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Highlights

Hague court redefines Sudan's Abyei boundaries

Reuters 22/7/09 - An international court redefined the eastern and western boundaries of the disputed oil-producing Abyei area claimed by both north and south Sudan, but left its northern border intact, in a ruling today.

Analysts said the eastern border was moved slightly to the west, leaving a majority of the area's oil supplies such as the Heglig oil field within Sudan's area, while leaving a smaller amount of the oil still within the Abyei area.

"We want peace. We think this decision is going to consolidate the peace," said Riek Machar, the SPLM's representative. "We came to see justice and it's a decision we will respect"

Meanwhile, Sudan's Foreign Ministry today said that a Hague court ruling on the borders of the disputed oil-producing Abyei area is a "step forward", adding the government would respect the decision.

"We respect this decision. And this decision is final and binding because all the parties agreed from the beginning that the decision of the court was binding and final. Also, the decision guarantees the rights of Misseriya pastoralists," Sudanese Foreign Ministry undersecretary Mutrif Siddig told **Reuters**. "We think the decision is a step forward," he added.

The U.S. special envoy to Sudan said today he was convinced that the Hague court ruling "will be fully implemented". "I have got to tell you, I am optimistic. The commitments that these folks have made in words, I am convinced that they will be carried out in deed, and that this arbitration decision will be fully implemented," envoy Scott Gration told journalists. "The border will be demarcated and the Dinka and the Misseriya will live for a long time in peace," he added, referring to tribes often at odds in the area.

According to **Al-Jazeera.net website**, Deng Alor, a senior southern leader who serves as foreign minister in Sudan's coalition government, said that the Ngok Dinka tribe had lost some small areas of land "but would accept the ruling". "All in all the decision of the court is acceptable and we will implement it," he said.

"Now the people of Abyei will realize that their interests lie in their being unified with their partners in the north - to share the value of their wealth and their resources," Hassan Meki, a political analyst and the chancellor of the International African University told **Al-Jazeera** from Khartoum. "People want to co-existence ... and to share the wealth of the area."

Ashraf Qazi, the UN special representative for Sudan, said the ruling had been a "win-win decision".

"This will pave the way for the peaceful implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement as a whole. The rights of both communities have been guaranteed as a matter of international law."

AP reports that the international arbitration panel awarded the Sudanese government control over almost all major oil reserves in a disputed region of Sudan that erupted into violence

between state forces and southern rebels last year. The five-member panel affirmed the northern boundary as set by a 2005 commission, but drew new lines in the east and west that placed the Heglig oil fields and the Nile oil pipeline under control of the Khartoum government. Dirdeiry Mohamed Ahmed, the head of the northern government delegation, called the decision a victory. "We welcome the fact that the oil fields are now excluded from the Abyei area, particularly the Heglig oil field," he said.

Riek Machar Teny, deputy chairman of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement, said the southerners accepted the panel's ruling. "I think the decision is balanced. We are committed to respecting it," he told the Associated Press. "I think this is going to consolidate peace in Sudan. It is a victory for the Sudanese people and a victory for peace."

SRSG Ashraf Qazi said: "This decision clearly demonstrates that, even on the most difficult and sensitive of disputes, the parties can find a peaceful solution if they work together in good faith,"

The panel's leader, French law professor Pierre-Marie Dupuy, said the rights of nomadic tribes that live in the region remain protected, regardless of where the boundary falls. "Boundaries are not barriers," he said.

UNSG calls on Sudan, Chad to exercise self-restraint

UNSG Ban Ki-moon has expressed concerns over increasing tensions between Sudan and Chad and has called on the two sides to exercise restraint and double their efforts to ease tension, reports *Al-Ayyam*.

Government denies reports on famine in the country

Al-Khartoum reports Sudan government dismissed reports about famine in the country. HAC Commissioner Hassabo Mohamed Abdul Rahman told a press conference yesterday in Khartoum that food is available and there is no gap any where in the country.

Meanwhile, *Al-Ayyam* reports the Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee on Humanitarian Affairs, Joseph Ajuang, said that the Committee is yet to receive official information on reports of food shortages in parts of southern Sudan and has requested the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs to provide updates on the situation in those areas. He said that the committee would send a fact-finding mission to those areas if they do not receive satisfactory information on the situation.

Parties may object geographical constituencies– NEC

Local dailies report the NEC has announced its readiness to receive objections from the political parties and civilians to the delimitation and distribution of geographical constituencies.

GoSS calls on SRSG to apologize

Al-Intibaha reports GoSS has called on SRSG Ashraf Qazi to apologize for his statement that SPLA had deployed troops in Abyei. GoSS deputy spokesperson Madut Biyar said Qazi's statement could incite violence.

British aid worker shot during Darfur robbery

AFP 21/7/09 - A British man working for a Swiss aid group has been shot and wounded during an armed raid on his compound in Sudan's war-ravaged Darfur region, police and the charity said on Tuesday.

The aid group, Medair, said that an international staff member was "slightly injured by shrapnel

when shots were fired during an armed raid on a Medair compound in El-Geneina in West Darfur in the early hours of Sunday."

A police official said the victim was a 40-year-old British man who was shot in the leg. Medair said shots were fired "apparently in an attempt to force entry to a building. The other staffs present were shaken but unharmed, although important communications and IT equipment were stolen."

The worker was being treated at a United Nations medical facility and a full recovery is expected, Medair said in a statement, adding that all affected "relocatable" staff had been temporarily withdrawn to Khartoum.

Attacks on aid workers in Darfur have increased since the ICC issued an arrest warrant in March for Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir for alleged war crimes there.

Two aid workers, an Irish and a Ugandan woman, are still being held after being snatched earlier this month in the North Darfur city of Kutum, the third such kidnapping since March.

Following the arrest warrant for Bashir, Sudan expelled 13 foreign aid agencies from Darfur -- a decision vehemently criticized by the United Nations. Khartoum later allowed some Western relief bodies in once again.

Sudan opposition discuss Juba conference preparations with SPLM

Sudan Tribune website 21/7/09 — The Sudanese opposition parties met yesterday with senior figures of the SPLM to discuss preparations for the Juba conference.

The SPLM Secretary General Pagan Amum said the meeting discussed the timing, agenda and different political issues that would be discussed according to Sudan state agency (SUNA).

Amum said the goal of the meeting is to reach consensus on successfully administering the interim period, implementing the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), ending war in Darfur, democratic transformation and creating a program for economic revival.

The SPLM official said participation is open to all parties including the NCP and that all issues would be discussed in complete transparency.