

CTSAMVM CONFIDENTIAL
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To: Lt. Gen. Rabi Mujung Emmanuel (ITGoNU)
Maj. Gen. Martin Gama Abucha (SPLM/A-IO)
Maj. Gen. Jany Kaway Yoakhor (SSOA)
Maj. Gen. Bior Leek Kuareng (Former Detainees)

From: The Chairperson, CTSAMVM

Date: 26 July 2022

SUBJECT: CTSAMVM REPORT 2022/20 – ILLEGAL RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING BY NATIONAL SECURITY SERVICE (NSS) IN TAMBURA COUNTY, WESTERN EQUATORIA STATE.

Dear CTSAMVM Technical Committee Senior Party Representatives,

Please find attached a report concerning the violation of the R-ARCSS which took place in Tambura County, Western Equatoria State.

Please accept the assurances of my highest consideration.

Lt Gen Asrat Denero Amad
Chairperson CTSAMVM



CTSAMVM REPORT 2022/20

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Under article 2.1.8 of the R-ARCSS, the Parties agreed to “cease security forces recruitment and training”. Any recruitment would not only be in violation of article 2.1.8 but also those other provisions such as article 2.1.10.3, 2.1.10.4, 2.1.10.7.1, 2.1.10.7.4 among others.

In June 2022, CTSAMVM received information about alleged recruitment and training of youth in Tambura. The allegation was that Captain Philips Khamis of NSS wanted to increase the number of NSS personnel following the loss of significant numbers of personnel through desertion.

CTSAMVM confirmed that there is ongoing NSS training currently being conducted in different locations such as Mamenze across the river, around 3 km south of Tambura and areas close to the Airfield where the NSS Barracks is located. The Training was authorized by the NSS HQ, State and County authorities. Captain Phillips Khamis (NSS) started the recruitment drive around 16 May 2022 in Tambura.

Some of the witnesses interviewed confirmed that, there are some under age children among the recruits on training. CTSAMVM was however not able to confirm whether they were recruited forcefully or not.



ILLEGAL RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING BY NATIONAL SECURITY SERVICE (NSS) IN TAMBURA COUNTY, WESTERN EQUATORIA STATE.

Introduction

1. Background

- a. Under article 2.1.8 of the R-ARCSS, the Parties agreed to “cease security forces recruitment and training”. Any recruitment and training of new recruits would not only be in violation of article 2.1.8 but also those other provisions such as article 2.1.10.3, 2.1.10.4, 2.1.10.7.1, 2.1.10.7.4 among others.
- b. Since the signing of the ACoH, CTSAMVM has received many allegations of forced recruitment by the Parties. It has always been a challenging issue to investigate. The Parties are unwilling to cooperate and too often witnesses unwilling to talk to CTSAMVM for fear of reprisals.
- c. During 2020 there were allegations of forced recruitment in Unity State, specifically in the Bentiu/Rubkona areas. CTSAMVM undertook an investigation but was unable to find any evidence of forced recruitment in the mentioned areas. SSPDF commanders told CTSAMVM that it was not recruitment but bringing back to units “deserters” or soldiers who had left SSPDF and returned to their villages.
- d. Between 2021 and 2022 CTSAMVM continued to receive allegations of recruitment in the Bentiu/Rubkona areas, and in particular in the IDP camps. On 25 January 2022, the Bentiu IDF Youth Forum issued a press statement condemning “rampant” arrest of young people by the armed forces.
- e. In September 2021 CTSAMVM received allegations from the SPLM/A-IO that the SSPDF was training “new recruits” in Digala. CTSAMVM was unable to get access to Digala, and indeed on 8 February 2022 was turned back at gunpoint (CTSAMVM Report 2022/06).



- f. On 22 September 2021, 10 SSPDF soldiers deserted the SSPDF camp at Nasir and were held by the SPLM/A-IO in Ulang. They all claimed to have been forcibly recruited by the SSPDF in Lakes State. The deserters remained in Ulang under the SPLM/A-IO until the end of January 2022 when they were reportedly sent back home by the SPLM/A-IO authorities.

2. **Allegations**

- a. In June 2022, CTSAMVM MVT Yambio received an allegation on recruitment and training of youth in Tambura by Captain Philips Khamis an officer in charge of South Sudan National Security Services (NSS). It was alleged that one Captain Philips Khamis started recruitment of the youth in Tambura to increase the number of NSS personnel and to replace those that were lost through desertion. It was further alleged that NSS lost a significant number of personnel through desertion thus the reason for Captain Philips Khamis to decide to start recruiting and training the youths in Tambura in order to mitigate the personnel gaps. Training of these new recruits was allegedly being conducted in the vicinity of Tambura Hospital along Sue road and the area close to the Paramount Chief's residence.
- b. Consequently, the Tambura County Local Authorities reportedly asked Captain Philips to provide documentation from the Revitalised Transitional Government of National Unity (RTGoNU) authorizing such recruitment and training activities in the area.

3. **Aim:** The aim of this report is to present the findings of CTSAMVM investigations into allegations of recruitment and training by the National Security Service in Tambura County.

4. **Methodology:**

- a. CTSAMVM MVT Yambio conducted a Dynamic Air Patrol on 16 Jun 22 and later a Long Duration Patrol to Tambura between 27 June - 01 July 2022.

- b. CTSAMVM interviewed a range of witnesses on 16 June 2022 and from 28 – 30 June 2022, including:
 - i. NSS State officials in WES.
 - ii. UNMISS officials.
 - iii. Political Leadership of Tambura County.
 - iv. Traditional and Cultural Leaders in Tambura.
 - v. Civilians owning land near the Paramount Chief
 - vi. Civil Society organisations representatives
 - vii. Captain Philips Khamis.
 - viii. Relatives of the recruited Children
 - ix. Leaders and members of IDP Camps in Tambura
- c. The standard of proof used by CTSAMVM to determine whether there is sufficient evidence to verify that a Party is not in compliance with the provisions of the Agreements is “reasonable grounds to believe that the incident that is the subject of the investigation occurred.” This is in accordance with accepted practice for monitoring mechanisms and human rights and humanitarian entities and signifies that sufficient facts and evidence have been collected to conclude that an event has occurred.

Findings:

- 5. The political and security situation in Tambura County has not normalised because of the disagreements between the State and County leadership. The Deputy Governor instructed people to keep staying in the IDP camps because fighting is still expected while the County Commissioner requested them to go

back to their homes. These contradictions have kept civilians in a state of fear and uncertainty.

6. There is ongoing NSS training currently being conducted in different locations such as Mamenze across the river, around 3 km south of Tambura and areas close to the Airfield where the NSS Barracks is located.
7. The Training was authorized by the State Government authorities, the NSS HQ and County authorities. Captain Phillips Khamis (NSS) started the recruitment drive around 16 May 2022 in Tambura.
8. Senior State officials alluded that the program was supposedly to train a cadre of youth to replace deserters from their operations in Tambura. However, there were differing reports on the training site, with some saying that it is in Matakurungu near the home of the Tambura Paramount Chief while others said that it is near Tambura Hospital. There were also differing reports of the composition of the trainees, with some alleging that they were all Zande whilst others claim that they were a mix of Balanda, Zande, Dinka and Jur.
9. The training includes the former NSS agents who have been working with the Service for 3 years to be nominated to join NSS and new recruits to increase the numbers of personnel.
10. Captain Philips Khamis told CTSAMVM that the training includes the NSS soldiers who defected or deserted to other areas during the conflicts, indiscipline soldiers and active soldiers to raise their capabilities and readiness.
11. CTSAMVM confirmed from relatives of the recruits on training that there are some underage children who were recruited and joined training.
12. There are child soldiers who had joined Maj Gen James Nando during the Tambura conflict but did not go through the screening process. They have uniforms obtained from Maridi TC which resemble NSS uniform. These child

soldiers donning NSS looking uniforms have become a source of threat inside the IDP Camps.

13. One of the Paramount Chiefs confirmed to have attended a meeting in March 2022 together with other local chiefs and headmen from both sides of Azande and Balanda, chaired by the County Commissioner. The commissioner informed them about the new recruitment for those who were willing to join NSS basing on the request by NSS.

Assessment

14. The security situation in Tambura has improved and the people move freely. Very few people are still in Hayat IDP Camp especially those who came from remote areas.
15. There are under age children among the recruits on training as confirmed by some of the parents. CTSAMVM did not confirm whether there was forced recruitment of these children.
16. The security situation in WES including Tambura is politically motivated. The people of Tambura especially those in IDP camps are confused by the contradicting instructions given to them by the State and County leaders belonging to different Party Signatories.
17. There was deliberate effort by Captain Philips Khamis to interrupt and deny CTSAMVM access to information claiming that the MVT had undermined his authority by being in his AOR without his knowledge. However, this was not true because all the necessary communications and arrangements had been earlier done by the National Monitors. This was an unfortunate incident deliberately intended to deny information to CTSAMVM in the fulfilment of its mandate.

Recommendations

18. It is strongly recommended that NSS de-registers the children on training and have them return to their parents.
19. There is need for dialogue amongst the leaders and communities of Tambura to avoid the repeat of June-August 2021 conflict.
20. Need for reconciliation between Governor of WES and his Deputy to let the State Government work in harmony.
21. Graduation of Necessary Unified Forces will enable restoration of hope and help boost security.