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March 7, 2013

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South Sudan: End Widespread Child Marriage



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On the eve of International Women's Day, girls in South Sudan are courageously standing up and saying no to early marriage; the government needs to support them.

Atong G. was 16 when relatives forced her to marry a 50-year-old man.

"This old man can feed us, you will marry him," her family told her.

According to government statistics, close to half of South Sudanese girls between 15 and 19 are married, with some marrying as young as age 12.

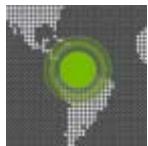
Child marriage in South Sudan keeps girls out of school and contributes to high maternal mortality rates. Girls in South Sudan told Human Rights Watch that family members forced them to marry in exchange for dowry payments. Girls who try to resist forced marriages suffer brutal consequences at the hands of their families.

The South Sudanese government needs a comprehensive plan to prevent child marriage.

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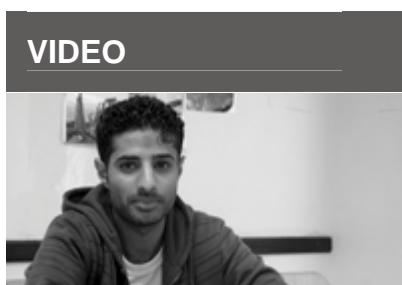


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Human Rights Watch - 350 Fifth Avenue, 34th Floor New York, NY 10118 USA
Tel: 1-(212) 290-4700 | news@hrw.org

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