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TO: The Chairman, JMEC

FROM: The Chairman, CTSAMM

DATE: 27 July 2017

**SUBJECT: CTSAMM REPORT 045 – EASTERN EQUATORIA STATE
MONITORING REPORT**

Your Excellency,

Please find attached a CTSAMM monitoring report which covers the security situation in Eastern Equatoria and alleged violations of the Permanent Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangements (Chapter II of the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan of 26 August 2015) over the period May to July 2017.

This report was discussed at the CTSAMM meeting of 20 July 2017.


Major General Molla Hailemariam

Chairman

Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangements Monitoring Mechanism



CTSAMM REPORT NUMBER 045
MONITORING REPORT EASTERN EQUATORIA STATE

Executive Summary

CTSAMM has continued to monitor the security situation in Eastern Equatoria closely, with an emphasis on the area affected by SPLA-IG operations against SPLA-IO (RM) in April when violations were committed against the local civilian population. During follow-up patrols by CTSAMM to Pageri, Pajok and surrounding areas from May to July it was discovered that these abuses continue and many places remain depopulated as those citizens who have fled are too afraid to return.

CTSAMM found evidence of SPLA-IO (RM) forces in the area. There have been allegations made suggesting that they have been responsible for ambushes and abductions on SPLA-IG and civilians.

The security situation in large parts of Eastern Equatoria remains poor with frequent and violent ambushes on main roads. Both parties have been reported to be preparing forces for armed clashes in the Imatong area. The tense and dangerous security situation and fear of attacks and looting has caused tens of thousands of civilians recently displaced to stay away from their home villages, and for some to travel to refugee camps in Uganda.

MONITORING REPORT EASTERN EQUATORIA STATE

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background:

- On 3 April 2017 Government Forces mounted an operation against SPLM/A-IO units in the Pajok area. This resulted in the deaths of at least 16 civilians, extensive looting and the displacement of the majority of the population. This was the subject of CTSAMM report number 038 which was presented at the CTSAMM meeting of 5 May 2017.
- The MVT continued to receive reports of violations involving the civilian population in the south west of Eastern Equatorial State.
- In June there were been frequent and bloody ambushes on civilians, NGOs and SPLM/A-IG convoys along main routes in Eastern Equatoria. The overall security situation has deteriorated over the past three months.
- In accordance with a commitment made at the last CTSAMM meeting the security situation in Pajok and other areas in Eastern Equatoria has been continuously monitored by CTSAMM.

1.2 Incidents: The MVT based in Torit has investigated multiple incidents which occurred between May and July. These included Cessation of Hostilities breaches, multiple incidents involving violations against civilians such as looting, the displacement and attacking of civilians and occupation of schools by military units.

1.3 Aim: The purpose of this report is to describe the security situation in Eastern Equatoria, identify alleged violations of the PCTSA and attribute responsibility where appropriate.

1.4 Methodology:

- MVT Torit mounted two joint patrols with UNMISS on 15- 20 May 2017 and 20-23 June 2017. The patrols visited Nimule, Magwi, Pajok, Owinkybul, Moli Andro, Obbo, Palotaka and Labone.
- During the patrol members of the MVT were able to meet with a wide range of people, including SPLA-IO (RM) defectors, ordinary citizens, leaders of youth and other community groups and members of County, Payam and Boma civil administrations and SPLA-IG officers.
- In addition to patrols the MVT also monitor the day-to-day situation in Eastern Equatoria through SPLA-IG Liaison officers, Community Liaison Officers and regular meetings with senior state officials and SPLA commanders in Torit.

2.0 Findings

2.1 Overall Security Assessment.

- The period May to July was characterised by high levels of violence in Eastern Equatoria. There have been skirmishes between warring parties most notably in the Imatong area.
- There has been extensive displacement of civilians who have chosen to flee the violence in Pageri County and Pajok and move into a refugee camp at Parabek across the border in Uganda.
- Since early June there have been frequent ambushes on major roads in Eastern Equatoria which have caused heavy loss of life to civilians.
- In addition to a heavy SPLM/A-IG and SPLM/A-IO (RM) presence there are active Unknown Armed Groups (UAGs) in Ayaci County who are reportedly responsible for robberies and ambushes. In response to the security threat

the youth in Magwi and Awaci have been mobilised and have been observed carrying weapons and operating alongside SPLA-IG soldiers.

- Recently reported movement of forces from both parties has resulted in a poor security situation becoming even more tense and threatening.

2.2 Cessation of Hostilities.

- In Eastern Equatoria there are credible reports of defections of senior officers and rank and file from SPLA-IO (RM) to SPLA-IG or SPLA-IO (TDG). The numbers involved and their status as combatants are not verified.
- The SPLA-IO (RM) have committed a number of violation most notably the ambush of a NSS convoy on 8 June 2017 which resulted in both military and civilian casualties.
- The recent movement of troops from both parties to establish positions in the Imatong area indicate the possibility of renewed clashes.
- Despite the tense security situation in Pajok the Acholi community with UNMISS assistance convened a Peace Conference in Pajok on 20-21 June where elders from the community travelled from Ayaci, Magwi, Torit and Juba and were able to meet.

2.3 Protection of Civilians.

- The theft, looting and destruction of properties carried out by SPLA-IG soldiers in Pajok has continued. The MVT witnessed SPLA-IG soldiers taking wheelbarrows of scrap from Pageri and that all the windows and doors had been stripped from the primary school and clinic.

- The committee to deal with problems between the civilian community and soldiers has been ineffective as evidenced by the fact that on the most recent MVT patrol shops schools and houses in Pajok continue to be occupied by SPLA-IG.
- Fighting on 3 April resulted in the displacement of at least 6,000 people from the Pajok area to Uganda within a period of 5 days. There is evidence that civilians are returning to Pajok Payam but a recent registration exercise saw civilians subsequently return to Uganda because of the destruction of property and lack of food in their villages. Most of the civilians remaining tend to be elderly and/or disabled.
- Civilians remain vulnerable to ambush and abduction. On 15 May 10 civilians were abducted and ransoms demanded by forces believed to be SPLA IO (RM) in Ayaci County.
- Evidence collected by the MVT from local people indicated that displacement from the Eastern Equatoria is driven not only by the actions of SPLA-IG but also by the insecurity caused by the SPLA-(IO) RM and UAGs.
- Large numbers of SPLA-IG personnel, specifically Tiger Battalion and what the MVT has been told are Mathiang Anyoor remain in Pageri and Ayaci counties. There is no doubt that their presence deters the return of those who have fled.

3.0 Assessment:

- 3.1 The recent escalation in violence in Eastern Equatoria has been caused by increased activity by SPLA-IO (RM) and UAGs. Consequently security is threatened by frequent ambushes, the killing and abductions of civilians and major disruption to civilian livelihoods by regular denial of access and road closures.
- 3.2 A national army should exist to protect its citizens. The SPLA-IG is committed to protect civilians under the COHA and PCTSA. However, the actions of SPLA-IG in Pageri and Ayaci counties continue to be in clear violation of these agreements. The blatant looting of private and civil property displays a contempt for the civilian population, who remain fearful of SPLA-IG personnel and are unlikely to return whilst they remain in the area.
- 3.3 The arming of youth groups in Ayaci County is likely to add to insecurity rather than encourage stability.

4.0 Conclusion

- 4.1 It is the opinion of CTSAMM that the SPLA-IO (RM) and UAGs are responsible for many attacks on SPLA-IG and civilians, especially along major roads, in Eastern Equatoria and in so doing violate Article 1.7.5 of the PCTSA and Article 1 of the COHA.
- 4.2 It is the opinion of CTSAMM that the actions of arming youth groups in Ayaci County constitutes a violation by the state government of Article 1.1 of the COHA and potentially Article 1.7.3 of the PCTSA if any of the youth are under the age of 18.

- 4.3 It is the opinion of CTSAMM that the actions of SPLA-IG personnel in Eastern Equatoria State against the civilian population continue to violate the PCTSA, specifically Article 1.7.5.

5.0 Observations and Recommendations:

- 5.1 The recently convened Acholi Community Peace Conference is a welcome development.
- 5.2 All parties should respect the ARCSS by maintaining a permanent ceasefire.
- 5.3 All parties should ensure the actions of their military forces do not result in violations against civilians
- 5.4 All parties should ensure that those who perpetrate violations are held to account.
- 5.5 All parties should contribute to the setting of conditions which will be conducive to the safe return of the displaced civilian population of Eastern Equatoria.