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AFRICA/SUDAN - Khartoum decrees war economy measures, China mediates to avoid a major conflict

Khartoum (Agenzia Fides) - The Sudanese government has launched austerity measures that are intended to finance a major war with South Sudan. Khartoum authorities have ordered the Civil Administration to reduce the consumption of fuels to supply the needs of the armed forces. State officials must give two days' salary to the army, as well as the management and state-owned companies will have to give part of their budget to support the war effort.
The two Countries have been facing each other for weeks to control the oil area of Heglig, back in the hands of Khartoum after bitter fighting. At the moment airforce bombing on behalf of the Sudanese aeem to have stopped on the oilfields of southern Sudan State of Unity. As a gesture of détente, the authorities in Juba have released 14 soldiers captured in Khartoum.
On the diplomatic front, President Selva Kiir has reduced the duration of his visit to China to meet the emergencies of war. Kiir's visit to China is significant. Beijing, in fact, is the biggest buyer of Sudanese oil. The oil comes mostly from South Sudan and is exported through Sudan. Therefore, it is China's interest to ensure that the two countries reconcile in order to continue to ensure a smooth supply of oil to Beijing. Southern Sudan is trying to finance the construction of a new pipeline in the direction of Kenya, to dispense with the structures of Khartoum. China does not seem for the time being willing to finance the project. Beijing has announced to send a representative to mediate between Khartoum and Juba. (L.M.) (Agenzia Fides 26/4/2012)

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