

THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

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REMARKS TO THE MEDIA

Khartoum, 8 June 2011

Foreign Minister Ali Karti and I have just concluded a useful meeting.

As you know, I am on my way to Juba. I felt it was important to come to Khartoum, however briefly.

Your country shares this historic moment. Tomorrow, South Sudan gains its independence. The successful holding of the referendum and the Sudanese government's willingness to accept the result required political courage and leadership.

I know the secession is painful, emotionally and financially. But I believe Sudan will have a bright future and continue to be a leader in the region.

While the people of North and South Sudan will soon live in different countries, their future will continue to be closely linked. Ties of culture, politics and commerce compel both to face their common future as partners, not as rivals. A viable South Sudan requires a viable North Sudan, and vice versa.

We also rely on a similar spirit of partnership between the UN and the Sudan as we address common challenges in the region.

I can assure you that the UN and its agencies and peacekeeping operations are ready to assist as you face the post-secession challenges ahead.

Some of those challenges are immediate. In this regard, I am extremely concerned about the on-going violence in southern Kordofan and its impact on civilians. That is why I have again urged the Sudanese government and the Sudanese Peoples Liberation Movement (North) to conclude a ceasefire as a matter of priority.

Furthermore, I have urged the Sudanese government to put in place mechanisms to ensure that humanitarian operations can continue in southern Kordofan and Blue Nile states. UN personnel also need unfettered access to civilians requiring assistance.

The June 20 agreement on Abyei was a positive step by your government and the government of South Sudan to establish security in the area pending a long-term solution.

As we prepare to deploy Ethiopian troops in the UN Interim Security Force for Abyei, as a temporary arrangement, the parties must make the political compromises necessary to finally resolve this question.

I have urged the government of Sudan one last time to agree to an extension of the mandate of the UN Mission in Sudan, at least until the situation calms down. We cannot afford to have any gap at this critical juncture.

I also strenuously urge the government of Sudan and the SPLM North to display the same leadership that brought an end to the north-south civil war, and to immediately end this new confrontation, cease all hostilities and resolve all pending disputes through negotiation.

Now is the moment for all Sudanese, north and south, to come together to shape their common future.