

Sudan demands SPLA troops withdraw from disputed areas

Sunday 16 December 2012

December 15, 2012 (KHARTOUM) - Sudan renewed its demand to withdraw all the South Sudanese forces from the disputed area ahead of resumption of discussions on the implementation of security arrangements .

Sudanese and South Sudanese delegations led by defence ministers resumed their discussions in Addis Ababa on Saturday in a new bid to overcome divergences over implementation of security deal they signed last September.

Khartoum; which accuses its southern neighbour of backing Sudanese rebel groups, demands that Juba put a term of its relations with the SPLM-North fighters after recalling them into South Sudan to disarm and demobilise them.

Sudanese army spokesperson Al-Sawarmi Khaled said the Sudanese delegation emphasised on the immediate withdrawal of the SPLA troops from four disputed areas and to stop supporting and harbouring rebel groups.

He further said that chairman of the African mediation Thabo Mbeki, takes part in the meetings and will receive the propositions of the two side to break the stalled talks..

Juba in the past demanded more time to withdraw its troops from the disputed areas saying it was difficult to move heavy weapons and tanks during the rainy season.

In accordance to the security arrangements deal, the two sides have to redeploy their forces from the disputed areas and to form joint teams with the participation of UNISFA to monitor the common border at these five positions.

According to the South Sudanese defence minister, John Kong Nyuon, Khartoum since the first meeting on the implementation mechanism demands that joint monitoring teams be deployed on the border of South Kordofan and Blue Nile in order to prevent SPLM-N fighter from crossing it.

Princeton Lyman, US special envoy to the two countries, accused Khartoum of imposing new conditions and hampering the implementation of the Cooperation Agreement, particularly Sudan refuses the exportation of the South Sudanese oil through its pipeline unless the later disarm the SPLM-N fighters.

The African panel, in its report to the AUPSC meeting on 14 December, underlined that the resolution "of the conflict in the Two Areas is an indispensable prerequisite for the normalization of relations between Sudan and South Sudan."

AGAR AND ARMAN IN ADDIS ABABA

The chairman of the SPLM-N, Malik Agar, and its secretary general, Yasir Arman, arrived to Addis Ababa for consultations with the mediation over the resumption of political talks between Khartoum and the rebel group.

Sudan foreign ministry spokesperson Al-Obeid Al-Marawah denied any talks with the SPLM-N leaders stressing that the Sudanese government negotiating team with the rebel group is not present Addis Ababa.

He however said that they might have arrived to meet the mediation.

Khartoum and SPLM-N refuse to hold direct talks as every side advance different demands.

Khartoum says it can engage direct talks with the rebels once Juba finalised the disengagement process with them, while the SPLM-N demands a comprehensive talks including Darfur groups.

Lyman recently underlined the need to conclude a cessation of hostilities deal between the Sudanese government and the SPLM-N to facilitate the implementation of the security arrangements.

The rebel movement has already proposed to sign a truce with Khartoum but asked to deliver humanitarian aid to the affected civilians in the areas under its control.

(ST)