

21 June 2006

Ethiopian Army Steps-Up Operations Against Anuak Civilians

Gambela, Ethiopia—Genocide Watch received a report on 21 June 2006 that the Ethiopian army has stepped up operations against Anuak civilians in the Gambela region. Below are attacks carried out by the army at different locations in the last several days:

- **Pinyudo**
A young Anuak man on his way to villages along Lake Thatha was picked up by soldiers and taken to detention in an army barracks. Shots were reported in the barracks following this arbitrary detention. The whereabouts of the young man is unknown.
- **Gog**
A group of soldiers who were stationed in the village of Gog and cooperated with rebels in the region attacked Anuak farmers. The farmers sustained beatings, torture, and cruel and inhumane treatment; later the army forced the farmers to sign an undertaking of further consequences in the future.
- **Opuomoro**
Soldiers in patrol around the village of Opuomoro shot a farmer dead on his farm. They approached the farmer and accused him of associating with a group of rebels in the bush, which the farmer reportedly denied by informing the soldiers that he had been a farmer in the village for many years. However, they nonetheless shot him dead. The soldiers then went further into the village and threatened the entire village with death if they discussed the murder of the farmer by the soldiers.
Notably, farming is a traditional way of life for the Anuak people involving individuals remaining in isolated locations away from the village. This way of life is threatened and disappearances are common.
- **Dumbang village / Abwobo town**
Soldiers attacked a farmer in the village of Dumbang and left him dead. They also brought six men to the town of Abwobo who currently remain in detention. The safety of women and children is unknown. This occurred on 16 June 2006.
- **Gambela Hospital**
It is reported that Oduong, a staff of the Health Bureau in the state of Gambela went to the hospital complaining of a minor headache and fever. The hospital personnel who are highlanders forced him to be admitted without further examination, and in the same day Oduong was reported dead.
Similarly, a nine-year-old female diagnosed with a complicated disease died in the hospital on Wednesday, 13 June 2006. Sources suggest that the girl's referral letter to the hospital had been signed, and the girl died when her father went to get transport.
It is believed that the hospital has a professional involvement in the war against

the Anuaks, as well as a similar involvement in the campaign of murder against the indigenous people.

- Lare-Joukau district
Oman Okedi died in a professional killing at Lare Clinic, similar to those at Gambela Hospital. Okedi complained of a minor headache and fever, and went to the clinic to get medication. He died the same night he arrived at the clinic. In all these deaths (both at Gambela Hospital and Lare Clinic) there is no postmortem report to clearly identify the cause of death. However, it is reported that in December 2003, doctors forced families to bury the bodies immediately following death due to fears that the bodies would decompose too fast.
- Bonga village / Gambela town
Reportedly, two farmers were picked up by army personnel who were escorting staff from the Administration for Refugees and Returnees Affairs (ARRA)—the UNHCR counter-part of the government. Sources indicate that upon approaching the two farmers along the road near the village of Jawee, the ARRA vehicle stopped the farmers and accused them of escorting rebel soldiers. Currently, the whereabouts of the farmers is unknown. The vehicle used to pick up the farmers belongs to the Regional Water Resources Agency, but was authorized to escort the ARRA staff from Bonga to Gambela.

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