

UNITED NATIONS MISSION IN SUDAN  
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**(By Public Information Office)**

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**IN THE NEWS TODAY:**

- **UN**
  - Pronk calls for Eritrean cooperation to resolve the problems of eastern Sudan
  - UN's Annan urges protection of civilians in Sudan's Darfur
  - Security Council to convene meeting next Tuesday over Darfur
  - Death threatens over 3 million in Sudan, UN official
- **Government of National Unity**
  - Sudan opposes UN force for Darfur even after September - Taha
- **CPA**
  - Police clash with Paulino forces in Fitihab, Omdurman
  - Police arrest some people connected to the sultans' courts
- **Southern Sudan**
  - South Sudan to set up panels for peace deal mandate
  - S. Sudan parliament summons minister over emergency funds
- **Eastern Sudan**
  - Eastern Sudan rebels accuse Khartoum of fomenting tension
- **Darfur, Chad/ Abuja Talks**
  - Border tensions renewed following Chadian attack on Sudanese village
- **Other Developments**
  - Political forces to organise massive demonstration on Darfur
  - Foul play ruled out in Sudan's Garang helicopter crash

## **HIGHLIGHTS:**

### **UN**

#### **Pronk calls for Eritrean cooperation to resolve the problems of eastern Sudan**

(*AlAyaam* – 15<sup>th</sup> Mar. **Khartoum**) The UN has called upon the State of Eritrea to cooperate with all parties in order to resolve the crisis in eastern Sudan.

A meeting between SRSG Pronk and the leaders of the Eastern Front present in Abuja did not take place but Khalid Al-Hitti, a spokesman for Mr. Pronk, said that Mr. Pronk did meet the Eritrean President and requested Eritrean cooperation with all parties to put an end to the crisis.

Al-Hitti said Pronk did not meet the leaders of these groups because they failed to turn up. He pointed out that Pronk's visit to Eritrea was to urge the parties to hasten up in the quest for solutions to the problems of eastern Sudan.

#### **UN's Annan urges protection of civilians in Sudan's Darfur**

(*UNNC/ST* – 14<sup>th</sup> Mar. **United Nations**) United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan said today that international efforts must focus on the protection of civilians in Sudan's troubled Darfur region. He described the security situation there as dangerous and volatile.

In his monthly update on the situation in Darfur to the Security Council, Annan says work is underway on a possible transition from the current African Union (AU) mission in Sudan, known as AMIS, to a UN force. "As planning moves forward in consultation with the parties, it will have to take into consideration the ongoing violence and consistent violation of human rights in the region, the displacement of more than 3 million people and increasing instability near the border with Chad," he says.

International efforts in Darfur should aim to "contribute to the protection of civilians at risk with a view to creating an environment conducive to national reconciliation in a country where human rights are respected and internally displaced persons and refugees can return home in safety and dignity."

He cautions that success will require the support of the Khartoum Government. "Although the Government of the Sudan is expressing reservations at the moment, we hope to gain its cooperation as we carry out the planning," Annan writes. "In fact, Government cooperation will be a requirement, since the Security Council request to start planning for a possible transition stipulates, quite rightly, that we do so in cooperation and in close consultation with the parties to the Abuja peace talks."

The Secretary-General also warns that without an effective ceasefire, any international security presence in Darfur "will have to be mandated and equipped to take robust action to protect civilians at risk."

The report points to escalating insecurity, and warns that banditry, armed clashes and tensions along the border with Chad are contributing to a “dangerous and volatile situation” in Darfur.

As the people of Darfur face growing threats to their security, aid workers trying to offer help are also under attack, according to the report. The UN has been forced to restrict the movements of relief workers in parts of Western Darfur and to cut staff levels in the region. Humanitarian and commercial convoys in Southern Darfur were also subjected to banditry.

“In the face of continuing attacks by militias, the police have not provided protection to civilian populations,” Mr. Annan states, citing one incident when police “resorted to an excessive use of force, in one instance resulting in the death of a secondary school student.” Civilians living close to rebel territory and who share the same ethnicity as the rebels are particularly vulnerable to abuse by the Sudanese Armed Forces.

Insecurity in Western Darfur has affected the overall protection situation there, with new forced displacements taking place almost daily, according to the report. Some of the forced displacements are due to inter-tribal conflict, while others are caused by fighting between Sudan Liberation Army (SLA) on the one hand and the Sudanese Armed Forces and militia forces on the other.

The report also points to disturbing indications of sexual violence against children, noting that the UN Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) is “following up on five separate cases in Northern and Western Darfur between late November 2005 and January 2006, in which strong evidence has emerged that children under 15 years of age were raped.”

Annan calls on the parties to urgently work to achieve a negotiated settlement. “It is of utmost importance that everything possible be done to ensure that the parties conclude an agreement during this seventh round of talks” in Abuja, Nigeria, he says.

### **Security Council to convene meeting next Tuesday over Darfur**

(*Alai AlAam/Agencies* – 15<sup>th</sup> Mar. **New York**) In its session last Wednesday, the Security Council called for clear cooperation from the government in Sudan to enable a UN team due to travel to Darfur to carry out its duties.

The President of the Security Council criticised government refusal to welcome the said UN team whose duties are to lay the grounds for a peacekeeping operation in the Darfur region.

The Council underlined the need to put an end to the violence in Darfur and for a trial for those who violate human rights and international law.

He said AU chief mediator Salim Ahmed Salim has requested to attend the forthcoming session of the Security Council next Tuesday.

### **Death threatens over 3 million in Sudan, UN official**

(*AFP/AlAyaam* – 15<sup>th</sup> Mar. **Khartoum, New York**) UN Emergency Aid Coordinator Jan Egeland has issued a worldwide appeal for assistance for Darfur and southern Sudan.

In his appeal, he said that the humanitarian crisis is exacerbating and now about 3.3 million people face death in Sudan.

Egeland who will be travelling to Darfur, Chad and Uganda within the next two weeks said that the emergency needs are about 650 million dollars for assistance for Darfur and a similar figure for southern Sudan.

He also pointed out that insecurity hampers the work of relief workers and access to parts of southern and western Darfur.

He also pointed out that the WFP requires also an additional 1.3 billion dollars for its Darfur and southern Sudan operations where it assists about 6 million people.

## **Government of National Unity**

### **Sudan opposes UN force for Darfur even after September - Taha**

(*AP/ST, AlAyaam, AlRai AlAam* – 15<sup>th</sup> Mar. **Khartoum**) Sudan will reject the proposed deployment of U.N. forces to Darfur after the African Union's peacekeeping mandate expires in September, Vice President Ali Osman Mohammed Taha told reporters Tuesday, according to the official Sudan Media Centre.

His comment conflicts with the agreement announced in Addis Ababa on Friday, when Sudan and the African Union agreed to extend the mandate of the A.U. peacekeepers in Darfur to September, and then allow them to be merged into a larger United Nations force.

Referring to the U.N. force, Taha was quoted by the official media center as saying: "Sudan's stand is to reject those forces even when the period of six months has elapsed." He pointed out that the government discussed in Brussels last week the possibilities of accepting a UN role and not deployment of UN forces.

He did not explain how the government reconciled that position with its acceptance of the Addis Ababa accord.

Commenting on the AU communiqué that also extended its mandate in Darfur, the Vice-president said that the AU had overstretched its functions by calling upon government to halt public protests against international forces as Sudanese have the right to express their views. He also said that government was reserved over the AU's decision to grant itself the right to decide over the fate of sovereign Sudan by the provision in the communiqué supporting the transition to UN forces after six months.

Taha further pointed out that the government will only accept a UN role for development in Darfur on condition that the parties to the conflict give their consent.

On the ICC, Taha reiterated government's rejection of an ICC trial of any Sudanese citizen "whatever the price".

The Vice-president stressed also that the government was keen to resolve the conflict in the eastern part of the country within the context of the peace agreement.

Taha also said that when he met the Darfur rebel leaders in Libya, he felt they had a "real desire to reach a peace agreement."

He did not say which rebel leaders he met and when the meeting took place.

## CPA

### **Police clash with Paulino forces in Fitihab, Omdurman**

(*AlAyaam* – 15<sup>th</sup> Mar. **Khartoum**) Sources report that a group loyal to Paulino Matip clashed with police in block 8, Fitihab in Omdurman yesterday.

The sources only say that the clashes occurred as a result of harassments (*the paper does not elaborate*) and Paulino's forces have taken over a police outpost.

### **Police arrest some people connected to the sultans' courts**

(*AlRai AlAam* – 15<sup>th</sup> Mar. **Khartoum**) Police in Fitihab (*could be related to the above story*) arrested a number of people in connection to the sultans' courts around the peripheries of Khartoum and released all those detained in the cells.

A police operation that took place in the area yesterday was part of a police dragnet to wipe out the illegal sultans' courts.

A source in the Khartoum State Police said that the operations shall continue and urged citizens to report of the existence of all such courts.

## Southern Sudan

### **South Sudan to set up panels for peace deal mandate**

(*SRS/ST* – 14<sup>th</sup> Mar. **Juba**) The Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Administrative Reform in the government of Southern Sudan has announced the formation of six teams that will set up Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA)-mandated commissions in Southern Sudan.

Minister of Labour David Deng Athorbei told Sudan Radio Service (SRS) in Juba last week that there are many commissions to be established in Southern Sudan, as clearly stipulated in the CPA.

However, the minister added that they are only selecting six commissions for the moment, including land, public service, human rights, anti-corruption, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration.

He said each preparatory team will consist of 4 people and have one month to accomplish their tasks. The teams will prepare draft terms of reference for the 6 commissions, their organizational frameworks and acts or laws governing them.

Athorbei said "Once the three are finished, they will be presented to me. One in hard copy and the other one in electronic copy. I will take all these copies. I will present them to the president, maybe, in the presence of the Ministry of Legal Affairs, who from there will then pick it up."

After the presentation of the draft act for each commission, the president of southern Sudan will then issue a decree for the establishment and appointment of the commissioners.

## **S. Sudan parliament summons minister over emergency funds**

(SRS/ST – 14<sup>th</sup> Mar. **Juba**) The Southern Sudan Legislative Assembly has summoned the finance minister in the government of Southern Sudan to explain how the government spent its 9 months emergency budget.

A source in Juba told Sudan Radio Service (SRS) that Finance Minister Arthur Akuein Chol is expected to appear before the Legislative Assembly when it resumes in a few days' time to explain how the money was spent.

The source said that questions are brewing because of the delay in paying salaries to civil servants and SPLA [Sudan People's Liberation Army] troops.

The interim budget approved by the Legislative Assembly totalled 405m US dollars. Of this, 350m dollars was to come from oil revenue and 55m dollars from the multi-donor trust fund.

The director of planning in the Finance Ministry of the government of Southern Sudan, Moses Mabior, says if there is any misappropriation of funds, an inquiry board will be set up and any one found to have squandered money will be prosecuted.

## **Eastern Sudan**

### **Eastern Sudan rebels accuse Khartoum of fomenting tension**

(AlAyaam, AlSahafa, Reuters, AFP/ST – 14<sup>th</sup> Mar. **Asmara**) Sudanese rebels on Tuesday accused the government of fomenting tension in the eastern part of the country, a restive belt through which an oil pipeline to the country's largest port passes.

The Eastern Front Sudanese rebels heaped blame on the Khartoum government for rising insecurity and a recent spate of raids in Kassala that have left 15 people dead, four of them over the weekend.

"On Sunday, two grenades were lobbed into the Matsoura camp in Kassala and as a result two women and two children were killed, and twenty people were injured," the rebels said in a statement released in Asmara, where they are based.

"The Eastern Front holds the government of Sudan fully responsible for these developments and the general insecurity," it added. "The Eastern Front will not hesitate to take the necessary steps to protect the citizens from these organised attacks."

The Matsoura camp in government-controlled Kassala is inhabited by more than 50,000 people, mostly from the Rashaida ethnic group, rebel official Abdalla Hamid told reporters.

Abdalla said at least 11 people had died in attacks in Kassala since February.

"There is an absence of law and order, a general insecurity ... These incidents are escalating despite the government's presence," he lamented.

Abdalla threw cold water on the prospects of a planned Libya sponsored peace talks between Khartoum and east Sudanese rebels, which were called off last month following disagreements over Eritrea's participation.

"How can you get peace this way?" he said. He said people are talking of a possible agreement on the east but they only see their region headed towards becoming another Darfur.

From oil fields in the southern region, Sudan has more than 300,000 barrels per day (bpd) for export through Port Sudan, which sits in eastern Sudan. Rebel activities have barred the production of proven reserves of around 560 million barrels.

Like their better-known rebel counterparts in Darfur, the Eastern Front complains of marginalization by the government in Khartoum, which it accuses of exploiting natural resources such as oil, natural gas, gold and other minerals at the expense of the local population.

## **Darfur, Chad/ Abuja Talks**

### **Border tensions renewed following Chadian attack on Sudanese village**

(*AlSahafa* – 15<sup>th</sup> Mar. **Khartoum**) There is renewed tension along the suda's borders with Chad following an attack by Chadian soldiers on the village of Gillo (?).

The Governor of West Darfur said that Chadian soldiers on 5 vehicles raided the Sudanese village town of Gillo targeting Chadian refugees living there, looted livestock and caused chaos before withdrawing back across the borders.

He said there was no loss of life and the authorities have sent a force in pursuit of the invaders.

## **Other Developments**

### **Political forces to organise massive demonstration on Darfur**

(*AlAyaam* – 15<sup>th</sup> Mar. **Khartoum**) Political forces, civil society organisations, activists of Darfur and other pressure groups are planning to stage a demonstration and hand copies of a memorandum to the government, the UN and the AU outlining their views on possible solutions to the crisis in Darfur.

The deputy leader of the Umma Party (mainstream) Dr. Adam Musa Madibo revealed that the memorandum will underline the need to end the bloodshed and displacement in Darfur, to facilitate the flow of relief and to protect civilians in the region against attacks by government forces and their militia.

He further noted that a meeting held by representatives of the organising groups also agreed that discussions be set up in all regions in the country to increase awareness and that these discussions culminate in a grand forum to be held in Khartoum where the date for the demonstration will be announced.

### **Foul play ruled out in Sudan's Garang helicopter crash**

(*AP/ST* – 14<sup>th</sup> Mar. **Kampala**) Foul play has been ruled out in the helicopter crash that killed Sudan's Vice President and former rebel leader John Garang last July, an official of the company that insured the aircraft said Tuesday.

The Nigerian-owned National Insurance Corporation Ltd on Tuesday presented to the Ugandan government a check worth \$3.4 million (A2.9 million) as compensation for the destroyed presidential helicopter.

"An insurer will not pay if he has doubts as to the nature of the accident," National Insurance Corporation Managing Director Bola Ososamya told The Associated Press.

"We have conducted our own investigation and are entirely satisfied that the crash was an accident."

Officials at the Ugandan Transport Ministry, which is responsible for any information on an ongoing probe into Garang's death, were not immediately available for comment.

Garang's death in the crash in southern Sudan led to the killing of at least 130 people during protests in Sudan's capital and in southern cities — raising fears that a peace deal that ended a 21-year civil war could collapse.

The Sudanese government and Garang's Sudan People's Liberation Movement quickly formed a team to investigate the crash and asked Uganda, Kenya, the U.S., Russia and the United Nations to help.