

Ethiopia and Sudanese foreign ministers discuss bilateral relations

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By Tesfa-Alem Tekle

August 5, 2012 (ADDIS ABABA) - Ethiopia Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Affairs Minister, Hailemariam Desalegn, met Sudanese Foreign Minister, Ali Ahmed Karti at his office in Addis Ababa, where they held talks on a number of bilateral issues.

According to State Ministry of Foreign Affairs statement on Sunday, the two sides held discussions on ways of further enhancing the existing relationship between the two neighbouring countries.

They have also discussed the current situation at a regional level, particularly on Sudan-South Sudan concerns.

During the discussion, Karti briefed his Ethiopian counterpart on the ongoing Khartoum-Juba peace negotiation and the latest developments achieved to resolve their disputes peacefully.

Ethiopia is seen as a broker by both Khartoum and Juba and most rounds of peace talks between them have been held in Ethiopia. The East African nation which is also Inter-governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) chair had a key role in the peaceful separation of Sudan and South Sudan and in the mediation and encouraging the two sides to settle pending issues remaining from the 2005 Comprehensive peace Agreement.

Karti applauded the position of Ethiopia towards both Sudan and South Sudan and expressed gratitude to Desalegn for closely following the ongoing peace negotiation in Addis Ababa.

Desalegne reaffirmed his country's support of the peace efforts and reiterated their commitment to efforts to ensure the success of the peace processes between the two Sudan's.

The two foreign ministers' meeting comes as Sudan and South Sudan achieved a major breakthrough deal on oil transit fees following negotiations brokered by the African Union (AU).

Former South African President, Thabo Mbeki, head of the AU High-Level Implementation Panel said on Friday that the two parties have settled financial arrangements on oil fees and will soon engage in discussions for resumption of oil production and oil shipment.

Khartoum-Juba talks are now suspended until the end of Ramadan fasting and are expected to resume after Eid holiday around the 23 August.

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