



Opening Statement

by

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Chairperson CTSAMVM

At the

40th CTSAMVM Board Meeting

Beijing Juba Hotel

19 March, 2024

Your Excellencies,

Ambassadors,

General Officers,

Distinguished Participants,

The Media,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good Morning.

1. Welcome to this Board Meeting, the 40th since the signing of the R-ARCSS five-and-a-half years ago.
2. The last Board Meeting was only 3 weeks ago, and I am pleased to say that since then there have been no significant ceasefire issues. This is a good thing, however CTSAMVM can also report no concrete progress concerning the NUF.
3. The formation of the NUF is a vital prerequisite for the upcoming elections; so far only about 6% of the planned 83,000-strong NUF has actually been deployed. Time is running out. If elections go ahead as planned, there is only about 9 months remaining to deploy sufficient numbers of NUF to provide credible security during the election period. Urgent action is required.

4. Less than a quarter of Phase 1 army NUF who graduated from Training Centres between August 2022 and January 2023 have been deployed. In other words over three quarters of army graduates did not respond to the order to return to Training Centres for deployment in November 2023.
5. CTSAMVM is concerned that if this pattern is repeated many of those Phase 1 graduates from the other security services who have yet to deploy will also prove unavailable. There is also a concern that many Phase 1 personnel currently assigned to Cantonment Sites will not respond to orders to start training. This could result in the final numbers of NUF being far less than planned.
6. It is encouraging that some of the NUF already deployed have been sent to sensitive areas such as Tonga, but it must also be remembered that many are unarmed, and they remain deployed under SSPDF rather than unified command.
7. Phase 1 graduates from the NSS, Police, Civil Defence, Wildlife and Prison Service have yet to be formally deployed. CTSAMVM is aware that a team from the JDB has been visiting some Cantonment Sites and Training Centres, but there are no indications when Phase 2 training and deployment might start. Cantonment Site and Training Centre Commanders continue to report a lack of any information about what will happen next.

8. On a positive note, CTSAMVM has evidence that at least some of those members of the NUF from the SPLM/A-IO and SSOA who have been deployed are now receiving their salaries.
9. At the last CTSAMVM Board meeting several members expressed concern about alleged violations committed by SSPDF forces during disarmament operations in Gondokoro Payam over Christmas and the New Year. CTSAMVM has completed a report into this which was discussed at the CTC a week ago, and which we will present to you today. This is the 13th CTSAMVM Report we will have presented to the Board since regular meetings recommenced in January 2024, and the 7th which concerns violations committed by ill-disciplined armed soldiers.
10. Discipline is a command responsibility, and CTSAMVM recommends that all Parties take all steps necessary to reinforce discipline, and ensure that all their officers understand they are accountable for the proper training and control of their soldiers. It is encouraging that in the case of Gondokoro the SSPDF is in the process of taking disciplinary action against those involved.
11. There are a number of ongoing issues and investigations which we will discuss. One of these concerns a fatal clash between SSPDF and SPLM/A-IO personnel near Wunaliet Cantonment Site on 12 February 2024. The investigation has been impeded

because the SPLM/A-IO leadership in Wunaliet Cantonment Site have so far declined to cooperate with CTSAMVM, and denied access to the site of the incident. I am hoping this will be resolved, and would like to use this opportunity to remind all Parties that CTSAMVM is guaranteed freedom of movement and access under the R-ARCSS, and should expect the full cooperation of the Parties.

12. At the last Board Meeting you were informed about the downsizing of CTSAMVM. Be aware that this has now been completed. The IGAD Executive Secretary has written to the Principals about this. The MVTs in Torit and Bor have now been closed, and their areas of responsibility shared between MVTs Juba, Malakal and Bentiu. This issue was discussed at the CTC, members of which complained in the strongest terms despite having been informed three months in advance that downsizing was inevitable.

13. I would like to emphasise that the issue of downsizing is, and always has been, out of my hands. It has happened, and nothing will change unless further funds become available. It is vital that in order to for CTSAMVM to continue with its mandate, it has the support and help of the CTC and the CTSAMVM Board.

14. CTSAMVM continues to experience logistic challenges resulting from the difficulties of accessing helicopter support, and the condition of some of the vehicles. However, the operations staff in the Headquarters, and the International Observers and National Monitors in the field, are working very hard to overcome these challenges. CTSAMVM continues to actively fulfill its mandate.

15. We will now present the CTSAMVM report, after which we will look forward to a useful and constructive discussion.

I officially declare this meeting open.

Thank you.