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Highlights

Foreign Ministry and UNMIS discuss liquidation plan

Akhir Lahaza 29/6/11 – The Undersecretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Rahamatullah Mohamed Osman discussed yesterday with USG Suzan Malcorra the plan for liquidation of UNMIS after the end of its mandate on the 9th of July 2011. The meeting discussed the plan submitted by UNMIS to liquidate itself including the re-exportation of the Mission's equipment.

Osman said the Sudanese Government would provide necessary support and assistance to facilitate the liquidation process particularly with regard to the entry of members of the liquidation team and procedures relating to re-exportation of the Mission's equipment and the exit of its personnel. He added that the Government would do everything necessary to ensure a smooth liquidation of the Mission.

Sudan warring parties sign South Kordofan accord

AFP 28/6/11 - The Sudanese government and the northern branch of the ex-rebel Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) signed on Tuesday a deal to resolve their differences in the embattled border state of South Kordofan.

Heavy fighting has raged in South Kordofan since June 5 between government forces and militia aligned to the ex-rebel army the SPLA.

"The issue of the ceasefire will be discussed tomorrow (Wednesday). This agreement is a prelude to ending the hostilities ... I hope it was signed in good faith," Malik Agar, who heads the SPLM north and was one of the three signatories to the accord, told AFP.

The two other signatories were top presidential aide Nafie Ali Nafie and the chief African Union mediator, Thabo Mbeki.

The framework agreement pledges to pave the way for comprehensive political and security arrangements in the so-called two areas of Blue Nile and South Kordofan state, which lie on the northern side of border with south Sudan and are home to large SPLM communities.

The fighting erupted following a disputed election for the state governor, from which the SPLM's candidate withdrew alleging fraud, and after the army's insistence on disarming SPLA-aligned northern troops, thought to number around 40,000 in the two states.

The agreement stipulates that "any disarmament shall be done in accordance with agreed upon plans and without resorting to force."

It also states that a joint political committee will be formed immediately, and that "the issue of governance in South Kordofan shall be discussed and resolved amicably" by the joint committee, within thirty days."

The beleaguered UN peacekeeping mission in Sudan (UNMIS) reported ongoing army air strikes

on Monday.

"There were bombings heard in Kadugli this morning, not far from the UNMIS compound," mission spokeswoman Hua Jiang told reporters.

"In the past few days the attacks have been concentrated on (rebel strongholds) Kauda and Julud. Julud was bombed yesterday."

Jiang also said the movement restrictions that the authorities had imposed on the peacekeeping mission were making it difficult to gauge the humanitarian situation in the area.

South invites 30 heads of state including Al-Bashir to attend independence celebrations

Al-Rai Al-Aam 29/6/11 – GoSS Secretary General Abidoon Jok said 80 heads of state had been invited to attend independence celebrations, with 30 presidents having confirmed their participation. He said Al-Bashir was among the invitees and hoped that he would attend the ceremony, pointing out that Sudan's national anthem would be played before that of the new southern state and stressed the importance of good relations between Khartoum and Juba.

Sudan Tribune 28/6/11 reported that Al-Bashir has officially been invited to grace South Sudan's independence celebrations, contrary to earlier speculations that his presence at the event was problematic, Barnaba Benjamin Marial, the information and broadcasting minister has confirmed.

"We have extended invitation to the National Congress Party (NCP) and President Bashir as part of the implementation of the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), which ends on July 08. President Bashir must speak at the event," Marial told journalists at the weekly media briefing on Tuesday.

Also invited for the celebrations, he added, are leaders of the other political parties currently operating in the north of the country.

The minister's remarks comes a day after the governing NCP in north Sudan reacted indifferently to reports suggesting that the US president Barack Obama has conditioned his attendance of South Sudan independence ceremony on the absence of President Al-Bashir.

This development stirred up both diplomatic and media confusion especially after it reportedly emerged that a number of Western leaders had conditioned their attendance of 9th July ceremony on the absence of president Al-Bashir.

But the South's information minister dismissed such media allegations, describing them as "bad rumours".

"We have an open invitation to all those who are interested in attending the July 09 celebration to witness the birth of a new nation," Marial assured.

He however appealed to the Khartoum government to respect the recent resolutions of the UN and African Union (AU) security councils, strongly condemning recent air strikes by northern

forces on innocent civilians in Southern Kordofan.

At least 16 civilians, according to Marial were killed, through aerial bombardment and artillery by northern forces in Sudan's border state of Southern Kordofan on Sunday. The UN says more than 70,000 people have fled their homes as fighting escalated in the region.

The southern information minister further warned the northern army against any military intervention in southern Blue Nile, saying they risk causing a repeat of the ongoing events in Southern Kordofan, if they attempt to forcefully disarm civilians.

Meanwhile, normal flights to Juba airport will continue till 8 July, but there will be no commercial flight on 9 July. The move is aimed at ensuring the safety of over 20 heads of states earmarked for the celebrations.

S. Kordofan authorities ban travel of SPLM leaders abroad

Al-Sahafa 29/6/11 – Authorities in Southern Kordofan state have banned the travel abroad of local SPLM's military and executive personalities serving in the state government including ministers on charges of incitement of war and terrorism against the state.

Sources have revealed to the SMC that senior SPLA military officials face charges of killing innocent civilians for which they would be brought to justice.

Meanwhile, preliminary investigations have reportedly begun on alleged presence of weapons and landmines in the compounds of some foreign organizations operating in the state.

China rolls out red carpet for Sudan's Bashir

AFP 29/6/11 - Sudanese leader Omar al-Bashir, who is wanted on genocide charges, was given a red-carpet welcome Wednesday by Chinese President Hu Jintao, despite criticism from Washington and human rights groups.

Beijing is a key military supplier to the regime in Khartoum and the biggest buyer of the country's oil, although the majority of Sudan's oil fields are located in the south, which will become independent on July 9.

The two presidents sat down for talks in the Great Hall of the People in the heart of Beijing after the usual pomp and circumstance of a welcoming ceremony not often afforded to Bashir, who is unwelcome in many countries.

"Mr. Bashir, you are a guest who has travelled from afar, and we welcome you," Hu said in opening remarks, adding that he hoped the talks would help bolster the "traditionally friendly relations" between the two countries.

The Sudanese leader, who called Hu his "friend and brother", thanked the Chinese leader for the "warm welcome and treatment" he had received since arriving in Beijing on Tuesday.

The pair later witnessed the signing of an economic and technological cooperation agreement, as well as two loan deals including one for a bridge project in eastern Sudan. No further details were given.

The two presidents were expected to discuss the ongoing north-south peace process in Sudan, the situation in war-torn Darfur -- and perhaps how Bashir's regime intends to safeguard Chinese investment in his country.

In an interview with China's official Xinhua news agency ahead of the visit, Bashir insisted that southern independence "will not affect the relationship" between Beijing and Khartoum, hailing China as a model "real partner".

Beijing has defended its invitation to Bashir, with foreign ministry spokesman Hong Lei saying Tuesday: "As a friendly country of China, the Sudanese leader's visit to China is quite reasonable."

The Sudanese leader's visit has sparked outrage among rights groups, and earned the reproach of the US State Department.

"We continue to oppose invitations, facilitation, support for travel by ICC indictees," State Department spokeswoman Victoria Nuland said Monday.

"We reserve our opinion on the ICC's prosecution against President Bashir," China's Hong said Tuesday.

New York-based Human Rights Watch described Bashir's trip as "an affront to victims of heinous crimes committed in Darfur".

Southerners in the North will be issued visas and will not be harassed – Bashir
Al-Ayyam 29/6/11 – President Al-Bashir said southerners in the North would be issued visas to stay in the North after secession and they would neither be harassed nor their property confiscated.

The President, who was addressing members of the Sudanese community in China yesterday, lashed out against some SPLM leaders, saying they were seeking to hamper partnership between the North and the South to serve foreign agenda.

Al-Watan 29/6/11 reports President Al-Bashir has rejected the SPLM's call for dual nationality for southern Sudanese because they have chosen their own state. However, the President pointed out that "the southerners would not be ill-treated and their property would not be confiscated".

77 killed and wounded in clashes between SPLA and rebels in Upper Nile
Al-Sudani 29/6/11 – 33 people have been killed and 44 wounded in fierce clashes yesterday in Upper Nile state between the SPLA and forces of rebel leader Maj. Gen. Johnson Owlung.

Owlung, who spoke to the newspaper yesterday, claimed that 28 elements were killed and 38 wounded on the part of the SPLA while 5 soldiers were killed and six wounded on his side, adding that his forces also seized large number of weapons and ammunition from the SPLA soldiers who fled the area.

Government says has no objection to deployment of Ethiopian forces in Abyei under Chapter VII

Al-Intibaha 29/6/11 – The Sudanese Government said it would have no objection to the UNSC’s resolution to mandate an Ethiopian force to deploy in Abyei under chapter VII.

Undersecretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Rahamatullah Mohamed Osman, told the newspaper that they did not receive the resolution yet but the Government would accept it regardless of the Chapter under which the force would function in order to prevent recurrence of past incidents and to ensure security and stability in the area.

“Any provocative celebrations of secession in the North will be prevented” – sources

Al-Sudani 29/6/11 – Security authorities said they would prevent any forms of provocative celebrations of the separation of the South.

Security sources have revealed to the newspaper that plans and security measures were in place to deal with any eventuality on the 9th of July. The sources said they would see to it that the 9th of July passes like any other day and that any southerner who opts to remain in the North would not be expelled but would be treated like a foreigner which entails meeting specific conditions including work permit. The sources added that anyone who attempts to create trouble would be deported immediately.

Sudan to let rebels join army; south downplays oil threat

Reuters 28/6/11 - Sudan agreed on Wednesday to bring some former rebels into the its army and the south played down a northern threat to shut oil pipelines, as the country's halves scramble to prepare for the South’s looming secession.

The main parties from both sides held talks in Ethiopia's capital Addis Ababa, mediated by South African former President Thabo Mbeki, to resolve the fate of fighters from the South’s Sudan People's Liberation Army who will end up in the north.

Mbeki said the sides had agreed on Wednesday that fighters from the South’s former guerrilla army who end up in northern territory would be incorporated into the northern army. He said they planned to meet again on Thursday to discuss prospects for a ceasefire in a border area where there have been clashes.

The two sides also need to figure out how to divide oil earnings that represent the lifeblood of both economies.

Sudan's President Omar Hassan al-Bashir threatened last week to shut down oil pipelines if the south refuses to pay transit fees or continue the current arrangement.

“We completely regret and are surprised by the decision of the president of the Republic of Sudan that he can close off the pipes that carry the oil from southern Sudan,” the South’s Information Minister Barnaba Marial Benjamin told reporters.

“This is also the oil that also supports 70 percent of the economy in the north. So we are obliged

by the mutual cooperation that we need that oil to flow, so that Sudan can benefit, and the people in south Sudan, who are the owners, also benefit."

Members of the North's ruling National Congress Party (NCP) and the northern branch of the SPLM would "engage each other" on Thursday morning on the cessation of hostilities in Southern Kordofan, Mbeki said.

The sides had signed an agreement that "provides for a political partnership, as well steps to be taken for security arrangements in South Kordofan", Mbeki told reporters.

"The Republic of Sudan will have one national army," the agreement, a copy of which was seen by Reuters, said.

"The SPLA forces from Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile shall be integrated, over a time period and with modalities to be agreed, into the Sudan Armed Forces, other security institutions and civil service," it said, referring to the SPLM's military wing, the Sudan People's Liberation Army.

The groups also agreed the SPLM North should be allowed to continue as a legal political party.

UN official urges human rights probe in Abyei, South Kordofan

Sudan Tribune website 27/6/11 - A senior UN official has called for thorough investigations into human rights abuses in Sudan's flashpoint regions of Abyei and South Kordofan, currently the scene of occupation and clashes between forces of North and South Sudan.

In a press conference held in Khartoum on June 27, the UN Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights, Kyung-wha Kang, highlighted several human rights concerns in both North and South Sudan.

Kang, who concluded a week-long visit to Sudan during which she visited South Sudan, the border-areas and the war-battered region of Darfur, said it was "necessary" to launch a thorough human rights investigation in Abyei and South Kordofan "as soon as possible."

She expressed regret over the devastation she saw during her brief stay in Abyei. According to Kang, "looters still roam among the ruins in the presence of Sudan Armed Forces."

The UN official reiterated calls on the government to facilitate access for humanitarian actors to assist the people affected by the fighting in these areas.

On Darfur, Kang urged the government of Sudan to create a human rights environment in the region, saying that little had changed in Darfur since her last visit eight years ago.

In order to create this environment, she said the government must lift the state of emergency in the region and guarantee freedom of expression, freedom from arbitrary arrest and freedom of association.

Kang leveled criticism at the country's National Intelligence and Security Services (NISS), saying that the wide powers granted to its members to detain and arrest people for long periods "must be brought in line with the international conventions that Sudan has ratified."

Meanwhile, the *Citizen* 29/6/11 reports that the ruling NCP has downplayed the statements by

the deputy high commissioner for human rights. NCP Press Secretary Ibrahim Ghandour told journalists yesterday that many international envoys make such statements to keep their jobs. He said the allegations had no grounds and that the claim of genocide was baseless, pointing out that the envoy has not visited the region until yesterday and described her talk as a mere fabrication. "If there is a proof, they should present it" he said.

South Sudan says renegade Athor organizes to launch attack before the independence

Sudan Tribune website 28/6/11 - The renegade former deputy chief of general staff in South Sudan army, General George Athor Deng, is organizing his forces to launch massive attack inside the South before the region's declaration of independence on July 9, the army stated.

Philip Aguer, the spokesman of the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), in a televised message on SSTV on Monday announced the intention of the militia leader, Athor, allied to the Khartoum government to destabilize the region.

Aguer said the army has reliable information that forces loyal to George Athor are being assembled and organized in the North Sudan's Senar state which borders the Upper Nile state of South Sudan to launch attacks targeting the disputed areas between North and South Sudan as the region prepares to formally become independent in less than two weeks' time.

The army spokesman accused the Khartoum government of supporting and arming the rebels and unleashing them to disrupt the process of smooth road to independence of the region.

Aguer further explained that forces allied to another rebel leader Major General Peter Gatdet Yak are responsible for this week's attack in Warrap state's Twic County which left dozens of people dead and many others wounded.

Officials in South Sudan suspect forces loyal to the former advisor to President Salva Kiir, Abdel Bagi Ayii, for the attacks in Warrap state. Ayii, who reportedly recruits his supporters from Warrap state and Northern Bahr el Ghazal, from where he hails, is also allied to Peter Gatdet, who recruits most of his supporters from Unity state.

Warrap state officials said the attack in the state was quelled but the attackers managed to hide among the local population of the community in the victimized county.

They further explained that the attackers who wanted to establish their base in Turalei, Twic County, also targeted tens of thousands of displaced persons from Abyei who were based in the area.

Aguer further accused the Khartoum government of targeting the disputed oilfields including Higlig in Unity state's Pariang County, which lies at the North-South border.

George Athor, who recruits most of his supporters from his home state of Jonglei, was the first high ranking officer in South Sudan army to rebel against the government since its formation in 2005 following the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement that ended 21 years of war between North and South Sudan.

He rebelled in May 2010, citing elections rigging in Jonglei state, after independently losing to his rival, Kuol Manyang Juuk, the current state governor who was backed by the ruling Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM).

The army spokesperson assured the South Sudan population that the region's army is ready to expel any attacks from all the Khartoum-backed militias in the region.

Sudan wants peace agreement in Darfur before the 9th of July -negotiator

Sudan Tribune website 28/6/11 - Sudan's top negotiator to the Doha peace process said his government wants to sign an agreements with the rebel Liberation and Justice Movement (LJM) before the ninth of July.

The government delegation and the LJM declared their determination to sign a peace agreement since last May at the Darfur stakeholders' conference but the two parties are still debating on the allocation of a vice-president post for Darfur.

Darfur mediation is consulting with the parties to determine a date for the signing of the peace agreement. Also, Presidential adviser Ghazi Salah Al-Deen, who is tasked with Darfur file will be in Doha on 2 July.

Speaking to the semi-official SMC news service on Tuesday, Amin Hassan Omer stressed that the government's delegation wants the signing ceremony take place before the ninth of July. He further stressed the date should be fixed according to the agenda of the President Omer Al-Bashir.

Sudan and LJM agreed this week to delay the referendum on Darfur status for one year after the signing of the peace agreement. They also agreed to allocate some seats to the rebel groups at the national parliament.

Amin once again said that the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) is not serious to seal a peace agreement with the government and reiterated Khartoum determination to not hold talks with the group.

The government delegation offered to discuss with JEM the integration of the rebel combatants and their participation in the national and regional organs.

Speaking before the upper chamber, States Council, on Tuesday Ghazi told the legislators that there is no provision in the constitution requiring to appoint a vice-president from Darfur. The presidential adviser went to add that also there is no provision preventing any Darfurian from being a candidate for the presidency.

He further stressed the government decision to appoint a vice-president from Darfur is a political decision aiming to consolidate peace in Darfur.

Different sources say NCP members from Darfur region were very critical to the peace deal with the LJM. They are reportedly also opposed to give a vice-president position to the rebels.

Amin Hassan Omer announced before the Darfur stakeholders conference last May that his government accept to appoint a vice-president from Darfur during the current presidential term

only but refuses to make it a constitutional rule.

LJM accepted the offer and also demanded to involve rebel groups in the nomination of the vice-president. But the government rejected the request saying his appointment is a discretionary power that only the president can exercise.

Ghazi told the lawmakers that framework document to end the eight year conflict is a "recipe to solve the problem" and lays the basis for peace in Darfur.

The presidential adviser pointed out that this text gained regional and international consensus, stressing that "the document is a contract held between us and those who care about the Darfur issue at home and abroad".

71 street boys died in Khartoum of toxicity, Justice Ministry orders investigation

Ajras Al-Hurriya 29/6/11 – Khartoum state police announced the death of 71 street boys in Khartoum city because of consuming Methanol.

Director of Khartoum State Police Mohamed Al-Hafiz Abdul Rahman told a press conference yesterday that 71 homeless died during the period during the period from 12 to 26 June 2011. He said postmortem confirmed the presence of methanol in their stomachs.

According to Khartoum state authorities, Khartoum city is home to 9355 vagabonds. An inquiry committee has reportedly been set up to investigate the incident.

According to *Al-Sudani* 29/6/11, Abdul Rahman said that burglary, pocket-picking and other types of theft have come down after the death of 71 homeless.

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