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(By Public Information Office)

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IN THE NEWS TODAY:➤ **UN/ Agencies**

- Akhbar Al Yom conducts the first interview with SRSG in Sudan, text of the interview will be published tomorrow (Akhbar Al Yom)
- Ashraf Qazi discloses full details of his recent visit to Abyei after claims of the area being occupied by SPLA (Akhbar Al Yom)
- Qazi says he is concerned over developments in Abyei and denies trend on the part of UN to intervene politically in the conflict (Akhbar Al Yom)
- Rebels crossing Chadian-Sudanese border of 'deep concern' to Secretary-General
- Sudanese president invited to UN Council summit (ST)

➤ **GoNU (CPA, DPA, ESPA)**

- NCP threatens to suspend joint action on Abyei Protocol (Sudan Vision)
- Sudanese presidency discusses Abyei's administration (ST)
- Sudan confirms release of Darfur war crimes suspect indicted by ICC (ST)
- US urges deployment of 3,600 UN troops in Darfur soon (ST)
- Preparations for Round Table Conference Finalized in Khartoum (Sudan Vision)

➤ **GoSS**

- SPLA soldiers to launch disarmament campaign in Rumbek (ST)
- Jonglei insecurity will not interfere with Sudan census – Director (ST)

➤ **Darfur**

- Sudanese army bombs Darfur rebel's areas: SLA-Unity (ST)

➤ **Miscellaneous**

Highlights

UN/ Agencies

[Akhbar Al Yom's Editor-in-Chief promotes what he describes as the paper's first interview with SRSG Ashraf Qazi with a front-page preview in today's edition](#)

The Editor-in-Chief of Akhbar Al Yom says the interview, to be published tomorrow, will include full details of the SRSG's recent visit to Abyei. The Editor notes the SRSG's concern about developments in Abyei, the fact that they constituted a threat to the CPA and the fact that he had conveyed his concerns to Dinka, Messeriya and CJMC representatives

The SRSG said UNMIS stood ready in CPA terms to assist the parties should they request help in achieving a peaceful settlement. Also, the SRSG had noted the parties' readiness to try to resolve the issue through dialogue. He hoped they would reach a peaceful settlement.

The SRSG made clear UNMIS was in the Sudan to implement the CPA and to assist in building necessary capacity in the North and South. As a Chapter VI mission. UNMIS was not here to intervene in the affairs of Sudan but to implement the SC's resolution, which, Mr. Qazi pointed out, was supported by the UN and by the Government of the Sudan.

According to today's blurb for the interview, SRSG Qazi rejected the idea that the UN might was attempting to intervene politically in the Abyei conflict. He had tried to meet personally with all involved parties in the area, to the exclusion of none. He regretted his inability to visit Muglad because of security reasons and road closures.

The Editor said the SRSG declined to answer questions about Darfur, noting that this was a matter for UNAMID and not part of his mandate as UNMIS SRSG.

[Rebels crossing Chadian-Sudanese border of 'deep concern' to Secretary-General](#)

(ST) 1 April 2008 – Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon today urged Chad and Sudan to make every effort to ensure that rebel groups do not use their territory as a staging ground for incursions across their mutual border.

“The Secretary-General is deeply concerned by reports of continued movement of rebel groups across the Chadian-Sudanese border and by the possibility that these groups may launch cross-border attacks,” Mr. Ban's spokesperson said in a statement.

He called on the Governments of Chad and Sudan to uphold their commitments under the 13 March Dakar Accord, which was facilitated by Mr. Ban, Senegalese President Abdoulaye Wade and others on the margins of the summit of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) and calls for reconciliation and the normalizing of bilateral relations.

Tensions have been high in the region in recent months with about 10,000 people from West Darfur seeking refuge in eastern Chad following a series of deadly air and land attacks by the Sudanese Government and its allied militias, and Chadian rebels suspected of crossing the border to attack the forces of their Government.

In today's message, the Secretary-General called on the Contact Group, established under the Dakar Accord, to work with the parties in facilitating the pact's implementation.

He reaffirmed that the UN stood ready to do everything within its capacity to help stabilize the border region.

[Sudanese president invited to UN Council summit](#)

(ST) April 1, 2008 (UNITED NATIONS) — Sudan's President Omar Hassan al-Bashir has received an invitation to attend a summit meeting of the U.N. Security Council in New York later this month, Sudan's U.N. envoy said on Tuesday.

Several Western diplomats said the invitation to Bashir, who they said has been dragging his feet in agreeing to the full deployment of 26,000 U.N.-African Union peacekeepers in Sudan's war-ravaged Darfur region, came as a surprise to them.

Sudanese Ambassador to the United Nations Abdalmahmoud Abdalhaleem told Reuters: "There was an invitation sent to a few countries that have their agendas on the Security Council like Sudan, and our president is invited."

"So far the capital is studying this very kind invitation from South Africa," he said, adding that Khartoum would make a decision in the coming days on whether Bashir would attend.

South Africa took over the month-long presidency of the Security Council from Russia on Tuesday.

The Hague-based International Criminal Court has charged two Sudanese men — the country's Minister for Humanitarian Affairs Ahmad Harun and former Janjaweed commander Ali Kushayb — with war crimes for their actions in the conflict in Sudan's Western Darfur region. Sudan has refused to hand them over.

Around 2.5 million people have fled their homes during the five year war in Sudan's west. International experts estimate some 200,000 have died from famine, disease or fighting in Darfur, violence the United States calls genocide.

Khartoum denies that genocide has occurred in Darfur and puts the death toll at 9,000.

Bashir has not been charged with war crimes over Darfur, but Western diplomats said his presence at the U.N. headquarters in New York would likely spark protests by non-governmental organizations monitoring the Darfur conflict.

A spokesman for South Africa's mission to the United Nations said the Security Council summit meeting on April 17 would be presided over by his country's President Thabo Mbeki.

He said the leaders of the other 14 council member states had also been invited, along with the leaders of other African countries currently on the agenda of the Security

Council. It was not immediately clear whether Bashir and others would address the council in an open session or behind closed doors.

The point of the meeting is to discuss ways of improving cooperation between the Security Council and regional organizations, in this case the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, the South African spokesman said.

Apart from Sudan, African countries on the agenda of the Security Council include Chad, Ivory Coast, Somalia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Central African Republic, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Ethiopia and Eritrea.

The spokesman said it was too early to say how many other leaders would attend.

GoNU (CPA, DPA, ESPA)

[NCP threatens to suspend joint action on Abyei Protocol](#)

(Sudan Vision) National Congress Party (NCP) said it would no longer be committed to joint work with SPLM towards implementation of Abyei Protocol if it has been established that SPLM endorses the recent development in Abyei.

NCP leading member and Co-chairman of South Kordofan Assessment and Evaluation Commission (AEC), Al-Dirdeeri Mohammed Ahmed, told Sudan Vision that NCP is still awaiting a clarification from SPLM on the steps taken by some of its leading members in Abyei.

"NCP is ready to resume dialogue with SPLM on the implementation of Abyei Protocol if the SPLM confirms that the present development in Abyei is an isolated step taken without its approval and that it is ready to put an end to it," he said. Furthermore, he reiterated that if SPLM actually endorses the unilateral move in Abyei, NCP will consider that SPLM has washed its hand off joint implementation of Abyei Protocol as stipulated by the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. In that case, he said, all options will be open before NCP.

He further added that the President of the Republic will adopt the necessary resolutions that will maintain the dignity of the State and warrant the sanctity of the State's Constitution and establishments.

"We will only convene with SPLM if it tells us it does not recognize what is now taking place in Abyei," he concluded.

[Sudanese presidency discusses Abyei's administration](#)

(ST) April 1, 2008 (KHARTOUM) — The Sudanese Presidency discussed in a meeting held on Tuesday evening the establishment of a joint administration in the disputed Abyei.

The meeting, which held at the Guest House in Khartoum, was chaired by President Omer Al-Bashir and attended by First Vice-President Salva Kiir Mayardit who was long time absent from the capital and Vice-President Ali Osman Mohamed Taha.

Mahjoub Fadl Badri, press secretary to the President of the Republic, said that the meeting discussed the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. Adding that the parties also deliberated the current situation in Abyei and their understanding to establish an interim administration till a final solution is reached between the two peace partners.

The National Congress Party (NCP) rejected on March 30 the appointment of Edward Lino as SPLM administrator of Abyei. It demanded the removal of his administration as well as the redeployment of the SLPA to 1956 north-south border.

The NCP said SPLM unilateral administration transgresses the authority of the presidency, which owns alone the decision to appoint the administration of Abyei under the Comprehensive Peace Agreement and the Interim National Constitution.

In June 2007, the SPLM had rejected the NCP proposal to set up a six-month interim administration for Abyei, saying such proposal would only prolong the crisis. Nonetheless, the two parties agreed that Abyei administration should be based on SPLM-NC partnership.

The NCP responsible of Abyei file, Al-Dirdiri Mohamed Ahmad, told the pro-NCP, SMC, that they received assurance from the First Vice-President and the SPLM Secretary General that they didn't support the step made by Edward Lino. But he said that the SPLM should make an official statement to support this position.

Al-Dirdiri further stressed that the NC was no longer committed to any joint effort or negotiation over implementing the Abyei Protocol until the SPLM officially declares the dissolution of the SPLM administration.

Abyei lies just north of the boundary line between north and south Sudan set by Sudan's British colonial rulers in the early 20th century. But the line is disputed, and the SPLM wants the area incorporated into their autonomous zone, created by the 2005 peace agreement.

The dispute has already shaken the peace deal once. Last October, southern cabinet ministers walked out of the unity government over a number of disputes, including Abyei — raising fears the peace could collapse.

In December 2007, the Sudanese presidency has decided to settle by itself the row over the oil rich region of Abyei while the other pending issues in the implementation of the 2005 peace agreement are referred to other committees.

[Sudan confirms release of Darfur war crimes suspect indicted by ICC](#)

(ST) April 1, 2008 (WASHINGTON) — The Sudanese government today confirmed that it had freed a militia leader indicted by the International Criminal Court (ICC) for lack of evidence.

The judges of the ICC issued their first arrest warrants for suspects accused of war crimes in Sudan's Darfur region in early May.

The warrants were issued for Ahmed Haroun, state minister for humanitarian affairs, and militia commander Ali Mohamed Ali Abdel-Rahman, also known as Ali Kushayb. Sudan has so far rejected handing over the two suspects.

The International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) circulated a notice for the arrest of both suspects in mid-2007.

The spokesman for the Sudanese embassy in London, Khalid Al-Mubarak was quoted by Voice of America (VOA) as saying that Haroun and Kushayb were not prosecuted "because there is no evidence against them".

Al-Mubarak did not return Sudan Tribune calls requesting additional details on the release of Kushayb.

Khartoum had long claimed that Kushayb was in custody since November 2006 for investigations into allegations of violations he committed during the peak of the Darfur conflict in 2004.

Kushayb has been nicknamed as the "Butcher of Darfur" by Darfur refugees and is alleged to have carried out mass executions against the African population in the area.

"We have eyewitnesses who saw Kushayb on his horse giving instructions in each of the cases. I have eyewitnesses who saw Kushayb involved in the execution of prisoners, the rape of women," the ICC prosecutor Luis Moreno-Ocampo said in statements last year.

Sudan's former Justice Minister Mohamed Ali al-Mardi told a news conference in Khartoum in February 2007 that "'Ali Kushayb, along with two other individuals, was sent for trial. He was detained as a suspect, questioned, his statements were evaluated and witness statements recorded, and then the decision was taken to refer him to court".

But in March 2007 Kushayb's trial was delayed when the defendants filed an appeal with the Justice ministry.

Shortly afterwards the Sudanese justice ministry ordered a ban on publishing reports or details relating to criminal cases on Darfur conflict and many observers at the time voiced skepticism over Khartoum's seriousness to try perpetrators of crimes in the war ravaged region.

In early October, Sudan's former foreign minister Lam Akol told the pro-government daily Al-Rayaam from New York that Kushayb was freed "due to lack of incriminating evidence against him".

However, Al-Mardi issued a quick denial to the Al-Rayaam report describing it as "false" without directly commenting on Akol's statements.

The former Justice Minister was asked again by Al-Rayaam last November on the whereabouts of Kushayb and he reiterated that the militia leader was "never released"

before saying that he refrained from commenting on the issue “because it is under investigation”.

Sudan has not ratified the Rome Statue, but the UN Security Council triggered the provisions under the Statue that enables it to refer situations in non-State parties to the world court if it deems that it is a threat to international peace and security.

[US urges deployment of 3,600 UN troops in Darfur soon](#)

(ST) April 1, 2008 (UNITED NATIONS) —The United States has urged the United Nations to get 3,600 new peacekeepers on the ground in conflict-wracked Darfur by June, according to a letter obtained Tuesday by The Associated Press.

Ambassador Richard Williamson, the U.S. special envoy to Sudan, told Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in the letter that additional troops are the best hope of increasing security in the Sudanese region.

A joint African Union-United Nations peacekeeping force took over in January from a beleaguered AU force to try to stem the violence. But it only has about 9,000 troops and police on the ground, out of a total of 26,000 that have been authorized.

"We believe that the deployment of 3,600 new African troops by June — a target number based on the U.N.'s planning schedule — will bring increased security and stability to the people of Darfur," Williamson wrote.

"At this crucial moment, the deployment of new troops as quickly as possible is our best hope to change the course of this tragedy."

The U.N. believes that far more than 200,000 people have been killed in the conflict. Fighting has raged in Darfur since 2003, when ethnic African tribesmen took up arms, complaining of decades of neglect and discrimination by the Sudanese Arab-dominated government. Khartoum has been accused of unleashing janjaweed militia forces to commit atrocities against ethnic African communities in the fight with rebel groups.

Williamson said the United States has committed \$100 million to train and equip African peacekeepers pledged to deploy as part of the AU-U.N. force, "and we will work to assist troop contributing countries in meeting the U.N. deployment schedule."

The U.S. wants Egyptian, Ethiopian and Rwandan contingents in Darfur by June, Williamson said. He noted that the Ethiopians and Rwandans are already participating in U.S.-sponsored training prior to their deployment.

While the U.S. supports the U.N. objective of deploying the best-equipped troops possible, Williamson said, "it seems that some U.N. practices may hinder deployment."

He explained in a telephone interview that the United Nations normally requires that a peacekeeping battalion be able to sustain itself by having its own equipment, the ability to maintain it, and to maintain the camps for troops.

The United States will continue to help troops from contributing countries to become self-sustaining, Williamson said, but in the meantime the U.S. wants the U.N. to provide short-term maintenance and support for the peacekeepers.

"Our point is that they have \$1.28 billion just for UNAMID, and they've spent only a fraction of it and the fiscal year is going to end" in June, Williamson said, using the initials of the AU-U.N. force.

"So 75 percent of the year's gone by and we're told they've spent just 25 percent. Yet, they don't have the capacity to absorb troops at the rate they can be made available," he said.

Williamson said the AU-U.N. force only added 290 peacekeepers since Jan. 1 "and that is just unacceptable for the people of Darfur who are suffering."

"Peacekeepers on the ground are one of the tangible ways we can change the dynamic in Darfur," he said.

If all African troops that have been pledged were deployed, there could be 18,000 troops in Darfur by the end of the year, he said.

At Sudan's insistence, the U.N. Security Council agreed that the force would be predominantly African.

Williamson said the Sudanese government also continues to raise impediments to deployment of the force. He said the U.S. and other countries that are "friends" of the AU-U.N. force are trying to deal with the government of Sudan to solve them.

[Preparations for Round Table Conference Finalized in Khartoum \(Sudan Vision\)](#)

The High Preparatory Committee of the Round Table Conference between the Sudan Government and UN has announced finalizing of all the arrangements for the conference that would be held in the current April.

Director of UN integrated forces Adrian Verheul stated that the committee ended the coordinative meeting aimed to discuss the measures to the round table conference. He confirmed that the government and donors will have high-level representation with respect to disarmament, demobilization and reintegration.

He added that the conference is a good chance to Sudan Government to present its plans to attract support. It is also an opportunity to donors to allocate their financial contributions.

He stated that there is cooperation and trust to make this issue successful, because it is considered as a cornerstone for implementing the Comprehensive Peace Agreement CPA.

Verheul added that a governmental high level delegation, representatives of donors countries and UN will take part in the conference.

On his part, representative of Southern Sudan DDR Commission, Benjamin Goro Gimba articulated that the committee has wrapped up all preparation to the conference. He asserted that Sudan would provide a unified plan for Northern and Southern Sudan.

Representative of Northern Sudan DDR Commission Shihab Eldeen Hussein stated that Sudan has made one document as a 4-year comprehensive plan for the whole country. He added that the Sudanese government started the integration program and provided contribution which amounted to \$10 million which benefited 11,000 of the demobilized people. He concluded that the government is committed to provide 72% of the total budget of the program and there is fruitful cooperation from UN.

GoSS

[SPLA soldiers to launch disarmament campaign in Rumbek](#)

(ST) March 31, 2008 (RUMBEK) — The governor of Lakes state Lt. General Daniel Awet Akot revealed that there are 1,000 Sudan People Liberation Army (SPLA) soldiers on their way to Rumbek to carry out disarmament in this territory of Eastern county.

Akot who was addressing the opening ceremony of Pacong trinity parish in Rumbek, said the SPLA units were needed because there are about 18,000 machine guns in the hand of cattle keepers.

The governor praised the church and recounted the difficulties facing the religious institution during the civil war years.

“In 1995 we opened 25 churches built with grass while there was still fighting with enemy going on in other part of the church, so church had not been so easy to us” he said.

“Well done Good Samaritan purse people for building this first concrete church in Pacong, this church will play a great role to this Pacong community. There is more land for you Good Samaritan purse to build more churches and we are still giving you land to build as well as enough” Akot added.

The Lakes State official called on churches to play a role of awareness to cattle keepers, so that they disarmament could take place smoothly in an area which was marked to be the centre of insecurity in the state.

He also issued a stern warning to those who resist the SPLA disarmament.

“The coming of 1,000 SPLA soldiers into this county is destruction into violence and ignorance by those who do not give their gun to the soldiers” he said.

Akot also noted that the completion of disarmament in Rumbek East County will allow the local government to collect taxes on 3.5 million head of cattle at a rate of one pound monthly. He said this will help fulfill their obligations to the chiefs.

The governor addressed the people of Rumbek East County describing them as the “most educated people”.

“You have a position of minister of defense in government of Southern Sudan being carried by Paul Mayom Akec and John Wol Makec as president of Supreme Court of Southern Sudan and yet you are still making thing difficult. The insecurity between Pacong and Akot has been so difficult to handle” he said.

On Friday afternoon, Governor Akot concluded the workshop attended by over 260 chiefs and during the mid-day, they were brought into the state house for a photo opportunity with the executives and 4,000 guns that where displayed.

He also had a gift for the chiefs.

“I am very happy today to give you 16 motorbikes and by the end of April I will provide to all chiefs of Lakes state some motorbikes that will make movement easy among the chiefs” he said.

Among 260 chiefs attending the four days workshop, there was one woman Chief Mrs. Akoi Mabeny who said that she is facing difficulties in her court because most of her powers are taken by men.

She also alleged that her decisions are being undermined by men decision making and that man made laws are the key reason why they are ignoring women rights in a court.

The four days workshop of the traditional authority leaders was challenged by demands from chiefs asking for their payments, by saying that since the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) was signed their demands were not heeded by the Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS).

The chiefs also stressed that during the civil they contributed their “children to carry on the struggle which led to the CPA”.

The SPLM signed a peace deal in January 2005 with the government of the National Congress Party in January 2005 ending two decades of civil war in Southern Sudan. The peace deal made the SPLM, the ruling party in the south and the NCP the ruling party in the north.

In 2011, southerners will be asked to vote in a referendum on whether they want to be independent or remain part of Sudan.

[Jonglei insecurity will not interfere with Sudan census – Director \(ST\)](#)

April 1, 2008 (BOR, Jonglei) – Jonglei government has assured citizens and the census officials today April 1 that ‘insecurity is not a threat to the forth coming census’ exercise at Bor "A" primary in Bor town despite last week’s incident at Ayot (about 200miles north of Bor town) where a census official was killed.

The state director for South Sudan Census Commission (SSCC) launch a week training of over 1300 enumerators at the state headquarters Bor town where two hundred and sixteen (216) enumerators for Bor county are being trained.

An officer was gunned down last week in a car carrying SSCC officials but the director denied any connection between the death of his colleague to the resistance to census exercise while briefing local reporters today.

"They (gunmen) were cattle raiders driving cattle stole from Toch (area between rivers used to graze cattle in dry season) but did know who was in the car," said state Director of SSCC, Thiong Akuei stressing that "they were not targeting our officials."

The commissioner of Bor county also witnessed the opening ceremony of his county's census officials and called for carefulness while counting. "In the 1983 population census, Bor county had 208000 people counted and any figure below this should be considered inaccurate," said Bor county commissioner Abraham Jok Ariing adding that "I trust your creditability."

All enumerators, field supervisors and coordinators are set for training in their various counties after last month's training in the state capital Bor. Pibor county census officials however, were trained in Yei in accordance to the request pertaining Murle tribesman's safety in Bor town. Mr. Akuei (state Director) however maintained that all is set right including Pibor which reporters claimed was ignored due to insecurity caused by that tribe's cattle raiders.

The census officials contacted by Sudan Tribune claimed that the state SSCC were bias in selecting census officials where all Arabic language (speaking and writing) citizens were eliminated. The director rejected the argument saying no Arabic speaking higher official was sent to the state and apologize to the citizens in case the point is negatively comprehended.

Once the training is done, census will be deployed to various Payams, Bomas, and all the units possible. The major challenges expected include man power shortage, inaccessibility of some areas due to seasonal roads given the emerging rains and insecurity that state authority say is well averted.

Darfur

[Sudanese army bombs Darfur rebel's areas: SLA-Unity](#)

(ST) April 1, 2008 (KHARTOUM) — Sudanese planes have bombed five areas in the war-torn Darfur region, killing a child and injuring another, Darfur rebels said on Tuesday, although the army denied any involvement.

Suleiman Jamous, a senior member of the rebel Sudan Liberation Army Unity faction, said three areas were in the desert where rebels had troops. He added two others were villages where the rebels have no presence in the north of the region which is the size of France.

"On Friday and Saturday the government bombed five areas in North Darfur by Antonov plane," Jamous told Reuters by telephone. "In Madu (village) they killed a child and injured one but there were no reports of casualties from the other four areas."

Another Darfur rebel faction also confirmed there had been bombing in the area, in the far north of the region.

The U.N. Security Council banned aerial bombardment in Darfur although the government has reserved the right to defend itself.

Sudan's army denied it had bombed the areas. "We ... were not involved in any such clashes," an army spokesman said.

Reports from such remote areas are hard to confirm because they are largely devoid of population after 2.5 million people fled their homes during the five year war in Sudan's west. International experts estimate some 200,000 have died from famine, disease or fighting in Darfur, violence Washington calls genocide.

Khartoum denies genocide and puts the death toll at 9,000.

Peace efforts have been stymied in Darfur by ongoing violence, banditry and infighting among rebel groups who have split into almost a dozen factions.

Miscellaneous