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CTSAMM Headquarters
CEASEFIRE AND TRANSITIONAL SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS MONITORING MECHANISM




TO: The Chairman, JMEC
FROM: The Chairman, CTSAMM
DATE: 22 March 2016

SUBJECT: CTSAMM report 006: Violations of the PCTSA in Mundri West County and Mundri East County, Western Equatoria State

Your Excellency,

Please find attached a CTSAMM report on 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) that took place in Mundri West County, Western Equatoria State.


Major General Molla Hailemariam
Chairman

Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangements Monitoring Mechanism

CTSAMM VIOLATION REPORT NUMBER 006
PCTSE VIOLATIONS IN WESTERN EQUATORIA STATE

Executive Summary

On 10 and 11 February 2016 Government Forces in Western Equatoria State mounted two operations. The first in Mundi West County was directed against Bari and Gariya and involved troops based in Mundri. The second in Mundri East involved troops based in Lanyi who advanced to and attacked the village of Lozoh.

The civilian populations fled as soon as Government Forces arrived, and so there were few casualties, although many houses and crops burnt, and agricultural produce, livestock and valuable equipment such as grinding mills, clinic supplies and solar panels were looted.

It is the opinion of CTSAMM that in mounting these operations Government Forces were in clear violation of the PCTSA

VIOLATIONS IN WESTERN EQUATORIA STATE

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background: The situation in the greater Mundri area has been tense for many months, with ongoing incidents between Government Forces and those of the SPLM/A-IO and other armed groups.

1.2 Allegations: The allegations covered by this report were in SPLM/A-IO letter 'Report of Permanent Ceasefire Violations by GRSS' dated 14 Feb 2016 and received by JTC 19 Feb 2016. The two specific allegations are quoted verbatim as follows:

- **WES – Mundri West County**: After attacking Bari payam on 10 Feb at 10.00 PM and occupying it, the GRSS forces have advanced towards Garia village. They burnt down the entire village and killed 67 children on their way to Garia. The attack on Bari has impeded the distribution of food to the IDP's and once again massive displacement of civilians has occurred. As a result the WFP has moved the trucks carrying food to UNMISS compound in Mundri.
- **Mundri East County**: On 11 Feb GRSS Forces moved from their base in Lanyi and attacked the village of Lozoh killing an unknown number of civilians and displacing the entire population. All houses were set on fire and crops looted.

1.3 Aim: The aim of this report is to outline for JMEC the results of investigations into the above incidents and with an assessment and recommendations.

1.4 Methodology:

- An MVT based in Juba deployed to Mundri on 22 February 2016. The team visited Bari and Garia on 23 February and Lanyi and Lozoh on 24 February.
- The MVT was able to interview a wide range of witnesses, including local people, government officials and military officers, and SPLM/A-IO civil leaders and soldiers. All information was corroborated.
- The team also observed at first hand destruction wrought by the fighting, and also the depopulation resulting from the insecurity in the areas visited.

2.0 VIOLATIONS OF THE PCTSA

2.1 Government Forces operations in Bari and Gariya:

- On about 10 February Government Forces troops moved south from Mundri and attacked Bari. The MVT saw clear signs of fighting, including mortar impacts, unexploded mortar shells and signs of heavy machinegun fire. There were also burnt tukuls and signs of looting: for example the solar panels and other items had been taken from the clinic.
- Witnesses said there were some hundreds of soldiers in eleven vehicles including trucks and land cruisers, armed with AK47's, heavy machineguns, RPG's and mortars. When the attack started all the civilians fled into the bush. Sounds of fighting were heard for about 5 days. When the MVT visited there were only a few civilians in Bari, but there were soldiers who claimed to be members of the SPLM/A-IO and under the command of General Wesley Welbe.
- Government Forces moved on from Bari to Gariya and Bangolo. When the MVT visited Gariya there were about 30 civilians who had apparently come out of the bush to meet the team. There were no soldiers observed in Gariya. Those interviewed by the MVT confirmed that Government Forces had moved from Bari and attacked Gariya, looting and burning houses. The MVT observed a large number of burnt tukuls (up to 150), and saw at first hand burnt crops, food stores what was left at the looted clinic, which, like the clinic at Bari had solar panels and other equipment taken.
- Displacement of civilians: Government Forces operations in Bari and Gariya have led to displacement of the civilian population, as observed by the MVT.
- Casualties:
 - Apart from one woman injured in the arm, no casualties were reported by either the civilians or military in Bari. No casualties were reported in Gariya; there were also no reports of conflict-related sexual violence. The reason given for this was that everyone fled when the Government Forces arrived.
 - The allegation mentions 67 children being killed. There was no evidence found or mention of any children being killed.
- Food distribution: The fighting in the Bari and Gariya areas had disrupted the distribution of food by UN agencies. However, the MVT found no

evidence that Government Forces had deliberately impeded the distribution of humanitarian aid. Indeed, after the visit by the MVT to the area distribution was continued.

2.2 Government Forces operations in Lozoh:

- On 11 February Government Forces based in Lanyi moved out and attacked the village of Lozoh. Witnesses stated about 100 troops were involved travelling in about ten land cruisers and 1 APC. Government officials and SPLA officers in Lanyi freely admitted the attack had taken place.
- A significant number of houses were burnt and agricultural produce and livestock looted. 3 grinding mills were also taken. The population fled into the bush: community leaders reported they heard gunshots at about 11.00 Hrs and ran away.
- Buildings allegedly used by SPLM/A-IO elements in Lozoh had been burnt down. The village appeared to have been prepared for defence: the MVT observed 28 foxholes (fighting positions) in the village. Local civilians reported the use of tear gas by Government Forces, but the MVT found no evidence of this. One UXO (a 66mm mortar round) was seen.
- Casualties:
 - 2 men were burnt in their houses. One died, and the other was still alive but in a bad way. The MVT interviewed the injured man.
 - A young girl with a condition which meant she could not be moved easily was reportedly burnt to death. The MVT was shown her grave next to the remains of the tukul in which she died.
 - No other casualties were witnessed or reported by the team.

3.0 **Assessment:**

- 3.1 It is the assessment of the JTC that Government Forces did carry out offensive operations in Mundri West and East Counties as described in the allegations received from the SPLM/A-IO and outlined in paragraph 1.2 above, and that these operations have resulted in the displacement of the civilian population.
- 3.2 Witness statements, corroborated by the first hand observations of the MVT, indicate that Government Forces indulged in significant looting and also the

destruction of crops and agricultural produce, thus denying the civilian population the means to support themselves.

- 3.3 The number of casualties was grossly exaggerated in the allegations. No children – or indeed any civilians - were killed in Bari/Gariya. However, the MVT was satisfied that two people had lost their lives as a result of the attack on Lozoh.

4.0 Conclusion

- 4.1 It is the opinion of CTSAMM that by mounting offensive operations against Bari, Gariya and Lozoh Government Forces were in clear violation of article 1.7 of the PCTSA, specifically:

- Article 1.1 of the COHA: “The Parties hereby agree to cease all military actions aimed at each other....”
- Article 1.7.5: “Acts of hostility, intimidation, violence or attacks against the civilian population.....”.

5.0 Recommendations and observations:

- 5.1 It is recommended by CTSAMM that JMEC does all in its power to encourage dialogue between the Parties in order to limit tension and stop any further conflict. This would be facilitated by the early deployment of an AJMCC to the area.
- 5.2 Incidents such as these would not happen if the military forces from both Parties implemented the agreement and occupied their designated cantonment areas.