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Post-Referendum Monitor

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Post-Referendum Monitor

Sudan presents proposals on Abyei

Al-Ahram Al-Youm Khartoum, 01/06/11 - Sudan on Tuesday presented some proposals to resolve the issue of Abyei, which included deploying African troops and appointing a new chairmanship for the area on a rotational basis between north and south Sudan.

"The proposals underlined the importance of keeping the current status, with the SAF north of the Bahr-el-Arab and the SPLA south of the river but without the two sides being involved in any administrative task until a final solution is reached with the conduct of the referendum," said foreign ministry Spokesperson Khaled Musa in a statement on Tuesday.

"It is also possible to utilize the UN peacekeepers currently present in Abyei after we replace them with more efficient troops of African nature in accordance with specific duties and mandate, and with the participation of joint north-south forces to be deployed north of the Bahr-el-Arab, in addition to community police from the two sides," he added.

He went on to say that "the proposals further include the appointment of a new chairmanship for the Abyei Administration to be on rotation between north and south Sudan, with guarantees that no administrative, political or security decision on Abyei would be taken without the consent of the two parties. And the chairmanship of the new Abyei administration should be under the responsibility of the Presidency of the Republic until July 8, 2011."

The statement urged the international community to live up to its responsibilities of ensuring the full implementation of the agreement via supporting the ongoing negotiations to assimilate the northern Sudanese from the Nuba Mountains and Blue Nile areas, who are part of the SPLA, and completing the redeployment of the SPLA south of the 1956 borders before July 9, 2011.

Envoys differ on UNMIS fate, trade blame for situation in Abyei

KUNA UN, 01/06/11 - Representatives of North and South Sudan differed late Tuesday on the fate of the UN Mission in the Sudan (UNMIS) and traded blame for the escalation of the security situation Abyei.

Addressing the Security Council as it examined Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's report in which he suggested the automatic extension of the Mission for three months - from July 9 to October 9 - Sudanese Ambassador Daffa-Alla Elhag Ali Osman said his Government had sent a letter to the UN Chief early in the day asking the UN to terminate the Mission's mandate in the North.

Any attempts to justify the continuation of the Mission beyond July 9, the day on which the Government of South Sudan was scheduled to officially declare independence from Khartoum, would "not be right", he stressed, adding that the settlement of pending issues between the north and south must take place at the negotiating table.

On the situation in Abyei, he said the recent events there were "bound to happen," adding that the Southern Government had not complied with the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) of 2005 to evacuate all forces from the Abyei area. The Sudanese military presence in Abyei was limited, and would last until an agreement was signed to secure an end to attacks on the armed forces and businessmen, he explained, insisting that an agreement was needed to end the presence of forces belonging to both sides. The ultimate objective was to usher in a cooperative relationship between North and South, he argued.

The representative of South Sudan at the UN and US, Ezekiel Lol Gatkouth, appealed to the Council for a continued United Nations presence in the South following its declaration of independence scheduled for July 9th, and concurred with Ban that such a presence must be seen in the context of North-South security arrangements.

Welcoming the progress made by the parties in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, earlier this week on establishing an agreed security framework in that regard, Gatkouth said recent events showed that external support was required for such a framework, and that the United Nations was best placed to provide it.

The main objective now should be to avoid a security vacuum after 9 July, he stressed, adding that the United Nations might need to plan for the possibility that peacekeepers would need to be deployed only on the Southern side of the future border with the north. He also suggested that monitoring that border between north and south, the longest in Africa, would require more troops than the 7,000 recommended by the Secretary-General in his report.

He described the Sudanese forces presence in Abyei as occupation forces and suggested that "the Security Council must intervene swiftly and decisively." He called on the Council to condemn Sudan's action and demand the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Sudanese forces from the region. The Council was scheduled to issue a US-sponsored Presidential statement on the issue, but did not. Council members said they needed more time to consult with their capitals.

Sudan makes formal demand for UN withdrawal

AFP United Nations, 01/06/11 - Sudan on Tuesday officially told the United Nations that it wants UN peacekeepers withdrawn after the July 9 division of the country, officials said.

The Khartoum government's demand would only cover the north of Sudan that remains under its control. UN peacekeeping chief Alain Le Roy said it would be up to the UN Security Council to decide how to act on the request.

The Sudan government made its request amid heightened tensions between the north and the south with growing territorial disputes ahead of the south's formal break on July 9. The south has asked that the UN remain after the break.

A letter from Sudan's foreign minister was handed to UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon on Tuesday morning, Le Roy told the 15-member Security Council.

"The letter said clearly that they don't want to continue UNMIS after July 9," he added.

The UN peacekeeping department had recommended that the Security Council extend the UN mission in Sudan, UNMIS, for three months from July 9 while a long term change to the operation is planned.

UNMIS would be an invasion force if imposed against Sudan's will MoFA

Al-Rai Al-Aam Khartoum, 01/06/11 – In an exclusive interview, Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Khaled Musa said he does not think the UN would go on to extend the UNMIS mandate without government consent. Should this happen, he says, UNMIS would turn into an invading force and added he does not think the United Nations Security Council would risk the deployment of an invading force in Sudan. He said Sudan would launch a diplomatic and political battle "to the end" should the United Nations Security Council extend the mandate without Sudan's consent.

On Abyei, he noted that UNMIS did lose some troops in the recent attack in the area, though there has been no announcement of the casualty figures.

He described the UNMIS performance of late as “good and acceptable”

NCP warns against UN use of Chapter VII provisions on Abyei

Al-Rai Al-Aam Khartoum, 01/06/11 – NCP Spokesperson Ibrahim Gandour has warned the UN against use of the Chapter VII provisions of its mandate in Abyei, saying that this would be a “grave mistake with a high price”. Addressing the press yesterday, he said that he was sure the international community is more sensible than that.

NCP denies agreeing to demilitarized zone with South

Sudantribune.com Khartoum, 31/05/11 - The ruling National Congress Party (NCP) in Sudan denied reports of an agreement with the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement (SPLM) on establishing a demilitarized zone on the North-South borders.

NCP media secretary Ibrahim Ghandour downplayed the AU’s announcement describing what was signed as a plan given to both sides as part of many on the table that could form the basis of a framework agreement.

Ghandour stressed that the proposals submitted are still being discussed with none being endorsed yet.

Alex de Waal, an adviser for AUHIP, who has facilitated negotiations on security issues between Sudan’s north and south regions, told *Associated Press* from Addis Ababa that the parties agreed on Monday during talks in Ethiopia’s capital to form a common, demilitarized zone stretching across the 1,300-mile north-south border.

The SPLM expressed skepticism on whether such an agreement can be implemented.

“The question is, whether the Khartoum army and intelligence implement it?” SPLA spokesperson Col. Philip Aguer commented to *New York Times*. “We doubt it very much.”

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) in its discussion of Sudan today, saw trading of accusations between representatives of North and South Sudan.

"We went to Abyei to put the house in order and to stop the SPLA from committing violations," Sudan’s Permanent Representative Dafalla Al-Haj Osman said. He added that the north’s military presence in Abyei would be "temporary."

Ezekiel Gathouth, the south Sudan government’s envoy to the United States and United Nations, called the north’s incursion into Abyei "a most serious violation" of the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Accord (CPA).

"Khartoum’s actions over the last week represent a grave escalation that risks the resumption of armed conflict between the parties" he said.

Gathouth also criticized the UN forces in Abyei for not protecting civilians when the north’s troops entered Abyei. The UN troops "reportedly remained inside their compound during the military attacks," he said.

SPLA denies having troops in Sudan’s Blue Nile and S. Kordofan

Sudantribune.com Bor, 31/06/11 – Speaking to *Sudan Tribune* from Juba, SPLA spokesman, Col. Philip Aguer said the SPLA had no forces to withdraw from South Kordofan and Blue Nile. His statements come in the wake of an ultimatum by the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) for the SPLA to withdraw from those areas.

“There are no forces to be withdrawn from South Kordofan or Nuba, because the forces that are there in South Kordofan and Blue [Nile] are sons and daughters of Nuba and Blue Nile, so we have no right to withdraw them to South Sudan,” said Aguer.

On Abyei, he said that the SPLA would not go to war on the issue but would leave the case to the international community. “We are not going to war. We have left the case of Abyei to the international community. UN will see that issue. The violation of CPA and violations of Abyei protocol are in the hands of UN”, he said.

Aguer said people of Blue Nile and Southern Kordofan have arms which they acquired during the civil war. As part of the CPA the SPLA was made the official army of South Sudan. He said it is up to the north whether to demobilize, reintegrate or disarm those with arms in Blue Nile and South Kordofan.

AEC’s work to end by the end of this month – Sir Plumbly

Al-Sahafa Khartoum, 01/06/11 – The head of the Assessment and Evaluation Commission (AEC), Sir Derek Plumbly, has revealed that the parties to the CPA may resume talks in Addis on a number of outstanding issues and on the post-referendum arrangements under AU sponsorship next week.

Following a meeting yesterday with representatives of the partners to the CPA and of the UK, the USA and Norway (the Troika), the head of the AEC said that the meeting discussed three main issues covering the resumption of talks on the outstanding issues, post-referendum arrangements talks in Addis and the situation in Abyei and the tensions in Blue Nile and Southern Kordofan. He said that the parties agreed on the need for intensive talks to address all the major outstanding issues ahead of the end of the Interim Period. They also subscribed to the view that there is no military solution to the Abyei problem.

Sir Plumbly revealed that the AEC intends to send a team to Abyei soon to assess the situation on the ground.

He also noted that the AEC would end its work by the end of the mandate period on 30th June.

Other Highlights

JDB meeting in Juba postponed indefinitely

Al-Ahdath Khartoum, 01/06/11 – The technical committee has indefinitely postponed a meeting of the Joint Defence Board (JDB) scheduled to for Juba yesterday to discuss a number of joint security issues.

A spokesperson for the JDBs revealed that the suspension comes following the failure of the UNMIS to provide air transport for delegates from the SAF to attend the Juba meeting. He pointed out that UNMIS provides transport if the party that intends use of this service applies beforehand.

He pointed out that SAF delegates in the past had chartered air transport for such meetings but this time round decided to request UNMIS transport but gave a short notice for that, thus causing the postponement.

Situation worsening for Abyei displaced: aid groups

AFP Khartoum, 31/05/11 - Aid groups warned on Tuesday of a worsening humanitarian situation in south Sudan, with the UN refugee agency now saying 60,000 people had fled Abyei, and amid fears the border town of Agok might be attacked.

"At the moment we can say there are an estimated 60,000 people who have fled to the south from Abyei," Mimi Girard, a UNHCR spokeswoman in Juba, told *AFP*. "The numbers are growing by the day."

The International Organisation for Migration said it had so far registered 30,642 people who had fled the violence in the contested border region, which was seized by the northern army 10 days ago.

The IOM said most were women, children and the elderly.

It said another 30,000 were reportedly in need of registration, adding that the displaced people urgently required shelter, food and sanitation facilities, as most had fled Abyei without any belongings.

Humanitarian workers say heavy rains and fuel shortages were hampering their access to people needing emergency aid.

"Vehicles are more and more getting stuck in the mud," Girard said.

In Warrap state's Twic County, to where many Abyei residents fled, basic life-saving and life-sustaining services were lacking, the UN's humanitarian office (OCHA) said in its latest report.

The fear of ongoing violence has also caused many of those fleeing the army, the vast majority them pro-southern Dinka Ngok people, to hide in the bush, according to the UNHCR, particularly in Agok.

"The UN team (that visited last week) saw a stream of civilians heading south towards and past Agok," Adrian Edwards, a UNHCR spokesman in Geneva, said on Tuesday.

"A number of villages just south of Abyei were burning. Many people feared that Agok itself might soon be attacked," he added.

Stakeholders adopt Doha framework for peace in Darfur

Sudantribune.com Doha, 31/05/11 - Delegates at the All Darfur Stakeholders Conference endorsed a framework document for peace in Darfur prepared by the mediation after two year of tireless efforts.

"The Conference endorsed the Doha draft document as the basis for reaching a permanent ceasefire, a comprehensive and inclusive peace settlement, and sustainable peace and stability in Darfur," says the text of the final communiqué read at the colored meeting by Qatari state minister for foreign affairs Ahmed bin Abdullah Al-Mahoud.

The stakeholders further urged the Sudanese government and the rebel groups in the troubled region of Darfur to "make every effort to reach a permanent ceasefire and a comprehensive peace settlement on the basis of this document".

Justice Chande lauds appointment of state prosecutors

Al-Sahafa Khartoum, 01/06/11 – Independent Human Rights Expert on Sudan, Justice Mohamed Chande, started his visit to Sudan yesterday with talks in Khartoum with members of the Sudan

Human Rights Advisory Council.

Undersecretary for the Ministry of Justice, Isameldine Abdulgadir, headed the Sudanese side of the talks said that the Advisory Council briefed Justice Chande on the recent developments in the human rights situation.

On his part, Justice Chande said commended steps taken by the Sudan government to appoint a prosecutor who would be touring detentions centres of the security organs. He described this as a very important development. He also urged Sudan to form the National Commission for Human Rights.

OPINION PIECE: More war in Sudan? It's in no one's interest.

The Christian Science Monitor - The land-grab in Sudan's Abyei region serves no one, not even dictator Bashir who instigated it.

War again threatens a peace between North and South Sudan that took two decades and 2 million lives to reach, and that is slated to result in a new nation – Southern Sudan – in July.

As if on autopilot, Sudan's dictator, Omar al-Bashir, has once more resorted to force instead of negotiations to settle a dispute in Africa's largest country. But it's a blunt tool that won't, in the long run, serve the interests of his country, or the region and beyond.

Reminiscent of the long tragedy in Darfur, the Sudanese Armed Forces invaded the town of Abyei on May 21 – burning, looting, attacking, and forcing tens of thousands of people to flee. As the Obama administration rightly stated, it was a “disproportionate” response to an attack by the South on Sudanese troops.

Khartoum's military now controls the Abyei region, a fertile area near oil fields that's about the size of Connecticut. It straddles the North and South and is prized by both.

The status of the Abyei area – whether it belonged to the North or South – was supposed to be decided last January in a referendum, along with a vote determining South Sudan's future. Those in Abyei never voted because of disagreement over who was eligible, even while nearly 99 percent of people in Southern Sudan chose to secede from the North. The referendum was part of an American-backed peace treaty between North and South in 2005.

Independence for Southern Sudan is set for July 9, though many outstanding issues are still being negotiated between North and South, including how to split oil revenues. It looks as if Khartoum invaded Abyei to improve its bargaining position, and to make Abyei's unresolved status a fait accompli.

Like many dictators, Sudanese President Bashir keeps pushing until he encounters pushback. As with his neighboring dictator in Libya, the world needs to act with one voice on Abyei – not by dropping bombs, but by exercising muscular diplomacy that includes tougher sanctions.

The international community has condemned the invasion, with the United Nations Security Council demanding the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Sudanese troops. That's noteworthy, because Council member China, which has significant oil interests in Sudan, has traditionally been Khartoum's friend, selling it arms.

Beijing, though, quietly supported the peace process, realizing that it must get along with the oil-rich South, and that instability only endangers its own energy supply. Now is the time for China to use its leverage on Khartoum to withdraw.

The crisis also requires consequences, not just condemnation, from the international community.

The referendum had put Khartoum on the road to normalization with the West; Bashir must understand that the Abyei invasion puts that path in jeopardy.

Encouragingly, the North and South are talking to each other, this week agreeing on a demilitarized zone along their shared border (if they can define it). And neighboring Ethiopia is apparently ready to send peacekeeping troops to Abyei. Ethiopia is respected by both sides and is eager to head off insecurity that may ricochet from Sudan into its own country.

Bashir must come to realize that military might and the threat of renewed war do not serve his interests. The North and South are mutually dependent on oil, and prolonged instability will interrupt that revenue stream.

And the grab-what-you-want tactic is unlikely to scare Sudan's restive regions into unity with Khartoum. Rebels in the vast western region of Sudan, for instance, are reportedly emboldened by the referendum in the South.

Bashir's practice has been to keep the regions in line through military threat and patronage, with state goodies flowing to loyal regional leaders and the capital. Everyone else ekes out a dirt-poor existence. But with a spring cleaning taking place in Arab states just to his north, how long before downtrodden Sudanese get the same idea?

In the long run, only an inclusive government will unite the Sudanese and put this country on the road to greater prosperity. Forcing it is so old school.

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