

Russia Balks At Sudan Sanctions

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UNITED NATIONS — China and Russia are resisting a Western push for the UN Security Council to threaten Sudan and South Sudan with sanctions if the two countries fail to comply with demands to halt their escalating conflict, UN envoys said.

The UN negotiations on Sudan and South Sudan, former civil war foes that split when the south seceded last year, follow weeks of border fighting that have raised fears that Khartoum and Juba could launch an all-out war.

Delegates from the 15-nation Security Council met Monday for several hours at the U.S. mission in New York to try to reach an agreement on amending a U.S.-drafted resolution on the two Sudans that council members hope to put to a vote later this week, Western diplomats said on condition of anonymity.

After their discussions, the United States circulated a revised draft resolution that threatens both Sudan and South Sudan with "additional measures" under Article 41 of the UN charter, which allows the council to impose economic and diplomatic sanctions on countries that ignore its decisions.

"The draft will probably change before it goes to a vote, which we hope will happen on Wednesday," a diplomat said. "China doesn't want any mention of Article 41."

Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov made clear at a joint news conference in Moscow on Monday with visiting Sudanese Foreign Minister Ali Ahmed Karti that Russia has reservations about threatening the two Sudans with punitive measures.

He also suggested that Russia did not want any automatic triggers for sanctions in the draft resolution.

"Yes, some economic measures could be taken but ... this is not an automatic decision, but only an indication, depending on how the resolution is implemented," Lavrov said.

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