**Universal Periodic Review 26 – South Sudan**

**Statement by the Kingdom of the Netherlands**

Thank you Mr. President,

The Netherlands would like to thank the government of South Sudan for its report [and for addressing our advance questions].

1. The Netherlands **recommends** South Sudan to take steps to hold to account the perpetrators of the human rights violations, including sexual and gender-based violence, committed during the violence in Juba in July 2016. More specifically, to hold accountable the perpetrators of the attack on the Terrain Hotel, during which a local journalist was killed and several aid workers raped.
2. Also, the Netherlands **recommends** South Sudan to protect human rights defenders and journalists from violence and arbitrary arrests, to address impunity for crimes against human rights defenders and journalists and notify UNESCO of the status of the judicial inquiry into the murder of journalists.

We make the first recommendation because, despite communiqués signed by both the Government and the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement/Army in Opposition in October 2014, the use of conflict related sexual violence by both parties remains widespread and common practice. Moreover, since the start of the fighting in Juba on 8 July 2016 sexual violence has increased and has largely remained unanswered.

As often stated in the Human Rights Council, it is the primary responsibility of the government to protect the people of South Sudan.

We make the second recommendation because during the UPR review in 2011 South Sudan committed to completing its transition from a militarized society to a democratic system based on the rule of law under civilian rule and to increasing efforts in the field of civil protection. Unfortunately, since the outbreak of the armed conflict in December 2013, press freedom, access to information and the safety of journalists and human rights defenders have deteriorated, with a significant increase in incidents following the violence in July 2016.

Thank you Mr. President.