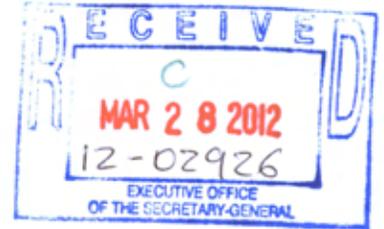


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Immediate

Note to Mr. Nambiar



Note to the Secretary-General on the Situation on the Border between Sudan and South Sudan

1. Please find attached a note to the Secretary-General on the situation on the border between Sudan and South Sudan, dated 28 March 2012.
2. Your assistance in bringing this to the attention of the Secretary-General is very much appreciated.


/7 Hervé Ladsous
28 March 2012

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Immediate

Note to the Secretary-General

Situation on the Border between Sudan and South Sudan

1. This is to provide an update on the recently reported tensions on the border between Sudan and South Sudan. While both parties have confirmed bombings and military clashes and the South Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) did enter Sudan and occupied an area in the vicinity of Higlig, the situation appears to be de-escalating and both parties have admitted a willingness to meet in the coming days in Addis Ababa to prevent a new eruption of violence.

2. On 26 March 2012, at around noon, UNMISS received reports of a Sudanese air and ground offensive on positions of the SPLA in the area of Tishwin, Unity State, South Sudan. The exact circumstances that led to the fighting remain unclear. Later in the evening, President Kiir confirmed that clashes occurred at the border in an address to the SPLM National Liberation Council broadcasted on national television, and added that the SPLA had repulsed the SAF and taken Higlig, a disputed oil producing area. Information received from several sources indicates that the SPLA counter-attack targeted a SAF military position at Kakhaba, approximately 13 kilometres into Sudan, but did not reach the town of Higlig or the oil producing areas.

3. The following morning, on 27 March 2012, UNMISS received further reports of aerial bombardments in the vicinity of Pariang, Unity State and several SAF Antonov overflew the town of Bentiu, Unity State. Soon thereafter, South Sudan accused Sudan of bombarding its oil fields. While media reports have cited officials of the Greater Nile Petroleum Operating Company (GNPOC) of China, confirming that oil fields had been hit, UNMISS has not been able to confirm the bombing of South Sudan oil installations. It only confirmed the impact of two bombs in the vicinity of Bentiu.

4. Following intensive engagement with the parties by your Special Envoy for Sudan and South Sudan, Mr. Haile Menkerios, and supported by UNMISS SRSG, Ms. Hilde Johnson, with her interactions with the Government of South Sudan, in collaboration with the African Union High-level Implementation Panel (AUHIP) and together with other international partners, both sides have now agreed to de-escalate the situation and meet to prevent a new eruption of violence. The Government of South Sudan committed to withdraw its forces to its previous positions if the bombing stopped. The Government of Sudan agreed to attend a meeting of the Joint Political and Security Mechanism (JPSM) on 30 March in Addis Ababa, if the SPLA immediately withdrew from the territory of Sudan, but warned that it would continue fighting and bombing SPLA positions until that occurred. The Government of Sudan also stated that it would still consider attending the planned Presidential Summit, if it is held in a different location than Juba and the security situation has returned to normal in the border area.

5. Concurrently, on 27 March 2012, UNHCR issued a warning to 16,000 residents of the

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Yida refugee settlement in Unity State to leave the area due to insecurity. On 27 March 2012, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) reported that a convoy with approximately 1,700 South Sudanese returnees which had arrived in Higlig the previous day could not proceed to South Sudan due to the fighting. Although the Government of Sudan has ordered the buses to return to Khartoum, approximately ten buses with 500 people remain stranded in Higlig. The Red Crescent Society reportedly began mobilizing staff to help with mobile clinics and the Relief and Rehabilitation Commission is planning to deliver food and water for the convoy.

6. While the situation on the ground remains tense, and it remains to be seen whether both Governments will actually follow through on their respective commitments, our communications with Special Envoy Menkerios and SRSG Johnson do indicate that the two parties wish to avoid the situation deteriorating into a fully-fledged war and seem ready to return to the negotiation table. I will continue updating you as developments unfold.


Hervé Ladsous
28 March 2012

cc: Ms. Amos
Ms. Malcorra
Mr. Pascoe
Mr. Starr