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HIGHLIGHTS:

UN

UN SG promises to have elements hindering implementation of UN resolutions in Darfur to be held accountable

(Al-Ayaam, 9 Jan, 06, Khartoum) The Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Kofi Annan, expressed concerns with regards to the incompleteness of arrival of overall peacekeeping forces to the Sudan, attributing delay to circumstances of countries sending troops. He also pointed out that the number of peacekeepers that have actually arrived in Sudan is 4091 soldiers, i.e. 40% of total proposed force.

Mr. Annan stated that 51 countries had sent peacekeeping forces to the Sudan, including China, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Rwanda, Kenya, Nepal, and India. He further expected volume of UN peacekeeping forces to reach 7,000 by current mid January, which would be considered far less than the required number. Therefore in this connection, he confirmed that delay in arrival of peacekeeping forces raises concerns, because the UN will not be able to fully deploy its military observers on timely basis.

UN SG promised that those who are hindering the implementation process of the Security Council's resolutions in Darfur will be subject to accountability. He also demanded increasing humanitarian assistance to Sudan, and at the same time, pointing out that the peace process in Sudan can not be inequitable and that peace must be done through out the country.

SRSJ Pronk expresses disappointment towards Abuja Talks results

(Al Rayaam, 9 Jan, 06, Khartoum) Abuja Talks was adjourned yesterday for a 5-day Eid's break in order to enable participants celebrate the occasion with their families and relatives.

SRSJ Jan Pronk, , expressed his disappointment towards failure to reaching agreement by the 31 December 2005. At the same time, he commended the actions taken by the GoS, as a result of which Police Form no. (8) has been declared inapplicable in re cases of rape and assault. However, he urged the GoS to disarm Janjaweed.

Government of National Unity

GoS demands international community to carry out commitments made towards peace

(Al-Ayaam, 9 Jan, 06, Khartoum) In a communiqué issued on the occasion of the first anniversary of signing the CPA, the Sudanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs expressed wishes that Sudan would be able to overcome current Darfur crisis, and called on the international community to see the implementation of its commitments made in relation to addressing post-war conditions in the Southern Sudan.

President Al-Bashir issues decree on re-formation of constitution commission

(SUNA, 9 Jan, Khartoum) President of the Republic, Field Marshal Omer Al Bashir, has issued a Republican Decree on reformation of the Constitution Commission. According to the Decree, the Commission is to revise the constitution regularly throughout the Interim Period and put into consideration viewpoints of political parties, civil organizations. The Decree stated that the commission will act under the President's supervision

Darfur:

DR Subcommittee & Darfur Network Sign Agreement

(BBC Monitoring, 8 Jan, Khartoum) Disarmament and reintegration DR subcommittee and Darfur network organizations signed memo of understanding today. The memo stipulates for building social integrity, provision of services for child woman in Darfur region.

The service should target those who were affected by war in the region. These two organizations have likely agreed to design development program in solidarity with donors as well.

The memo of understanding was signed by Dr. Sulaf Al Dein for DR and Hassan Bargo for Darfur network.

Northern Darfur Legislative will start Sessions on 23rd of current month

(BBC Monitoring, 8 Jan, Khartoum) Northern Darfur state legislative council announces it should start sessions on 23rd of the current month.

Legislative council acting house speaker Sidig Abdul Rasoul told (*smc*) that the council will start by holding hearing session on statement from governor of the state and ministers reports on activities and programs of their ministries.

Acting house speaker said the council top priority should concentrate on laws related organization of public affair and restoration of security in the state. The council composes of 70% seats obtained by national congress, 10 percent for SPLM and the remaining 20% of seats have gone to other political forces.

Ambush in Sudan's Darfur region kills Senegal peacekeeper, wounds nine

(AP, 8 Jan, Dakar)- Unidentified gunmen ambushed a Senegalese peacekeeping contingent in Sudan's troubled Darfur region, killing one Senegalese soldier and wounding nine more, an army spokesman said Sunday.

The attack occurred Friday near the border with Chad, said Senegal army spokesman Lt. Col. Antoine Wardini.

The troops were traveling in a convoy between the towns of Tine and Kulbus "when they got ambushed," Wardini said. "We fired back and the attackers pulled back and ran."

Wardini said peacekeeping reinforcements had been sent from Kulbus to secure the area. It was not known who carried out the attack, but an investigation was ongoing, he said.

Senegal has about 500 troops in the nearly 7,000-strong African Union peacekeeping mission in Sudan's western Darfur region.

The Darfur conflict began in February 2003 when rebel groups took up arms against the government, accusing it of neglect and repression of Sudanese of African origin.

The government is accused of supporting a counterinsurgency led by an Arab militia known as the Janjaweed, which has been blamed for widespread killing, rape and arson. The Sudanese government denies backing the Janjaweed.

The United Nations estimates that 180,000 people have died in the conflict, mainly through famine and disease. Several million more have fled their homes.

Tensions have also been rising between the governments of Chad and Sudan. Chad accuses Sudanese militia of launching cross-border attacks and alleges Sudan is backing Chadian rebels, while Sudan accuses Chad of supporting rebels in Darfur.

Sudan, Chad relations

Chad accuses Sudan militias of three attacks

(AFP, Jan 6, N'djamena) Chad accused Sudanese militias Friday of carrying out three attacks in the east of the country in which nine civilians were killed, in what the government said was a new act of "aggression".

"Sudanese militias attacked the locations of Borota, Ade and Moudaina in the region of Ouaddai yesterday, Thursday, killing nine and injuring three civilians seriously," the government said in a statement. It said that several head of cattle had been taken away by the attackers.

"These new criminal incursions show the obvious wish of the Khartoum government to pursue its aggression against Chad," the statement continued.

The Chadian government "calls on the African Union and the entire international community to accept their responsibilities in the face of this new aggression and the attempt to destabilise Chad conducted by the Sudanese government."

It "once again warns the Sudanese government against any unconsidered policy, as the aggressions by Sudanese militias cannot remain unpunished any longer."

Relations between the two neighbours have been tense for some weeks, with Chad accusing Sudan of backing rebels and defectors from President Idriss Deby's previous supporters.

The Chadian government declared a "state of war" with Sudan last month following a rebel attack on the border town of Adre claimed by the Rally for Democracy and Freedom (RDL), and has called for the African Union and international community to head off further escalation of the conflict.

Late Friday the Sudanese government accused Chad of attacking an African Union military unit, killing one, and of transgressing Sudanese airspace during the last three days.

A statement by General Al-Abbas Abdel Rahman al-Khalifa, the spokesman of the Sudanese armed forces, read on Sudan Television, said a Chadian armed unit made up of six vehicles and horses, at 11:00 local time Friday morning, attacked an African Union unit in an area between Kulbus and Jerjeirah. It had killed an AU soldier, wounded 10 others, seized an AU vehicle and drove back across the border into Chad, it said.

General Khalifa said a number of planes separately flew over towns in West and North Darfur states on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday.

The United Nations reported Thursday a troop buildup along the border between eastern Chad and Sudan's western Darfur province, saying it was reducing its mission in the region "due to the increasing instability in the affected areas."

East:

Some Biga Congress Members demand quit of six leaders from Organization

(BBC Monitoring, 7 Jan, Khartoum) A number of prominent leaders from Biga congress inside outside the country have blasted the current organization leadership and demanded being sacked and replaced by new leadership for they have committed a number of violations such as withdrew from Libya negotiation without further consultation. In statement issued by the protesting group and obtained by (smc) that congress leadership violates regulation of the organization. The group says formation of delegation to Libya was selected without following up the regulations of the organization.

It was noted that the current leadership composed of Abdallah Kona, Amna Dirar, Abdallah Musa, Ali Al Safi, Salah Barkiwain and Idris Mohammed Nur.

Other Developments

Kiir congratulates SPLA & SSDF forces for merger

(Khartoum Monitor, 9 Jan, 06, Khartoum) First Vice President and President of the GoSS, Lt. Gen. Salva Kiir, congratulated SPLA and South Sudan Defence Forces (SSDF) for reaching an agreement to merge into a single force under the SPLA. Mr. Kiir said this in his address after a communiqué, known as "Juba Declaration on Unity and Integration of SPLA and SSDF" concluded after three-day South-South Dialogue, was issued yesterday.

New SSDF Leadership May Declare Today

(BBC Monitoring, 8 Jan, Khartoum) It was reported that more than 20 southern factions should hold meeting during which they would declare new leadership for Southern Sudan Defence Forces SSDF.

SSDF commander for Bahr Al Ghazal section Gen Tom Al Nur Tom said he was expecting election on Gen Gordon Wang Shol to replace the current SSDF leader Gen Fawlino Matab. A statement signed by Gordon Wang was dispatched stating that Matab was in differences with leaders of 20 southern factions on agendas of negotiation with SPLM. The statement said that these factions have prepared agendas similar to those discussed in Nairobi with SPLM however the statement said Matab was against Nairobi agendas.

Garang helicopter crash parts sent to US for testing

(AFP, Jan 9, 2006, Kampala) The team investigating the helicopter crash that killed Sudan's former first vice president John Garang at the end of July last year, has sent parts of the helicopter wreckage to the U.S. for testing.

John Nasasira, Uganda's minister of works, transport and communication, was quoted by the state-owned newspaper, the New Vision, as saying on Monday that the parts of the wreckage are being tested in the United States.

"We did not have local capacity to test that equipment to get the best results. Those tests are necessary," Nasasira said.

Last September, some of the equipment was flown to Russia for analysis to determine the cause of the accident. The helicopter was manufactured in Russia.

Nasasira said the probe team would resume work in the second week of February. The probe team comprises of more than 10 technical investigators from Uganda, Sudan, Kenya, the U.S. and the Sudanese People's Liberation Army/Movement (SPLM).

Preliminary reports from the probe team indicated no foul play in the crash that killed 14 people on board despite many conspiracy theories being advanced.

Reports said that once the team resumes work, a four-member team representing Sudan, Uganda, Kenya and the United States would immediately begin questioning some 35 persons from Uganda, Russia and the SPLM, including Garang's widow Rebecca over the crash.

John Garang, who was also the head of the SPLM, died on his way to southern Sudan from Uganda after paying a visit to Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni.

He died in a Ugandan presidential helicopter when it crashed in southern Sudan on July 30, 2005.

Sudan peace still fragile year after north-south deal

(AFP, 8 Jan, Khartoum) - A year after it was signed, Sudan's north-south peace agreement that ended more than two decades of war has overcome several obstacles but is still threatened on several fronts, analysts say.

A north reluctant to loosen its grip on power, a south already leaning towards independence, other conflicts in the west and east and a lack of international commitment are only some of the perils the agreement faces. On January 9, 2005, Sudanese President Omar al-Beshir's Islamist regime and the mainly Christian southern rebels signed a peace deal that put an end to a war that lasted 21 years, killed 1.5 million people and displaced four million.

"There have been some achievements in the implementation of the deal: its key institutions have been set up despite delays and its main actors have managed to avoid major divisions so far," analyst Mohammed Mahjoub Haroun said.

"But there is still a long way to go to develop a political culture and move away from the context of war," said Haroun, who heads an independent Sudanese think tank. Joint commissions have been created and a national unity government including the ruling National Congress and the former rebels of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement sworn in on September 22.

But the fledgling peace agreement still faces sporadic violence and the huge challenges of reconstruction, mine-clearance and mass repatriation.

"One of the most worrisome things is the systematic effort on the part of the National Congress party to delay the implementation of the agreement," said analyst David Mozersky, from the International Crisis Group (ICG).

Beshir, who seized power in a 1989 military coup, has a tiny support base and has to open up the political arena to competition and relinquish any control on the country's oil bounty.

"The facade of shared governance masks the ruthless preservation of power by the" Islamic regime, US-based Sudan analyst Eric Reeves wrote in a recent commentary.

But the SPLM's contribution to the momentum of the peace deal has also fallen short of expectations.

"The south is more worried about its future independence than preserving a united Sudan," Haroun, of The Future Trends Foundation for Strategic Studies and Dialogue, based in Khartoum, said.

He was referring to a referendum on self-determination due to be held in six years.

The death of the SPLM's historical leader John Garang in a July helicopter crash also dealt a serious blow to a peace process he had come to symbolise.

The lack of charisma and credibility of his successor Salva Kiir has left the SPLM's different factions struggling to outline a clear vision and oversee its metamorphosis from a rebel group to ruling political party.

Ongoing civil strife in the western region of Darfur and the looming threat of a conflagration in the eastern provinces have also contributed to the fragility of the north-south peace deal.

In a report released this week on the so-called eastern front, ICG deplored that the January 9 deal did not seek to defuse these other powder kegs.

"Maybe Darfur and the East should be brought within the framework of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement," Haroun said.

But analysts also blamed the international community for failing to stand by its commitments and letting Africa's largest country run the risk of sinking back into conflict.

Mozersky took to task foreign powers for their "lack of visible engagement to be the guarantors of the peace process."

The African Union, which deployed close to 7,000 troops in Darfur in 2005, took much flak for failing to stabilise the area, where an estimated 300,000 people have died and 2.4 million been displaced.

"But the UN Security Council fell short by passing resolutions and holding nobody accountable. The US labeled Darfur genocide but then did very little about it," Mozersky argued.

Clandestine nuclear deals traced to Sudan - The Guardian

(The Guardian, Jan 5, 2005 London) — International investigators and western intelligence have for the first time named Sudan as a major conduit for sophisticated engineering equipment that could be used in nuclear weapons programmes. Hundreds of millions of pounds of equipment was imported into the African country over a three-year period before the 9/11 attacks in New York and Washington in 2001 and has since disappeared, according to Guardian sources.

Western governments, UN detectives and international analysts trying to stem the illicit trade in weapons of mass destruction technology are alarmed by the black market trade.

A European intelligence assessment obtained by the Guardian says Sudan has been using front companies and third countries to import machine tools, gauges and hi-tech processing equipment from Western Europe for its military industries in recent years. But it says that Sudan is also being used as a conduit, as much of the equipment is too sophisticated for use in the country itself.

"The suspicion arises that at least some of the machinery was not destined for or not only destined for Sudan," the assessment says. "Among the equipment purchased by Sudan there are dual-use goods whose use in Sudan appears implausible because of their high technological standard."

Western analysts and intelligence agencies suspect the equipment has been or is being traded by the nuclear proliferation racket headed by the Pakistani scientist Abdul Qadeer Khan, who admitted nuclear trading two years ago and is under house arrest in Islamabad.

Khan is known to have visited Sudan at least once between 1998 and 2002, and the suspicion is he may have used the country as a warehouse for the hi-tech engineering equipment he was selling to Libya, Iran and North Korea for the assembly of centrifuges for enriching uranium, the most common way of building a nuclear bomb.

Sudan has been ravaged by internal conflicts for decades, and has until recently been governed by an Islamist regime.

Analysts point out that a "failing state" such as Sudan is an ideal candidate for the illicit trading.

David Albright, who is investigating the various players in the Khan network and tracks nuclear proliferation for the Washington-based Institute for Science and International Security, said about £20m worth of dual-use engineering equipment was imported by Sudan between 1999 and 2001.

The purchases were denominated in German marks (before the introduction of the euro), suggesting that at least some of the equipment came from Germany.

Investigators say the machinery has not been found in Sudan. Nor has it been found in Libya, since Tripoli gave up its secret nuclear bomb project in December 2003. Given Osama bin Laden's long relationship with Sudan, where he lived before moving to Afghanistan, there had been suspicions of al-Qaida involvement. But the goods have not been found in Afghanistan either.

"A huge amount of dual-use equipment was bought by Sudan and people don't know where it went to," Mr Albright said. "It's a big mystery. The equipment has not been found anywhere."

A senior international investigator confirmed that Sudan had been importing the material and that the transports had ceased in 2001.

"No one now seems to be buying to that extent," he said. "Perhaps the activity stopped because they got all that they needed."

While the Khan operation is a main suspect, Iran is also suspected of being behind the Sudanese dealings.

"There is the Khan network and then there is a much bigger network in this, and that is the Iranian network," the investigator said.

Yesterday, the Guardian reported that the same European intelligence assessment - which draws on material gathered by British, French, German and Belgian agencies - concluded that the Iranian government had been successfully scouring Europe for the sophisticated equipment needed to build a nuclear bomb.

Western intelligence and Mr Albright identified a state-owned firm in Khartoum as a "pivotal organisation" in Sudan's procurement of weapons and dual-use technology in eastern and Western Europe and Russia.

The named company has offices in Tehran, Moscow, Sofia, Istanbul and Beijing. According to the European intelligence assessment, the company "is cooperating intensively with Iran".

"It is striking," says the document, "that [the company's] partners are enterprises subordinate to Iran's Defence Industries Organisation. Technology transfer between these two states and links between their programmes cannot be ruled out."

While the machinery was dual-use, meaning that it could be used in civil or military applications, Mr Albright said he understood the equipment was "nuclear-related".

"For the people following this, the interest is whether it's nuclear. The assumption is it is."

The likelihood that the machinery was for Sudan is slim, say experts and investigators.

"The idea that Sudan could buy and make use of extremely sophisticated nuclear technology is obviously a question mark," said Jon Wolfsthal, a nuclear proliferation expert at Washington's Centre for Strategic and International Studies.

Sudan is known to have a small civilian nuclear programme, researching nuclear medicine, radiological safety and food irradiation techniques.

Never before has it been suspected of involvement in nuclear weapons research, however. It signed the nuclear non-proliferation treaty in 2004.

Ex Lost boy Jal performs at UN's CPA celebrations

(Khartoum Monitor, 9 Jan, 06, Khartoum) UNMIS is today Monday celebrating the first anniversary of eth CPA in the Nubian Club. UN commemoration is aimed at promoting a sense of unity and teamwork through colour, movement, song, and dance.

The event includes musical and dance performances from some Sudanese prominent artists including Emmanuel Jal and Abdel Gadir Salim.