



Headquarters Ceasefire & Transitional Security Arrangements Monitoring and Verification Mechanism

Ref: CM/2024/09/10

TO: Lt. Gen. Rabi Mujung Emmanuel (ITGoNU)
Maj. Gen. Dr. Chuol Ruey Kompuok (SPLM/A-IO)
Maj. Gen. Jany Kaway Yoakhor (SSOA)
Maj. Gen. Bior Leek Kuareng (Former Detainees)

FROM: The Chairperson, CTSAMVM

DATE: September 2024

SUBJECT: CTSAMVM REPORT 2024/11 - ALLEGED RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING OUTSIDE OF NUF STRUCTURES

Please, find attached a report on alleged recruitment and training outside of NUF structures at the John Garang Stadium in Bentiu, Unity State.

Please accept the assurances of my highest consideration.

Respectfully,

Major General Yitayal Gelaw Bitew
Chairperson, CTSAMVM



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**CTSAMVM REPORT 2024/11-ALLEGED RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING
OUTSIDE OF NUF STRUCTURES AT THE JOHN GARANG STADIUM IN BENTIU,
UNITY STATE**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On the 22 July 2024, Monitoring and Verification Team (MVT) Bentiu attended the weekly Security Management Meeting at the UNMISS compound. The meeting was chaired by the then Head of Field Office (HOFO) Mr. Dwmena Aboagye. During this meeting the HOFO reported that during a visit to Rubkona IDP camp on 19 July 2024, the Unity Police State Commissioner had announced that Unity State was planning to hire 1000 new Police Officers. He explained that the numbers were to be achieved with each County receiving an allocated quota of 100 places. The Rubkona IDP camp was to be allocated 200 places.

Following concerns that such an initiative would constitute training outside of the Unified Forces structure, MVT Bentiu conducted a series of interviews between 3-9 September 2024, including a visit to the stadium. The MVT received conflicting reports that the training was refresher training for existing Police Officers and conversely that new Police Officers were being recruited to attend training.

The MVT visited the John Garang Stadium in Bentiu Town on 4 September 2024 and took the opportunity to interview five trainees, chosen at random by the MVT members. The trainees' explained their length of service, method of selection and gave their dates of birth. From their accounts it emerged that some of the Officers had not previously received any formal training for the role. Of the five interviewed four had been recruited between 2020 and 2023, the other had been recruited around 2006. They had been selected by their Unit Commanders and told to report for training. All were salaried Officers. One of the interviewed trainees gave his date of birth as 2007, this would make him 17 at the time of the investigation. The MVT noted that some of the trainees looked to be under 18 years of age.

The investigation concluded that the training at the John Garang Stadium was exclusionary and not available to participants from all the signatory parties. The training audience was comprised of trainees who had been assembled outside of the Unified Force structure. Additionally, some of the trainees at the training venue were under 18 years old and therefore considered as minors.



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CTSAMVM REPORT 2024/11 - ALLEGED RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING OUTSIDE OF NUF STRUCTURES

References:

A: 20240910_Investigative_Report_Bentiu_John_Garang_Stadium_(Signed).

INTRODUCTION

Background:

1. On the 22 July 2024, Monitoring and Verification Team (MVT) Bentiu attended the weekly Security Management Meeting at the UNMISS compound. The meeting was chaired by the then Head of Field Office Mr. Dwmena Aboagye. He shared information that on the 19th July 2024 during a visit to Rubkona IDP camp, the Unity Police State Commissioner announced that Unity State was planning to hire 1000 new Police Officers and that each County had been allocated a quota of 100 places, and Rubkona IDP camp 200 places.
2. On the 31 July 2024, MVT Bentiu held a telephone conversation with Maj. Gen. Nyot Puok the SPLM/A-IO Commander of Unity State. He informed the MVT that there was a potential R-ARCSS violation ongoing in Unity State whereby the Police Commissioner was recruiting personnel in breach of the R-ARCSS. He queried why the recently graduated Unified Police had not been deployed before new personnel can undergo training for deployment.
3. On the 2 August 2024, the MVT conducted a visit to Khliy Balk Police Station in Bentiu Town, to speak with the Deputy Director. He informed the MVT that the recruitment of new Police had taken place and training had commenced at the John Garang Stadium. He Stated that the trainees were new recruits not existing Police.
4. On the 6 August 2024, MVT Bentiu visited Unity State Police HQs, and engaged with the Deputy Director of CID. He informed the MVT that, the previous day the Police had assembled Officers from all Counties to conduct refresher training. He Stated that the training was available for all salaried Police Officers. He told the MVT that there were no new recruits and that there was no plan for any new recruitment.
5. On the 28 August 2024, The MVT visited the Office of Deputy Governor of Bentiu State. He reported that the ongoing training was a potential violation. He further Stated that the agreement recognises joint training and that they have previously trained over 2,000 graduates, currently awaiting deployment. He assessed that the training at John Garang Stadium was not refresher training but rather the training of new recruits. Which he Stated constituted a violation of the agreement. He highlighted that the training was not conducted in a designated training centre.



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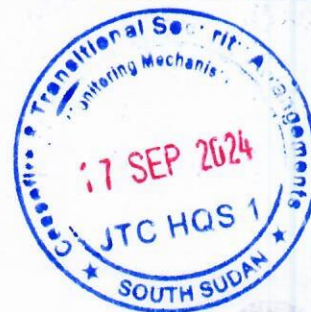
6. Based on the above accounts, MVT Bentiu was tasked by the Joint Monitoring Coordination Office to prepare an investigative report, task number S2/116. The MVT was tasked with investigating the following:
 - a. Was training ongoing or had taken place at the John Garang Stadium in Bentiu Town?
 - b. Was the training available to all signatory parties?
 - c. Was the training refresher training for existing Police Officers or training for newly recruited individuals?
 - d. Were any of the trainees considered minors, i.e. Under 18 years of age?
3. Aim: This report aims to present the findings of Monitoring and Verification Team's findings regarding the alleged training and recruitment of Police Officers in Unity State. To attribute responsibility for violations of the R-ARCSS if proven, and where appropriate make recommendations to foster compliance with the R-ARCSS.
4. Investigation: Investigations were undertaken with National Monitors from all parties,
5. Methodology:
 - a. From 3 – 9 September 2024, CTSAMVM MVT Bentiu conducted a number of face-to-face interviews and visited the John Garang Stadium in Bentiu Town.
 - b. CTSAMVM interviewed a range of witnesses including:

Maj Gen. Gatkuoth Duop Unity State Police Commissioner	Bentiu town - Police Commissioners Office
Col. Michael Wiek the Chief of Police Training Unity State	John Garang Stadium— Bentiu Town
The trainees	John Garang Stadium —Bentiu Town
IDP Camp High Committee Cabinet	Rubkona IDP Camp High Committee Offices
Rubkona IDP Camp Joint Police Commander Col. James Tut	Rubkona IDP Camp Police post
Commandant Kaljak Training Centre Col. Deng Chan Makuai	Ariab (Bentiu Town)



Governor His Excellency Justice Riek Bim Top Long	Bentiu Town - Unity State House
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- c. Standard of proof: 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 subject to the investigation occurred". This is in accordance with accepted practice for monitoring mechanisms and human rights and humanitarian entities and signifies that sufficient facts and evidence have been collected to conclude that an event happened.
6. Findings: In answering the questions outlined above and based on the evidence available, CTSAMVM has concluded the following;
 - a. Training has and is taking place within the John Garang Stadium in Bentiu Town. All of the interviewees confirmed this, and the MVT interviewed trainees on site.
 - b. The accounts from the interviewees suggest that this training is exclusive and not available to all signatory parties. Most notably, the Rubkona IDP Camp Joint Police Commander states that the ongoing first phase training is for the Government Police only. This training does not align with article 2.2.9 of the R-ARCSS that forces shall be trained together. The issuing of quotas to Counties in Unity State to assemble 100 personnel and the Rubkona IDP camp 200 personnel for training is considered a recruitment initiative in violation of article 2.1.10.4 of the R-ARCSS.
 - c. The trainee audience comprises a mix of experienced Officers and more recently recruited personnel. It is claimed that some have previously been trained at the Kaljak Training Centre and others have received no previous formal training. Trainees who have joined the Police in 2021 and 2023 are participating in the training. Trainees who joined the Police in 2021 and 2023 are out of the structure of unified forces and this is a violation of article 2.1.8 R-ARCSS; training of late recruits.
 - d. The MVT identified trainees at the John Garang Stadium whom they believe are minors, i.e. Under 18 years of age. In one instance this was confirmed by questioning, trainee three who stated he was 18 years old and gave his year of birth as 2007. This constitutes a violation of CoHA article 3, 2f, Obligations of the parties.
7. Conclusion: It is the conclusion of CTSAMVM that the SPLM-IG initiated training taking place at the John Garang Stadium in Bentiu Town is in violation of R-ARCSS articles 2.1.8, 2.2.9 and 2.1.10.4. CTSAMVM concludes that the trainee selection process is in violation of CoHA article 3, 2f.



8. Recommendations, CTSAMVM recommends that:
- The current training at John Garang Stadium in Bentiu Town be halted.
 - The recruitment of new Police Officers should be halted and emphasis placed on the deployment of unified force elements.
 - All under 18 years of age trainees to be immediately released and transported back to their families or guardians.
 - Further exclusive training which deviates from the transitional security arrangements to be halted.
 - All signatory parties to R-ARCSS are reminded of their obligation to fully implement the peace agreement.
 - The IGAD Special Envoy for South Sudan, RJMEC and the IGAD Council of Ministers to take all appropriate and timely action at the political level as a response to violation reports, and to ensure those responsible are held to account.



Transcript of Interviews

1. On the 3 September 2024, the MVT interviewed Maj Gen. Gatkuoth Duop Unity State Police Commissioner. He reported that the ongoing Police training at John Garang Stadium is a direct order by Presidential Decree. This training is aimed at preparing the Police for the upcoming elections. He stated that the training is being provided for Police personnel who are already receiving salaries. The Commissioner emphasised that the current trainees are personnel who were serving before the 2013 conflict and are current active Police officers, regardless of signatory party affiliation. He further stated that a thorough verification process was conducted to identify these Police personnel based on the pre-conflict records. He also stated that the training is also targeting newly integrated personnel who were previously part of the rebel groups.

The Commissioner further stated that the current phase started around 15 July 2024, and was aimed at training over 1000 Police personnel, now 780 are present. Each County in Unity State was given a quota of 100 personnel to attend training, except the Rubkona IDP camp which was given a quota of 200 personnel. The first phase is expected to end in November, he highlighted that the second phase of training will focus on training an additional 1000 newly integrated Police personnel and will commence after the end of first phase.

2. On 4th September 2024, MVT Bentiu interviewed Col. Michael Wiek the Chief of Police Training Unity State. He informed the MVT that training commenced on the 15 July at John Garang Training Centre, he stated that it was comprised of components from the fire brigade, prison warders and wild life, all together 775 personnel of whom 50 are female. He stated that this phase is targeting all those Police men and women who had never trained before but are receiving salaries and those serving as volunteers. This phase will end on 30 November 2024, and after that a second phase will start, targeting new recruits. This is an order to rehabilitate the Police and this came as an order from General Police HQs to all States not only Unity State. When asked why the trainees are training at John Garang Stadium instead of Kaljak Training Centre, the Col replied that John Garang Stadium is the official and main Police Training Centre in Unity State. The other training centres Kaljak and Moum were started after the war and it is for all signatory parties the SSOA, SPLM-IO AND SSPDF and the training being conducted now is a Government directive. He further stated that the UNPO which promised to facilitate them with some tents and t-shirts.

3. On the same day 4 September, MVT randomly selected 5 trainees at the John Garang Stadium for interview. The interviewees were comprised of one female and four males. These included;

Trainee One: 21 years
Marital Status: Single
Gender: Male
Rank: Private
Years in Service: 3 years



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Duty Station: Garot Port/ HQ Koch
County of origin: Riak (Koch county)

He informed the MVT that he joined Police in 2021 as a volunteer and has never received any training. He joined the training at John Garang Stadium as he had been selected by his Unit Commander. He was in receipt of a salary and stated that he was born in 2003. (The MVT noted that this trainee looked younger than his given age).

Trainee two: 34 years' old
Marital Status: Widow
Gender: Female
Rank: Private
Years in service: Joined 2021
Duty Station: Bentiu Police Traffic
County of origin: Mayom

She stated that she had joined the Police in 2021 and carried out training at Kaljak training centre. She is not affiliated to any party and had deserted before Commissioning. She later returned and was deployed as a traffic officer at Bentiu. She is salaried. She stated that she was selected by her Unit Commander who informed her to report for training.

Trainee three: 18 years' old
Marital Status: Single
Gender: Male
Rank: Private
Years in service: 1 year
Duty Station: Rubkuay
County of origin: Mayendit

He informed the MVT that he joined the Police in the month of November 2023. It was a decision made by his father because he did not have money to look after him and his siblings. He was brought to the John Garang Stadium by his father from Mayendit. He stated that his Father has a home near the John Garang Stadium. He did not remember his Commanders name but remembered his Rank to be a Captain. He claimed that he has only received one salary and that was last year November. He claimed that he had been born in 2007.

Trainee four: 34 years' old
Marital Status: married
Gender: Male
Rank: Private
Years in service: 4 years
Duty Station: Rubkona Police Station
County of origin: Rubkona



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He stated that he joined the Police in 2015 as a volunteer. He received a salary from 2018 until July 2024. How he knew about the ongoing training at John Garang Stadium, as he had been selected by his commander because he had never trained before. He claimed that those who had trained at Kaljak were not eligible for selection for this training. His reported length of service is at odds with his later account.

Trainee five: 46 years' old
Marital Status: married
Gender: Male
Rank: RSM
Years in service: 18 years
Duty Station: Unity State Police Headquarters
County of origin: Rubkona

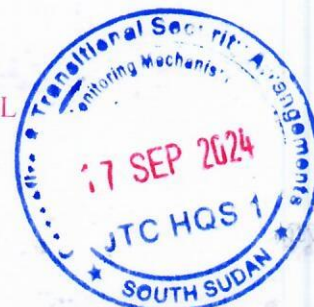
He stated that he joined the Police, trained and Commissioned in 2006. He informed the MVT that this was a Government initiative that began on the 15 June 2024 at the Police Headquarters but transferred to John Garang Stadium in July 2024. He stated that the trainees were all were Police. He suggested that since the war erupted in South Sudan, the Police and Army had lost direction and the Government has decided to offer the refresher training. He stated that he was receiving a salary.

4. On September 5 2024, MVT Bentiu engaged Rubkona IDP Camp High Committee Cabinet. Those present included the Chairperson, the Deputy Chairperson and the Secretary General. The Chairperson Madam Sarah Nyanget Bior, stated that she is aware that previous training was observed by CTSAMVM when Police arrived at the Kaljak and Moum Training Centers. She stated that the trainees have been there for the last three years and now she believes the Government are trying to mobilize new people to join them. She queried as to why there was a need when there is unified Police personnel who are not yet deployed.

She suggested that the Government is using the training to buy time and that she could see no reason as to why they should send people when there is already a force not yet deployed.

"I will stop here but what the Government is doing is not good because people are not being treated equally were it pays salary to one side and fails to pay the other this thing is not pushing the agreement forward." (Chairperson Rubkona IDP Camp High Committee Cabinet, 5 September 2024).

The Deputy Chairperson said that when the Governor accompanied by the Unity State Police Commissioner visited the Rubkona IDP camp, the Police Commissioner announced that he needed 200 personnel from Rubkona IDP camp to join the training. He suggested that as the Police Commissioner knows the people in the IDP camp are civilians it is a request for fresh recruits. He stated that to date the IDP camp have not contributed personnel to the training.



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The Secretary General informed the MVT that he was one of the organizers for the visit of the Governor and Police Commissioner. He stated that during the Police Commissioners speech, he made an announcement that they needed 200 personnel. He asserted that if people from the IDP community were attending training they were there in a personal capacity. He suggested the training was for only for the SPLM.

5. On the same day the 5 September 2024, MVT Bentiu engaged Rubkona IDP Camp Joint Police Commander and the Director of CID about the ongoing training. The Police Commander informed the MVT that the ongoing training is orientation training for Government Police. From Rubkona IDP camp Police station, they selected 10 members and they are part of the training at John Garang Stadium. He informed the MVT that only Officers who receive a salary and did not attend the training of unified forces were selected.

The Police Commander informed the MVT that the SPLM/A-IO Police is awaiting the second phase, to be directed from Juba. He stated that when the second phase starts they will go to John Garang Stadium and attend training. He remarked that the ongoing first phase is for the Government Police only. He claimed that 10 Police personnel from the IDP camp were selected because they have been serving as well as receiving salaries but had never had prior training.

6. On 6 September 2024, MVT Bentiu interviewed the Commandant of Kaljak training Centre. He informed the MVT that Officers who had graduated at Kaljak and belongs to the SPLM-IG were called by their leaders and joined the training. He claimed that when he asked them why they joined the training, they informed him that they were told they would not get their salary if they do not attend.

The Commandant claimed that no instructor from Kaljak is assisting with the delivery of training. He assesses that the ongoing training cannot create any problem because from its onset because it targeted those who had not passed through the Kaljak Training Centre. He stated that some who have completed training at Kaljak have now joined training. He believes that the training is carried out in John Garang instead of Kaljak or Moum the gazetted Training Centres because the order comes from Juba as a directive to the Unity State Commissioner.

7. On the 9 September 2024 MVT Bentiu interviewed the Governor His Excellency Justice Riek Bim Top Long. He informed the MVT that the activity at John Garang Stadium is not training but rather a rehabilitation for the existing Police. He said that these are forces being trained for the coming elections and each county has been given a quota to be present for the rehabilitation. He noted that recruitment is controlled by the central Government and training takes place in Juba. He stated that information is broadcast over radio are the responsibility of the Ministry of Interior. He believes that as the Police are not in the front line, the training does not cause any security compliance issue with the agreement.

