

CTSAMM Headquarters

CEASEFIRE AND TRANSITIONAL SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS MONITORING MECHANISM



TO: The Chairman, JMEC

FROM: The Chairman, CTSAMM

DATE: 28 March 2017

SUBJECT: CTSAMM Interim Report 035 – Fighting in the Malakal Area

Your Excellency,

Please find attached an interim CTSAMM report on fighting in the Malakal area which started on 25 January 2017. This report as discussed with the members of CTSAMM at a meeting on 8 March 2017. A full report will follow once investigations are complete.

Major General Molla Hailemariam
Chairman



Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangements Monitoring Mechanism

CTSAMM INTERIM REPORT NUMBER 035
INTERIM REPORT ON FIGHTING IN THE MALAKAL AREA

Executive Summary

The security situation in the Malakal area has been tense throughout the current crisis. There have been numerous clashes between the Parties, and there is concern that continuing tension may lead to more fighting.

Fighting broke out on the west bank of the Nile opposite Malakal on 25 January 2017. It spread to Dolieb Hill south of the town and continued sporadically until 6 February. There have been reports of occasional clashes since then. During this period reports suggested that Government Forces attacked and took Wau Shilluk to the north of Malakal.

Attempts by CTSAMM to investigate the fighting have so far been frustrated by lack of cooperation by Government Forces. JTC requests the assistance of those CTSAMM members representing the Parties to facilitate a full investigation into the recent fighting in the Malakal area.

The fighting in Malakal area urgently requires further investigation by CTSAMM.

INTERIM REPORT ON FIGHTING IN THE MALAKAL AREA

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background:

- Throughout the current crisis there has been tension and ongoing conflict in the area in and around Malakal, particularly on the west bank of the Nile and towards Dolieb Hill to the south.
- The last incident reported by CTSAMM was report #20 concerning fighting around Lelo and Warjok in October 2016.

1.2 Incidents: Since 25 January 2017 there has been sporadic fighting between Government Forces and the SPLM/A-IO in the Malakal area. Reports indicate that Government Forces took Wau Shilluk, and that the IDP's have since dispersed.

1.3 Aim: The aim of this interim report is to outline what is known about the incidents so far, and to make recommendations for future investigation.

1.4 Methodology:

- On 7 February JTC deployed extra personnel to augment the Malakal team and assist with an investigation into the fighting. Arrangements were made with Government Forces commanders and UNMISS to visit the Wau Shilluk area on 9 February. This trip was postponed due to alleged mortaring by SPLM/A-IO forces on the morning of 9 February.
- Subsequent visits were planned on 16 and 23 February. On both occasions access was denied by SPLA forces on the ground.
- During the fighting the MVT tried on many occasions to contact senior Government Forces officers, but their calls went unanswered. However, the MVT was able to meet with the Acting SPLA Commander of the area and

senior officers of 2nd Division SPLA on 8 February. The Acting Commander stated that Government Forces had been operating defensively, there was no information available on the SPLM/A-IO activity during the fighting.

- In accordance with recognised procedures JMCC were informed of the need for the Malakal MVT to be allowed access to Wau Shilluk and other areas. However the SPLA commanders on the ground did not comply and denied access to the MVT.

2.0 A timeline of fighting in the Malakal Area

- 2.1 25 January 2017: Between 0600hrs and 1000hrs, fighting erupted between SPLA/IO and Government Forces in the Detang area (2 to 3 kilometers from the Airport). Several mortar or artillery rounds landed a few metres from the airport fence and flights were cancelled. Malakal town was also shelled in the late morning; no casualties were reported.
- 2.2 26-28 January: Sounds of fighting were heard from the Detang area, particularly on the 27th and Warjuak on the 28th. Reports from local sources suggested that Government Forces shelled Wau Shilluk.
- 2.3 29 January: Fighting in the areas on the west bank on the Nile opposite Malakal (Detang, Leleo and Warjuak) had died down, but there continued to be sporadic clashes around Dolieb Hill.
- 2.4 31 January – 1 February: The Malakal appeared relatively calm. However, it was apparent that Government Forces had reinforced the area tensions built up in Dolieb Hill and Kaldak/Canal as both Parties appeared to be concentrating their forces.
- 2.5 1-2 February: There were reports of the shelling of Wau Shilluk causing civilian casualties. The MVT tried to contact Government Forces commanders, but their calls went unanswered.

- 2.6 3 – 6 February: There was a further outbreak of fighting on the west bank of the Nile opposite Malakal in the morning of 3 February, but it soon died down. Further reports suggested that Government Forces were in control of Wau Shilluk and the MVT received information to suggest that Government Forces were continuing to concentrate in Dolieb Hill and might prosecute offensive operations to the south. Despite numerous attempts, the MVT was unable to contact the Government Forces for comment.
- 2.7 8 – 9 February: On 8th February the MVT met with the Acting Commander of 2 Division SPLA who agreed they could visit Wau Shilluk on the 9th provided there was no incidents. On the morning of the 9th artillery or mortar fire was heard to the north of Malakal and the visit was postponed.

3.0 Assessment:

- 3.1 The situation in Upper Nile in general and Malakal in particular is a cause for significant concern. There has been fighting in blatant violation of the PCTSA.
- 3.2 Government Forces have consistently failed to cooperate with the CTSAMM investigation. No reason was given for the cancellation of the visits to Wau Shilluk on 17 and 23 February. The MVT reported these as a denial of its Freedom of Movement.

4.0 Recommendations and observations:

- 4.1 CTSAMM is unable to fulfil its mandate without the cooperation of the Parties. Government Forces in Malakal have not cooperated with the CTSAMM MVT.
- 4.2 CTSAMM HQ calls upon the Parties to help facilitate a full investigation into recent events in the Malakal area, in order that JMEC can have access to accurate information for action at the political level.
- 4.3 CTSAMM is prepared to conduct further investigations in the Malakal area.