



The Republic of South Sudan

Press Release

Pursuing the Path of Peace

Addis Ababa, 1 April 2012, At the invitation of the African Union High Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP) the Republic of South Sudan (RSS) has travelled with a high level delegation to Ethiopia to engage the Government of Sudan (GoS) in the Joint Political and Security Mechanism (JPSM), to further the positive spirit and the new approach that was initiated here in Addis Ababa at the last round of talks that resulted in initialling agreements on Nationality and Borders. In addition, we came here to rescue the Presidential Summit planned for 3 April in Juba that was intended to consolidate the new initiative that would guide us away from confrontation and towards two mutually viable States living side by side in peace and mutual security, cooperating in all fields in pursuit of mutual interest of our two peoples.

Unfortunately, this initiative has been deliberately derailed by a group in Khartoum that is opposed to President Bashir's visit to Juba and to a peaceful resolution of the outstanding issues between the two countries. On Monday 26 March 2012 the enemies of peace in the Republic of Sudan launched an unprovoked air and ground attack against South Sudan and crossed the international border between Jau and Tashwin invading the territory of South Sudan. The SPLA successfully repelled the attack and chased the attackers back to Heglig, quickly disengaged and withdrew all its troops back to Jau. The Government of Sudan has acknowledged and admitted that it started this fighting on the 26 March.

Regrettably, these enemies of peace continue to undermine the negotiations between the countries by launching daily aerial bombardments of South Sudan – even today they bombed Manga town in Unity State deep inside the territory of South Sudan and the positions of the 4th division of the SPLA stationed within South Sudan. At the same time Sudan is deflecting attention away from these hostile acts, creating a smoke screen, by disseminating false accusations against South Sudan. Yesterday, yet another false allegation has been made to the AUHIP, namely that South Sudan has invaded Sudan and SPLA troops of division 4 are currently moving 90km inside Sudanese territory in support of SPLM-N. For the record – South Sudan has not invaded Sudan and there is no presence of a single South Sudanese soldier on Sudanese soil. To the contrary it is Sudan that is occupying South Sudanese territory in Hofra El Nahas, Kefia Kengi, Abyei, Heglig/(Panthow), Meganes etc.

The conflict in Southern Kordofan, Blue Nile and Darfur is a war that is caused by the Sudan government and is a matter for the parties to the conflict in Sudan to address and resolve. RSS calls on the parties to return to the negotiation table, revive the June 2011 Addis Ababa agreement, seek a negotiated peaceful solution to the conflict, conclude an immediate ceasefire and allow unrestricted humanitarian access to assist the needy in the affected areas.



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For the avoidance of doubt, this outright ridiculous accusation, levelled yesterday, that RSS has invaded Sudan and that the entire 4th division of the SPLA is fighting 90 km inside Sudan in support of SPLM-N is categorically untrue, as the entire RSS Ministry of Defence staff is present here in Addis Ababa, not at all occupied with an invasion of Sudan. Quite the contrary, this accusation is intended as a pretext for an all out invasion of South Sudan. We are privy to intelligence that Sudan is planning an imminent invasion of Unity State, and to attack Bentiu, Pariang and Mayom counties, by providing 153 military vehicles to militia group mobilized in the border areas. In addition there is a major concentration and movement of Sudanese troops around Northern Upper Nile.

It is incumbent upon Sudan to provide irrefutable proof for this allegation against South Sudan or withdraw it immediately. It is for precisely this purpose that the JPSM was established – to investigate any security related accusation and establish processes to de-escalate tensions and it is crucially important that the Minister of Defence and the chief of staff of the Sudanese Army to attend the JPSM. Indeed it is suspicious that Sudan is unwilling and refusing to engage in the JPSM mechanism at the present time. In contrast the Government of South Sudan delegation is here in Addis Ababa in full force and is ready and willing to fully engage with Sudan through the JPSM.

RSS is determined to contain these military attacks and rebuff these false accusations emanating from the enemies of peace in Sudan. We consider these attacks and allegations as a *temporary* set back to the South Sudan peace initiative between the two countries. In fact they are testing our resolve and commitment to the path of building co-operation and peace. The Government of South Sudan is determined to revive the new spirit, to ensure that we avoid a return to war between Sudan and South Sudan and generate the necessary momentum to peacefully resolve the outstanding issues by implementing the agreements signed, particularly the MoU on Non Aggression, the Agreement on Boundary Demarcation and the Agreement on the Status of Nationals of the Other State and Related Matters. South Sudan is committed to work tirelessly to ensure the holding of the Presidential Summit in Juba. President Salva Kiir Mayardit renews his invitation to his brother President Bashir to come to Juba for peace and calls on him to stop sending his warplanes to attack South Sudan. It is time to leave the path of confrontation and war and walk the path of peace in the interest of Sudanese and South Sudanese people. We hope that the leadership in Sudan has the courage to contain the anti-peace group and walk this road together with the leadership of South Sudan.

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