

Active fighting between Sudan and South Sudan must stop to allow for a negotiated settlement of the conflict

Publication date: Saturday 14 April 2012

Description:

Observations from an international fact-finding mission in South Sudan

Copyright © Worldwide Movement for Human Rights - All rights reserved

Observations from an international fact-finding mission in South Sudan

FIDH and its member organisation, the African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies (ACPJS), urge the Sudanese and South Sudanese authorities to comply with the Memorandum of Understanding on Non-aggression and Cooperation signed by both parties on February 10th 2012. Adherence to the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity, and non-intervention in internal affairs is critical in order to conclude the African Union (AU) facilitated negotiations key arrangements between the two countries including the demarcation of the common border, citizenship, and economic relations.

The Sudan People's Liberation Army and the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) have been engaged in clashes around the disputed region around Heglig in South Kordofan (Sudan) and in Unity State (South Sudan) since March 26, 2012, with each side claiming to be acting in response to attacks from the other. Inflammatory statements from both sides have accompanied these confrontations including mutual general mobilizations of the Sudanese and South Sudanese populations to respond to the aggression from each side.

Moreover, each party accuses the other of providing support to rebel groups operation in their respective territory. Khartoum has accused the South Sudanese authorities of supporting the Sudan People's Liberation Army - North (SPLA-N) in South Kordofan and Blue Nile, and Juba has condemned Sudan's arming the South Sudan Liberation Army (SSLA).

In its fight against the SPLA-N, the Sudanese authorities continue to commit serious human rights violations that could amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity including indiscriminate bombings, looting and burning down villages, sexual violence, and extra-judicial executions. Mr. Ahmed Haroun, the Governor of South Kordofan who has been indicted by the International Criminal Court for his alleged responsibility for crimes committed in Darfur, recently issued ominous instructions to members of the SAF clearly suggesting that they should not bring back any prisoners.

Our organisations urge the authorities in Sudan and South Sudan to immediately put an end to the hostilities and fully engage in negotiations led by the AU in order to reach sustainable peace. If both parties fail to agree on critical issues such as the demarcation of the international border between their two countries, the status of the contested region of Abyei, questions of citizenship and repatriation, and oil transit fees, the current fighting could escalate into widespread violence accompanied by increased violations of the rights of the civilian population.

Our organisations call upon the international community - notably the AU the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) and the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACPHR) - to put pressure on both parties to immediately end hostilities and resume negotiations with the goal of reaching concrete and rapid results.

FIDH and ACJPS led an international fact-finding mission in South Sudan from April 1 to 7 of this year and will soon publish a report on the human rights situation in the country.