



Security Council condemns renewed military incursions in eastern Chad by Sudanese armed groups stresses any attempt at destabilization by force ‘unacceptable’

NEW YORK, May 9, 2009/ABC Television-Africa (ABC-Africa)/ — Presidential Statement Calls on Sudan, Chad to Fully Implement Mutual Commitments;

The Security Council today condemned the renewed military incursions in eastern Chad of Chadian armed groups, coming from outside and demanded that rebel armed groups cease the violence immediately.

In a statement read by President Vitaly Churkin (Russian Federation), the Council stressed that any attempt at destabilization of Chad by force was unacceptable, and called on all parties to re-engage in dialogue in the framework of the Sirte agreement of 25 October 2007.

The Council called on Sudan and Chad to respect and fully implement their mutual commitments, in particular the Doha agreement of 3 May 2009 and the Dakar agreement of 13 March 2008, and to engage constructively with the Dakar contact group and the good offices of Libya and Qatar to normalize their relations, cooperate to put an end to cross-border activities of armed groups and strengthen actions to combat illicit arms trafficking in the region. It expressed its concern at the external support received by Chadian armed groups, as reported by the Secretary-General.

Expressing deep concern at the direct threat the activity of armed groups posed for the safety of the civilian population and the conduct of humanitarian operations, the Council called on all parties to abide by their obligations under international humanitarian law, in particular to respect the security of civilians, humanitarian workers and United Nations personnel.

In a briefing to the Council during an earlier meeting today, Dmitri Titov, Officer-in-Charge of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, said that, on 26 April, the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad (MINURCAT), had received unconfirmed reports of skirmishes between Chadian security forces and small groups of rebels of the Union des forces de la Résistance (UFR) in eastern Chad. MINURCAT had been able to confirm that air strikes were being carried out since 5 May and that heavy engagement on 7 May had resulted in considerable losses among the rebels. The confrontation had seriously compromised the ability of United Nations agencies, funds

and programmes and their non-governmental organization partners to deliver humanitarian assistance.

He said that, on 3 May, in Doha, under the auspices of Qatar and Libya, the Governments of Chad and Sudan had signed a new agreement to normalize relations and deny any support on their respective territories to rebel groups. Only two days later, however, on 5 May, the Government of Chad had accused the Government of Sudan of sending armed elements into eastern Chad. A spokesman of the Government of Sudan had denied that accusation.

As of today, the MINURCAT force, which stood at 46 per cent of its authorized strength, lacked 14 of the required 18 military utility and reconnaissance helicopters, he said. As a result, it lacked the ability to observe and track incidents as they developed, as well as a force reserve with rapid mobility to reinforce sites, or react to changing circumstances. He, therefore, urged the Council to join the Secretary-General in his appeal to potential troop contributors to provide MINURCAT with the required helicopter assets.

Following that briefing, the representative of Chad said that, as far as the agreement signed in Doha was concerned, peace agreements had been signed in the past, but that soon after the agreements were signed, Chad was attacked by Sudan's forces. Sudanese and Chadian fighters recruited by Sudan were working to overthrow the legitimate Government of Chad. Khartoum had provided those fighters with food, military vehicles, arms and military training camps in Darfur. In view of what was happening in eastern Chad, efforts by Chad to consolidate the rule of law and democracy, which were necessary for peace and stability, were being thwarted by the strategies of armed mercenaries in the country.

On 5 May, the Government of Chad recalled that it had welcomed the signing of the Doha agreement to normalize relations with Sudan, he said. But the Khartoum regime had not changed its intentions or strategy. It had sent several armed battalions, with 350 vehicles, to attack Chad. Those armed battalions had been defeated, but the same thing might happen again. The new situation that seriously threatened peace and security deserved the Council's urgent attention, so that it could take appropriate steps to end the aggression against Chad. The Council must not tolerate that thousands of men were being given hundreds of vehicles to attack Chad, and openly condemn Sudan.

The representative of Sudan, however, said that what was happening in Chad was an internal affair, with which Sudan had nothing to do. Chad had made it a habit to cover its criminal activities in Sudan by bringing complaints to the Council, whenever it planned an act against his country. The current accusation was yet another operation to cover up an intensive aggression that would be conducted by the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) from Chadian territory. JEM had resumed its military activities in several places, relying on logistical support from the Chad Government, including vehicles. JEM was also recruiting people, including children, in refugee camps in Chad.

He said that peace and stability in Chad was linked with stability in Sudan, and his country had invested in numerous efforts over a span of two decades, long before the problems in Darfur had arisen, to mediate. Sudan was facing enough challenges and did not gain anything from interfering in the internal affairs of other countries, including of

Chad. If the Council wanted to help Chad, it must advise that country first to seek reconciliation with all its people and not to ignore regional mechanisms that tried to establish peace in the region. It was strange, in that regard, that Chad had rushed to the Council, at the same time that the African Union's Peace and Security Council was considering the issue.

SOURCE: U.N. Security Council