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UN

Annan to Bush: Help stop murder, rape in Darfur

(*Reuters/ST* – 12th Feb. **United Nations**) Secretary-General Kofi Annan intends to ask President George W. Bush on Monday what the United States can contribute to a mobile U.N. force to stop the killings, rape and pillaging in Sudan's Darfur region.

The United States has offered military planners for the Darfur operation, which will arrive on Monday. But it has made no offer of air coverage or other assistance for the venture, expected to be comprised mainly of African and Asian troops, who form the bulk of all U.N. forces.

At issue is a transfer of command from an under funded African Union force of 7,000 monitors and troops in Darfur to U.N. peacekeepers, a move U.S. Ambassador John Bolton promoted in the Security Council last week by drafting a statement asking the world body to begin contingency planning.

Annan said Darfur's plight, which the United States has characterized as genocide, was too dire for rich nations to pay but not participate in the mission, which will increase the \$5 billion spent on peacekeeping last year.

"It is not going to be easy for the big and powerful countries with armies to delegate to third world countries. They will have to play a part if we are going to stop the carnage that we see in Darfur," Annan told reporters on Thursday.

Asked if Bush would be asked to participate, Annan said, "I will share with him the facts that I have shared with you, the needs that we have, and the countries that I think can supply those needs, and that will include the U.S."

Annan said he envisioned a highly-mobile force with APCs and jeeps and air support that "would be able to be on the ground when there is an SOS — not to arrive after the harm has been done."

The United Nations has a peacekeeping operation in southern Sudan of about 7,000 troops to help keep the peace after a nearly three-decade old civil war.

That operation is also short of resources, with Russia only last week having approved 200 soldiers and four Mi-8 military transport helicopters, which the chief U.N. envoy in Sudan, Jan Pronk, had said were delayed for a year and greatly hindered the mobility of that mission.

Annan also plans to meet U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on a host of issues, his office said.

Sen. Joseph Biden, a Delaware Democratic, suggested last week that NATO contribute to the operation.

"NATO is already helping the AU with airlift support and training," Biden wrote in the Baltimore Sun. "We should increase NATO's presence by deploying a few thousand NATO troops to work side by side with AU forces."

But the Sudan government would probably turn down any force under a NATO flag.

CPA

Vraalsen: We strongly believe in parties commitments to CPA

(*Sudan Vision, Akhbar Alyaum, Rai AlShaab* – 13th Feb. **Khartoum**) The Assessment and Evaluation Commission (AEC) Chairman expressed yesterday the strong belief in the durability in CPA and the strong commitment of the parties to it.

"Otherwise, if it had been different, I wouldn't have been sitting here," said AEC Chairman Ambassador Tom in a press conference yesterday, adding that (If I didn't believe in it, I would simply have stayed back home).

The AEC have been formed by a Presidential Decree on October 30, 2005 and is comprised of 13 members, 3 from NCP, 3 from SPLA, 1 from UK, US, Netherlands, Italy, Kenya, Ethiopia and Norway, in addition to four observers from the AU, EU, Arab League and the UN.

According to Ambassador Vraalsen, the UN has not appointed an observer in the AEC up to now. Vraalsen also accused the UN Mission in Sudan of transcending its peacekeeping mandate and deviating to "another path" (the source, *Rai AlShaab* daily, does not elaborate). In the same vein, the article *AlAdhwa* on the same issue says: "Vraalsen lamented the fact that the UN has avoided representation in the membership of the Commission".

The Commission's Rules of Procedure, which will govern its work in accordance with the Presidential Decree, have been forwarded to the Presidency for approval. Same time the commission has adopted a work plan for the period from January-June 2006 establishing four working groups based on the structure of the CPA (power -sharing, wealth-sharing, security arrangements and the three areas). The commission priority areas are: The Petroleum Commission, Abuja, The Census, the establishment of the Joint Integrated Units, Monitoring the disbursements versus the pledges and new commitments made by the international community and as the implementation of the CPA is an ongoing process; the AEC shall be ready to respond to any situation which might require its attention. He added that the work of the Commission is one main goal that is to promote unity in Sudan.

The Commission will soon move into its own offices building in Khartoum and also ambassador Vaarsen will be travelling soon to Juba to discuss with the government of South Sudan where to establish office in Juba. "It is very important for the Commission to be present both in Khartoum and Juba" said the Chairman stressing on the importance of the Petroleum Commission adding that "oil is central to the implementation of the CPA.

We have all seen statements lately which give the impression that there are significant differences between the parties concerning various aspects on matters related to oil" he stated, pointing out that any differences in this area need to be overcome. Light was also focused on the importance of the Border Commission, which has been established, and members appointed but not yet functioning. The issue of the census was also raised by the AEC Chairman because according to CPA it should be finalized by the end of the second

year of the CPA and the elections to be held before the end of the third year of the interim period.

"Needless to say that the work on the census goes ahead with full speed because the census is essential to holding the elections" said ambassador Vaarlsen.

The AEC will monitor very closely the way the International community honour their pledges in be held in March 9 - 10, 2006 organized by the World Bank which will look at if the donor community have lived-up to the pledges they made in Oslo in 2005, "This is a matter which the AEC will engage itself in" said Tom Vaarlsen.

Most of the Commissions required by CPA have been established but many of them are not yet operational, a situation that needs to be addressed, said AEC commission chairman, adding that "we are also looking forward for the establishment of the Land and the Human Rights Commissions, bearing in mind that we are well in the first year of the Interim Period".

But what Ambassador Tom Vaarlsen stressed on several times was that AEC mechanism in solving any problem and difficulties in the implementation of CPA is dialogue specially that the highest authority, "the Presidency of the Republic had repeatedly reassured me that they are committed to the implementation of CPA, and I have no reason to doubt that they are committed."

Government of National Unity

Sudan says satisfied with donors funding to peace projects

(*ST, Khartoum Monitor* – 13th Feb. **Khartoum**) The Sudanese cabinet chaired by president Omer al-Bashir, has expressed its satisfaction over the size of the funding extended by the donors in the context of their commitments which they have declared at Oslo Donors' Conference in last April.

The extended funds reached till now 146 million dollars, out of 500 million dollars, which were pledged by the donors in Oslo Conference.

The Council of Ministers reviewed a report of the Joint Assessment Mission (JAM) on the programme for implementing the Sudan rehabilitation document by the government and Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM).

Also, the cabinet went over the volume of projects' implementation in the past period, the mechanisms which were laid down by the JAM for restoration of confidence and cooperation between Sudan and the international community, toward attracting funding for development and services' projects in the year 2006.

The Cabinet also got acquainted with the preparations which were made for convening the Conference of Donors in Paris on March 10.

Lam Akol says AU has not asked the Security Council to intervene in Darfur

(*AlAyaam* – 13th Feb. **Khartoum**) Foreign minister Lam Akol says the AU has not requested the Security Council to intervene in Darfur.

Akol who was speaking to *AlJazeera* yesterday pointed out that the last meeting of the AU Peace and Security Council held in Addis Ababa decided that the mandate of the AU forces in Darfur but had a problem with funding for these forces. Consequently, among the proposed alternatives was UN funding and supervision.

He further pointed out that an agreement has been reached to defer discussions on this issue to the next AU Peace and Security Council meeting that takes place in Addis Ababa by the end of March.

This dispels earlier reports from the western press that the AU had informed the Security Council of its consent to an AMIS-UN transition.

Meanwhile the US and some western states that support such a transition are mustering support for the transition to a UN operation with large logistics support and capability.

President Bush of the USA and UN's Koffi Annan are also expected to meet in Washington today to discuss issues along this line and Bush is expected to pledge commitments to a UN military operation in Darfur.

Salva Kiir: Cooperation to Implement CPA Intact

(*Sudan Vision* – 13th Feb. **Khartoum**) First Vice President, Salva Kiir Mayardit affirmed that cooperation between himself and President Al Bashir, and Vice President Ali Osman Mohammad Taha to turn the peace agreement into tangible reality is intact.

Kiir expressed his appreciation of the developing Sudanese-Egyptian relations, adding that he would visit Egypt shortly. According to press reports, the First Vice President would lead on Wednesday an SPLM delegation to Abuja where he would meet with the Nigerian President, Obasanjo, Chief AU mediator, International partners and the Government and Armed Movements delegations to the Talks to be acquainted with the Talks progress. On the other hand, in an interview with the Egyptian *Al-Ahram Daily*, Kiir denied that SPLM has abandoned its 'united new Sudan' project, affirming that SPLM will practice political activity country-wide. Kiir said he was not worried about differences of views within the movement since, according to him, that reflects real democracy. The First Vice President said he expects that parties to the Abuja talks would soon reach a peaceful solution to which SPLM would contribute and commended the role Egypt is playing in the development of South Sudan. On the statements Garang widow, Rebecca recently made in Washington, accusing Sudan government of procrastination as to the implementation of peace agreement, Kiir said he was not informed about these statements, adding that Rebecca is visiting Washington as was planned by South Sudan Government. The First Vice President called on donors to meet the Oslo obligations, in addition to calling on Arab companies to increase their investments in Sudan. In another development, the President of the Republic and his two vice presidents held a closed meeting yesterday to evaluate the implementation status of the peace agreement, a move initiated by the Presidency of the Republic. The meeting, which comes in a series of others to follow, reviewed reports on the implementation of CPA in the newly established States of Unity, Blue Nile and South Kordofan. According to reports, the meeting was followed by another with the National Commission assigned the assessment of post-war needs. The projects of the commission and donors' fulfillment of their obligations were also reviewed at the meeting.

Rebecca Garang: I was a secessionist

(*AlRai AlAam* – 13th Feb. **Khartoum**) Speaking to NBR radio, USA, the wife of late Vice-president Garang disclosed of her secessionist past.

Rebecca Garang said that her husband was on the other hand a unionist and was fighting for the whole of the Sudan. She said she once asked him whether his unionist tendencies would allow him to live with a secessionist and he answered, “Yes”.

Mrs. Garang pointed out that her visit to Washington was to remind the west of its pledges made following the signing of the CPA and to draw some attention to southern Sudan.

She said the implementation of the CPA was proceeding at a slow pace and accused the SPLM’s partners in government of withholding information that might have otherwise speed up the implementation of the protocols on wealth sharing.

“There is something they are hiding that they do not want to let us know. We have asked them about the volume of oil production and the revenues thereof and how the same is distributed but do not get answers to these questions”.

Hamas says to visit Russia in near future

(*Reuters/ST* – 12th Feb. **Khartoum**) Hamas delegates will travel to Russia in the near future for talks with Moscow, a leader of the Islamic militant group that won last month’s Palestinian election said on Sunday.

Khaled Meshaal, visiting the Sudanese capital Khartoum, also said representatives of Hamas would attend a summit of Arab leaders next month to ask for support for the new Palestinian leadership.

Meshaal called on the international community to respect the democratic vote of the Palestinian people to elect Hamas, a group Washington lists as a terrorist organisation.

"We will in the near future travel to Russia at the invitation of the Russian leadership," Meshaal told reporters on arrival in Sudan, which is on Washington’s list of states that sponsor terror.

The invitation from Russia — part of the Quartet including the European Union, United States and United Nations mediating the Middle East peace process — surprised Western governments who have ruled out talks with Hamas until it renounces violence and recognises Israel’s right to exist.

"We ask the international community to respect the results of this democratic vote," Meshaal said. "The Palestinian people have chosen and it’s now up to you to respect their choice."

Khartoum will host the Arab League summit next month and Meshaal said Hamas would attend and ask Arab leaders to support the newly-elected Palestinian leadership.

The Palestinian government is heavily dependent on European and U.S. aid. U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice has threatened to withhold aid unless Hamas recognises Israel.

Hamas has carried out more than 60 suicide bombings against Israeli targets since an uprising began in 2000 against Israeli occupation of land Palestinians want for a state.

Hamas leaders have often been the target of Israeli assassination attempts. Meshaal lives in exile in Syria.

Court sentences 3, acquits 18 others on sabotage charges

(*AlRai AlAam* – 13th Feb. **Khartoum**) The special military tribunal looking into the case of the suspects to the foiled attempt at sabotage has sentenced three suspects to prison and dismissal from Armed Forces and acquitted 18 others for lack of insufficient evidence.

The three, two captains and one lieutenant, were each sentenced to 10 years imprisonment and dismissal from the Armed Forces.

Darfur/ Chad

Government reserved over proposal by mediators on ceasefire arrangements

(*AlRai AlAam* – 13th Feb. **Abuja**) The government delegation to the Abuja talks has expressed reserve over a proposal by mediators to the Security Arrangements Committee on the humanitarian ceasefire arrangements and have requested amendments.

The delegation of the rebel groups have however described the proposals as “good” and said it allows them to participate in the protection of the IDP camps including those in government-held territories.

On power sharing, a member of the JEM team said that the delegation of the rebel groups have called upon the government to take decisions with regards the representation of the people of Darfur in the civil service. He pointed out that the government position on power sharing must be consolidated with figures on percentages and timetables to be implemented. He called upon the government to benefit from past experiences like the South Africa and Nigerian experiences.

Darfur movements welcome Salva Kiir’s impending visit to Abuja

(*AlAyaam* – 13th Feb. **Khartoum**) The SLM and the JEM have welcomed Vice-president Salva Kiir’s impending visit to the venue of the peace talks in Abuja and said the government delegation to the talks lacks the mandate to enable them give impetus to the Abuja talks.

JEM Spokesperson Issam-el-deen el-Haj said the JEM and the SLM welcome such a visit by the Vice-president and urge him to play a positive role to bolster the negotiations process and “inject some life into the SPLM delegation that was physically presence at the venue but is absent in substance.”

3 killed in raid on water source in Darfur

(*AlRai AlAam* - **Khartoum**) About 80 armed men in horse and camel-back raided a major water hole in Doumiya in South Darfur killing 3, injuring 3 others who were rushed to hospital and looted 320 heads of livestock.

Residents of the area managed to recover about 100 heads of cattle yesterday following the raid that occurred last Saturday when the livestock was being driven to the water hole to drink.

Chad rebel leader demands change, by force if needed

(*Reuters/ST* – 12th Feb. **Sudan-Chad border**) Confident and relaxed, the leader of the insurgents trying to topple the Chadian president says well-armed defectors are flocking to his remote camps on the Sudanese border and are eager to take power.

In his first interview with a Western journalist, Mahamat Nour said his forces are now "eight times stronger" than when they attacked the Chad border town of Adre in December, a raid he describes as a test run.

A stocky man with a commanding presence and an organised mind, Nour, 35, comes from a family that has played a key role in making and breaking Chad's leaders over the past two decades.

His father, the head of a powerful east Chadian tribe, helped launch both the coup that brought President Idriss Deby to power in 1990 and that of his predecessor Hissene Habre.

Many of the area's tribes span the long and porous border, making it almost impossible to differentiate nationalities.

Nour himself is fluent in Arabic, French and his native tribal language Tama, speaking each with a slight stutter.

His desert bases are well defended. A jolting three-hour drive on dirt tracks through Sudan's Darfur region brings the visitor to a narrow opening between two hills, where vehicles full of armed men appear from nowhere and surround the car.

From the French spoken by the men in new green uniforms, it is clear this is one of the insurgents' camps.

Both Deby and Nour know this rocky terrain well from the days when coups were planned here. Sudan's western Darfur region is now in the throes of its own civil war.

Nour left Deby's government in 1994, disillusioned with what he calls Deby's "autocratic and corrupt ways." Since then he has remained in opposition, spending time in Khartoum and other African capitals.

Nour has said he has offered Deby a final chance to accept a national forum to discuss democratic change or face removal by force.

"No one wants a war, but if that's the only way, we will go to Chad," he said.

His ambitions have fuelled tension between Sudan and Chad and prompted Deby to declare a "state of belligerence" with Sudan, which he has accused of supporting Nour.

Last week the two states' presidents agreed at a mini-summit in Tripoli to ban insurgents from setting up bases in each country, but the border is remote and largely unsupervised.

Nour said December's failed attack on Adre was a test run and, with deserters arriving every day including high-level government officials, he now had thousands of troops.

Truckloads of young men and supplies, including brand new weapons, were arriving every day at the well-secured camp. Heavy weapons including rocket and mortar launchers were out of sight just beyond the deceptively simple entry checkpoint of a branch and two stones. There appeared to be no shortage of funds.

Chadian Colonel Ahmed Youssef Bishara, one of a group of senior officers who deserted recently and came to the rebel camp, said he was surprised at the strength of Nour's forces.

"There's not been anything as big as this in all my experience," he said. "Here we have many heavy weapons and many troops — much more than Deby had."

Bishara said he had some 1,800 troops in southern Chad near the border and was ready to join Nour's ranks to oust Deby.

"Deby has taken the money from the Chadian people — now we want freedom," said Bishara, a tall, sinewy figure wearing dark glasses and green army uniform.

"We have people in the high ranks with us. When Deby is sleeping we know what he just ate for dinner," he said with a grin.

Colonel Bishara Moussa Farid, who took part in peacekeeping operations in Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), has also turned on Deby.

"He accused me of attempting a coup and imprisoned me for six months," said Farid, 52, a veteran who took part in the coups which installed both Deby and his predecessor Hissene Habre in power in N'Djamena.

"These troops here are much better off than the previous resistances," he said. "We didn't have equipment and heavy weapons as we do now," he added.

Some members of the opposition groups that signed an agreement in December to form the United Front for Democratic Change said there were doubts over whether Nour was strong enough to unite them.

"Everywhere in the world there are problems like this," was Nour's reply. "But I can say that as of today, it's all going well."

Nour and his troops were confident of success. "We will invite you to N'Djamena when we arrive," he said, laughing with his officers.

Sudan's Darfur peace talks in Slovenia postponed indefinitely

(ST – 12th Feb. **Ljubljana, Slovenia**) Peace talks between the warring sides in the Sudanese region of Darfur, scheduled to take place on Monday and Tuesday in Slovenia, have been postponed indefinitely, the office of President Janez Drnovsek told the Slovene state-run STA on Sunday.

According to the president's office, the sides set conditions for the level of the meeting, making it impossible to stage such a meeting that would lead to the initialling or signing of a peace agreement.

Moreover, officials in the president's office explained that it was obvious the participants were pressured not to take part in the meeting.

There was obvious pressure from a number of international organizations, the office explained, adding that representatives of the United Nations also failed to show much enthusiasm for helping to bring about the meeting.

The pressure on the warring sides included threats that their participation in negotiations in Slovenia could endanger the Abuja peace process, the office added.

The peace talks in Slovenia are by no means an attempt to undermine the Abuja peace process, Drnovsek's office underscored. There was no point in pushing ahead with a meeting for which not enough readiness was shown, the office said.

However, the office believes that there is not much time to lose now, so as not to relinquish the fresh impetus injected in the Darfur peace process by Drnovsek's peace plan, which was met with wide approval from the warring sides.

According to Drnovsek's aides, additional diplomatic efforts are needed to ensure that a meeting takes place in Slovenia in the near future.

The doubters will have to be convinced that this is a genuine effort to achieve peace and offer humanitarian assistance to Darfur, the office said, adding that the president was ready to keep up his efforts.

The announcement comes after Drnovsek revealed earlier this week that his proposed peace plan for Darfur would likely lead to a round of peace talks in Slovenia.

The meeting was first expected to be held at the weekend, but Drnovsek told the BBC World Service Radio on Saturday that talks were scheduled for Monday and Tuesday.

Drnovsek outlined this week an upgraded, 16-point peace agreement to the Sudanese government and three leading rebel groups in Darfur: the Sudanese Liberation Army, the Justice and Equality Movement and the Sudan Liberation Movement.

Sudan briefly detains NYT journalists near Chad

(*Reuters/ST* – 10th Feb. **Sudan-Chad border**) Sudan briefly detained two U.S. journalists and their Chadian translator on Friday near the Chad border, where tensions between the two countries have flared in recent weeks.

"We were detained for questioning for about ... four hours. We are now across the border in Chad and are making our way to Adre," New York Times journalist Lydia Polgreen, told Reuters, adding she was traveling with a photographer and translator.

The newspaper in the United States identified the photographer as Michael Kamber. "She's acknowledged that they were treated well," New York Times spokesman Toby Usnik said after the newspaper spoke to Polgreen.

The Sudanese authorities are very sensitive to foreign media coverage in Darfur. Foreign journalists have previously been detained there. They are usually held only for a few hours before being released without charge.

There was no immediate comment from Sudan on the latest incident.

Tensions flared between Sudan and Chad after Chadian rebels attacked the Chadian town of Adre in December. Chad accuses Sudan of backing the rebels.

Sudan has also accused Chad of backing Sudanese rebels in its western Darfur region, where a three year rebellion against the Khartoum government has made 2 million people homeless and sparked a humanitarian crisis.

On Wednesday, Chadian President Idriss Deby and Sudanese President Omar Hassan al-Bashir agreed to end their dispute after talks in the Libyan capital Tripoli.

The Chad-Sudan border is long and porous, with few official border crossing points.

Eastern Sudan

Eastern Front welcomes SPLM participation in talks

(*AlAyaam* – 13th Feb. **Khartoum**) The Eastern Front says the decision by the SPLM to participate in the forthcoming talks in Tripoli is welcome.

Amina Dhirar, a high rank official of the Eastern Front, said that the decision by the SPLM to field a team alongside the government delegation to the talks is a sure sign that the SPLM has got down to business in the country in order to bring peace in the conflict areas such as eastern Sudan.

She pointed out that the SPLM has strong ties and a good knowledge of the east.

Other developments

Egypt frees last Sudanese protestors

(*AlRai AlAam* – 12th Feb. **Cairo**) Egypt said Sunday it had freed the last 156 Sudanese who had been detained and threatened with expulsion after police brutally broke up a Cairo sit-in demanding resettlement.

The foreign ministry said in a statement that the Sudanese in the last batch to be released were not entitled to refugee status and were technically considered illegal immigrants in Egypt.

"But because the authorities care about their situation and want to keep those families united, it has been decided they would not be expelled," the statement said.

Thousands of riot police wielding batons and water canon broke up a three-month sit-in in central Cairo on December 30, killing at least 27 Sudanese refugees and asylum-seekers, including women and children.

More than 600 of them were detained and threatened with expulsion but the UN refugee agency had obtained from the Egyptian authorities that their cases be reviewed to determine who was entitled to international protection.

Several Sudanese families in Cairo still argue the death toll from the December 30 raid may have been higher and the government of south Sudan has demanded Egypt carry out a probe into the killings.

Campus violence

(*Khartoum Monitor* – 13th Feb. **Khartoum**) The ANF bloc of students of the University of Juba urged in a press conference Sunday that the GoSS order the return of the main campus back to Juba and condemned the building of lecture halls in their Khartoum campus saying that these had to be built in Juba instead.

The ANF says the university was relocated to Khartoum because of the war but has to be returned back now that the war is over.

This follows recent clashes that saw the university closed.