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(By Public Information Office)

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HIGHLIGHTS:

UN/ AU-UN Transition

Sudan demands consultations before visas to UN experts

(*ST, AlRai AlAam, AlAyaam* – 23rd May. **Khartoum**) Sudan on Monday denied United Nations military experts' immediate access to the western region of Darfur before prior consultation with Khartoum.

"The visas will not be issued to the international military experts before consultations are held between the government and the United Nations," said Samani al-Wasila al-Sheikh,

Lakhdar Brahimi, Special Envoy of the UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, is expected to arrive in Khartoum Tuesday 23 May morning to hold talks with Sudanese officials on this issue.

The state minister said that the Sudan government has closely been following the escalating campaign to deploy international peacekeepers to Darfur and rejects such pressures on the government to succumb.

He pointed out that the government doubts the motives behind such a push for deployment and does not reject the Security Council resolution but only seeks more consultation on the issue.

"The settlement of peace in Darfur needs economic and social rather than security efforts," al-Sheikh told reporters.

He said that an AU delegation will arrive in Sudan on Wednesday to get acquainted with the preparations for implementing the peace agreement the government signed with Darfur rebels to put an end to the three-year conflict.

Sources say that UN envoy Lakhdar Brahimi who is expected in the country later today will also hold talks with Darfur activists to acquaint himself with their views on the deployment of international troops to Darfur.

On the other hand, reports say a Darfur lawyers' fraternity will deliver a memorandum to the UN envoy welcoming the deployment of international forces to Darfur and stressing the need for amendments to the DPA to make it more comprehensive.

The memorandum, the source intimates, points out that the deployment of international forces to Darfur is imperative to rein in and disarm the Janjaweed.

Parliament rejects UN troop deployment to Darfur

(*AlAyaam* – 23rd May. **Omdurman**) The Speaker of the National Assembly says parliament's rejection to the deployment of international forces to Darfur is still valid.

He pointed out that parliament has no objection to the executive organs of government debating over the issue but still stands by its decision against such a deployment.

He added however that parliament will listen to the briefing next Wednesday that the foreign minister is due to present before parliament on the issue.

UN seeks to persuade Sudan to accept peacekeepers

(*Reuters/ST* – 23rd May. **Khartoum**) Senior United Nations diplomats seek to persuade Sudanese President Omar Hassan al-Bashir's government on Tuesday to accept a U.N. peacekeeping force in the western Darfur region.

Khartoum, under international pressure to accept a transition to U.N. peacekeepers, initially resisted and said such a deployment would cause an Iraq-like quagmire that would attract Islamist militants into attacking the U.N. troops.

But since the peace deal was struck, the government has softened its stance and says it does not reject a U.N. force but wants to be consulted about its mandate in Darfur — an arid ethnically mixed region the size of France.

Veteran troubleshooter Lakhdar Brahimi and U.N. peacekeeping head Hedi Annabi are due to arrive for a two-day visit during which they plan to meet Bashir and other government leaders.

"We are hoping that we can work out an agreement with the government because ... this (deployment) should not be done without the agreement of the government," said U.N. deputy spokesman Bahaa Elkoussy.

The United Nations hopes Brahimi, an Algerian, will be able to deal more easily with the Islamist government in Khartoum. In the past he has tackled issues such as Iraq and Afghanistan.

Dr. Turabi rejects UN request for his mediation with the armed groups of Darfur

(*AlSahafa* – 23rd May. **Khartoum**) SRSRSG Jan Pronk held talks yesterday with the Secretary-General of the Popular Congress Party Dr. Hassan El-Turabi.

The talks that span more than an hour covered the situation in Darfur and the envisaged Darfur-Darfur Dialogue.

Following the meeting, SRSRSG Pronk told reporters that his talks with Dr. Turabi comes in the context of UN continued consultations with political forces in the country.

He said he had requested Dr. Turabi to look at the DPA constructively. The SRSG said he also pointed out that there are a number of armed groups that did not sign the DPA but should participate in the Darfur-Darfur Dialogue.

On his part, Dr. Turabi told the press that the meeting with the SRSH covered, among other things, issues pertaining to human rights in Darfur, the protracted state of emergency and the continued arrest campaigns and on the UN's role in Darfur.

Turabi also told the press that Mr. Pronk told him that the UN is coming to Darfur and that the government may sign a deal on the issue. He said Pronk noted that the government's hesitation to allow for a deployment of UN troops to Darfur is a reflection of uncertainty about the mandate of such a force and whether or not it will include pursuing and arresting those wanted for war crimes in Darfur so they could be brought before the ICC "because the issue may affect some big people".

Turabi said that the Popular Congress Party sees the DPA as an incomplete document that needs to be improved upon.

Darfur's UN force could be same troops in different hats

(*AF/ST* – 22nd May. **El-Fasher**) If a United Nations force takes over from African Union (AU) peacekeepers in the troubled Sudanese region of Darfur all they need do is exchange their green berets for blue ones.

For it looks like the UN force, if deployed, will be the existing African outfit in new guise.

The contingent sent by the pan-African AU organisation is badly cash-strapped. But it says it could continue doing the job of providing security in this war-torn region if given the resources at the disposal of the UN.

"We don't have enough vehicles, we don't get paid regularly," complained an NCO. "With the UN here our mission will be more stable."

The Sudan government previously refused to allow the deployment of UN troops in Darfur without a peace accord with the rebels.

But now that hurdle is considered practically cleared after a peace accord signed in Nigeria this month, it is only a matter of time before the Khartoum government gives the green light to the UN, say experts.

"The AU force is already on the ground and its soldiers are from countries in the UN," said an AU officer. "All we'll need to do is change the signs on our trucks and put on blue berets."

"But it's essential for the UN to take over officially, because it has more experience and more resources than the AU," added the officer, who wished to remain anonymous.

And one western diplomat based in the Sudanese capital Khartoum said of the UN mission sought particularly by the United States, "it won't be western. It will be African."

The AU force here, largely financed by the US, Canada and the European Union, has a mandate until September, but has already set up logistics for UN operations.

"The advantage in Darfur is that the UN won't have to start from scratch," said a diplomat.

Things are constantly humming at Al-Fasher where the AU has its main encampment. Patrols, recognisable by white-painted vehicles bearing AU insignia, quarter the territory to check the security situation.

Local Sudanese greet them and village chiefs welcome officers who have already become familiar faces in a new climate of confidence built up in recent months.

The AU force has succeeded in achieving contacts even with the recalcitrant groups.

"We've got very good relations with the African soldiers," said self-styled General Tarrada, a leader of an SLM splinter group encountered some 70 kilometres (40 miles) west of Al-Fasher.

But the prospect of a UN deployment still has to be explained to local Darfur people, most of them Muslims. Many, especially supporters of the Khartoum regime, fear an American-style invasion like that in Iraq.

"We are against a UN presence," said Abdallah Jouzou, mayor of Kouma in pro-government territory 80 kilometres (50 miles) from Al-Fasher.

"The African Union has helped to settle the conflict in Darfur and it remains the only solution," he said.

But when an AU officer explained to him that the new UN force would be mainly African, Jouzou looked relieved.

"In that case, it's fine," he agreed.

UN report on the human rights situation in Sudan 2006

(*ST* – 22nd May. **Khartoum**) The UNHCR issued today (22nd May 2006) a report covering human rights issues in Darfur, as well as in Eastern Sudan and Abyei*.

However, much of it focuses on Darfur, the ongoing violence, the needed to end impunity, violations against human rights defenders, and the need to reform Sudan's security apparatus.

The report covers the period of December 2005 to April 2006, and is issued by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in cooperation with the United Nations Mission in the Sudan (UNMIS). It is the third report issued jointly by OHCHR and UNMIS.2 The report covers seven human rights issues:

- The impact of the conflict in Darfur on civilians and the Government of Sudan's inability and unwillingness to hold perpetrators of international crimes accountable;
- The persistence of sexual and gender-based violence in Darfur;

- The ill-treatment, detention, and harassment of people who voice their human rights concerns in the Sudan;
- The problem of torture and cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment in detention facilities in Khartoum and Darfur;
- Reforming the Government's security apparatus to prevent it from committing human rights violations with impunity;
- The problem of Other Armed Groups (OAGs) in Southern Sudan and the three Transitional Areas (Abyei, Southern Kordofan, and Blue Nile States);
- Emerging human rights issues in Eastern Sudan.

* The full text of the 27-page UNHCR report compiled in cooperation with UNMIS is attached in PDF format

GoNU

Authorities clamp down on anti-DPA demonstrators

(*AlSahafa* – 23RD May. **Khartoum**) Students from the Nilein University took to the streets of central Khartoum yesterday protesting against the DPA.

The demonstrations which continued for almost one hour crippled traffic in the Khartoum business district (*Suq el-Arabi*) and traders quickly closed their shops as the demonstrators threw stones at car windows in the area. Police had to use teargas to bring the situation under control.

According to its press office, the police said four ready-for-use Molotov canisters were uncovered in central Khartoum but the demonstrations ended without any casualties of note.

CPA

JDB endorses salary and organisational structure

(*AlAyaam* – 23rd May. **Khartoum**) The spokesman for the Joint Defence Board says the board sat yesterday and, after long discussions, endorsed the JDB salary and organisational structures.

Spokesman Mjr. Gen. Majzoub Raham told *AlAyaam* that the meeting also discussed plans to flush out the Lord's Resistance Army and redeployment.

The meeting, he adds, also endorsed the JDB budget, identification cards, banner and official dress code for the JDBs and agreed to continue discussing the issue of the other armed groups with the Presidency of the Republic.

Boundary demarcations committee reviews performance

(*Sudan Vision* – 23rd May. **Khartoum**) The technical committee charged with the demarcation of the 1.1.'56 line between north and south sat yesterday to review the performance of the sub-committees and other activities related to its duties.

The committee stressed the need to expedite all demarcation documents in order that they be thoroughly scrutinised.

DPA/ Darfur

SAF launches crackdown on the *Janjaweed*

(*AlSahafa* – 23rd May. **Nyala**) The governor of South Darfur says government forces clashed last Friday with a group of *Janjaweed* robbers in Ammar Jadeed.

The governor who was speaking over phone from South Darfur revealed that 7 members of the *Janjaweed* were killed in the crackdown and others were arrested while the SAF lost 3 and suffered a similar number of injured.

On the other hand, a UN report issued yesterday by *Reuters* said that the UN has received information from Sudanese security of a clash in South Darfur between the SAF and the *Janjaweed*. The UN said that they could not confirm the incident but that Sudanese security told them that the clash was sparked by an attempt by the SAF at disarming the *Janjaweed* in South Darfur.

The AU also reports of a gathering of Arab militias in areas of North and South Darfur and say that there was some exchange of fire between these militias and AMIS forces.

The AU says however that they could not confirm reports of a clash between the SAF and these forces.

Government forms task force to monitor the implementation of the DPA

(*AlRai AlAam* – 23rd May. **Khartoum**) The high committee following up on the implementation of the DPA sat yesterday and established a task force to monitor implementation of the agreement and identify obstacles.

AbdulWahid consults with Rizzeigat tribal leaders

(*AlAyaam* – 23rd May. **Khartoum, Abuja**) SLM-AbdulWahid reports that their faction yesterday had extensive discussions with Rizzeigat tribal leaders who denied having exercised pressure on Ibrahim Madibo (who was reported yesterday as having expressed willingness to join the DPA) to sign the DPA.

A high rank member of the faction said that the Rizzeigat leaders expressed their rejection to the DPA and their solidarity with the issues of the displaced and commitment to seek redress to the aggrieved people in Darfur.

SAF accuses some parties of blowing Darfur out of proportion

(*AlAyaam/SMC* – 23rd May. **Khartoum**) The SAF has called on the media in Sudan to be accurate in handling information of a military nature and on analysis of such information and especially on military issues pertaining to Darfur.

The Office of the Spokesperson of the Sudan Armed Forces accused some parties of using the media to try to blow the issue of Darfur out of proportion and thus find justification for the deployment of international forces to Darfur.

Sudan denies violation of Darfur truce

(Reuters/ST – 22nd May. **Khartoum**) Sudan on Monday denied Darfur rebel reports that its troops had attacked their camps, breaking a cease-fire and a peace deal signed this month to end the conflict which has killed tens of thousands.

The peace deal was signed under intense global pressure on May 5 between the government and one main rebel faction. But two other rebel factions refused to sign, saying the deal was unfair. Thousands of Darfuris have demonstrated against the deal.

On Sunday the faction which signed the deal belonging to Minni Arcua Minnawi, said the government and its allied militia had attacked its bases in Dar es Salaam in North Darfur.

"We the armed forces did not attack any areas, not Dar es Salaam or anywhere," said the armed forces spokesman's office in Khartoum. "There are many empty accusations flying around but none of them are true."

The African Union said Arab militias, known as Janjaweed, had been massing in both North and South Darfur states and had exchanged fire with its soldiers. But they could not confirm any government attacks on rebels.

Clashes have continued unabated despite the peace deal between militias and rebels. Smaller clashes between rebel factions also continue. But the government, which the United Nations says armed the Janjaweed to fight the rebels, denies it is using the militias.

"The armed forces do not need to use militias. If we are attacked we have the right to defend ourselves and will do so," said the army official, who declined to be named.

The government admits arming some tribes to fight the rebels in early 2003 but denies any links to the Janjaweed, calling them outlaws.

On Monday Minnawi's faction said the government was using Antonov planes as air cover for large troop movements in North Darfur state in preparation for an attack. The areas of control are not clearly marked so both the government and the rebels claim some areas as theirs.

"They flew Antonov planes for two hours this morning," said al-Tayyib Khamis, a spokesman for Minnawi's Sudan Liberation Army (SLA) faction. "They are trying to get as much territory as possible before the U.N. troops come in," he added.

The cash-strapped African Union force has asked for a U.N. transition in Darfur. The force has been unable to stop attacks on civilians even when present and those in the refugee camps have attacked them out of frustration.

Sudan prior to the peace deal had refused a U.N. force and U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan is sending top diplomat Lakhdar Brahimi for high-level talks in Khartoum on Tuesday hoping to secure a breakthrough.

AU, rebels delegation to Khartoum to discuss peace implementation

(*ST* – 22nd May. **Khartoum**) Delegations from the African Union and Darfur rebels will arrive to Khartoum within two days to discuss practical steps toward the implementation of the Darfur Peace Agreement, said the head of the Sudanese delegation to Abuja talks.

Chief negotiator of the Sudanese government delegation at Darfur peace talks Majzoub al-Khalifa told reporters that a delegation of the African Union, headed by Ambassador Sam Ebok, and other delegations of the rebel groups are expected to arrive in Khartoum on Wednesday to begin the practical implementation of the peace agreement.

The Sudanese official, who attended a meeting headed by the Sudanese president on the implementation of the peace agreement, said that arrangements are being adopted to receive signatories of Darfur peace agreement.

He stated that the higher committee's meeting has reviewed reports of specialized committees and the vision of the political committee regarding the media and mobilization plans at the internal and external levels to boost the implementation of the agreement.

Al-Khalifa said that the technical committee has given at the meeting its vision concerning the items of disarmament, guaranteeing security at the sites, re-opening of passages and conducting tribal reconciliation, adding that the humanitarian affairs committee also referred to the assignment of 20,000 metric tons of food materials that would meet the requirements of the needy people in Darfur till next September.

He added that the meeting of the higher committee also heard a report of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs concerning its external contacts to acquaint with Darfur peace agreement and supports.

Sudan release Human rights activists detained in Darfur

(*ST* – 22nd May. **London**) Human rights lawyers Mossaad Mohamed Ali and Adam Mohamed Sharief have been released but have to report daily to the National Security Agency offices (NSA) in Nyala, South Darfur, rights organisations announced today.

On May 16, Sudanese security services detained Mossaad Mohamed Ali, the coordinator of the Amel Centre for Treatment and Rehabilitation of Victims of Torture, a non-governmental organization providing legal, medical, and psychosocial care for victims of rape, torture, and other abuses in South Darfur.

According to Amnesty International and Sudan Organisation Against Torture, Adam Mohamed Sharief was allowed home at 11 pm on 16 May, but told to report to the offices of the NSA in Nyala on the following morning. Since then he has had to report to the offices on daily basis at 7am and is not allowed home until later in the evening. During this time however he has not been questioned and has to wait around all day.

Mossaad Mohamed Ali was released from the NSA offices on 20 May at 5.30pm. He has been released without charge and whilst being detained was only interrogated once on 19 May after being held for three days. During the interrogation, he was questioned about the Amel Centre for the Treatment and Rehabilitation Centre of Victims of Torture and

reportedly accused of opposing the Darfur Peace Agreement. He was also accused of inciting internally displaced people to resort to violence. He too has been ordered to report on a daily basis to the NSA and is made to stay until the evening.

The NSA refused to allow human rights monitors from the UN Mission in Sudan to see the detainees whilst they were being held, even though the authorities have agreed to allow the UN unrestricted access to all detainees held in Darfur. Mossaad Mohamed Ali was allowed to meet his family for only five minutes on 19 May and to meet a group of Nyala-based lawyers on 20 May shortly before his release following international pressure on the authorities.

The practice of summoning people (istid'a) is a frequent form of harassment. "The individual is summoned to the security department and interrogated, or made to sit around, for several hours; this daily summoning is frequently repeated, sometimes for up to two weeks", Amnesty said.

Southern Sudan

Ugandan army kills 226 LRA rebels this year - report

(*Xinhua/ST* – 22nd May. **Kampala**) According to the Operation Iron Fist Performance Report January 1, 2006 - May 21, 2006 sent to Xinhua by the Army Spokesman's office, 226 rebels were killed, 69 were captured alive while 36 were forced to surrender.

During the operation, the army recovered 158 lights arms, 11 machine guns, two mortars and 109 bombs of different calibre among other weapons.

The report said nine People's Defence Force (UPDF) soldiers were killed during the operation while four soldiers were injured.

Operation Iron Fist, which was launched in 2002 covers northern Uganda and southern Sudan. Analysts have described the operation as being largely successful.

A joint operation between the Sudanese People's Liberation Army and the UPDF forced rebel leader, Joseph Kony and his deputy to flee their bases in southern Sudan and crossed to eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

According to the Ugandan military, about 95 percent of the LRA rebels in southern Sudan have relocated to Garamba National Park in eastern DRC.

"Our forces in southern Sudan have made major success in wiping out these rebels. And because of our fire power, they are fleeing to the DRC," said the 4th Division army spokesman Lt. Chris Magezi in a recent interview.

President Yoweri Museveni recently gave Kony an ultimatum of 60 days of up to July this year to renounce rebellion and guaranteed his safety.

He said if Kony is serious about a peaceful settlement, the government would guarantee his safety. Kony and four of his commanders had been indicted by the International Criminal Court.

This peace deal which has been described as the final offer by Museveni is the latest attempt by his government to hold talks with Kony. In December 2004, efforts to sign a peace agreement fell through at the last minute.