

CTSAMVM CONFIDENTIAL

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Headquarters Ceasefire & Transitional Security Arrangements Monitoring and Verification Mechanism

30 September 2024

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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: 30 September 2024

**SUBJECT: CTSAMVM REPORT 2024/12 – CLASHES INVOLVING SSPDF AND ARMED CIVILIANS at NASIR BARRACKS (3KM WEST OF NASIR TOWN), REFERRED TO IN TRANSCRIPTS AS WECH YARADIW.**

Please, find attached a report on the clashes between SSPDF forces and armed civilians in Nasir Town (Wech Yaradiw).

Please accept the assurances of my highest consideration.

Respectfully,

Major General Yitayal Gelaw Bitew  
Chairperson, CTSAMVM



**CTSAMVM REPORT 2024/12- CLASHES INVOLVING SSPDF AND ARMED  
CIVILIANS at NASIR BARRACKS (3KM WEST OF NASIR TOWN), REFERRED  
TO IN TRANSCRIPTS AS WECH YARADIW**

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

On 20 June 2024, an incident occurred when Nordeng youth accidentally injured SSPDF soldier Pte Simon Aguak whilst hunting birds. The soldier was evacuated to Juba for advanced care but died of his injuries on 3 July 2024. In retaliation, SSPDF forces stationed at the Nasir Barracks (3Km West of Nasir Town), referred to within transcripts as Wech Yaradiw, engaged multiple payams, including Nasir Town with indirect fire resulting in several civilian casualties. Following the death of Pte Simon Aguak, the situation further escalated when SSPDF engaged a boat with small arms fire belonging to a humanitarian NGO on 8 July 2024. The SSPDF were alleged to have taken the personal property of civilians and humanitarian workers on several occasions during July and August 2024.

On 14 August 2024, armed youths believed to be from Ulang ambushed SSPDF soldiers, killing three and injuring one. In retaliation, the SSPDF again engaged Nasir Town with indirect fire, causing the deaths of two civilians and wounding several others. Additional attacks were reported on 15 and 17 August 2024, culminating in the deaths of two elderly civilians and extensive civilian displacement. The motivation for the SSPDF's actions, including the use of indirect fire within civilian areas and the misappropriation of personal property was assessed to be retaliatory. These acts represent violations of several articles of the Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities (COHA) and the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS).

The violations raise serious questions regarding the command and control exercised within the SSPDF forces stationed at the Nasir Barracks (3Km West of Nasir Town), referred to within transcripts as Wech Yaradiw. Recommendations include adherence to the CoHA and R-ARCSS provisions and deploying Unified Forces to stabilize the area to promote trust and confidence building measures. This would eventually enable the disarmament of all armed civilian groups, irrespective of name or affiliation.





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CTSAMVM REPORT 2024/12 - CLASHES INVOLVING SSPDF AND ARMED CIVILIANS AT NASIR BARRACKS (3KM WEST OF NASIR TOWN), REFERRED TO WITHIN TRANSCRIPTS AS WECH YARADIW.

References:

A: 20240919 Malakal Investigative Report JMCO S2-114.

INTRODUCTION

Background:

1. On 4 July, MVT Malakal had a telephone conversation with Maj Peter Kwang, Intelligence Officer SSPDF stationed at Nasir Barracks (3Km West of Nasir Town), referred to within transcripts as Wech Yaradiw. He reported that armed civilians, referred to as White Army had fired upon SSPDF soldiers, killing Pte Peter Tong Paul. The deceased was shot near a river fishing site and he died instantly. On 1 August 2024, MVT Malakal received a call from the County Commissioner Hon Duol Kuon Thian who informed the MVT that SSPDF soldiers at the Nasir Barracks (3Km West of Nasir Town), referred to within transcripts as Wech Yaradiw, had attacked local health workers engaged in a vaccination program. The health workers had gone to conduct vaccinations at Dhurding Payam and were returning back to Nasir when they were attacked and their property taken. On 11 August 2024, the Chief of CID in Nasir reported that a lone student had been shot by SSPDF soldiers and his personal possessions taken.

On 15 August 2024, the Acting Director National Security, Upper Nile State reported that the previous day, SSPDF soldiers moving outside their barracks had been ambushed by armed civilians, resulting in the deaths of several soldiers and one wounded. Subsequent clashes, including the use of heavy calibre munitions resulted in the death of one civilian and several militiamen, with one person wounded. Civilians in the Town evacuated or sheltered in place.

2. Based on the above accounts, MVT Malakal was tasked by the Joint Monitoring Coordination Office to prepare an investigative report, task number S2/114. The MVT was tasked with investigating the following;



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- a. What or who was the catalyst for the series of armed clashes between SSPDF and armed civilians in Nasir County?
  - b. Were the actions of the participants proportionate to the threat posed by their adversary?
  - c. Have there been any other contributory acts perpetrated that has compounded the pre-existing tension in Nasir County?
  - d. Were the armed clashes orchestrated as part of a pre-determined strategy to inflict death or injury upon the opposing group?
3. Aim: This report aims to present the findings of Monitoring and Verification Team's investigation regarding the clashes involving SSPDF and armed civilians in Nasir Town and in the vicinity of Nasir Barracks (3km West of Nasir Town), referred to within transcripts as Wech Yaradiw. To attribute responsibility for violations of the R-ARCSS if proven, and where appropriate make recommendations to foster compliance with the R-ARCSS.
4. Investigations were undertaken with national monitors from all parties, although it should be noted that the SSPDF national monitor elected not to sign the report. The SSPDF national monitor expressed reservations about conducting the interview with the former County Commissioner by telephone. He believes that the investigation would have been better served with a physical interview and has expressed his concerns in writing.
5. Methodology:
- a. From 10 – 15 September 2024, CTSAMVM MVT Malakal conducted multiple face-to-face interviews and visited both Nasir Town and the SSPDF barracks at Nasir Barracks (3Km West of Nasir Town), referred to within transcripts as Wech Yaradiw.





b. CTSAMVM interviewees include:

SER	POSITION
1	Acting County Commissioner Nasir County
2	Deputy Executive Director of Nasir County
3	Police Commissioner of Ulang and Nasser Counties
4	Paramount Chief of Nasir County
5	Head Chief of Dhuording & Nasir Town Payams
6	Deputy Head Chief of Dhuording & Nasir Town Payams
7	Injured civilian, male 34y.o.
8	Injured civilian, male 48y.o.
9	Injured civilian, male 19y.o.
10	CID Director of Ulang & Nasir Counties
11	Chairlady of Women's Association of Nasir County
12	Deputy Chair of Women's Association of Nasir County
13	Secretary of Women's Association of Nasir County
14	Member of Women's Association of Nasir County
15	Nasir White Army Youth Leader
16	Youth Leader White Army Thuol Community
17	Deputy Leader White Army Nasir
18	Clan Leader Mitnyal Clan
19	White Army Military Police
20	SSPDF Acting Brigade Commander



21	SSPDG Acting Deputy Brigade Commander
22	SSPDF Operations OFFICER
23	SSPDF Administration Officer
24	SSPDF Deputy Transport Officer
25	Injured SSPDF Officer
26	SSPDF Clerical/Records Officer
27	Moderator of the Presbyterian Church
28	Pastor of charge Nasir Presbytery
29	RRC Director
30	Former County Commissioner, Nasir County

- c. Standard of proof: The standard of proof employed 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 that is the subject of the investigation has occurred". This is in accordance with accepted practice for monitoring mechanisms and human rights and humanitarian entities. Reasonable grounds imply that sufficient facts and evidence has been collected to conclude that an event happened.

6. Key observations:

- a. On 20 June 2024, young civilian males from Nordeng, engaged in bird hunting accidentally shot and wounded SSPDF soldier Pte Simon Aguak. The soldier was evacuated to Juba for advanced treatment.
- b. On 3 July 2024, Pte Simon Aguak died of his wounds in Juba. SSPDF forces at the Nasir Barracks (3Km West of Nasir Town), referred to within transcripts as Wech Yaradiw, responded by engaging several neighbouring Payams, including Nasir Town.





Dhuroding, Nordeng, Koat and Ketbet, using indirect fire. This resulted in two civilian casualties within Nasir Town;

- c. On 8 July 2024, SSPDF soldiers engaged a NGO boat from Goal International, forcing it to turn back without delivering humanitarian cargo. Later that evening, soldiers entered Nasir Town, resulting in the death of Gatbel Koang and the destruction of three houses.
- d. On 14 July 2024, SSPDF soldiers take food items from women traveling from Nasir Town to Nordeng.
- e. On 1 August 2024, SSPDF are involved in an armed exchange with a group of youth who had travelled to Dhuording Payam for a vaccination program.
- f. On 6 August 2024, SSPDF soldiers took money amounting to forty-five thousand South Sudanese pounds (45,000.00 SSP) from three children. Twenty thousand South Sudanese pounds were recovered. The children were travelling from Ulang County to Nasir town through Dhuording Payam.
- g. On 10 August 2024, SSPDF soldiers took food items from a group of women travelling to Dhuording from Nasir Town.
- i. On 11 August 2024, SSPDF soldiers shot a student who was travelling from Ethiopia and removed his personal effects.
- j. On 14 August 2024, armed civilians referred to as White Army and believed to be from Ulang engaged SSPDF soldiers as they collected firewood. This attack resulted in the death of three soldiers and one wounded. The armed youths removed the weapons of the deceased.
- j. On 14 August 2024, the SSPDF engage Nasir Town using indirect fire. Two civilians were killed and four were wounded.
- k. On 15 August 2024, the SSPDF engaged Nasir Town, Dhuording and Nordeng using indirect fire and inflicted four civilian casualties.



1. On 17 August 2024, SSPDF soldiers engaged civilians Weichyuel Boma of Dhuording Payam, causing two fatalities.
  1. Over the period between 3 July to 15 August 2024, an estimated 40,000 people are estimated to have been displaced as a result of the armed clashes.
  - m. Nasir Barracks (3Km West of Nasir Town), referred to within transcripts as Wech Yaradiw, is located on ground that the civilian community perceive as ancestral land. The SSPDF moved to the area in 2018.
  - n. CTSAMVM MVT observed a proliferation of small arms within Nasir Town. Weapons were openly carried by young men. This poses a significant challenge to security within the Town and County.
6. Findings: In answering the questions outlined above and based on the evidence available, CTSAMVM has concluded the following;
- a. The existence of a large number of armed youths, routinely referred to as White Army, incorporated within a joint operation force but outside of nationally recognised security structures poses a threat to the security of the civilian population and security forces alike.
  - b. SSPDF did respond to the killing of their soldiers with heavy calibre munitions and indirect fire. These acts were borne of frustration and retaliatory in nature. The indiscriminate use of heavy munitions such as mortar and RPG within and around civilian areas by SSPDF violates articles 2.1.10.5 of the R-ARCSS.
  - c. On 8 July 2024, SSPDF soldiers targeted a boat belonging to Goal International on the Sobat River. This act caused delay in the delivery of humanitarian assistance or aid, and is a violation of article 2.1.10.1 of the R-ARCSS.
  - d. On several dates SSPDF soldiers appropriated or retained the personal property of the civilian community. This amounts to prohibited acts under article 2.1.10.5 of the R-ARCSS and violates articles 6 (a) of the CoHA and article 2.1.10.7.4 of the R-ARCSS.





7. Conclusion: It is the conclusion of CTSAMVM that the SSPDF soldiers garrisoned at Nasir Barracks (3Km West of Nasir Town), referred to within transcripts as Wech Yaradiw, were in violation of R-ARCSS articles 2.1.10.1, 2.1.10.5 and 2.1.10.7.4 and CoHA article 6, (a). It is true that clashes occurred between armed civilians, routinely referred to as White Army and SSPDF troops stationed at the Nasir Barracks (3Km West of Nasir Town), referred to within transcripts as Wech Yaradiw, on multiple occasions between 3 July 2024 and 15 August 2024. This latest round of conflict appears to be linked to the shooting of Pte Simon Aguak on 20 Jun 24. Although the drivers of conflict appear to be more historically entrenched. Following the death of Pte Aguak on 3 Jul 24, the situation escalated, resulting in the SSPDF employment of heavy munitions and indirect fire within civilian areas. The requisition of personal property and the death or wounding of civilians are assessed as an escalation of the original incident.
8. Recommendations, CTSAMVM recommends that:
- ITGoNU to ensure that all military actions comply with the CoHA (Agreement on the Cessation of Hostilities) and R-ARCSS (Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan) provisions to protect civilian populations and prevent retaliatory actions against non-combatants.
  - RTGoNU to accelerate the deployment of the Necessary Unified Forces in Nasir County to stabilize the area and promote trust and confidence among the civil population.
  - All parties involved in the conflict that led to the death, injuries and displacement of civilians should be formally investigated and held accountable for their actions.
  - CTSAMVM recommends that the armed youth groups are disarmed to reduce the likelihood of further conflict with the SSPDF and among themselves. An attempt to implement a DDR programme at this time would likely exacerbate tensions in the area. Confidence building measures such as a NUF deployment to replace the SSPDF garrisoned at Nasir Barracks (3Km West of Nasir Town), referred to within transcripts as Wech Yaradiw, may be a necessary prerequisite.



- e. RJMEC and the IGAD Council of Ministers to take all appropriate and timely action at the political level as a response to violation reports to ensure those responsible are held to account.

