



Opening Statement

by

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Chairperson CTSAMVM

at the

CTSAMVM Technical Committee

Meeting 02/26

Beijing Juba Hotel

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**Dear Senior Party Representatives and CTC members,
IGAD Representative,
RJMEC Representative,
Defense Attachés,
Observers,
Media,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Good morning.

It is my honour to welcome you to this meeting. This is the second regular CTSAMVM Technical Committee (CTC) meeting of the year, with the first taking place last month on 19 February during which we discussed three violation reports.

Following the significant challenges we faced last year in holding these meetings, I am pleased that we have been able to return to our regular monthly schedule to keep the momentum going so far in 2026.

Today's meeting will follow the normal structure, after opening remarks, the security update will be provided followed by the presentation and subsequent discussion of five violation reports.

Before that, I would like to highlight a number of concerns regarding the implementation of the Permanent Ceasefire, as well as some of CTSAMVM's operational activities that have taken place since we last met in February.

Esteemed Senior Party Representatives, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The security situation has not improved since our last meeting in February and the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (R-ARCSS) 2018 is still in real danger.

The last 12 months have been marked by repeated attacks on the peace agreement. We cannot, and must not, accept the widespread violence. The premise of the agreement rests on the understanding that signatory parties must work together in good faith to transition away from a state of conflict towards a state of peace.

In other words, only the signatory parties can stop the violence. Only the signatory parties can give South Sudan peace. Unfortunately, several alarming incidents during the period indicate that this is not happening.

CTSAMVM expresses its deep concern over the events of 1st March in Abiemnhom, Ruweng Administrative Area, where a coordinated early-morning attack resulted in the killing of a significant number of civilians the destruction of homes and property, and the displacement of thousands.

Reports vary on the number of civilian casualties, but indicate a large number, and it appears that local government figures were among those killed.

The violence had a severe impact on already vulnerable communities, including women and children, and CTSAMVM extends its sincere condolences to all those affected.

CTSAMVM's Monitoring and Verification Team (MVT) for that area is currently planning for a verification mission to take place from 10 April.

We also reiterate that the protection of civilians remains an obligation for all parties and affiliated actors under the Revitalized Agreement and we condemn in the strongest possible terms the commission of this grave act of violence.

The center of the fighting continues to be within Jonglei State, with recent fighting in Akobo escalating in early March 2026 when SSPDF forces launched an offensive to retake the town from SPLM/A-IO, following the release of an evacuation order giving civilians, humanitarians and even UN peacekeepers 72 hours to leave.

Clashes broke out as SSPDF troops entered the area, with both sides claiming control and reports of back-and-forth engagements. The situation caused mass displacement, with reports stating that up to 200,000 people fled towards Ethiopia.

This fighting caused widespread humanitarian disruption, including the looting of facilities and the suspension of aid. I will reiterate, territorial battles are not the way to resolve conflict and I urge the parties to use the peaceful conflict resolution pathways set out in the Agreement.

CTSAMVM was also concerned to see the announcement that on 06 March the SPLM/A-IO and NAS had signed a Memorandum of Understanding committing to closer political and military coordination.

CTSAMVM does not have to remind my IO colleagues that this alliance is not permitted under R-ARCSS and directly contravenes the principle that signatory parties must transition away from conflict-related activities towards peace. I urge the SPLM/A-IO to revoke this new cooperation agreement.

Esteemed Senior Party Representatives, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Regarding CTSAMVM's work, as has been highlighted on several occasions, due to financial constraints CTSAMVM closed three MVTs in January, leaving only the MVTs in Juba, Malakal and Wau operational, and with expanded territories.

The teams have now largely adjusted to these changes and as we speak we have one MVT on a Long Duration Patrol. MVT Juba is currently in Eastern Equatoria State undertaking verification work of alleged violations of Chapter II of R-ARCSS, returning on 29 March.

MVT Malakal is also planning to travel to Ayod County, Jonglei State in the coming days, carrying out important verification work in response to the recent 21 February incident of an alleged killing of civilians. We listened to your comments last month on the need to prioritise the verification of incidents which have occurred more recently, and as such the MVT was tasked to urgently verify this event. We hope to be able to share the results of these fact-finding missions in future monthly meetings.

However, I must also draw your attention to a movement restriction incident which prevented CTSAMVM from carrying out a planned LDP to Terekeka County, Central Equatoria State earlier this month.

MVT Juba was stopped at a checkpoint, located approximately 20km from Juba, and the SSPDF soldiers manning the checkpoint refused to allow the team to continue onwards, stating that the MVT did not have the appropriate clearance.

Article 2.1.10.6 of R-ARCSS guarantees unhindered access to CTSAMVM across the entire territory of South Sudan in the execution of its verification work, and as such we determine this incident to be a breach of this provision.

In response to the incident, CTSAMVM wrote to the SSPDF to seek further information and in an effort to avoid further denial of access incidents in future.

A further LDP planned from 11-13 March to Canal/Pigi County in Jonglei State had to be cancelled due to the security risks in the area being deemed unacceptable for our staff. We will continue working with our UNMISS colleagues to try to reorganise this mission.

Here in Juba, CTSAMVM participated in the commemoration of International Women's Day, recognizing the importance of this theme in R-ARCSS. We held a staff workshop on March 6th, generously supported by the Governments of Norway and Ireland, which served as a platform to enhance collaboration with Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in an effort to more effectively mitigate Sexual and Gender-Based violations.

We are committed to strengthening the leadership of women within conflict resolution and utilizing the knowledge and experience of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in monitoring at the grassroots level.

In addition, this month we engaged with various donors and partners in Juba and Addis Ababa to mobilize financial and operational support for CTSAMVM, strengthen existing partnerships, and advocate for resources needed to sustain monitoring and verification activities in light of the organization's financial shortfall.

Regarding the reports on today's agenda, we have five to discuss. Three from our former Yambio team relate to violations in Nagero, Tambura and the Mundri region of Western Equatoria State. The fourth is from our former Yei team on violations within Morobo county. The fifth is from our Malakal team regarding a series of allegations in the Greater Upper Nile Region. Due to our desire to efficiently address pre-existing tasks, these reports mostly focus on a geographic area which include multiple violations, rather than just one single incident.

Esteemed Senior Party Representatives, Ladies and Gentlemen,

CTSAMVM has taken note of developments arising from regional diplomatic engagements supporting the peace process, including those of the High-Level Ad Hoc Committee for South Sudan (C5).

In line with its mandate, CTSAMVM underscores the importance of signatory parties complying with the ceasefire and cessation of hostilities provisions under Chapter II of the R-ARCSS and will continue to monitor and verify their implementation on the ground.

CTSAMVM remains steadfast in its mandate to monitor, verify, and report impartially, but lasting peace ultimately depends on the political will of the Parties to uphold the permanent ceasefire, ensure the protection of civilians, and engage in constructive, inclusive dialogue.

I therefore urge all stakeholders to exercise maximum restraint, prioritize the interests of the South Sudanese people, and work collectively with regional and international partners to preserve the gains achieved so far and prevent a return to widespread conflict.

I now declare this meeting open and welcome the Party Representatives to share their remarks.

Thank you.