



IGAD MVM

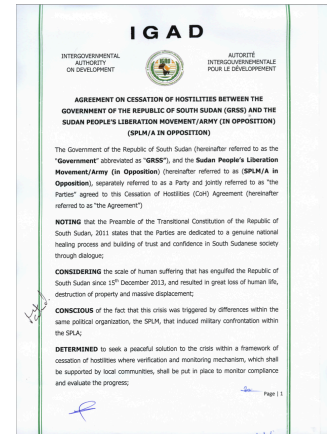


Factsheet: A Summary of the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (COHA), Signed 23 January 2014

Republic of South Sudan

The COHA agreement was signed by the South Sudanese Government and the SPLM/A in Opposition on January 23rd, 2014, in an effort to limit the human suffering caused as a result of political and tribal violence which broke out in December 2013.

It reflects the parties' expressed commitment to "a genuine national healing process" as called for in the Transitional Constitution of 2011, and the "building of trust and confidence in South Sudanese society through dialogue." It states the parties "determination to seek a peaceful solution to the crisis within a framework of cessation of hostilities, where a verification and monitoring mechanism, which shall be supported by local communities, shall be put in place to monitor compliance and evaluate progress."



Within the agreement, the parties agree to the following:

Declaration of Cessation of Hostilities.

This commits the parties to:

- End all military confrontations and freeze forces where they are
- Refrain from confrontational actions like movement of forces, ammunition resupply, etc
- Disengage forces or armed groups under the parties' control
- Redeploy or withdraw forces from the theatre of operations

Cessation of Hostile Propaganda

This commits the parties to:

- Cease hostile media and other propaganda campaigns, especially those which fan ethnic hatred, through any form of media
- Cease any action that may undermine the peace process

Protection of Civilians

This commits the parties to:

- Refrain from attacks on the civilian population and commit to protection of human rights, life and property
- Refrain from rape, sexual abuse and torture
- Refrain from acts against vulnerable groups such as children, girls, women and elderly
- Refrain from violence including summary executions, displacement of populations, all forms of torture, destruction of property, attacks on aircraft, vehicles of riverboats, recruitment of child soldiers, or other acts

Humanitarian Access

This commits the parties to:

- Open humanitarian corridors
- Support all humanitarian assistance including creating conditions to ensure emergency aid to displaced people
- Create enabling environments to facilitate burials and memorialisation and family reunions
- Assist the return of displaced people to their homes
- Allow free movement of people and goods within conflict areas

The agreement also commits the parties to form the **Monitoring and Verification Mechanism (MVM)**, under the leadership of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), in order to monitor the implementation of the COHA. It outlines the composition of the MVM and how operations should be conducted. It also obligates the parties to respect the complete freedom of movement of all MVM observers.

A COHA Implementation Workshop was held with parties in November 2014 in Addis Ababa, under the auspices of IGAD. Its aims was to prepare maps, agree timelines and work out specific arrangements for the disengagement, separation and withdrawal of forces. It helped to identify force boundary lines and the territory held by the parties, as well as disputed areas which had to be verified. The two sides agreed to the creation of “special arrangement areas” where forces were in close proximity, in order to defuse tensions and provide for immediate separation of forces. Defining and clarifying these areas on maps continued in the field with the two parties.



IGAD flight over Sobat river on outskirts of Nassir, Upper Nile State



IGAD delivers maps of disputed areas to an SPLM/A (IO) meeting in Pagak, Dec 2014

Within the framework of these agreements, the IGAD-MVM is committed to pursuing its mandate in order to help the people of South Sudan live in a safe environment, until a permanent ceasefire and political settlement is agreed and implemented.

DEFINITIONS

Force Boundary Line: Forces loyal to either party should not cross the force boundary line unless they are already positioned in a ‘special arrangement area’ or have been allocated an approved resupply route. Boundary lines can also be applied when forces are progressively withdrawing.

Special Arrangement Areas: These are locations where forces from one party are in occupation, but in an area surrounded or threatened by the other party. Aimed at separating forces in close proximity, SAAs comprise an area dedicated to the party in occupation, surrounded by a separation zone, where forces from both parties are permitted to enter.

Separation Zones: This is a zone where forces from both parties are not permitted to enter, unless approved for resupply purposes; this ensures that forces are out of the effective range of each others’ weapon systems. The zone is defined by a radius from the perimeter of the occupying force position.