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**(By Public Information Office)**

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**IN THE NEWS TODAY:**

- **Arab Summit/ AMIS-UN Transition**
  - Egyptian and Algerian presidents to discuss outcome of the Khartoum summit
- **UN**
  - UNICEF to recruit 50,000 to carry out polio vaccination campaign
- **CPA**
  - 1,400 ex-SSDF troops to relocate to southern Sudan
  - Commander of UN force in Kassala says SPLA to withdraw from Hamesh Khoreib starting this weekend
  - Sudan earmarks US\$24 million for returns
  - Sudanese civil society petitions UN, Sudan, Uganda over rebels
- **GoNU**
  - Parliament to form committee to review legislation contradicting the CPA
  - Salva Kiir lashes out on NCP
  - Opposition forces to stage procession for Darfur next week
- **Darfur**
  - African peacekeepers accused of rapping women and children in Darfur
- **Southern Sudan/GoSS**
  - SPLM leadership holds meetings in South Sudan
- **Other Developments**
  - Sudan talks with the US and the UK over solutions to Darfur crisis
  - Tribes of South Kordofan to hold all-inclusive conference
  - Eritrea says ready for constructive role in Sudan peace process
  - Southern leader defects from NCP, forms new party

## **HIGHLIGHTS:**

### **Arab Summit/ AMIS-UN Transition**

#### **Egyptian and Algerian presidents to discuss outcome of the Khartoum summit**

(*AlRai AlAam/Agencies* – 3<sup>rd</sup> Apr. **Algeria**) Algerian president AbdelAziz Bouteflika held talks yesterday with his visiting Egyptian counterpart who was on a one-day working visit to Algeria.

A spokesperson for Egypt's Office of the President told the press in Algiers that the two leaders discussed the outcome of the recently-concluded Arab League summit meeting held in Khartoum. He said the visit also comes also because the Egyptian president had failed to travel to Khartoum for the summit as he was busy with some internal issues.

Qatar-based *Al-Jazeera TV* reports that the Egyptian leader's visit to Algiers comes against the background of reports of disagreement between the two countries over the issue of deployment of a UN force to Darfur which surfaced during the closed-door session of the Arab League meeting in Khartoum

Arab diplomats say Egypt had called for more flexibility on the issue from the part of the Sudan government in the peace talks in Abuja to enable the parties reach a peace agreement that will avert a confrontation with the UN or the AU while the Algerian position was in favour of the steps taken by the Sudanese government.

## **UN**

#### **UNICEF to recruit 50,000 to carry out polio vaccination campaign**

(*AlAyaam* – 3<sup>rd</sup> Apr. **Khartoum**) The UNICEF has announced it will recruit at least 50,000 local volunteer health workers to carry out a vaccination campaign targeting about 8.1 million children under 5 years of age.

The campaign will especially target children in remote areas cut off by conflict.

## **CPA**

#### **1,400 ex-SSDF troops to relocate to southern Sudan**

(*Khartoum Monitor* – 3<sup>rd</sup> Apr. **Khartoum**) Some 1,400 troops of the ex-South Sudan Defence Forces under the command of Lt. Gen. AbdelBagi Anai left Khartoum yesterday for Malwal Kut in North Bahr-el-Ghazal, where they will be integrated into the SPLA.

Gen. AbdelBagi told the *Khartoum Monitor* yesterday that 750 soldiers of different ranks under the command of Col. James Marial left Khartoum for Malwal Kon in N. Bahr-le-Ghazal yesterday. He said that this is the third batch with two earlier batches totalling 3,000 soldiers who departed earlier.

The SSDF General said that the movement of these forces is being carried out in coordination with the UN.

It is worth noting that the first batch of 1,500 SSDF soldiers returning to southern Sudan was ambushed near Abyei where a number of killed and others wounded.

The ambush was allegedly staged by pro-government militias.

### **Commander of UN force in Kassala says SPLA to withdraw from Hamesh Khoreib starting this weekend**

(*AlAyaam* – 3<sup>rd</sup> Apr. **Kassala**) The SPLA embarks on a three-phase withdrawal from Hamesh Khoreib starting this weekend. The process is expected to complete by early June this year.

UN Sector Commander in Kassala, Prem Thapa, said that the first phase of the withdrawal will start the first week of this month and conclude by the month's third week.

The *Sudan News Agency (SUNA)* reports that part of the force in Kassala will complete the 1,500 SPLA troops to be deployed to Khartoum while the remaining troops will redeploy to southern Sudan.

Sector Commander Thapa said the SPLA will hand over Hamesh Khoreib in full to the SAF once their withdrawal is complete.

### **Sudan earmarks US\$24 million for returns**

(*Sudan Vision* – 3<sup>rd</sup> Apr. **Khartoum**) State Minister at the Interior, Brigadier Aleu Ayen Aleu, disclosed that the returns of refugees and IDPs is estimated to cost about US\$4 billion and should be made available against amounts provided by donors including the expenses of UN peacekeeping forces as per the CPA.

The state minister added that Sudan is not depending entirely on foreign funds and has earmarked US\$24 million for the voluntary repatriation program.

Aleu commended the role of the police force in helping with the repatriation of the refugees and IDPs and refuted reports about congestion caused by returning IDPs in Kosti.

### **Sudanese civil society petitions UN, Sudan, Uganda over rebels**

(*Xinhua/ST* – 2<sup>nd</sup> Apr. **Nairobi**) The Sudanese civil society organizations on Saturday petitioned the United Nations and governments of Sudan and Uganda to help decimate insurgents from the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), a rebel group that has waged a brutal war in northern region.

In an open letter addressed to the UN and governments of Sudan and Uganda, The New Sudanese Indigenous NGOs Network (NESI Network), an umbrella body comprising 66 organizations condemned the LRA atrocities which it said poses serious threat to the implementation of the southern Sudan peace deal.

"The rebel group has in the past caused serious insecurity, not only in Uganda but also southern Sudan. Now its continued existence poses a serious threat to the sustenance of the Sudan Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA)," the organizations said.

"We want the UN to revise and review the mandate of the UN Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) in order to give it the power to deal with the LRA threat as well as make it proactive enough to act on potential security threats in Sudan including Darfur in the West as well as Eastern Sudan," they said.

The LRA, which has waged a 20-year war against the government of Uganda, operates from bases in northern Uganda and southern Sudan, and frequently targets southern Sudanese civilians.

The conflict has dragged on despite attempts to mediate a peaceful resolution and last year the International Criminal Court indicted five of the group's leaders, including its elusive supreme, Joseph Kony, on war crimes charges.

## **GoNU**

### **Parliament to form committee to review legislation contradicting the CPA**

(*AlSahafa* – 3<sup>rd</sup> Apr. **Khartoum**) Parliament has delegated a special committee to review with the Minister of Justice legislature and prevailing laws that contradict the spirit of the CPA and to re-draft such laws then present it for debate.

Parliament comes out of recess today and will be addressed by the President of the Republic who will also present a report on the performance of the executive organs and on current issues.

The Speaker of Parliament said he hoped the Council of Ministers will present bills for parliament's attention and noted that this session kicks off without any bill having been presented.

### **Salva Kiir lashes out on NCP**

(*AlAyaam* – 3<sup>rd</sup> Apr. **Rumbek**) Vice-president Salva Kiir Mayardit has launched out on the SPLM's NCP partners and accused them of supporting some militia groups that launch attacks in SPLA areas in what he dubbed as clear violations of the CPA.

In his first address before the SPLM Political Office, Salva Kiir talked about the current political situation, the implementation of the CPA and the obstacles faced in that regard, the Lord's Resistance Army and their continued attacks on different areas of Equatoria. He also gave a report of the current situation in Darfur and eastern Sudan and the role the SPLM can play to contribute to a peaceful solution to these issues.

The SPLM leader also outlined his vision for the transformation of the SPLM into a political party.

### **Opposition forces to stage procession for Darfur next week**

(*AlAyaam* – 3<sup>rd</sup> Apr. **Khartoum**) The Alliance of National Forces is organising a procession next week in which copies of a memorandum will be handed to the Presidency of the Republic, the UN and the AU.

Dr. Adam Madibo, the Vice-chairman of the Umma Party (mainstream), said that the alliance of opposition parties held talks at the Umma headquarters yesterday and decided there was a need for a political mobilisation to help resolve the Darfur crisis.

The group is also organising a symposium for next week in which Umma leader Sadiq el-Mahdi, Communist Party leader Nugud and Popular Congress Party leader Dr. Turabi will be the main speakers. This will precede the procession.

## **Darfur**

### **African peacekeepers accused of rapping women and children in Darfur**

(*ST* – 2<sup>nd</sup> Apr. **London**) According to the UK Channel 4 TV, women and children in Sudan's troubled Darfur region had been raped by members of the African Union peacekeeping forces.

In a video report by Channel 4, women interviewed said AU forces committed large-scale abuses in the region.

The channel informed the AU command of these allegations but they denied such abuses.

Following the text of Channel 4 news report:

Women and children in Darfur claim they have been abused by the very guards who are meant to be protecting them.

Since 2004, the fragile peace in Darfur has been monitored by troops from the African Union.

But More4 news has uncovered evidence that some of the soldiers overseeing the ceasefire are now exploiting the women and children they were sent in to protect.

This weekend, the United Nations promised to speed up moves to send its own peacekeepers to the war torn region.

Our reporter Nima Elbagir travelled to Geraida in Southern Darfur, where girls as young as 11 said they had been threatened and coerced into sexual acts by soldiers.

We showed our report to the African Union command in Sudan. They told by More4 news that the claims were "horrible but not true". The United Nations were unable to comment.

*To read more and watch the video report, please go at <http://www.channel4.com/more4/news/news-opinion-feature.jsp?id=197>*

## **Southern Sudan/GoSS**

### **SPLM leadership holds meetings in South Sudan**

(*ST, Khartoum Monitor* – 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> Apr. **Juba**) The leadership office of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) holds meetings in South Sudan to assess the political situation in the country and the implementation of the peace agreement.

The secretary general of the SPLM Pagan Amum said the aim of these meeting is to measure the implementation of Comprehensive Peace Agreement signed in January last year with the ruling National Congress Party.

Meetings of the SPLM leadership office began today at the southern town of Rumbek, under the chairmanship of the first vice-president and SPLM leader, Lt-Gen Salvia Kiir Mayardit.

The presidential adviser and a member of the leadership office of the SPLM, Mansour Khalid, said that following the dissolution of the movement's organs after the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, it was necessary to establish other organs to replace them.

He added that the two secretariats in the north and south were not dissolved. He said the SPLM leader recently formed a political office comprising of 30 members, with an aim of preparing the 2nd national conference of the SPLM next May.

Mansour said the conference aims to form elected bodies of the SPLM, adding that the meetings would discuss implementation of structural reforms within the SPLM, its institutions besides reviewing its constitution.

In the context of the preparation for the coming elections within tow years, the SPLM intends to consolidate its structures and proposes a political program to the whole country to meet aspirations of the Sudanese people for change and democratic transformation.

The SPLM want to extend its bases in the north as well as in the south and the marginalized areas because after 17 years of repression in the country northern political forces are weakened and lost much of credibility, said a political analyst.

He further said the concept of "New Sudan" is in phase with the educated and urban populations, but the SPLM suffers from the lack of organization and professionalism.

## **Other Developments**

### **Sudan talks with the US and the UK over solutions to Darfur crisis**

(*AlRai AlAam* – 3<sup>rd</sup> Apr. **Khartoum**) Vice-president Ali Osman Mohamed Taha travels in the coming few days to Abuja a bid to bolster the peace talks.

A conference of Sudanese ambassadors held at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs the day before yesterday was briefed by the President of the Republic's deputy special envoy to Darfur, General Mohamed Mustafa el-Dabi who, in his paper, pointed out that the government started off on a wrong security footing while handling the beginning of the crisis. He also pointed out that there was disharmony in the political discourse on the Darfur issue and that some groups in the opposition helped 'internationalise' the problem.

He also called for a calm and logical perusal of the issue of an AMIS to UN transition.

On the other hand, officials from the US and the UK are expected in Khartoum the next few days for talks over radical solutions to the crisis in Darfur and eastern Sudan.

Sources also say that Secretary-General Kofi Annan's invitation to President Bashir to visit New York for consultations over the AMIS-UN transition was welcomed by the government and may take place soon.

## **Tribes of South Kordofan to hold all-inclusive conference**

(*AlAyaam* – 3<sup>rd</sup> Apr. **Kassala**) The local administration of the Tegeli people of Rashad municipality, South Kordofan, have issued an urgent call for an all-inclusive conference of the people of the area to address the security issues involving farmers and cattle keepers.

A prominent member of the local administration and the SPLM's South Kordofan chapter said they do not want a political involvement in the issue which they see as more of a social problem and not a political one.

## **Eritrea says ready for constructive role in Sudan peace process**

(*ST* – 2<sup>nd</sup> Apr. **Asmara**) Eritrean ruling party expressed readiness to play a constructive role in the Sudanese peace process, the state run Eritrean News Agency reported.

Head of Organizational Affairs at the ruling People's Front for Democracy and Justice (PFDJ) Abdellah Jabir said that Eritrea as a nation that has toiled persistently for the reaching of a comprehensive political solution in the Sudan, it is ready as always to extend its constructive assistance in the slowly progressing Sudanese peace process.

Jabir didn't specify if his proposal is about eastern Sudan or Darfur region. But it seems the Eritrean offer is related to eastern Sudan peace talks.

In last February the Libyan-sponsored peace talks between Khartoum and eastern Sudan rebels had been delayed after the two sides disagreed over Eritrea's participation.

"Relations between Khartoum and Asmara have not reached a level (of improvement) at which Eritrea can mediate in Sudanese internal issues," said a spokesman for the ruling National Congress Party, Kamal al-Obeid.

"The government has clearly informed the Libyan mediator that it does not accept any form of Eritrean participation in the negotiations," he said.

Jabir further added that his government wishes to see Sudanese government and opposition "put aside their differences and work together in a spirit of responsibility" ... "for the sake of the Sudanese people realizing that peace is the cornerstone for the existence and development of any nation".

In October 2005, Eritrea and Sudan announced an end to "more than 10 years of estrangement," and this led to a series of high-level exchanges of visits by senior officials.

Sudanese First Vice-President Salva Kiir Mayardit, visited Eritrea for the second time since his appointment, and held talks with Eritrean President Isayas Afewerki on 23 February.

The entry of former southern Sudanese rebels backed by Asmara, including Kiir, into the Khartoum government following a peace deal in July 2005 eased a decade of difficult relations between Eritrea and Sudan.

But other Sudanese rebel movements operating in the western Darfur region and eastern Sudan have offices in Asmara.

Reacting to the Sudanese refusal of the Eritrean participation in the eastern Sudan peace process, the Eritrean Foreign Ministry on 9 February issued a press release saying “the government of Eritrea did not ask at all to join this meaningless and futile dialogue gimmick; neither will it ask for participation in the future”.

So, this new proposal of “constructive assistance” seems indicating a new attempt from Asmara to convince the reluctant ruling National Congress Party of its good will and seriousness in the normalization of bilateral ties.

Khartoum demands that Asmara stops clearly any type of relations with the eastern rebels and particularly with Darfur rebels.

In this gesture one can also observe the Eritrean aspiration to see Khartoum distancing it self vis-à-vis the Eritrean opposition located in the Sudanese capital and Addis Ababa.

### **Southern leader defects from NCP, forms new party**

(*Khartoum Monitor/ST* – 2<sup>nd</sup> Apr. **Khartoum**) Former Vice-President George Kongor confirmed conflicts within the ruling party and disclosed the formation of a new political party vowing to support peace in the Sudan

Former Vice-President of the Republic and current Chairman of the newly-formed African National Congress (ANC) Lt-Gen George Kongor Arop confirmed conflicts within the ruling National Congress Party (NCP) and especially conflict over NCP’s southern forum which led him and a group of southerners to defect from the NCP.

In a press conference to launch the ANC, Arop said they tried to correct mistakes in the NCP but their attempts went unheeded.

"We made a press statement on 12 July 2005 but the NCP leadership intentionally ignored our demands, therefore we suspended our activity in the NCP on 5 September 2005, with only three choices left, either to abandon politics, join other parties or establish an independent party, and we chose the latter," Arop disclosed.

Arop added that the party will be dedicated to protection of the peace agreement and will hold no disagreement with any party who supports the agreement and has principles and a vision for resolving Sudan’s problems.

"Ours is a party that stands against armed militias," Arop responded to a query on whether his party had armed militias.

The matter of militias is settled by the peace agreement which allows them to either join the SPLA or the government forces, including Popular Defence Forces, he explained.

He stressed that his party adheres to the Abyei report in its final form.

"NCP rejection of Abyei report will lead us back to square one," he added.

Arop announced that he supports any settlement to the Darfur question at the Abuja talks, but in case the talks failed, he said he would support international intervention to settle the problem.



He called upon the Sudanese to settle their problems by themselves, because stubbornness brings international intervention.

He dismissed the recent Arab summit as a useless ceremony as many an Arab summit before had pledged financial support for Sudan and nothing materialized.

"My relationship with Hassan Turabi is a political rather a personal one and Turabi was not behind my appointment as vice-president of the Sudan as much as he was not the reason of my defection from the NC," stated Arop.

"Our constitution is at variance with that of Turabi's Popular National Congress Party and our party, whose objective is democracy, is governed by the constitution," Arop said.