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(By Public Information Office)

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HIGHLIGHTS:

UN

Pronk advises UN to formally take hold of the dossier on eastern Sudan

(*AlSahafa* – 30th Jan. **Khartoum**) SRSG Jan Pronk expects the UN Security Council to issue a resolution this February for a transition of the AMIS to an UNMIS operation. He also disclosed that he has formally asked Koffi Annan to allow the UN to formally take over the issue of eastern Sudan in view of the fact that the situation there is taking a turn not much different from that of Darfur. He expects to get a response from the Security Council soon.

The SRSG also threatened to invoke Chapter VII of the UN Charter against those he dubbed as a ‘hindrance to the peace in Darfur’ in order to put an end to the escalation of the situation in the west of the country.

AlSahafa has learnt from reliable sources within UNMIS that Pronk held a meeting yesterday with UN staff in Sudan and briefed them on the developments and the peace process. He said that the UN Security Council intends to hold a meeting next week to look into the issue of the AMIS-UNMIS transition and said it is likely that the Asian and African troops in southern Sudan may be redeployed to the west of the country. He said discussions are ongoing between the UN and the GoNU on the issue.

Mr. Pronk further revealed that a survey will be conducted of the SAF and SPLA forces in southern Sudan next month to certify adherence of the parties to the Security Arrangements of the CPA and pointed to the lack of qualified southern Sudanese and said this has greatly hindered work on many fronts.

The African Union Peace and Security Council sits next March to decide on whether to continue or hand over to the UN.

Government of National Unity

SPLM threatens to seek IGAD and UN arbitration over implementation of CPA

(*AlSahafa* – 30th Jan. **Khartoum**) The SPLM has threatened to seek an IGAD and UN arbitration over the slow pace of implementation of the CPA or “return to war” as a final option should such arbitration fail to bring dividends.

SPLM Spokesperson Walid Hamid told *AlSahafa* that V-p Salva Kiir’s conduct since coming to the Republican Palace could only be characterised as “smooth” and he has been carrying out his duties in “perfect harmony”.

On the other hand, Sadiq el-Mahdi of the Umma party said that SPLM’s accusations against the National Congress party on lack of commitment to resolve the Darfur issue and on the implementation of the CPA comes as no surprise. He points out that the CPA has 20 unclear points that could become time bombs that may explode any time. The solution, according to el-Mahdi, lies in the convening of a comprehensive conference.

Presidency of the Republic to meet to discuss NCP-SPLM differences

(*AlSahafa, AlAyaam* – 30th Jan. **Khartoum**) Nafei Ali Nafei confirms commitments of the National Congress party to continue dialogue with the SPLM on outstanding issues and has disclosed that a meeting will be held at the level of the Presidency of the Republic to discuss these issues and seek ways to resolve them without hampering cooperation or obstructing the course of implementation of the CPA.

The Advisor to the President of the Republic who also doubles up as the National Congress party's Vice-chair responsible for political and organisational affairs told the press in response to the recent accusations by V-p Salva Kiir that the V-p did touch on some important issues in his statements. He pointed out that dialogue on some of the issues he mentioned have gone a long way forward and expressed confidence that the issues raised will not affect the trust between the parties.

On Abyei, Nafie said that the government's position is clear in that the ABC report deviated from the mandate granted the experts. The committee of experts, he said, even did acknowledge it had failed to carry out its mandated task and so the rest of what was mentioned in the report did not therefore concern the government.

On the Petroleum Commission, he pointed out that the commission may not have sat due to conditions of its members.

On the other hand, a high ranking source within the National Congress party reveals that Vice-president Salva Kiir's statement comes about as a result of internal pressures from some members of the SPLM. The source further disclosed that the National Congress party itself does have some observation over some parts of the CPA not implemented by the SPLM such as the withdrawal of SPLA forces from eastern Sudan. He noted also that some SPLM officials have signed oil concessions with drilling companies.

“Gen. Salva Kiir must now be regretting his statements following the uproar it has caused”, the source adds.

Sudan says sanctions threaten comprehensive peace agreement

(*ST* – 29th Jan. **Khartoum**) The government of Sudan has stressed that any move to impose sanctions on Sudan would obstruct the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement signed last year.

The government further warned on the danger of the international community sending wrong messages which would have a negative influence on the ongoing Darfur peace talks in Abuja.

Speaking on the sidelines of the UN Security Council ministerial meeting discussing the Great Lakes region in New York, the foreign affairs minister, Lam Akol, reiterated the importance of concerned states, in particular the USA and European countries, to play a bigger role in providing financial and logistical assistance to AU troops so as to enable them carry out their mandate in Darfur.

Akol warned that some sides were still dealing with Sudan based on old assumptions and were disregarding the formation of the government of national unity (GNU).

He called on representatives of countries he met to take care by dealing positively with the GNU in order for it to successfully carry out its duties.

Sudan slams UN rights commission's report on Darfur

(*ST* – 29th Jan. **Khartoum**) The official spokesman for the Sudan's Foreign Ministry, Jamal Mohamed Ibrahim, has slammed the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) report regarding the deterioration of human rights in Darfur and other parts of Sudan.

The UN human rights agency denounced Sudan's government on Friday 27 January for considerable shortcomings, including allegations of torture, appalling prison conditions and attacks on civilians in Darfur.

He said that the report would give the wrong signal to the negotiating sides in Abuja and would increase their inflexibility towards achieving peace in Darfur.

The Sudanese official affirmed that the ministry had received the 42-page report from the Office of the UNHCHR and that the ministry had begun studying and analysing the report ahead of issuing a clear statement on its position towards it.

Ibrahim said that such reports, under such circumstances, at a time when there was positive and tangible progress in the Abuja negotiations would send wrong signals to the sides negotiating with the government and would increase their inflexibility.

The UNHCR considered "efforts to improve the situation on the ground have fallen short of aspirations" since some "initiatives have been superficially and inadequately implemented".

The security service, military intelligence and police routinely tortured suspects in Khartoum, the rapporteurs concluded, while "the absence of fair trial guarantees as well as inhuman detention conditions are of serious concern."

Ibrahim further criticized the report for ignoring many important developments which occurred at the end of last year in particular the setting up of courts in Darfur to look into human rights violations.

"The work these courts are now carrying out is completely independent from the executive organs," he added.

He further pointed out that the UN mission admitted that there was positive development in the human right situation in Darfur.

The UN body said the government must "install an active, professional, well-trained law enforcement system in Darfur with adequate resources" and "must allow civil society to function freely, with restrictions on the media, political parties and unions being the exception rather than the rule."

Sudanese president receives letter from Libyan leader on Tripoli's mediation

(*STV* – 29th Jan. **Khartoum**) The president of the republic, Field Marshal Umar al-Bashir, has received a written letter from the Libyan leader Col Mu'ammar al-Qadhafi. The letter was delivered by the Secretary of Brotherhood Bureau in Khartoum.

The state minister in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Al-Samani al-Wasilah, said the letter concerns Libyan mediation between Sudan and Chad and how to activate it, in order to end tensions between the two countries.

The minister added that President Al-Bashir welcomed efforts by the Libyan leader to bring about peace in the region.

For his party, the Libyan official lauded Sudan for successfully hosting the sixth AU summit in Khartoum.

Government committed to improving human rights situation

(*AlRai AlAam* – 30th Jan. **Khartoum**) The Sudan government has welcomed the impending visit next February of the UN Human Rights Special Rapporteur on Sudan, Sima Samar.

Government is committed to improving the human rights situation in the country but added this should not be in the context of the reports by international organisations condemning Sudan's rights record, says Justice Minister el-Murdi.

Eastern Front

Eastern Front says it will only negotiate with government and not with a party

(*AlAyaam* – 30th Jan. **Khartoum**) Talks between the Eastern Front and the government are due to start in the Libyan town of Sirte on 7th February. International and regional observers are expected to attend.

Amina Dhirar, the Secretary-General of the Eastern Front, confirms that the Eastern Front will field in a delegation representative of all the factions and groups of eastern Sudan and that they will only negotiate with representatives of the Government of National Unity endowed with the powers of decision-making and not only with a party delegation. She also said the talks will cover security arrangements, power sharing, wealth sharing and modalities for the implementation of the agreement that may be reached.

Asked on the recent tensions around the Hamishkoreib area, Dhirar said the Eastern Front condemns the escalation by government and believes it is an attempt by the government to weaken the Eastern Front through the formation of tribal militias. She also pointed out that the warming in relations between Khartoum and Asmara will not have a negative effect on the Eastern Front but will instead bolster the effects exerted to realise the legitimate demands of the east and realise peace if the government was ready for that.

Darfur, Chad

Darfur rebels request AU to allow them to participate in protection of IDP camps

(*AlAyaam* – 30th Jan. **Khartoum**) The rebel movements of Darfur have given the government 48 hours to halt escalations of its military operations in rebel-held parts of West and South Darfur and have threatened to “take the war from Darfur to other parts of the country” failure to do so. The rebels have also requested the AU mediators to allow them to participate in the protection of IDP camps but this has strongly been rejected by the government team on the grounds that these camps are within government area. The rebels also say they reject the idea

of government police protecting these camps and asked instead that they be replaced by AU police.

Meanwhile reports from Abuja say there is some progress in the talks but reports coming in from South Darfur say about 17 Land Cruisers with rebel soldiers on board have been seen amassing around 50 km. south of Nyala town. The police chief in South Darfur says they are committed to adherence to the ceasefire agreement but said they are also ready to repulse any attack targeting the state. The AU has on its part warned the parties that it and the international community are running out of patience and that the AU will institute harsh sanctions on any party proved to have violated the ceasefire agreement.

US, UN mull new plan to end Darfur violence

(New York Times/ST – 27th Jan. Washington) The broad strategy for ending the carnage in Darfur, Sudan, devised over the last two years by the United States, the United Nations and the European Union, is collapsing as the violence and chaos in the region seem to grow with every passing week, United Nations and Bush administration officials say.

After three years of bloodshed that has already claimed more than 200,000 lives, officials say they are struggling to devise an effective new strategy.

"We're working very closely with our partners to see if we can turn this around," said a senior administration official who was not authorized to speak publicly. But the obstacles and complications are multiplying.

Peace talks have nearly halted after government and Darfur-rebel negotiators, in the latest round, showed an unwillingness to seriously discuss anything except sharing Sudan's oil wealth. A growing military conflict on the Sudan-Chad border in Darfur is further endangering hundreds of thousands of refugees living in camps there. One of the Sudanese president's latest positions, articulated in a published interview this month, is that the government-backed militias known to be behind most of the violence are actually a fictitious creation of the media and the United States Congress.

"The looming threat of complete lawlessness and anarchy draws nearer," Kofi Annan, the United Nations secretary general, lamented earlier this month as he urged Western nations to do more. The international response has been so ineffectual that "people on the ground are just laughing," said Jan Pronk, the chief United Nations envoy in Sudan.

The primary element of the present approach to end the bloodshed has been the deployment of 7,000 African Union peacekeeping troops in Darfur, where they have tried without success to dampen the widespread brutality and banditry. In fact, these troops have become targets themselves. In recent months, five have been shot and killed, including one on Jan. 6.

The United States and Europe have both declined to provide further financial support for the effort, and African Union leaders say money to conduct the operation will run out in March. The Bush administration continues to push Congress to provide more money, but Congress has twice rejected the request in recent months during budget debates.

"The funds are almost exhausted," Alpha Omar Konaré, chairman of the African Union commission, said in a report last week.

The United Nations is considering deploying a larger force of its own peacekeeping troops to replace those of the African Union, but the discussions are at an early, preliminary stage. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice expressed support for the idea this month. But the Sudanese government insists it will not accept United Nations forces on its territory, leaving Darfur and its surviving residents in limbo. What is more, Mr. Pronk said this week, the United Nations "is not so eager" to take on troop commitments. "The U.N. has already reached its ceiling of commitments."

Neither he nor other officials were willing to predict how this predicament might be resolved. Meanwhile, "Darfur is in a free fall," said John Prendergast, who was director of African affairs for the National Security Council during the Clinton administration. Now he is a senior adviser for the International Crisis Group, a non-profit organization.

In recent months, American officials said they were placing most of their faith in the on-again, off-again peace talks that began 18 months ago. Salim Ahmed Salim, an African Union official mediating the talks, observed after the latest negotiating session collapsed without result last month that both sides had shown little more than "deep distrust" of each other. American and United Nations officials said the only topic that the sides showed any eagerness to discuss was "wealth sharing."

Relief agencies administering the enormous task of feeding and caring for more than three million homeless Darfurians - half the state's population - have for many months tried to work in an environment rife with thugs, bandits, kidnappers and killers. Now, however, Sudan and Chad are building up forces and fighting skirmishes along their border in Darfur.

As a result, Mr. Pronk said he had ordered "a significant reduction in the presence of U.N. staff, and restricted U.N. access in the affected areas." Camps holding hundreds of thousands of refugees lie on or near the border with Chad. But Mr. Pronk said relief agencies there were still providing essential services.

The conflict in Darfur began in February 2003, when rebel groups attacked government positions, accusing the leaders in Khartoum of ignoring their region. The government struck back with a fury, enlisting local militias to massacre civilians and destroy entire villages.

The world was slow to acknowledge the problem, but in September 2004, the Bush administration stated that the carnage constituted genocide. The African Union troops began slowly arriving in Darfur last year.

So far, Mr. Prendergast added, Western nations "have used an ostrich strategy, hoping with a wing and a prayer that the African Union forces would actually succeed. But they are finally acknowledging that it is not going to work."

Western leaders have all but given up on a key part of their strategy, trying to persuade Sudan's president, Omar al-Bashir, to disarm the militias that are responsible for a large part of the violence. The United States says his government continues to finance the militias, even though Sudanese officials claim to be working hard to bring peace to Darfur. A special United Nations committee said this month that the Sudanese government had "abjectly failed to fulfil its commitment to identify, neutralize and disarm militia groups."

Mr. Bashir generally deflects questions on the Darfur violence when meeting with visiting American officials, and instead asks them to lift the economic embargo on Sudan, senior

officials said. He also urges them to continue providing aid under the peace agreement that ended a 21-year civil war with the south - the one bright spot in Sudan.

In a speech two weeks ago, Mr. Bashir called on the anti-government Darfur rebels to "repent." Then, in an interview with a German newspaper two days later, he denied that the government-financed *Janjaweed* militias existed.

On Jan. 12, Sudan's government news agency issued a statement about the interview, saying "Field Marshall Bashir" had offered the view that "the U.S. Congress groups, which represent the Christian right and Zionist lobby, have a primarily hostile stance against Sudan and always try to incite this issue."

Sudan-Chad relations

Sudan alleges new Chad army incursion

(*AFP/ST* – 29th Jan. **Khartoum**) Sudan on Sunday accused Chad of carrying out a military operation against its forces in western Sudan, as tension between the two neighbours continued to escalate.

Sudanese army spokesman General Al-Abbas Abdelrahman Khalifa said in a statement that a Chadian unit backed by artillery attacked a Sudanese position 40 kilometres (24 miles) northwest of Geneina in West Darfur state on Saturday.

"Our forces stood up to the attackers and drove them away, killing two Chadian soldiers in the process," Khalifa said.

Official spokesman for the armed forces said that despite showing good intentions towards the Republic of Chad, it continued its series of attacks on our western borders.

Chad declared a "state of belligerence" with Sudan last month after a string of border clashes, with both countries trading accusations over support for the other's rebel groups.

LRA

Uganda calls UN to rout out LRA rebels from Sudan, Congo

(*Xinhua/ST* – 29th Jan. **Kampala**) The Ugandan government has appealed to the United Nations (UN) and the international community to rally behind its efforts to rout out the rebels currently hiding in Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo(DRC).

According to a report from the Uganda Broadcasting Corporation (UBC) Radio on Sunday, the call was made by Ugandan Foreign Minister Sam Kutesa at the UN Security Council meeting.

Kutesa told the meeting that a group of Ugandan rebels continue to terrorize innocent people in northern Uganda, Sudan and the DRC.

The minister stressed that the Ugandan government was committed to restoring peace in the north.

The UN Security Council condemned the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) rebels for killing innocent people in the Great Lakes region.

The UN Security Council also noted with regret that the Ugandan rebels recently killed UN peacekeepers in eastern DRC.

The LRA rebels, based in southern Sudan, have killed tens of thousands civilians, abducted over 20,000 children and displaced over 1.4 million people in their nearly 20-year rebellion in northern Uganda.

A group of LRA rebels, who entered eastern Congo from southern Sudan in September last year, on Monday killed eight Guatemalan peacekeepers in eastern Congo and the UN has called on the DRC transitional government "immediately to take all necessary measures to bring to justice those responsible for this attacked."

Ugandan army raids rebels hideouts in Sudan

(*Xinhua/ST* – 29th Jan. **Kampala**) Uganda People's Defence Force (UPDF) has said that its troops raided rebel Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) hideouts near Juba in southern Sudan on Saturday.

UPDF spokesman Major Felix Kulaije was quoted on Sunday by the Uganda Broadcasting Corporation (UBC) Radio as saying that the Ugandan army killed five LRA rebels during the attack. The army also rescued two women and their children from the rebel hideouts.

The spokesman said in another operation in Gulu in northern Uganda on Saturday, the UPDF soldiers killed one LRA rebel and rescued two abducted people.

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Civil Society

Bar Associations says international forces should be taken out of capital

(*AlRai AlAam* – 30th Jan. **Khartoum**) The Sudan Bar Association says UN troops must be withdrawn from towns, especially Khartoum, in order to curb "practices foreign to Sudanese society".

Fathi Khalil, Dean of the Bar Association, told a press conference yesterday that any foreign (UN) presence in Darfur will turn Darfur into an international hot spot and open the way for 'terrorism'.

Khalil also described the AU and the Arab League as organisations on the path to extinction and said they have nothing to give.

The Dean of the Bar Association also launched a series of warnings to the government, the UN, the SRSG and the UNMIS Spokesperson and said the UN should bear the outcome of the practices of its forces in Khartoum. He also said that Radhia Achouri's statements are demeaning to the people of the Sudan and she must bear responsibility for this. He described SRSG Pronk as someone with an enmity towards Muslims.

Riak Machar says role of NGOs to be revisited

(*Khartoum Monitor* – 30th Jan. **Khartoum**) Speaking at a workshop organised by the GoSS, GoSS Vice-president Dr. Riek Machar commended the role NGOs have played during the 21 years of war in the country. He pointed out however that their role has to be re-adjusted and a shift made from their role geared towards the provision of humanitarian assistance to development aid in southern Sudan.

He stressed the need to establish a regulatory framework that would guide their operations in southern Sudan and make them compatible with the GoSS system. The Vice-president of the GoSS said that the framework would pass through the GoSS Council of Ministers and the Southern Sudan Legislative Assembly before it is endorsed to become law.