

South Sudan unable to cope with mental trauma of civil war

July 6 2016, by Jason Patinkin

South Sudan is unable to cope with high levels of mental trauma suffered by survivors of the country's civil war, Amnesty International said Wednesday.

A new report by the rights group said widespread rape, torture and killing of civilians by soldiers has led to many people showing symptoms of [post-traumatic stress disorder](#).

South Sudan's [mental health care](#) system is "practically non-existent," with only two part-time psychiatrists and a single psychiatric ward in the whole East African country, Amnesty International said.

"While the death and physical destruction caused by the conflict and preceding decades of war are immediately apparent, the psychological scars are less visible and neglected," said Muthoni Wanyeki, Amnesty International's Regional Director.

South Sudan's war began in 2013 and continues despite a peace deal signed last year. Tens of thousands have been killed.

A 2015 study conducted in six of the country's 10 states by the South Sudan Law Society and the U.N. Development Programme said 41 percent of South Sudanese citizens have symptoms of PTSD.

A man who survived a massacre in a police station in the capital Juba at the war's start said he still suffers nightmares.

"Sometimes I dream that I died with those who were killed. I wake up sweating and trembling. Sometimes I think those people who died are here with me, alive," the man said, according to Amnesty's report.

Another man hanged himself in a U.N. camp after escaping a government prison where he had been tortured for months, a relative told Amnesty.

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