

**PRESS CONFERENCE WITH U.S. SPECIAL ENVOY FOR SUDAN AND SOUTH SUDAN AMBASSADOR DONALD BOOTH AND EU SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE TO THE HORN OF AFRICA MR ALEXANDER RONDOS**

**Addis Ababa, Ethiopia**

**March 19, 2014**

**Alex Rondos:** Well good afternoon to you all and thank you for coming here. Let me introduce you first of all to Ambassador Donald Booth, the U.S. Special Envoy, and I am Alex Rondos, the EU Special Representative to the Horn of Africa. We are here today as special envoys of the U.S. and the EU, on behalf of the envoys of the Troika and the European Union. Since the crisis erupted in South Sudan in December, we have been in the region working closely in support of IGAD and the IGAD mediation as they attempt to find a resolution to this crisis.

In that regard, we will make a very brief statement on behalf of the Troika and the European Union, followed by a few brief remarks by each of us and then a few questions from you. Ambassador Booth will read the statement.

**Ambassador Booth:** Thank you Alex. This is the statement:

The United States, the United Kingdom, Norway and the European Union expect the Government of South Sudan and other South Sudanese parties to engage constructively in IGAD-led negotiations. If the government or any other actor tries to undermine the peace process and revoke the IGAD heads of state, they will face consequences.

The people of South Sudan expect renewal; they expect their voices to be heard in forging a more sustainable peace. Business as usual is not a viable way forward.

That is the end of the official statement that we wanted to make today, and now we will take, entertain two of your questions.

**Questioner:** When you say the government or any other actor, who are you referring to?

**Ambassador Booth:** Well we are referring to the parties to the talks, the government, the opposition and anyone else that should be participating in the talks.

**Question:** Can you tell us what kind of consequences you are speaking of? Are sanctions a possibility?

**Alex Rondos:** Let me um, I can perhaps guide you in that a bit. On Monday, the European Union, the 28 member states issued the conclusions from a foreign ministers council meeting and here is what they officially say: EU, European Union that is, reiterates that it stands ready to consider targeted restrictive measures against individuals obstructing the political process in support of the AU and IGAD efforts and in close coordination with international partners. That obviously means that our system certainly is beginning to look at more, other, the types of measure that would be relevant for this particular situation.

**Question:** Does that go for the U.S. as well?

**Ambassador Booth:** Yes, the U.S. is also considering what measures might be taken for those who obstruct the peace process in South Sudan.

**Question:** Do you know if the rebels, the opposition delegation [unclear], in your opinion, and how are both sides [unclear].

**Ambassador Booth:** The problem that we face today, actually as of last night, was when the government announced on South Sudanese radio that they would not be sending their delegation unless assured that the detainees would not be part of the process. And this is one of the reasons that we are making this statement today, to make it clear that we expect all parties to participate and to cooperate in IGAD-led mediation.

**Alex Rondos:** If I may, I would like to, in support of that on behalf of the European Union. The international community, and here I mean the Troika, The European Union collectively are totally united and at one with the efforts of IGAD. There should be absolutely no question or doubt about that. As a consequence, we expect all the parties to this conflict to support and comply with everything that they have already agreed to. And patience is beginning to run a little thin with parties to this conflict who think that they can toy with their own agreement and with their neighbors and eventually at the great cost, day by day, of lives of their own citizens.

**Question:** [unclear]

**Ambassador Booth:** The opposition has indicated that it will be here tomorrow, and certainly the detainees and civil society are prepared to participate in a point. And, I would just like to point out, this past weekend, we held, there was a four day conference of civil society from South Sudan, which was I think a very successful gathering of roughly 60 representatives of a broad range of South Sudanese civil society from many different areas, from religious areas, women's groups, youth groups, from different ethnic groups, from different regions of the country. And they reiterated their commitment to wanting to be included in and supportive of a peace process that will lead to a sustainable peace in South Sudan.

**Alex Rondos:** Great, I think that is about it. Thank you all.