

Sudan and South Sudan (debate) 7 June 2011

Ana Gomes (S&D). - Madam President, the EU must keep up pressure on the Government of Sudan to withdraw troops from the border town of Abyei. A solution to the Abyei problem is needed urgently to prevent the escalation of armed conflict between Sudan and South Sudan. This conflict is jeopardising the peace process that should have followed the referendum of January 2011.

The firing of shots by militia men at a UN helicopter at the end of May was an outrageous and cowardly act; as outrageous as the call by the Khartoum Government for UN Peacekeepers to withdraw after 9 July. The UN presence is more necessary than ever to help observe the parties and stabilise the region, thus preventing the conflict from expanding.

Ensuring a peaceful transition to independence in South Sudan also requires that the fight against impunity remains at the top of the EU agenda for both countries and for their unhelpfully meddling neighbours. The EU should not be tempted to make any potentially 'convenient deals' with President al-Bashir in exchange for forgetting that he and his henchmen must be brought before the International Criminal Court (ICC) to answer for the war crimes and the crimes against humanity committed against the Sudanese people in Darfur.