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**(By Public Information Office)**

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## **HIGHLIGHTS:**

### **UN**

#### **Sudan Permanent Mission to UN in New York: Pronk's report neglects positive developments in Darfur**

*(Al Sahafa, 16 Jan, Khartoum)* The Sudan Permanent Mission to the UN-New York said that the report on Darfur submitted by SRSG Pronk to the Security Council neglected several positive aspects of Darfur issue that took place during last period of time, and that the report reflected an opaque image about the situation in Darfur.

Positive aspects neglected are said to be –according to SUNA – achievements reached during previous rounds of talks in Abuja such as agreement on Declaration of Principles, current talks on wealth sharing, power sharing, and security arrangements.

### **Government of National Unity**

#### **Al Bashir expresses confidence in AU**

*(Khartoum Monitor, 16 Jan, Khartoum)* President Omar Hassan Al Bashir confirmed at a forum of African Universities held Saturday confidence in the African Union (AU) as a peace broker in the war-stricken Darfur region.

Meanwhile, the Sudanese government voice regret over some African countries support for the UN's proposal regarding deployment of a 20,000 member strong international force in Darfur. The Government favours continuation of the AU's mandate in Darfur but demands the international community to extend a helping hand to bridge the logistical and financial gap in order to enhance the AU's military job in Darfur.

The Government disclosed a proposal it presented to the AU suggesting formation of a joint force from the Armed Forces, Darfur Armed Movements, and the AU in a bid to rein in rogue militias.

Foreign Minister, Dr. Lam Akol termed the UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan's statement to replace the AU's troops as premature saying that if an amount of US\$ 160 million was not forthcoming, the government would have several alternatives to discuss with the AU, to continue with its mandate up to December 2006.

### **Governmental Official/Leader calls for driving Pronk out of Sudan**

*(Alwan, 16 Jan, Khartoum)* In a reaction – which is deemed the most aggressive so far – uttered as a result of the report submitted by SRSR Pronk to the Security Council on Darfur crisis; Alsmeeh Alsideeq, Minister of State at the federal Investment Ministry and Darfuri/National Congress Party's outstanding leader, described the situation as being a “plunge/fall” of Pronk that does not bear resemblance to neither his position nor the UN.

In addition, Alsideeq added that Mr. Pronk deserves to be driven out of the Sudan, because he provided the Security Council with inaccurate and irresponsible information about Darfur, and that he made allegations that are not even claimed by the rebels themselves. At the same time, he asked Pronk to provide evidence in support of his allegations in regard to the said 500 to 1000 militia men on backs of camels and horses who came to rape and kill people in villages on monthly basis; otherwise he should be taken to be held accountable before courts of law.

### **Darfur:**

#### **Northern Darfur State rejects foreign intervention**

*(Al-Rayaam, 16 Jan, Khartoum)* The Sudanese President, Omar Al-Bashir, criticised what he has called the “hidden hands” that are scheming to see to the intervention of foreign forces in Darfur, reconfirming, at the same time, his government's full trust in the African Union capability to settle Darfur issue.

Meanwhile, the Government of the State of North Darfur declared state of general emergency, called for public mobilisation and explained that will organize a public protest during coming days in Fashir against foreign intervention in Sudan, particularly after the SRSR Pronk's request to have 20,000 international troops for Darfur.

In addition, the State's government - during a meeting attended by Al-Wali (the Governor) of North Darfur, his government's members, and the Security Committee – condemned the Armed Groups for welcoming the proposal of foreign intervention in the region.

#### **Bar Association rejects foreign intervention in Darfur**

*(Akhbar Al-Yaum, 16 Jan, Khartoum)* The Sudanese Bar Association – during its extraordinary meeting - declared its rejection to any move for having foreign/international forces deployed in Darfur, or extension of AU life-span in Darfur after the completion of duration of its tasks in forthcoming March.

#### **Sudanese Students' General Union warns American against involvement in Darfur**

(*Alwatan, 16 Jan, Khartoum*) The Sudanese Students' General Union declared its rejection to the UN Secretary-General's proposal on replacement of the AU's forces by UN forces to be headed by the USA. The union described such a proposal as being a play that lacks the simplest form of credibility. Further, it called on Mr. Kofi Annan and the US to fulfil their commitments made in relation to provision of logistical support to the AU forces, altogether with food, and medications.

### **Contemplations on the UN and Darfur**

(*Alwatan, 16 Jan, Khartoum*) The recent international trends in connection with the settlement of Darfur issue have come to take unexpected track for even close observers. SRSG Pronk said that there are genocide operations committed by the Janjaweed. This is the basis on which he came to make argument when he called on the Security Council to send 12-20 thousand troops to Darfur – i.e. based information he heard during meetings of Abuja Talks. We wonder, if such information is true, why then the Darfurian parties in Abuja are negotiating issues of wealth sharing, power sharing, and security arrangements?

### **To Kofi Annan: For whom are you tolling bells**

(*Alwatan, 16 Jan, Khartoum*) Those who are observing the American strategy realize that Mr. Kofi Annan is becoming an outstanding expert in accomplishing American goals. Because he knows how to produce relevant justifications as far as interventions in other countries are concerned. The US current strategy is targeting Syria and the Sudan. Now the US is plotting to create tensions in order destabilise the area between Sudan and Chad, because there is a hidden conflict taking place between the US and France, the US most challenging enemy in western Africa. In this connection, the arrival of UN-US forces in Darfur will certainly serve the American interests in the area by rearranging it according to US strategies. Just as Britain had once done with France during the former century. Therefore the US inspired its faithful servant to toll the bells in Darfur.

### **Sudan proposes tripartite force for Darfur**

Sudan Tribune, Jan 15, 2006 (KHARTOUM) — Sudan has proposed the formation of a tripartite force including its own troops, rebel movements and the African Union (AU) to maintain peace in Darfur, the foreign ministry said Sunday.

The proposal came amid growing expectations the United Nations would send its own forces to the war-torn region of western Sudan in a bid to quell the violence AU peacekeepers have failed to contain.

“We have proposed at the recent AU Peace and Security Council meeting in Addis Ababa the formation of a joint force,” foreign ministry spokesman Jamal Mohamed Ibrahim told AFP.

Such a proposal was likely to be fiercely opposed by rebel movements, who want Western troops to take over from the close to 7,000 AU peacekeepers who have been deployed since 2004.

Un Secretary General Kofi Annan's special envoy in Sudan, Jan Pronk, told the UN Security Council Friday that the international community had failed to address the situation in Darfur and needed to dispatch a more robust force.

While Khartoum has sought to assert its right to choose who would be in charge of peacekeeping operations, the AU itself has warned Sudan it would be bound by any AU decision allowing a UN deployment.

During a press conference Saturday, Foreign Minister Lam Akol said Sudan “would explore all alternatives” to a UN deployment.

Ibrahim repeated Sunday that it was “too early to decide on whether we are going to accept any resolution on deployment of international forces”.

Sudan has expressed its satisfaction with the performance of AU peacekeepers and urged the international community to come forward with the funds for the contingent to continue its mission.

(ST/AFP)

### **African Union under pressure over Sudan**

Andrew Meldrum in Pretoria, Monday January 16, 2006, **Guardian**, More than 40 African non-governmental organisations have launched a bid to prevent Sudan from becoming the next chairman of the African Union, claiming the move would jeopardise peacekeeping operations in the country's troubled Darfur region. The Guardian has obtained copies of an appeal sent to African heads of state yesterday saying that Sudan's chairmanship could dash hopes of resolving the crisis, in which an estimated 300,000 people have been killed and two million driven from their homes.

The African Union currently has a peacekeeping force of 6,000 struggling to restore peace and end widespread killings and atrocities in the region in western Sudan. A larger United Nations force of up to 20,000 is being urged by UN experts.

The AU is expected to vote on the chairmanship at a summit meeting to be held in Sudan's capital, Khartoum, next Monday. Traditionally the leadership is assumed by the country that heads the summit meeting, and Sudan's government is lobbying hard to secure the position.

Ahmed Motala, executive director of South Africa's Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation and one of the signatories to the letter, said it would be a “travesty” if Sudan won the AU chairmanship. “It is currently the continent's worst abuser of human rights,” he said.

“The human rights and humanitarian situation in Sudan's Darfur region continues to be one of the worst in the world,” the letter warns. “Because of these crimes against humanity committed on her territory, Sudan should not be rewarded by granting the leadership of the African Union.”

Peter Kagwanja, director of the South African office of the International Crisis Group, said that the result would be a “terrible setback” for the body. “Sudan has nothing to export to the continent except chaos. It would be the ugliest thing to happen to pan-Africanism,” he said.

“This would be the most tragic development in the evolution of the AU because Sudan is Africa's greatest pariah regime,” said Mr Kagwanja. “It has not solved its own internal problems and actually is exporting them to its neighbours. Therefore nobody can imagine that Sudan could spearhead a continental peace initiative like the AU.”

Several North African countries and Zimbabwe are campaigning for Sudan to take over the leadership of the AU, and South African civic leaders are alarmed by reports that President Thabo Mbeki also intends to support Khartoum's bid.

South Africa's endorsement would probably sway the votes of the 14-nation Southern African Development Community and could tip the balance in favour of Sudan, say analysts.

Especially at risk is the role of the AU's Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights.

The commission recently issued a report condemning human rights abuses in Zimbabwe and passed resolutions on the situations in Ethiopia, Eritrea, Uganda, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Sudan's Darfur region. If Sudan wins the AU's leadership, activists believe it is almost certain that no action would be taken on these reports.

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### **Sudan asks AU to strive to solve Darfur crisis**

Sudan Tribune, Jan 15, 2006 (KHARTOUM) — Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir on Sunday asked the African Union (AU) to continue sponsoring peace talks between Khartoum and rebel groups in the western region of Darfur.

Bashir made the appeal while addressing an opening session of a gathering of African universities as part of preparations for the sixth AU summit on Jan 23-24 in Khartoum.

He stressed the role of the AU in settling the conflict between the Sudanese government and two rebel groups in Darfur.

Currently, there are almost 7,000 AU peacekeepers deployed in Darfur.

On Saturday, Foreign Minister Lam Akol expressed reservation over a UN proposal to deploy peacekeeping forces in Darfur to take over from AU forces, which are facing a financial shortage of some 160 million U.S. dollars.

(Xinhua)

### **Sudan's bid to chair AU has put African leaders in tough position**

Sudan Tribune, Jan 15, 2006 (NEW YORK) — Sudan's bid to chair the African Union has put the continent's leaders in a tough position because of the country's poor human rights record and the conflict in Darfur where an estimated 300,000 people have died and 2.2 million have fled their homes.

By tradition, Sudan's President Omar El-Bashir should become the next chairman of the 53-nation regional group at its upcoming summit in the Sudanese capital, Khartoum, on Jan. 23-24.

But more than 40 African non-governmental organisations have launched a bid to prevent Sudan from becoming the next chairman of the African Union, claiming the move would jeopardise peacekeeping operations in the country's troubled Darfur region.

In an appeal sent to African heads of state, the signatories say that Sudan's chairmanship could dash hopes of resolving the crisis, in which an estimated 300,000 people have been killed and two million driven from their homes.

But Tanzania's U.N. Ambassador Augustine Mahiga, the current Security Council president, said Friday that no decision has been made.

"Traditionally, the country that hosts the summit on an annual basis takes the chairmanship, but we broke this tradition last year when Nigeria continued the chair for two years, and in respect to the coming chairmanship consultations are still going on and we are waiting to see the outcome," he said.

Libya hosted last year's AU summit but because of opposition to its leader, Moammar Gadhafi, heading the organization Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo was kept in the chair.

The case of Sudan is even more difficult because a 7,000-strong African Union force is in Darfur charged with monitoring a cease-fire between El-Bashir's government and rebels that is being regularly broken by all parties.

Asked whether Sudan should chair the AU under these circumstances, Mahiga said, "It would create difficulties, and I think the consultations will take into account those difficulties."

Chadian President Idriss Deby has accused Sudan of backing rebels who are seeking to overthrow his government. He has called on the AU to block Sudan from taking over the AU president because of its aggressive attitude toward its people and toward Chad.

Jan Pronk, the top U.N. envoy to Sudan, said Friday that the United Nations has not taken a public position on the issue.

"I am being told that the decision is not going to be made now in this new African Union summit," he said. "So I expect that they will find, perhaps, a temporary solution, which might consist of president Obasanjo continuing for a while in that chair."

Pronk said the Sudanese government has sounded out governments throughout Africa on the issue over a long period and "are very well aware of the situation, and also wise."

(ST/AP)

## **East:**

### **Eastern rebels vow to reach solution with Khartoum**

*(Khartoum Monitor, 16 Jan, Khartoum)* Eastern Sudan rebel group reiterated its commitment to find a peaceful solution to the issue of eastern Sudan through negotiations. Also it accused the government of widening the circle of war by attacking Hamishkoreib town on the second day of Eid-al-Adha.

Rebels from Sudan's Eastern Front parade during a conference held by the Front north of Kassala town, near the Eritrean border.

Deputy Secretary-General of the Beja Congress and member of the leadership office of the Eastern Front, Abdullah Musa said that the Front was committed to reaching a peaceful solution through negotiations, he further described the government's attack on Hamishkoreib last Wednesday 11 January as a dangerous escalation which threatened to widen the circle of war.

Musa said that by creating Al-Bitanah Lions militia in Al-Qudarif region in eastern Sudan, the government only wanted to repeat the Darfur scenario in eastern Sudan and urged the parties to the transitional government to put pressure on bellicose elements on the regime.

Musa Siad that following the intervention by the **UN Secretary-General's Special Representative, Jan Pronk**; the Eastern Front's leadership had agreed to enter into negotiations with the government in Tripoli. However, he added: "We have not received any new information regarding negotiations after the attack on Hamishkoreib".

The Eastern Front has joined forces with the Beja Congress and Free Lions – a smaller rebel group – from the country's Rashaida ethnic group.

The Beja Congress military wing was launched in 1994 and joined four years later in March 2005 by the Free Lions to fight marginalisation by the Sudanese government.

## **SPLA:**

### **Sudan SSDF militia denies merger with the SPLA – Kong**

Sudan Tribune, Jan 14, 2006 (KHARTOUM) — South Sudan Defence Forces militia, led by Maj. Gen. Gordon Kong, has announced its support and the integration of its troops in the Sudanese Armed Forces.

The leader of the South Sudan Defence Force (SSDF), Maj. Gen Paulino Matip has announced 8 January that his militia will join the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), formerly a rebel group and now a partner in Sudan's national unity government.

Under the agreement, called the Juba Declaration of Unity and Integration, the armed forces of the two groups will merge, reducing the number of disparate armed groups in the south that have caused much insecurity.

But the official SUNA news agency reported that Kong has denied the claim of Paulino Matip on the absorption of South Sudan Defence Forces (SSDF) in the army of Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM).

Kong has affirmed their stance to be part of the Armed Forces.

He stressed that SSDF is committed to the Comprehensive Peace Agreement and ready to cooperate with South Sudan Government, which is headed by the First Vice - President, Salva Kiir, toward prevalence of peace and stability in south Sudan.

He congratulated the Sudanese people on the first anniversary for the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement.

Meanwhile, the Commander of Sudan Defence Forces for Bahral-Ghazal States, Maj. Gen. al-Toam al-Nur Daldoum, said that 6,000 troops and 900 officers of SSDF have been absorbed in the Armed Forces.

He explained that SSDF did not take part in Nairobi Conference of the Southern Factions, because the SPLM has refused their agenda, which included the call for participation in power for at least three southern states and absorption of at least 6.000 of SSDF in the Police forces in south Sudan.

Gordon Kong is a Jikany Nuer, he was a militia leader of Thourjikany Forces, based in Nasir, eastern Upper Nile with Jikany Nuer troops. Then he became Major-general in Anya Nya II

in 1988, then became commander in SPLM/A, and member of the SPLM/A political-military high command. In 1991 he led breakaway from SPLM/A with Riek Machar and Lam Akol. In 1997, he signed the Khartoum peace agreement with the government, when he was made a commander with the South Sudan Defence Forces (SSDF) under Riek Machar. Since 1998, backed directly by the government.  
(ST)

## **Other Developments**

### **Kenyan Vice President Calls on African Leaders to Give Top Priority to the Continent**

Sudan Vision, The Kenyan Deputy President, Modi Aweiri renewed his country's firm keenness to support peace and stability in Sudan.

He appealed to the Sudanese refugees in Kenya to come back and contribute to the development of the southern region. "It is a chance for them to go back there since Southern Sudan is enjoying peace now." In a separate development, Aweiri talked about the African summit which will be convened during this month (January). He called on the African leaders to give top priority to the continent's interest, rather than personal narrow ones. We should be proud that we are Africans and hence we should eradicate all the traces that colonialism has left behind, he said. In an interview with the National Television Mission, the Kenyan Vice President made comments on the International campaign, to combat terrorism. He said, "Africa itself is badly affected due to that". He called on friendly countries of Africa to give special consideration to the needs of development and security. "By doing so, assistance given to us can be utilized to improve the economic situation of Africa and combat terrorism." Africa can help in fighting terrorism if it is economically supported, he said.