

CTSAMVM facilitated a visit by the UK and US envoys to Yei on September 8

The United Kingdom Special Representative to Sudan and South Sudan , Robert Fairweather, the US Special Representative, W Stuart Symington IV and the UK Ambassador to South Sudan Chris Trott travelled to Yei on Tuesday 8 September 2020 in a field visit facilitated by CTSAMVM.

CTSAMVM and R-JMEC senior leadership made of the Chief of Staff, John Scudder and the Deputy Chief of Staff, Nigel Milverton and R-JMEC Security Advisor, Colin Martin accompanied the Delegation.

Yei still remains a hotspot where political violence continues despite the signing of the peace deal to end the war. The aim of the visit was to meet with the CTSAMVM Monitoring and Verification Team in the field and with community representatives to listen to their voices on the security and humanitarian situation in the area. The visit also served to find out what the community thought about the prospects for peace and reconciliation.

In their first meeting with the local political leaders, the local leaders expressed appreciation for recent progress of the Revitalized Peace Agreement, notably the SSPDF court-martial proceedings currently taking place in Yei, they were concerned regarding NAS attacks on the local communities and asked why there was no compliance with the Rome Agreement which stated commitment to the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (CoHA) of December 2017. The CoHA purpose is to avoid any further armed confrontation across the country by the Signatories and non-Signatories so as to create a conducive environment for dialogue to resolve the conflict.

The UK Special Representative, Robert Fairweather said the UK is concerned about the on-going insecurity taking place in Yei. He also said that the host countries of the delegation are working hard to see that peace and stability in South Sudan prospers.

After meeting with the local authorities, the delegation then proceeded to the Episcopal Church of South Sudan compound to meet with representatives of local civil society organisations (CSOs) and religious leaders. The CSO representatives raised similar concerns as the local government officials. They reiterated the NAS activities in Yei of alleged killings, abductions and lootings which has become a major security concern.

The religious leaders pointed out the on-going insecurity in the whole of Central Equatoria. His Grace, Erkolano Ladu Tombe, the Catholic Bishop of Yei Diocese, said despite the signing of the Rome Declaration violence still continues in Yei. He appealed to the envoys to speak to the leaders of the nation to ensure that sustainable peace is achieved in South Sudan and that the violence in Yei is brought to a stop so that the people of Yei can return to their normal livelihoods of farming.

The UK Ambassador to South Sudan, Chris Trott during their meeting with the religious leaders said the people of South Sudan still continue to suffer from the conflict in South Sudan. He said that the US and UK continue to be the biggest donors of South Sudan through the ministry of health and education. And that they will continue encouraging the leaders of South Sudan to continue putting the interest of the people first by delivering services.

Bishop Dr. Arkangelo Wani Lemi, the Chairman of South Sudan Council of Churches said that the religious leaders will continue encouraging the people not to lose hope.

The Commander of the SSPDF unit in Yei, at the main SSPDF barracks said the civilians enjoy a very good relationship in the area with the forces. However, he highlighted attacks conducted on civilians by the NAS forces.

In summary the field visits are important to ascertain the security and humanitarian situation and what the local community thought about the prospects for peace and reconciliation.