



UNITED NATIONS MISSION IN SUDAN  
UNMIS

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**(By Public Information Office)**

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## **HIGHLIGHTS:**

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

#### **United Nations envoy to discuss with Khartoum the Security Council resolution**

(*AlRai AlAam* – 18<sup>th</sup> May. **Khartoum**) Secretary-General Kofi Anan and Vice-President Taha agreed yesterday that the UN send a special envoy in the next two days for more consultations with the Sudanese government over the role of the UN in Sudan.

Vice-President Taha revealed that he had a phone call yesterday from the UN chief and that the discussions covered the recent UN Security Council resolution over which they agreed more consultation was needed.

#### **Pronk urges government to accept Security Council resolution**

(*AlAyaam, AlRai AlAam* – 18<sup>th</sup> May. **Khartoum**) Following a meeting between the two, SRSR Jan Pronk said yesterday that he discussed with Vice-President Taha on proposals on the situation in Darfur.

The SRSR did not elaborate but said that he urged the Sudan government to accept the recent Security Council resolution.

UNMIS Spokesperson Bahaa Elkoussy said that talks yesterday between Taha and the SRSR covered the African Union Peace & Security Council meeting, the UN Security Council resolution following that meeting and future steps concerning the peace in Darfur.

Elkoussy said that the SRSR left for West Darfur in the wake of his meeting with the Vice-President. During his 3-day visit, he adds, the SRSR will seek to marshal support for the DPA and will be holding meetings today with state officials.

The SRSR will also hold talks with leaders of the armed groups to urge them to join in the DPA. The SRSR, continues the Spokesperson, will hold talks tomorrow with Fur tribal leaders and with officials of UNMIS and AMIS in West Darfur and will be assessing the security and humanitarian situation there.

On the other hand, UNMIS has welcomed the government decision to earmark 20,000 metric tonnes of food to fill the food gap in Darfur.

Speaking to SUNA, Elkoussy said that the decision was a positive one and backs the efforts currently being exerted to provide more assistance to the needy in Darfur.

The spokesperson urged donors to increase their funding for food and humanitarian assistance.

#### **Reactions to the Security Council resolution**

FOREIGN MINISTER AKOL IN MOSCOW: SUDAN IS OPEN FOR TALKS OVER UN ROLE IN DARFUR

(*ST* – 18<sup>th</sup> May. **Moscow**) Sudan is open to discussing a role for the United Nations in bringing peace to the troubled Darfur region following a recent peace accord, Sudanese Foreign Minister Lam Akol said Thursday.

"The conclusion of a peace agreement created a new situation," said Akol.

"The agreement made no mention of any group of countries or organisation except the African Union. But we, as representatives of the Sudanese government, are ready for dialogue with the United Nations about the role they could play in Sudan," Akol told a news conference during a visit to Moscow.

The UN Security Council has been pressing for UN peacekeepers to take over from an embattled contingent of African Union troops in Darfur since the signing of a peace agreement in Abuja earlier this month.

Meeting Akol on Wednesday, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said the possible transformation of the peacekeeping mission into that of the UN "must take place with the agreement of the Sudanese government and the African Union".

Akol's visit was aimed at strengthening political and economic ties with Russia, which is a permanent member of the UN Security Council and has had friendly relations with Sudan.

OFFICIAL SAYS GOVERNMENT NOT INCLINED TO CONFRONT THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

(*AlAyaam* – 18<sup>th</sup> May. **Khartoum**) Ambassador Jamal Mohamed Ibrahim, the spokesperson for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, says the recent UN Security Council resolution is in line with the African Union Peace & Security Council resolution and the UN Presidential Statement on the issue.

Sudan, he adds, is cooperating with the Security Council since resolution 1590 mandated UMIS and this cooperation was crowned by the signing of the SOFA.

He said there was therefore no need for the Security Council to issue in its recent resolutions statements that obligate Sudan to allow a UN assessment mission into the country since the channels of communication are open between Sudan and the UN and these issues could easily have been addressed through dialogue.

He said that the Sudan government is keen not to get into a confrontation on the issue with the international community or the Security Council and these issues could have been addressed through dialogue and far from Chapter VII resolutions.

The Spokesperson said that the government is currently discussing the issue at the level of its higher institutions and is ready for extensive dialogue with the international community on the issue [*"and expressed hopes that the dialogue would proceed without difficulties or obstacle"* adds Sudan Vision in her version of the story].

THE HEAD OF THE GOVERNMENT DELEGATION TO THE ABUJA TALKS

Dr. Majzoub el-Khalifa who led the government delegation to the talks in Abuja that culminated to the signing of the DPA points out that the UN Security Council's recent resolution on Darfur brings in nothing new but is a repetition of the African Union Peace & Security Council resolution issued last Monday.

## PARLIAMENT

*AlSahafa* reports that the National Assembly will be briefed by the Minister of Foreign Affairs on the government's position on the UN Security Council resolution that has sparked much reaction [*the paper does not mention when the briefing will take place*].

Assembly Speaker Ahmed Ibrahim el-Tahir is however said to have been overheard lobbying member support for a rejection of the resolution and calling on members to voice their opinion on the issue.

## SLM

SLM-Minnawi has urged government to allow UN peacekeepers to Darfur in order to avert any confrontation on the issue with the international community.

A spokesman for the armed group pointed out that the Sudan government had earlier voiced its consent in principle and pegged it to a peace deal being reached in Abuja.

## ANALYSTS: SUDAN TO ACCEPT UN FORCE BUT WANTS TO SAVE FACE

(*ST* – 17<sup>th</sup> May. **Khartoum**) Sudan is ready to accept the deployment of UN peacekeepers in Darfur despite defiant rhetoric catering to domestic opinion hostile to what is perceived as a US-engineered intervention, analysts say.

While President Omar al-Bashir once threatened to turn Darfur into "a graveyard" for foreign troops, his regime has since signalled it would accept the deployment.

"We are ready to negotiate with the United Nations" on its peacekeeping project, Information Minister Zahawi Ibrahim Malek told AFP in an interview.

Malek emphasised that a UN deployment would only take place at Khartoum's explicit request but said that "if Sudan deems that the situation requires such a deployment, we have no objection because we are part of the United Nations.

"There was a time when we were totally opposed to the idea of a deployment by any troops other than the African Union. But the present situation has its own imperatives," he said.

At an AU Peace and Security Council meeting in Addis Ababa earlier this week, Nigerian Foreign Minister Olu Adeinji said Khartoum was no longer adamantly opposed to a deployment but wanted to discuss the modalities.

"The only issue we are not willing to negotiate is the sovereignty of Sudan over its territory," Malek added, ahead of next month's visit by a UN Security Council delegation.

On Tuesday, the council unanimously adopted a resolution urging speedy implementation of the peace accord and threatening "strong and effective measures" against those standing in the way.

The resolution also called on the Abuja parties to cooperate to speed up the transition to a UN operation, and endorsed Monday's decision by the AU Peace and Security Council that "concrete steps" be taken to that end.

"There's nothing inconsistent on the part of the Sudanese government with letting the UN deploy," a Western diplomat said. "But it's important for them to retain face."

"The government will accept the UN deployment," predicted Hassan Mekki, who teaches political science at Khartoum's African University.

"But it is waiting for guarantees so it can go and explain to the Arab tribes that the 'blue helmets' are not coming to combat them," he said.

The partial peace agreement signed earlier this month under the aegis of the African Union calls for a "complete and verifiable" disarmament of the Janjaweed, which Mekki argued could pose a major problem.

"If foreign forces come with the aim of disarming the Arab tribes, this could lead to an Iraqi-style resistance, with attacks and eventually another war," he said.

Mekki warned of the risk that Arab tribes would consider a deployment by UN peacekeepers as tantamount to a US intervention and that the government faced an uphill struggle to clarify the situation with public opinion.

With a UN deployment looking increasingly unavoidable, some Khartoum editorialists have warned that while the civil conflict in Darfur pitted Muslims against each other, warring parties would form a united front to face "Western Christian hegemony".

### **Sudan's support crucial for UN peacekeeping in Darfur - Russia**

(AP/ST – 17th May. **Moscow**) Russia's foreign minister said Wednesday the U.N. should only take over peacekeeping in Darfur from the African Union in consultation with Sudan's government, which has been opposed to the mission.

Sergey Lavrov said that a U.N. Security Council resolution passed Tuesday pressing Sudan to cooperate with the proposed U.N. force didn't remove the necessity to obtain Khartoum's consent. Lavrov spoke following talks with Sudan's Foreign Minister, Lam Akol.

"As a result of (Russia's) initiative, it is clearly stated in the resolution that this potential transformation (to a U.N. force) should take place in close consultation with the Sudanese government and the African Union," Lavrov said.

The underfunded 7,300-member African Union peacekeeping force has been unable to end the suffering in Darfur, where fighting between rebels and Arab militias known as the Janjaweed has killed nearly 200,000 people since 2003.

The violence has continued despite a May 5 peace agreement signed by the Sudanese government and Darfur's main rebel group.

The Sudanese foreign minister thanked Russia for its stance on the Darfur conflict, where Sudan's government is accused of backing the Janjaweed fighters who have carried out a campaign of murder, rape and arson on civilians. Russia is a major arms supplier to Khartoum.

"We are thankful to the progressive position that the Russian Federation has been taking regarding the issues of Sudan, and seeing that the discussions, whether it is in the Security

Council or bilateral relations, are directed to the objective part of it rather than other considerations," Akol said.

Akol didn't comment on the possible replacement of the African Union force, but said on Monday that the peace agreement "rendered the issue of the transfer of the African Union mission to the U.N. no longer relevant."

Under the resolution, the council demands that an assessment team are deployed to Sudan within a week to prepare for the transition to the U.N. peacekeeping force.

In addition to Russia, fellow veto-wielding Security Council member China and Qatar, a non-permanent council member, have supported Sudan's position.

An earlier draft had explicitly mentioned the involvement of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in preparing for the U.N. to take over peacekeeping in Darfur, but Russia and China were opposed.

Western leaders have envisioned a scenario whereby NATO would provide logistics and training to the force.

### **Germany to extend peace mission in Kosovo, Darfur**

(*Xinhua/ST* – 17<sup>th</sup> May. **Berlin**) The German government has decided to extend the mandate of the country's troops serving with the NATO-led peace-keeping force KFOR in Kosovo, a spokesman said Wednesday.

Meanwhile, the government also decided to extend the mandate of its military airlift forces serving in Sudan's Darfur region through Dec. 2, Steg said.

Germany has up to 200 troops in Darfur helping provide airlift services mainly for African Union peacekeepers.

## **CPA**

### **SAF and SPLA mine action training in Juba**

(*Khartoum Monitor* – 18th May. **Khartoum**) The Senior Technical Adviser at UNMAO said yesterday in an orientation workshop for press editors that they have nominated 140 members of the SPLA and SAF to be flown to Kenya for Mi which, it is hoped, will begin in the near future.

Qadeem Khan Tariq said that they already have trained about 80-85 army members from both the SAF and the SPLA and underlined the need for local capacity building with regards to mine action.

He pointed out that there is a big gap for mine action resources and Sudan has around 500 local de-miners compared to the 7,000 of other post-war countries.

He mentioned a funding shortage and said that on Darfur, according to his knowledge, there is evidence that landmines have been used.

## **Eastern Equatoria community concerned with influx of SPLA soldiers**

(*Juba Post* – 18<sup>th</sup> May. **Torit**) An influx of 2,500 SPLA soldiers into Hiyala centre, Eastern Equatoria, is causing some problems with the local population as resources are not enough to accommodate the population increase.

The local administration complains of limited services for the soldiers and local population of 8,000.

Water and sanitation facilities are lacking and there are signs of disease outbreak, the local authorities report.

## **Southerners return from South Darfur to Bahr-el-Ghazal**

(*Juba Post* – 18<sup>th</sup> May. **Juba**) About 160 returnees have arrived in Mariyal Bal and 191 proceeded to Arriyadth from the Bileil Camp in South Darfur.

On 2nd May, an estimated 1,770 returnees set off from Nyala on their way to Kiir Aden.

The IOM is handling transportation of the IDPs using 48 trucks.

A church group has recently assisted 1,000 returnees from South Darfur to Kiir Aden.

Spontaneous returnees are reported to be entering from points between Kiir And Galoma and many of them are taking advantage of the transportation plans in place.

## **Melut-Malakal road opened**

(*Juba Post* – 18<sup>th</sup> May. **Malakal**) On 3<sup>rd</sup> May, the Melut Country inaugurated the Melut-Malakal road in a ceremony witnessed by the Local Civil Commissioner and other high government officials and SAF, SPLA and the local police.

A convoy of 15 – 17 vehicles moved from Melut, Paloich, Koradar and onwards to Malakal.

## **Major returns expected for Aweil**

(*Juba Post* – 18<sup>th</sup> May. **Aweil**) UN military observers estimate that 3,076 returnees are on their way to Aweil town and the surrounding northern areas.

Due to the nature of the movement by civilian trucks there is no means of communication with the civilian truck convoy.

## **No SAF soldier to take wives back home**

(*Juba Post* – 18<sup>th</sup> May. **Juba**) None of the SAF soldiers being relocated north of line 1.1.'56 will be allowed to take along their wives without following the legal procedures, the Commissioner of Central Equatoria State said last week.

Commissioner Peter Jerdis said most of the SAF soldiers did not pay bride price and feared the southern Sudanese spouses will be abandoned in the north or that the parents of their husbands will not accept these girls.

He said a committee has been formed to look into these issues.

On the other hand, a SAF officer shot and seriously injured his wife because she refused to follow him to the north despite the fact that he has not yet paid the bride price.

### **Obstacles limit return of south Sudan displaced**

(*ST* – 17<sup>th</sup> May. **Khartoum**) A year and a half after Sudan's north-south peace deal, ambitious plans for the return of millions of displaced people are being quashed by a host of physical and financial obstacles.

Since the January 2005 peace agreement that ended more than two decades of deadly fighting between Khartoum and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement, only a fraction of the four million displaced have headed back to their homes.

Robert Turner, who heads the UN mission in Sudan's Return, Reintegration and Recovery (RRR) unit, put the figure at 500,000.

The autonomous government of south Sudan had set itself a target of repatriating another half million displaced people during the dry seasons of 2006 alone, allocating 24 million dollars for transport costs.

But the United Nations asked the authorities to downscale the programme in the face of serious logistical problems in a country covering 2.5 million square kilometres (almost one million square miles), the largest in Africa.

"They lowered the number from 500,000 to 150,000 but that's not possible either.

"It's not realistic to do it in this calendar year because a lot of the overland routes won't be fully passable almost until the end of this year," Turner told AFP in an interview.

A Western diplomat explained that the southern government wanted mass repatriations in order to swell the electorate ahead of the general elections that could take place as early as 2008.

The scrapping of the current executive was enshrined in the peace accord with Khartoum.

The southern authorities have also sought to speed up the return of the displaced — notably the estimated two million who live in and around Khartoum — as the labour is needed to rebuild the devastated region, Turner said.

"We are not encouraging returns," he quickly added. But short of being able to regulate them, the United Nations has decided to assist the returns in a bid to prevent a new humanitarian crisis.

Yet the world body — which is conducting the world's largest humanitarian operation in Sudan — suffers from a dire shortage of funds, with only 11 of the 80 million dollars budgeted for RRR paid so far.

Further threats await those who make it back home before they can resume a normal life.



"Landmines, the absence of any basic infrastructure and insecurity" are only some of them, said the World Health Organisation's Jean Rigal.

The estimated five million landmines sown in south Sudan during the 21 years of civil war continue to kill and maim people, as do marauding Ugandan militias from the ultra-violent Lord's Resistance Army.

Sudan's 10 southern states — which are among the poorest regions in the world — are starting from scratch.

They lack schools, hospitals, roads and housing, while poor sanitation has facilitated outbreaks of cholera and meningitis that have affected 15,000 people since the start of the year.

The international community had rallied behind the cause of south Sudan, vowing to bankroll its reconstruction and pledging 600 million dollars at a donor conference in Oslo in April 2005.

"The money is ready to go but donors stressed it was very important it was well spent, while as a matter of fact we are dealing with an infrastructural vacuum," the Khartoum-based Western diplomat said.

He argued this state of affairs affected both equipment and manpower. "The south has brilliant technocrats at the top and community leaders at the grass roots but nothing in between."

## **DPA**

### **SLM-AbdulWahid says it is will join in signing the DPA before the end of this month**

(*AlSahafa* – 18<sup>th</sup> May. **Khartoum, Abuja**) SLM-AbdulWahid announced yesterday that it will sign the DPA by the end of this month as it has reached the conviction that the DPA can not be changed without their signing.

SLM-AbdulWahid says that there are ongoing consultations with the government, the AU and the international community in a bid to increase the 30 million dollars earmarked for compensation.

An aide for AbdulWahid said that their faction is seeking more guarantees for an increase in the amount and hoped that the government and the international community will respond favourably.

He added that the AbdulWahid faction may sign the DPA before the end of this month.

### **Rebel JEM mulls joining Darfur peace deal**

(*ST* – 17<sup>th</sup> May. **London**) Consultations are running among the leadership of the Darfur Justice and Equality Movement to decide whether they will ink Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) signed early this month between the Sudanese government and the Sudan Liberation Movement- Minawi faction.

Sources close to the JEM told Sudan Tribune, leading members engaged a discussion with their leader Khalil Ibrahim who is currently in N'djamena to persuade him to sign the Au brokered deal. "We think the Chadian president will push him to go in this direction" said a JEM member.

The sources disclosed that the rebel JEM tries to obtain some guaranties to accept the DPA.

The JEM is expected to hold consultations with the SLM-AbdulWahid al-Nur to convince him they join the DPA together.

### **Sudan says will not open talks on Darfur peace deal**

(*Xinhua/ST* – 17<sup>th</sup> May. **Khartoum**) Sudan refused on Wednesday to reopen negotiation on a peace deal signed between the government and a main rebel faction in Sudan's western region of Darfur earlier this month.

"We will not open the negotiation again and there is no problem (in the peace agreement) which should be negotiated any more," Sudanese government delegation to Abuja talks spokesperson Amin Hassan Omer told reporters.

The spokesperson said the government was set to implement the peace agreement by establishing a central committee for the Darfur development and estimating the needs in the region before a donors' conference due in Holland in September.

The government would also allocate 300 million U.S. dollars before the end of this year for launching the development program in Darfur and providing the basic services for the residents in the region.

### **Khartoum prepares to receive Minnawi next Thursday**

(*AlRai AlAam* – 18<sup>th</sup> May. **Khartoum**) Informed sources within the SLM's Minnawi faction report that the SLM has formed committees to prepare to welcome Minnawi when he comes to Khartoum next week.

## **Southern Sudan**

### **Museveni and Salva Kiir grant LRA's Kony 2 months to sit for talks**

(*Khartoum Monitor* – 18<sup>th</sup> May.) President Yuwari Museveni of Uganda has given Lord's Resistance Army leader Joseph Kony another chance to renounce the rebellion.

A statement issued by the office of the President of Republic says Museveni and the GoSS have given Kony a new ultimatum of 60 days – up to July this year – "to peacefully end terrorism".

The statement said that both leaders vowed to "handle him [*Kony*] militarily" should he refuse to grasp this latest offer.

### **Tensions arise over resources in Yei town**

(*Juba Post* – 18<sup>th</sup> May. **Yei**) IDPs who arrived in Yei last December with a number of cattle have created tension between the local communities in Yei town and the outlying villages.

The Acting Commissioner of Yei River County said that these tensions are as a result of competition over the scarce water and land resources in the town and are becoming a contentious issue.

The IDPs in question were neither granted grazing land for their cattle nor were they settled in camps – they simply integrated into the local communities and settled in other peoples' plots.

## **Other Developments**

### **Sudan tightens foreign press travel to Darfur**

(*Reuters/ST* – 18<sup>th</sup> May. **Khartoum**) Sudan has tightened restrictions on foreign press traveling to Darfur and has not issued any travel permits to its violent western region since a peace deal was signed earlier this month.

Experts who have watched Darfur since the conflict erupted in early 2003 say this is the most restrictive the government has been on access since the height of the conflict in 2004.

U.N. humanitarian chief Jan Egeland called on the government to allow press access to Darfur especially as donors have been slow to respond to the crisis this year, forcing food rations to be halved in May.

"It is vital for journalists to be given full access to Darfur ... to cover the humanitarian work and explain the urgent need for additional international support," he said.

During the height of the Darfur conflict, which has claimed tens of thousands of lives and forced 2 million people from their homes, journalists were made to wait weeks in Khartoum for travel permits to the remote west.

In 2003 and early 2004 many resorted to sneaking across the porous border with Chad to expose the misery of the people suffering what the United Nations called the world's worst humanitarian crisis.

But the government eased access to Darfur and began issuing travel permits within two to three days for visiting journalists and even less time for resident correspondents.

Since early May, however, when a peace agreement was signed in Abuja, Nigeria, no travel permits have been issued, said an official at the External Affairs Council responsible for foreign press. He did not know why.

Some foreign press have travelled to Darfur without permits on high-level delegations or with the African Union, who are monitoring a widely ignored truce in Darfur. But without permits their access is very limited and they risk being arrested.

"I applied for a permit for myself and my photographer on May 3 and still to this day have not received them," said Lydia Polgreen of The New York Times, who is traveling in Darfur with the AU.

Dan Rice of the Guardian newspaper said he had no travel permit despite applying 11 days ago. Permissions for resident journalists, which are usually issued within a day, have not been given after 10 days.

Some correspondents have been waiting months for visas to even enter Sudan.

While foreign press are being hindered from traveling to Darfur, thousands of Darfuris are daily demonstrating angrily in the camps against the AU-mediated deal, which was signed by only one rebel group faction. Two other factions refused to sign.

They say the deal does not meet their demands including adequate representation in central government and involvement in the disarmament of Arab militias. Camp residents have attacked the AU and government, killing an AU translator last week.

"In light of the peace agreement it would be good to have a clear picture of what is happening in Darfur so that the world can see with transparency the commitment of all parties to the deal," said Gemmo Lodesani, a senior U.N. humanitarian in Khartoum.

Officials from the humanitarian affairs commission who issue the permits were not available to comment but Humanitarian Affairs Minister Kosti Manyebi told reporters there should not be barriers.

"Within the next three months we want to put new procedures in place for helping Darfur ... and I believe they will address your concerns adequately," he said.

Sudanese officials said new Darfur travel forms have been introduced in the past two months stating foreign press needed to get permission from local authorities before leaving main towns. Most attacks in Darfur are on remote villages far away from urban centres.

"This is for the security of journalists," said one government official.