



South Sudan Watch Update

17 – 23 February 2018



A general killed

A fight between two rebel groups in South Sudan on 15th February led to the killing of a top general in the rebel ranks. The clash broke out in an area near Napotpot involving rebels of the National Salvation Front (NAS) led by General Thomas Cirillo and SPLA-IO led by Riek Machar. The spokesperson of the SPLA-IO William Gatjiath Deng confirmed that they killed Brig. Gen Joseph Lokopir of NAS after NAS rebels opened fired on their troops.

One killed in ambush

A group of 13 people transiting from Narus to Kopoeta were ambushed by armed men. One woman was killed and the remaining twelve were wounded. One of the survivors pointed out that the men who ambushed them were wearing military uniforms.¹

Deadlock in Addis Peace talks

Peace talks led by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) to end the conflict in South Sudan in Addis Ababa came to a temporary halt because of disagreements between officials.

The IGAD mediation team called off the discussions when officials failed to agree on power sharing and security. IGAD Special Envoy to South Sudan Ismail Wais confirmed that the talks were temporarily suspended and would resume after three weeks. The Minister of Information for South Sudan Michael Makuei blamed the rebel delegation of being the cause of the failed talks saying that they made unreasonable demands.² Mr. Makuei said that the rebels demanded that Salva Kiir and his government step down as a precondition for peace. This was

¹ "One killed, 12 wounded in car ambush in Kapoeta," *Radio Tamazuj*, 16 February 2018, available at <https://radiotamazuj.org/en/news/article/one-killed-12-wounded-in-a-car-ambush-in-kapoeta>

² "IGAD closed door on peace talks, delegates to return in March," a *Radio Tamazuj*, 16 February 2018, available at <https://radiotamazuj.org/en/news/article/igad-closed-door-on-peace-talks-delegates-to-return-after-3-weeks>

unacceptable to the government. Another reason for the failed talks was the suggestion that there be two standing armies, one led by the government and the other by the rebel groups.

Kenyan pilots released

The two Kenyan pilots who were detained by rebels in South Sudan were released after the civilians whose property was damaged by the plane crash were compensated. The pilots Captain Frank Njoroge and his co-pilot Kennedy Shamalla whose plane crashed in Akobo damaging property were released on Monday after \$107,700 was paid to the families affected.³

Former detainees may withdraw from government.

The lead member of the former detainees political group in South Sudan, Majak D'Agoot, warned that his group would withdraw from the government if the next round of peace talks in Addis Ababa did not lead to peace in South Sudan. Mr. Majak said this would mean that government of South Sudan would no longer be a unity government, but rather an agreement between Salva Kiir and Taban Deng. His party, he added, would not find it feasible to stay in such a government.⁴

Civilians abducted

According to the state deputy governor of Amadi, Manas Labui, a group travelling in a car owned by a local construction company were ambushed by unknown gunmen who abducted seven people, set their car ablaze and escaped into the forest.⁵

³ "Kenyan pilots freed after paying compensation: rebel official," *Sudan Tribune*, 21 February 2018, available at <http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article64776>

⁴ "Former detainees plan to withdraw members from government," *Radio Tamazuj*, 21 February 2018, available at <https://radiotamazuj.org/en/news/article/former-detainees-plan-to-withdraw-members-from-government>

⁵ "7 kidnapped, vehicle burned in Amadi state," *Radio Tamazuj*, 21 February 2018, available at <https://radiotamazuj.org/en/news/article/7-kidnapped-vehicle-burned-in-amadi-state>