

Child rights extracts from the following report:

Report of the independent expert on the situation of human rights in the Sudan,
Mohamed Chande Othman

44. Inter-communal violence continues to cause loss of life and property across southern Sudan. On 22 May 2011, a cattle raid by unidentified armed elements in Lafon County in Eastern Equatoria State killed 17 children. On 2 May, UNMIS investigated allegations of human rights violations following fighting between Dinka Gok and Dinka Agar tribes in Rumbek, Lake State. A total of nine people, including four women, were reportedly killed in the fighting. In Jonglei State, the traditional rivalry between Lou Nuer and Murle tribes intensified in late April in Pibor County, claiming more lives. The County reported that more than 60 people were killed when fighting broke out between the feuding tribes between 18 and 20 April. An unverified number of children were reported missing after the fighting. According to figures released by the State Security Committee, more than 1,000 lives were lost in the State through communal violence in the first three months of 2011. Impunity and lack of accountability continues to fuel the cycle of violence. To date, the Government has been unable to bring to justice any of the perpetrators of the numerous crimes committed.

45. Hundreds of civilians, including women and children, were killed in fighting between the SPLA and rebel militia groups. Since the referendum in January 2011, UNMIS has documented massive human rights violations committed in the context of this fighting. The violence can be traced to events following the April 2010 elections, when several former SPLA generals fell out with the movement over allegations of vote-rigging, formed militia groups and launched armed rebellions against the SPLA. While a majority of the casualties were soldiers on both sides, a substantial number of civilians has been targeted and killed on suspicion of being affiliated with rebel militia groups. The SPLA and other militia groups have committed human rights abuses, including the deliberate burning of villages and indiscriminate killing of civilians, including women and children, looting and rape and sexual violence against women. Between January and April 2011, UNMIS reported that more than 1,000 people, including hundreds of civilians, were killed in the fighting concentrated in the Greater Upper Nile region of Jonglei, Upper Nile and Unity State. Tens of thousands of civilians have been forced to flee their villages and many of them remain inaccessible to humanitarian actors.

48. Concerns also remain about continuing human rights violations linked to discrimination against women in South Sudan. Sexual and gender-based violence, forced marriages and abduction of women and children associated with inter-communal violence remain widespread. Serious crimes against women are sometimes settled through the traditional justice system, which very often applies discriminatory customary norms focused more on reconciliation than on ensuring accountability. In Western Equatoria, a man suspected of raping his two under-aged stepdaughters was released on bail after he agreed to compensate the victims' family. Another man suspected of murdering his wife was also released by the police after the families agreed to a settlement out of court.

55. Sexual and gender-based violence remained a serious concern in Darfur in spite of measures taken by the Government to address it. The persistent climate of impunity continues to create an environment conducive to the perpetration of sexual violence. Many incidents of sexual violence were not reported owing to fear of social stigma associated with rape, fear of reprisal and the victims' lack of trust in the police to effectively investigate and prosecute offenders. Furthermore, the police do not have the capacity to follow up and investigate cases of sexual violence in areas under the control or influence of armed groups. These challenges notwithstanding, the Government has taken a number of positive steps to combat sexual and gender-based violence. In North Darfur, the authorities have significantly increased the number of female police investigators, while in West and South Darfur, female police investigators have recently been posted in family and child protection units of the Police solely to handle cases of violence against women.

