

African team to help Khartoum and Juba over disputed areas

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September 12, 2012 (KHARTOUM) - An African Union Good Offices team has launched an initiative aiming to support Khartoum and Juba in their negotiations to reach an agreement over the border contested zones.

The stalled process over boundary demarcation is hampering the implementation of security arrangements between the two country and threaten to hamper the whole process.

South Sudanese government has proposed to go before the tribunal of international arbitration but such process requires Sudan's consent. However Khartoum for the time being decline such approach.

Badr El-Din Abdallah, a spokesperson of Sudan's negotiating delegation, said the good offices team, which visited the two countries recently, will hear to the two parties and assess the evidences and documents they produce.

Following this process which will last three months, the African experts will present their conclusions over the ownership of the disputed areas to the two parties to decide on it.

Abdallah stressed that the conclusions of the good offices team are not binding to the parties but aim to help them to reach an agreement or a compromise over the contested areas.

He further pointed out that the chief mediator Thabo Mbeki is drafting a framework agreement on the economic issues agreed by the two parties.

He also said the security committee headed by Sudan's defence minister Abdel Rahim Hussein and South Sudan's cabinet affairs minister Deng Alor held a four-hour meeting Wednesday and will resume its discussions on Thursday.

The two delegations are expected to end the talks in the third week of September as the mediation will hold a meeting for the two presidents Omer Al-Bashir and Salva Kiir on 21.

The two leaders have to decide on Abyei and other issues the negotiating teams failed to agree on it.

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