



**Economic and Social
Council**

Distr.
GENERAL

E/CN.4/2006/NGO/232
7 March 2006

ENGLISH ONLY

COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS
Sixty-second session
Item 9 of the provisional agenda

**QUESTION OF THE VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL
FREEDOMS IN ANY PART OF THE WORLD**

**Written statement* submitted by Sign of Hope , a non-governmental organization in
special consultative status**

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is
circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[28 February 2006]

* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the
submitting non-governmental organization(s).

Human Rights situation in Sudan

Sign of Hope wishes to draw the attention of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights to human rights abuses carried out by the so called "Lord's Resistance Army" (LRA) in areas of southern Sudan.

The LRA has been responsible for human rights violations on a large scale. The LRA, led by Joseph Kony, committed numerous, serious abuses and atrocities. Rebels routinely killed, tortured, maimed, and abducted civilians, including children. The LRA used children as soldiers and subjected female captives to rape and other forms of severe sexual exploitation. Up to now, 20,000 children have been abducted by the LRA. The LRA uses night-time attacks to intimidate the civilian population.

On July 8 and September 27, 2005, the International Criminal Court issued arrest warrants for Joseph Kony, Vincent Otti, and LRA commanders Raska Lukwiya, Okot Odhiambo and Dominic Ongwen. The warrants were filed under seal. The warrants have been released on October 13, 2005.

Lord's Resistance Army still active in Southern Sudan

Sign of Hope found credible evidence for continued activities of LRA elements in southern Sudan.

A Sign of Hope human rights assessment team stayed in the area of Juba/Rejaf from February 18 to February 21, 2006. On February 21, the team moved on to Nimule where they stayed until February 23, 2006.

During their stay in Juba and Rejaf the team conducted interviews at the grassroots level with persons affected by activities of the LRA.

Sign of Hope found reliable evidence for very recent attacks of LRA elements in the area. Cassava fields around Rejaf were looted by LRA members on February 17 and 18, 2006.

On November 16, 2005 LRA elements had raided Rejaf, looted the village, and killed at least three persons (Alfred Mogga Ladu (70 years), Albina Poni Morbe (60 years) and Gordon Kual). According to villagers, Alfred Mogga Ladu was killed by multiple machete chops on his head.

On July 4, 2005 a woman was sleeping in her house in Rejaf, when LRA rebels raided the village. Persons belonging to the LRA cut her face with a bayonet which was attached to a gun.

The threat, imposed by the LRA, forces the local population to leave the village during night time in order to hide itself in the bush. Referring to the need to stay in the bush during night time one male school teacher of Rejaf told the team: “We are human beings only in the daytime. At night we are not.”

During their stay in Nimule (Magwe County), the team conducted additional interviews at the grassroots level with persons affected by LRA activities. By doing so, the Sign of Hope staff produced a list of 21 persons who are suspected of still being held captive by the LRA.

After having assessed the situation of persons still being held by the LRA, the team estimates that there are a total of at least 92 persons, who formerly resided within the county of Magwe, who are presently still being held captive by the LRA.

Interviewees described there were several indicators that make it possible to identify LRA fighters: LRA fighters are commonly identified by their Acholi accent, as many of the fighters stem from the Acholi tribe. LRA fighters regularly do not use vehicles or other means of transportation as they usually carry out their attacks on foot. LRA fighters commonly use pangas or machetes to hurt target persons. That is why the LRA fighters are called “tong-tong” in the Bari tribal language, an expression that means “those who cut”.

Traumatic fears that LRA raids continue are widespread among the local population. The effects of forced abductions are extremely grave. As a rule families do not know the whereabouts of their abducted relatives. Many parents fear that their children have already been killed by LRA rebels. Many of those who were able to escape from abduction and returned back home find it extremely difficult to deal with their traumatic experience.

As a result the LRA activities pose the most difficult hardship on people who are already struggling to rebuild their lives after suffering from war and displacement.

Recommendations

The Commission should point out that the LRA, as a rebel army, is obliged under international law to observe Article 3, common to all four Geneva Conventions and Additional Protocol II.

In that context the Commission should condemn the grave human rights violations perpetrated by the LRA.

The Commission should call upon the LRA to immediately stop all forced abduction of civilians and release all persons currently held as captives or forcedly conscripted soldiers.

The Commission should urge the LRA to cease cruel or degrading punishment and stop looting privately owned property.

The Commission should ask the Government of Sudan to use its influence with the Lord's Resistance Army to ensure that the above recommendations are followed. Moreover the Commission should ask the Governments of Sudan and Uganda to take all possible steps to protect civilians from abduction.

Concerning the situation in southern Sudan the Commission should welcome the deployment of police forces. Still the Commission should point out that an efficient police force of considerable size under the rule of law is vital in protecting civilians against the activities perpetrated by the LRA.

The Commission should create awareness that the human rights situation in the on-going conflict in the LRA affected areas of Southern Sudan is grave. The abuse of the human rights of civilians in particular reveals the need for strong international measures to protect civilians in armed conflicts.

Therefore the Commission should call upon governments to support measures to increase the protection of children and civilians from abuse in situations of armed conflict.

The Commission should ask all relevant UN bodies to promptly investigate the abduction, killing, torture and sexual abuse of civilians and children by the LRA.

The Commission should strengthen all efforts to execute the arrest warrants against LRA leaders that were unsealed by the International Criminal Court on October 13, 2005.
