

UNMMIG Sector East Operating Environment

(Extract focused in North Eri and South Eri Provinces)

1. Overview

UNMMIG Sector East is comprised of North East, North Eri, South Eri, and South provinces. This sector has been identified as the UN Main Effort considering the preponderance of armed groups in the area and the potential for intra and inter-state violence in that area.

The main threats in the area are insurgence movements. The Eriyan National Liberation Front (ENLF) has influence and operates in North Eri Province and in the southern (forested) part of North East province, and the Eriyan Independence Movement Fighters (EIMF) operates mainly in South Eri Province.

It is worth noting that the EIMF was once part of the ENLF (breaking with the group in 2012), but now has a different political objective (a separate and independent state, rather than joining with Eastland). The two groups compete for influence over illegal border crossings and access and control of natural resources but both draw support from part of the Eastarian population in the area. The Garland Armed Forces (GAF) is not present in South Eri Province as a pre-condition to the ceasefire with EIMF that is in place (and has held) since January 2017. In North Eri Province, where a current humanitarian ceasefire was agreed with ENLF in November 2017, GAF remains active, due to the insurgency continues in that area.

Generally, both North and South Eri Provinces have rich mineral resources, and international mining firms have long been present in these areas. While the local Eastarian population) work in the mines and make a living there, most of the wealth generated leaves the provinces towards the capital Garville, thereby generating discontent amongst the local population. There are Dotan population groups in urban areas and some rural areas, but both North and South Eri Provinces are relatively ethnically homogeneous. The 7th Continent Force (7CF) deployed a full Infantry Brigade with one Battalion to each province, and this deployment was mirrored by the UNMMIG.

2. Geography

North Eri Province is relatively flat, being part of the central agricultural belt, and agricultural production levels are high. The western and central parts of North Eri Province are comprised of Savannah and woodland, but to the East of the Eri River, the province gradually becomes more forested as close as the border with Eastland. Another important terrain feature is the Eastern Mountain Range (rising to 3500 m), running from north to south; these terrain features facilitate irregular operations.

South Eri Province comprises of savannah to the extreme south of the province, and rain forest elsewhere. The Eastern Mountains also run in the border with Eastland. The ground in South Eri Province is also conducive to agricultural production, but most production remains at subsistence levels. Generally, the terrain in South Eri Province is difficult for conventional military operations.

The Eri River and its basin area is the lifeline of the region. It runs from South Eri Province through North Eri Province, and on through North East Province and it is a tributary of White Line River. It has a wide flood basin and the surrounding areas are highly fertile. Moreover, most of Garland's drinking water comes from this river. The Eri River is navigable and is used by local and businesses to transport goods, which are subject to both formal (Government) and informal (ENLF/EIMF) taxation. There are also two significant lake features in North Eri Province located close to the

provincial capital Nicada. These are largely fed by the Eri River and surrounding tributaries. Owing to the natural geology water levels in these lakes can vary significantly as can the quality of the water.

The Eastern Mountain Range forms natural flank protection to Garland from threats to the east and, as such, the Garland Armed Forces (GAF) maintains networks of informants to give advance warning of any possible Eastland invasion, and to give information on insurgent movement in the area.

The crop season run year around, with Garland dependent on both crops grown in both the dry and wet seasons vital given the relatively low quality of life. Any significant disruption to the supply of foods (due to conflict, weather etc.) can cause substantial upset, unease and discontent.

The weather in both North and South Eri Provinces follows the standard wet season (Aug to Dec)/ dry season (Jan to early Aug) pattern. Rainfall recorded during the dry season is low (approx. 1000mm), but it is relatively common in the Eastern Mountain Range. There is little or no rain during the dry season in the extreme south of South Eri Province, close to the border with Southland.

Both North and South Eri Province benefit from the run-off rainwater that collects in the upper reaches of the Eastern Mountain Range, and runs into the Eri River and on to other areas via a series of small tributaries.

The impact of the dry season causes some Eri pastoralists to move south from the southern section of North East Province to North Eri Province.

Hurricanes and other extreme weather phenomena are rare in Garland.

Temperatures are similar to the rest of Garland ranging from 25 degrees (daytime max) in the wet season to 35 degrees (daytime max) in the dry season.

3. Political

The provincial governor resides in Nicada (the provincial capital of North Eri), and in Byra (the provincial capital of South Eri Province). The provincial governor in both North and South Eri Province is a Dotan, although there are some indications that an Eastarian may rise to this station in South Eri Province, as a means of maintaining the ceasefire and stability in the build-up to national elections. That the governor in North Eri Province remains a Dotan is a persistent bone of contention there. However, with no lasting ceasefire in place in North Eri, the Government of Garland feels it needs political control of the province. Both governors reside in the governor's mansion, and legislate from the provincial assembly buildings, all of which are located in Nicada and Byra.

Governor Pedro Martell has been governor of North Eri province for six years and, although a Dotan, is generally respected for his professionalism. Three years ago there were escalating protests outside his residence which culminated in the destruction of his vehicle outside the property. Although there were concerns that this may result in a crackdown by security forces, Governor Martell stepped in and began hosting monthly 'town hall' meetings at the provincial assembly building, which deescalated the situation and earned the grudging respect of the locals.

Governor Johnson Rodham is governor of South Eri and is not well-liked as he rarely interacts with the Eastarian population. There are rumours that the central government will replace Rodham ahead of elections to stabilize the situation and win favour with the local population. While Rodham has never advocated for violence, there are concerns that he will not willingly step aside for an Eastarian. Rodham maintains his own personal security detachments at both his residence and the provincial assembly building.

The local GDM party leader is Tito Farr, who is very popular among Eastarians. He is also popular among the troops of the GAF as he has called for amnesty for those Eastarian NCOs involved in the 2012 coup. Tito's sister is married to the Vice President of Eastland and he visits there often. Tito has

previously received death threats but chooses not to travel with personal protection as he believes the people will protect him.

4. Economic

The economy of North and South Eri Province, both formal and informal, is based on the extractive mining industry. As trading routes to Eastland are formally shut down, the vast majority of minerals produced flow westwards to Garville, but some artisanal mines – operated by both the ENLF and the EIMF – produce minerals that flow to Eastland via informal border crossing points in the most remote areas of the Eastern Mountain Range. This informal trade is said to produce between USD \$ 40 and \$50 million per annum for each group. It should also be noted that there have been some clashes in and around the more accessible crossing points between North and South Eri Province.

Many of the men in the local population are employed either as security guards or workers at the mines. Generally, the supervisors at the mines, and other managerial positions are held by members of the Dotan population. Salaries are higher at the mines than in other sectors (agricultural), leading to a higher than average monthly salary for workers ranging from USD \$ 300- USD \$ 500 per month.

Those not involved in the extractive mining sector are involved in subsistence farming, on land that they do not own, but that the Government of Garland also has no interest in.

4.1. Transport Infrastructure

Metaled roads in North and South Eri run from mining areas, through the major urban centres, and connect the provinces to Eastland and to Garville. There are two formal border crossing points to Eastland in both North and South Eri Provinces, in Byra and East of Dafari. Other roads to smaller towns and villages are a combination of dirt tracks and, in some cases, dirt tracks that have been reinforced with gravel to mitigate the impact of the wet season. Most areas in North Eri Province remain accessible year-round, apart from areas in the mountainous region to the east of the White Line River. South Eri Province, on the other hand, is far more difficult to access, particularly for heavy military vehicles. The combination of rainforest in eastern and central parts of the province, together with the mountains to the east of the White Line River has helped the EIMF to build its strength.

Rivers in North Eri are not generally navigable, but – as outlined above – the White Line is.

The formal border crossing points are manned by the GAF, but there are many informal crossing points that both the ENLF and EIMF control. This affords them access to Eastland markets and, reports indicate, for the movement of arms to both groups.

The majority of the mineral wealth produced in the Eri Provinces moves westward to Garville, and these routes are protected by the GAF. In South Eri Province, there is an informal agreement in place that sees the EIMF protect goods moving to Garville. The EIMF benefits financially from this arrangement.

The national government is attempting to shore up support ahead of elections and has announced a number of infrastructure-related initiatives. As well as the South Eri pipeline, the government has committed to upgrading the roads between Siama and Nicada, as well as the M13 highway. There is considerable doubt as to whether the government can fulfil these promises given its dire economic position and given it continues to devote the majority of its revenue to security. Construction of the roads is due to start next January.

5. Services

There are major hospitals in Nicada, Byra and Conville, though there are shortages of equipment and qualified staff, particularly in Byra. There are clinics in Amegre and Qanabi. In most other towns, locals need to travel long distances for proper healthcare, or attend mobile clinics.

Access to clean drinking water is not guaranteed in any area of Garland, but is most common in urban areas, particularly in the capital Garville. The major towns and the provincial capitals of both North and South Eri Province have access to fresh drinking water via structures built in the 1960s by foreign mining companies, however these are prone to issues owing to age, wear and tear and lack of investment. The vast majority of other villages and settlements rely on cisterns which collect rainwater for use throughout the year.

Villages around the Eri River have a plentiful supply of water year-round, as do those located in the mountainous east. However, this water supply can vary significantly in quality.

There is no central sewage system anywhere outside the capital. Outside Garville, most waste escapes via a series of partially close or open sewage pipes; this is the case in minor towns and villages in both North and South Eri Provinces. Exceptions to this are the major urban areas in both provinces, which have benefitted from the expertise of foreign engineers, employed in the mining sector.

6. Social

Access to education, government, to the rule of law and to most services is largely limited to those living in towns or villages. Access to these services in peripheral or rural areas is uncommon, and even where such services exist, they are generally only enjoyed by the Dotan, and some sections of Eastarian society.

UNHCR has formally designated two camps in North Eri Province, and one camp in South Eri Province as an Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camp. These camps are now recognized as Protection of Civilian (POC) sites for the UN. The conditions in these camps are reported to be relatively good, and the Eastarian (the majority of the IDP population) located there are treated as honoured guests – many have relatives in the surrounding areas – by the local (Eastarian-dominated) population.

The civil society group Eastarian Women's Association (EWA) has been vocal in pushing for increased participation of women in public life, including in politics and decision-making bodies. Many of its membership were former members of the ENLF and the EWA also campaigns for veterans benefits as females were not included as part of previous DDR programs. The Mission Gender Advisers meets weekly with Celeste Tyaz, leader of the EWA. Recently the EWA has created an informal counter-radicalisation program to identify individuals vulnerable to more extreme ideologies and recruitment into armed groups.

The Eastarian Youth League (EYL) is a popular youth group and most of the young IDPs have joined the organization. Some within the elder generation have expressed concerns that the EYL allows both male and female members, which they consider inappropriate.

Markets are generally held on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays. There is one market in Nicada township opposite the Provincial Assembly building, and a smaller one just outside the southwest corner of the Dafari POC site on the road to Qanabi. The GAF recently set up a checkpoint in vicinity of the market in Nicada town, purportedly to ensure that no black-market weapons are being sold. Some stall-holders claim they have been forced to pay for new 'permits' to operate in the market, though the Governor denies any such permit is required. Although citizens are encouraged to use the formal banking system, many prefer traditional lending practices and currency can be easily traded at all the markets in the area.

The local Catholic priest is highly respected among the population, including those in the POC camp. He is wary of becoming involved in local politics as he wishes to remain neutral but has been very influential in mediating disputes, and many believe he has back-channel access to the local ENLF and EIMF commanders. He lives in a small dwelling adjacent to the church in the north-east part of Nicada.

7. Information and Communication

Landline communication is the most widely used person to person form of communication over longer distances. However, only the elite own their own fixed line phones, and most households use a centrally-located public phone offered at a flat rate by local entrepreneurs. These public phone boxes are only available in urban areas in both North and South Eri. Indeed, phone lines tend to follow the national primary routes in both provinces.

There are a number of GSM masts in both North and South Eri, though South Eri is much better-served. The GSM masts are FR1 type, and can technically cover 50 to 150 km, though this depends on terrain as they are line of sight propagation. This explains why most GSM masts in rural areas are constructed on high ground. GSM masts are set up by the Garland state-owned mobile phone company microcell, and are widespread in the larger towns of both North and South Eri. However, in rural areas, masts are generally located around mining sites, or along major lines of communications. GSM coverage elsewhere depends on the local terrain. Generally, mobile phone coverage is either patchy or non-existent in deep valleys, or in the very high ground to the east of the Eris.

Communications in forests and remote areas is only possible via satellite phones – inaccessible to local populations – or by radio set.

Internet connectivity throughout the Eris is relatively poor. Some families can afford to use dial-up internet (56kps) over the phone lines, but only such services are only available in urban areas, and even then access varies throughout the day and depends on bandwidth available. This option is relatively expensive and is only really suitable for making skype phone calls.

Broadband connections are available at mining sites, Garland Armed Force Brigade and Battalion HQs, and in the urban areas of Nicada, Qanabi, Conville, Turus, Brya, Walesi, Amegre, and Astern. This reflects the level of state cooperation with South Eri relative to North Eri. Only those connected to the State (the Dotan, some Eastarians, and mining entities) have access to Broadband in North Eri, while many living in urban areas in South Eri have access for approximately 2 hours per day.

None of the masts in either North or South Eri are capable of delivering third generation (3G) wireless connectivity. However, some of the very rich or those that are otherwise connected to the state (political and military leaders) can afford Wi-Fi connections. Such connections are exceptionally expensive.

It is worth noting that both the ENLF and the EIMF have Facebook pages and twitter accounts. In the past these pages have been used to broadcast messages between commanders and fighters. However, at present, both groups use their accounts as recruitment tools. Indeed, the EIMF has a full media arm that works to maintain a constant presence across relevant social media platforms; the ENLF is less well organized and is not helped by its generally low level of access to wireless platforms.

7th Continent Force media monitoring identified the social media account EastariansStandUp as spreading hostile content, including calls to use ‘whatever means possible’ to defend the Eastarian community. This site has not been active since the commencement of the humanitarian ceasefire in North Eri.

Almost every household in Garland has access to a radio, and this is the medium through which most ethnic groups, outside the elite, get their news. There are both one to many, and two-way radio

networks in the Eris; all one to many networks, used by the general population are FM type (Range is approximately 40 miles from each antenna). Generally, the use of two-way radio limited to the security services. Radio antennae are co-located with all GSM masts, but are also found in other less accessible areas of both North and South Eri; these antennae were set up by the colonial power in the 1950s and 1960s, and the local community service them to ensure that they can maintain radio connectivity. It is worth noting that these antennae are not marked on maps.

There are a number of radio stations, both at the national and provincial level. Garland State Radio (GSR) is the government channel, but even the local Dotan understand that it is propagandistic and listenership is very low. Indeed, both the Dotan prefer to listen to LW radio shows that are broadcast in Eastland; these shows allow the local population to hear what is going on in the outside world as they regularly re-broadcast recordings of the BBC world service.

The Dotan have a local radio station called 'radio Eri'. This show is renowned for its even-handed approach in dealing addressing issues of national importance, though it has a slightly pro-Dotan slant. Significantly, radio Eri has interviewed both John Sparrow and Joseph Le Pew. Many Eastarians also listen to this show. The ENLT broadcasts a propagandistic show called radio ENLF, which is quite militant and tends to have very low listenership; the Garland Intelligence Service also believes that radio ENLF is used in times of conflict to broadcast to ENLF fighters. The EIMF broadcasts 'radio Sparrow', which, although also propagandistic, has steadily increased its listenership by allowing local personalities, both Dotan and Eastarian to debate the issues. Listenership is highest between the hours of 1900 and 2300 daily on all radio stations.

Print media is accessible in a surprising number of areas in both North and South Eri Province, but because literacy rates are low, only the Eastarian and Dotan groups tend to read them. It is worth noting that both the ENLF and the EIMF produce a monthly pamphlet which is distributed to the local population for free.

The local newspaper is called the Eri Herald and is distributed in both North and South Eri. The Mission Public Affairs team assess that the newspaper is quite balanced in its reporting. However, GAF forces have raided the premises on several occasions and specific articles are often censored. The owner has been taken into custody on several occasions, and on one occasion was detained for 18 days, but has never been formally charged with a crime. The Eri Herald has generally reported positively on the UN presence in both North and South Eri.

Television is only available in major urban areas. There is one state TV channel – Garlan – and it shows free to air news, current affairs, and soap operas. It is not widely watched, with most of those who can afford a TV choosing to pay for satellite TV.

8. Ethnic Groups

Dotan: 30% of the population in North Eri and South Eri Provinces, mainly found in urban areas. The Dotan is a relatively cohesive population groups that relies on the state for leadership and direction. Traditionally, the Dotan had a patriarchal clan system with traditional means of security and justice, but that faded over the last 200 years. Dotans now think of themselves as Garlandians first.

Eastarian: The Eastarians comprise about 65% of the population of North and South Eri. The Eri are a cohesive group and are used to being part of a state structure. However, although those living in Garland consider themselves to be Garlandian, they have a sentimental connection with the 'old land' or Eastland, and many still have family connections there. Both the ENLF and the EIMF have the support of the local population, but most of the Eri population do not full support the violent nature of the groups as they would rather the economic stability that ceasefires bring. There is no appetite for a return to the kind of warfare that would induce large-scale GAF operations. However, the support for

the EIMF and the ENLF creates a climate of suspicion in urban areas, where the Dotan dominate the security services. The Eastarians also have a patriarchal society.

Sunka: comprise 5% of the local population. The Sunka are a nomadic, pastoralist people and although they feel an attachment to Garland, and to Southland, their loyalty runs as follows: family – clan – tribe – tribal confederation. The Sunka routinely arm themselves with rifles. The Sunka are located in the border area between Southland and South Eri Province, but rarely come into contact with the Eastarian population.

Abu/Northern: There are no Abus or Northarians in North or South Eri Province.

9. Security

The GAF maintains one light infantry company in each major town in North Eri Province and has also deployed several Forward Operating Bases (FOBs) to secure the mines in the area, and border crossing points.

The GAF is not present in South Eri Province but is stationed in strength at FOBs in North Eri Province and in South Province, ready to move should the ceasefire collapse.

The GAF also secures trading routes between the capital Garville and North and South Eri Province.

The GAF Commander in North Eri is generally cooperative and engages openly with UN personnel. However, his former unit was implicated in human rights atrocities (including during the period GAF controlled the POC site) and he has been known to make disparaging remarks about Eastarians (he and his senior staff are Tutu).

A number of the conflict-related sexual violence incidents in Nicada have been perpetrated by personnel in uniform or mixed uniform / civilian attire, and it is suspected that GAF soldiers have been involved. It is unknown to what extent the leadership has sanctioned this behaviour.

GAF Armed Forces Day is held on 12 April and generally involves a parade through the town before a function at Nicada HQ to which only the elite are invited. Intoxicated GAF members have been known to harass locals, fire their weapons in the air and destroy property following such functions.

There is a police HQ in each provincial capital, as well as a smaller presence in each town. Police are poorly paid but have generally not been implicated in harassment of locals.

10. Relevant Actors: ENLF, EIMF, GAF, Eastland Armed Forces (EAF).

10.1. Ethnic: Dotan, Eastarian.

10.2. Religious: Catholic Church leader.

10.3. NGOs: Variety of NGOs working IVO Refugee camps.

10.4. International: Mining companies.

10.5. Security Issues:

10.5.1. North Eri Province: conflict between GAF and ENLF – current humanitarian pause;

10.5.2. South Eri Province: conflict between GAF and EIMF – current ceasefire; Tensions between ENLF and EIMF; Tensions between Eastarian and Dotan population; Tensions between Garland and Eastland.



POC Site Report Dafari

UNMMIG Relief, Reintegration and Protection (RRP) section

The Dafari POC site hosts approximately 28,270 IDPs according to biometric registration. IDPs are permitted to leave and return to the POC site as required, but there is a curfew 2100h-0500h when the camp gates are closed.

The leader of the Dafari POC Camp Committee is well-respected by most IDPs, largely due to his reputation as a militia commander during Garland's invasion. He has now committed to working peacefully for the betterment of Eastarians. Camp Committee meetings are held at the 'Eries Tukul' on the southeast corner of the POC site. However, recently another member of the Camp Committee, known as 'Nertiti', has been making statements critical of the government and indicating sympathies for the ENLF.

The Dotan minority, which makes up approximately 12% of the camp population, is informally led by Augustus Legge, who has expressed frustration that Dotan concerns are not considered in camp decision-making. Most Dotan IDPs were displaced during the government's counterinsurgency campaigns in North Eri and are generally moderates who tried to protect Eastarians. Many come from the village of Walesi where significant intermarriage has occurred and the Dotans form around 45% of the town. Some Dotans in the POC camp have been critical of the Eastarians due to their perception that Eastarians have assisted members of armed groups by storing weapons within the camp. The Dotans resent the government, particularly the GAF, but do not support Eastarian secession and believe that a deal with the government for increased autonomy is the best way forward. The town of Ganush has no Dotans at all as the Eastarians attacked any settlers who tried to move there, claiming the Dotans were being deliberately settled on their lands to dilute Eastarian influence.

The local Catholic priest is highly respected among the population, including those in the POC camp. He is wary of becoming involved in local politics as he wishes to remain neutral but has been very influential in mediating disputes, and many believe he has back-channel access to the local ENLF and EIMF commanders. He lives in a small dwelling adjacent to the church in the north-east part of Nicada.

The main NGOs operating in the IDP camp are Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF), Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) and 7th Continent for Peace (7C4P). They are generally cooperative although are wary of being seen engaging too closely with Force. They often have good information on atmospherics within the POC site. Jawanna Henry is the lead MSF doctor and she is often aware of when there has been fighting in the area as MSF are called to treat the injured. IOM, UNHCR and WFP have a strong presence in the camp.