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THURSDAY, 21 MARCH 2013

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# Highlights

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## **South Sudan army will keep an “eagle eye” along border areas with Sudan**

*Sudantribune.com Juba, 20/3/2013* – South Sudan’s army said Wednesday that it has completed its troop withdrawal from all areas along the border with neighbouring Sudan, with whom they have engaged in sporadic clashes over disputed areas since the South’s independence in 2011.

However, the Southern military (SPLA) said they will continue to keep a close eye on the border. South Sudan often accuses the Sudanese military and its allied militias of cross-border attacks, while Khartoum accuses Juba of backing its former allies who are fighting Sudan’s army (SAF) north of the border in Blue Nile and South Kordofan.

The withdrawal of both sides 10km from the contested border is the belated implementation of an agreement signed in September to create a demilitarized buffer zone.

“We have accepted to fully and unconditionally pull out our troops from all the areas defined as buffer zones in this state within time, according to the African Union Security Map and in compliance to orders from our general command”, Major General Santino Deng Wol said on Wednesday.

Wol, who is the commander of the SPLA’s third division which is based in Northern Bahr el Ghazal, said police forces would take over from the army to fill the security gap caused by the army’s withdrawal.

The agreement signed by the two countries in Addis Ababa on 12 March provides a clear timeline and framework for the establishment of a Safe Demilitarized Border Zone (SDBZ).

The area will be monitored by the UN peacekeeping force in Abyei (UNISFA) as part of the Joint Border Verification Monitoring Mechanism (JBVMM).

However, the withdrawal of South Sudan’s troops from the border area has worried locals who fear that they will now lack protection and be exposed to cattle raids and attacks by militia.

Just days after the two sides agreed to withdraw their troops from the tense and heavily militarized border zone, South Sudan accused its neighbour of launching a fresh ground attack in Northern Bahr el Ghazal on 17 March, killing at least one civilian and wounding others.

Northern Bahr el Ghazal was shocked when the disputed ‘Mile 14’ area, which is claimed by both countries, was included in the border buffer zone, with many claiming that the area has never been included in Sudan’s East Darfur state.

“The area is no longer under our control. It is now fully empty. Our departure, as you know, was not in the interest of the local people. There were a lot of mixed reactions, particularly in the areas of Kiir Adem and Warguet. Citizens there raised a lot questions”, Wol said.

The senior military official explained that the withdrawal of the troops not only raised alarm and anxiety from the citizens but also several questions which he and the regional sector commander could not immediately provide responses to during their visit to witness the troop withdrawal.

“We are now receiving complaints and reports that some armed groups from the other side have moved into the area. They have said they have celebrated and claimed to have taken over the area. This shows that our response to orders from above to withdraw has been misinterpreted on the other side”, Wol told Sudan Tribune by phone from Wunyiik, the SPLA’s headquarters in the area.

He stressed that the army will continue to “do the best” within its “capability” to provide protection, explaining that they were complying with orders from the senior level of command.

“There is nothing we could do because as soldiers we work on orders. We complied and moved out because that it is the nature of the army anywhere in the world. The army does not discuss orders. They simply comply and execute orders but this does not mean we shall completely abandon our constitutional mandate to protect this country and the citizens against foreign aggression. We have moved out but will keep [an] eagle eye [on Sudan], Wol added.

He said the army had “strong standing orders” to remain on maximum alert and were prepared to respond to any security situation anywhere in the country.

Many officials and local residents have expressed fears that armed groups allegedly backed by the government of neighbouring Sudan may use the newly created buffer zones to launch attacks on the area.

The agreement between Sudan and South Sudan, signed in Ethiopian capital Addis Ababa after African Union-brokered talks, is aimed at ending long-running hostilities over border and security issues.

It also allows for the resumption of oil production which South Sudan shut down last January following a dispute over the cost of transporting oil to international markets through Sudanese pipelines.

The suspension has sparked an economic crisis in the two Sudans, with both countries depending heavily on oil for revenue and the foreign currency it uses to import food and fuel.

### **Policeman shoots civilian dead in Unity**

*Radio Miraya, 20/3/2013* – A policeman in Unity State has shot dead a civilian.

The policeman from Manga Police post shot the unnamed civilian late at night, while on patrol to deter thieves in Biu Payam.

Unity State Police commissioner, Lt Col. Hussein Girish Yambio confirmed the incident and cautioned police personnel to be careful as they carry out their duties.

He said the shooting was accidental.

The family of the deceased has condemned the incident and is calling for justice.

### **UAE to host the first diplomatic mission of South Sudan in the Gulf**

*Gulf News Dubai, 20/3/2013* – The UAE government will help in establishing the first diplomatic mission of South Sudan in the Gulf region, South Sudan’s Vice President said.

Riek Machar told *Gulf News* that his discussion with Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Anwar Gargash were “very useful”, adding that one of the topics they discussed included establishing an embassy in Abu Dhabi and a consulate in Dubai.

“The government of UAE has decided to provide even the fund,” he said in an exclusive interview with *Gulf News*.

Without specifying a date for opening of the missions, he noted, “It could be this month, because things are ready.”

Describing UAE as the financial hub of the Gulf region, he said opening an embassy in it will “surely” help opening embassies in other Gulf States. Already there are discussions underway with Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Qatar to have diplomatic missions.

After months of tension and troop’s deployment along the borders, Machar said the tension has been defused and South Sudan’s relation with the northern part of the country, Sudan, is improving.

“Sure, that is what we are heading for, two counties, peaceful with each other, friendly, trading, cooperating,”

Next Sunday, the oil agreement between the two countries will come into effect and the oil produced in the south will flow to the north according to an agreement signed recently.

Apart from the oil agreement, Machar noted that a security agreement was reached, while direct flights were resumed and people return to cross the borders, and trade “is picking up again”.

He added that Egyptian businessmen are showing increasing interest in investing in South Sudan.

### **Northern Bahr el Ghazal assembly in crisis: MPs**

**Gurtong.net Aweil, 20/3/2013** – Nine Northern Bahr el Ghazal State Legislative Assembly members have revealed that the parliament is in a political crisis and needs higher authority at the national level to intervene in regards to the changes which happened within the assembly last year.

Last week, the state governor Paul Malong was given directives by the president to reinstate the six members and a former speaker who were expelled from the ruling party and lost their parliamentary seats.

The members were accused of collaborating with other political parties, misbehaving and being disloyal to their party which the victims denied.

According to nine assembly members, they were in a position to discuss the reinstatements of former colleagues who got expelled from the assembly so that they endorse the letter sent by the president to the governor.

“We came to the assembly’s hall knowing that we were coming to endorse the letter that our president sent to the governor, surprisingly, we had our discussion begin but in the middle of our discussion had a different diversion which distorted our proceedings,” said Santino Mayuat Ngong.

Mayuat said that state members of the parliament are not constitutionally mandated to discuss president’s directives, decrees and resolutions which are of higher authority.

He stresses that both state and national constitutions do not have any articles stipulating the room for discussion when there is any decree passed in the office of the president addressed to his junior governors of states or ministers.

“The reinstatement did not come from the president only but the recommendations made by the council of states investigating committee which was on ground here last year for fact findings. If the president has written backing the recommendations from the investigation committee to reinstate our colleagues, who else somewhere here to say the president’s directives are not in position?” he asks.

Mayuat appeals for higher authority to send an implementing committee which passes these directives into action as he thinks that those directives will not be implemented by the governor.

On the hands, MP Benson Opothmala Garjuak says he walked out from deliberation because he deems to go against the law.

Among the MPs who boycotted the deliberation were Angok Achuol Barjok, Benson Opothmala Garjuak, William Wel Deng, Majok Wol Wol, Peter Marol Kur, Archangels Biet Wol, Isaac Makau Ayok, Santino Mayuat Deng Ngong and Kuot Kuach Kuach.

### **UN: Newly displaced people increase in Jonglei**

**Sudantribune.com Bor, 20/3/2013** – The United Nations says it is continuing to respond to the increasing number of newly displaced people in Jonglei state’s Akobo County, with aid agencies witnessing the arrival of 2,800 people over the past week.

The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) said the cause of the new displacement is yet to be established.

More household items such as mosquito nets, blankets and kitchen sets, including water and sanitation facilities, are urgently required. Aid agencies are now mobilizing resources to address the needs of the new arrivals and ensure adequate water and sanitation facilities to avert disease outbreaks.

Prior to the new arrivals, aid organizations were responding to the needs of over 9,000 people affected by last month’s inter-communal violence in Akobo County.

In a heavy attack in February on Akobo’s remote Walgak village, 114 civilians and 14 SPLA soldiers were killed after they were set upon by armed men suspected to be loyal to rebel leader David Yau Yau, as well as some elements of the Murle ethnic group.

Over 17,000 people displaced from their villages in Pibor and Akobo counties are still in need of food assistance, according to the UN.

Ongoing humanitarian operations, including the delivery of food assistance, are currently being carried out in Boma, Gumuruk, Likuangule and Pibor.

One-month food rations have been distributed to about 5,300 displaced people in Likuangole and over 2,500 individuals from two villages in Gumuruk.

### **Madam Rebecca Nyandeng urges women to prioritize agriculture**

*News Agency of South Sudan Juba, 20/3/2013* – The Presidential Advisor on Gender and Human Rights Madam Rebecca Nyandeng de Mabior has challenged South Sudanese women to prioritize agriculture for commercial and subsistence purposes.

Addressing women during the International Women’s Day in Bor she said that agriculture has great commercial potential. She explained that she earned SSP 400,000 in three months from agriculture. She said that this is lucrative compared to her monthly salary of about SSP 10,000.

Madam Rebecca also challenged mothers to support girl-child education. She said that educating one girl is an investment in the development of a community. She said that better education will equip girls to participate more effectively in nation building. She explained that it is only educated girls who can make impact in the national assembly and other constitutional positions.

These sentiments were echoed by the national minister for Gender, Child and Social Welfare Hon Agnes Kwaje Lasuba. She emphasized that this year’s theme for the women’s day celebrations is education for women and girls.

On his part, the Jonglei State Governor Kuol Manyang Juuk the state authorities are working to take education to the lowest levels. He said that the state government will work with the national government to ensure that all children, especially the girl-child, get access to quality education in all parts of the state. He also said the state government is dealing with insecurity so that the people can live in peace.

### **Cattle keepers asked to vacate Kajo-Keji within a week**

*Radio Miraya, 20/3/2013* – Cattle keepers grazing their animals in Kajo-Keji County, Central Equatoria State have agreed to relocate to Terekeka within one week.

The Governor; Clement Wani Konga sent a team of Policemen to escort the herders out of Kajo-Keji, following concerns from the local community about the destruction caused by the grazing animals.

Speaking to Radio Miraya, the Deputy Chief Inspector of Police for Kajo-Keji County Major James Konyo Lubajo said the cattle keepers who are mainly Mundari have agreed to relocate by the 28th of this month.

“The Mundari also entered in. They agreed to each other that indeed they are happy for the government to take that initiative and they are ready to go back to Terekeka. And they signed for the community of Mundari people. According to the agreement they even agreed that one, if they fail to respond on 27th of this month or 28th then the government will arrest them and put them under detention. Two, the government will take the cattle for their own use if they do not respond to what they have agreed on.”

The Deputy Chief Inspector of Police also confirmed to Radio Miraya that there are still some herders who are believed to have crossed from Jonglei, and who have settled in parts of Kajo-Keji.

### **New grazing rights deal between Warrap and Lakes state**

*Sudantribune.com Rumbek, 20/3/2013* – Three county commissioners from Warrap and Lakes state have agreed to share water resources without condition among their pastoralist communities.

The agreement was reached after Lakes state’s Rumbek North County’s Stephen Mathiang Deng and Cueibet County’s Isaac Mayom Malek met with Madhol Chol from Warrap state’s Tonj East County at the Mayom cattle camp on Saturday to discuss access to grazing land.

The commissioners strongly recommended that the two states share their water resources, which are essential for the survival of the thousands of head of cattle in the area.

Warrap state pastoralists will be granted permission to graze their cattle in Cueibet and Rumbek North in Lakes state, while cattle herders from Lakes state will be able to do the same in Warrap territory.

There have been several cattle raids and cross border attacks since between Lakes and Warrap since South Sudan became independent on 9 July 9 2011. The two states have held several peace reconciliation meetings to improve understanding and communication between the communities and decrease cattle raiding.

Mayom cattle camp is inhabited by the Gok Dinka and is shared between pastoralists drawn from the Pakam, Gok and Luang-jang Dinka sub-clans.

## **22 students arrested over riot in Kajo-Keji**

*Radio Miraya, Juba, 20/3/2013* – Police are holding 22 students from Kajo-Keji Secondary School, in Central Equatoria State, in connection with a student riot.

The students are suspected to have taken part in the attack on the home of the Director of Studies, Duku Emmanuel. The incident took place after Duku switched off the television while the students were watching an English Premier League football match last Saturday and instructed them to go to class to prepare for exams.

Speaking to Radio Miraya, the Inspector of Information for Kajo-Keji County Beden Elikana Kenyi said classes have resumed but says teachers claim to be receiving threats from students, warning them not to report them to police.

“Teachers are here and then students are here. Most of them are outside they are just reading because they are for mid-term exams. But still students have been continuing threatening teachers through writing letters as such teachers have lost interest and then they are just here within sitting. There around twenty-two numbers of students taken right now for police custody but yet six more are to be taken into the police custody. But the six currently they have not been identified and they are not within those in the police custody.”

The school administration is organizing an emergency meeting with the school's parents to discuss the incident.

## **UNICEF ambassador calls for intensification of education on child marriage**

*Gurtong.net Juba, 20/3/2013* – The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Goodwill Ambassador Kuroyanagi Tetsuko upon her visit to Juba to advocate for and familiarize herself with the situation of managing children affairs in the infant nation, called for the government and partners to intensify education on child marriage.

After paying visits and met a number of children, UNICEF supported projects and government officials in Central and Western Equatoria States, Tetsuko described the issue of child marriage in South Sudan as “a problem.”

“I think education of adult who are surrounded by these small girls who wait to get married is important,” Tetsuko said while addressing journalists at the South Sudan Capital, Juba.

She said there is need for education for girls, boys, and families to ensure that girls are not married below the age of 18.

Dr. Yasmin Ali Haque, the UNICEF Country Representative South Sudan exclusively said that, four out of ten girls are married below the age of 18; a practice that compromises the Southern Sudan Child Act 2008 and The Transitional Constitution which defines that, a child is someone who is less than the age of 18.

Early this month the Human Right Watch launched a researched report that documented marriage in South Sudan. Entitled “This old man can feed us you will marry him,” it presents appealing situation as it depicts how young girls are being forced into marriages by their parents.

The report recommended numerous resolutions including government to define marriageable age which is not being defined in the constitution.

Tetsuko who is visiting South Sudan for the second time since 1993 though said there has been great improvement taking place in manning children affairs in the infant nation.

Her efforts in South Sudan has benefitted thousands of children after Totto-chan Centre, a children institution that missions to benefit traumatized children in Sudan was established in 1996 after Tetsuko made generous donation to UNICEF.

It is reported that, Totto-chan has now since establishment benefitted 2,500 children affected by armed conflict, demobilized from armed forces, separated and unaccompanied, returnees, abducted, and other vulnerable children.

Initially, activities at the Center includes; conducting research, carrying out surveys, training teachers and health social workers, raising public awareness on child trauma issues and exchanging information and experience with similar and international institutions through exchange visits and networking.

### **Minister urges youth to participate in agriculture production**

*Gurtong.net Juba, 20/3/2013* – The National Agriculture and Forestry Minister Betty Achan has urged youth to take lead in agriculture, adding that they should monitor the policy implementation by both government and partners.

Addressing a four-day workshop launched by Crisis Management Initiative (CMI) and Organization for Non-violence and Development (ONAD) that brought about 20 youth from the different parts of the country, Achan also cautioned youth of malpractices that degrade the environment particularly forests.

She was very critical on massive involvement of the youth into charcoal burning as a quickest way of earning money. She said government is on alert on the matter and has drafted a penalty awaiting approval to regularize the issue of charcoal burning in the country.

“Agriculture is a private sector lead and I want you to look at this as a business,” Achan told the youth. “It is very important that youth should get engaged to work with government and the county for not only agriculture but peace too.”

“Let’s look at both quantity and quality of food production. I urge the youth to be monitors to the government policies,” she added.

She also called youth to be peace makers in the communities, outlining that, the issue of peace instability has proven today as one of the critical challenges affecting the agricultural sector in country, pointing out practices of cattle rustling that create tribal conflicts.

Achan said her Ministry has so far drafted an agriculture policy framework that is now pending ratification by the National Assembly, adding the frame work aims at boosting agriculture in the country.

She has called on the youth to specialize in the agricultural sector as marketers, producers, and transporters to commercialize the sector.

She said government has initiatives through the agricultural bank to boost all these efforts.

Ms. Johanna Poutanen CMI Field Coordinator said that, the four day workshop was an organization of youth dialogue which aims at offering a long term-dialogue platform for youth to discuss the conflict and challenges in the new Republic of South Sudan.

### **Unity state approves funds for students to compete in national football competition**

*Sudantribune.com Khartoum, 20/3/2013* – Unity state has approved 121,000 South Sudanese pounds (SSP) to allow secondary students to participate in May’s South Sudan National Football Federation school tournament in Wau.

South Sudan is trying to improve sports activity in the young nation by introducing a new curriculum for physical education in schools.

The national schools competition was supposed to take place in Malakal in April, but was postponed due to a lack of suitable football pitches.

Speaking to Sudan Tribune after addressing the Unity state cabinet earlier this week, Joseph Arop Malual, the minister of Information and communication, said the funds had been approved to encourage youth to improve their sporting skills.

Following South Sudan's poor performances at last year's East Africa football competition, the authorities are trying to regain momentum by creating internal school tournaments to prepare the next generation of footballers.

Unity state's deputy governor, Michael Chiengjiek Geay, says the coming together of South Sudanese youths will promote professionalism and sporting activities in the new nation.

As it is a national event, it is important for, he encouraged Unity state's school students to take part in the national tournament, adding that the annual event will cement South Sudan's national unity and help the "nation building" process.

Cattle rustling and other violence have hampered relations between many of South Sudan's 10 states. However, Geay said that through sports, youth across the 20-month-year-old nation can carry a peaceful message to their communities and discourage the backward practice of cross-border cattle raiding.

"We will also educate the youth from creating things that will not [be] beneficial for the society, among them is cattle raiding. We want to discourage the cattle rustling among the youth so that they have to go for education and other activities rather than going for cattle raiding and killing themselves", the deputy governor said on Tuesday.

The development of South Sudanese sport is a challenge due to the lack of good facilities and qualified coaches to train young people.

Authorities in Unity state say they plan to work with oil companies operating in the area, as well as NGOs in order to support sports in schools.

### **Poverty sends children to the streets**

*Bakhita Radio Juba, 20/3/2013* – Many children in South Sudan lack parental care and together with poverty it is contributing to the influx of children on the streets.

UNICEF Representative Yasmin Ali Haque told the press in Juba that two weeks ago they held a conference to tackle issues on children who don't have parental care, Bakhita Radio reported.

She said the study showed that most of the States had no validated reports on the number of children living on the streets.

Ms Haque said the conference came up with a roadmap to address the needs of children with no parental care. She added that the action plan will be prepared locally in each state.

Ms Haque said it was a collective responsibility of the Government, NGOs, and the churches to address the issue of the abandoned children.

The UNICEF chief in South Sudan made these statements at the end of Japanese goodwill ambassador Tetsuko Kuroyanagi to the country.

In the past 11 years, Japan has made a total contribution of more than 67 million US dollar to Sudan through UNICEF and one third of that amount was used in South Sudan.

### **The AU welcomes continued progress in the situation between the Sudan and S. Sudan**

*Peaceau.org Addis Ababa, 20/3/2013* – The Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union (AU), Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, welcomes the successful convening of an extraordinary meeting of the Joint Political Security Mechanism (JPSM) between the Republic of Sudan and the Republic of South Sudan, held in Addis Ababa from 16 to 19 March 2013.



The meeting was co-chaired by the two Ministers of Defence, General John Kong Nyuon from South Sudan, and 1st Lieutenant General Abdel Raheem Mohammed Hussein, and facilitated by H.E. Abdusalami Abubakar, member of the AU High-Level Implementation Panel for Sudan and South Sudan (AUHIP).

During the meeting, the United Nations Interim Security Force in Abyei (UNISFA) Force Commander, General Yohannes Tesfamariam, provided a progress report on the implementation of the security agreements. Both Parties have met their obligations with regard to withdrawal to their side of the border, and their national monitors are in the process of being airlifted to the Joint Border Verification Monitoring Mechanism (JBVMM) Headquarters in Kadugli. Both Parties have also given assurances that the monitors from the other State will be able to operate in their respective territories without hindrance. The UNISFA Force Commander also expressed his conviction that further progress will be made in the coming days.

The Chairperson of the Commission commends the Parties for the exceptional efforts they have exerted, to meet the very tight timelines for operationalization of the Safe Demilitarized Border Zone (SDBZ). She commends UNISFA for its continued work in support of Sudan and South Sudan, which has been instrumental in ensuring the success of the Parties to date.

The Chairperson of the Commission calls on the United Nations Security Council to extend its full support to the process. In particular, she urges the members of the Security Council to authorize the additional 1,126 personnel, including support elements, as requested by UNISFA, to facilitate force protection for the monitors of the JBVMM.

The Chairperson of the Commission welcomes the positive and cooperative spirit demonstrated by the two Parties and is pleased to note the tangible progress they have made in the implementation of the agreements to operationalize the SDBZ. The Chairperson believes that these actions constitute important steps in building the necessary confidence between them, leading towards the full normalization of their relationship, based on their commitment to build two viable States. The Chairperson is confident that the same spirit and commitment will continue to be exerted by the Parties in their ongoing efforts to meet their obligations.

### **Sudan, S. Sudan concluded mechanism to monitor refraining from hosting rebels**

*Sudanvisiondaily.com Khartoum, 20/3/2013* – Sudan and South Sudan signed in Addis Ababa a decision to establish a joint mechanism to monitor and verify the two countries' commitment not to harbour armed movements. The mechanism is also tasked to monitor and verify any violation or lack of commitment to the agreement on cessation of hostilities and other relevant agreements.

A press release by the government delegation said a report by the UNISFA force commander was also approved at the meeting. The report confirmed the two parties' commitment to the agreement to withdraw to their side of the border.

UNISFA force commander confirmed the readiness of the mechanism to carry out its task in the buffer zone. An agreement was reached for introduction of some amendments in the terms of reference of the permanent joint secretariat.

The statement added that the Joint Political and Security Committee (JPSC) between the two countries met on 17 and 19 March in Addis Ababa under the auspices of AUHIP member Abdel Salam Abubaker. He said the spirit that prevailed at the meeting helped in signing a matrix of implementation between the two countries which means the two countries are determined to go ahead in normalizing their relations and to adopt a constructive policy to advance the interests of the two countries.

By the success of these meetings, the two countries have completed all aspects of the agreements especially the security arrangements and that will open the door wide for unlimited cooperation between the two countries in all fields.

Defence Minister, Lt. Gen. Abdel Rahim Mohamed Hussein said by agreeing on the monitoring and verification mechanism the actual and serious implementation of the matrix has begun.

In press statements, Gen. Hussein said the meetings of the JPSC shifted relations between the two countries to a new phase of cooperation, and described the meetings as important and a major step that will put relations between the two countries on a new track.

Regarding the buffer zone, he said a mechanism will monitor the zone to ensure that rebels do not get support from either country.

The Minister added that a new mechanism was established to look into complaints and security concerns.

### **Observers prepare to monitor border: Sudan minister**

*Agence France Presse (AFP) Khartoum, 20/3/2013* – The first observers are preparing to monitor a demilitarized buffer zone between Sudan and South Sudan, Khartoum's defence minister said on Wednesday, a move which aims to curb cross-border rebel support.

Analysts say both countries will face a major challenge to effectively implement the zone along their undemarcated and disputed frontier.

"The mechanism we agreed on has begun working," Defence Minister Abdelrahim Mohammed Hussein told reporters after returning from Addis Ababa.

For the first time, he also said his country was ready to engage in talks with the rebels who have been fighting for almost two years in South Kordofan and Blue Nile states.

Hussein said Sudanese monitors have since Tuesday been in the South Kordofan state capital, Kadugli, which will serve as temporary headquarters for the joint border monitoring teams.

"South Sudanese observers arrived today in Kadugli," he said.

The monitors, who will include United Nations peacekeepers, are to verify the withdrawal of Sudanese and South Sudanese forces from the buffer zone, 10 kilometers (6.2 miles) on each side of the 1956 border.

At talks in the Ethiopian capital this month, Sudan and South Sudan -- which have engaged in months of intermittent clashes -- finally settled on detailed timetables to ease tensions by implementing the buffer zone and key economic pacts.

The deals had remained dormant after their signing in September as Khartoum pushed for guarantees that South Sudan would no longer back rebels of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N).

At the African Union-led talks in Addis Ababa, Sudan softened its stance on the security guarantees, helping the buffer zone and eight other agreements to go ahead, observers said.

The two countries have a history of signing pacts with each other but not following through.

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, following a Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA).

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

South Sudan says the north has supported insurgents on its territory, too.

The United Nations and the African Union (AU) have for months called on the SPLM-N and Khartoum to reach a negotiated settlement.

"We are ready to meet them," Hussein said in the first such statement by a government official.

But he said talks must occur "under the umbrella" of the CPA which, among other measures, called for a popular consultation in South Kordofan and Blue Nile.

SPLM-N has reiterated its readiness for direct negotiations with the government.

In a statement last Sunday, the US embassy in Khartoum said it welcomed a reported decision by the Sudanese government "to engage in AU-brokered talks with the Sudan People's Liberation Movement North (SPLM-N)".

It urged both parties to meet for those talks as soon as possible.

The war in South Kordofan and Blue Nile has forced more than 200,000 people to become refugees in South Sudan and Ethiopia.

An estimated one million more have been affected inside the two states.

### **Sudan border monitors ready**

*News24, 20/3/2013* – The first observers are preparing to monitor a demilitarized buffer zone between Sudan and South Sudan, Khartoum's defence minister said on Wednesday, a move which aims to curb cross-border rebel support.

Analysts say both countries will face a major challenge to effectively implement the zone along their undemarcated and disputed frontier.

"The mechanism we agreed on has begun working," Defence Minister Abdelrahim Mohammed Hussein told reporters after returning from Addis Ababa.

For the first time, he also said his country was ready to engage in talks with the rebels who have been fighting for almost two years in South Kordofan and Blue Nile states.

Hussein said Sudanese monitors have since Tuesday been in the South Kordofan state capital, Kadugli, which will serve as temporary headquarters for the joint border monitoring teams.

"South Sudanese observers arrived today in Kadugli," he said.

The monitors, who will include United Nations peacekeepers, are to verify the withdrawal of Sudanese and South Sudanese forces from the buffer zone, 10km on each side of the 1956 border.

At talks in the Ethiopian capital this month, Sudan and South Sudan - which have engaged in months of intermittent clashes - finally settled on detailed timetables to ease tensions by implementing the buffer zone and key economic pacts.

The deals had remained dormant after their signing in September as Khartoum pushed for guarantees that South Sudan would no longer back rebels of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N).

### **Comprehensive Peace Agreement**

At the African Union-led talks in Addis Ababa, Sudan softened its stance on the security guarantees, helping the buffer zone and eight other agreements to go ahead, observers said.

The two countries have a history of signing pacts with each other but not following through.

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, following a Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA).

Analysts and diplomats say there is no doubt that South Sudan continued to back the rebels. South Sudan says the north has supported insurgents on its territory, too.

The United Nations and the African Union (AU) have for months called on the SPLM-N and Khartoum to reach a negotiated settlement.

"We are ready to meet them," Hussein said in the first such statement by a government official.

But he said talks must occur "under the umbrella" of the CPA which, among other measures, called for a popular consultation in South Kordofan and Blue Nile.

SPLM-N has reiterated its readiness for direct negotiations with the government.

In a statement last Sunday, the US embassy in Khartoum said it welcomed a reported decision by the Sudanese government "to engage in AU-brokered talks with the Sudan People's Liberation Movement North (SPLM-N)".

It urged both parties to meet for those talks as soon as possible.

The war in South Kordofan and Blue Nile has forced more than 200 000 people to become refugees in South Sudan and Ethiopia. An estimated one million more have been affected inside the two states.

### **Khartoum must establish banking presence in South Sudan, bank manager says**

*Sudantribune.com Khartoum, 20/3/2013* – The General Manager of Sudan's Export Development Bank Mohammed Rashid Mohammed Salem called for swift signing of cooperation protocols between the central banks in Khartoum and Juba in the wake of the recent rapprochement between the two countries.

Salem said that such an agreement would allow for Sudanese banking presence in South Sudan which would help facilitate border trade in line with the deals signed last week.

He said that lack of Sudanese banks in South Sudan is an impediment to trade between the two countries which is has a potential of reaching a volume of \$2 billion annually and encompassing 175 line of commodities.

The agreement, signed in Addis Ababa under the supervision of the African Union, sets a timetable and the mechanisms to enact a cooperation agreement signed by both countries last September.

In addition to oil production, other matters addressed in the cooperation agreement are to be immediately carried out in the next two to three weeks, including security arrangements, the demarcation of borders, the status of people living across borders, trade, economics and pensions.

Landlocked South Sudan, which seceded from Sudan in July 2011, closed off its 350,000 barrel-per-day output in January last year in a dispute with Khartoum over how much it should pay to send the oil through Sudanese pipelines to the Red Sea.

Now both countries say that they are prepared to resume oil exports which is hoped to bring billion of dollars into their beleaguered economies.

The Sudanese banker emphasized the readiness of his bank to contribute to the development of trade and exports to South Sudan and support the banking system there.

### **Sudan ready to talk with southern rebels - Defense minister**

*Reuters Khartoum/Juba, 20/3/2013* – Sudan made its first offer to hold direct talks with rebels on its southern border with South Sudan on Wednesday.

The SPLM-North (SPLM-N) rebels operating in Sudan's Blue Nile and South Kordofan states said the offer extended by Sudan Defence Minister Abdel Raheem Mohammed Hussein was "progress", but that it was too early to talk about peace.

Hussein said Khartoum would be willing to have discussions with SPLM-N, providing the dialogue was based on protocols set out in a 2005 peace agreement with South Sudan.

"We are ready to meet with the northern sector (of the SPLM), on the condition that the dialogue and discussion is based on the Comprehensive Peace Agreement and the protocol for the two areas as a reference," Hussein told reporters at Khartoum's airport on Wednesday.

Sudan has previously refused to meet the rebels and has accused South Sudan of backing the SPLM-N, a former ally of the SPLM whose decades-long war with Khartoum resulted in the 2005 peace deal and the secession of South Sudan in 2011.

The SPLM-N rebellion to overthrow the rule of Sudanese President Omar Hassan al-Bashir began shortly after secession.

### **South Sudan denies backing the SPLM-N.**

This month, the two countries agreed on a timeframe to withdraw troops from their disputed, roughly 2,000-km (1,200-mile) border, something they agreed to do in September but have failed to implement because of lingering tensions.

Neroun Phillip, a member of the SPLM-N negotiations team, told Reuters the breakthrough in talks between Sudan and South Sudan may have encouraged Khartoum to start talks with the rebel group.

He said earlier this month the African Union set an agenda for such talks including a cessation of hostilities to get humanitarian aid into the region as well as make security and political arrangements.

"For Khartoum to directly negotiate with the SPLM-N is progress but the difficulties will come in the details of the talks," Phillip said.

"It's too early to talk about peace until the parties sit and agree on some issues."

Fighting in the two Border States has forced hundreds of thousands of people to flee their homes, and complicated ties between Sudan and South Sudan.

The withdrawal of troops from the border zone was seen as a vital first step to resuming southern oil exports through Sudan, which both countries depend on for revenue and foreign currency.

South Sudan shut off its roughly 350,000 barrel-a-day output in January last year in a dispute with Sudan over how much it should pay to send it through Sudanese pipelines to a Red Sea port.

Sudan's north-south civil war was one of Africa's longest and deadliest, killing some 2 million people. The war over oil, religion, ideology and identity devastated much of South Sudan and sucked in many of its neighbours.

### **Sudan working on improving image in foreign media: minister**

*Sudantribune.com Khartoum, 20/3/2013* – The Sudanese minister of Information Ahmed Bilal Osman disclosed that his ministry attempted to hire public relations experts holding U.S. citizenship to work as consultants for improving Sudan's negative image in foreign media.

Osman, who was addressing a forum on the 'Modern Trends in Media Management, Public Relations, and Protocol' organized by the Federal Center for Research and Capacity Building, said that they asked a group of Jordanians holding American citizenships to conduct studies aiming at improving Sudan's image in foreign media.

However, they asked for large sums of money which the Ministry of Finance was unable to offer.

The minister underscored the need to put more efforts in the information and public relations sector in order to improve the image of Sudan abroad in addition to enhancing the official awareness about the importance of public relations which he acknowledged that the government neglected for long time.

The Sudanese government frequently complains about unfair coverage particularly in Western media.

News about the Darfur conflict which started in 2003 made the headlines around the world for several years.

In 2008, the United Nations said some 300,000 people may have died in Darfur's war, which the U.S. unilaterally labeled as genocide. The government has put the death toll around 10,000.

Sudan's President Omer Hassan al-Bashir is wanted by the International Criminal Court on charges of genocide and war crimes in Darfur. Khartoum dismisses the court as an agent of Western neo-imperialism.

### **AUPSC committed to respecting Sudan's sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity**

*Sudanvisiondaily.com, 20/3/2013* – The Peace and Security Council of the African Union (AU PSC), while seeking a breakthrough in Darfur conflict is fully committed to respect Sudan's sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity said a statement issued by the AU PSC.

In a statement delivered by the Ambassador of the Gambia, Member of the AU-PSC following their last visit to Sudan, the council commended the hospitality he received in the country, "On behalf of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union(AU PSC) and on my own personal behalf, I would like to express our sincere gratitude to the Government and people of the Republic of The Sudan for the warm hospitality extended to our mission since our arrival on 17 March 2013", said the statement.

The statement went further to give utmost support to Doha Agreement (DDPD) as the base for any peaceful settlement and pledged support to any effort to bring on board the other non-signatory armed groups. AU PSC commended the role played by UNAMID including the countries contributing troops and

police. "As well as the men and women on the ground for the immense contribution they are making towards the achievement of lasting peace, security and development in Darfur. We pay particular tribute to the men and women who have paid the ultimate sacrifice in the service of Africa", the statement said.

The AU PSC considered the UNAMID as a clear testimony of the AU's commitment towards making peace in this integral part of The Sudan (Darfur), adding that the UNAMID could be prototype for future peacekeeping missions in the maintenance of international peace and security.

The Council expressed satisfaction with recent agreements between Sudan and S. Sudan on the implementation modalities of the security and other agreements signed previously. "We look forward to positive results of these agreements on the security situation in Darfur".

### **Sudan's opposition parties threaten to boycott elections**

*Theniles.org Khartoum, 20/3/2013* – Sudanese opposition parties signaled they will boycott future elections in response to an attack by the Registrar of Parties.

While the ruling National Congress Party (NCP) is gearing up for elections scheduled for 2015, opposition parties said they planned to boycott any ballot.

The opposition is under pressure from an official complaint against them from the Registrar of Political Parties and Organizations which has contacted the Constitutional Court, demanding the dissolution of opposition parties that signed a "New Dawn" cooperation agreement aiming to end the current regime. The document was inked in Kampala with the Sudanese Revolutionary Front (SRF) in January.

"It is the government which is afraid, which explains why it refrains from giving us enough space to move."

Al-Harith Al-Tom This new threat to the political opposition has been dubbed a technique to exert pressure and control over the political sphere.

Member of the Sudanese Communist Party (SCP) Central Committee Al-Harith Al-Tom explained the restrictions placed on his party, saying that it would not participate in the elections if this pressure continued. "It is the government which is afraid, which explains why it refrains from giving us enough space to move," he said in a telephone interview, referring to the Registrar's complaint.

Chairman of the opposition National Consensus Forces (NCF) Farouk Abu Eissa said talk about dissolving the parties and the complaint against them at the Constitutional Court were "a tool used to pressurize and punish those parties", adding that that move, in conjunction with the talk about election preparations, emphasized the government's "lack of seriousness" and "short-sightedness by the ruling party".

In a statement published by Al-Jareeda newspaper last Wednesday, Abu Eissa said democratic life would be incomplete without opposition parties. "How can you weaken parties and loosen their relationship with the masses, and still claim you respect democracy and call for fair elections?"

For his part, writer and political analyst Abu-Bakr Amin argued that opposition groups were too weak. "If these parties were genuine opposition parties, they would not accept any formulas, including the elections, without ensuring the freedoms, especially assembly, association, demonstration and free expression," he said.

"Boycott is not considered a pressure."

Abu-Bakr Amin "You should not give a rival party the right to register your party," said Amin. He argued that the real force of opposition lies with the people, saying that "boycott is not considered a pressure".

The Registrar, for its part, said the parties violated the country's Interim Constitution of 2005 and provided support to the Sudanese Revolutionary Front, an alliance of groups opposed to President Omar al-Bashir's government.

Earlier this month Akhir Lahza newspaper reported that the Registrar handed over its critique to the Popular Congress Party (PCP), the National Umma Party, and the SCP, and gave them a week to answer the charges and clarify the jobs of the people who signed the Charter on their behalf.

“These complaints are a conspiracy hatched by the regime to dissolve the parties.” Kamal Omar Abdel Salam The newspaper quoted the PCP Political Secretary, Kamal Omar Abdel Salam, as saying: “These complaints are a conspiracy hatched by the regime to dissolve the parties.”

Abdel Salam argued that the Registrar was not authorized to dissolve the parties, freeze their activities, or even questions them and accused it of partiality.

Meanwhile, the nation is gradually gearing up for elections. Earlier this month the Sudanese Media Center published an announcement from the National Election Committee’s Chairman Abdullah Ahmed Abdullah who gave recommendations for the permanent electoral rolls project, incorporating fingerprints and photos to avoid multiple registrations.

Abdullah said it was his committee’s priority to initiate comprehensive and credible electoral rolls, including all eligible individuals. He said voters should be able to express their free will to choose the candidates in order to “establish democratic transformation and peaceful exchange of power”.

He argued that the electoral rolls were the backbone of Sudan’s electoral success and would ensure inclusiveness and transparency.

### **Opposition party calls to hand over power to Sudanese army**

*Sudantribune.com Khartoum, 20/3/2013* – The opposition National Umma Party (NUP) called on the Sudanese president Omer Al-Bashir to hand over power to the army if he intends to step down before the resolution of the current political crisis in the country.

Bashir who survived last year Arab Spring announced in an interview released on Wednesday that he has no intention to maintain himself in power. He added that the ruling National Congress Party is deliberating to choose a candidate for the presidential election in 2015.

In a press statement the largest opposition party said Bashir, before to leave power, should undertake some transitional arrangements including a role for the armed forces to protect the constitution and to protect the elected government.

The opposition party referred, in its statement, to the role of the Sudan Armed Forces after a popular uprising that caused the downfall of Nimeiri’s regime in April 1985, saying the army can manage to restore the democratic regime as it had been before the Islamist coup d’état of 1989.

"The National Congress Party, which failed to reach power through the ballot box (in 1986), should not be the heir of a regime made in the name of the army," said NUP spokesperson Nagib Al-Khair Abdel-Wahab on Wednesday.

He further reiterated that Sudanese people attach great’s hopes on its armed forces and refuse to challenge its nationalism or allegiance to the people and its respect for democratic choice.

Last January following the announcement of the New Dawn Charter inked in Kampala by rebel groups and opposition forces, the Umma party voiced its rejection to a provision calling to dissolve the army and demanded to review this agreement.

The alliance of the opposition parties agreed in June 2012 to remove the regime through peaceful means and reiterated their willingness to continue the dialogue with the rebel groups to privilege this option instead of the use of arms.

The spokesperson of the opposition National Conesus Forces Kamal Omer reacted to Bashir’ statements saying they are determined to topple the regime. He further called to establish an interim government to ensure democratic change in Sudan.

### **HAC warns foreign, local organizations over violation of law**

***Sudanese Media Center Khartoum, 20/3/2013*** – Humanitarian Aid Commission (HAC) denies existence of any organization operating in humanitarian activities without being registered according to humanitarian law.

HAC's organizations department manager Ali Adam Hassan said in statement to (smc) said any organization operates in Sudan must be registered. He said donations and raising funds for organizations programs are done based on a document presented for endorsement by the commissioner, according to regulations.

He adds that the commission abides all local, foreign and UN agencies that all funding and implementation of proposed projects should take place through technical deals endorsed by HAC commissioner. "And foreign organizations should establish partnership with local organizations to facilitate easier running of the humanitarian work and strengthens follow-up implementation of the projects," Hassan said.

Moreover UN is also must be abide by offering a plan of action endorses by the commissioners, Hassan noted.

"The organizations destined to struggle affected areas in Blue Nile and south Kordofan must obtain travel permit from the commissioner's office, otherwise they shall be subjected to legal accountability, Hassan said

### **Central African Republic rebels end truce**

***Reuters Paris/Bangui, 20/3/2013*** – Rebels in the Central African Republic called off a truce on Wednesday, accusing the government of renegeing on a January peace deal, but said they would give regional mediators a chance to settle the dispute before they resumed fighting.

The Seleka rebel group, which came close to taking the capital Bangui late last year, said a 72-hour deadline for the president to honour the terms of the deal had now passed.

"All options are being studied by our military command ... President (Francois) Bozize ... should draw the right conclusion and present his resignation," the movement's spokesman Eric Massi said by telephone in Paris.

The expiration of the deadline meant "the possible resumption of hostilities," he added. No one was immediately available to comment from CAR's government.

France's foreign ministry said earlier on Wednesday it had convened a meeting of the U.N. Security Council to discuss the fragile situation in its former colony.

The standoff is the latest in a series of rebel incursions, clashes and coups that have plagued the landlocked nation in the heart of Africa since its independence in 1960.

CAR remains among the least developed countries in the world despite rich deposits of gold, diamonds and uranium.

The spill-over of conflicts in neighbouring Chad, Sudan and Democratic Republic of Congo have undermined efforts to stabilize it.

Seleka - a loose umbrella group of insurgents - made its advance on the capital last year after accusing the government of failing to honour an even earlier peace agreement to give its fighters jobs and cash in exchange for laying down their arms.

Regional powers including Chad and South Africa sent in troops to bolster the government and helped negotiate the January settlement.

Seleka says the president had now failed to keep his promise to send remaining South African troops out of the country and to incorporate 2,000 rebels into the army.

CAR spokesman Massi said all options were on the table ahead of the expected arrival in coming days of Chad's President Idriss Deby and Congo Republic's President Denis Sassou Nguesso to broker talks in Bangui.



Paris increased the number of its troops in CAR to 600 in December to protect citizens working there, many of them in the key mining industry.

French nuclear energy group Areva mines the country's Bakouma uranium deposit.

The United States said on Sunday it was concerned about worsening security, urging all sides to implement the ceasefire deal

### **U.S. seeks swift transfer of Congo warlord to Hague Court**

*Reuters Kigali, 20/3/2013* – The United States is seeking the swift transfer of a Congolese warlord from its embassy in Rwanda to a war crimes tribunal for a trial that could help eastern Democratic Republic of Congo inch towards peace.

Bosco Ntaganda gave himself up to the U.S. Embassy in Kigali on Monday after a 15-year career that spanned a series of Rwandan-backed rebellions in eastern Congo.

He asked to be sent to the International Criminal Court (ICC) in The Hague where he faces war crimes charges.

Ntaganda's departure from the conflict zone, where he was a leading commander in the M23 group fighting Congolese forces, could improve prospects for stability in a region where vast mineral resources have fuelled two decades of conflict.

But the trial of Rwandan-born Ntaganda could also prove an embarrassment to the Rwandan government which has denied charges by a U.N. panel that accused it of backing the M23 rebels. The trial could take months or even longer to start.

"This is an opportunity to advance a little bit of peace and stability in the eastern Congo," Johnnie Carson, U.S. assistant secretary of state for African affairs, told a conference call on Ntaganda's situation.

He also said Rwanda could use the opportunity to demonstrate its commitment to a February deal signed in Addis Ababa that called for regional states to help end conflict in Congo.

He said the Rwandan government had offered "appropriate assurances" that it would not interfere in the process of transferring Ntaganda, who needs to be transported through the capital to the airport in coordination ICC authorities.

Rwandan President Paul Kagame told U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon during a visit to the United Nations on Wednesday that Rwanda "will work to make what the U.S. Embassy needs in relation to Bosco Ntaganda's case happen as fast as possible."

Speaking from Washington, Carson said he wanted Ntaganda moved "as quickly as possible" but did not give a precise timeline. Practical arrangements were still being worked out and ICC officials were heading to Rwanda to help with those logistics.

"The next 48 hours or so will be critical," he said.

### **Obstacle to peace**

ICC Prosecutor Fatou Bensouda, speaking to reporters in Paris, said the court was working closely with those on the ground to ensure Ntaganda was transferred as quickly as possible.

"Its logistics now ... A couple of days," she said, adding that court procedures meant the start of the trial would take time. "I can't speak for the judges, but in my experience three months minimum."

Ntaganda faces charges of recruiting child soldiers, murder, ethnic persecution, sexual slavery and rape during the 2002-3 conflict in north-eastern Congo's gold-mining Ituri district.

Ntaganda's whereabouts had been unknown after hundreds of his fighters fled into Rwanda or surrendered to U.N. peacekeepers at the weekend following their defeat by a rival faction of M23 rebels in the mineral-rich eastern Congo.

With an arrest warrant hanging over him, Ntaganda and his faction were seen as an obstacle to a peace deal between the M23 and the Congolese government. Jason Stearns of the Rift Valley Institute, a research body working in the region, said he might have feared being sold out.

But his decision to give himself up may improve the prospects for a deal that the M23 faction he opposed has shown signs of warming to.

Born in Rwanda, Ntaganda grew up in Congo before fighting alongside Rwandan Tutsi rebels who seized control of the small central Africa country, ending the 1994 genocide in which over 800,000 people died.

For Rwanda, the worries of being implicated by Ntaganda in any testimony when on trial may be outweighed by the desire to avoid being seen as a nation seeking to protect an ICC indictee.

"It's possible the Rwandans will be nervous about what he might say if he got on the stand in the Hague," said Ben Shepherd, an analyst at Chatham House, a London-based international affairs institute.

But Shepherd said the relationship between Ntaganda and Rwanda was ambiguous so Kigali might be confident it could avoid being implicated or might simply be hoping it would take years before he stood trial.

### **US indicates Rwanda hasn't assured safe passage of Congolese warlord at embassy**

*Washington Post Nairobi, Kenya, 20/3/2013* – The United States appears to be worried that Rwanda won't allow a warlord from Congo now camped out in the U.S. Embassy safe passage to the airport to be flown to the International Criminal Court for prosecution.

The U.S. hopes Rwanda will help facilitate the transfer of Congolese rebel leader Bosco Ntaganda from the U.S. Embassy in Kigali to the airport for a flight to the ICC in the Netherlands, the top U.S. State Department official on Africa, Johnnie Carson, said Wednesday.

"We hope that the Rwandan government will do its part," Carson said in a telephone press conference from Washington. "It is a small but significant part to ensure that Bosco Ntaganda is able to move freely from the American embassy compound to the airport where he will board a plane and go to The Hague."

Carson said it's important that Ntaganda's movement from the embassy to the airport "in no way be inhibited."

Carson also indicated that Rwanda hasn't yet assured cooperation with ICC officials en route to Rwanda. He noted that Rwanda, like the United States, is not a signatory to the Rome Statute that created the ICC and is not bound by international obligations to hand Ntaganda to the ICC.

Rwanda's foreign minister, Louise Mushikiwabo, implicitly criticized the ICC on Twitter on Sunday that "Rwanda believes in justice, not judicial colonialism," in response to a question from the head of Human Rights Watch on whether Rwanda would commit to sending Ntaganda to the court's headquarters in The Hague.

A spokesman for the ICC, Fadi El Abdallah, said the ICC is "contacting authorities in Rwanda and the Americans in order to check how we can get him as soon as possible." He wouldn't elaborate on the nature of the contacts.

Ntaganda's reputation for ruthless methods in the battlefield acquired him the nickname "The Terminator," and his ICC arrest warrant describes how Ntaganda would not hesitate to shell villages with heavy artillery before launching an attack in which his men would kill people with machetes, knives and rifles.

Those who recently fought alongside him say Ntaganda fled Congo over the weekend after his men lost a key battle against fighters who split off last month from his M23 rebel movement.

"Ntaganda's self-surrender at the U.S. Embassy in Kigali was a surprising end to a saga of conflict, human rights abuses, and blatant disregard for his ICC arrest warrant by (Congolese) officials for many years. It is very significant in terms of a victory for individual rights," said Laura Seay, a Congo expert at Morehouse University in Atlanta.

Having Ntaganda on the stand, though, could pose problems for Rwandan President Paul Kagame, Seay said. Kagame won't want Ntaganda, who was born in Rwanda, to reveal the details of security arrangements and illicit mineral extraction deals between Congo and Rwanda, she said.

Congo has been wracked by warfare for years, and Carson noted that some experts indicate 5 million people have died in violence. Women suffer from mass rapes and children are forced to become soldiers.

But even with Ntaganda out of the picture, peace in eastern Congo remains a long way off. The victorious M23 faction of Gen. Sultani Makenga has lost little strength in the fighting with Ntaganda's faction, and troop morale is high after defeating one of the most feared warlords in Africa. Makenga himself does not have an international arrest warrant against him, but is under United Nations sanctions and has a track record of similar crimes to those committed by Ntaganda.

"It is an interesting development for peace in eastern Congo," said Marc-André Lagrange, senior analyst at the International Crisis Group. "A warlord is leaving, but it doesn't mean that he won't be replaced. Makenga has exactly the same connections in minerals trafficking and so on. A warlord is merely being replaced by another."

Carson said the next 48 hours are critical for Ntaganda's situation. Carson said Ntaganda moved across the border from eastern Congo to Rwanda late on March 14 or early on March 15 with 500 to 700 of his fighters.

"We then found Mr. Ntaganda coming to our embassy. We did not encourage him, we did not know his whereabouts," Carson said. "I suspect he may have come because he knows we are a symbol of fairness and justice and integrity in these kinds of processes but I can't tell you because I don't know and can't read his mind."

Carson said the situation with Ntaganda is an opportunity for progress to be made in the battle against impunity for atrocities and crimes against humanity.

### **The two Sudans moving from ideology to interest**

*Arab News*, 20/3/2013 – As far as Sudan is concerned, fingers crossed; we may be lucky this time. There are grounds for optimism as the latest round of talks between Sudan and South Sudan ended last week with the signing of a matrix to enforce eight deals on cooperation between the two countries agreed upon last September. This means that these deals may have finally found their way for implementation.

There was a host of issues on the table, from the question of borders to the disputed region of Abyei and from oil to other points of contention that should have been settled before the separation of South Sudan back in July 2011. South Sudan has apparently opted to drag its feet on the matter. For one thing, it was very much focused on the big task of having the separation carried out smoothly and receiving recognition from the mother country itself, Sudan. Moreover, it makes a difference to be able to negotiate as an independent country.

However, not long after South Sudan became independent, a row erupted between the two on oil transporting fees, as it is a landlocked country and needs to use both downstream facilities and ports in Sudan to get its oil to world markets.

As the dispute continued for six months and no agreement on transit fees was reached, Sudan decided to take what it saw as its dues, in turn confiscating some of the oil cargoes so as to cover its outstanding transit bills.

Juba reacted furiously, calling Sudan's unilateral action a "robbery" and went even further to shut down its oil production so as to deny Khartoum any access to its oil. Tensions rose and prospects of a war between the two countries became a possibility. However, the involvement of the African Union as the main mediator, backed by the UN Security Council, with the threat of sanctions, provided some of the restraint for the two capitals not to drift into war.

However, 14 months after that shutdown, South Sudan began feeling the pinch of that decision as oil revenues constituted almost all its income, but it somehow managed to survive insofar as it managed to paint the oil production shutdown as a form of economic independence following political independence

from the mother country. In addition, as a nation of youth that had been through tough years of civil war, it thought it could tolerate the hardship.

Whatever savings it had or help from friendly countries proved insufficient in the end to sustain the plight of a lack of oil revenues. Moreover, nothing substantial had been done to look for an export alternative through Kenya in East Africa despite a number of MoUs signed between South Sudan and Kenya, Ethiopia and Djibouti. Such an alternative is in need of a detailed feasibility study to determine whether the country has enough reserves to justify building a new pipeline, in addition to other logistical and security issues.

Though the presidents of the two countries, Omar Bashir and Salva Kiir, signed the deal, six months have passed without them being implemented. The sticking point was and still is the security arrangements where Sudan wants to ensure that the rebels who are challenging its authority are not getting support from the South Sudan and that is why they have decided on a buffer and a demilitarized zone so as to satisfy the security concerns of both parties before allowing South Sudan oil to flow through its land. Another factor is that Kiir has managed to consolidate his grip on power following his firing of more than 100 generals from the army as well as some governors.

If the agreements on cooperation between the two countries are carried out, they will take their relationship to a whole new level of mutual interest and defuse the tendency to go for regime change as hard-liners in both capitals were preaching.

That stems from the fact that the two ruling parties in both countries, the Sudan's National Congress Party with its Islamic program and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement in South Sudan with its clear secularist commitment, stand disunited politically and ideologically. It was ironic that the 2005 peace that ended Sudan's civil war, the longest in Africa, was concluded between these two. Indeed, the challenge before them now is to move from ideology to mutual interest.

### **East Africa: Celebrating the bureaucratization of peace - the Addis implementation matrix**

*Googleadservices.com, 20/3/2013* – Another Addis Ababa; negotiating marathon, another document heralded as the 'breakthrough' agreement between Sudan and South Sudan.

The 68-point implementation matrix (not counting sub-points), signed on March 12 by Idris Mohamed Abdel Gadar for Sudan and Pagan Amum for South Sudan, follows the meeting on March 8 of the defence ministers of both states, who agreed again to withdraw their forces from the previously defined Safe Demilitarized Border Zone (SDBZ).

Or as South Sudan's negotiating team put it, with a first sentence tongue-twister for bored diplomats and journalists covering the next meeting in Addis: "On March 8, 2013, after months of negotiations, the Republic of South Sudan and the Republic of Sudan's Joint Political and Security Mechanism (JPSM) came to an agreement on the content of a framework for implementing the commitments made in the bilateral September 2012 security arrangements agreement.

This important development should result in the creation of a safe demilitarized buffer zone along the two countries' shared border. Both sides have already ordered their armed forces to withdraw to their side of the buffer zone."

Point seven of the March 8 document tells of the delays suffered after the last supposed breakthrough agreement, the cooperation accords of September 2012.

It subtly ignores that failure of implementation and just says: "the original D-Day for the implementation plan matrix was 19 December 2012. The matrix has been reviewed and the JPSM have set D-Day at 10 March 2013."

Three months delay could be forgiven if the intentions of the parties were now honourable. Unfortunately, there is reason to be skeptical of that being the case.

Orders by Khartoum and Juba to withdraw their troops from the border are encouraging, but are just as easily reversed. Resuming oil production is welcome, until the next crisis comes. We celebrate the matrix, because even modest progress is better than the alternative.

Our faith is in this new bureaucratization of peace: the idea that if only there are or were enough technical benchmarks, processes, committees, mechanisms and modalities, on paper and on the ground, all that underlying emotional antipathy and mistrust and suspicion could be controlled if not eradicated entirely.

### **Sudan: Are the brakes coming off the train?**

*Sudantribune.com, 20/3/2013* – Last month has marked the 10th anniversary of Darfur conflict where embattled President Omer Al-Basher of Sudan has orchestrated a genocidal war against the Darfurains in western Sudan. Darfur holocaust was not enough for bloodthirsty dictator Basher, hence, he has waged another deadly ground and aerial assaults on the Nuba Mountain and Blue Nile's people which has led more than one million and half civilians from both areas to flee their homes and take refuge in neighboring countries such Ethiopia and the Republic of South Sudan .

General Al-Basher and his wacky-birds are ravaging Sudan with conflicts and genocidal war against marginalized citizens of Sudan not because they are leading a holy war on behalf of Islam as they claimed, but because the wanted to retain power to themselves by crushing all democratic and revolutionary forces all over Sudan.

Defiant Al-Basher has divided his own party, The National Islamic Front (NIF) in 1997, and arrested his mentor, Hassan Turabi who was the mastermind of Al-Basher's coup in 1989 and the Godfather of what so called the Islamic movement in Sudan. Furthermore, indicted Al-Basher has divided the country itself in 2011, and has been traveling in this bumpy road for the past two decades will not change his repressive policies unless there is a siege of crisis and international pressure are mounting on his crumble regime.

Obviously, the regime is looking for a lifeline that could save the regime from the imminent collapse. Given this fact, Al-Basher met with Al-Turabi about two month ago to search for a safe landing for the regime. According to reliable sources that Al-Turabi didn't mind extending his hand Al-Basher in order to save the remnant of Islamic movement. The Berlin meeting with VP Ali Osman Taha and Ali Hajj Mohammed, Al-Turabi's aide aimed to discuss the unity of the Islamists, and to search for a solution to the regime's crisis over Sudan's, according to multiple sources in Berlin.

No doubt, Sudan is at crossroads and heading towards a disintegration due to the bad policies that has been implemented by Al-Basher's regime since 1989. After the cession of south, Sudan becomes like dominoes' game, when one cube falls down, the rest of the cubes do. Al-Basher has two options, is either to change or be changed. Al-Basher can call on a national conference by inviting all stakeholders for a roundtable discussion to where all parties participate and agree on a blue-print of a national project that would lead to change on the power's status quo and ends the war in Darfur, Nuba Mountain and Blue Nile. In addition, leaders can agree on a process of reconciliation and form a committee for reconciliation and reparation and brining those perpetrators who committed atrocities in Darfur, the Nuba Mountains and Blue Nile.

The second option, Al-Basher refusal to negotiate a holistic peace-settlement with The Sudanese Revolutionary Front (SRF) and the rest of the democratic forces would lead to more suffering for the Sudanese people and destroy Sudan's infrastructure, or what's left of it. The Sudanese people are eager to freedom, peace, justice and democracy, and they are able to remove two dictatorial regimes before, and the will bring this one down. It is just a matter of time before Al-Basher is being ousted.

The international community's role in getting rid of dictators is complementary. Nevertheless, superpowers such as the U.S. and Britain have a moral commitment in stopping the genocide in Darfur, and President Obama pledged in 2008 that he would never allow repeating the tragedy of Rwanda in Darfur if he was elected as president. The Obama Administration's silence on Sudan makes us question how serious the U.S. commitment to human rights and democracy , because U.S. officials in Washington preach others about the importance of freedom, the role of law and democracy without those issues are reflected on the U.S. foreign strategy to solve the crisis in Sudan.

The Sudanese people are looking for a strong position from the United States to deal with multiple crisis that Sudan has been suffering from, and not a lip-service statements.

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