



EMBASSY OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH SUDAN, WASHINGTON, D.C.

Press Statement

South Sudan condemns ongoing indiscriminate aerial bombardments by Sudan into its territory and calls for immediate resumption of negotiations

Washington, 14 April 2012 – In a letter to the UN Security Council, South Sudan condemned today's indiscriminate aerial bombardments of its country by its northern neighbor, Sudan, which left civilians dead and wounded. At 1:30 PM local time today, 14 April, a SAF MiG 29 bombed Bentiu town in the South Sudan's Unity State, killing 5 civilians, wounding 6 other civilians, and destroying the Bentiu market. SAF also released three bombs today on Bentiu Bridge, aiming to destroy the path between Bentiu and Rubkotna, and SAF dropped bombs on Panakuach village (also in Unity State) leaving at least five other civilians wounded. Two bombs were also dropped on Abiemnhom in South Sudan's Upper Nile State today. Indeed, despite the UN Security Council's statement on 12 April calling for an immediate cessation of SAF aerial bombardments, today a SAF Antonov plane further dropped two bombs on Ajakkuach in Warrap State of South Sudan and SAF also conducted aerial bombardments of Majoknhom, also in Warrap State.

South Sudan strongly condemns these indiscriminate attacks on civilian areas within its sovereign territory, and it calls upon the Security Council, as well as the international community at large, to continue demanding the immediate cessation of these bombings in order to protect civilian lives. Violence in the border areas between South Sudan and Sudan has escalated since the breakdown of negotiations facilitated by the African Union. Before talks broke down on 4 April, South Sudan had been ready to sign a security agreement proposed by the AU, but its northern neighbor has refused.

Recent violence has centered on the disputed area of Panthou (Heglig). Sudan first launched ground attacks on South Sudan from this area at the end of March. In response to Sudan's offensive attacks, South Sudanese forces advanced into Heglig on 26 March, repelled the attack, and then immediately withdrew from the area on 28 March to allow AU mediators the chance to bring the parties back to talks. After the AU-facilitated talks broke down, on 10 April the Sudan Armed Forces launched another attack from the Heglig area. As a matter of self-defense, the SPLA forces moved back into Heglig to deter further attacks against South Sudanese territory.

South Sudan reiterates the same position it has maintained for years: that the North/South border at the time of Sudan's independence from Britain on 1st January 1956, which under the terms of the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement is the agreed basis for today's North/South border, in fact lies well to the north of Heglig. As such, South Sudan claims Heglig as part of its territory.



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Furthermore, South Sudan described efforts by successive governments in Khartoum since 1956 to shift the North/South boundary southwards, after the discovery of oil the Heglig region.

As affirmed by President Kiir this earlier week, South Sudan has no intention to remain in Heglig. It is prepared to “withdraw its forces from Heglig, as long as an internationally-monitored mechanism is put in place to guarantee that the area cannot be used to launch further attacks against South Sudan and the United Nations commits to deploy neutral forces to Heglig until the parties reach a final settlement of the disputed area.”

In today’s letter to the UN Security Council, South Sudan also informed the UN about its recent discovery that Sudan had been constructing a new tie-in pipeline from Heglig to oilfields in Toma South and Naar in Unity State, South Sudan. Sudan’s intention had been to connect this new pipeline illegally to South Sudan's oil wells in Unity State. South Sudan underlined that it “does not wish to see a return to war, which would be devastating for both countries and for our peoples.”

South Sudan further called for an immediate return to negotiations, leading to a comprehensive agreement on all outstanding matters between the two countries, including security, borders, and Abyei.

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