

**Survivors Network South Sudan (SUNS)
Statement on the next steps to establish
the CTRH and CRA**



Juba, 8 February 2025

Given the entry into force of the Commission for Truth, Reconciliation and Healing (CTRH) Act 2024 and the Compensation and Reparation (CRA) Act 2024 on 11 November 2024, members of the SUNS network coming from 6 locations across South Sudan, gathered in Juba on 7-8 February 2025, would like to share the following recommendations for the next steps.

Awareness raising about the CTRH and CRA

The Commission for Truth, Reconciliation and Healing should be known in South Sudan. There needs to be a lot of awareness raising starting from now. The government and stakeholders need to step up sensitisation and education. Widespread radio talks-shows should be foreseen in local languages. An outreach unit needs to be established from the outset to reach the 10 States and 3 Administrative areas.

The Process for Selection the CTRH Commissioners

SUNS would like to see a survivor of conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) on the Selection Panel. SUNS currently represents 3199 CRSV survivors, but even for those who are not members, CRSV has been very widespread, and the needs and rights of survivors are specific. The CTRH can be an opportunity to break down stigma and acknowledge the suffering.

We do not think that 35% women is enough. Women make up 50% of the population and were very badly affected, as survivors of sexual violence, as mothers of children born of rape, as widows and as children. 35% should be the minimum, but we should expect 50%. At least 4 out of the 7 Commissioners should women.

Of the African Union selected candidates, we would like to see some with experience of Truth Commissions to bring their experience to South Sudan.

The need for Listening and Acknowledgment

We want the government to recognise us, to acknowledge CRSV survivors as victims.

We recommend that the CTRH *should be able to summon government* officials to also listen to those giving testimony, to participate in any healing commemoration efforts. This will allow victims to feel heard, that they are not alone, that the government stands with us. Up to now, when we invite the government to attend memorials, for instance, of the Widows of 1992, they prefer not to attend, so we stand alone.

Special consideration for Children

Directly affected children, especially children born of rape, who are now considered direct victims of the sexual violence, have very difficult needs. They are stigmatised and discriminated, often suffering from neglect or abuse. Families need to accept and love them and the CTRH can help reduce this discrimination. Special, safe and trauma-informed hearings should be foreseen to allow children born of rape to be heard if they want to testify and special compensation and reparation should be foreseen. Children born of rape should have free education and health services.

Protection Measures

While some feel they will be strong and able to tell their stories to the Commission, others might fear.

In addition to protection measures that the Commissioners can grant, like protecting identity or private hearings, UNMISS should be mandated to protect the CTRH, including victims and witnesses, men and women. The Women’s Protection Unit at UNMISS should be monitoring and able to protect women who testify but face reprisals.

It is important to note that protection should also include psychosocial protection in line with best practices.

The Independence of the Commission

We disagree that the CTRH should be renewed after six years. It should complete its work in this time. It should only be renewed for 1 year if necessary, and this should come from the Commissioners unanimously.

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‘Supporting Survivors Through Advocacy and Interim Reparative Measures (SEAR)’

