

**REPORT OF THE INVESTIGATION COMMITTEE ON THE
DEATH OF CHRISTOPHER ALLEN ON 26TH AUGUST 2017 IN
KAYA TOWN - CENTRAL EQUATORIA STATE,
SOUTH SUDAN**

FORWARD

On 02nd October 2023, the Minister of Cabinet Affairs in the Revitalised-Transitional Government of National Unity (R-TGONU) formed an Investigation Committee vide Ministerial Order No. 02/2023, to investigate the causes and circumstances of the death of journalist Christopher Allen (American and British Dual Citizen), who was killed in Kaya on 26th August 2017. Before I proceed to present this Investigation Report, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Minister of Cabinet Affairs Dr. Martin Elia Lomurö, for bestowing confidence in members of the Committee under my leadership.

In the course of the investigation, the Committee listened keenly to accounts provided by the eye-witnesses and government officials who happened to be present during the incident. The Committee conducted meetings and interviews in Juba and Kaya respectively involving the eye-witnesses and government officials. In all of those interactions, the Committee concluded that Christopher Allen was not killed intentionally, as purported by some foreign media, rather was killed in cross-fire when the SPLA/IO rebel forces attacked SSPDF Garrison in Kaya Town.

The Committee has conducted its investigation under many challenges, and without the efforts and commitment of its members the investigation would not have been accomplished.

David Charles Ali Bilal
Technical Expert and Chairperson
of the Investigation Committee

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ACRONYMS:

Brig. Gen.: Brigadier General

CDF: Chief of Defence Force

Col: Colonel

Dr.: Doctor

DRC: Democratic Republic of Congo

GOSS: Government of South Sudan

GRSS: Government of the Republic of South Sudan

H.E.: His Excellency

Hon.: Honourable

IC: Investigation Committee

IGP: Inspector General of Police

JBW1: Juba Witness 1

JBW2: Juba Witness 2

KW1: Kaya Witness 1

KW2: Kaya Witness 2

KW3: Kaya Witness

LC: Lance Corporal

Lt. Gen.: Lieutenant General

RSS: Republic of South Sudan

R-TGNU: Revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity

R-TNLA: Revitalized Transitional National Legislative Assembly

SPLA: Sudan People's Liberation Army

SPLM: Sudan People's Liberation Movement

SPLA-IO: Sudan People's Liberation Army/In Opposition

SSD: South Sudan

SSPDF: South Sudan People's Defence Force

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background

On 02nd October 2023, the Minister of Cabinet Affairs in the Revitalised-Transitional Government of National Unity (RTGoNU) formed a Committee of seven members pursuant to Ministerial Order No. 02/2023 dated 02nd October 2023, to investigate the causes and circumstances of the death of Christopher Allen (Journalist) on 26th August 2017, in Kaya Town of Central Equatoria State, South Sudan.

The Committee was mandated to complete its work within the period of fifteen (15) days from the date of its formation. However due to technical nature of the task, the mandate was extended for an additional Forty-Five (45) days. On 03rd October 2023, the Committee commenced its work in Juba by developing a work plan.

Since its formation, the Committee has conducted a number of plenary meetings and fifteen (15) interviews with eye-witnesses. The Committee also viewed real time camera footage that revealed the activities of Christopher Allen whilst in Uganda and South Sudan respectively.

On 23rd November 2023, the Committee travelled to Kaya Town, where it interviewed four (4) eye-witnesses from the civilian sector and Government forces who were present during the rebel attack on the town. Those witnesses provided a detailed account of what occurred during the attack by SPLA-IO rebels on 26th August 2017, and they also provided the committee with the number of casualties, including information about the death of Christopher Allen.

On 26th August 2017, around 05:30am, approximately 200 SPLA-IO rebels entered Kaya town from three directions: Yondu, Custom area and the Araba Miju garrison. The rebels temporarily took control of the main road, the Custom Office and the market area.

The eye-witnesses also confirmed the elimination of the Government forces in Araba Miju Garrison, including its area commander 2nd Lt Deng Lual Bol by the SPLA-IO rebel forces. The SPLA-IO rebels continued shelling Kaya until about 08:00am the same day, when they were driven back by Government forces.

After the rebels were pushed back, the Government forces carried out a Battle Damage Assessment in Kaya, where they found 7 casualties from the SPLA-IO rebels which included the body of a white man, who was later identified as Christopher Allen. The same day, Christopher Allen's body was air-lifted from Kaya to Juba on board a military helicopter.

Mandate of the Committee

The mandate of the Committee as specified in Ministerial Order No. 02/2023 dated 02nd October 2023, was to investigate the cause and circumstances of the death of Christopher Allen on 26th August 2017, in Kaya Town, Central Equatoria state, then Yei River State.

Composition of the Committee

The Investigation Committee comprised the following members:

S/No.	Name	Position
01.	Justice: David Charles Ali Bilal	Chairman
02.	Brig. Gen. Riak Bim Top	Member
03.	Brig. Gen. Jalpan Obyec Kir	Member

04.	Brig Gen. Alex Makelele	Rapporteur
05.	Lawrence Kamilo Loro	Member
06.	George Stephen Lomeling	Member
07.	Ochola Paul Omal	Member

Terms of Reference

The Committee’s Terms of Reference were as follows:

1. Investigate the cause and circumstance of the death of Christopher Allen.
2. Identify, summon and interview any relevant witness or witnesses of the incident.
3. The Committee may where it deems necessary co-opt any relevant member or members.

Powers of the Investigation Committee

The Powers of the Investigation Committee are stipulated under section 12 of the Investigation Act, 2006, which reads as follows:

- a. conduct a hearing;
- b. interview witnesses who may have relevant information regarding the investigation;
- c. issue summons to any person to appear before it, if the Investigation Committee deems that there is a reasonable cause for summoning to give evidence under oath;
- d. require the production of any document from anywhere; and
- e. issue warrant of arrest for any person who refuses to appear before the Investigation without valid reason, provided that, all powers set forth above are exercised in good faith with the belief that they are necessary to the Investigation.

CHAPTER TWO

METHODOLOGY

Methodology of the Investigation

The Committee in its first meeting dated 03rd October 2023, set down the guidance, procedure of how to conduct the investigation, proper management and supervision of the investigation process alongside accurate recording of information in order to determine the facts and draw conclusion.

The Committee consulted a range of evidential sources to establish the facts pertaining to the death of Christopher Allen, including documentary evidence, witness statements, conducting a visit to the battle scene, examining video-recordings, photographs, open source material and other exhibits. In order to protect the providers of information, some sources have been anonymous.

The lawyers representing the family of Christopher Allen that had made allegations as to the circumstances of his death were contacted and invited to submit all evidence in their possession relevant to the mandate of the Committee to assist in its task. No documents, reports or materials were received from them.

CHAPTER THREE

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

The Committee obtained information from various sources during the course of the Investigation. Those sources include interviews of eye-witnesses, access to video footage related to the incident and other confidential sources. The identities of the witnesses interviewed are confidential in order to ensure their protection. Interviews were conducted in Kaya and Juba in the presence of all members of the Committee.

The materials considered falls into three categories: **Witness Statements, Video Footage and Other Documents.**

1. Witness Statements

The Committee conducted interviews in two locations - Juba and Kaya Town.

a. Interviews in Juba

Two interviews were conducted in Juba. These are referred to as JUBA WITNESS 1 (JBW1) and JUBA WITNESS 2 (JBW2).

JUBA WITNESS 1 (JBW1)

The witness stated that the incident happened on Saturday 26th August 2017 between 05:30 to 07:30 (approximately). JBW1 had received information about a planned attack from a source of Counter-Intelligence, South Sudan People's Defence Force (SSPDF) on Friday 25 August 2017 at around 7pm.

At around 12am in the morning of the 26th August 2017, a source of Counter-Intelligence SSPDF, confirmed that the attack would be imminent and the forces were joint forces under the SPLA-IO.

The attack on Kaya happened at about 5:30am. The witness was surprised by the sound of machine gun Rocket Propelled Grenades (RPG). He stated that the attack lasted approximately two hours from 05:30 to 07:30am. He was informed that there had been three white men with the attacking forces.

After the attack, he and others searched the battlefield and found a white man who had been shot dead in the head, chest and leg. There were six other deceased from the SPLA-IO forces. JBW1 reported the incident to former Deputy Inspector General of Police (IGP) Lt. Gen. Biel Ruot who was based in Juba at around 07:30am. Gen. Biel former Deputy Inspector General of Police (IGP) directed that nobody must touch the body of the white man until they received necessary directives.

The body of the white man had no personal property. At around 02:00pm the same day, a plane came with 4 passengers. The pilot was a white man and there was a cameraman from SSPDF called Deng, and they took the body of Christopher Allen.

The SPLA-IO attack was commanded by Brig. General Kenyi Warrior, and the SSPDF Commander was Maj. Khamis, but he was in Yei during the attack and Capt. James was present in Kaya.

Government forces were killed during the attack including Deng Deng and Ibrahim Nyok from the Military Police. After the attack, the witness explained that he helped to bury all the dead bodies of his colleagues and the bodies of the attacking forces.

JUBA WITNESS 2 (JBW 2)

Juba Witness 2 (JBW2) said he had information that Christopher Allen entered the country illegally. The witness confirmed he saw Christopher Allen's body at Juba International Airport (JIA), when it was brought from Kaya Town. He stated that Christopher Allen was shot in the head, chest and leg. The witness also stated that the body was taken to the Mortuary of Juba Military Hospital at Geida.

a) Interviews in Kaya Town

Three interviews were conducted in Kaya Town. These witnesses are KAYA WITNESS1 (KW1), KAYA WITNESS 2 (KW2) and KAYA WITNESS 3 (KW3).

KAYA WITNESS 1 (KW1)

On 26th August 2017, the witness stated he was present when there was an attack upon Kaya Town area at 5am. The attack started from the Yanduo area, and the attacking forces were using PKMs (machine gun) and RPGs. The second attack was near the Office of Customs, while the third attack was in the army garrison and the attack forces (SPLA-IO) were able to repel the army from the barracks and many soldiers were killed. Members of the attacking forces were seen in the shops around the market.

After that, the army (SSPDF) repelled the attack forces and they escaped from the area. The army then started searching the battle-field and he was present when they found six bodies and a body of a white man.

The witness confirmed that he saw the six bodies plus the white man and they were wearing red scarfs around their foreheads and hands. The white man had been shot in the head, chest and leg.

Directives then came from Juba that the deceased were to be left as they were at the battle-scene. An army helicopter arrived with five passengers and an army cameraman who took photographs of the dead bodies, and they took the body of the white man and left in the helicopter. Afterwards, the SSPDF collected the dead bodies from both sides and they were buried.

KAYA WITNESS 2 (KW2)

Kaya Witness 2 stated that the attack started at 05:30am while he was sleeping at the Standard Lounge in Kaya town. The attack started from the army barracks near the border with Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and the attacking forces were able to repel "our forces" to the Custom Office till 08:00am when the attack stopped. KW2, as a civilian

he ran to the border of Uganda with other civilians. After the attack, he returned on the same day and found many dead bodies and injured individuals. He saw the white man lying down dead surrounded by six dead bodies and they were wearing red scarfs. The white man had been shot in the head, chest and leg and he was wearing civilian clothes. The dead bodies of the SSPDF forces and the attacking forces were buried, and the body of the white man was taken to Juba.

KAYA WITNESS 3 (KW3)

On 26th August 2017, at 05:00am, they were attacked in Kaya from the barrack side, and the area commander was Deng Lual and his deputy was Peter Ayuel and the army was pushed back; the attack by the SPLA-IO was very heavy from three directions. After the attacking forces were repelled away, they found the body of a dead white man with other (6) bodies of the attacking forces, and there were also dead bodies from the Government forces. The attacking forces were wearing red scarfs around their foreheads and hands.

2. VIDEOS

The Committee is in possession of four videos indicating what occurred before, during and after the incident that happened in Kaya Town on the 26th of August 2017. Videos 1, 2 and 3 came from the SPLA-IO and Video 4 was obtained from the SSPDF. Below are brief summaries of each of the four videos.

VIDEO 1

Christopher Allen was seen in Video 1 addressing elements of the SPLA-IO rebel commanders, Youth and elders in the area of Panyume, Central Equatoria State - South Sudan, a rebel-controlled area near the border with Uganda. This took place after his illegal entry into the country.

Christopher Allen introduced himself as a US journalist, and he claimed to have come to South Sudan to visit the SPLA-IO. He thanked the SPLA-IO for welcoming him and also talked about the formation of a new Government by the SPLA-IO. He also thanked the SPLA-IO for the protection of civilians in their controlled areas, and stated that it was a privilege to meet the local people and members of SPLM-IO. He stated that today was the first day in a new South Sudan and wished them luck.

VIDEO 2

This video contain the procession of a military parade and the command given by the rebel commanders to their forces to carry out a major offensive with a company of forces to capture Kaya, Morobo and Kimba, all those three areas were under the control of the Government's forces. The weapons of the SPLA-IO forces form part of the Parade Procession and it is intended by those forces to use the weapons to take Kaya Town by armed force. The parade is observed and filmed by three white men.

VIDEO 3

This video shows troop movements and repeated gunfire, the forces of the SPLA-IO are identified wearing red scarfs.

The attackers were accompanied by the same three (3) white men who appeared in video 2 and were shown wearing red scarfs. During the combat, one of the white men was seen in the video taking cover behind a wall. After repelling the rebel forces, the video shows two (2) of the white men leaving the area with the rebels forces.

VIDEO 4

After Battle Damage Assessment by the Government forces, the bodies of seven (7) rebel forces were located including the body of a white man who was later identified as Christopher Allen by the Embassy of the United States of America in South Sudan. He is seen wearing a red scarf around his left wrist as worn by SPLA-IO forces. He is not wearing a Press or Journalist vest or any other marker that indicate he was a journalist.

3. Other Sources

Several other sources of information were obtained by the Committee during the course of the Investigation. These include both confidential and open source information relevant to Christopher Allen's entry into South Sudan.

Christopher Allen was joined by two Reuters journalists: Goran Tomasevic (a celebrated Serbian photojournalist and Pulitzer Prize winner) and Siegfried Modola whilst he was with the SPLA-IO in Kaya.

Tomasevic did not witness Christopher Allen's death but was with him shortly before he died. He alleges that he told Allen to fall back but that Allen did not listen and was then sadly killed.ⁱ There is other information in the Podcast called Pig Iron that alleges the SPLA-IO Division Commander made a request that all the international journalists should stay behind as the risk was high.ⁱⁱ

It's to be recalled that, the Committee officially requested potential witnesses for interview. This included officers from the command of the Unified Forces of the SSPDF. However, one of the officers, Lt. Colonel Lam Paul Gabriel failed to appear before the Committee.

Lt. Colonel Lam Gabriel was the deputy Military Spokesperson of the SPLA-IO during the time of the incident in 2017. He had personally acknowledged in several media interviews that Christopher Allen was embedded with their forces for some time before they attacked the Government's position in Kaya on the 26th August 2017.

Secondly, the fiancé of the Late Christopher Allen confirmed that it was Lt. Colonel Gabriel Paul Lam who informed her by a phone call on the date of the incident in Kaya Town on the 26th August 2017 about the death of Christopher Allen.ⁱⁱⁱ

Observations and Analysis of Information

a. Observations and Analysis From Witness Testimony and Videos

There was consistency in the information from the witnesses interviewed both in Juba and Kaya Town concerning the time as being 05:30 am at which the attack by the SPLA-IO took place on the Government's positions in Kaya Town on the 26th August 2017. The attack took place until 07:30-08:00 am, and the rebels then left the area.

In Video 1 Christopher Allen features prominently and is aware that the SPLA-IO forces have planned an armed attack to take place in South Sudan intending to overthrow the Government and lends his support to that attack.

In Video 2 the three white men Christopher Allen, Goran Tomasevic and Siegfried Modola were present during the Parade Procession of the SPLA-IO and the planning of the operation to attack Kaya and the Government forces. The weapons of the SPLA-IO forces form part of the Parade Procession and it is intended by those forces to use the weapons to take Kaya Town by armed force. The Commander refers to a Company of men to carry out the attack, which is a strength of force of 200. Sketches of the SPLA-IO battle plan are filmed as part of the preparations made to attack Kaya town.

In Video 3 taken during the attack on Kaya by the SPLA-IO, there was no physical indication/marker/clothing to show that any of the white persons were journalists; there are many armed SPLA-IO rebels shown to be entering Kaya.

The video records the extensive firepower used in the attack upon Kaya Town. Only two white men are seen returning with the repelled forces of the SPLA-IO after the attack and a group of the forces appear to be carrying a corpse.

In Video 4 the body of Christopher Allen can be seen in an open area near the bodies of 6 dead SPLA-IO forces that were involved in the attack on Kaya Town. Christopher Allen had a red scuff in common with the SPLA-IO forces that identified him as being with those forces.

The dead white man was later identified as Christopher Allen (an American and British Dual citizen) by the USA Embassy.

The other two white men were identified by the Committee as Goran Tomasevic and Siefried Modola who are both photojournalists working with the Reuters news agency owned by Thomson Reuters.

CHAPTER FOUR

GENERAL FACT FINDINGS

After the incident, it was reported by the American Embassy in South Sudan to the Government of South Sudan that Christopher Allen was a freelance journalist who was a dual citizen (American and British). However before and at the time of the incident, there was no documentation to confirm that Christopher Allen was in the country lawfully. This lack of documentation was later confirmed by the Directorate of Nationality, Passport and Immigration.

The Media Communication Authority confirmed on 30th October 2023, that Christopher Allen was not accredited as a journalist and neither did they receive any application from him requesting accreditation as a journalist in South Sudan in 2017. (Attached, Letter from Media Authority dated 31st October 2023 below).

Christopher Allen entered into the country illegally from the common border to South Sudan with Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Uganda. This was confirmed by the Directorate of Nationality, Passports and Immigration. (Attached, Letter from the Directorate of Nationality, Passports and Immigration).

On 26th August 2017, Christopher Allen and other two journalists from Reuters, namely Goran Tomasevic and Siefried Modola were with a company of 200 rebel forces of the SPLA-IO when they attacked Kaya Town, Morobo County of Central Equatoria State.

This incident happened in the early hours in the morning, at approximately 05:00-05:30am. Whilst they had been in the rebel-controlled area Christopher Allen, Goran Tomasevic and Siefried Modola had been present with the SPLA-IO forces while they are making preparations and planning for the attack.

The SPLA-IO forces attacked Government's positions in Kaya Town from three (3) directions (Yondu, Custom area and Araba Miju garrison), civilians were forced to flee the town to avoid the attack.

Christopher Allen and the other journalists accompanying the SPLA-IO forces in the attack upon Kaya did not wear distinguishing clothes or insignia to identify them as being members of the Press. Christopher Allen had separated from the two journalists Goran Tomasevic and Siefried Modola who accompanied him on the attack and they were not present at the shooting incident.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS

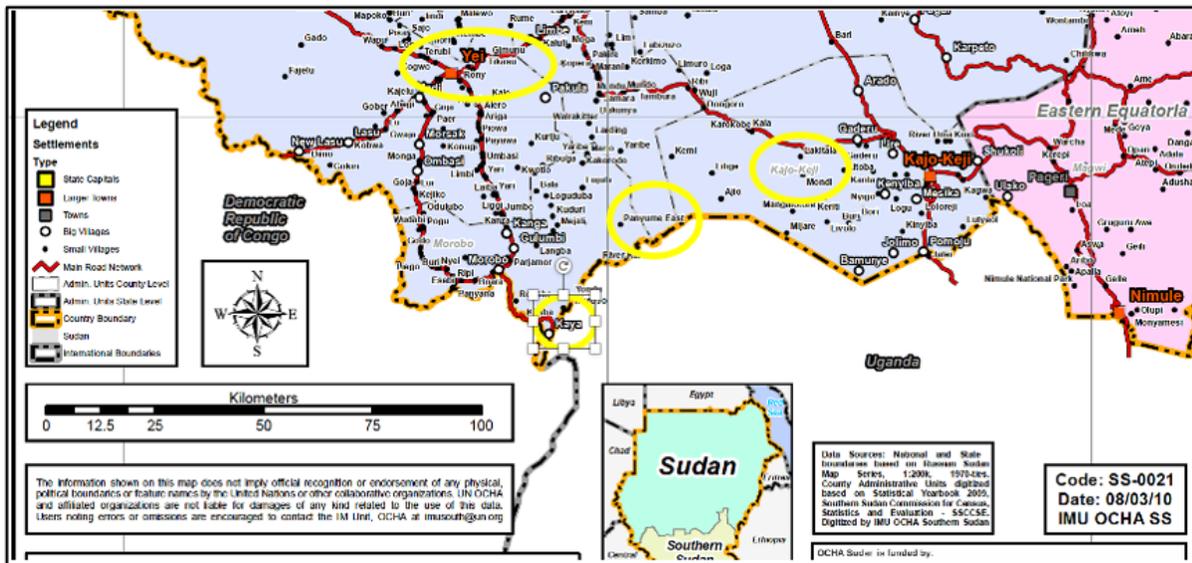
The Committee concludes the following:

1. Christopher Allen entered South Sudan illegally without the knowledge of the relevant authorities of the Government of the Republic of South Sudan.
2. Christopher Allen was present at the planning and preparations made for the attack upon Kaya Town in South Sudan and encouraged the SPLA-IO rebel forces to carry out that attack.
3. Christopher Allen was accompanied with other two foreign photo journalists, Goran Tomasevic and Siefried Modola, and embedded with the SPLA-IO rebel forces.
4. Christopher Allen was killed as a result of crossfire, during the attack of Kaya town on 26th August 2017, Not intentionally.
5. The body of Christopher Allen and other rebel forces were discovered during the Battle Damage Assessments carried out by government forces.
6. Christopher Allen was not wearing any protective or press identification cloth or equipment, when his body was located. Instead, he was wearing a red scuff which was also worn by the rebel forces.
7. The Embassy of the United States of America in Juba – South Sudan, confirmed that Christopher Allen was freelance journalist who holds a dual citizenship (American – British).
8. Christopher Allen had willingly and with knowledge that he would be entering a dangerous place where multiple firearms and other weaponry would be discharged intending to kill and maim people, choose to take the risk of his own life by being present in such dangerous place.
9. There is no evidence that establishes the identity of the person or persons that discharged the firearms causing the death of Christopher Allen.
10. No evidence that Christopher Allen was known to be a journalist by the person or persons that discharged the firearms that caused his death during the combat.

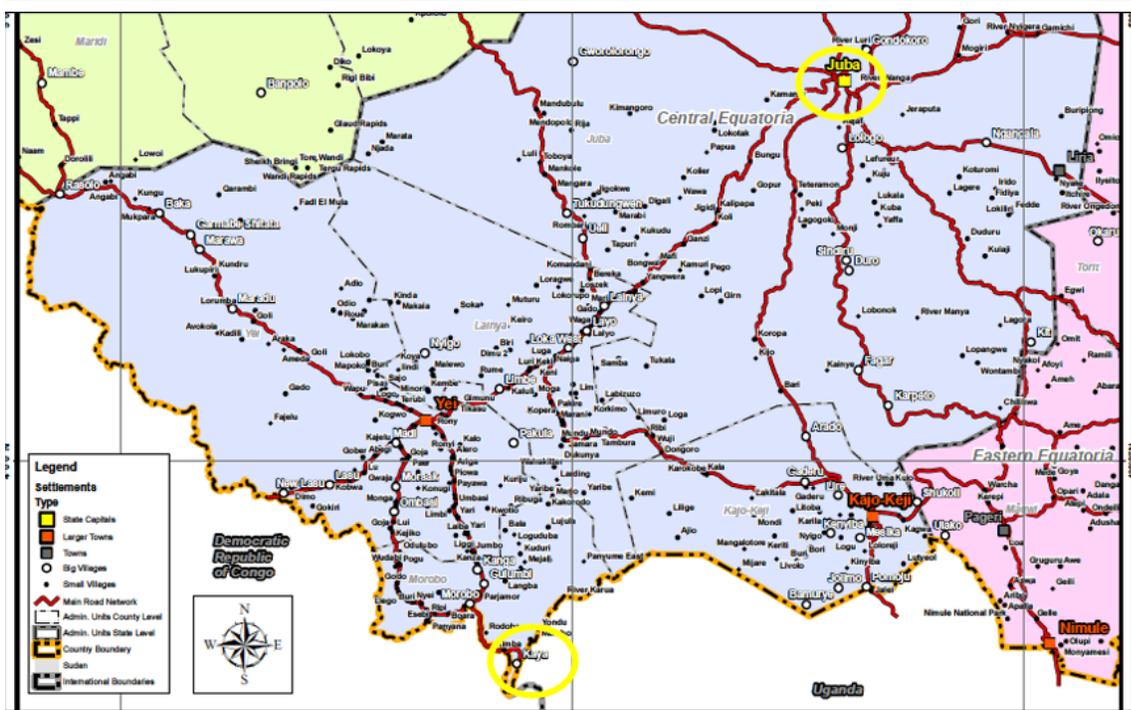
ANNEX 1 - Maps

Map – Kaya, 26 August 2017

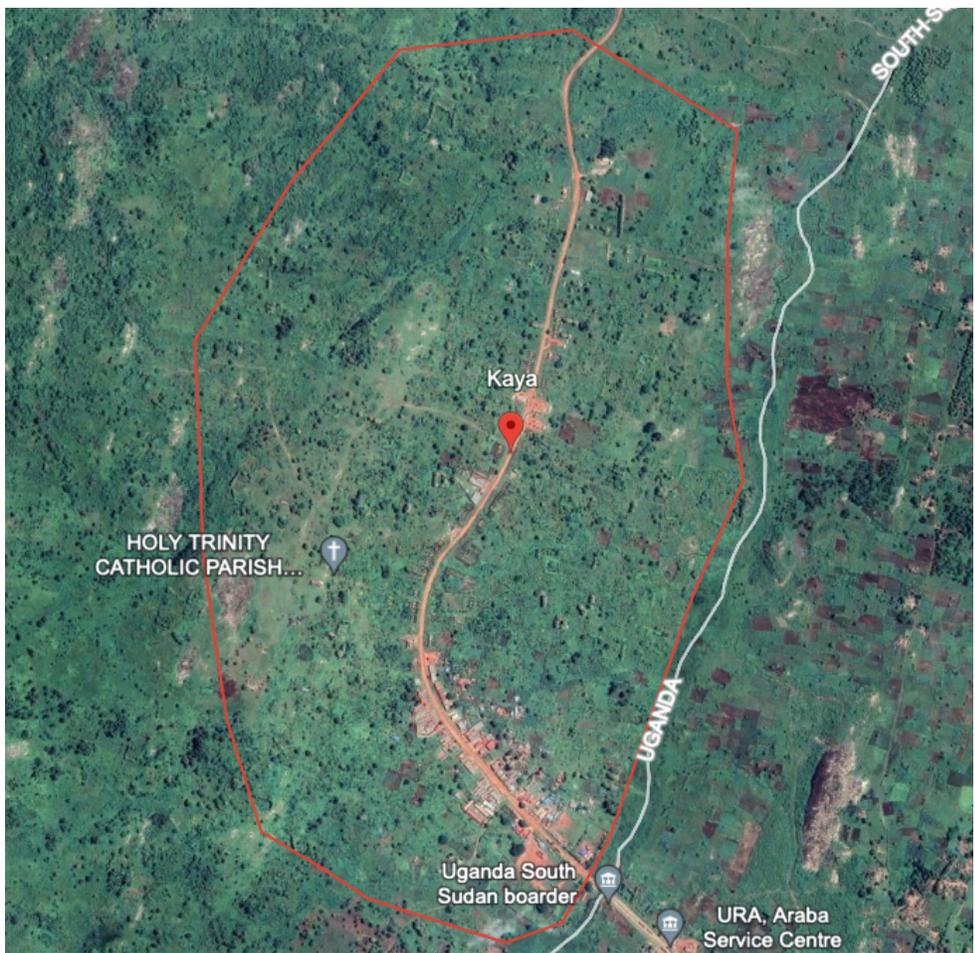
Yei, Kajo-Keji, Panyume, Kaya Circled. Yei to Kaya Highway is Approximately 73 km.



Kaya in relation to Juba:



Map of Kaya Town



Locations for Kaya Attack



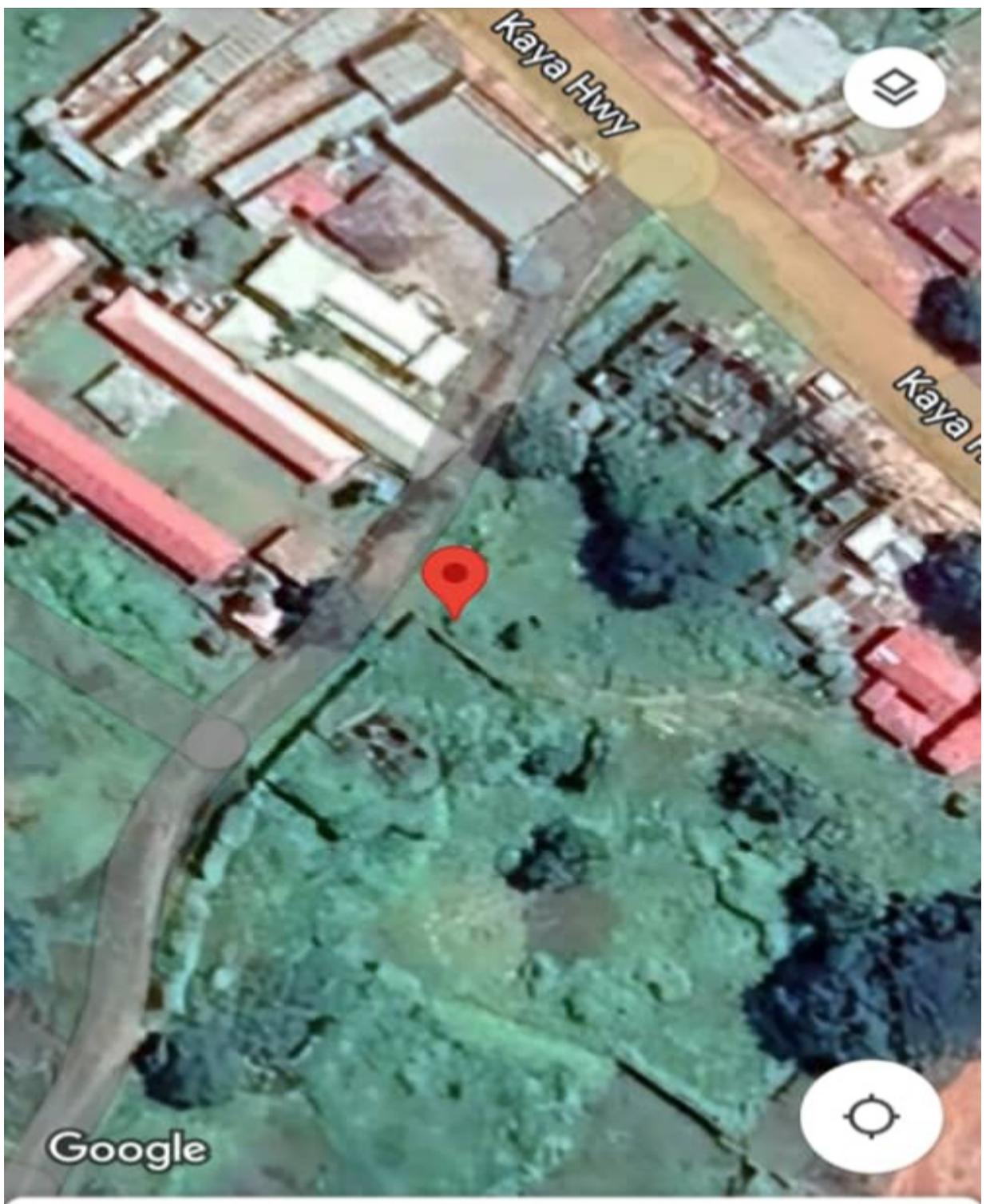
Video 2 Sketch Map of the Main Barracks in Kaya



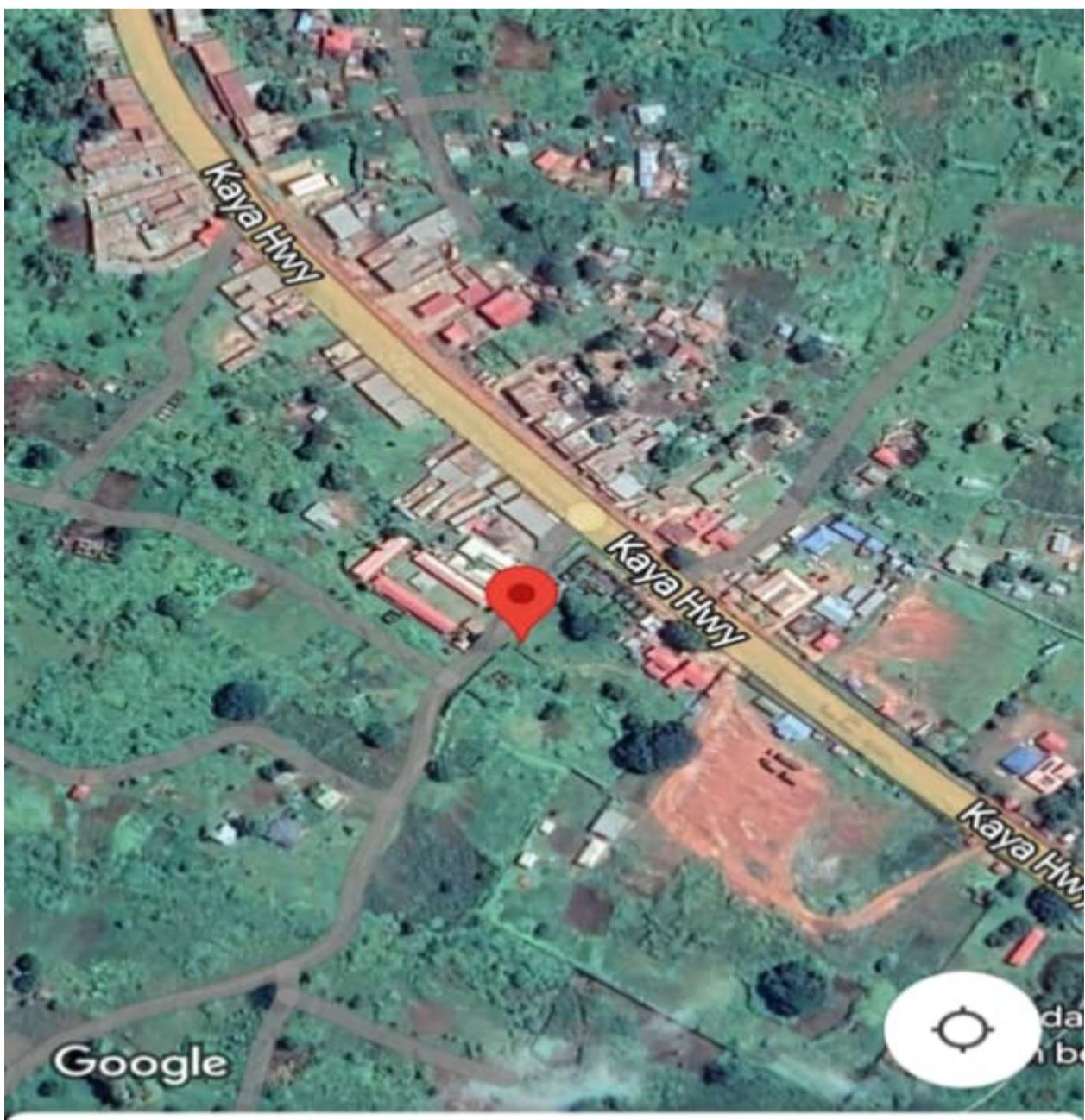
The Area
of the first attack by
the rebel forces in
Kaya

KAYA BRIDGE

Oraba area in the border side of Uganda



3°32'28.0"N 30°52'52.0"E



3°32'28.0"N 30°52'52.0"E

ANNEX 2 – Correspondence from Media Authority



**REPUBLIC OF SOUTH SUDAN
MEDIA AUTHORITY**

RSS/MA/MD/2023/228

31 October 2023

Justice; David Charles Ali Bilal

Technical Legal Expert & Chairman of the Investigation Committee
Ministry of Cabinet Affairs
Republic of South Sudan, Juba

Your Honour,

**Sub: Request for Information Pertaining the Death of Journalist
Christopher Allen**

Reference to your letter dated 30th October 2023 regarding the above mentioned subject, "the Investigation Committee on the death of journalist Christopher Alan, who was killed on 26th August 2017, in Kaya", asking Media Authority whether Christopher Allen was accredited by the Media Authority.

Media Authority accreditation of journalists' records showed no journalist by the name "Christopher Allen" being accredited neither did the Authority receive any application from him requesting for accreditation as a journalist during that time, 2017.

The other two journalists, Goran Tomasevic and Seigried Modola were not accredited by the Media Authority.

The Media Authority is an independent regulatory body established by the Media Authority Act, 2013, with the mandate to regulate and promote the development of pluralistic media in the public interest.

Please accept the assurance of our highest respect and best regards.

Elijah Alier Kuai
Managing Director
Telecom House, Gumbo
Media Authority, RSS – Juba





REPUBLIC OF SOUTH SUDAN
MINISTRY OF INTERIOR
South Sudan National Police Service
Directorate of Nationality, Passports & Immigration
Office of The Deputy Director General



25/01/2024

To: Lt/Gen. Nicola Dimo Biajo
A/IGP & COMMISSIONER OF POLICE,
Ministry of Interior,
Republic of South Sudan.

Sir,

Ref: The Information requested regarding Mr. Christopher Allen, Goran Tomasevic and Siegried Modola.

References is made based on your letter dated 04th /01/2024 requesting the information for the above mentioned reference.

Sir, our expert in the Department of the ICT has cross check the data base system and did not found any information regarding the entrance of the said persons in our entry/exit points at our borders (South Sudan Entry Points).

Thus, this is passed for you acknowledgement and further consideration.

Please accept the assurance of my highest considerations.

Kind Regards,

Maj. Gen. Charles Boza Eywa.

Acting Director General.

Directorate of Civil Registry, Nationality, Passports and Immigration.



Cc; Director FOR General Administration and Finance

Cc; Director of Legal Affairs

Cc: File.

P.O Box 119, Juba. www.dnpi -rss.org