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"Government urged to intensify efforts to end the war in South Sudan after killing of four Kenyans"

Leading Kenyan voices are demanding that President Kenyatta intensify Kenya's bilateral diplomatic efforts to end the conflict in South Sudan, days after four Kenyans were killed execution-style in the country.

George Kegoro, Executive Director of the Kenya Human Rights Commission (KHRC), said: "The war in South Sudan has been knocking on Kenya's door for more than three years. In this latest tragedy, four Kenyans have lost their lives. Our government can no longer pretend that they do not hear the banging."

Seven people were killed in the attack which happened near the town of Mangalla, located 75km northeast of Juba. The victims included three Kenyans and three South Sudanese working for the South Sudan-based Grassroots Empowerment and Development Organization (GREDO). The seventh victim was a Kenyan who worked for Capital Base, a construction contractor. All the victims were dragged from the car, lined up and executed with shots to their heads. Kenya's Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced that they are conducting a probe into the killings, but the assailants have yet to be identified.

Elsy Sainna, Acting Executive Director of ICJ-Kenya, said: "We are outraged by these tragic murders of innocent people, all of whom were working to improve the lives of South Sudanese. We are demanding the intervention of Kenyan authorities to ensure that those responsible for this criminal incident are swiftly identified and brought to justice through a fair trial."

Nearly 90,000 South Sudanese have sought safety and protection in Kenya. Last November, the Kenyan government suddenly withdrew its 1,000 soldiers from the UN peacekeeping mission after a Kenyan commander was sacked by the UN. Kenya committed to re-instating the troops in January this year after an intervention by UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres.

George Kegoro said: "We are calling on President Kenyatta to stand up for his citizens, whose lives were brutally taken away while they were just doing their jobs: providing humanitarian relief to a starved people, and reconstruction to a destroyed nation. By ensuring that those responsible are held to account, our President can stand up for not just the human rights of our nationals, but for everyone in South Sudan. And he must not stop there – the only way to stop more killings from occurring is to urge President Kiir to finally end the war. Our president must say, 'enough is enough.'"

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Notes to Editor

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