

Update Note for the Secretary-General
16 October 2007

1. Lebanon

PM Siniora sent the SG a letter¹ on the aftermath of "Israel's aggression" on Lebanon in the summer of 2006. He explains that many Lebanese families are still being shattered by unnecessary and brutal tragedies relating to cluster bombs.

In his letter, the PM is requesting that the SG and the SC oblige Israel to release maps related to the areas of South Lebanon targeted by the Israeli Air Force, to enable UNIFIL, the Lebanese army and all the other contributors to clear this region.

2. Somalia

UNPOS reports² that the parliamentary meeting in Baidoa which was supposed to discuss the vote of confidence on the PM and his government has been postponed until tomorrow. It is believed that President Yusuf's faction has the necessary votes (simple majority) to remove PM Gedi. Gedi is allegedly now turning to the former Mogadishu warlords and opposition groups for support. However, it is not clear how much support he has in Mogadishu.

3. Central African Republic

Fall, who arrived on 11 October to take up his post and has been conducting wide consultations, reports³ that a three week long trade union civil servant strike came to an end on 10 October, after the Government accepted to pay two months of overdue salaries.

On 12 October, Fall met separately with the President and PM of CAR. They both welcomed him and expressed the Government's recognition of the UN's contribution to the CAR peace process. They also highlighted that efforts were being undertaken to address political instability and poverty, namely, through the organization of the political dialogue, the evaluation of the judicial system, and the Brussels Round Table.

¹ (27-12402)

² (CNM-339 of 16/10/07)

³ (Daily sitrep of 11/10/07)

4. Kosovo

Ahtisaari reports⁴ that on 14 October, the delegations from Belgrade and Pristina continued direct dialogue under the EU/Russia/US Troika auspices on Kosovo's future status. Belgrade repeated its substantial autonomy proposal and Pristina repeated its independence-based concept of inter-state Treaty of friendship and cooperation between Kosovo and Serbia. Neither side departed from their established views though Belgrade clearly stated its intentions to keep to the timeframe established by the international community.

This was followed by separate meetings of the Troika with each of the parties. The Troika presented a paper summarizing what they perceived to be areas of agreement based on the discussions to date. These deal with general principles (e.g. there will be no return to the pre-1999 status, Belgrade will not govern Kosovo), as well as modalities of relations between Belgrade and Pristina (areas and mechanisms of cooperation, certain competencies, etc.). The paper, aimed at bringing positions closer and identifying common ground, will be the basis for discussion during the next meeting on 22 October in Vienna. The Troika will then elaborate a proposal of their own.

The parties were invited to provide their comments on the paper though the Serbian delegation at first expressed concern that this would move the discussion toward "technical" discussions and leave it unable to effectively defend Serbia's sovereignty.

From now on, the Troika intends to apply a more intensive schedule of discussions with meetings every week or ten days so as to produce a compromise based on something both sides could agree to (rather than imposed solution). Towards the end of November the Troika is considering holding a multi-day event with the parties in an informal setting.

5. Nepal

Martin reports⁵ that there was no progress in intense mediation efforts by the Unified Marxist-Leninist (UML) to bridge the positions of the Nepali Congress (NC) and Maoist parties regarding the latter's motions registered in the Interim Parliament. As a result, the UML registered its own amendment proposals to the Maoist motions in parliament, urging that the question of monarchy be decided through the Constituent Assembly (CA) process and that fully proportional representation (PR) electoral system be adopted by "consensus".

⁴ (CUX-024 of 16/10/07)

⁵ (CQN-0288 of 16/10/07)

The UML, long overshadowed by the NC and the Maoists throughout the peace process, may have emerged as the proverbial king-maker in parliament, at least in the present context, although its relations with the Maoists remain prickly. It is likely that the special session will have to vote on both the Maoist motions and the amended proposals of UML despite on-going efforts to forge consensus among the Seven-Party Alliance (SPA) constituents. A vote could herald a "rupture" of the SPA, which has to date decided all important issues through consensus.

PM Koirala told a gathering of non-resident Nepalis that he believed he will succeed in keeping the SPA together, and that a new date for the CA election would be decided soon. On the other hand, Maoist chairman Prachanda, speaking to the same group, warned that confrontation would be inevitable if the NC did not agree with the Maoist motions.



Political Unit
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cc: DSG
VN
KWS