



## REMEMBERING THE ONES WE LOST

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### PRESS STATEMENT

#### ***Over 13,000 People Dead in South Sudan Conflicts, Time to End Violence is NOW***

South Sudanese people have suffered a series of conflicts since 1955 and the latest wave of violence started in December 2013 to date, despite the signing of R-ARCSS. Many lives are being lost, property destroyed and people displaced internally and many more took refuge to neighboring countries.

Our ultimate goal is to advocate for an end to all forms of violence in South Sudan and we seek to do so by continuously highlighting the human cost of the violence in the country and its terrible effects on all of South Sudan's people.

Remembering The Ones We Lost has been documenting conflict related deaths, killings and disappearances in South Sudan since 2014 as a response to renewed conflict. The organization has developed a standard format for data collection and an online website where the public can upload names of their loved ones who have been killed during conflicts between 1955 to date. Data are either uploaded by relatives of the deceased or missing person or through well trained team of volunteers who are deployed all over South Sudan. Once data is submitted it is verified by ROWL staff before being published on the website [www.rememberingoneswelost.org](http://www.rememberingoneswelost.org)

So far we have documented, verified and published 13,052 cases of persons who were either killed or died or missing as a direct result of conflict. The percentage of confirmed dead is 96.58% of the total number, while missing persons constitute 3.42% of the total cases documented. South Sudanese conflict victims are the majority amounting to 99.42% and people of other nationalities is 0.65%. Male victims constitute 84.61% and female victims are 15.39% of the total losses. The average age of the deceased and missing persons is 40 years. The youngest victim was a 2 week old baby and the oldest was 103 years old.

Marital status of the deceased and missing persons is as follows: 17.97 were single, 1.01% were separated, 0.4% were widow and 80.62% were married. This means an increase in the number of widows and children growing up in single parent female headed households. Civilian victims amount to 75.82% of total cases documented while armed forces amounts to 24.18%. Civilians includes 27 chiefs, 46 children, 182 professionals, 145 religious workers, 344 students. South Sudan's violence is mainly taking the lives of innocent people, not combatants, and it is destroying the future in myriad ways, leaving behind generations of traumatized people.

The period from August 1955 to February 1972 constitutes 1.72% of total cases documented; March 1972 to April 1983 had 0.31%; May 1983 to December 2004 constitute 15.02%, January 2005 to November 2013

constitute 2.87% while 80.08% of total cases were recorded from December 2013 to date with a total of 10,452 dead and missing persons. A total of 2,050 cases of killings and disappearance were reported in 2013, 2,954 in 2014, 1,045 in 2015, 1,721 in 2016, 1,124 in 2017, 782 in 2018, 560 in 2019 and 263 in 2020. It appears that the more recently the killing or disappearance occurred, the more likely it is to be reported. It is urgent that we continue to collect names before too much time passes to ensure that when we are finally able to create a memorial of lost loved ones, the numbers will reflect the scale of that loss.

The main cause of death was gunshot totaling to 88.88%. Other causes of death included slaughter by knife or machete 1.9%, torture 1.46% and burning people inside houses 0.83%. Central Equatoria witnessed the highest cases of killings and disappearances with 57.41% of the total cases documented, followed by Jonglei 18.54%, then Unity 8.74%, then Eastern Equatoria 6.8%, then Upper Nile 4.32%, then Western Equatoria 2.4%, then Western Bahr el Ghazal 0.8%, then Lakes 0.55%, then Warrap 0.4% and lastly Northern Bahr el Ghazal 0.03%. Such figures represent numbers relating to the most recent conflict from where most of the data has been obtained.

The impact of the conflicts are severe on lives of many people. Almost every family in South Sudan has lost at least one family member as a result of recurrent violence. Families and individuals live in fear and most of them are traumatized by recurrent cases of killings and disappearances.

Government and all Opposition Groups were all signatory to the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement signed in Khartoum in 2017 and Rome Declaration signed in 2019. Parties have both legal and moral obligations and duties to protect citizens and residents of South Sudan. Protection of civilians and their properties is a primary responsibility of the Government as per the national Constitution.

**Remembering The Ones We Lost would like to make the following recommendations:**

1. Government of South Sudan and all Armed Groups to abide and adhere to Cessation of Hostilities Agreements;
2. Government and All Armed Groups to make public apology and accept responsibility for atrocities committed against people of the South Sudan;
3. Government and Armed Opposition groups to commit to non-recurrence of violence in the South Sudan;
4. Government and All Armed Groups to handles remains of deceased with dignity and whenever possible handover the remains to the relatives for decent burial;
5. Government of South Sudan to declare an annual memorial period to be dedicated to remember and honor souls of all people who lost their lives in the course of the country's armed conflicts and to reflect on consequences of violence;
6. Government of South Sudan to construct memorial centers across the country to remind citizens of the consequences of violence and that South Sudan should never again resort to the use of violence in future.

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