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INTERGOVERNMENTAL AUTHORITY  
ON DEVELOPMENT

AUTORITÉ INTERGOUVERNEMENTALE  
POUR LE DÉVELOPPEMENT



TO: Special Envoys to South Sudan

FROM: Chairman, Joint Technical Committee, Monitoring and Verification Mechanism,  
Juba, South Sudan

DATE: 24 June 2015

**SUBJECT: Report on Violations of the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement**

Your Excellencies,

Please find attached the Joint Technical Committee (JTC) report on violations of the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (23 January 2014) in Unity State from 25 May- 09 June 2015.

Major General (Retired) Negash Dagne Ayele  
Chairman, Joint Technical Committee



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**JOINT TECHNICAL COMMITTEE (JTC)**

**INVESTIGATIONS INTO VIOLATIONS OF THE CESSATION OF HOSTILITIES AGREEMENT  
IN UNITY STATE**

**(V044)**

**PRESENTED TO:**

**THE SPECIAL ENVOYS TO THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH SUDAN  
INTERGOVERNMENTAL AUTHORITY ON DEVELOPMENT (IGAD)  
ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA**

**24 June 2015**



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### Executive Summary

Following the SPLA offensive in the counties south of Bentiu in Unity State that began on 27 April 2015, the Government sought to expand its operation by advancing to the northern areas of Unity Oil Fields.

From 25 May 2015, MVT Bentiu observed Government Forces moving past the UNMISS compound in Bentiu towards the north, in what was openly confirmed by State Government officials as reinforcing its forces in the Oil Fields. The Government Forces' reinforcements to the north were also supported by units moving from Mayom towards Lalop.

As a result of these reinforcements and logistic build-up by SPLA Force, fighting began on 02 June and culminated in the capture of Panakuach, Lalop and Luony Luony areas, north of the Unity Oil Fields, on the 09 June 2015.

It is the clear opinion of the JTC the Government Forces violated Articles 1.1 and 1.2 (a) of the COHA by deliberately planning and executing attacks on Panakuach, Lalop and Luony Luony areas of Rubkona County.



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### INVESTIGATIONS INTO VIOLATIONS OF THE CESSATION OF HOSTILITIES AGREEMENT IN UNITY STATE

#### 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Background: After the Government Forces offensives in the counties south of Bentiu, there was a plan to expand its operation into the northern parts of Unity State.

Towards the end of May 2015, the Government withdrew most of its forces from the counties south of Bentiu and the troops were seen moving past the UNMISS compound in Bentiu towards the oil fields in the north. This was assessed as preparations for an offensive.

- 1.2 Incident: From 25 May to 09 June 2015, Government Forces planned and launched an offensive operation against SPLM/A-IO positions, north of the Unity Oil Fields in Panakuach, Lalop and Luony Luony.

- 1.3 Aim: The purpose of this report is to provide IGAD Special Envoys with a summary of the incident that took place in Panakuach, Lalop and Luony Luony areas of Unity Oil Fields from 25 May - 09 June 2015 and to attribute responsibility for violations of the COHA where appropriate.

- 1.4 Methodology:

- The MVT based in the UNMISS Compound at Bentiu received information regarding Government Forces preparation for operations against the SPLM/A-IO in the areas north of the Unity oil Fields.
- The MVT Bentiu gathered information from different sources including the Deputy Governor of Unity State, Rubkona County Commissioner and community sources. The MVT submitted a report to the JTC on 18 June 2015.

#### 2.0 Violations of COHA in Unity State from 25 May - 09 June 2015

- 2.1 Cessation of Hostilities:

- On diverse dates beginning 25 May 2015, the Government Forces moved and redeployed some of its forces to create a logistic build-up near Unity Oil Fields. They subsequently mounted an offensive operation against SPLA-IO positions in Panakuach, Lalop and Luony Luony areas, which they eventually captured.

- 2.2 Interview with Col Hon Stephen Salaam-Rubkona County Commissioner





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- On 29 May, the Rubkona County Commissioner indicated to the Bentiu MVT that Government Forces who were in the southern counties have been moved to reinforce the Unity Oil Fields and that the Mayom Forces were also on standby as reinforcements.

### 2.3 Interview with Deputy Governor of Unity State Hon Col Mabek Lang

- The Deputy Governor stated that SPLM/A-IO had attacked several areas held by Government Forces in Unity Oil Fields with an intent to capture the oilfields, but they were always repulsed. He said that a decision was made to pursue the SPLA-IO to Panakuach area, in order to prevent frequent attacks. He stated that on 09 Jun 15 Government Forces captured Panakuach and defeated the opposition forces, some of whom went to a neighbouring country and others infiltrated other counties.
- The Deputy Governor said that on 10 June 2015, the convoy which the MVT saw heading north was comprised of the 4<sup>th</sup> Div Commander and Unity State Government officials, headed by himself. The aim was to acquaint themselves with the situation and to meet frontline forces. He said Unity Oil Fields was firmly under the control of Government Forces. Panakuach was a stronghold of the SPLM/A-IO and main supply line for all their operations in Unity State, as well as Jonglei and Lakes States.
- The Deputy Governor stated that Government Forces have established defences in that general area of Panakuach and will not pull back. He stated that some of the SPLM/A-IO Forces who came back to Guit and Al Jezira area (SW of Rubkona) will be cleared if they don't voluntarily surrender.
- He also stated that the Government Forces' plan is to call the oil companies to come and restart the process of refining oil, as the area is safe and under Government control.

### 2.4 Report from MVT Sources:

- The MVT received reports that two Government Forces/SPLA Brigades were pulled back from the assault on southern counties, in order to reinforce forces in Unity Oilfield who were planning to attack Panakuach. The forces were under the Command of Maj General Mathew Puljang assisted by MG Joseph Manywat Tim. The source further stated on 25-26 May that a large number of Government Forces soldiers were seen moving towards Unity Oil Fields, in a convoy of 3 trucks and 8 Land Cruisers mounted with guns



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- It was further stated that Government Forces had decided to conduct an offensive operation in Panakuach as seen by the logistical build-up through Rubkona airstrip and towards Unity Oil Fields. After a series of skirmishes in the areas around Unity Oil Fields, Government Forces launched an offensive against SPLM/A-IO positions in Panakuach, Lalop and Luany Luany, which they eventually captured on 09 June 2015.

### 3.0 Assessment:

- From 25 May 2015 onwards, the Government Forces/SPLA deliberately planned and executed attacks against SPLA-IO controlled areas.
- It is the assessment of the JTC that sufficient and credible evidence exists to conclude that Government Forces mounted a planned offensive against the SPLM/A-IO in Panakuach, Lalop and Luany Luany areas, north of Unity oil Fields from 25 May - 09 June 2015.

### 4.0 Conclusion

- 4.1 As a result of this investigation and the weight of evidence collated, it is the opinion of the JTC that Government Forces violated the following articles of the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (COHA) of 23 January 2014 in Unity State from 25 May- 09 June 2015:

- 1.1: The Parties hereby agree to cease all military actions aimed at each other and any other action that may undermine the peace process.
- 1.2 (a): The Parties...commit to immediately cease all military operations and freeze their forces at the place they are in.

### 5.0 Recommendations and observations:

- The JTC recommends that the Special Envoys declare and condemn Government Forces in the strongest possible terms, for violating the COHA of 23 January 2014.

