



Statement by H.E. Archbishop Ivan Jurkovič, Permanent Representative of the Holy See to the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva, at the 26th Special Session of the Human Rights Council,
“On the Human Rights Situation in South Sudan”
Geneva, 14 December 2016

Mr. President,

The Delegation of the Holy See expresses its gratitude to the Members States of the Council for requesting this special session to address the deteriorating situation of human rights in South Sudan. The increased intensity of the violence, wherein the norms of international law and international humanitarian law have been almost completely ignored, is contributing to the worsening of the already precarious situation of the nation.

The consequences of this conflict are seen most clearly in the suffering of the South Sudan population. About 2.3 million people, the clear majority being women and children, continue to be displaced from their homes within the country, and some 600,000 have sought refuge in neighboring countries, about 70 per cent of these being unaccompanied minors. Estimates show that between 5 and 7 million people are facing food shortages. The conflict has created one of the gravest humanitarian situations facing the international community and it must be addressed immediately, particularly by the involved parties.

Any solution to the conflict must take into consideration not only the obvious tension between the parties, but also these underlying motives and factors that fuel the conflict.

Mr. President,

My Delegation wishes to reiterate the appeal of Pope Francis for South Sudan when he asked that the parties involved and the international community put an end to the violence, to ensure “access to humanitarian aid for the needy” and to strive “relentlessly” for peaceful solutions in order that the “common good prevail over special interests.” There is the need to “promote a culture of encounter” which implies first and foremost the rejection of selfishness and the ability to see the other “not as an enemy but as a brother to accept and to work with.”

Thank you, Mr. President.