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Headlines

- FM condemns abduction and rejects ransom (**Dailies**)
- NCP, SPLM deadlocked over laws – Garang (**Al-Sahafa**)
- AUPD's findings won support within and without – Mbeki (**al-Sahafa**)
- Kaddafi's statement on secession misunderstood – Nafie (**Al-Rai Al-Aam**)
- Foreign Ministry rules out Al-Bashir-Deby meeting (**Dailies**)
- Equatoria governor tells civilians to fight LRA (**Al-Intibaha**)
- Southern Front warns of "Somali-like" situation in the South (**Al-Intibaha**)
- GoSS affirms readiness to mediate Kampala-LRA talks (**Sudan Vision**)
- Court hears Libyan Embassy's case against a local paper (**Al-Intibaha**)
- AEC chief praised implementation of wealth sharing protocol (**Al-Sahafa**)
- Abel Alier to address media training session (**Al-Ahdath**)
- Kadhafi hosts African summit on eve of anniversary (**AFP**)

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Highlights

FM condemns abduction and rejects ransom

Local dailies report Sudan's Foreign Ministry has condemned the abduction of UNAMID peacekeepers in Darfur, describing the incident as "criminal". According to **Al-Sahafa**, the Ministry set up an operation room comprising the Defence Ministry, NISS and State authorities to follow up on efforts to ensure release of the abductees. Foreign Ministry spokesperson Muawia Osman Khaled said the government categorically rejected payment of any ransom or to meet any kind of conditions. He dismissed claims that the government is dragging its feet on the incident, saying abduction is a sensitive issue, requiring careful handling. He said the incident was intended to add more fuel to the fire in Darfur, adding it had occurred just days after UNAMID's announcement that the region is no longer in a state of war.

NCP, SPLM deadlocked over laws – Garang

Al-Sahafa reports National Assembly Deputy Speaker Atem Garang as saying that the NCP and the SPLM have reached a deadlock over the referendum and the popular consultation laws, urging the two partners to speed up efforts to finalize the laws needed for democratic transformation and the CPA implementation.

Sudan Tribune website 30/8/09 reported Sudan peace partners will resume talks today in Khartoum over the controversial referendum bill which should be adopted before the end of the year. GoSS VP Dr. Machar arrived in Khartoum yesterday for the talks.

In a related development, **Al-Rai Al-Aam** has learned that the NCP had made offers to the SPLM to overcome the dispute over the census results. The south is offered 150 election constituencies based on the CPA percentage rather than 91 constituencies decided by the NEC in exchange for granting the NCP the rule of three southern states.

AUPD's recommendations won support within and without – Mbeki

The AU Panel on Darfur announced that its recommendations, which will be submitted to the AU, have won the support of various groups within and outside Sudan, **Al-Sahafa** reports. The Panel stressed the need for participation of the people of Darfur in the upcoming elections. However, Thabo Mbeki, the head of the Panel, who addressed a press conference yesterday in Khartoum, declined to elaborate about the report, saying some aspects are yet to be completed which need consultation with the neighbouring countries, armed movements and the international community.

According to **Al-Rai Al-Aam**, the AUPD denied that it had agreed to the ICC's indictment of President Al-Bashir, saying its report would be submitted to the AU by the end of September.

Sudan Tribune website 30/8/09 reported the head of high-level AU Panel on Darfur reaffirmed yesterday the need for justice to achieve peace in Darfur, saying it is a fundamental pillar.

"The peace, justice and reconciliation are integrated parts of the peace process, and all of them are complementing each other," Mbeki told reporters today in Khartoum. "We are convinced that justice must be achieved in Darfur, and it's a fundamental pillar of the endeavor for a peaceful solution to the crisis," he further said.

"But there are several questions on how to achieve the justice and on the institutions that we need to deal with the justice, we'll talk in our report to the African Union on these questions," Mbeki stressed.

The AUDP is preparing a report on the findings of the commission and its recommendations to address the Darfur crisis. The report will be submitted to an AU summit to be held in the Libyan capital Tripoli on Monday.

The panel is expected to propose in its final report a South African style "Truth and Reconciliation" commission.

Kaddafi's statement on South secession misunderstood – Nafie

Al-Rai Al-Aam reports Presidential Assistant Nafie Ali Nafie has said that Libyan leader Col. Kaddafi's statements on support for South Sudan secession might have been misunderstood, adding Kaddafi was known for his support for Sudan's unity. Nafie made the remarks after meeting with the Arab League Secretary General Amr Musa in Cairo. He said his consultations with Musa focused on Darfur issue and the CPA. He stressed the need for more efforts to address Darfur issue, citing the successes so far made in Darfur which, he said, is recognized by the UN and the USA.

With regard to southern Sudan, Nafie said that the inter-tribal conflict in the South is accidental; it would not spoil the relationship between the South and the North.

Foreign Ministry rules out Al-Bashir-Deby meeting

Local dailies report President Omar Al-Bashir arrived in Libya yesterday, leading a high-level delegation, to take part in an AU summit meeting. The summit will focus on a range of issues and the Darfur issue and the Sudan-Chad relations are likely to feature high on the agenda. However, **Al-Wifaq** reports FM spokesperson Muawia Osman has ruled out a meeting between Presidents Al-Bashir and Idriss Deby of Chad on the sidelines of AU summit in Libya.

Equatoria governor tells civilians to fight LRA

Al-Intibaha reports Central Equatoria Governor Clement Wani has called on the residents of the state to defend themselves against LRA attacks if need be. Mr. Wani, who was speaking at an inaugural session of a forum of Counties Commissioners, cited security, development and reconstruction as key challenges for his state.

Southern Front warns of "Somali-like" situation in the South

Al-Intibaha reports the Southern National Front has slammed GoSS holding it responsible for the deterioration of the security situation in the South, saying what is happening in the region is due to GoSS weakness and fragility, urging southerners to resist what it described as SPLM's injustice, arrogance and devastating policies. The Front said a revolt against GoSS was the only way out to avoid a "Somali-like" situation in southern Sudan.

GoSS affirms readiness to mediate between Kampala and LRA

Sudan Vision reports GoSS VP Dr. Riek Machar has affirmed his readiness to lead a fresh mediation between the Ugandan government and the LRA following the resignation of the head of the LRA negotiating team.

Machar told Sudan Vision that the incidents in Jonglei were unexpected, considering them as a great and disturbing challenge, adding the solution lies in arms collection.

Meanwhile, Machar said that his government appealed to the international community for \$44 million to address the humanitarian gap.

Court hears Libyan Embassy's case against a local paper

Al-Intibaha reports a local court in Khartoum convened its first session to hear the case filed by the Libyan Embassy in Khartoum against a local newspaper (Al-Intibaha). The Embassy has filed a suit against the newspaper, saying Al-Intibaha claimed that Libya was involved in the attack on Omdurman in May last year.

AEC chief praised implementation of wealth sharing protocol

State Minister for Finance and National Economy, Lual Deng, yesterday briefed AEC Chairman Sir Derek Plumbly about progress in the implementation of the CPA's wealth sharing protocols, **Al-Sahafa** reports.

State Minister Lual pointed out that the GoSS has received its share from the Central Bank.

Abel Alier to address media training session for elections coverage

NEC Chairman Abel Alier is to address tomorrow the opening session of a media training course on elections coverage, **Al-Ahdath** reports. The training takes place at the National Press and Publications Council and targets a first batch of 30 journalists.

NEC Secretary-General, Jalal Mohamed Ahmed, said that some 300 journalists are targeted for training in Khartoum State.

Kadhafi hosts African summit on eve of anniversary

AFP 31/8/09 — African leaders gathered in Libya on Monday for a special summit to discuss the continent's trouble spots, on the eve of celebrations to mark 40 years of Moamer Kadhafi's rule.

The conflicts in Somalia and Sudan are expected to top the agenda at the meeting, the third African Union summit so far this year.

"We'll try to focus on all conflict situations... We believe that we can move forward in terms of peace and discussions," the AU's Peace and Security Council chief Ramtane Lamamra said, singling out Somalia.

Hard-line Islamist rebels launched a sweeping onslaught in Mogadishu in May against the government of President Sharif Sheikh Ahmed, reducing his reach to only a handful of areas with the backing of AU peacekeepers.

The summit will examine ways to "further support the Somali transitional government, in particular by reinforcing its institutions and by improving security in the country," a summit document said.

Focus will also fall on Sudan's war-ravaged Darfur region and the AU's joint peacekeeping force with the United Nations, which has been plagued by funding and equipment shortfalls.

"The need to reinforce security (in Darfur) is paramount," the document said.

The summit is also expected to review the political deadlocks in Guinea and Madagascar, where governments were toppled despite strong opposition from the AU.

African leaders are also expected to endorse a common stance on climate change, seeking

billions of dollars in compensation from industrialized nations.

Monday's summit is being held in a festive atmosphere as Libya marks the anniversary of the coup against the monarchy on September 1, 1969 that brought Kadhafi to power.

The self-proclaimed "king of the kings" of Africa, Kadhafi called the extraordinary meeting just two months after having hosted the 13th ordinary summit of the AU at the end of June in his birthplace Sirte.

"We are at about the same point where we were at the last summit in Sirte. There have been no major advances," an African minister told **AFP** on the sidelines of the gathering.

A gala anniversary celebration on Tuesday will be attended by some heads of state, including outspoken Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez, but a string of European leaders are staying away.