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**(By Public Information Office)**

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## **HIGHLIGHTS:**

### **AMIS-UN transition**

#### **Sudan informs US of its opposition to UN force in Darfur**

(*Sudan Tribune* – 5<sup>th</sup> Mar. **New York**) The Sudanese government enlightened the US Administration about its opposition to the UN peacekeeping force taking over AU force in Darfur, the official SUNA reported.

The acting director of the US Administration at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Abdelghani al-Nayim, said that Akol explained to the US official Sudan government stance regarding the developments in Darfur and refusal to replace the African forces there by international forces.

The Sudanese Foreign Minister, Lam Akol discussed Sunday 5 March in New York with the US Deputy Secretary of State, Robert Zoellick, the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), developments in Darfur and the American support in this regard.

Al-Nayim pointed out that the minister of foreign affairs has participated in a symposium, which was organized by the American University of Harvard to discuss Peace in Sudan by tackling the implementation of the CPA, Darfur crisis and opportunities for establishment of developmental projects in Sudan.

On Jan. 12, ambassadors on the African Union's Peace and Security Council agreed in principle to hand over peacekeeping to the U.N. but left a final decision to a ministerial meeting to be held next week.

In the meantime, the U.N. Security Council authorized the start of planning for a takeover, and U.S. Ambassador John Bolton tried unsuccessfully to get the council to authorize the new U.N. force.

#### **Arab League urges member-states to provide technical and financial support to the AU**

(*AlRai AlAam* – 6<sup>th</sup> Mar. **agencies**) Kuwait-based *AlQabas* newspaper reports that Arab states intensified efforts during a meeting of Arab foreign ministers to convince the Sudan government to allow in international peacekeepers to replace the AU force in Darfur.

The paper disclosed that the Arab officials pointed out that failure to control internal issues and resolve the problems may affect the outcome of the forthcoming Arab League summit meeting Khartoum will be hosting and may even diminish chances for Khartoum hosting the summit.

The sources say Sudanese officials seem to have been convinced by the reasoning especially after assurances that these international forces will mainly be composed of African and Arab soldiers.

The Arab League has requested member-states to provide technical and financial assistance to the AU to help her consolidate her efforts in Darfur and has urged the parties to the conflict in Darfur to continue in the peace talks and without preconditions.

Commenting on the *AlQabas* report above, a spokesperson for Sudan's foreign ministry said that the Sudan is prepared to cooperate with the African Union and work together with all other parties to provide the necessary facilities. He confirmed that the government is committed to a peaceful solution to the Darfur crisis.

## **CPA**

### **GoSS finance minister refutes reports of purchase of Russian fighter aircrafts**

(*AlRai AlAam* – 6<sup>th</sup> Mar. **Khartoum**) State minister for the Presidency, Tilara Deng, has refuted reports of a 110 million dollar deal between the GoSS and Kazan (a Russian company) for the purchase of 24 combat and military transport helicopters.

“Combat helicopters for what?” he wondered and pointed out that the focus of the GoSS is currently on development and stability.

On his part, the GoSS finance minister said no approval has been granted and there are no plans for such a purchase which has no need for the GoSS.

### **Following killing of two SPLA soldiers, SPLA demands tougher measures**

(*AlAyaam* – 6<sup>th</sup> Mar. **Khartoum**) In a new development following the killing by a SAF soldier of two SPLA soldiers, the people of Fama in the Nuba Mountains area where the incident occurred took to the streets yesterday demanding tough measures against the perpetrators in order to prevent a repeat of the incident.

Walid Hamid, the SPLM’s spokesperson for the northern sector, said the protestors warned that a repeat of such the incident will lead to serious consequences that may affect peace and stability in the Nuba Mountains area.

He also disclosed that the protestors called for an investigation and trial of the perpetrators and demanded that the people be informed of the outcome of such an investigation and those behind the incident.

It is worth noting that the Office of the Spokesperson of the Sudan Armed Forces had issued a statement earlier confirming the incident and stating that the incident was accidental and that a committee has been formed to look into the incident.

## **Darfur/ Abuja talks**

### **Minnawi faction of the SLM lashes out on SPLM for not having a clear position on the Abuja talks**

(*AlRai AlAam* – 6<sup>th</sup> Mar. **Khartoum**) In an unprecedented move, the Minnawi faction of the SLM has lashed out against the SPLM and described its position on Darfur as shaky. The SLM has described the SPLM participation in the Abuja talks as negative.

A spokesperson for the faction said the SLM was disappointed in the SPLM which they thought would bolster the negotiations process but has turned out to be siding with the National Congress Party and sharing its views.

### **Demonstrations in Nyala over murder of a tribal leader**

(*AlRai AlAam* – 6<sup>th</sup> Mar. **Khartoum**) Members of the Fur tribe came out in demonstrations in South Darfur yesterday protesting the murder last Saturday of el-Murdi Ahmed Haroun, a leader of the Fur of Nyala.

The protesters marched to the state administration building and handed over a memorandum blaming the regional for responsibility for allowing the situation to reach that extent and for the continued tribal clashes between the Fur of the region and the other tribes.

### **SLM splinter group calls for meeting of the military committee**

(*AlAyaam* – 6<sup>th</sup> Mar. **Khartoum**) The new splinter group of the SLM that walked out on AbdulWahid says it has sent note to the AU defining their position and now await the response of the AU.

The official in charge of SLM's finances, himself a member of the splinter group, said that the 19 field commanders met yesterday with representatives of the JEM and SLM-Minnawi to renew coordination. He said all representatives of the international community in Abuja were informed of their decision to isolate AbdulWahid.

### **New split looms against SLM's AbdulWahid**

(*ST* – 5<sup>th</sup> Mar. **Abuja**) A 19 members group from the leadership of rebel Sudan Liberation Movement announced freezing the president of movement while they called for the holding of a general conference of the SLM.

In a move justified by their opposition to the conclusion of a deal between their leader Abelwahid Mohmaed al-Nur and the Sudanese government, the group decided to freeze the powers of Nur as chairman of the SLM.

For his part, Abdelwahid said the 19 group is not qualified to take such decision, he also reiterated his decision to end the coordination with the other rebel groups which have been negotiating as a unified Front.

This is the second division within the SLM. After a conference convened in Haskanita, a rebel-held town in North Darfur state, the SLM is divided to two factions, Minawi faction and Abdelwahid faction.

These divisions will complicate the task of the AU Mediation team in Abuja. Also, it will conduct international community to make more pressures on the rebel group during the talks.

## **GoSS/Southern Sudan**

### **GoSS bans minis**

(*AlSahafa, agencies* – 6<sup>th</sup> Mar. **Nairobi**) The Sudan Mirror newspaper reports that the GoSS has banned the wearing of mini-skirts and tights in all parts of southern Sudan.

Quoting a high rank police source, the paper said that imitating the west in dressing is an issue that is unacceptable and does not comply with the cultural norms of the people of southern Sudan.

The police has called upon the press to sensitize the people earlier before the decision is fully implemented.

## **Eastern Sudan**

### **Sudan orders US aid agencies to withdraw from Beja area**

(AP/ST – 5<sup>th</sup> Mar. Asmara) A U.S.-based aid agency suspended operations Sunday in Sudan's troubled north-eastern region after the government ordered the only two international charity groups to withdraw from the Beja area, an official said.

It was unclear what motivated the expulsion of The International Rescue Committee, or IRC, and the Samaritans Purse Relief International, a North Carolina-based group run by the son of U.S. evangelist Billy Graham, said Robert Warwick, IRC's director for Eritrea and north-eastern Sudan.

There was no immediate comment from the government.

The New York-based International Rescue Committee, whose operation in north-eastern Sudan helps some 45,000 people, will complete pulling out two international staff and 25 Sudanese workers Sunday, Warwick told The Associated Press.

The Beja area is one of Sudan's least developed and most neglected. Poverty-related illnesses, including tuberculosis, are common and illiteracy are a major problem.

The International Rescue Committee and Samaritan Purse are the only international charity groups providing food aid, basic health care, vaccination, safe drinking water and education services as well as training midwives in an effort to curb high rates of deaths during childbirth in the region.

There are fears that the expulsion of the two agencies will lead to a serious humanitarian crisis in the forgotten corner of Africa's largest nation, an E.U. official said.

The official said Sudan's government expelled the aid agencies from the region possibly because it thought it could get away with the move because the international community is preoccupied with the conflict in the country's western Darfur region, where African tribesmen have rebelled against the Arab-dominated central government.

The Beja Congress, an exiled group representing numerous eastern Sudan tribes, criticized the decision to expel the aid groups.

"They expelled them because they want to make the lives of our people even more miserable and much more difficult -and remember these are people who have already lost a lot and are suffering untold hardships," said Asmat Ali, head of the group's relief wing. "We know definitely that the result of this action will be even more deaths for our children and women from food shortages and health care."

"The international community should intervene and compel the government of Sudan to reverse this criminal and inhumane order," said Ali, whose group is also a member of the umbrella Sudanese opposition group, the Eritrean-headquartered National Democratic Alliance.

The Beja group, however, rejected the accord, saying it failed to meet its demands for a share of wealth and power in the north-eastern region.

### **Beja Congress present memorandum to UN Human Rights Rapporteur over rights situation in eastern Sudan**

(*AlAyaam* – 6<sup>th</sup> Mar. **Khartoum**) The Beja Congress (internal) has presented a memorandum to Human Rights Rapporteur Sima Samar outlining the rights situation in eastern Sudan.

A member of the Beja Congress' Leadership Office revealed that the memorandum which was delivered yesterday has called for an investigation over last year's incident in Port Sudan and listed the names of the victims of that incident.

He said that the Congress says the findings of the commission of inquiry formed by the government in the aftermath of the incident be made public and for an independent trial of those responsible.

Among other things highlighted in the memorandum to the Rapporteur are the fears over the use of toxic cyanide in the gold mines, dumping of Greek toxic wastes in eastern Sudan and the transformation of the Aroma hospital into a military camp which has very much affected medical services.

## **Human Rights**

### **Civil society calls for repeal of Humanitarian law**

(*AlSahafa* – 6<sup>th</sup> Mar. **Khartoum**) A group of civil society organisations have presented a memorandum to the Presidency of the Republic calling President Bashir not to endorse the Humanitarian and Voluntary Works Act before it is tabled again before parliament for review of some of its clauses.

The Act has been granted the parliamentary nod and only awaits endorsement by the President of the Republic to become law.