



SOUTH SUDAN HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS NETWORK

PRESS RELEASE

SOUTH SUDAN: SOUTH SUDAN HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS NETWORK WELCOMES DECISION TO SCRAP S.54 AND 55 OF THE NATIONAL SECURITY SERVICE ACT, 2014 ON ARRESTS.

(Juba/ February 27, 2023) The South Sudan Human Rights Defenders Network (SSHRDN) welcomes the recent proclamation by the Cabinet Affairs Minister, Dr. Martin Elia Lumoro on behalf of the Revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity declaring that the National Security Services (NSS) no longer have the power to arrest with or without a warrant.

At the press conference held on Tuesday 21st, February, 2023, Dr. Lumoro stated that President of the Republic of South Sudan His Excellency Salva Kiir Mayardit and the first Vice President Dr. Riek Machar resolved to scrap Section 54 and 55 that provide for arrest without warrant and arrest with warrant respectively from the National Security Service Act, 2014.

Human rights defenders have faulted the 2014 National Security Service Act for giving the NSS police-like powers to arrest, detain conduct searchers and seize property without adequate safeguards and exceeding the NSS's constitutional mandate, which limit its powers to "information gathering, analysis and advice to the relevant authorities". Human rights organizations have documented human rights violations by the NSS including arbitrary arrests and prolonged detention, including of political opponents and government critics.

"The scrapping of the two sections comes at a time when so many arrests, often arbitrary ones, have been made in violation of human rights" states James Bidal, National Coordinator, SSHRDN " and we therefore applaud the President and the First Vice President for this positive step that we believe will reduce human rights violations by the NSS."

The review and scrapping of these sections come at a time when the country is gearing up for key political events inclusive of the forthcoming constitution making process and general elections, events when the freedom of expression, association and assembly is especially critical. We look forward to swift amendment of the 2014 NSS Act and we will continue to advocate for the rule of law in South Sudan as a core tenet of democracy and governance.

As the Human rights defenders' network we commit to continue defending and advocating for human rights of every person in the country and continue to explore meaningful ways to collaborate and work with government, legislature, the Judiciary, civil society, the South Sudan Human Rights Commission, media, academia, individual human right defenders, International NGOs, United Nations Agencies and the Diplomatic corp.

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