

South Sudan defence minister accuses Sudan of renegeing on September deal

Thursday 13 December 2012

December 13, 2012 (JUBA) - South Sudan's defence minister has expressed disappointment with Sudan saying that Khartoum has renegeed over a key cooperation deal agreed in September that could have secured their disputed border and allow oil exports from South Sudan through Sudan to resume.

President Salva Kiir and his Sudanese counterpart Omar al-Bashir signed the Cooperation Agreement in Addis Ababa under African Union mediation under the pressure of sanctions from the UN Security Council if they failed to make progress in relation to the issues outstanding from South Sudan's independence last year.

"I came to brief the president about the outcome of the Joint Political Mechanism meeting I attended in Khartoum", John Kong Nyuon said Wednesday in statement broadcast by South Sudanese state radio and television.

"The meeting did not make any progress because Sudan is not moving away from the agenda of discussion. They are renegeing on the agreement".

Minister Nyuon and the Sudanese Minister of Defense, Abdel-Rahim Mohamed Hussein, resolved to refer their discussions to the African Union mediators in Addis Ababa. South Sudan's delegation will leave Juba on Thursday.

The security elements of the 27 September deal called for both sides to move their armed forces 10km away from a notional non-binding border line put forward by the AU. The status of disputed area and demarcation the hotly-contested oil-rich border was not addressed in the deal.

Khartoum has said that it will not allow South Sudan to pump its oil through Sudanese territory until Juba stops its support to rebel groups north of the border. South Sudan, which fought alongside one of the rebel groups - the SPLM/A-N - during the civil that led to its independence, denies backing their former comrades of the Darfur rebels.

President Kiir has said that since signing the deal Khartoum has made additional "impossible" demands, such as wanting the names of all northern Sudanese who have applied to join South Sudan's army (SPLA).

According to Minister Nyuon Sudan has also demanded that the SPLA themselves disarm the SPLA-North in South Kordofan and Blue Nile.

Relations remain tense between the two nations. Earlier this month South Sudan accused the Sudan Armed Forces of bombing its border state of Northern Bahr el Ghazal. Sudan has denied this saying instead that it attacked a rebel camp within its own territory.

(ST)