

Sudan's NCP rules out direct talks with SPLM-N

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March 5, 2012 (KHARTOUM) - Sudan's ruling National Congress Party (NCP) has ruled out direct talks with the Sudan People's Liberation Movement - North (SPLM-N), reiterating that Juba has to first disengage with the rebel group.

Press reports said recently that Khartoum has accepted to negotiate directly with the SPLM-N following messages received from different countries urging for a peaceful solution in line with decisions by the African Union and UN Security Council.

The decision of the government over the negotiations with the SPLM-N is crystal clear and there is no change in this position, said Hamid Sideeg, head of the NCP organisational section on Tuesday.

The government position is based on the decisions of higher instances of the Party which provide no negotiations with the SPLM-N unless the latter disengages with the South Sudan, he further said in statements to Sudan's official news agency (SUNA).

The SPLM-N Secretary General Yasir Arman announced recently that they will head to Addis Ababa on 15 March as per a letter received from the African Union mediation team.

The African Union Peace and Security Council (AUPSC) on 25 January urged the two parties to negotiate "without pre-conditions" in order to reach a political solution to the conflict in Blue Nile and South Kordofan.

It further reiterated that the framework agreement of 28 June 2011 is "the only viable basis" for negotiation and demanded the mediation call on the Sudanese government and the SPLM-N to start direct talks "by no later than 15 February 2013".

Informed sources in Khartoum however said that the government would dispatch a delegation headed by South Kordofan governor Ahmed Haroun to discuss the humanitarian access with the rebel groups.

Last year the two parties failed to implement a humanitarian agreement they had signed in August 2012 allowing the tripartite initiative members, UN agencies, African Union and Arab league, to reach the affected civilians in the areas held by the SPLM-N.

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