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**(By Public Information Office)**

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## **HIGHLIGHTS:**

### **UN/ AU-UN Transition**

#### **AU agrees in principle on the deployment of international troops to Darfur**

(*AP/ST, ALAyaam* – 16<sup>th</sup> May. **Khartoum, Addis Ababa**) The African Union Peace & Security Council has declared its consent in principle to a transition of the AMIS to a UN operation.

The head of the government delegation to the talks in Abuja said that the African Union Peace & Security Council agreed in principle to a transition to the UN and left the final decision on the issue to consultations between the government of Sudan, the UN and the AU Commissioner.

Meanwhile, the AU Commissioner has issued a stern warning to the parties that did not sign the DPA.

On the other hand, U.N. special envoy to Sudan, Jan Pronk, told reporters in Addis Ababa after the meeting ended. "It is now high time to take very concrete steps towards a stronger force."

Pronk\* called for continued efforts to press the holdouts to sign, saying "there could be no lasting peace in Darfur unless all the communities in Darfur are party to it."

Pronk also called for more funds for humanitarian operations. U.N. and other aid groups have had to severely cut feeding and other programs after international donors failed to respond to repeated pleas for funds, though moves have been made to address that since the peace treaty drew renewed attention to Darfur.

The meeting of the African Union Peace & Security Council agreed to extend the deadline for remaining rebel groups to sign the peace agreement signed by the government and the main rebel group to May 31.

If they miss the deadline, "failure to sign would attract measures by the African Union including consultations with the United Nations Security Council," the Ambassador Adeniji of Nigeria who chaired the meeting said. These measures would include some form of sanctions, he added.

Commenting on what is perceived as government's hesitation towards agreeing to the deployment of international forces to Darfur, the Nigerian foreign minister said that the Sudan government is not against such a deployment in principle but would like to further discuss the conditions for a transition.

A.U. Commission Chairman Alpha Oumar Konaré said the African Union will push for a U.N. travel ban and asset freeze that would target those who may try to undermine the Darfur peace process and commit human rights violations in the vast, arid region.

Konaré pressed the Sudanese government to allow U.N. experts to travel to Darfur to study conditions on the ground to determine what would be needed by a United Nations

peacekeeping force and what support African peacekeepers would require during the transition.

Ensuring the Janjaweed respect the cease-fire agreed to as part of the peace treaty is key to persuading Darfur rebels to comply with the peace deal, but there have been several Janjaweed attacks since then, U.N. officials said.

"I urge the government of Sudan to produce its plan for the disarmament of the Janjaweed and armed militia expeditiously and, in any case, within the 37 days required by the" peace agreement, Konaré said.

*\* Text of the SRSF's statement attached separately*

### **Sudan renews its rejection of UN force to Darfur**

(ST – 15<sup>th</sup> May. **Addis Ababa**) Foreign minister Lam Akol has reiterated Sudan's rejection to a transition of the AMIS forces in Darfur to a UN operation but says Sudan is ready for dialogue on a possible UN role in the region.

The minister pointed out in his statement before the 51 Ministerial Meeting of the African Union Peace and Security Council, held in the Ethiopian capital of Addis Ababa that the presence of the African Union force was stipulated in the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) and that any talks of deployment of United Nations troops would mean replacing the African forces by UN forces as part of the security arrangements stipulated in the agreement.

Akol said all the parties which had been calling for a UN involvement had taken part in the talks in Abuja but that they did not bring in that question. He said the agreement itself did not mention any presence of UN presence in Darfur.

He said any new position with regards to transferring the mission to international force other than the African Union would need a direct dialogue and discussion between the United Nations and the Sudanese government in a separate procedure.

UN chief Kofi Annan said he wanted the UN force to take over as soon as was possible now that a peace deal was in place. "This is not a moment for anyone to bask in congratulations," he wrote in London's Financial Times, saying the holdout rebels had to be persuaded to sign up.

The minister stressed that the agreement was an advance step towards the stability of in Darfur. He reaffirmed Sudan's readiness to work in harmony with the African Union for the implementation of the agreement.

He underlined that the Sudanese government had some reservations about the agreement but it still signed the document and that these reservations did not contradict with the government commitment to implement the deal.

The minister revealed that the Sudanese president Omar al-Bashir, has formed a committee to draw up plans for the mechanisms to implement the accord in all transparency.

The minister expressed hope that the African Union and behind it the international community would exercise pressure on the remaining groups that did not sign the agreement to do so in order to allow moving forward to a new phase in the region.

He said the government also hoped to see the international community playing its role in providing all types of material, logistic and humanitarian assistance.

The minister expressed appreciation for the position taken by the Netherlands with the view to convene a donors' conference for securing assistance for Darfur.

In a press statement to the official SUNA, Akol said the meeting has also stressed that "the few" who did not sign the DPA should not be allowed to obstruct what has been achieved up to now and that they should not work to obstruct the agreement least they would be facing the UN and the international community which have backed and welcomed the agreement.

The minister said he expected the American and European sides to be moderate in their stands towards the Sudan following the conclusion of the agreement and putting an end to the war and the commitment to implement the clauses of the agreement under the supervision of the African Union, the United Nations and the mediators.

### **UN's Egeland: Abuja agreement only hope for Darfur**

*(Reuters/ST – 15<sup>th</sup> May. Geneva)* The Darfur peace deal signed in Abuja last week is the only hope to end the conflict in Sudan's vast west and if it is not enforced the region will spin out of control, the top U.N. humanitarian official said on Monday.

"If it is implemented, we (the U.N. and aid agencies) could start planning for recovery and a return home of the more than 2 million refugees," said Jan Egeland, the U.N. under-secretary for humanitarian affairs.

"If it is not, it will mean a downward spiral which will get totally out of control and go into the abyss," he added.

Egeland called on the two remaining factions to sign and said the agreement was the only hope to end the three year conflict that has killed tens of thousands of people and forced 2 million more to flee their homes.

"I think Abuja is the only hope we have for Darfur," Egeland told a news conference in Geneva on his way back to New York.

He echoed U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan's call for the international community to be ready to fund a beefed-up operation by African Union (AU) forces in Darfur.

Egeland said it was "absolutely essential" that the AU force get a more robust mandate which would allow it to protect the civilian population in Darfur and not just AU peace monitors.

But in order to do this, he said the AU needed more troops and transport equipment, especially helicopters.

Egeland said he hoped a U.N. force of troops from a wide range of countries including Muslim states could be approved and put into operation in place of the AU force by the end of the year. But the Sudanese government has yet to agree to this.

### **SAF newspaper organises debate on the experience of UN troops**

(*AlWatan* – 16<sup>th</sup> May. **Khartoum**) The official SAF newspaper (*Alkuwat AlMusallaha*) organises tomorrow a debate on the experience of UN troops in Africa and the Arab World.

Among key speakers are Dr. Muddawi Turabi, a political analyst.

Invitations are sent to the media fraternity and concerned parties.

## **DPA**

### **Sudan's Bashir to chair meeting of Darfur peace implementation panel**

(*ST* – 15<sup>th</sup> May. **Khartoum**) President Omar al-Bashir, is due to chair the meeting of the Higher Committee on implementation of Darfur Peace Agreement Tuesday 16 May at the Republican Palace.

In a press statement to SUNA, the adviser of the president and chairman of the government's delegation to Abuja talks, Majzoub al-Khalifah, who explained that the meeting would discuss the items of Abuja Peace Agreement on Darfur, as well as the implementation of this agreement.

Al-Khalifah further added that the meeting would touch on the humanitarian, political, economic and social situation in Darfur.

Sudanese top negotiator said in a telephone interview from Addis Ababa that he discussed with the African Union Commission the implementation of the peace agreement.

He affirmed that the African Union rejected the proposals given by the Sudan Liberation Movement of AbdulWahid al-Nur who demanded making major amendments in the peace agreement.

He said that al-Nur can negotiate amendments with the ruling National Congress or the parties of the national programme after signing the peace agreement.

### **SLM's Nur urges African Union to consider its demands**

(*Reuters/ST* – 15<sup>th</sup> May. **Abuja**) In a letter\* addressed to the head of the African Union executive body, the rebel Sudan Liberation Army (SLM) of AbdulWahid al -Nur urged the Pan African body to intervene to bridge gap between them and the Sudanese government, and to consider its three demands.

In a letter sent yesterday to the Chairperson of African Union Commission Oumar Konaré, the leader of a faction of the main rebel SLM AbdulWahid al-Nur called the African Union to put pressure on the Sudanese government to sign a supplementary document related to their demands.

AbdulWahid also indicated the three demands of the faction:

“We have consistently made three important demands. One is our demand for adequate compensation for the individuals and families who have suffered losses during the conflict. The second is full involvement of SLM/A in key aspects of security arrangements including ensuring the protection of civilians as they return to their original places and the mechanisms

for monitoring the disarmament of the Janjaweed. The third is the question of political representation both at the centre and at the State and local levels”, said the letter.

The African Union Peace and Security Council holds a meeting today to discuss the Darfur Peace Agreement signed Friday 5 May between the Sudanese government and the SLM-Mini Minnawi faction.

Al- Nur wants the African Union to consider his demands before endorsing the signed deal.

*\* See full text of the letter attached separately*

## **Darfur**

### **Janjaweed militias raid a village near Kutum killing 15**

(*AlAyaam* – 16<sup>th</sup> May. **Kutum**) Janjaweed militia have launched an attack on a number villages around Kutum.

Preliminary reports put the death toll in only one of the four villages attacked at 15 and 1,000 heads of cattle looted.

The army and security forces were sent in pursuit of the culprits.

Meanwhile the AU has called on the government to bring the outlaws under control and on the SLM/A to exercise restraint following this, the first such attack following the DPA.

## **Southern Sudan**

### **LRA pledges cessation of operations to GoSS**

(*AlRai AlAam* – 16<sup>th</sup> May. **Juba**) The Ugandan Lord Resistance Army (LRA) has pledged to stop all operations in South Sudan and resolve all conflicts with the GoSS.

Meanwhile GoS efforts at mediating between the Uganda government and the Lord's Resistance Army seems to have progressed significantly. GoSS Vice-President Dr. Riek Machar has announced that the GoSS has received a list of 8 LRA representatives to talks with the Uganda government.

Machar says President Museveni of Uganda has expressed willingness to talk with the LRA.

The GoSS Vice-President said that the talks may be held in Sudan at a venue and date to be specified.