



# Opening Statement

by

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Chairperson CTSAMVM

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53<sup>rd</sup> CTSAMVM Board Meeting

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**Your Excellencies**  
**Ambassadors,**  
**General officers,**  
**Distinguished participants,**  
**The Media,**  
**Ladies and Gentlemen,**  
**Esteemed members of the CTSAMVM Board,**

**Good morning.**

I warmly welcome you all to our first CTSAMVM Board Meeting of the New Year 2026, which also marks the 53rd CTSAMVM Board Meeting. I thank you, honourable board members for your presence and continued commitment; and encourage each of you to actively contribute your perspectives and insights during our deliberations, as your guidance remains essential in advancing peace and stability in South Sudan.

Today's agenda will begin with a review of the Permanent Ceasefire Agreement and progress on the implementation of the Transitional Security Arrangements. We will then consider updates on ongoing monitoring and verification tasks, followed by a discussion of violation reports.

**Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

The previous CTSAMVM board meeting was held in December 2025 under extraordinary circumstances and focused primarily on institutional restructuring to ensure the sustainability of the Mechanism.

CTSAMVM has greatly benefited from the generous support of its donors over the years, enabling effective implementation of its mandate. For the 2026 financial year, some donors have adjusted their funding commitments and while others have reduced it.

This funding shortfall has placed considerable pressure on our operational capacity. Without financial support, CTSAMVM will be constrained in maintaining effective operations, which may adversely affect its ability to monitor, verify, and report on compliance with the Permanent Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangements.

As a result, effective January 2026, Monitoring and Verification Teams were reduced from six to three. The remaining teams are Juba, Malakal, and Wau, with expanded geographical responsibilities. MVT Juba covers the Greater Equatoria region; MVT Malakal covers Upper Nile, Jonglei, Unity, Greater Pibor Administrative Area and Ruweng Administrative Area; and MVT Wau covers Greater Bahr el Ghazal, Lakes, and Warrap states.

Although the Yei, Bentiu, and Yambio teams concluded operations at the end of January 2026, CTSAMVM continues to uphold its core functions amid rising monitoring demands. CTSAMVM remains committed to achieving its objectives and looks forward to strengthening partnerships to deliver greater impact.

### **Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

The events in Nasir in March 2025 represented a significant juncture in the implementation of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (R-ARCSS).

Prior to these developments, direct hostilities between signatory parties were limited and the Permanent Ceasefire largely held. Since then, the security situation has evolved, with insecurity expanding across Upper Nile, Jonglei, Unity, and much of the Equatorias.

Allegations of violations have become more frequent and geographically dispersed. CTSAMVM receives near-daily reports on armed confrontations between the SSPDF and SPLM/A-IO and their affiliated forces. In certain areas, territorial control has become contested and is continually changing hands, severely affecting civilians.

From April 2025 to date, CTSAMVM has conducted 14 Long Duration Patrols and Dynamic Air Patrols, as well as 591 Short Duration Patrols. Operational implementation has, however, faced constraints.

Monthly Activity Plans were not approved for April, June, and July 2025, as well as for January 2026, which has limited the execution of mandated tasks. Monitoring in Upper Nile and Jonglei remains high-risk and extremely difficult, with continued air restrictions by UNMISS further constraining verification capacity.

Between August 2025 and January 2026, 407 alleged violations were recorded by CTSAMVM's Monitoring and Verification Teams. Since March 2025, 45 Weekly Monitoring Reports have been issued, Daily Monitoring Reports have continued uninterrupted; and from December 2025 a Monthly Snapshot Report has been introduced to consolidate trends and provide statistical analysis.

## **Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

The Permanent Ceasefire framework is under great threat with most parts of the country seeing widespread fighting. Recent reports from local authorities, military commanders and community representatives in Jonglei and Upper Nile indicate a sustained pattern of hostilities characterised by a battle for presence and influence over territory.

The impact on civilians cannot be overstated, with killings, injuries, sexual violence, displacement and severe movement restrictions caused by the ongoing hostilities. These dynamics underscore the importance of accelerating disengagement, cantonment, and unification processes.

Protection of civilians remains a central concern. Reports of aerial bombardments in civilian areas, incidents involving humanitarian personnel in Nasir and Koat Payam, and cases of ambushes, abductions, looting, and market attacks highlight the vulnerability of local security conditions.

Disruptions along river transport corridors have contributed to economic strain and food insecurity, while displacement of more than 8,000 individuals from Ayod and Nyirol Counties illustrates the humanitarian impact of localized instability.

Sexual and Gender-Based Violence remains a grave concern, and the clear prohibition outlined in Article 2.1.10.3 of the Agreement calls for ongoing monitoring, prevention, and accountability by all signatory parties.

Humanitarian access and freedom of movement are also of concern. Recent attacks on health centres and humanitarian workers are unacceptable and must be condemned.

Informal restrictions continue to affect civilian mobility and movement between areas under the control of different forces remains difficult.

On 10 December 2025, CTSAMVM formally requested an update from the Joint Defence Board (JDB) regarding the deployment and training of the Necessary Unified Forces (NUF) and the broader status of the Transitional Security Arrangements. A response remains pending. CTSAMVM assesses that the NUF has never been established as an independent and functioning force. There are no indications that, despite public and official statements, the NUF Phase II training is in progress.

In addition, the limited progress from Phase I can be considered depleted or disintegrated, with the few graduates merged into existing SSPDF Divisions. CTSAMVM assess that any progress with creating NUF has been lost, and that NUF remains largely theoretical.

Progress within the Strategic Defence and Security Review framework is acknowledged; however, legislative endorsement and operational implementation are still required. Continued parallel command structures and incomplete force integration present structural challenges to sustained ceasefire compliance.

CTSAMVM welcomes the recent deployment of a Senior National Liaison Officer from SPLM/A-IO, which has restored full party representation at Joint Monitoring and Coordination Office (JMCO). This development creates an opportunity to resume verification activities more effectively, subject to security guarantees, unrestricted access, and timely operational approvals by Joint Verification Monitoring Mechanism.

At present, 25 top priority tasks have been identified for verification within available capacity.

## **Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

The security situation over the past week presents an increasingly concerning picture. While parts of Central Equatoria remained relatively stable, Upper Nile and sections of Jonglei experienced deterioration marked by armed confrontations, civilian casualties, intercommunal fighting, and disruptions to humanitarian aid operations.

In Nasir County, although general control was maintained, a humanitarian worker was fatally shot during food distribution on 16 February 2026. The incident underscores the fragile protection environment and absence of effective policing.

Hostilities also escalated in Longochuk and parts of Maban County, with ongoing engagements affecting civilians and constraining movement. Ulang County experienced sustained violence resulting in fatalities, injuries, and destruction of civilian property, with investigations requested by local authorities.

Intercommunal tensions in Malakal and surrounding areas have intensified, highlighting the growing overlap between political, military, and communal grievances. In Baliet County, clashes involving organized forces and irregular armed actors further exposed civilians to harm.

On 21 February 2026, in Ayod County - CTSAMVM received reports that civilians who gathered at Pankor in Pajiek Payam for food assistance provided by the United Nations were allegedly fired upon by elements of the SSPDF resulting in multiple fatalities. These allegations of a mass-casualty incident during food distribution has increased fear and eroded trust between communities and security actors.

Overall, the reporting period reflects a shift from localized tensions to broader instability across Upper Nile and parts of Jonglei. Without prompt de-escalation, strengthened monitoring, and credible investigations, there is significant risk of further deterioration.

In accordance with established procedures, CTSAMVM will also present three finalized reports from early February 2025 concerning incidents in Juba County, Jur River County, and the Athony area at the boundary of Twic County. Even though these incidents happened before the later escalation of violence, their presentation is nevertheless important as they relate to serious violations of Chapter II and deserve to be discussed here.

**Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

The peace process is under extreme pressure. This assessment is shared not only by CTSAMVM, but by the wider international community, analysts, and regional stakeholders. It is imperative that the parties step back from confrontation and recommit to dialogue. We are pleased to see the participation of Revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity (RTGoNU ) in recent diplomatic efforts.

CTSAMVM respectfully encourages all signatory parties and relevant mechanisms to reaffirm their commitment to the Permanent Ceasefire and to extend full institutional support to monitoring and verification processes.

**Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Thank you all for your presence and your ongoing dedication to the objectives of CTSAMVM. Let us work together to ensure a productive meeting.

Thank you.