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Highlights

Main News

Ban Ki-moon ‘deeply concerned’ at fighting in disputed Sudanese town

(UN News Centre) 20 May 2008 – United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon says he is deeply concerned about renewed fighting between the Sudanese Government and rebel forces in the area around the disputed town of Abyei, which lies in an oil-rich area near the boundary between north and south Sudan.

The clashes, which began on 13 May, have resulted in the destruction of Abyei town and the displacement of between 30,000 and 50,000 people. The following is the statement attributed to the spokesperson for the Secretary-General on Sudan:

The Secretary-General has expressed his grave concern at the outbreak of fighting on the outskirts of Khartoum as a result of the reported attacks by Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) forces against the capital.

He condemns strongly the use of armed force and military means by JEM for the achievement of political ends and calls for an immediate cessation of fighting and a renewed commitment to a peaceful resolution of outstanding issues.

The Secretary-General has expressed his anxiety at the effect they would have on the overall situation in Sudan, as well as on the Comprehensive Peace Agreement and Darfur Agreement, and at the possible effect on civilian lives and property of any escalation of such attack.

Clashes resumed between SAF and SPLA, 22 killed on SAF side, UN fears renewal of confrontation

(**Ray Al-Shaab**) Fighting resumed between SAF and SPLA in Abyei yesterday.

SPLM official Edward Lino has accused NCP of supporting the Messeriya to fight in this area. Abyei area is still disputed, not resolved by the CPA.

SAF announced that 22 personnel killed on its side in clashes with SPLA in Abyei.

UN voiced fears over possibility of renewal of confrontations between the two sides.

UN/Agencies

UN envoy says alarmed by renewed fighting in Sudan’s Abyei

(ST) May 20, 2008 (KHARTOUM) — The UN Secretary General Special Envoy said alarmed by the resumption of fighting between Sudan's former foes in the disputed area of Abyei. He also urged the two parties to exercise self-restraint.

In a statement issued today, Ashraf Jenhagir Qazi expressed grave concern over the renewed hostilities in Abyei between the Sudan Armed Forces and the Sudan People's Liberation Army which have caused numerous casualties on both sides. He also called upon both sides to exercise the utmost restraint and to take immediate steps towards disengaging their respective forces.

"The recent round of armed hostilities underscores the urgent need for the political leadership of both sides to intensify their joint efforts to address the issues that underlie the current crisis." He said.

Qazi regretted that the resumption of military confrontation comes so soon after the parties had met at the level of Ceasefire Joint Military Committee (CJMC) on 18 May 2008.

According to the 18 May deal, the SPLA troops should be pulled out to their previous position south of the river, while the SAF troops have to remain confined to their barracks inside Abyei and they should not be deployed outside the camps of the infantry Brigade 31.

[GoNU](#)

Ruling NCP, opposition Umma Party sign "National Compromise Agreement"

(Sudan Tribune) The ruling NCP and opposition National Umma Party signed yesterday evening a national reconciliation agreement called the "National Compromise Agreement".

The President of the Republic, Omer Hassan Al Bashir, the head of the ruling National Congress Party and the leader of the National Umma Party Sayed Sadiq Al Mahdi signed the agreement.

The agreement contains seven pivotal axes viz. removal of tension, creation of conducive climate in the country, preservation of national principles, comprehensive peace, settlement of Darfur crisis, restoration of civil liberties, comprehensive dialogue and general elections.

President Bashir described the agreement as another gift to the Sudanese people, citing the decisive defeat and repulsion of JEM attack on Omdurman early last week as the first gift.

Omdurman Commissioner: talk about imminent JEM attack on Omdurman only a rumour

(Al-Khartoum) The Commissioner of Omdurman has reassured the residents of Omdurman that there was no imminent threat as SAF and NISS had crushed the rebels. He said what was circulated was only a rumour.

It is worth mentioning that there was a rumour in Omdurman yesterday to the effect that another JEM attack was imminent. SAF, police and NISS were deployed in some areas in Omdurman yesterday and residents thought another attack might be imminent.

President Bashir directs detention of JEM followers, says GoS will not honour ceasefire in Darfur

(**Al-Sahafa**) President Bashir had given the National Intelligence and Security Services (NISS) the free hand to detain whosoever proved to be JEM follower.

Addressing thousands of NISS personnel the President said, “I direct NISS to detain any JEM supporter whether student, labourer or an official. Any adult JEM supporter should be detained,” he said.

“Patience has a limit, there is nothing called liberated territories, any JEM supporter should face necessary measures. SAF will not abide by any ceasefire with non-DPA signatories,” the President declared.

The President said JEM leader Khalil Ibrahim should have preferred being killed in Omdurman to escaping to leave children behind. He has ridiculed JEM leader’s claim of capacity to attack again.

We lost contact with Khalil since before the attack on Omdurman – JEM field commander

(**Al-Khartoum**) JEM is in disarray following the abortive attack launched by Khalil on Omdurman.

JEM field commander Abdullah Banda in statement to SMC from Sudan-Chad border said many JEM field commanders were not happy with Khalil, as they were not consulted about the assault on Omdurman. He said the field commanders lost contact with Khalil since before the occurrence of attempt to invade Omdurman adding that the attempt to invade Omdurman was likely at the behest of Idriss Deby.

He accused Chadian President of seeking to implement his agenda through JEM.

With regard to children fighting with JEM, the field commander said, “We have advised Khalil of the futility of coercive recruitment of children from IDPs camps, it contravenes JEM manifesto”.

France rejects accusations of supporting rebel attack on Sudan capital

(**ST**) May 20, 2008 (KHARTOUM) — The French embassy in Khartoum released a statement dismissing allegations that it provided assistance to Darfur rebel attack on the Sudanese capital.

The embassy said that it “noticed a number of remarks that contained explicit or implicit allegations of our involvement in the JEM assault on Omdurman. We strongly dismiss these accusations”.

Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) fighters mounted an assault on the Sudanese capital that took the government and international community by surprise. However, the Sudanese government repulsed the attack and accused Chad of backing JEM in its attempt.

Senior Sudanese officials became more outspoken about other countries involvement in the attack besides Chad believed to be Libya and France.

The Sudanese defense minister implied France's involvement in JEM attack by saying that a Western country guided the fighters through the satellite, which helped them avoid government troops on their way to the capital.

The speaker of the Sudanese national assembly Ahmed Ibrahim Al-Taher said that his government intends to reveal the names of countries that provided the support for the rebel offensive.

The Sudanese presidential adviser Mustafa Ismail echoed Al-Tahir accusations in a press conference in Doha Qatar and said that weapons used by JEM are "very advanced" and not available in Chad "which means that other countries supplied it to them".

However Ismail declined to name these countries.

The French embassy said that it "firmly condemn the attack [JEM] which is unjustified" and called on Darfur warring parties "to exercise self restraint and respect international humanitarian law".

The statement also called for a resumption of peace talks and speeding the deployment of the Darfur peacekeeping force.

France has a long-term military presence in Chad, one of its former colonies, giving the government intelligence and logistic support.

Khartoum has been furious at France for hosting leader of Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM) Abdel-Wahid Al-Nur and has persistently demanded that he be expelled.

Last March French President Nicolas Sarkozy condemned what he called the "deliberate and disproportionate" use of force by Sudan in the killing of a French soldier serving with European Union forces in Chad (EUFOR).

The defense ministry in Paris said the soldiers who strayed across the border encountered a Sudanese checkpoint and quickly declared their identity, but were fired on without warning.

The Sudanese government has strongly opposed the French backed initiative for deployment of the 3,700-strong EUFOR mission being deployed in eastern Chad to protect refugees displaced by violence in neighboring Sudan's Darfur region.

US prospects ways to resolve row over Sudan's Abyei

(ST) May 20, 2008 (WASHINGTON) — The US State Department said Tuesday it was trying to find a way to help end an outburst of heavy fighting in Sudan that could sink a 2005 north-south peace agreement.

"It's something that certainly has our attention," State Department spokesman Sean McCormack told reporters as fighting took place in Abyei, an oil district whose status remains contested three years after the end of civil war.

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice spoke to her African affairs expert Jendayi Frazer "to see how we might be helpful in resolving one of these final pieces of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement," McCormack said.

Khartoum police corner suspected JEM rebels

(ST) May 20, 2008 (KHARTOUM) — Sudanese police fired shots and arrested three men during an operation on Tuesday against suspected rebels involved in an attack on Khartoum, a security source said.

The incident took place in Omdurman, the suburb in western Khartoum that was attacked by Darfur rebels earlier this month, said a security officer who spoke on condition of anonymity.

Sudanese security services have been searching for rebels in the area since the attack, which killed more than 200 people.

Rebels from the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) attacked Khartoum on May 10, the first time in decades of civil war that rebels from Sudan's peripheries had brought fighting to Khartoum's doorstep.

"Very early this morning, there was some firing from police who were looking for JEM soldiers," said the security officer. "They arrested three men."

There was a heavy security presence in central Khartoum and Omdurman on Tuesday. Heavily armed soldiers were seen on the streets around the United Nations headquarters, close to the capital's main airport.

Human rights groups have accused the government of carrying out mass arrests and torturing suspects.

GoSS

Salva Kiir elected Chairman of Sudan People's Liberation Movement

(ST) May 20, 2008 (JUBA) —the Second National Convention of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement has elected unanimously in its meeting today Salva Kiir Mayadrit as chairman of the party for five years to come

Riak Machar, the former First Deputy Chairman of the SPLM nominated Salva Kiir for the presidency of the movement. Pagan Amum, the former Secretary General

supported the proposal. Both they pointed his efforts in the establishment of the party and to ensure its unity.

The convention also passed the constitution of the SPLM and its manifesto which insists on the need to build one state for all the Sudanese, as strategic choice for the SPLM.

Salva Kiir described the constitution as a safety valve of the SPLM, adding it will contribute to developing the performance of the various organs of the Movement.

The convention also elected the National Liberation Council, which consists of 275 members. The council will in turn elect three vice-presidents and Secretary-General and his two deputies in addition to members of the Political Bureau

Riek Machar, James Wani and Malik Aggar are expected to be re-elected in their positions as deputies chairman. Also Pagan Amum is expected to be reconducted as secretary-general of the movement despite his initial refusal to retake the office.

Machar and Nhial Deng Nhial, the two contenders for Chairmanship of the SPLM had accepted to withdraw their declaration of candidacy against the interim Chairman, Salva Kiir Mayardit who had been elected to this position following the tragic death of Dr John Garang at the end of July 2005.

[Darfur](#)

93 Egyptian technicians to join UNAMID in Darfur

(**Al-Sudani**) Cairo-based UN office announced that 92 Egyptian communication technicians who work with UNAMID in Darfur left for El Fasher.

A press release issued by the office said another team of 83 technicians would arrive in Darfur shortly to assist in installing communications in various UNAMID area of responsibility.

The press release pointed out that these forces constitute the first batch of peacekeepers pledged by Egypt and were expected to reach 1200 personnel by next June.

Rebel group releases census workers arrested in Darfur

(**ST**) May 20, 2008 (LONDON) — A Darfur rebel group announced today the release of census enumerators arrested during the fifth national census exercise in southern Darfur.

Mahgoub Hussein the spokesperson of the Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM) Unity-Command said in a press statement received by email today that the release of census staff comes after the request of "the Canadian government envoy" who met him in London.

The SLM-Unity declared on May 2, the arrest of 13 census enumerators led by Hassan Ali Daw albitt in Shairiah, south Darfur. However, in today's statement Hussein spoke about the release of 11 census takers.

Darfur rebel groups, which had demand postponement of census until the signing of a peace deal, expressed their opposition to the ongoing census operations in Darfur. Rebels said they do not trust the outcome of the census because millions of Darfuris are displaced while Khartoum plans to count new Arab immigrants recently arrived from neighbouring countries.

The Sudan population and housing fifth census started on April 22 and lasted to May 6, 2008.

Hussein also said that his group would transfer "all military operations to central Sudan including Khartoum". He demanded civilians to avoid "sensitive area" and "military ceremonies and Carnivals."

He also called for an international investigation on the mass arrest and killing of innocent Darfuris in Khartoum after the attack carried by the rebel Justice and Equality Movement against the Sudanese government in the capital on May 10.