

# IGAD

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OFFICE OF THE SPECIAL ENVOYS  
FOR SOUTH SUDAN

## Summary of Latest Reports of Violations of the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (COHA) Investigated and verified by the IGAD Monitoring and Verification Mechanism in South Sudan Reporting Period: 31 March – 30 April 2015

**Background:** The IGAD Monitoring & Verification Mechanism (MVM) was set up in February 2014 to monitor implementation of the COHA by the two Parties to the Agreement, the Government of the Republic of South Sudan (GRSS) and the SPLM/A In Opposition, as well as any armed groups under their control or invited to support them. The MVM has 6 Monitoring and Verification Teams (MVTs) deployed to the states of Jonglei, Upper Nile and Unity, where hostilities have occurred. The Teams monitor violations through direct observation and investigation, including information-gathering from varied sources. There is an extensive process of fact-checking before each violation is verified and submitted to the Office of the IGAD Special Envoys for South Sudan, who carry out a further review. The following is a report of the most recent verified violation which took place from 27 April 2015 onwards.

Reference	Date of Violation	Location	Nature of Violation	Responsible Party
V039	27 April 2015; ongoing	Unity State	<p>During late March and continuing into April, a build-up of Government Forces and weapons was observed by the IGAD Monitoring and Verification Team (MVT) in the Bentiu area. Tensions have been high in the area for some time, with an outbreak of fighting initiated by Government Forces to the south of Bentiu, as specified in Violation 37. From 24 April, the MVT observed troops marching south from Rubkona.</p> <p><b>Government Forces Offensive:</b> On the morning of 27 April, the MVT heard heavy firing to the south. It was later confirmed that Government Forces based in Rubkona had advanced south west towards Nhialdu and south east towards Guit, while Government Forces in Wang Kai (Mayom County) advanced south towards the villages of Wichok and Ngop. Fighting was also reported to the north of Bentiu. The MVT interviewed both parties and was told that by 30 April 2015, Government Forces controlled Nhialdhu in Rubkona County and the town of Guit in Guit County. Public statements from Government Forces confirmed that they had</p>	GRSS Forces

launched offensives and captured these towns from the SPLM/A (IO).

Reports of hostilities continued with evidence that in the second week of May, Government Forces were advancing north into Unity State from Lakes State.

**Reported Violations of Article 3: Protection of Civilians**

The MVT interviewed Internally Displaced Persons who had fled to the UNMISS POC camp from the fighting in Rubkona and Mayom Counties. They heard first-hand accounts of the killing of civilians, the burning of houses and the stealing of cattle by Government Forces. Credible reports from the UN and other international agencies state that there have been significant Protection of Civilian Violations in the areas taken by Government Forces. These are being investigated further by the MVM, though lack of freedom of movement has hampered investigations.

**Denial of Freedom of Movement:**

The MVT based in Bentiu has been denied Freedom of Movement by Government Forces since hostilities started on 27 April. On 4 May, the IGAD MVM Joint Technical Committee (JTC) wrote to the Director of Operations of the SPLA General Headquarters about this, stating clearly that obstructing MVM freedom of movement was a violation of the COHA. On 5 May, the MVT met with the Acting Governor of Unity State and wrote to the Government Forces (SPLA) Commander of 4<sup>th</sup> Division, asking for the freedom to visit the areas affected by the fighting and investigate alleged violations. However, the Acting Governor refused to grant this permission, and both the SPLA General Headquarters and Government Forces 4<sup>th</sup> Division failed to reply.

**Articles of COHA violated**

Article 1.1: ‘The Parties hereby agree to cease all military actions aimed at each other’.  
The offensive operations started by Government Forces on 27 April in Unity State constitute a clear and significant violation of the COHA.

Article 7.2.a: ‘The MVT shall enjoy freedom of movement and unhindered access’.  
The denial of Freedom of Movement to the MVT also constitutes a serious violation of the COHA.

		<p><b>Recommendations</b></p> <p>The IGAD Office of the Special Envoys condemn the actions of the Government which have precipitated a further humanitarian crisis and caused untold suffering to the people of Unity State. Government Forces are urged in the strongest possible terms to immediately stop all offensive operations in Unity State, and to respect all COHA obligations concerning the Protection of Civilians and Humanitarian Access. This especially applies to areas they occupy which were previously under control of the SPLM/A-IO. The IGAD MVM will continue to actively investigate these violations.</p> <p>It is unacceptable that the MVT is denied the Freedom of Movement it needs in order to fulfil its duties under the COHA. The Special Envoys demand that Freedom of Movement is restored immediately and the MVT is given access to all areas, including where there has been serious violence against civilians.</p>	
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**Attribution and Type of Violations for the period of 28 February 2014 to 30 April 2015**

As of April 30, 2015, in the past 14 months the MVM has reported a total of 39 incidents which resulted in violations of the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement. This includes 20 violations by the GRSS and 23 violations by the SPLM/A (IO). Some incidents include violations by both Parties and of more than one article and in more than one state.

Incidents including Violations	Attributed to Government Forces/GRSS	Attributed to SPLM/A (IO)	Article 1 Cessation of Hostilities	Article 2 Cessation of Hostile Propaganda	Article 3 Protection of Civilians	Article 4 Humanitarian Access	Article 7 Operations of the MVT
39	20	23	33	1	19	6	7

Violation by Location	UPPER NILE	UNITY	JONGLEI	JUBA
	22	14	7	2

**NOTE: A summary of all verified IGAD MVM violations can be found on the website of the Office of the IGAD Special Envoys**

[www.southsudan.igad.int](http://www.southsudan.igad.int)