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SUDANESE TROOPS OCCUPY THREE DISTRICTS IN GAMBELLA

Reliable reports reaching the EPRP confirm that Sudanese troops have occupied three major districts of Gambella: JIKAW, AKOBO and ITANG (partially). Moreover, Sudanese air force transport planes have also landed at Gambella airport bringing in Sudanese officials. Jikau, Itang and Akobo are mainly inhabited by Nuers though there are considerable number of Anuaks in Jikau and Akobo.

Tension is high at the Ethio-Sudanese border and there are reports that fighters of the Gambella People's Liberation Movement (GPLM) may intensify their attacks. Reliable reports affirm that the Meles regime has agreed to hand over to the Sudan half of the oil rich district of JOR. On the other side of the border, a Chinese oil company is prospecting for oil and China has donated substantial money to the official border demarcation commission of the two countries so as to facilitate its interest in exploiting the oil in the region. Other agreements between the Meles regime and the Sudan also involve the export of electrical power from Ethiopia to, at least, five major towns in the South Sudan (Akobo Sudan, Pibor, Bor ,etc...). It is to be noted that certain Southern Sudanese officials like the Nuer Riak Machar consider the whole of Gambella as Sudanese territory though they are presently claiming that the occupation of parts of Gambella by Sudanese troops is the work of the National Congress party of General Omar Al Beshir.

Sudanese troops are presently camped inside Ethiopia in the Quara region of Gondar. Some 28 Ethiopian farmers kidnapped from these areas by the Sudan and imprisoned in the Sudan have now been released and have arrived in Metema, a border town of Ethiopia. There are fears that the Meles regime may mistreat them to silence them and to cover up their plight which was initially denied by Meles Zenawi himself. Meles had previously asserted that no Ethiopian has been abducted by the Sudan.

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