



## **MEMORANDUM N° 13/2011**

**08/02/2011**

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## ONE) - AFRICAN UNION FACES FINANCIAL DIFFICULTIES

Projects and programmes financed by the African Union (AU) are at risk, unless alternative sources of funding are proposed by Member States during the forthcoming Ordinary Session to be held in Addis Ababa. For the last two years, the AU Commission has sought to supplement annual contributions by Member States through new finance plans in order to increase funding for its various institutions. The issue was raised at the opening of the two-day meeting of the Union's Permanent Representatives Committee (PRC), where members will discuss the budget proposal for the next two years. According to sources close to the AU Secretariat, finance ministers from Member States are considering a number of possible ideas for additional funding for the organization, but suggest that it was difficult to find agreement. Previously, it had been suggested that Member States raise funds through additional taxes on the more lucrative sectors of their economies, in particular oil exports, air travel, tourism and insurance premiums, in order to carry out AU strategic programmes. A decision regarding the proposal should be reached during the 16th Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the AU due to start next week in Addis Ababa. The 2011/12 budget for the AU Commission, estimated at 258 million dollars, will be discussed by the Permanent Representatives and the AU Executive Board during preparatory meetings held this week. The Commission is being forced to rely more heavily on internal sources of funding as a result of the reluctance of external partners to release funds without greater assurances of proper accounting measures within the Commission

## TWO) – GHANA TO SIGN INTERIM EPA AGREEMENT WITH EU

Ghana will go ahead and sign an Interim Economic Partnership Agreement (IEPA) with the European Union this year following the lack of progress at the ECOWAS level. The Interim Economic Partnership Agreement will among other things give Ghana Duty and Quota free access into the EU for all imports with transition periods for rice and sugar. Ghana will in return liberalize 80% of imports from the EU. Ghana has been pursuing a regional Economic Partnership Agreement with the EU but the process has continuously stalled because members from the West African sub-region have failed to come to a consensus on critical issues in the EPA. According to Minister of Trade and Industry Hanna Tetteh, the delay has left Ghana disadvantaged hence the need to side-step ECOWAS and seek Ghana's interest first. "In any year, at least 40% of our exports go to the European Union, and therefore for us the EU is a significant trading partner. So notwithstanding the fact that as a regional entity we are unable to make progress, we certainly have to protect our access to markets."

## THREE) – CHINA'S GROWING ROLE IN AFRICAN PEACE AND SECURITY

This [report from Saferworld](#) critically assesses China's growing role in Africa and its effect on both the factors that drive conflict and those that promote peace. The report takes a thematic approach, looking at a number of topics: China's bilateral relations with African states; its military co-operation with their armed forces; the China-Africa arms trade; China's relations with African regional organisations; its involvement in international co-operation; China's role in peacekeeping and peacebuilding; and its economic engagements on the continent. The report draws on a wide spectrum of views and perspectives from Chinese, African and international experts. It also makes recommendations for how China's engagement can better support the common goal of peace, security and development in Africa.

## FOUR) - FRANCE CALLS FOR MORE SANCTIONS ON IVORY COAST'S GBAGBO

Le ministre français de la Défense Alain Juppé s'est dit de nouveau favorable à un renforcement des sanctions contre le président ivoirien sortant Laurent Gbagbo et son clan, excluant une initiative militaire unilatérale de la France. "Je pense que c'est la position de l'Union européenne et de la Communauté internationale", a déclaré à Bruxelles M. Juppé à la presse qui l'interrogeait sur la possibilité de renforcer les

sanctions déjà prises par l'UE contre M. Gbagbo et ses partisans. "M. Gbagbo doit partir et un renforcement des sanctions financières serait de nature à faire changer les choses", a estimé le ministre français, à l'issue d'un entretien avec la chef de la diplomatie européenne Catherine Ashton, centré sur la relance de l'Europe de la défense. Cependant, M. Juppé a réitéré que les 900 soldats français de la force "Licorne" en Côte d'Ivoire étaient là "pour protéger les ressortissants français et les évacuer. Rien d'autre". Il a concédé que cette force était "là aussi pour protéger l'ONUCI", la force des Casques bleus en Côte d'Ivoire. Mais, a-t-il souligné, "nous ne prendrons d'initiative militaire qu'à la demande du Conseil de sécurité". "Il n'y aura pas d'initiative militaire de la France", a-t-il martelé. M. Juppé s'était déjà exprimé le 4 janvier en faveur d'un accroissement des sanctions contre le clan Gbagbo, après que le président ivoirien sortant et ses proches eurent été privés fin décembre de visa d'entrée dans l'UE. Entretemps, les Européens ont gelé à la mi-janvier les avoirs de près de 90 personnes membres de son entourage et plusieurs entreprises. L'UE a décidé vendredi d'ajouter le gouverneur de la Banque centrale des Etats d'Afrique de l'Ouest et un autre responsable ivoirien de l'institution à la liste. Bruxelles n'a pas exclu lundi de recourir à terme à l'arme de l'embargo commercial sur la Côte d'Ivoire si le président sortant Laurent Gbagbo persiste à rester en poste, tout en jugeant qu'elle ne serait pas envisagée à court terme.

## FIVE) – INTRA-ACP ACADEMIC MOBILITY SCHEME - CALL FOR PROPOSALS

The intra-ACP academic mobility scheme promotes cooperation between higher education institutions (HEIs) and supports mobility in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific regions. This scheme builds on the African Union's Mwalimu Nyerere programme for Africa, granting additional funding, and setting up a similar scheme for the Caribbean and Pacific regions.

Cooperation between HEIs and mobility of students (at master's and doctoral level) and staff will take place within:

- Lot 1 - Africa;
- Lot 2 - the Caribbean and the Pacific

This Call for proposals aims to support 3 projects under Lot 1 (EU budget available: € 7 million) and 1 project under Lot 2 (EU budget available: € 2 million), and it is available [here](#).

The deadline for submission of applications is **6 May 2011**.

In this context, we take the opportunity to remind you that the Agency will need experts for assisting with the evaluation of grant applications to be received. We would like to establish a list of potential experts from Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific.

Experts are asked to submit their applications by 28 February 2011, using [this online form](#)

## SIX) - COM4DEV PRO€INVEST E-KNOWLEDGE CENTRE FOR ACP PRIVATE SECTOR LAUNCHED

Building a dynamic, interactive community of donors, public and private sector organisations and companies across Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific, [COM4DEV](#) aims at offering the private sector, a virtual environment where information sharing, market analysis, commercial opportunities and networking can be achieved.

## SEVEN) – NEW PORTAL GIVES INSIGHT INTO AFRICAN POLITICS

The Africa Portal is an online knowledge resource for policy-related issues on Africa. An undertaking by the [Centre for International Governance Innovation \(CIGI\)](#), [Makerere University \(MAK\)](#), and the [South African](#)

[Institute of International Affairs \(SAIIA\)](#), the Africa Portal offers open access to a suite of features including an online library collection; a resource for opinion and analysis; an experts directory; an international events calendar; and a mobile technology component—all aimed to equip users with research and information on Africa's current policy issues. A key feature to the Africa Portal is the online library collection holding over 2,500 books, journals, and digital documents related to African policy issues. The entire online repository is open access and available for free full-text download. A portion of the digital documents housed in the library have been digitized for the first time as an undertaking of the Africa Portal project. Facilitating new digitization projects is a core feature of the Africa Portal, which aims to improve access and visibility for African research.

#### **EIGHT) – WIDESPREAD ILLEGAL FISHING BY EASTERN EUROPEAN VESSELS IN SENEGAL**

For at least two months, fishing vessels largely from Eastern Europe, have been fishing illegally in Senegalese waters. There are under Russian, Georgian or Ukrainian flag... Some of them officially come from the Comoros or from Belize. None of them have an authorization, and they are a particular threat to Senegalese fishers (RFInternationale)

#### **NINE) – EU TO URGE TOP TRADE MINISTERS TO GIVE NEW LIFE TO DOHA ROUND**

Trade ministers meeting give negotiators in the long-running Doha talks the green light to make more concessions for a deal that all can sell to their voters, trade policy-makers said. The European Union, the world's biggest exporter, is hosting a dinner for trade ministers from the other key players -Australia, Brazil, China, India, Japan and the United States- during the World Economic Forum in Davos. The seven will take stock of the Doha round. Members of the World Trade Organization have agreed to intensify the pace of negotiations, already in their 10th year, after the G20 urged them to use 2011 as a window of opportunity to reach a deal. "What we will try to get from ministers is acceleration," said WTO Director-General Pascal Lamy. He will not attend Friday's dinner, but will take part in another meeting of some 25 ministers, including the seven, on Saturday. The host of Friday's dinner, EU Trade Commissioner Karel De Gucht, agreed further moves are needed by all players. "Everyone around the table realises that if you negotiate it's about give and take. There's nothing bad about a compromise," he told Reuters. The Doha round was launched in late 2001 to boost the world economy and help poor countries prosper through trade. While economists differ over the impact of opening markets in food, industrial goods from cars to chemicals, and services such as banking and law, several studies show that a new trade agreement could add hundreds of billions of dollars to the world economy, bolstering business sentiment. **MAKE OR BREAK** "2011 is the make or break year," British Prime Minister David Cameron told the Forum meeting, calling for more concessions by all sides to reach a deal. The wide-ranging and complex talks have missed repeated deadlines and some negotiators say 2011 will go the same way, perhaps dooming the negotiations altogether. But in recent months the talks in Geneva have moved up a gear and some believe the necessary trade-offs are now possible. "There seems to be a general acceptance that what is needed to bring Doha to a successful conclusion is for the major countries to bring a little bit more to the table," Australian Trade Minister Craig Emerson told Reuters. Emerson said Australia, one of the keenest proponents of a deal, does not believe that it is the one blocking agreement, but would consider further concessions as part of a final push. "If it's a matter of the demonstration of good faith and everyone bringing more to the table then Australia would be a willing participant in that," Emerson said. For instance Australia could consider making further cuts in its already low tariffs, or accepting binding restrictions on the role of AWB, the former monopoly exporter, he suggested. **COMPLEX COMPROMISES REQUIRED** In the end the deal will require bilateral agreement between the United States and China, the world's two biggest economies. But it is much more complicated than that, with competitive exporters among the emerging economies wanting to boost South-South trade by opening markets as well. Anabel Gonzalez, foreign trade minister of Costa Rica, said small export-reliant developing countries like hers believed that trade was an important means of development and access to markets in both rich and poor countries was vital. Costa Rica wants a Doha agreement this year and is ready to play its part too, she told Reuters. But there is no sign so far of progress narrowing gaps on proposals allowing developing countries to limit imports of food, which contributed to the collapse of a meeting of ministers to push for a deal in 2008, said Gonzalez, who was a top WTO agriculture official during that meeting. "That continues to be a very contentious issue," she

said. And in Geneva, representatives of poor countries called for an acceleration of negotiations on cotton that will lead to a big cut in U.S. trade-distorting subsidies. Many see such cuts as a touchstone of Doha's ability to help developing countries. The changing nature of world trade may also make it easier to open markets by cutting import duties, as global supply chains mean tariffs amount to a tax on your own business. "If you protect imports you will damage your exports," Lamy told reporters.

#### TEN) – BELGIUM RECALLS AMBASSADOR TO SENEGAL IN AIRLINE ROW

Belgium will recall its ambassador to Senegal after the West African country withdrew the rights of Belgian national carrier Brussels Airlines to operate flights via Dakar to other African destinations. Brussels Airlines, 45 percent owned by Germany's Lufthansa, has been unable to fly on from Dakar to Gambia, Guinea and Sierra Leone since the launch of Senegal's flag carrier earlier this month. "I can confirm that we will recall our ambassador for consultations regarding this matter," a spokesman for the Belgian foreign ministry said. Senegal says its agreement with the Belgian airline for routes from Dakar other than to Brussels only applied as long as there was no Senegalese national carrier. "The aim at the time was to satisfy demand for destinations which were not being served by direct flights," Senegalese aviation authority ANACS said in a statement. Brussels Airlines said the withdrawal of rights it had held for eight years came quite suddenly at the start of the year. "We are now almost one month later and it hasn't changed despite interventions from various levels, the Belgian government, and the German foreign office and at European Commission level," a Brussels Airlines spokesman said. He added Brussels Airlines had not been competing with local carriers for almost all of the past eight years as it had only been allowed to carry passengers between the African cities and Brussels. It had also now had to lease an extra plane to service Gambia, Guinea and Sierra Leone separately. **THE PRESIDENT'S SON** Senegal Airlines, which is 64 percent held by private Senegalese investors and the rest by state bodies, launched this month with two Airbus machines and follows an earlier attempt at a national carrier which collapsed last year. The affair has a political twist in Senegal because the brainchild of the project is Karim Wade, son of the country's octogenarian President Abdoulaye Wade and whose ministry portfolios range from transport to infrastructure. Karim Wade was once tipped as a future presidential candidate. Brussels Airlines, set to be 100 percent owned by Lufthansa this year, flies to 16 destinations in Africa.

#### ELEVEN) – EU MINISTERS SIGNAL SUPPORT FOR EGYPTIAN DEMONSTRATORS

Les Européens ont appelé à des réformes démocratiques en Egypte et s'apprêtent à ouvrir un nouveau chapitre de leurs relations avec la Tunisie en sanctionnant l'ex-président Ben Ali. A leur arrivée à une réunion à Bruxelles, plusieurs ministres européens des Affaires étrangères ont appelé le président égyptien Hosni Moubarak à céder aux appels de la rue en faveur de plus de démocratie, sans aller cependant jusqu'à réclamer son départ. "Nous ne pouvons pas exporter des révolutions", a souligné le Luxembourgeois Jean Asselborn. Mais, que ce soit en Egypte ou en Tunisie, l'Union européenne peut apporter au moins une aide matérielle à l'organisation d'élections "libres et qui puissent donner la chance d'un nouveau départ dans ces pays", a-t-il dit. Hosni Moubarak, au pouvoir depuis 30 ans et principal allié des Occidentaux dans le monde arabe, doit "poursuivre les réformes comme le réclame le peuple", a jugé le Chypriote Markos Kyprianou, assurant que "l'UE sera prête à soutenir l'Egypte dans ce processus de transition". **ORDERLY TRANSITION** "Ce qui est nécessaire, c'est que les manifestants pacifiques sentent que l'Europe et la communauté internationale sont derrière eux", a souligné l'Italien Franco Frattini pour qui l'UE doit "encourager une transition ordonnée vers une situation plus démocratique, tout en évitant d'interférer" dans les décisions souveraines du peuple. Ces appels interviennent alors que l'Europe est critiquée pour avoir trop longtemps fermé les yeux sur les atteintes à la démocratie chez ses voisins de la rive sud de la Méditerranée. Trop "focalisés dans le passé sur la politique étrangère des nombreux pays arabes, nous avons un peu oublié que des gens vivent là, qui veulent aussi la démocratie, et le droit de se déterminer eux-mêmes", a admis lundi Jean Asselborn. **BEN ALI ASSETS FROZEN** Lundi, alors qu'une mission d'experts européens est partie pour Tunis, les ministres européens des Affaires étrangères vont également décider de geler les avoirs de Ben Ali et de sa femme. La décision de principe devait être entérinée en début d'après-midi, selon des diplomates. Et une liste comportant "plusieurs dizaines de noms" de proches de l'ex-président pourrait être adoptée dans les jours qui viennent, précise un diplomate. Les Européens restent inquiets face à l'instabilité de l'ensemble de la région, alors que des manifestations ont aussi lieu, outre l'Egypte, au Yémen notamment. Le ministre yéménite des Affaires étrangères est d'ailleurs attendu aussi mercredi à Bruxelles. "Nous avons des défis dans l'ensemble de notre

voisinage", a résumé le ministre suédois des Affaires étrangères Carl Bildt, "de Minsk à Tirana jusqu'au Caire et à Tunis. Et c'est l'UE qui est l'acteur qui peut être en mesure d'apporter l'Etat de droit et la stabilité dans cette région, personne d'autre".

#### TWELVE) – **WORRIED CHINA GOVERNMENT CENSORS INFORMATION ABOUT EGYPT RIOTS**

Les troubles qui font vaciller le pouvoir d'Hosni Moubarak sont suivis avec inquiétude et malaise en Chine où les censeurs empêchent les discussions sur l'internet et la presse officielle donne une version très édulcorée de la situation en Egypte. Les nouvelles récentes concernant ce pays restaient lundi censurées sur les principaux sites de micro-blogging et portails d'information en Chine. Samedi, les requêtes avec le mot "Egypte" sur des équivalents chinois de Twitter déclenchaient la réponse suivante: "Selon les lois en vigueur, le résultat de votre recherche ne peut être communiqué". Le parti communiste au pouvoir à Pékin, qui étouffe les revendications démocratiques et redoute les troubles à l'ordre public, se méfie d'un possible effet de contagion venu du Caire, alors que la contestation égyptienne s'inspire déjà de la révolte tunisienne qui a chassé le président Ben Ali. La presse officielle se limitait lundi à rapporter succinctement le mouvement de contestation et les manifestations antigouvernementales qui se sont soldées par au moins 125 morts et des milliers de blessés depuis près d'une semaine. La couverture mettait plutôt l'accent sur la nécessité de restaurer l'ordre public face aux scènes de chaos, escamotant les facteurs politiques et les appels à la démocratie. Le journal télévisé de la mi-journée a présenté lundi le président égyptien Hosni Moubarak en réunion avec des hauts responsables, sans montrer les milliers d'Egyptiens qui ont de nouveau dimanche bravé le couvre-feu, alors que l'armée était déployée dans les rues. Les principaux quotidiens chinois n'ont par ailleurs publié lundi aucune photo des événements en Egypte. **CHAOS WARNING** Le journal Global Times, connu pour ses prises de position nationalistes, a mis en garde contre le chaos pouvant résulter des mouvements de révolte populaire. "En tant que concept général, la démocratie a été acceptée par la plupart des gens. Mais, en tant que système politique, le modèle occidental n'est qu'une option parmi quelques autres", a estimé le quotidien. "La Chine suit de près l'évolution de la situation en Egypte", a déclaré lundi dans un communiqué le porte-parole du ministère des Affaires étrangères chinois, Hong Lei. "L'Egypte est un pays ami de la Chine et nous espérons que la stabilité sociale et l'ordre public vont être restaurés dès que possible en Egypte", a-t-il ajouté. La censure concernant l'Egypte rappelle celle exercée par Pékin lors des "révolutions de couleur", ainsi qu'on a appelé les mouvements pro-démocratie qui se sont développés il y a une dizaine d'années dans les sociétés postcommunistes d'Europe centrale et orientale et d'Asie centrale. La Toile en Chine est expurgée de sites politiquement sensibles et Pékin contrôle étroitement la communauté des 450 millions d'internautes chinois pour éviter que la dissidence ne s'organise ou puise une inspiration à l'étranger. "J'aurais tendance à croire que le gouvernement a donné comme consigne à tous les médias de se limiter aux dépêches de (l'agence d'Etat) Chine nouvelle. C'est la procédure habituelle", a déclaré à l'AFP Jeremy Goldkorn, rédacteur en chef du site d'informations danwei.org, qui est également bloqué par la censure. Ce canal obligatoire permet selon lui aux autorités de décrire à leur sauce l'évolution de la situation en Egypte, en affirmant éventuellement qu'elle se produit sous l'influence occidentale.

#### THIRTEEN) – **EGYPT'S SUEZ CANAL WORKING AS NORMAL**

Egypt's Suez Canal was working as normal on Monday, Ahmed al-Manakhi, a member of the canal authority's board of directors who is also responsible for traffic, told Reuters. "The Suez Canal is working normally ... The company still has the ability to transport the employees needed to maintain the flow of ships through the canal to their workplaces," al-Manakhi said.

#### FOURTEEN) **MOROCCO WON'T ESCAPE CONTAGION, SAYS KING'S COUSIN**

Le Maroc ne fera "probablement pas exception" parmi les pays arabes après la révolution tunisienne et les manifestations qui secouent actuellement le pouvoir en Egypte, a estimé lundi le cousin du roi du Maroc Mohammed VI, le [prince Moulay Hicham](#). Surnommé le "prince rouge" car critique vis-à-vis de la monarchie marocaine et du système politique dans ce pays, Moulay Hicham souligne, dans une interview au journal espagnol El Pais, que le "Maroc n'a pas été encore atteint" par la vague de contestation sociale et politique qui secoue les pays arabes. "Mais il ne faut pas se tromper: presque tous les systèmes autoritaires seront affectés par la vague de protestation. Le Maroc ne sera probablement pas une exception", estime le cousin germain de

Mohammed VI. "Reste à voir si la contestation sera sociale ou bien aussi politique et si les formations politiques, influencées par les récents évènements, bougeront" commente encore cet homme de 46 ans, qui occupe la troisième place pour la succession au trône du Maroc. Le prince Moulay estime que dans ce pays la "dynamique de libéralisation politique entamée à la fin des années 90 a pratiquement pris fin. Redynamiser la vie politique marocaine dans le contexte régional, en évitant les radicalismes, sera un grand défi". La révolution tunisienne et les manifestations égyptiennes représentent une "rupture par rapport aux schémas antérieurs" n'ayant "aucun caractère religieux", "anti-impérialiste" ou "anticolonialiste". "L'Europe doit se réveiller, arrêter d'appuyer des dictatures qui ne sont pas viables et appuyer à fond les mouvements qui aspirent à un changement durable", estime encore le prince Moulay.

#### **FIFTEEN) – ALGERIANS SENDING CHILDREN TO SPAIN DELIBERATELY, SAYS MINISTER**

Des enfants algériens sont envoyés en Europe, et notamment en Espagne, à bord d'embarcations de fortune afin de profiter des dispositions sociales favorables pour les enfants mineurs, a déploré lundi à la radio chaîne III un haut responsable algérien, Halim Benatallah. "Il y a beaucoup de parents chez nous qui ont tendance à exporter leurs enfants mineurs dans les embarcations de harraga (clandestins), c'est tout à fait déplorable", a déclaré le secrétaire d'Etat auprès du ministre des Affaires étrangères chargé de la communauté nationale à l'étranger, qui était interrogé en duplex depuis Berlin. "Imitant en cela des pratiques suivies par des pays voisins, les parents essaient d'exploiter les bonnes dispositions des lois des pays envers les enfants mineurs qui sont pris en charge, a ajouté M. Benatallah. Et alors, il lancent leurs enfants dans des embarcations". Une fois arrivés sur les côtes européennes, ils sont alors pris en charge par des associations comprenant notamment des femmes algériennes, a-t-il indiqué. Et lorsque celles-ci contactent les parents en Algérie, "ils refusent de les reprendre". "Ils préfèrent que leurs enfants restent là-bas et à la limite, ils coupent les communications téléphoniques", a expliqué M. Benatallah. Le haut responsable n'a pu fournir de chiffres "mais des cas commencent à se multiplier et cela commence à interpeller notre communauté sur place", a-t-il noté, qualifiant ces parents d'"irresponsables". Le 19 janvier, le secrétaire d'Etat avait fourni des chiffres généraux pour l'Espagne, indiquant que plus de 1.400 clandestins algériens avaient été expulsés de ce pays en 2010. Il n'a pas cité de chiffres pour ceux qui n'arrivent jamais à bon port et meurent noyés. S'ils sont arrêtés au départ de l'Algérie, les candidats à l'émigration clandestine sont passibles de six mois de prison en vertu d'une loi votée en 2009 qui punit aussi les passeurs à des peines pouvant aller jusqu'à 20 ans de détention.

#### **SIXTEEN) - SUDAN DEMANDS END TO U.S. SANCTIONS, AS PROMISED**

Sudan called on Monday on the United States to lift sanctions, a day after provisional results showed south Sudan voted almost unanimously to secede in a referendum. "We have delivered what we promised. We now want all sanctions to be lifted," Foreign Minister Ali Karti told Reuters on the sidelines of an African Union summit in Ethiopia. "Darfur should not be attached on this. We are providing our full cooperation with them to solve the issue," he said. Karti hoped the peaceful conduct of the vote would provide an opening for economic opportunities for his isolated country, which has long faced embargoes. "We want more investment in our country. We want to strengthen our trade, and enhance cooperation on all aspects," he told Reuters. The United States has so far taken some small initial steps to lift export controls on agricultural machinery, but has stressed that further progress is contingent on Khartoum's continued cooperation. While Washington has praised Sudan for the January vote, officials have said they are still concerned about the situation in Darfur, where violence continues to crackle. At a mini-summit attended by senior officials from the U.N., EU, African Union, Somalia and Sudan on Sunday, Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir and southern leader Salva Kiir pledged to solve the issue over the disputed Abyei region by the end of March, a senior official from the grouping told Reuters. Lingering disputes over the eligibility and status of Abyei's two main tribes has forced authorities to postpone the referendum in the disputed region, which remains one of the most serious potential flashpoints between North and South Sudan since their 2005 peace deal. "Presidents Bashir and Kiir have agreed in the presence of (mediator) Thabo Mbeki to try to solve the issue of Abyei by the end of March," he said.

## SEVENTEEN) - SUDANESE STUDENT DIES AFTER PROTESTS

A student in Sudan died from his injuries after being beaten by security forces who broke up anti-government demonstrations inspired by protests in neighbouring Egypt, activists said on Monday. It was the first reported death as protests continued late into Sunday night, when students at Khartoum university were beaten and tear gassed in their dormitories with at least five injured. Police and security forces surrounded universities in Khartoum and other cities on Monday, said witnesses. "You are our martyr Mohamed Abdelrahman," activists wrote on the social networking site Facebook, on a group called "Youth for Change" which has more than 16,000 members and calls for an end to President Omar Hassan al-Bashir's government. Three activists told Reuters that Abdelrahman, a student from Omdurman Ahaliya University, died in hospital from his injuries late last night and had been buried. The university has been closed indefinitely. "Medical sources confirmed to us that the student died yesterday from his injuries inflicted by security forces," Yasir Arman, a senior official with south Sudan's main party the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), told Reuters. Arman condemned the use of force and said the students were trying to hold peaceful demonstrations. **UNIVERSITIES SURROUNDED** Protests have been held in Khartoum, el-Obeid town in the west and Kassala in the east on Sunday, with hundreds of young people being beaten by police with batons. At least six universities in the capital and Sudan's regions were surrounded on Monday by hundreds of heavily armed police, preventing students from leaving the grounds. Students demonstrating against rising food and petrol prices clashed with police in north Sudan earlier in the month. The protests have broadened since the uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt, with campaigners calling for regime change, and listing a range of complaints ranging from corruption to the practice of sentencing women to be lashed. Police were not immediately available and the Omdurman hospital morgue declined to comment on the death. On Sunday police spokesman Ahmed Tuhami denied excessive force had been used. On Monday journalists said security forces prevented the opposition Ajras al-Huriya and the independent al-Sahafa newspapers from being distributed after they wrote about the protests. "Security came to the printing press and stopped the paper going out," said Fayez al-Silaik, deputy editor of Ajras al-Huriya. He said the paper has been targeted because it had a front page article on the protests. Dozens of students including two sons of opposition politician Mubarak al-Fadil were arrested and many remain detained, activists and opposition officials said on Monday. Sudan has a close affinity with Egypt as the two nations were united under British colonial rule. Protests in Cairo and other Egyptian cities have sparked calls for change in Sudan, Africa's largest country, which is about to split in two with the oil-producing south voting in a referendum for independence. Sudan is also deep in economic crisis after a bloated import bill has eaten up foreign currency and forced an effective currency devaluation which sparked rising inflation. This month the government cut subsidies on petroleum products and key commodity sugar, sparking smaller protests throughout the north.

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