

No Deal: Sudan and South Sudan fail to reach agreement by deadline
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August 2 marks the deadline set by the United Nations (UN) for Sudan and South Sudan to reach an agreement on longstanding issues that continue to threaten prospects for peace between the two countries.

While the international community has increased pressure on both Sudan and South Sudan to negotiate an agreement, the imposition of a deadline has failed to successfully expedite a deal. Despite the deadline, there has been more backtracking than progress on critical issues that were intended to be resolved prior to South Sudan's independence over a year ago. These include border demarcation, border security, citizenship, oil transit fees and the status of the disputed Abyei region. Meanwhile, violence continues in Sudan's border areas where hundreds of thousands remain at risk of starvation as a result of the Sudanese government's ongoing attacks against the people of South Kordofan and Blue Nile.

On May 2, 2012, the UN Security Council adopted UN Resolution 2046 in response to heightened tensions between Sudan and South Sudan and the violence occurring in Sudan's border regions. In accordance with the resolution, the parties may face additional measures such as sanction since they failed to make substantial progress on the outstanding issues by the resolution's August 2 deadline.

In the event that the parties failed to agree on the remaining issues, Resolution 2046 requested for the UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon to consult African regional bodies involved in the negotiation process. He is expected to report back to the Security Council on the status of the negotiations including detailed proposals on all outstanding issues by September 2, 2012.

Given the dependence of both countries on oil revenue and the failing state of their economies, the discussion of oil transit fees has become a primary concern. Following independence, approximately 75% of the oil is located in what is now South Sudan. The pipelines, however, run through the North. Tensions increased following accusations that Sudan was stealing oil from the South subsequently resulting in South Sudan's decision to shut down production entirely in January.

Both countries have offered proposals and counter proposals to resolve the oil impasse. South Sudan is clear that they simply want to pay transit fees for use of the North's pipeline. However, Sudan wants to work out a deal where they can maintain income similar to the pre-independence 50-50 revenue sharing agreement. As a result, the gap between the two countries' offers remains more than \$20 per barrel of oil. Adding further complications, Sudan claimed they would not consider an oil transit fee proposal from South Sudan until security issues are settled. The negotiations between Sudan and South Sudan continue to be characterized by intense animosity; however, they may be forced to come to at least a temporary agreement on oil fees to keep both of their economies from future suffering as a result of oil cutoff.

In addition to negotiations over oil, the recent talks have focused border security and the establishment of a demilitarized zone along the North-South border. Both sides agreed in June 2011 to a demilitarized border zone which would extend 10km from each side of the border. However, little progress has been made to actually establish the zone due to disagreement on the border itself and where the zone would actually lie.

In addition to Sudan and South Sudan issues, the resolution also addressed the need for agreements between Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N) on humanitarian access in South Kordofan and Blue Nile. 2046 also called for the resolution of the conflict in Sudan's border area. While the SPLM-N stated they would accept an agreement for access proposed by the UN, African Union and League of Arab States, Sudan continues to

impede access for aid into the SPLM-N controlled areas where 350,000 civilians are internally displaced or severely affected by the fighting.

As talks between Sudan and South Sudan carry on with little progress, the people of both countries are the ones who suffer the consequences. The international community must continue to pressure the parties to resolve outstanding issues and adhere to their commitment to take action if progress continues to be obstructed.

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