

H.E. Salva Kiir Mayardit
President of the Republic of South Sudan
Juba, South Sudan

CC: Dr. Barnaba Benjamin Marial, Minister of Foreign Affairs
CC: Paulino Wanawilla Onango, Minister of Justice
CC: Lawrence Korbandy, Chairman of the Human Rights Commission
CC: Members of the Human Rights Committee, National Legislative Assembly

15 April 2014

Your Excellency,

We write to you as South Sudanese and international non-governmental organizations committed to the promotion and protection of human rights in South Sudan, to urge the Government of South Sudan to ratify the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (the African Charter) in advance of the 55th ordinary session of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR), which will begin on 28 April, 2014.

South Sudan became a member of the African Union when it gained independence in July 2011. For almost three years, it has been the only member state of the African Union that is not party to the African Charter. In March 2013, the ACHPR issued a resolution in which it called on the Government of South Sudan to immediately ratify and domesticate the African Charter and other fundamental human rights instruments.

In the context of the current conflict, serious violations of international human rights and humanitarian law have occurred, including attacks on civilians, looting and destruction of civilian property, and acts of rape and other forms of sexual violence. Prompt ratification of the African Charter would demonstrate the government's commitment to the improvement of the human rights situation in the country. Ratification of the Charter would also allow both the government and South Sudanese citizens to benefit from the attention and expertise of the members of the ACHPR on human rights issues.

In May 2013, the Council of Ministers adopted a resolution approving seven regional and international instruments, including the African Charter. The National Legislative Assembly subsequently voted to ratify the African Charter in October 2013. We request that you complete the ratification process by assenting to the ratification of the Charter without further delay, and then ensure that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs transmits the instrument of ratification to the African Union.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Amnesty International
Assistance Mission for Africa (AMA)
Citizens for Peace and Justice (CPJ)
Institute for Promotion of Civil Society (IPCS)
International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH)
Kush, Inc.
Organization for Nonviolence and Development (ONAD)
PAX
South Sudan Law Society (SSLS)
The ROOTS Project
Voice for Change (VfC)