

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: 10 May 2023

**CTSAMVM REPORT 2023/07 – NAS ACTIVITIES AGAINST SSPDF AND
CIVILIANS IN CENTRAL EQUATORIA STATE**

Dear CTSAMVM Technical Committee Senior Party Representatives,

Please find attached a report on violations of the Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities, Protection of Civilians and Humanitarian Access (ACoH) in Central Equatoria State

Please accept the assurances of my highest consideration.

Lt Gen Asrat Denero Amad
Chairperson CTSAMVM



CTSAMVM REPORT 2023/06 – NAS ACTIVITIES IN CENTRAL EQUATORIA STATE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Between the months of October 2022 and April 2023, CTSAMVM received reports of a number of incidents in Central Equatoria State allegedly perpetrated by NAS forces of General Thomas Cirilo.

At the CTC meetings of 31 October and 06 December 2022 these incidents were reported. CTSAMVM was requested to conduct a thorough investigation into NAS activities in Central Equatoria.

CTSAMVM has only attributed responsibility for NAS incidents, when there have been first-hand witnesses who could clearly identify perpetrators as NAS, or who were told by the perpetrators that they belong to NAS.

CTSAMVM has reasonable grounds to believe that NAS is responsible for most of the abductions carried out in Central Equatoria State. This is corroborated by the witness statements of former abductees, former NAS commanders and fighters, both National and State government officials as well as SSPDF Commanders.

CTSAMVM obtained sufficient evidence to conclude that NAS uses abduction as a means of recruitment, as well as a way of instilling fear into the local population in order to force their cooperation.

The presence of and operations by NAS in rural areas has a significant effect on security, forcing many civilians to move to towns rather than risk living in villages. The risk to civilians is not only from NAS, but also from SSPDF operations against NAS.

CTSAMVM recommends that the RTGoNU working with the Comunita di Sant'Egidio should fast track the Rome peace process in order to implement the ceasefire already agreed in ACoH of 21 Dec 2017 and integrate NAS National Monitors into CTSAMVM.

The RTGoNU should further deploy the graduated Phase I NUF to ensure security of the civilians especially in rural areas



NAS OPERATIONS AGAINST SSPDF AND CIVILIANS IN CENTRAL EQUATORIA STATE

Introduction

1. Background:

Between the months of October 2022 and April 2023, CTSAMVM received reports of a number of incidents in Central Equatoria State allegedly perpetrated by NAS forces of General Thomas Cirilo.

At the CTC meetings of 31 October and 06 December 2022 these incidents were reported. CTSAMVM was requested to conduct a thorough investigation into NAS activities in Central Equatoria.

2. Context:

- a. Since 2017, NAS forces have been conducting operations in Central Equatoria State, principally attacks and ambushes against the SSPDF, abduction of civilians and looting of civilian properties. The CTSAMVM team based in Yei has been reporting NAS incidents in Counties of Yei River, Morobo and Lainya. There is also evidence to suggest that NAS have been involved in forced recruitment in Central Equatoria State.
- b. Since the signing of the R-ARCSS, 16% of all reports submitted by CTSAMVM have concerned violations of the ACoH committed by NAS.
- c. The most recent CTSAMVM report concerning NAS was No. 2023/04: On 13 January 2023, the SSPDF went to Yembe village following a tip-off that NAS officers were present having a meeting. A man was killed in an exchange of fire and a NAS officer was captured.

Methodology.

2. In the process of investigating alleged NAS incidents, CTSAMVM conducted a number of face-to-face and telephone interviews with key witnesses between 22 November 2022 and 27 April 2023 including SSPDF Commanders and



Counter Intelligence Officers, County Commissioners, County Executive Directors, Paramount Chiefs, Businessmen, former abductees and a former NAS commander.

3. CTSAMVM has only attributed responsibility for NAS incidents, when there have been reasonable grounds to believe that NAS were involved: when there have been first-hand witnesses who could clearly identify perpetrators as NAS, or who were told by the perpetrators that they belong to NAS.
4. 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 humanitarian entities and signifies that sufficient facts and evidence have been collected to conclude that an event has occurred.

Findings.

5. CTSAMVM found out that:
 - a. In August 2022, twenty-one (21) civilians including three women and three children (aged 2-5 years) were abducted from Lasu by five armed men who identified themselves as NAS. The abductees were taken to Waliwa in DRC from where they were later released after spending one month in captivity.
 - b. Mr Samuel Khamis, the Boma Chief of Ombasi and Mr Charles Anyika, the head Chief of Otogo Payam were abducted by NAS on 02 June 2022 and 09 October 2022 respectively. They have not yet been released.
 - c. Ten people (9 men and 01 woman) were abducted by NAS forces from Lainya Town on 06 Dec 22. They have not yet been released.

- d. One SSPDF Officer (Lt Col) was killed by NAS at Ronyi on 20 January 2023 when the SSPDF Engineers were conducting road works on Yei – Morobo road. According to the SSPDF Bde 1 Deputy Commander, NAS was against grading the road because it provided suitable ambush sites/spots.
- e. On 10 January 2023, 13 people were abducted by NAS from Udabi Payam in Morobo County; 11 were released. The Head Chief of Lujulo Payam, Mr. Moses Daudi and the Payam Director, Mr Simon Remu are still in captivity.
- f. On 19 April 2023, NAS forces ambushed three civilian vehicles at Liggi and 20 civilians including three women, each carrying a child on their back were abducted. Fifteen (15) were later released after spending a night in captivity.
- g. Mr Deng Mak, the leader of the cattle herders who was reportedly abducted on 23 April 2023 at Mapoko is still in captivity though there are efforts by Yei State Governor to have him released.
- h. There is an ongoing local peace initiative between the SSPDF and one of the NAS factions led by Lt Gen Ramadan Khamis. The initiative is chaired by the Arch Bishop of EPC, Bishop *Elias*, and is aimed at finding a lasting peace to alleviate the suffering of the locals in the area.
- j. NAS does not have known bases. The force is mobile and employs hit and run tactics. This information was given to CTSAMVM by the NAS officer captured in Yembe.



- k. There is no accurate information concerning the number and identities of abductees. Most of the returnees or former abductees are afraid to report to relevant authorities for fear of retribution.

Assessment

5. CTSAMVM has reasonable grounds to believe that NAS is responsible for most of the abductions carried out in Central Equatoria State. This is corroborated by the witness statements of former abductees, former NAS fighters, both State and National Government officials as well as SSPDF Commanders.
6. CTSAMVM obtained sufficient evidence to conclude that NAS uses abduction as a means of recruitment, as well as a way of instilling fear into the local population in order to force their cooperation.
7. The presence of and operations by NAS in rural areas has a significant effect on security, forcing many civilians to move to towns rather than risk living in villages. The risk to civilians is not only from NAS, but also from SSPDF operations against NAS.

Conclusions

8. By abducting civilians, NAS has acted in clear violation of the ACOH, specifically articles 3 (e), 5 (1), 6 (a) and 7 (1)
9. By instilling fear into the population NAS has acted in clear violation of the ACOH, specifically articles 3 (1).
10. By looting civilian properties and obstructing humanitarian assistance, NAS has acted in clear violation of the ACOH, specifically articles 5 (4), 10 (b), (c), (e) and (f).

Recommendations

11. CTSAMVM therefore recommends:
 - a. That RTGoNU working with the Community of Sant'Egidio should fast track the Rome peace process in order to implement the ceasefire



already agreed in ACoH of 21 Dec 2017 and integrate NAS National Monitors into CTSAMVM.

- b. That RTGoNU and other stakeholders should support the ongoing local peace initiatives between the SSPDF and the NAS faction led by Lt Gen Ramadan.
- c. That RTGoNU should deploy the graduated Phase I NUF to ensure security of the civilians especially in rural areas.

