



MEDIA MONITORING REPORT

United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS)

FRIDAY, 15 MARCH 2013

SOUTH SUDAN

- South Sudan orders resumption of oil output (*Agence France Presse (AFP)*)
- SPLA says it respects security deal, but will retaliate if attacked (*Sudantribune.com*)
- South Sudan orders oil companies to resume production (*AllAfrica.com*)
- China denies promising S. Sudan an \$8bn development deal (*Sudantribune.com*)
- Consular officials visit Perth man jailed in Sudan (*Theage.com.au*)
- Judge says his resignation from court driven by honesty (*Gurtong.net*)
- Inmates report of torture in Rumbek prison (*Gurtong.net*)
- South Sudan, Egypt sign nine memoranda of understanding (*Radio Bakhita*)
- Egypt ready to invest in South Sudan, says PM (*Sudantribune.com*)
- Authority warns citizens against explosives (*Radio Easter*)
- Mundri east cattle raid leaves one dead (*Gurtong.net*)
- After a long fight for freedom, South Sudan cracks down on dissent (*Reuters*)
- South Sudan and partners sign agreement to fight Malaria (*Sudantribune.com*)
- NGO to support health centers in Yei (*Easter Radio*)
- JICA urged to prioritize Malakal water project (*Gurtong.org*)
- Officials discover lepers, TB patients selling food items (*Good News Radio*)
- Central equatoria state government approves funds for women projects (*Gurtong.net*)
- Women launch peace conference in Bor (*Gurtong.net*)
- UNHCR to resettle thousands of S. Sudanese refugees in Ethiopia (*Sudantribune.com*)
- Western equatoria state ministry starts adult education for unclassified staff (*Gurtong.net*)
- USAID hands over fisheries institute to university administration in Jonglei (*Gurtong.net*)
- Eastern Equatoria State parliament to close for recess: speaker (*Gurtong.net*)

SOUTH SUDAN, SUDAN

- Sudan, South talk peace as insurgency rages (*Agence France Presse (AFP)*)
- West calls on Sudans to get serious (*United Press International (UPI)*)
- Sudanese cabinet backs cooperation agreement with Juba (*Sudantribune.com*)
- UN chief appoints new Abyei force commander (*Sudantribune.com*)

OTHER HIGHLIGHTS

- Sudan accepts to negotiate with SPLM-N rebels, NCP sources (*Sudantribune.com*)
- Sudan's 1st VP holds rare meeting with opposition figure in Germany (*Sudantribune.com*)
- Egypt's Morse to visit Sudan in April (*Sudantribune.com*)

OPINION/ANALYSIS/INTERVIEWS/EDITORIAL

- Analysis about Justice John Clement Resignation from Judiciary (*Sudantribune.com*),

NOTE: Reproduction here does not mean that the UNMISS Communications & Public Information Office can vouch for the accuracy or veracity of the contents, nor does this report reflect the views of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan. Furthermore, international copyright exists on some materials and this summary should not be disseminated beyond the intended list of recipients.

Highlights

South Sudan orders resumption of oil output

Agence France Presse (AFP) Juba, 14/3/2013 – South Sudan ordered oil companies in the country to resume production Thursday and end a 14-month-old shutdown sparked by furious arguments with rival Sudan, officials said.

"The foreign oil companies and pipeline operators... are hereby ordered and instructed forthwith to recommence and re-establish the production of crude oil," oil minister Stephen Dhieu Dau said in a statement.

The order, read out to the heads of oil companies, follows the signing on Tuesday of the latest string of deals between Juba and Khartoum to restart the flow of oil.

Oil companies in South Sudan include Malaysian state-owned PETRONAS, China's National Petroleum Company (CNPC), and the Sudd Petroleum Operating Company (SPOC), a joint venture between PETRONAS and South Sudan's government.

Last October South Sudan issued similar orders to oil companies to resume production, but Khartoum scupper the deal after accusing South Sudan of backing rebels on its territory.

"South Sudan officially from today is now giving the order to the operators to start production, and we hope that within a short time the oil will flow," Dau added.

If the agreement is followed -- and multiple previous deals have been ignored -- it could still take several weeks for companies to reopen pipelines closed for 14 months.

The exact date for a restart will "depend on the technical readiness" of the companies, Dau added.

Emi Suhardi Mohd Fadzil, president of SPOC, which operates in South Sudan's Unity state, said he hoped they "should be back in production within three to four weeks."

The two neighbours are increasingly cash-strapped after Juba shut down oil output a year ago in a furious row accusing Khartoum of stealing its crude.

Since then the former civil war foes -- which fought again along their undemarcated border in March and April 2012 -- have failed to implement a string of deals.

Khartoum accuses South Sudan of supporting rebels -- former comrades during the 1983-2005 civil wars - - which has been a major obstacle to implementing agreements.

The South, in turn, says Sudan backs insurgents on its territory, a tactic it used to deadly effect during the two decades of civil war.

However, Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir this week accepted an invitation to visit Juba for the first time since South Sudan won independence in July 2011, although no date has been announced.

When it gained independence, landlocked South Sudan inherited two-thirds of the former unified country's oil, while crucial pipelines, processing facilities and the only port remained in Sudan.

SPLA says it respects security deal, but will retaliate if attacked

AllAfrica.com Bentiu, 14/3/2013 – The South Sudanese army (SPLA) will respect the recent security agreement reached with Sudan, but will protect and defend its territorial integrity if attacked, the army's fourth division commander said Thursday.

"All our areas [are] in the frontlines, [and] we will never lose any inch of land from Panakuach to Jau, which [Sudan] always claim. The will never fall under Sudan unless with lessons", James Koang Chuol said at the official opening of the army's headquarters in Unity state's Rubkona county.

Both Sudan and South Sudan last week agreed on immediate and unconditional withdrawal of forces to their respective side of the border within two weeks, to allow for the establishment of a Safe Demilitarized Border Zone (SDBZ).

As part of the security agreement, the two countries also committed themselves to the deployment of the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism (JBVMM) and the activation of all security related mechanisms, starting 10 March.

Under the agreement, both countries are required to deploy their troops 10 kilometers from their current positions to their side of the border, with the United Nations Interim Security Forces for Abyei (UNISFA) tasked with monitoring the area.

The inclusion of the so called 'Mile 14' in the proposed border buffer zone last year caused anxiety in South Sudan's Northern Bahr el Ghazal state, despite the African Union (AU) and the UN making clear that the location of the buffer zone would have no bearing on any final border settlement.

Sudan had initially proposed an extension of the demilitarized area on the common border to include Blue Nile and South Kordofan states, but Juba declined to accept. The Sudanese army (SAF) later claimed Juba refused to withdraw its troops from the disputed area until the two reached a consensus on the mediation process, which is being overseen by the AU High Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP).

Speaking at the opening of the headquarters, Chuol urged both the national and state governments to strengthen collaborative efforts to eradicate cattle raids, which continue to cause insecurity among neighbouring states.

Unity state's deputy governor, Michael Chiengjiek Geay, insists the newly reached security agreement will improve strained relations between South Sudan and its northern neighbour.

At the same time, he encouraged the army to step up the fight against rampant cattle raids, saying civilians continued to hold illegal arms, despite the government's various disarmament campaigns.

He said the army should take a hard line on cattle raiding activities, once the cattle rustling law is amended.

"I know every one of us has relatives [involved] in all sorts of cattle practice[s] in South Sudan, but brother and sisters, I want to assure you that if the government comes out with a law that [stipulates] whoever [is] involved in cattle raiding must be killed, you should not react negatively to it", the deputy governor said.

He urged the army to remain vigilant on cattle raiding activities, saying the practice is threatening to undermine the struggle for South Sudan's independence, attained after over two decades of civil with Sudan.

South Sudan has been plagued by cattle raids and ethnic violence since gaining independence in July 2011. The UN estimates some 200,000 South Sudanese are likely to be internally displaced this year because of ongoing violence.

South Sudan orders oil companies to resume production

Sudantribune.com Juba, 14/3/2013 – South Sudan ordered oil companies and pipeline operators to immediately resume production of crude oil for delivery to international markets through Sudan on Thursday, a move seen as part of its commitment to implement an agreement signed this week.

Disagreement over oil charges prompted South Sudan to shut down oil production in January 2012, accusing Sudan of stealing its oil and diverting it into other pipelines. The two sides signed an agreement in September 2012, allowing Juba to resume export through Sudan, but disagreement of border security issues has delayed implementation of the deal.

Addressing journalists on Thursday, South Sudan's oil minister, Stephen Dhieu Dau, said the government was committed to the full implementation of the September agreement, particularly the issue relating to resuming oil production.

Before the shutdown South Sudan's 350,000 barrels per day provided 98% of the government's revenue. The closure has also effected Sudan's economy, which lost 75% of its oil production when South Sudan seceded in July 2011.

"The foreign oil companies and pipeline operators operating in the republic of South Sudan are hereby ordered and instructed forthwith to recommence and re-establish the production of the crude oil and all petroleum operations within producing blocks", Dau told reporters in Juba.

The minister said production would resume in blocks 1, 2, 4, 3, 7 and 5A.

Minister Dau said Thursday's order revoked an instruction issued on 14 November 2012, which instructed oil companies working in South Sudan to postpone resumption of production due to additional conditions raised by the government of Sudan.

"The oil resumption order shall continue in all aspects to have full force and effect and be binding on the foreign oil companies and pipeline operators in the republic of South Sudan", he said.

"This supplemental oil resumption orders is issued without prejudices to order to suspend or terminate in future in whole or in part of the crude oil resumption production and petroleum operations in the republic of South Sudan as permitted by law or any agreement to which the republic of South Sudan is a party", Dau told reporters at a news conference.

South Sudan gained independence in 2011 from neighbouring Sudan after fighting repeated wars against successive Khartoum regimes, over inequality, separating religion from politics and identity.

Despite a six-year peace deal and almost 20 months since South Sudan's independence, the two countries have still not agreed on the status of disputed areas and large areas of the oil-rich border are not yet demarcated.

China denies promising S. Sudan an \$8bn development deal

Sudantribune.com Juba, 14/3/2013 – A senior diplomat has denied China ever promised South Sudan \$8 billion in development funds after President Salva Kiir visited Beijing last April.

South Sudan's government announced the figure following Kiir's trip to Beijing, but until now Beijing had neither confirmed nor denied the claim.

In an interview with Reuters on Thursday, China's special envoy to Africa, Zhong Jianhua, who assisted with mediation efforts between the two countries, said there was never any deal.

However, Zhong conceded that South Sudan had potential and that China may be willing to play a future role in speeding up the country's development, adding that any deal would be contingent on a lasting peace between Sudan and South Sudan.

"I don't believe that this is something both sides acknowledged following the visit. This was not mentioned in any of the official Chinese reports following the visit; there was nothing about \$8 billion," he was quoted as saying by Reuters.

"It's not impossible – maybe in the future, and maybe not only \$8 billion," Zhong added, without elaborating further.

The new nation faces enormous challenges ahead in terms of providing adequate infrastructure, including running water, electricity, road lights and bridges.

As a major supporter of Sudanese president Omar Hassan al-Bashir and South Sudan's biggest oil customer - accounting for 82% of its oil exports, China has had to play a delicate balancing act during attempts to resolve ongoing conflicts with the country's northern neighbour.

South Sudan, which depends on oil revenues for 98% of its annual budget, broke away from Sudan last July, with lack of agreement over how to divide the country's vast oil wealth inevitably bringing the two countries to the brink of war once more last April.

The bitter dispute saw landlocked South Sudan shut down its 350,000 barrel-per-day crude output over a year ago following a disagreement with Sudan over how much it should pay to pipe oil through Sudanese territory.

In what is being hailed as a significant breakthrough, both countries this week finalized a deal to resolve long-running border and security disputes. South Sudan said it could be ready to restart oil production within three weeks and ordered oil companies and pipeline operators to begin prepare to resume production on Thursday.

Under the terms of the implementation matrix distributed by the African Union High Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP), the governments of the two Sudans are to instruct oil companies within 14 days to re-establish production, processing and transportation.

Zhong told Reuters that although the agreement was a positive step, he remained concerned about the peace process.

“These antagonistic feelings still exist. There are still people who think now is not the time for reconciliation ... But the general trend is still progressing in a positive way,” he said.

“[Former] president Hu [Jintao] told president Kiir very clearly when he visited that if you want to develop, it will be very hard without peace,” Zhong added, saying his country was committed to working with the international community to mediate between the two sides.

While Western countries have turned their back on Sudan since the current government Khartoum came to power in 1989, due human rights abuses and links to terrorist organisations, China has ramped up its presence in the troubled region offering technical expertise and investment unencumbered by political conditions.

As civil war raged in Sudan’s western Darfur region the rest of the world stayed away from Sudan’s oil industry with US introducing sanctions. State-owned China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) led the development of Sudan’s oil industry during the 1990s.

It has since become the biggest investor in Sudan, importing some 70 percent of Sudan’s total oil exports in 2010. China is now Africa’s largest trading partner, having overtaken the United States in 2009.

With most of its oil investments now located primarily in South Sudan, China has a vested interest in the new nation.

Oil is the main source of state income for food imports and foreign currency in both Sudans, with the loss of oil exports sending the countries’ economies in to turmoil.

Consular officials visit Perth man jailed in Sudan

Theage.com.au, 14/3/2013 – Australian consular officials are on their way to visit an Australian citizen locked up in a South Sudan military prison after being arrested during ethnic clashes.

Manyang Maker Tulba, 21, was jailed in Rumbek, in South Sudan's north last month after clashes in which more than 100 young men were taken to a military prison in Langcok.

Mr Tulba, who graduated from Perth's Edith Cowan University in 2011 with a bachelor of criminology and justice, was visiting family at the time.

His supporters say he was a bystander rather than a participant in the violent clashes, which left six people dead, the South Sudan Tribune has reported.

It is claimed Mr Tulba did not take part in the fighting, but was swept up in the mass arrests by the local state security service.

Magang Chol Mathei, the chairman of the Rumbek Youth Union in Australia, has claimed Mr Tulba had also been mistreated in jail, with reports of beatings and whippings.

Mr Tulba is an Australian citizen who was born in South Sudan, but has lived in Perth since 2003. A spokesman for Foreign Affairs Minister Bob Carr said Australian consular officials in Nairobi had made contact with local authorities in Rumbek, and had confirmed Mr Tulba was in jail.

They had also confirmed through Mr Tulba's family that he had been visited by his sister.

"They are on their way to Rumbek, and will speak to the Australian and offer any consular assistance that is required," the spokesman said.

The spokesman confirmed no charges had been laid against Mr Tulba, and if that remained the case, then efforts to have him released would be stepped up. The consular official is expected to arrive in Rumbek, via Juba, in the next 24 hours.

Judge says his resignation from court driven by honesty

Gurtong.net Juba, 14/3/2013 – A judge who resigned from the Court of Appeal has said that the decision to tender his resignation to the President Salva Kiir through Chief Justice, Chan Reech Madut was driven by honesty.

Justice John Clement Kuc cited bad administration, corruption, nepotism and favoritism in the judiciary as reasons for his resignation.

He also highlighted the need for recruitment; training and a roadmap to track court cases as possible ways of strengthening the judicial system.

He said that as a judge he is supposed to be a 'mirror' that reflects the people.

"I have resigned because I am a judge and if I am a judge, I have always to be honest with myself and to be honest with my job," he said.

Justice Kuc expressed disappointment over criteria under which 78 legal assistants were selected without being awarded marks in the interviews.

He questioned the selection of the legal assistants from nearly 600 lawyers who attended the interview saying that the interview was just a cover up.

According to him, there has been nepotism in the system and that driven by honesty and transparency as one of their principles in the legal field, he decided to resign.

Nevertheless, he says judges are few in the country, a number of about 80. He added that the public is crying that the judiciary is not working.

Justice Kuc said that the judiciary has a big budget which he says some of it should have been used to employ more judges.

Juba prison alone is said to have more than 1000 remand cases according to the Justice. He said that for those cases to be finished, it needs a program of six to eight months.

South Sudan has been accused of prolonged detention without trial something which the judge says is not an issue of government because money is being given to the judiciary.

"Am supposed to be there to help the people so if I become vulnerable because of politics of certain person who is sitting on me, then I must step aside," he said. Recently, the Chief Justice, Chan Reche Madut was accused of appointing his daughter as a legal assistant.

Inmates report of torture in Rumbek prison

Gurtong.net Rumbek, 15/3/2013 – Authorities in Lakes State are holding more than 30 youth at Rumbek Central Prison charged with impregnating underage girls and some have reported cases of torture happening at the correction facility.

The facility has more than 1,300 suspects arrested for several accusations ranging from murder to adultery and minor cases with some high record of arbitrary arrests carried out by government officials.

Nathan Marial Deng Ngor, a radio journalist working with state government was arrested since February and was sentenced to jail for one year imprisonment while he was not allowed to have a defence lawyer or even defend himself in court.

Marial says his arrest is politically motivated.

“They arrested me when a girl said that she is pregnant. We agreed as a family to marry that girl and relatives to the girl accepted. Shortly after I collected some cows to marry her, the relatives changed their mind and the said girl is underage and took the case to the High Court direct,” he said.

Marial said that the judge sentenced him to one year and says that there is serious mistreatment going on inside the jail.

“The girl deceived me that she was pregnant but after I was convicted with imprisonment for one year, later on after I am sent to prison she said that she is not pregnant,” Marial said.

Isaac Pur Majak, Head of High Court in Rumbek says that he will not revise his decision although girl deceived Marial, there is no option and Marial should go to the court of appeal despite that Marial has no lawyer to follow the case.

Most of the arrested people did not have an advocate or defence lawyers.

An Australian university graduate is also reported being tortured with daily beatings and whippings and starved of food and water, according to relatives who are pleading for his release and return to Australia.

Manyang Maker Tulba, 22, is one of about 100 young men being held in a military prison in Rumbek as part of a state investigation into violent ethnic clashes last month.

Mr Tulba, an Australian citizen who was born in South Sudan but has lived in Perth since 2003 and was visiting his family at the time of his arrest.

“Most of us arrested here have not stood before a judge - we are being subjected to daily beating - we ask to get ourselves defence lawyer but they don’t grant us permission,” said one of the prisoners who talked to the media from the facility last month.

William Marial Agok, Lakes state prison deputy director at the time said that, “We have taken administrative measure against those soldiers who torture prisoners were served with warning letter and administrative measure is being undertaken. The prison warden decides alone and beat up one prisoner with 25 lashes. The nine suspects who received the beating remain in prison awaiting prosecution.”

In 2012, the Human Rights Watch launched an investigative report depicting the status of human rights in South Sudan prisons.

The 105-page report titled “Prison Is Not for Me: Arbitrary Detention in South Sudan”, documents violations of due process rights, patterns of wrongful deprivation of liberty, and the harsh, unacceptable prison conditions in which detainees live.

During the launch, South Sudan Vice President Dr Riek Machar said that the report will help his government in soliciting for suitable solutions to address the challenges facing the prisons department.

The research was carried out in twelve of the country’s 79 prisons during a 10-month period before and after South Sudan’s independence in areas with the largest prison populations.

It revealed that, a third of South Sudan's prison population of approximately 6,000 has not been convicted of any offense or in some cases even charged with one, but are detained, often for long periods, waiting for police, prosecutors, and judges to process their cases.

The vast majority of detainees have no legal representation, because they cannot afford a lawyer and South Sudan has no functioning legal aid system, adding that Judges pass long sentences and even condemn to death people who, without legal assistance, were unable to understand the nature of charges against them or to call and prepare witnesses in their defense.

The government pointed out infrastructural challenges, insecurity, budget constraints and other political problems that hinder government’s efforts to prioritize the improvement of the prisons in the country.

Human Rights Watch interviewed more than 250 inmates and a range of justice officials, correctional officers, police, prosecutors, and traditional authorities.

South Sudan, Egypt sign nine memoranda of understanding

Radio Bakhita Juba, 14/3/2012 – South Sudan and Egypt on Thursday signed nine memoranda of understanding to strengthen relations and boost development in the new country.

Vice President Riek Machar told journalists after meeting Egyptian Prime Minister, Hesham Mohamed Qandil in Juba that their talks were fruitful.

He said the two countries signed nine memoranda of understanding with five of them focusing on health.

Dr Machar did not mention specific projects discussed.

Hesham Mohamed Qandil said Egyptian government is willing to bring development and encourage investors to come and invest in South Sudan.

He said South Sudan is key player in the region and that his visit marks the new beginning.

Prime Minister added that Egyptian President Mohamed Morse invited his South Sudanese counterpart Salva Kiir to visit Cairo.

Mohamed Qandil was accompanied to Juba by businessmen.

Egypt ready to invest in South Sudan, says PM

Sudantribune.com Juba, 14/3/2013 – South Sudan and Egypt have inked five different agreements that seek to strengthen bilateral relations between them, and provide the latter investment opportunities in the new nation.

The five Memoranda of Understandings (MoUs) were signed Thursday during a meeting between the Egyptian Prime Minister, Hisham Qandil and South Sudan's Vice-President, Riek Machar in the capital, Juba.

Agriculture, health, animal resources and fisheries were some of the key sectors that the agreements covered.

The Egyptian PM, accompanied by a large delegation of investors, pledged strong commitment to the existing bilateral relations between the Arab nation and South Sudan.

“The Republic of South Sudan is a key player in the region and we want to maintain a strong relationship with them, by investing in it and be part of its nation building process”, said Qandil.

Meanwhile, Machar, who witnessed the various line ministers sign the MoUs, said the agreements demonstrate the political will to maintain strong ties between South Sudan and Egypt.

Also discussed, was the prospect of Egypt's involvement in to the country's private section, an area with huge potential, but largely undeveloped.

The Arab Republic of Egypt was one of the first countries in the region to recognize the independence of South Sudan in July 2011, which resulted from the outcome of the referendum on self-determination, held six months earlier.

Since then, South Sudan and Egypt have exchanged diplomatic missions, with each opening an embassy and assigning an ambassador to the other.

The new nation, from the time it attained independence, has embarked on attracting foreign investment, promoting bilateral cooperation and diplomatic relations with all countries in the world.

Authority warns citizens against explosives

Radio Easter Yei, 14/3/2013 – The National Demining Authority in Yei River County of Central Equatoria State has warned citizens in the area against playing with metal objects that may be explosives.

Greater Equatoria Coordinator for National Mine Authority Joseph Ramba Simon expressed concern on the dangers of dealing with metal business in the County, Easter Radio reported.

Mr Ramba said many people lost their lives from remains of unexploded ordinance like land mines and unexploded bullets in the community.

He appealed to the population to stop metal scrap business which may turn out to be explosives left during the long war.

Children in Yei River County are very business with metal scrap collection to earn money.

Mundri east cattle raid leaves one dead

Gurtong.net Juba, 14/3/2013 – A cattle raid in Mundri East County has left one person dead with another injured according to the county's commissioner, January Jonny Sebit.

"It was on Friday the 8th of this month at around 10:45PM that an unknown gunmen came to Yiba one of the Bomas from Minga Payam in Mundri East and they attacked a cattle camp," he said.

He said that 134 heads of cows were taken with one person killed and another injured and the third person who was at the cattle camp escaped.

The commissioner said that he was informed and he was able to send police to pursue the raiders and all the cows were recovered the following morning with 34 cows already handed to the owners.

One of the cattle raiders was arrested according to the commissioner, who is reported to have come from Yirol.

Another chief from Terekeka County known as Isaiah Kenyi Nyombe is allegedly arrested for hosting the cattle raiders and is said to have been handed to authorities in Terekeka.

He said that he has told his people to be calm and allow the law to pursue its course. The commissioner says that they are planning to bring the chief of Terekeka, Juba and Yirol counties together so that they have a chief's conference to tell them the importance of controlling cattle to avoid conflicts.

He added that intervening through the chiefs is better because they are in direct link with the people on the ground.

Jonny called on all the commissioners to ensure the movement of cattle keepers is controlled during the rainy season. He added that cattle keepers move with children who should have been in school.

He called on all citizens to embark on agriculture and ensure that the children go to school.

Furthermore, he called on the cattle keepers to adopt the modern methods of keeping cattle. He also called for national unity and love for another onto halt tribal conflicts.

After a long fight for freedom, South Sudan cracks down on dissent

Reuters Juba, 14/3/2013 – Three weeks after Christmas, a package wrapped in plastic appeared on John Penn de Ngong's bed.

Unwrapping the parcel, the South Sudanese poet-cum-activist found a jawbone, a bullet and a death threat signed by a group that called itself the Committee for the Operation to Restore Patriotism in South Sudan - CORPSS.

The handwritten note warned him to stop writing or he would get the same "gift" as his friend Diing Chan Awuol, an outspoken columnist who was shot in the face and killed at his home in the capital Juba in early December.

"We thought it was (the jaw) of a human being that night, but later the national security said it was the jawbone of a dog, and a bullet," Ngong said, speaking by telephone from a secret location abroad.

In July 2011, South Sudan was carved out of Sudan, the culmination of a 2005 peace deal that ended decades of brutal civil war between southern insurgents and the central government in Khartoum.

A year and half on, the ecstasy of long-awaited independence has given way to the punishing task of finally translating the old rebel slogans of freedom and democracy into a blueprint for running a secure and stable state.

There are signs South Sudan is already sliding toward censorship of its nascent media. Dissenting voices like Ngong accuse the young government of clamping down on the very freedoms its leaders spent decades fighting for in the bush.

Before he was killed, Ngong's friend Awuol - better known by his pen name Isaiah Abraham - had published a piece that called on the government to foster better ties with its old foe Sudan and refrain from supporting rebel groups across the border.

"They see us as a threat," Ngong said. "It is very disheartening for us, war survivors; to achieve our independence from the government we thought was our oppressor only to find ourselves on the run again."

Hit List

Despite noisy declarations about finding Awuol's killers, the government turned down assistance of a detective from the United States Federal Bureau of Investigation.

The government says it has made several arrests, but none of the suspects has been brought before court and Awuol's family says the investigation has stalled.

After his friend's death, Ngong started assembling a book of Awuol's essays and his own barbed poetry.

He claims this, and his other writings, put him on a hit-list of government critics.

A misspelled threat sent from a CORPSS email address ordered him to "stop your unpatriotic campaigns against your own country, we can get you! Understand?"

Ngong isn't alone in his concerns for the direction of the young country, whose relatively peaceful birth was heavily supported by Western powers.

This year, South Sudan slipped 13 places to 124 out of 179 countries on the world press freedom index compiled by media watchdog Reporters without Borders.

Political commentator Zechariah Manyok Biar, who wrote about the need to track down Awuol's killers, fled the country in December after a policeman told him he had overheard two men talk about killing him.

He says he traced two cars that were following him; one belonged to the presidential protection unit, the other to a policeman.

"They thought they would restore patriotism by killing people," Biar said by telephone from an undisclosed location outside the country.

In January, two U.N. human rights officers investigating Biar's case were arrested and interrogated by South Sudan's security service for several hours.

Government spokesman Barnaba Marial Benjamin said the investigation into Awuol's assassination was ongoing and rejected Biar and Ngong's harassment claims.

"It is mud-slinging on the government. It is not true. If it is true, bring it to the police," Benjamin said.

Animal Farm

South Sudan's minority leader of parliament, Onyoti Adigo Nyikwac, accuses the ruling Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) - which controls more than 90 percent of the legislature's seats - of abandoning its stated principles of "unity, equality and progress" once it gained power.

"The SPLM has become like Animal Farm, where all animals are equal but some are more equal than others," Nyikwac told Reuters, referring to a George Orwell novel that parodied Soviet Russia.

Corruption has become a serious problem. Midway through last year a letter by President Salva Kiir was leaked to the press, in which the president asked some 75 ministers and officials to return \$4 billion of stolen government money.

The government acknowledged the letter was genuine. Government spokesman Benjamin said at the time that more than half of the missing funds were from the country's so-called "durra" scandal, in which a large government purchase of sorghum was allegedly never distributed.

But despite the rise in threats and attacks against dissenting voices, including members of his own party, Nyikwac doesn't see the crackdown as a deliberate policy from top levels of government.

The problem, he says, is the confusion wrought by myriad security agencies operating with weak or often competing command structures and no law governing their work.

In the dingy reception area of National Security headquarters, staff sits transfixed by American wrestling on television.

Minister for National Security Oyay Deng Ajak acknowledged there were problems in the security sector but said he hopes to overcome these by the drafting of a National Security policy.

That may not be enough to reform forces that diplomats say operate above the law. Nominally, the directorate for internal security is part of the Ministry of National Security, but in reality it answers to the Presidency, said Jok Madut Jok, head of the Sudd Institute think tank.

"Nobody is held accountable. The disconnect between the policies and what (security organs) do is the main driving force behind the restriction of the press," he said.

Local journalists say state-sponsored intimidation and impunity are having a profound impact on the media landscape.

One local journalist, who asked to remain anonymous, said the climate of fear since Awuol's assassination has made most journalists "sing to the tune of national security."

Bitter Pill

Western donors have been exasperated by the crackdown and by the young country's decision to shut down its oil industry in a row with Sudan over pipeline fees more than a year ago.

Yet they have shown little appetite for cutting aid because of the risks to regional security were South Sudan to collapse.

One foreign diplomat said donors are likely to swallow the bitter pill of bailing out the government by pledging to pay salaries of teachers and health-workers at an upcoming donor meeting in Washington D.C., despite human rights abuses.

Tom Rhodes of the Committee to Protect Journalists said successful liberation movements like in Eritrea and Zimbabwe had failed to uphold freedom of expression in the past, but foreign governments and aid agencies were often willing to accept that.

"I rarely find instances where donors cut aid because of human rights abuses," he told Reuters by telephone.

That is unlikely to give much comfort to government critics and their families.

At a memorial service three months after Awoul's assassination, family members hung a banner demanding the government bring his killers to justice.

"Is this the South Sudan we fought for?" the banner read.

South Sudan and partners sign agreement to fight Malaria

Sudantribune.com Juba, 13/3/2013 – South Sudan and several international partners have signed an agreement which recommit them to the fight and control of malaria in the new country by 2018.

The five-year program, spearheaded by the ministry of health, has also reviewed the policies and programming framework within the context of the health system and the national development agenda in the country.

The agreement, which involves the World Bank, United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and United Nations agencies, aims to implement a comprehensive Malaria control strategy, calling on both the government and partners to scale up malaria interventions including community-based initiatives.

South Sudan's vice-president Riek Machar Teny, signed the agreement on behalf of the government during a ceremony organized on Tuesday in Juba by the minister of health, Michael Milly Hussein.

In his remarks, Machar urged the health institutions in the country and their counterparts to continue carrying out researches on how best to control malaria in South Sudan. He called on the concerned institutions to initiate establishment of a research oriented center for malaria control.

Minister of health, Michael Milly Hussein, said Malaria is impacting negatively on the economy of the country as it is the leading cause of death and paralyses the workforce.

Malaria constitutes 25% of all deaths related to diseases in South Sudan despite the ministry's prevention effort, which distributed 8 million mosquito nets across the country.

His ministry, he added, was conducting research on different ways to eradicate malaria in South Sudan.

NGO to support health centers in Yei

Easter Radio, 14/3/2013 – Action Africa Help International through the Integrated Service Delivery Programme (ISDP) is carrying out an assessment of health centers to support services delivery in Yei County.

ISDP Programme Manager, Edward Eremugu Lukam told the press that their support will be form of capacity building and equipping health facilities to improve services, Easter Radio reported.

Yei County Health Director, Simon Loro Swaka said this support will enhance work force to render services to the population.

Action Africa Help International will be implementing the twelve months project on service delivery in Yei County including its rural areas.

The NGO working is with the Central Equatoria state ministry of health to improve services delivery.

JICA urged to prioritize Malakal water project

Gurtong.org Malakal, 15/3/2013 – Authorities in Malakal are calling on the Japanese International Corporation Agency (JICA) help solve the water problem in the town.

Engineer James Tuong Luany, the Director General in the State Ministry of Physical Infrastructure and Rural Development said, "It is in the interest of the government to see JICA implementing the water project in the town immediately because the residents are suffering from water shortages."

Last week JICA Chief Representative visited Malakal to launch JICA developmental projects.

Atsuchi Hanatani said the Japanese Agency will implement three projects in Malakal; road, water network connections and rehabilitation of the Malakal port.

"We started to examine the development needs of the different parts of this country. In this process we understand the important of Malakal as a historical and strategic town in South Sudan. We have learned that road and water infrastructures in Malakal were destroyed during the war. We came here to make them again," said Hanatani.

Malakal town lies along the White Nile River with poor road connections. The area has black cotton soils that make it muddy during rainy season making the movement difficult in the town.

The residents living in the town get their drinking water from the Nile waters which health officials said it is not safe for drinking.

JICA last week launched the beginning of what they called, 'community roads improvement' from the south of Malakal leaving water project behind.

"We are asking JICA to put water project implementation at their first priorities. Our citizens travel long distances to collect even dirty water from the Nile for their domestic use and drinking. That Nile water can invite diseases to the people," Eng. Tuong said.

Eng. Tuong said JICA will make water network connections in Bam, Dengershufu residential areas and west of the town.

He added that JICA will construct water treatment center in Malakal to relieve people from drinking dirty water.

Officials discover lepers, TB patients selling food items

Good News Radio Rumbek, 14/3/2013 – The health officials in Rumbek town have discovered that the five leprosy and TB patients who were warned to keep off from selling food items have resumed their business.

Makur Ater Akony told Good News Radio on Thursday that the leprosy patients are selling food items with fresh wounds on their hands, while the TB patients were continuously coughing.

He said the patients were warned against selling food items because it will infect the healthy people.

Akony warned that any patient found again selling food in the market will face the law because patients with contagious diseases are not authorized to sell foodstuff.

He encouraged his staffs to continue discovering more patients in Rumbek town market as they always go shopping

Central equatoria state government approves funds for women projects

Gurtong.net Juba, 15/3/2013 – The Central Equatoria State Development Council chaired by Governor Clement Wani Konga has approved 132,000 South Sudanese Pounds to Yei Women Association for the development of women activities.

Information and Communication Minister Jacob Aligo Lo-Ladu said the Council approved the amount to help the school girls who drop out to be part of the development.

The state government has adopted the 25 women affirmative action since the inception of the state government as part of the national government policies and with the large number of the population being women who are not educated; this will be a boost for women in Yei County.

The Youth in Central Equatoria State are mostly not finding themselves busy due to lack of jobs.

The State Development Council is going to start sports project to lure most of the youth into sports.

“The Council approved the process of training the youth in various sports activities, so that they can compete in regional and global sports. The council also directed that more sports equipment be purchased and distributed in most schools in the state,” said Aligo.

The Council members resolved and approved the construction of four basic and three secondary schools in the state.

The State Ministries of Finance, Education and of Physical Infrastructure are directed to prepare a bill of quantity for the construction of the schools.

Women launch peace conference in Bor

Gurtong.net Bor, 14/3/2013 – Jonglei State Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare has launched a women’s peace conference funded by the United State Agency for International Development (USAID) in Bor.

Minister Rachael Anok has said the conference will build up the capacity of all women associations willing to disseminate peace messages at the counties.

“This workshop is about the roles of women in peace, last year in May there was initiative peace conference that was done here but the women didn’t participate much in the conference,” Anok said.

Anok said they thought that there is no outcome and have come together under to involve all women in the counties to put their hand together in contributing towards achieving peace at the local level.

She said that the US Ambassador to South Sudan, Susan Page has urged all women to be ambassadors of peace in the nation.

She urges all the women to carry out the message to the public and talk to their men to put down their arms and take part in developing the new nation.

The conference aims at empowering women for peace building across Jonglei state.

The women participants said that the work of women take care of the family according to the culture which make all the work to be done by women.

“Men doesn’t consent or consider work done by women they sit under the trees and play games, we want all of us to work because we need food not for women alone,” Achol said.

Governor Kuol Manyang Juuk urges the women to go ahead with their commitment not to be discouraged by men.

“We will enact laws that will even fine those who sit idle under the trees waiting for women to bring them food,”

Ms. Elizabeth Nyaok, the state women association chairlady said that it is through unity of women in the state that peace will dwell among the conflicting tribes of Jonglei.

One of the participants Ms Sarah Guzul urges all women in the state to help governments in disseminating peace among the civil population in Jonglei state this year.

She accused men for developing conflict through killing, abduction of child and raiding of cattle leaving miserable children and elders in dire poverty with no reasons.

The one week workshop which will end Saturday has been attended by 55 women representatives from four greater areas of Akobo, Fangak, Pibor and greater Bor.

UNHCR to resettle thousands of S. Sudanese refugees in Ethiopia

Sudantribune.com Addis Ababa, 14/3/2013 – The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) says it is preparing to relocate thousands of South Sudanese refugees stranded at Ethiopian border villages.

UNHCR’s spokesperson in Ethiopia, Kisut Gebreegziabher, told Sudan Tribune on Thursday that the agency is set to relocate some 16,000 South Sudanese refugees currently settled in the border Wanthowa district to the existing Pugnido camp in Ethiopia’s Gambella region.

According to the UNHCR official, the South Sudanese refugees have been living in host communities for about a year and it has been difficult to relocate them as most of them arrived with their livestock.

The relocation operation will be executed in collaboration with the Agency for Refugees and Returnees Affairs (ARRA), an Ethiopian implementation partner of the UNHCR.

As part of preparations for the ultimate relocation operation, a multi-agency team drawn from UNHCR, ARRA, World Food Programme (WFP) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) will be dispatched to the area to register the refugees.

Although 16,000 South Sudanese are estimated to currently reside at the border with host communities, their exact figures are not yet known as refugees in the area remain unregistered.

Thousands of South Sudanese have fled to Ethiopian border regions to escape inter-ethnic violence and a rebellion in South Sudan’s Jonglei state.

Many more continue to arrive in Ethiopia on a daily basis, including a recently arrived group of 200 South Sudanese.

Gebreegziabher told Sudan Tribune that on average 20 South Sudanese cross the border daily to Ethiopia’s southwest region due to ongoing conflicts in the new nation.

BLUE NILE CONFLICT

The UNHCR has also redoubled emergency preparations in Ethiopia's Benishangul-Gumuz region, which borders Sudan, for a possible fresh influx to Ethiopia, after recent reports of renewed fighting in Blue Nile state.

Along with its partners, UNHCR says it is also investigating reports that an estimated 10,000 internally displaced persons along the Sudanese border from Gengen are planning to cross into Ethiopia.

The UN agency said although it is yet to receive any new arrivals, it has stepped up emergency preparedness around Ethiopia's Assosa town where over 33,000 refugees who fled the conflict in Sudan's Blue Nile state are currently being assisted.

REFUGEE INFLUX

Ethiopia is facing an increasing refugee population, mainly from strife-torn neighbouring countries, including Somalia, Eritrea, Sudan and South Sudan.

In January and February alone, the UNHCR registered over 10,170 new refugee arrivals in the East African nation.

To accommodate the growing refugee population, the UNHCR - together with ARRA and other partners - have established 17 refugee camps and two community support centers across the country, with more camps due to be built.

According to UNHCR refugee statistics provided to Sudan Tribune at the end of February, Ethiopia hosted a total of 388,805 refugees from 13 different countries, including refugees from Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda, Yemen, Djibouti and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Western equatoria state ministry starts adult education for unclassified staff

Gurtong.net Yambio, 15/3/2013 – The Western Equatoria State Ministry of General Education and Instruction has this year introduced adult education training for all the unclassified staff within the ministry.

Education Minister Pia Philip Michael points out that he introduced the course to educate the unclassified staff and soon all ministries will be encouraged to do the same to fight illiteracy in the state.

Pia said he encouraged the unclassified staff to learn and have knowledge on how they can even sign their salary instead of being helped by those who may even cheat them against their own money.

The training helps with communication skills and the group included drivers, messengers and cleaners.

Gibson Francis Wawure the Director of Alternative Education in the Ministry of Education stressed that, they came up with this programme because on the president declared war against illiteracy in South Sudan saying each state had to fight illiteracy for the development of the new nation.

He however said due to austerity measures they are unable to recruit teachers to teach this special group because the directors at the ministry are teaching and sometimes they get involved in government work which may hinder them.

Francis said they began this on February 11 and they are going to train them for at least six months before they can graduate the first level.

Alice Josephat, one of the learners said she was very happy to have the chance to learn again which she never thought she would ever have adding that the minister has done much for them by introducing education to help them back up their knowledge.

Gordon Abraham, a 69-year old says after the first war he joined the Ministry of Education on March 15, 1972 where he has been working in the department of teachers but he never used to read or even write his name and he is going to learn and die as a knowledgeable man due to the initiative taken by the ministry.

USAID hands over fisheries institute to university administration in Jonglei

Gurtong.net Bor, 15/3/2013 – The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has handed over Padak Institute of Fisheries Training Centre to the Dr. John Garang Memorial University administration in Baidit Payam of Bor County.

Jonglei State Governor Kuol Manyang Juuk said Padak Institute of Fisheries Training Center is a vital institution in Jonglei state which will address issues of food insecurity and overall development of fisheries sector in the state and South Sudan in general.

Juuk said that the institute was the component of the Southern Sudan Agricultural revitalization program through which other six agricultural centers within Southern Sudan were established and supported.

He said the main objective of the establishment of the institute was to address food security in the fisheries sector for the state economy.

The United State Ambassador to South Sudan, Susan Page has said that the US government has recognized the importance of building livelihoods and the capacity to contribute to sustainability in South Sudan.

“Each one of the student will contribute to the development of South Sudan, the training you receive here will help youth improving fishing skills of others,” she said at Baidit during the official handing over of the center to Dr. John Garang Memorial University.

She said that the work that they are doing will both give the men and women a fish but also urges them to teach other to become better fishermen and fisherwomen.

“We hope the training center will not only help in Jonglei state but it is the part of the University that will serve entire country not in Jonglei state,” Susan Page said.

“I have travelled to many parts of South Sudan I have seen best resources of the Nile and the other rivers that bring the livelihood of the people of South Sudan so I am very pleased to see how the training center can help further develop fisheries as the livelihood in the country,” she said.

“When I eat in a restaurant in Juba, South Sudan the fish does not come from South Sudan it comes from Uganda and Kenya,” she said.

Historically the establishment of the institution was a joint mission of the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement (SPLM) liberation struggle and the United State Agency for International Development (USAID).

Vice Chancellor, Professor Ager Ayuen Majok said the main theme is strengthening the capacity of Dr. John Garang Memorandum University of Science and Technology to implement the mission of high education that is generation of knowledge and its dissemination.

Ager Ayuen said that the mission of the institute was to train people in modern methods of fishing, fish farming, processing, marketing and trade and they will be trained up to diploma level.

Eastern Equatoria State parliament to close for recess: speaker

Gurtong.net Torit, 15/3/2013 – The Eastern Equatoria State Legislative Assembly is set for closure next week to allow members to visit their constituents during a three-month vacation.

The Eastern Equatoria State Legislative Assembly is set for closure next week to allow members to visit their constituents during a three-month vacation.

The State Legislative Assembly Speaker Emmanuel Ambrose Ocholimo announced to the members that the present third session will be closed for three months and it will ceremonially be officiated by the State Governor Louis Lobong Lojore.

He disclosed to the MPs that the Parliament’s Assembly Business Committee (ABC) in which he presided over deliberated and resolved unanimously that State Parliament must close its present third session for three Months on March 20th until June 20th this year because the legislators have extended the session after it was reopened on November 16th 2012.

"The ABC resolved that we must close the session and agree that the plan they have rescheduled must be honoured and must continue the way it is. After the three months recess, it will then reopen further on June 16," he said.

Sudan, South talk peace as insurgency rages

Agence France Presse (AFP) Khartoum, 15/3/2013 – Sudan and South Sudan are talking peace after months of intermittent clashes but observers say there is still no end in sight to a rebellion in the north's Border States.

Regardless of whether deals reached over the past week -- including a demilitarized border zone -- finally end conflict between Khartoum and the South's government in Juba, observers say Sudan will continue to face an insurgency in South Kordofan and Blue Nile.

Sudan says the South has been backing the rebels, who were not part of last week's discussions in Addis Ababa.

"Even if Juba stops its support it doesn't mean an ultimate end to this conflict," said Magdi El Gizouli, a fellow at the Rift Valley Institute.

"There are domestic local causes of this war and these causes have to be addressed."

Khartoum pushed for months to get guarantees that South Sudan would no longer back rebels of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N), a demand which held up billions of dollars in oil revenues for both crisis-hit economies because South Sudan denies backing the insurgency.

But at last weekend's African Union-led talks, Sudan softened its stance on the security guarantees, helped an oil deal and eight other agreements including the border buffer zone to go ahead, observers say.

The two sides finally settled on detailed timetables to implement the pacts, which had remained dormant after their signing in September.

South Sudan halted crude production early last year, cutting off most of its revenue after accusing Khartoum of theft in a dispute over export fees.

Ostensibly between Sudan and South Sudan, the buffer zone on the undemarcated and disputed frontier really targets the rebels who have been fighting for almost two years, a diplomatic source said.

"It seems to me that they hope to weaken the rebels further by these agreements," said the source, declining to be named.

But observers expressed concern that there was no structure for talks with SPLM-N, despite encouraging signs for Sudan-South Sudan ties after the last Addis meeting.

That is "the only weakness in this whole thing," said an African diplomat.

He said key UN officials visited Khartoum this week "to lobby for direct negotiation... at least starting with a humanitarian ceasefire" that would allow aid into insurgent-held areas.

The United Nations and the African Union have for months called on the SPLM-N and Khartoum to reach a negotiated settlement to a war which has forced more than 200,000 people to become refugees in South Sudan and Ethiopia.

An estimated one million more have been affected inside Blue Nile and South Kordofan.

The SPLM-N says it is fighting to remove the Arab-dominated regime to ensure greater democracy, respect for ethnic diversity and human rights.

South Sudan armed and trained SPLM-N when it was part of the South's rebel force but says it cut military ties before the South's independence in July 2011.

Analysts and diplomats say there is no doubt South Sudan continued to back the rebels.

If the buffer zone is established the SPLM-N "will be in a much more weakened position without a credible supply line", Gizouli said.

Juba accuses Khartoum of backing insurgents on southern territory too.

The armies of the two countries say they have begun pulling troops back 10 kilometers (six miles) to implement the buffer zone which is to be supervised by dozens of monitors.

Putting that zone into effect will be a major challenge, observers say.

"So much depends on this stuff starting to be implemented, and whether they've actually withdrawn support or not," a foreign analyst said.

SPLM-N has reiterated its readiness for direct negotiations with Khartoum but the government says rebels must end hostility and cut ties with South Sudan's military first.

The rebels remain a "potential spoiler" of the Sudan-South Sudan deals and their response is uncertain, the diplomatic source said.

After the September agreements, rebels began weeks of deadly mortar bomb attacks on the South Kordofan state capital Kadugli.

"I'm afraid we will have to see more months of war in southern Kordofan," the source said.

West calls on Sudans to get serious

United Press International (UPI) Washington, 14/3/2013 – While border agreements between Sudan and South Sudan are welcome developments, many outstanding issues remain, Western powers said.

South Sudanese President Salva Kiir this week ordered his forces from the Sudanese border. Both sides in Ethiopia agreed to prepare to establish a demilitarized zone along the border.

"We call on the parties to begin implementation of all aspects of these agreements immediately and unconditionally," a statement from British Foreign Secretary William Hague, Norwegian Foreign Minister Espen Barth Eide and U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry read.

Both sides have squabbled over issues such as oil exports and the status of disputed borders.

U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Susan Rice this week said she was concerned that, while Sudanese leaders have made similar deals in the past, few have been implemented.

South Sudanese military leaders this week said it would border redeployment was under way. Juba called on its counterparts in Sudan to do the same.

South Sudan in 2011 gained independence from Sudan under the terms of a 2005 peace deal that ended civil war. Since then, border clashes, disputes over oil and ethnic conflict have threatened the peace.

Sudanese cabinet backs cooperation agreement with Juba

Sudantribune.com Khartoum, 14/3/2013 – Sudan's Council of Ministers, chaired by president Omer Hassan Al-Bashir, has reiterated the government's commitment to implementing the cooperation agreements signed with South Sudan.

The council spokesperson Omer Mohamed Salih said that the cabinet has called on Sudan's ministries to normalize and enhance relations with their counterparts in South Sudan, saying it is in the best interests of the countries' citizens.

The official told reporters that the cabinet has deliberated on a report on the cooperation agreements matrix presented by the State Minister at the presidency of the Republic and head of the government delegation for negotiations with South Sudan, Idris Abdul-Qadir.

He noted that the recent round of talks was confined to the implementation the agreements which were signed last September in the Ethiopian capital, Addis Ababa.

This week delegations from both countries meeting in Addis Ababa agreed to a 16-page timetable to put the nine September agreements into effect including the one related to resuming South Sudan's export of oil through the pipelines that run through Sudan's territory.

However, it did not set a date for determining the final status of Abyei, a disputed territory that has triggered fighting in the past. An administration and council for the area would be set up by March 17, however.

Salih said that provisional arrangements will be adopted by both countries and the Abyei administration within seven days and the set-up of a joint police service will be completed with 30 days, adding that the two countries agreed on the formation of a joint committee on the border and a timetable for border demarcation within two weeks.

On trade relations between the two countries, the spokesperson said that the two sides agreed on the formation of a joint committee within five days to draft an agreement on customs within 95 days, as well as the formation of another joint committee for organizing the cooperation between the two central banks and completing the procedure for facilitating banking accounts within 40 days.

He said that the matrix included payment of post-retirement benefits for employees in both countries.

Furthermore, the two countries also agreed on forming a joint committee to facilitate the movement of citizens and goods, as well as the establishment of mechanisms for monitoring the international demilitarized zones and the '14-mile' area and reviewing the complaints of affected persons in both Sudans within 90 days.

Salih said that Khartoum and Juba were to instruct oil companies to prepare for the resumption of production within 14 days, adding that the signing the matrix agreement between Sudan and South Sudan had moved from a stage of negotiations to an era of direct bilateral relations and cooperation.

He said that the cabinet has expressed its gratitude for the role played by the government delegation during negotiations, the African Union-led mediation team headed by Thabo Mbeki, adding that the Cabinet also thanked South Sudanese president Salva Kiir for his positive stance during the negotiation phase.

UN chief appoints new Abyei force commander

Sudantribune.com Juba, 13/3/2013 – The United Nations Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon has appointed Maj. Gen. Yohannes Gebremeskel Tesfamariam, the new head of mission and force commander of its Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA).

Maj. Gen. Tesfamariam, an Ethiopian national succeeds Lt. Gen. Tadesse Werede Tesfay, who completed his assignment in January this year.

The new force commander, the UN said in a statement, brings to the position 35 years of experience attained during his military career in the Ethiopian National Defence Forces (ENDF), which he served in various command capacities.

A holder of a Masters in Peace and Security Studies from Addis Ababa University in Ethiopia, Maj. Gen. Tesfamariam worked as head of the peacekeeping department and military intelligence unit of the Ethiopian defense ministry.

He also served as the commander of the army corps and the Ethiopia government's Commissioner for the UN Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE).

Born in 1960, the new UNISFA head reportedly joined peacekeeping mission in September, last year as deputy force commander.

The UN Security Council, in November last year, renewed the mandate of UNISFA, which is composed of 4,000 Ethiopian troops, established following the seizure of the disputed oil-rich region by the Sudanese army in May 2011 after clashes with South Sudan army (SPLA) troops there.

Its main mandate is to ensure the redeployment of troops out of the contested area and to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian aid to civilians.

The appointment of the new UNISFA force commander comes days after Sudan and South Sudan agreed to deploy their troops 10 kilometers from their current positions to their side of the border with each other as part of the security agreement.

Sudan accepts to negotiate with SPLM-N rebels, NCP sources

Sudantribune.com Khartoum, 14/3/2013 – Sudanese government has accepted to hold direct political talks with the rebel Sudan people's Liberation Movement North (SPLM-N) but demanded a delay before engage discussions, a Sudanese source said.

A well-placed source in the National Congress Party (NCP) on Thursday told Sudan Tribune that consultations are going on between a leading member of the ruling party, the head of the African Union mediation Thabo Mbeki and the SPLM-N leader Malik Agar over the resumption of talks between the two parties.

He added that these contacts aim to hold direct political talks between the Sudanese government and the SPLM-N following the signing of agreement to implement the buffer zone and to resume the exportation of the South Sudanese oil.

The NCP official further said that Sudanese government intends to change the chief negotiator, Kamal Obeid, who chaired its negotiating team during last year indirect talks and demanded further delay.

However, reached by Sudan Tribune to comment on these statements, SPLM-N Secretary General Yaisr Arman "categorically" dismissed such contacts adding that "there is no need to consult with Malik Agar" because the Movement already announced its "willingness to hold direct talks and our negotiating team is ready".

"These baseless statements aim to confuse the international community because the National Congress refuses to negotiate with the SPLM-N and rejects the resolutions of the African Union and the United Nations Security Council", Arman further said.

The SPLM-N earlier this week accused the Sudanese government of refusing talks, saying that the mediation cancelled twice two dates (5 & 10 March) it had determined for the start of negotiations to settle the conflict in the Blue Nile and South Kordofan states.

Reacting to these accusations, the Sudanese foreign affairs ministry issued a communiqué on Thursday claiming that the SPLM-N seeks to spoil the recent implementation agreements signed with the South Sudan.

The statement warned the international community against the "destructive behaviour" of the SPLM-N to achieve its interests at the expense of political stability in Sudan and the normalization of relations between the two countries.

U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry, Norwegian Foreign Minister Espen Barth Eide, and United Kingdom Foreign Secretary William Hague, in a joint statement released on Wednesday, welcomed the signing of the implementation matrix for Sudan–South Sudan agreements.

The statement called on the parties to begin implementation of all aspects of the nine agreements "immediately and unconditionally, as required by UN Security Council Resolution 2046".

The three ministers stressed the "urgent need for a cessation of hostilities, humanitarian access to all areas, and the longer-term political solution" for the conflict in the Blue Nile and South Kordofan.

They also welcomed SPLM-N's acceptance to hold direct talks and urged the Government of Sudan to do the same, without pre-conditions.

Sudan's 1st VP holds rare meeting with opposition figure in Germany

Sudantribune.com Washington, 14/3/2013 – The Sudanese First Vice President Ali Osman Taha met on Monday with the deputy Secretary General of the Popular Congress Party (PCP) Ali al-Hag in Berlin in the first meeting between the two men in more than a decade.

Taha was on a private visit to Germany where he was seeking treatment from an undisclosed illness, al-Hag told Sudan Tribune in a phone interview from Bonn.

The PCP official said that Taha's presence was kept under tight wraps and that he had to go to great lengths in order to ascertain whether in fact he had arrived in Germany after his sources from Khartoum tipped him about the 1st VP travel plans.

Al-Hag said that through the years he has made it a habit to get in touch with any Sudanese visiting Germany for medical treatment whether from the government or opposition.

After senior diplomats from the Sudanese embassy in Berlin including the ambassador ignored his phone queries about Taha, he managed to get hold of one of its staff members who conveyed his request for a meeting with the 1st VP.

Although Al-Haj's two-hour visit to Taha at a Berlin hotel was in essence a social one in which he was accompanied by his wife and son, the two men had a lengthy discussion on political issues.

"He [Taha] asked me why you don't return home. The country needs you. I told him the situation [in Sudan] is not encouraging and I will not go back simply to sit idly. I have to be able to make a contribution or else it is pointless [to return]," al-Haj said.

The PCP figure said he tackled a number of issues with Taha including the political environment, relations with South Sudan and the economic situation.

Al-Haj was critical of the events that led to South Sudan's secession in July 2011 saying that the south was historically the pivotal part of the country even before the oil discoveries.

"Sudan is done after the south went away," he said.

About 2 million people died in the two-decade Sudan's north-south civil war over ethnicity, religion, oil and ideology.

"My direct question to Taha was, do you want to preserve what is left of Sudan? He [Taha] said yes we do. So my response was that only Sudanese people can do that job. But how can find out what the people want without giving them their freedom to express their views," al-Haj said.

"Taha agreed in principle but said he believes that the current level of freedom is sufficient," al-Haj said.

He said that his impression after the meeting was that the ruling National Congress Party (NCP) recognizes that the country is in a very difficult situation but at the same time believes that this crisis can be weathered like the ones in the past.

Taha asked al-Haj for information about the "New Dawn" charter signed by opposition parties and rebel groups in Uganda last January.

"I told him the signatories are your people. [Former senior presidential assistant] Minni Minnawi, [former senior presidential assistant] Mubarak al-Fadil, [former Blue Nile state governor] Malik Agar, [former South Kordofan deputy governor] Abdel-Aziz al-Hilu and the Sudan People Liberation Movement (SPLM) were your allies" al-Haj said.

The document which aggravated Khartoum calls for toppling the regime and preventing the exploitation of religion in politics. The latter was interpreted by the Sudanese government to mean a call for establishing a secular state.

Some of the signatories including the PCP, National Umma Party (NUP), and Sudanese Communist Party (SCP) later distanced themselves from the charter saying they were rushed into it and expressed reservations on some of its clauses.

The Sudanese government launched a fierce media campaign against the deal and detained some of the parties' representatives who attended the signing upon their return to Khartoum. Some officials even threatened to ban and prosecute all parties that joined the agreement unless they officially dissociate themselves from it.

Al-Haj told Taha that the government's response to the charter was disproportionate in terms of the threats it made to the opposition parties and the crackdown on those returned from Kampala.

But the opposition figure also said that opposition parties also "went too far" in how quickly they turned around to wash their hands off the agreement they voluntarily signed.

He also confronted Taha about the "unique" restrictions imposed on the PCP inside Sudan.

"I was upfront with him and told him that the PCP is bitter [about the way it is treated by authorities]" al-Haj said.

He gave an example of two PCP members who were re-arrested hours after being released as part of a presidential pardon.

"It is freedom for everyone except us," al-Haj complained.

The PCP is led by the Islamist figure Hassan al-Turabi who was the mastermind behind the 1989 coup that brought Bashir to power. But the pair fell out following the introduction of a bill to limit the president's powers in 1999, a move which the president resisted by dissolving parliament and declaring a state of emergency.

Ever since Turabi and his party became the most outspoken critics of Bashir's government and a frequent target of their security sweeps on grounds that it is planning a coup and standing behind the rebellion that broke out in Darfur.

Egypt's Morse to visit Sudan in April

Sudantribune.com Khartoum, 14/3/2013 – The chairman of Egypt's governing Freedom and Justice Party (FJP), Saad El-Katatni said today that Egyptian president Mohamed Morse is expected to visit to Sudan in early April, declaring that Egypt can surpass its difficult economic conditions by investing in Sudan.

Al-Katatni, who was speaking at a joint news conference with deputy chairman of Sudan's ruling National Congress Party (NCP) Nafie Ali Nafie in Khartoum, said the visit had been arranged through diplomatic missions and "according to my personal information, Morse will be in Khartoum early April".

Some Sudanese officials have privately expressed disappointment with Morse for not making Khartoum his first destination following his election in June 2011.

Last month the head of Egyptian affairs at the Sudanese foreign ministry Esam Awad criticized Cairo for stonewalling the Four Freedoms agreement signed in 2004 and for failing to return 100 vehicles belonging to Sudanese gold miners who entered into Egypt by mistake.

Awad stressed that Sudan did not forfeit its sovereignty claims over the disputed border triangle of Halayeb but added that the time is not ripe for discussing the matter because of the current political instability in Egypt.

Nafie echoed the sentiment saying that Sudan doesn't want to distract the Egyptian government by raising the issue of Halayeb while it addresses difficult internal political challenges, stressing that the dispute will not affect "eternal relations" between the two countries.

On Egyptian investments in Sudan, al-Katatni said that Khartoum made huge efforts to overcome obstacles, stressing that an earlier visit by al-Bashir to Egypt had opened the door for increased Egyptian investments in Sudan.

For his part, Nafie expressed confidence that Cairo will work to correct the situation created by the ex-regime who he says was harboring Sudanese opposition and armed movements.

The Sudanese ambassador in Cairo filed a complaint this month with the Egyptian government this month for hosting some of the rebel figures on its territory who held meetings with several Egyptian parties.

Nafie praised the popular relations between Egypt and Sudan, while slamming "undemocratic" opposition parties in both countries whom he says are refusing to engage in dialogue.

Analysis about Justice John Clement Resignation from Judiciary

Sudantribune.com, 14/3/2013 – Since the beginning of the Republic of South Sudan starting from 2005 to date, there was no one from the Government of South Sudan that has resigned due to the disorganization of the System within the Judiciary of South Sudan, therefore it is something very interesting and realistic enough for Justice John Clement Kuc to resign due to the fact that, if he has not seen the needful from his Chief justice , he has the right and obligation to say enough is enough because I think he does not want to be in the system which is full of nepotism and corruption as he stated in his resignation letter addressed to our President of the Republic of South Sudan General Salva Kiir Mayardit yesterday 12th of March 2013.

Logically, I think John Clement Kuc is having right to resign in the Judiciary because everybody is entitled the right of freedom of will in this Country

When I read through the resignation of John clement, I really found a very interesting point which he mention in the middle paragraph where he said, Chief Justice brought in his son without being interviewed by the Judiciary, because there are rules and regulations that are needed in order for the Judiciary to have a competence and qualified people that can work for the betterment of this great nation known by the name Republic of South Sudan.

Another technical point was the issue the Chief Justice sending some names of South Sudanese who have Islamic names with the name of our colleagues from the North Sudan whose jobs were terminated according to the Constitution.

Another technical statement is that Clement stated that, Chief Justice ordered the interview committee not to award marks or grading to any person being interview. In really sense how can you determined if you have not test the capabilities of the people who are to be employees in the Judiciary.

Having look at all those concerns from John Clement show that, there are lots of issues in the judiciary that are happening wrongly and people are not aware about but now since all South Sudanese have got what is happening now through the resignation of the one of the senior judge, there is need for our Government to intervene in this crisis in the Judiciary according to my Journalistic way of viewing things, there is need for proper investigation to the Judiciary because, having annualized the issue of that very body in this Country, we need proper attention, the issue of saying we are from one place with the person does not work this days what matter is who to deliver services to the people of the Republic of South Sudan

This is the time of employing competence people in the Republic of South Sudan, the issue of saying Mr. so and so or Ms. so and is my relative or my son or daughter should be put a side if we really want Justice, good governance and respect of the rule of law to prevail in this Country.

I was so demoralized when I read this from the Media and when I interviewed the Justice John Clement Kuc today in Juba about this scenario happening in the current system of the Judiciary in this country.

Recommendations for public consumption in this great Nation:

Government of the Republic of South Sudan should intervene in that complicated issue where by some people reached up to the extent of employing their own sons through the window, something very shameful not to be practice in this nation, if we really want completeness of work and reality

Government should make screening to those that, have been recruited illegally without following the procedural process of making these in the Judiciary of the Republic of south Sudan

There is need for the government to take a crucial decision to either dismiss or suspend those who are in the process of disorganizing the Judicial way of making rule and regulations in this Country or can appoint another neutral person that can work for the betterment of the peacefully co-existence of the entire citizen of the Republic of South Sudan

Recruitment should be carry out by neutral people from different body , for the process to be transparent and credible because , people are trying to interfere with public positions to be personal which is not logically enough to be practice

Having look at those aspects of the recommendations regarding this volatile situation in the Judiciary , South Sudanese citizen will appreciates the government involvement in this curiosity

Conclusively; looking at the way we came through from the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), Referendum of the South Sudan for self-determination and the Independence of the Republic of South Sudan which was declared on the 9th of July 2011, these steps gave us a lot of experiences whereby we should not behave contrary to the law that is governing us in this great Republic in the Africa Continent. Therefore, we should make our things diplomatically, responsively, and realistically for us to proper to another level as a young Nation.

Peter Gai is an independent journalist based in South Sudan. He can be contacted at: southsudanjournalist@gmail.com

For further information or media enquiries please contact:
UNMISS Spokesperson
Tel.: +211 (0) 912 06 7149 or Mobile: +211 (0) 912 396 539

United Nations Mission in South Sudan - Public Information Office
www.unmiss.unmissions.org