

S. Sudan to halt oil production in row with Khartoum



South Sudan said it would halt oil production amid a dispute over sharing revenues with the Khartoum government.

South Sudan gained independence in July 2011 but the two states have not been able to agree on how to divide their oil wealth.

Most of the oil is produced in the south but is exported from Port Sudan in the north.

Sudan has accused the south of not paying transport fees and said it is taking the revenues in lieu of payment.

The two sides are currently holding talks in Ethiopia to try and reach a deal.

China, a major buyer of oil from both countries, has urged them to resolve their differences.

But South Sudan's Information Minister Marial Barnaba Benjamin said the cabinet had decided to turn off the taps, a process which could take two weeks.

"We are not benefiting from the oil," he said, accusing Khartoum of stealing it.

Sudan had unilaterally taken crude oil to the value of \$350m (£225m) in the space of three weeks, Mr Barnaba said.

The South Sudanese government felt there was no guarantee that oil exported through Sudan would reach international buyers, he added.

Al Obeid Morawah, spokesman for Sudan's foreign affairs ministry, said that South Sudan was free to do whatever it wanted, but a stoppage would hurt it more than Sudan.

The stoppage may be a tactical move by South Sudan, as both countries are involved in negotiations, Mr Morawah added.

South Sudan has to export oil via the north because it has no port or refineries of its own.

Al-Shabab hit by Somalia Government offensive

Pro-government forces launched a major offensive from the Somali capital, Mogadishu, to seize territory from al-Shabab militants.

Some 1,000 soldiers backed up by 20 tanks captured three al-Shabab bases, a senior security official said.

African Union forces backing the government say they have advanced outside the capital for the first time.

Al-Shabab is under attack on several fronts, with troops from Kenya and Ethiopia also gaining ground recently.

This was the biggest joint offensive by the government and the AU force, Amisom, since August 2011.

Troops from Djibouti have recently arrived in Mogadishu to bolster Amisom's 12,000 soldiers, while the AU is asking the UN to approve a further 50 per cent increase in troop numbers.



Al-Shabab controls many southern and central areas of the country.

The al-Qaeda linked group

made a "tactical withdrawal" from most of the capital last year but has continued to stage suicide attacks in the city.

Nigeria bombing toll 'sure to rise'



The death toll from last Friday's bomb attacks by militants in the Nigerian city of Kano is certain to rise further, doctors said.

Hospital officials say 160 people have been confirmed dead, but that bodies are still arriving at mortuaries.

Boko Haram, which wants its own extreme version of an Islamic state, said it launched the attack because the authorities refused to free a group of its members from jail.

President Goodluck Jonathan visited Kano to offer his condolences.

He has said that the security situation in Nigeria is now more complicated than it was during the 1967-1970 civil war.

But he has promised to track down the perpetrators of the Kano attack.

Boko Haram has launched a series of assaults over the past year, killing hundreds of people.

Its members have bombed churches, government buildings and police stations - mostly in predominantly Muslim northern Nigeria.

But the Kano attack appear to be the group's most deadly co-ordinated assault.

One doctor told the AFP news agency that the final toll was likely to be about 250.

"Although the bulk of the bodies were brought here [the main hospital], others were deposited at three other hospitals," the doctor said.

And aid workers were still collecting bodies from the streets on Sunday.

There is a growing belief that Boko Haram launched the attack to free some of its members from jail.

A local police chief told our correspondent that about 50 Boko Haram attackers had managed to free "many" prisoners.

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