

Press Statement

By the Government of Southern Sudan (GOSS)

21 May 2011

Abyei Invasion by the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF)

We condemn the invasion because it is unconstitutional and against the Abyei Protocol which was signed in 2005.

Regarding the Abyei issue, the Government of Southern Sudan believes that it has been resolved by the Abyei Protocol. When the Sudan Government protested against the Abyei border, a group of experts, known as the Abyei Border Commission (ABC) was mandated by the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) mediators to determine the border as it stood in 1905. The ABC Report was rejected by the ruling National Congress Party (NCP) in the North which opted to go to the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague, the Netherlands. The NCP accepted the decision of the Permanent Court of Arbitration in July 2009 simply because they thought that Hegliege was not included in the demarcated borders and thought that the oilfields had become their own. From then, they have been receiving 100 percent from the oil revenue in Hegliege. Later they realised that the borders of the South had not yet been demarcated as they stood at independence in 1956 and Hegliege will become a part of South Sudan since it is an indigenous home of the Pan-Ru Dinka ethnic group of Unity State.

The Government is clear and without any doubt that there is no presence of the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) in Abyei as stipulated by the Abyei Protocol. The SPLA soldiers in Abyei are the component of the Joint Integrated Unit (JIU), like UNMIS, are mandated by the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) to monitor and protect the agreement. So the claim by the Sudan Government to blame the SPLA is unjustified. In order for the SPLA JIU component to avoid military confrontation unnecessarily with the SAF, it withdrew southwards. The JIU

component of SAF withdrew a few days before the attack on Abyei. This is a master plan contemplated by the National Congress Party.

As far as the shooting at the United Nation Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) is concerned, the Government of Southern Sudan would like to apologize for it. It is unfortunate that the UNMIS force in Abyei has failed to protect the civilians in the area. We would urge the UN Security Council to review the role of UNMIS in Sudan. We also reject a statement by a senior UN official in Khartoum who stood side by side with the State Minister of Foreign Affairs condemning the SPLA for starting the fighting in Abyei. He should have called for investigation before uttering such a statement.

Details of Aggression

- In May 2008 SAF JIU component attacked and burned down the Abyei town.
- In February/March 2010 SAF JIU component again attacked and burned down Abyei town.
- On the 15th of May when SPLA JIU component withdrew from Domoloya to Abyei, they were attacked by SAF and three SPLA soldiers were killed and two wounded. When SPLA JIU withdrew from Omkariath north of Abyei they were attacked by SAF, one SPLA soldier was killed and two were wounded.
- Since the beginning of this year 2011 the Sudan Armed Forces began their plans to occupy Abyei by force, these preparations include:
- Mobilisation of Popular Defence Forces (PDF) that targeted villages and innocent civilians during the 21 years of war displacing millions of people and abducting others to slavery in the north. This militia is now active around the borders of Abyei and Unity state.
- SAF have transported a number of JANJAWOOD force from Darfur to the borders of Southern Kordofan, Abyei and South Sudan
- SAF have completely militarised the borders with heavy mechanised units and additional divisions from Rodoom, Muglad, Defra in addition to distribution of more than 150,000 AK-47 to the Messiriya Arab militia.

- After obstructing implementation of the Hague Declaration on Abyei, mapping and demarcating, SAF have begun their final plan to physically occupy Abyei by force, and are now creating pretexts and reasons. All the provocations since last year 2010, air bombardments to border areas of South Sudan, recruitment and armament of South Sudan militia men to attack border and oil producing states of Unity and Upper Nile is part of SAF strategic plan against South Sudan and its people.
- As SAF started moving out from Abyei in its Preparation to attack and capture Abyei by force at Alal on 19 May 2011 night, and their militia composed of forces of General Peter Gadet and PDF attacked Mankien in Unity State and were repulsed, on 20 May 2011. To conclude, the Sudan People's Liberation Army is still committed to the ceasefire and the security arrangements of the CPA and shall only act on self defence when necessary.

Solutions

We believe that the solution to the Abyei crisis is for the UN Security Council to immediately request the Government of Sudan to withdraw SAF from Abyei because this is in violation of the CPA and of the Sudanese constitution. We also urge SAF to stop looting property and breaking into shops and killing innocent women and children. It is the responsibility of the UN Security Council to see to it that innocent civilians are protected and human rights preserved.

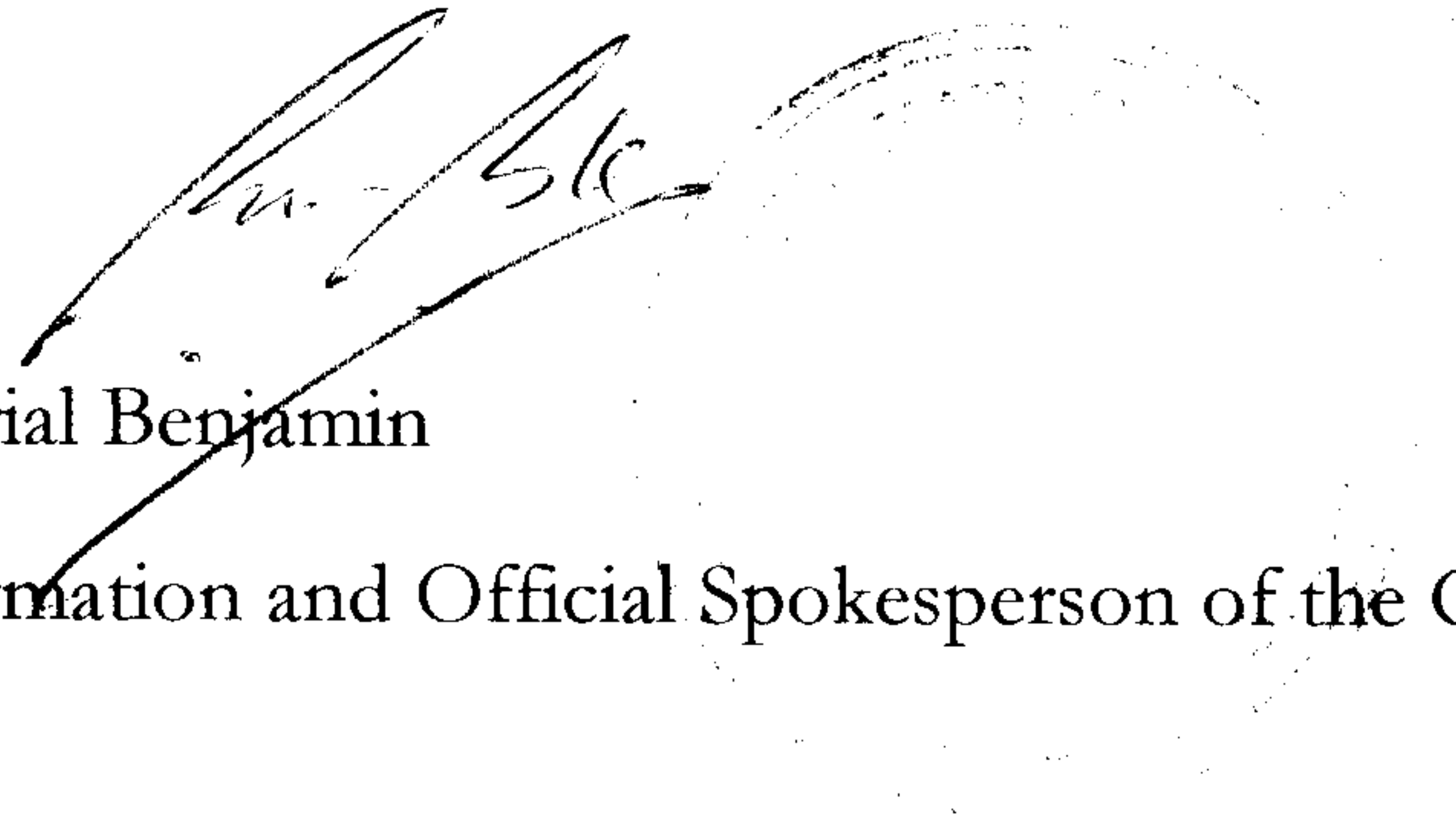
We also condemn the airlifting of Messiriya Arab tribes into the Abyei Area by the Sudan Government with the intention of occupying the Dinka Ngok territory to justify their participation in the Referendum. Nobody can entertain a Western Sahara or Kashmir scenario in Abyei.

We also appeal for urgent humanitarian intervention to avoid disaster on the displaced citizens in Abyei including women and children. They need food, medicines and shelter as an emergency response at this time when there is heavy rain which exposes women and children to risks.

We also urge SAF to stop high altitude bombing of villages, something which amount to depopulation.

In conclusion, we urge for the immediate withdrawal of SAF from Abyei area and for the reversal of the decision of the dismissal of the Abyei Administration including civilian associations as unconstitutional and against the Abyei Protocol.

Signed



Dr. Barnaba Marial Benjamin

Minister of Information and Official Spokesperson of the Government of Southern Sudan