



# **SOUTH SUDAN** **HUMAN RIGHTS OBSERVATORY**

*... undressing impunity, redressing violations*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **UNLAWFUL ARRESTS, DISAPPEARANCE AND DETENTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS IN SOUTH SUDAN.**

**Pretoria**, (11<sup>th</sup> August 2017) - We welcome the announcement by Jalban Obaj, the Director of Legal Affairs at the Internal Security Bureau of the National Security Service that the body has released 30 political prisoners.

We note with great concern that this gesture is cosmetic because thousands of South Sudanese and foreigners are still unlawfully detained across South Sudan.

It is very disturbing, however, that while government is releasing a handful of political prisoners, it is also arresting and detaining many more opponents, human rights defenders and civil society activists unlawfully.

There are credible reports of government operatives hunting, harassing and kidnapping political opponents, human rights defenders and South Sudanese civil society activists in the neighbouring countries of Kenya and Uganda.

We draw the attention of the Government to the fact that mass arrests of government opponents including house arrests and unlawfully muzzling of peaceful dissent is against the constitution of the Republic of South Sudan

We therefore call upon the government of South Sudan to release all political prisoners including those under house arrest unconditionally. We urge the international community not to reward the Kiir's administration for its cosmetic gesture releasing handful of prisoners while the bulk of political prisoners are languishing in detention centres across the country under horrible conditions including tortures.

The recent decision by the government to ban several web-based news outlets in South Sudan is another manifestation of the Government's policy to silent dissent and to muzzle the press and curtail freedom of speech at a time when South Sudanese are urged to participate in a national dialogue to find a peaceful solution to the four years of conflict in South Sudan.

### **About SSHRO**

South Sudan Human Rights Observatory (SSHRO) is a network of South Sudanese and non-South Sudanese volunteers from different backgrounds and with different expertise who are committed to documenting and disseminating reliable information about human rights violations in South Sudan.

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