

**CTSAMM CONFIDENTIAL**  
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TO: The Chairman, IGAD Council of Ministers  
The Chairman, JMEC

FROM: The Chairman, CTSAMM

DATE: 20 April 2018

**SUBJECT: CTSAMM REPORT 2018/14 – INCIDENT AT WAAT 29 MARCH 2018**

Your Excellencies,

Please find attached a report on a violation of the Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities, Protection of Civilians and Humanitarian Access (21 December 2017), specifically an attack which took place at WAAT on 29 March 2018.

Major General Ibrahim Abduljellil  
Chairman



**Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangements Monitoring Mechanism**

## **CTSAMM REPORT 2018/14**

### **INCIDENT AT WAAT**

#### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

On the evening of 29 March 2018, SPLA-IO (RM) forces prosecuted a mortar and small-arms attack against Government positions in WAAT. None of the mortar rounds landed close to the town, and the small arms fire was from such a distance as to be ineffective. There were no casualties.

The SPLA-IO (RM) denied any involvement, but it is the clear opinion of CTSAMM that it was SPLA-IO (RM) forces which carried out the attack.

Whatever the reason for the attack, the SPLA-IO (RM) were in clear violation of the ACOH. The attack also constituted a provocation at a time of significant tension in northern Jonglei State.

## INCIDENT AT WAAT

### 1.0 Introduction

#### 1.1 Background:

- Tensions have been high in the YUAI/WAAT area in Northern Jonglei State for many months. WAAT is held by the Government, but is surrounded by SPLA-IO (RM) forces. There have been many reports of attacks and counter-attacks.
- In late February 2018 there was an incident at MODIT, an area held by SPLA-IO (RM) which was subject to an attack by the SPLA (CTSAMM report 2018/11).
- Allegation: On 30 March 2018 CTSAMM received a call from the Deputy Governor of what is known as Bieh State stating that there had been an attack by SPLA-IO (RM) forces the previous evening at 18.30 Hrs involving mortar and machine-gun fire.

1.2 Aim: The aim of this report is to describe the incident and attribute responsibility for violations of the ACOH where appropriate.

#### 1.3 Methodology:

- An MVT deployed to WAAT on 3 April 2018 in order to investigate the incident. In WAAT the team met with military and civil leaders, and we also able to interview a range of civilian witnesses.
- The MVT were able to see where mortar rounds had landed, and also visit the point from which small-arms had been fired and see empty cartridge cases.
- The MVT later contacted the SPLA-IO (RM).

## **2.0 Findings**

- 2.1 A about 18.30 on 29 March 2018 there was an attack against Government positions in WAAT. It came from two directions: mortar fire from the west and small-arms fire from the north. The attack lasted about 30 minutes. There were no casualties.
- 2.2 Witnesses stated that the attackers had several vehicles with mounted machine-guns, and that it was likely the mortar team was dropped off to the west before the remainder of the party proceeded to the north.
- 2.3 The MVT saw where the mortar rounds had impacted. There were a number which had failed to explode. The mortar rounds had impacted between 800 and 500 metres from the town.
- 2.4 The area to the north from where there had been small-arms fire was about 1,000 metres from the town. The only empty cartridge cases seen by the MVT were AK47 rounds, so these would have been fired at extreme range with very limited effect. The firing from the north was likely to be no more than harassing fire or a diversion from the mortar attack.
- 2.5 SPLA forces returned fire at the attackers who retreated to the west.
- 2.6 The MVT contacted the SPLA-IO (RM) who denied any involvement with the incident.

## **3.0 Assessment:**

- 3.1 It is the assessment of CTSAMM that the attack did take place as described by the SPLA. However, this was not a serious attack or an attempt to take WAAT. CTSAMM can only guess at the motive, but it appears there was an attempt to hit WAAT with mortar fire, and that this failed as the closest round landed 500 metres from the town.
- 3.2 Claims by the SPLA-IO (RM) not to have been involved can be discounted. The attackers left to the west – in the direction of areas controlled by the SPLA-IO (RM) - and they had equipment including a mortar and vehicles which would indicate they were SPLA-IO (RM).

- 3.3 Whatever the reason for the attack, and whatever provocations the SPLA-IO (RM) have been subjected to, it can only be seen as a clear violation of the ACOH and a provocative action at a time of significant tension.

#### **4.0 Conclusion**

By prosecuting an attack against WAAT on 29 March 2018 the SPLA-IO (RM) were in clear violation of the ACOH, particularly:

Article 3, Paragraph 2: "All hostile military actions....are prohibited"

#### **5.0 Observations and Recommendations:**

- 5.1 The situation in northern Jonglei State is tense. The incident at WAAT is yet another in a series of clashes between the parties in what is a contentious area on the front line between areas controlled by the SPLA-IO (RM) and those controlled by the Government.
- 5.2 There remains considerable scope for escalation in the area. CTSAMM calls on JMEC and the IGAD Council of Ministers to use all their influence to persuade the Parties of their fundamental obligations under the ACOH, particularly the freezing of troops in place and the cessation of any type of offensive military operations or movement, in order that the underlying issues can be addressed at the political level.