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TO: The Chairman, IGAD Council of Ministers
The Chairman, JMEC

FROM: The Chairman, CTSAMM

DATE: 15 January 2018

SUBJECT: CTSAMM REPORT 2018/03 – SGBV IN CENTRAL EQUATORIA

Your Excellencies,

Prior to the signing of the Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities, Protection of Civilians and Humanitarian Access (21 December 2017), CTSAMM prepared this report on SGBV following a long investigation.

This is a very important issue, and we are publishing the report now in order to highlight the problem of SGBV as the ACOH is being implemented.

Major General Ibrahim Abduljellil

Chairman

Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangements Monitoring Mechanism

CTSAMM REPORT 2018/03
SGBV IN THE JUBA AREA, CENTRAL EQUATORIA

Executive Summary

The women of South Sudan have suffered and continue to suffer all kinds of violence including rape, mutilation, and harassment at the hands of soldiers from all Parties to the conflict. CTSAMM has identified 154 reported cases of SGBV in Juba and the surrounding area between February and December 2017. Many cases go unreported.

CTSAMM International Observers have been able to access accurate information about Sexual Violence cases involving soldiers. There is clear evidence that sexual violence, mutilation and sexual assaults by uniformed soldiers of the SPLA and other Government security services continues to be prevalent in Central Equatoria, despite all the work that has been done improve security and reduce crime.

The signing and implementation of the ACOH provides an opportunity to refocus on the commitment protect civilians, and in this case women. CTSAMM calls on the SPLA to actively comply with the ACOH Article Three.2.g, outline what measures are being taken to reduce Sexual and Gender Based Violence perpetrated by their soldiers, and to provide information on the number of SPLA soldiers who are currently facing legal action for sexual violence in Central Equatoria.

SGBV IN THE JUBA AREA

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background:

- In the course of their routine monitoring activities, CTSAMM MVTs come across anecdotal evidence that women in the Juba and surrounding areas continue to be subject to sexual harassment, mutilation and rape by uniformed members of the SPLA and other security services.
- There have been improvements to security in Juba, with the establishment of the JOC and other measures. Whilst it is acknowledged that the security situation is improved, and that the SPLA has and is taking some action against military personnel found guilty of sexual violence, it remains a serious issue and many women suffer as a result.
- Accurate information about the scale of the problem and access to individual victims is now available to CTSAMM.

1.2 Aim: The aim of this short report is to highlight the issue of SGBV in the Juba area and to make recommendations.

1.3 Methodology:

- International Observers from HQ CTSAMM and various MVTs scrutinised detailed evidence collected about SGBV in Central Equatoria.
- All the evidence suggests that many cases of SGBV are not reported to the authorities and so there is significant underreporting. The information shortfall has been partially addressed by gaining access to primary information and by conducting follow-up investigations with the victims of SGBV to obtain first-hand accounts of multiple incidents.

2.0 Findings

- 2.1 Between February and December 2017 a total of 154 women and children from the Juba area sought medical attention as a result of suffering SGBV, mainly rape by men they described as “uniformed armed males”.
- 2.2 Victims interviewed by CTSAMM reported incidents including several gang rapes where 2-3 SPLA soldiers broke into private houses in the early hours of the morning. Women of all ages have suffered. Most SGBV and in particular rape occurs at night or in the early hours of the morning.
- 2.3 CTSAMM obtained harrowing first-hand accounts of violence, rape and sexual abuse committed against women of all ages in the Juba area by military personnel.
- 2.4 The physical and mental trauma suffered by the victims cannot be overstated. CTSAMM obtained evidence of appalling physical abuse. In addition to rape women have been mutilated: ears have been cut off and fingers removed. Many have been raped and severely beaten in front of their children and close family members.
- 2.5 The long term consequences of physical sexual violence are extensive, including Sexual Transmitted Diseases. The provision of post sexual violence counselling services is woefully inadequate, and in addition to physical damage the women and girls affected will suffer from mental trauma for the rest of their lives. Individual lives are being ruined and families and communities severely damaged.
- 2.6 Fear of stigmatisation and retribution means that victims and witnesses are reluctant to report SGBV crimes to the authorities. Multiple sources suggested that only a small proportion of SGBV cases are reported and investigated. Many victims do not even seek medical attention.

3.0 Assessment:

- 3.1 Over the past year the national and local authorities in Juba have made efforts to reduce crime and increase security. However, it is apparent that women in and around the city and neighbouring areas remain at risk of rape by SPLA and other uniformed security personnel.
- 3.2 CTSAMM has the impression that military personnel appear to be able to act with impunity, and that they do not understand the significance and consequence of their actions.

4.0 Observations and Recommendations:

- 4.1 The Government is in full control of most of Juba and the surrounding areas. There are no opposition forces in the areas where the SGBV crimes outlined in this report were committed, only those of the SPLA and other government security services. It should be easier to impose discipline on soldiers in the nation's capital and surrounding areas than in other areas of the country.
- 4.2 It is recommended that the SPLA and other uniformed forces do more to educate personnel about the issue of SGBV, and to ensure that personnel who commit or permit any kind of sexual violence face the appropriate disciplinary consequences.
- 4.3 CTSAMM calls on the Government to provide information about what measures are being taken to tackle this issue in the nation's capital, and to report how many soldiers are currently facing disciplinary action for SGBV crimes in Central Equatoria.