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(By Public Information Office)

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Highlights

UN/ Agencies

[Security Council to undertake mission to Darfur](#)

(Al-Rai Al-Aam) Security Council team is preparing to undertake a tour in Africa that will cover five African countries including Sudan.

South Africa's Ambassador to UN who co-chairs the mission with his British counterpart said the mission was scheduled to take place between 31 May to 10 June and it would cover Somalia, Sudan including Darfur, Chad, Ivory Coast and DRC.

The ambassador emphasized the need for a visit to Somalia despite the fact that UN Security had some reservations due to instability in that area.

Diplomats said the delegation intend to visit UNAMID HQs in El Fasher when they arrive in Sudan.

[Fire ravages part of UN refugee camp in eastern Chad, leaving 3,000 homeless](#)

11 April 2008 – Some 3,000 people from Sudan's war-torn Darfur region are again homeless after fire swept through part of a refugee camp in eastern Chad today, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reported.

Ten people were slightly injured in the midday blaze at Goz Amer camp, believed to have been caused by an untended cooking fire that then spread rapidly because of the high winds.

Many refugees lost all their food rations and meager belongings, and numerous stick and mud shelters that had been constructed in 2004 when the Darfurians first arrived in Goz Amer also ignited easily.

The newly displaced are being housed at three camp schools, while tomorrow more tents and aid supplies – including sleeping mats, blankets and kitchen sets – will be distributed. The UN World Food Programme (WFP) is also handing out additional monthly food rations.

High Commissioner for Refugees António Guterres said from Geneva that he was relieved there had been no loss of life from the fire.

“The refugees have already suffered so much tragedy and now face yet another trauma... We will do everything we can to help and to get shelter and food supplies to them as quickly as possible,” he said.

UNHCR staff have started opening up stockpiles in the area and delivering blankets and aid supplies, an effort they plan to continue throughout the weekend by drawing supplies from around eastern Chad.

Emmanuel Uwurukundo, the agency’s acting head of office in nearby Koukou-Angarana, said “everyone around, refugees and all our partners alike, rushed to the spot and tried to extinguish the fire with whatever they had – clothes, extinguishers and water.”

He said bricks should be used in the future instead of stick and mud shelters to avoid such incidents.

Goz Amer, which lies about 70 kilometers from the border with Darfur, is host to about 20,500 people and it is the southernmost of 12 UNHCR-run camps in the region that are home to more than 240,000 Darfurians in total, all fleeing conflict that has raged in their homeland since 2003.

The remoteness of the region, which is also home to about 180,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs), already makes it an extremely difficult environment in which UNHCR has to operate.

GoNU (CPA, DPA, ESPA)

Sudan ruling party slams decision by SPLM to suspend census

(ST) April 12, 2008 (KHARTOUM) — Sudan’s ruling National Congress Party (NCP) condemned the decision by Sudan People Liberation Movement (SPLM) to suspend elections in the South.

The NCP issued a statement during a late night meeting headed by Sudanese president Omar Hassan Al-Bashir to discuss the SPLM’s move of pulling from the census process, which was to start next Tuesday.

“The decision by the SPLM is not supported by any justifications or facts whether they be security or political” said Kamal Obeid the Information Secretariat official at the NCP.

“All the reasons mentioned in the SPLM’s statement were discussed in previous meetings but the option of delaying census was never discussed,” he added.

The former Southern rebels made a surprise decision today to exclude the South from the census process until the end of the year.

"It was postponed," South Sudanese Information Minister Gabriel Changson Chang told Reuters from Juba. "There is a sizeable number of southern Sudanese in northern Sudan and if they are not transported to the south before the census it will affect the wealth sharing."

Questions on ethnicity and religion were not included in the census questionnaire, contrary to the southern government's wishes Chang said.

The SPLM also said that border demarcation process is not complete which prevents the south from adding people, which will affect power-sharing formula. Moreover, the southern group said the war in Darfur will impede the conduct of census and as such will only be partial.

However, the head of the Central Bureau of Statistics Yasin al-Hajj Abdine said in statement to Sudan news agency (SUNA) that the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) does not stipulate the return of displaced people for census to take place.

He told SUNA that the SPLM agreed to the census questionnaire, which excluded questions on ethnicity and religion, through a letter by South Sudan's Minister for Presidential Affairs Luka Biong dated November 5, 2007.

Abdine also said that it was "impossible" for all displaced Southerners to return before the end of the year and to include them in the census because of the rainy season. He stressed that the census will not change anything with regards to the border issue or confers right on any side.

The NCP said in the statement, they "regret the decision especially when money from Sudanese people money has been spent on a constitutional issue agreed upon by all sides".

"All reports from the South confirmed that preparations for census were complete. This is not a surprising decision if you look at the prior positions by the SPLM towards the CPA," Obeid said.

The NCP official called on SPLM to "reverse its decision" before adding that they "see no reason for the census delay and hope that this cause elections to be held on time".

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. A census is supposed to prelude the elections but has stalled because of cash shortage and disagreement over the process.

Security commissions verifies the two planes' cargo

(Sudan Vision) Information obtained by Sudan Vision indicate that the security commission formed out of security, intelligence and customs authorities yesterday started checking up the exhibits seized yesterday on two planes that landed in Khartoum airport to refuel on Wednesday and Tuesday,

Consecutively, while heading for N'djamena. The exhibits seized on the two planes are believed to be on their way to the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM).

Authorized sources told Sudan Vision that the security authorities have not filed charges against the two seized planes because investigations have not been finalized, pointing out that the commission is now making a list of the cargo of the two planes. The sources added that results of the investigation would be passed on to the concerned authorities for action, revealing that one of the two planes carried a UN logo while the UN denied any association with the plane.

The sources went on to explain that the first plane which carried the UN logo carried 8 land-cruiser pickups, indicating that the UN logo may have been used by the plane to mislead Khartoum airport authorities. They stressed that the crew of the two planes are not associated with the cargo.

The security authorities had on Wednesday seized a plane carrying the UN logo that touched down in Khartoum airport to refuel and resume its flight to N'djamena. However, the plane's crew submitted to the authorities in Khartoum airport discrepant information on its cargo. A subsequent search of the plane revealed a cargo of some land-cruiser pickups believed to be on their way to JEM. The next day the authorities also seized another chartered Russian plane heading for N'djamena, carrying cars and equipments that were thought to be going to the same destination.

Authorities released crew of the two impounded planes for lack of evidence

(Al-Rai Al-Aam) Authorities' yesterday released the crew of the two planes impounded on Wednesday and Thursday consecutively after the crew of the two planes gave inconsistent information to the authorities with regard to the two planes' destinations and cargo.

A source told Al-Rai Al-Aam yesterday that the crew of the two planes was released for lack of evidence with regard to the charges directed against them in accordance with Civil Aviation Act.

The source revealed that a committee was set up by the competent authorities to check the cargo of the two planes and the findings would be made public by technicians.

According to the source, the cargo of one of the two planes included a GPS adding that the committee was expected to complete its work during the two coming days and will submit its report.

North Sudan army commits huge breaches in Abyei

(Sudan Tribune) The northern Sudanese army is committing huge violations in disputed area of Abyei, said the Minister of Presidential Affairs in the Southern Sudan Government today stressing that no tribal conflict there.

Lunka Biong has charged the Sudan armed Forces of breaching massively the Comprehensive peace Agreement. “The route to the north has been blocked, UN is prevented from moving returnees and displaced detained and denied travel home,” he said .

Luka who headed a fact-finding mission to Abyei this week on behalf of GoSS President, Salva Kiir said the situation there is “calm but tense”. He further said this tension is created by the northern Sudan Army. SAF forces “deliberately have sent 222 soldiers to Abyei and deployed more forces outside Abyei town. This is a clear violation of the CPA, as the troops are not to be around in the area after JIU was formed,” Luka Biong said in press statements released in Juba on Friday.

[Lino accuses NCP of fanning conflict, asks SAF withdrawal](#)

(Khartoum Monitor) Governor of Abyei Edward Lino has accused the National Congress Party (NCP) of fanning the conflict in Abyei and he has asked for the withdrawal of Sudan Armed Forces in the area.

Lino who was speaking at a press conference in Abyei yesterday following his return from the peaceful coexistence conference in Higlig area, said there was a military build-up by SAF in Goli, Todaj and Aldafra, in Northern Abyei.

He has asked SAF units to withdraw their 31 brigade, which is still stationed in Northern Abyei area.

Lino has described the outcome of the peaceful co-existence conference as good by saying that the parties have reached an instrument which provides for non-fighting among the tribes and also to work to realize a peaceful coexistence. He added that it was not possible to involve the Misseriya in the administration of Abyei because the Abyei protocol does not provide for that.

Abyei’s administration had previously turned down a proposal raised by the NCP to the effect that the Misseriya be involved in the area’s administration.

He went on to say that, the involvement of the Misseriya in the administration of Abyei is not possible, but they will be provided with all the services in Abyei area.

The NCP has been paying lip service to the people of Abyei but we will provide the necessary services and implement the vital development projects, he said. Lino was appointed by the SPLM as the Governor of Abyei and this has stirred disputes between the SPLM and NCP.

[NCP leadership Office calls on SPLM to reconsider its decision to defer fifth census](#)

Khartoum, April 12 (SUNA) - The Leadership Office of the National Congress called in its emergency meeting Saturday evening, which was chaired by President of the

Republic and Chairman of the National Congress Field Marshal Omer Al-Bashir, on the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) to reconsider its decision concerning postponement of the process of the Fifth Population Census in southern Sudan.

Secretary of Information Secretariat and Spokesman of the National Congress Dr. Kamal Obeid said in a press statement that the decision of the Government of Southern Sudan was not based on security or political justifications. It did not consider the requirements of the Sudanese people concerning the importance of conducting the population census for development and the constitutional rights stipulated clearly by the Comprehensive Peace Agreement.

He added that the National Congress saw no justifications for that postponement, and hoped that it would not be a reason for not holding the elections in its set time. He pointed out that the National Congress would continue its consultations with the political forces to shape its stance towards this decision, affirming that all the justifications cited by the government of southern Sudan were discussed in previous meetings and that there was no view on postponement. Dr. Obeid expressed regret of the Leadership Office of the National Congress over the decision, especially that there were funds spent from the treasury of the Sudanese people on an agreed upon constitutional issue, pointing out that all reports coming from the south had been affirming completion of preparations for starting the process in the south. But, he said, the decision was not a surprise for the political forces, considering the previous stances of the SPLM towards the peace agreement.

[The text of NCP statement on GoSS deferment of census](#)

(Akhbar Al Yom) After the GoNU has made all preparations to conduct census according to schedule - based on its national responsibility and commitments - after it provided to the Southern Sudan Statistics and Evaluation Commission with complete budget estimated at \$8.3m, after the GoSS agreed in November 2007 to census questionnaire without mentioning ethnicity and religion, after the GoNU responded twice to the GoSS requests to postpone population census as population census was supposed to be conducted in November 2007 but postponed to February 2008 and then again to 15 April 2008 at the request of GoSS.

Government of the Sudan, during peace talks in Naivasha, postponed population census that was held regularly every ten years, to support efforts to achieve the CPA.

Since the return of IDPs and border demarcation are not pre-requisites for conduction of census and since census preparations have been finalized in Darfur and the zero hour has approached for the start of census on 15 April 2008 under the supervision of UNFPA, the Government of Southern Sudan, committed a flagrant violation of the CPA by postponing census in southern Sudan indefinitely.

The SPLM's flagrant violation of the CPA and its unilateral and individualistic action and behavior outside the Presidency institution with regard to a federal and strategic matter and the taking of a pre-emptive step to impede upcoming general elections.

The SPLM's random and sudden disruption of the provisions of the CPA which has been a historic achievement for both north and south, is required to immediately implement the CPA provisions and be strictly committed to conduction of population census on schedule in order to complete the implementation of the CPA on the ground, to safeguard the interest of the country and the citizens and to complete peace and unity.

The NCP calls on the various political forces and civil society organizations to shoulder their responsibility and role to prevail upon SPLM to desist from repeatedly putting the CPA on test and plunging the country into a dark tunnel.

Khartoum, 12th April 2008

GoSS

Ugandan LRA fails to sign final peace deal at Riikwnbwa

(ST) April 12, 2008 (NABANGA, Western Equatoria Stat) — The fugitive Lord's Resistance Army boss General Joseph Kony has failed to shown up for signing the final peace agreement with Ugandan government delegation at Riikwnbwa assembling point in Western Equatoia state of Southern Sudan.

Briefing forty journalists at Riikwnbwa camp, the chief mediator of Ugandan peace talks in Juba,. Riek Machar, who is also the Vice President of the government of Southern Sudan, said General Kony, wants some clarification on Acholi traditional justice system of "Mato Oput" and the special division of the high court of Uganda.

"General Kony wants to know which one comes first; and if Mato Oput comes first, what does it means to those who are charged with committing crimes on humanity and war crimes. Can they walk free after administering Mato Oput?" explained Machar

The chief mediator further explained that Kony also demanded meetings; first with the religious and traditional leaders from northern Uganda and later with chief mediator before LRA boss could append his signature on the final peace agreement documents.

In separate press briefing, both the mediators and Ugandan government delegation have no objection in granting the request of Joseph Kony. Hence, the chief mediator immediately dispatch the religious and traditional leaders accompanied by David Matasnga including other members of LRA delegation at negotiating table in order to brief General Kony from his hide out location in Garamba forest of the Democratic Republic of Congo while mediators, observes and invited guest were left waiting at Riikwnbwa camp.

Nevertheless, the chief mediator, Riek Machar wondered why Matsanga has failed to brief Kony on traditional justice and the special division of the high court of Uganda after their request for one day workshop with religious and traditional leaders including members of parliament and district administrators from northern Uganda to

explain to them the details of Mato Oput and the special court of Uganda which was held last year in December at Juba bridge Hotel.

Machar further said Matsanga himself reported to mediators that thirty traditional and religious leaders were designated to meet Kony to explain more about Mato Oput and the special division of Ugandan court.

Elucidating government of Uganda position on whether the LRA are seeking for renegotiation of the agreement, Ruhakana Rugunda, minister of internal affairs and team leader of government delegation stated that the two parties have within the last thirty months or so have exclusively discussed and signed final agreement documents in Juba peace negotiation and only what remains is appending of ceremonial final signatures by the principles.

Rugunda said Ugandan government have no plan of extending the cessation of hostility agreement that is due to end on 16th April 2008 .However, he said the chief mediator and the cessation of hostilities and monitoring team will continue doing every thing possible with their full support to ensuring that there is recapturing of the momentum; adding that the scheduled date of 14th April 2008 for ceremonial signing final agreement has been put off until further notice.

Under the ceasefire agreement, LRA forces are requested to assembly at Riikwnbwa camp of western Equatoria state but the LRA are only reporting to collect their food ration then they immediately disappeared, observed payam administrator of Nabanga .

Since LRA started cutting of ears, lips and nose of innocent people, in December 2003, Ugandan president Museveni decided to referred the LRA to the International Criminal Courts (ICC) based in Hague Netherlands to determine if the LRA is guilty of international war crimes.

The rebel LRA became effective at the time when Ugandan president Tito Okello, an Acholi, was overthrown by National Resistance Army then led by Yoweri Museveni Kwaguta in January 1986. Since Acholi speaking communities of northern Uganda feared the loss of their traditional domination of the national army of Uganda, hence, that period marked the intense turmoil in northern Uganda; and by August 1986 the rebellion Acholi resorted to a full-blown up insurgency in whole of northern Uganda.

[Sudan census delayed until the end of the year raising doubt on 2009 elections](#)

(ST) April 12, 2008 (KHARTOUM) — Sudan's semi-autonomous south withdrew on Saturday from a census that will help decide how wealth and power are shared, throwing into doubt months of preparations for the highly politicized count.

The census, due to be held from April 15 to 30, was agreed under the 2005 north-south peace deal which ended Africa's longest civil war. It will set constituencies for the first democratic elections in 23 years.

The head of the Central Bureau of Statistics in Khartoum said he was disappointed with the south's decision and that politicians were interfering in the process.

The Population Census Council within the presidency could decide to go ahead with the census in the rest of the country — although that would violate the spirit of the accord which envisaged a nationwide count.

The semi-autonomous south wants southerners living in the north to return to the south before the census to give a better indication of the population and how wealth and power ought to be shared and delayed its participation in the count.

The north-south border crosses oilfields producing some 500,000 barrels per day of crude.

"It was postponed," South Sudanese Information Minister Gabriel Changson Chang told Reuters from Juba. "There is a sizeable number of southern Sudanese in northern Sudan and if they are not transported to the south before the census it will ... affect the wealth sharing."

Questions on ethnicity and religion were not included in the census questionnaire, contrary to the southern government's wishes, and the north-south border has still not been demarcated, the minister added.

Chang said the census had been postponed to the end of the year. The rainy season begins in May and much of Sudan will be out of reach by road until October.

The head of the Central Bureau of Statistics Yasin al-Hajj Abdine told Reuters: "I am very much disappointed after all these preparations we are happy here ... we thought we did a very good job and we were ready to commence the census as best as we could.

"Now politicians are interfering in our scientific management services."

TIMETABLE

The head of the census monitoring and observation committee Abdel Bagi Gailani told Reuters the move was illogical, as both sides had already resolved the issues.

"All these things collapsed in a minute when we heard what has been declared today," he said. "To me as an observer this is nonsense."

"I would appeal to the government of southern Sudan to revise its decision and let us work according to the timetable we set."

South Sudan's Minister for Presidential Affairs Luka Biong agreed to printing the questionnaires with alternatives to questions on ethnicity and religion in a letter seen by Reuters dated Nov. 5, 2007.

The former southern rebel Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) signed the 2005 accord with the northern National Congress Party (NCP) but the road to peace has not been smooth.

The SPLM withdrew from the national coalition government last year in protest at the NCP's delays on issues such as the census and changing laws to reflect democratic progress.

The delay in the census puts time pressure on elections due next year, said one diplomatic source.

Abdine said the Population Census Council within the presidency would have to meet, likely in the coming say or two, to decide whether the census will go ahead.

[Two World Food Program aid workers were shot and killed](#)

(Miraya FM) Two World Food Program aid workers were shot and killed by unknown people on the road to Bor in southern Sudan. This incident is the third of its kind during the three last weeks. A statement from the UN agency said that the government of southern Sudan has started investigations on the attack.

Darfur

[Britain proposes to host Darfur peace talks](#)

(ST) April 12, 2008 (LONDON) — The British Prime Minister has proposed to host peace talks between Sudanese government and rebel groups in order to end the five-year civil war in western Sudan.

According to information disseminated by the office of Prime Minister Gordon Brown, British officials were in contact with the Sudanese officials and rebel groups to offer the hosting of peace talks "as soon as practicable".

A Downing Street spokesman said: "Britain is willing to invite all parties to London for talks to see if there is a way to make some progress."

Details of the offer were released as activists in 30 countries prepared to hold a global day of action Sunday to mark the fifth anniversary of the start of the Darfur conflict.

"Today, on the fifth Global Day for Darfur, the eyes of the world are rightly focused on the millions of men, women and children in the region who continue to start each day with the fear of violence, abduction, rape or death," Brown said.

He promised to bring up the issue of deploying peacekeepers in Darfur during talks with US President George W. Bush and UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon in the United States next week.

Brown said in a statement he was frustrated at the "appalling situation and the slow progress" in brokering peace talks.

International experts estimate 200,000 people have died and 2.5 million have been forced to flee homes in Darfur since the conflict erupted in 2003, when rebels took up arms against the central government.

Till recently the British Prime Minister threatened several time to impose sanctions against Khartoum government over Darfur violence.

"I believe we must strengthen our sanctions against the Sudanese government. We should have military sanctions for the whole of Sudan," he told the House of Commons on March 12..

During a recent visit to Beijing, Brown s asked Chinese officials, an ally of the Sudanese government, to intervene over Darfur.

[Sudanese army, rebel JEM renew fighting in West Darfur](#)

(ST) April 12, 2008 (EL-GENEINA) — Sudanese army and Darfur rebel Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) claimed victory following the renewal of fierce fighting in West Darfur.

JEM troops attacked, on Saturday at 4:00pm (local time) the newly established Kushkush base of the Sudan armed Forces, 45km, north of El-Geneina and west of Jabal Moon, in West Darfur.

JEM military spokesperson, Ali Wafi, said on Saturday their troops completely annihilated the military garrison, and the soldiers were "flushed out of their trenches for surrender or death."

Wafi further said that a helicopter gunship was downed and another took a direct hit but its fate is not clear. He added that JEM troops seized a number of vehicles.

In Khartoum the Sudanese army spokesperson, Brigadier Osman Mohamed Al Aghbash, said that the army repelled the assailants forces. He indicated that SAF caused heavy losses in lives and equipment among the troops of the Justice and Equality Movement.

He pointed out that the rebel forces moved from the Chadian area of (Borak), which leads to Jebel Moon.

He further said that the rebel forces that launched its attack were supported by 100 Chadian vehicles He indicated that the army destroyed a significant number of these vehicles.

Sudan and Chad used to trade accusations of supporting respective rebel groups despite the signing of many non-aggression pacts.

Since last December, West Darfuris have been caught up in increasingly violent clashes involving Sudan's Armed Forces, insurgent groups, and the forces of neighbouring Chad.

The Darfur conflict marked a grim five-year anniversary with peace talks in tatters, the joint UN-African Union peacekeeping mission running drastically below capacity and 4.2 million people living on aid handouts.

[Ethiopian police fly to join Darfur peacekeeping troops](#)

(ST) April 12, 2008 (ADDIS ABABA) — Ethiopia today sends a first group of police officers to Sudan to take part in the United Nations-African Union peacekeeping mission in the war-torn Darfur region.

Addressing at farewell party, federal police commissioner, Workuneh Gebeyehu said, “A group of 15 police officers, who were under high preparation, will leave for Darfur tonight”

The commissioner called on the police officers to effectively carry out their responsibility while in duty.

Ethiopia has offered 5,000 troops for Darfur but 3,000 of them are so far accepted to be deployed, hence in principle, a big number of troops doesn't have to come from a single nation for the proposed UN/AU hybrid force, to effectively carry out the mission.

Commissioner Workuneh also called on the departing peace keepers to promote Ethiopia's image by playing tremendous role in maintaining peace and security in Sudan.

“Ethiopia is taking part its share in an international peacekeeping mission” the commissioner said adding, “Ethiopia has given a bigger attention in assuring peace and stability in the horn of Africa's region and internationally as a whole.”

The departing police officers to their side pledge to effectively carry out the responsibility they are taking on behalf of the Ethiopian people and the government of Ethiopia.

This is the first time in its history Ethiopia to deploy police officers to an international peace keeping mission.

The officers rank from assistant inspector to commander. It was learnt.

Ethiopia, in recent weeks, has been transporting military logistics to Sudan ahead of its troop's arrival.

Ethiopia's history of contribution to peace mission dates back from Mengust's regime to republic of Korea and in recent years to Rwanda Congo, Liberia, Burundi, Somalia and now to the Sudan.

[Darfur rebels hail decision by SPLM to postpone census](#)

(ST) April 12, 2008 (LONDON) — the two largest Darfur rebel groups today applauded decision by Sudan People Liberation Movement (SPLM) to suspend a long awaited census until year-end.

“The SPLM made the right decision and the most logical one that preserves the interests of our Southerner brothers” Abdel-Wahid Al-Nur, leader of Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM) told Sudan Tribune by phone from Paris France.

“The reasons they [SPLM] cited for their decision is simply a snapshot of the situation in Sudan as a whole. There can be no census or elections under these circumstances anywhere in the country,” Al-Nur said.

The spokesperson for Darfur Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) Ahmed Hussein Adam echoed the same view.

“We call on the SPLM to stick to its decision. This position is the closest to that of the marginalized population of Sudan”.

The former Southern rebels made a surprise decision today to exclude the South from the census process until the end of the year.

"It was postponed," South Sudanese Information Minister Gabriel Changson Chang told Reuters from Juba. "There is a sizeable number of southern Sudanese in northern Sudan and if they are not transported to the south before the census it will affect the wealth sharing."

Questions on ethnicity and religion were not included in the census questionnaire, contrary to the southern government's wishes Chang said.

The SPLM also said that border demarcation process is not complete which prevents the south from adding people, which will affect power-sharing formula. Moreover, the southern group said the war in Darfur will impede the conduct of census and as such will only be partial.

Sudan is ruling National Congress Party (NCP) condemned the decision by Sudan People Liberation Movement (SPLM) to suspend elections in the South.

The JEM official accused the NCP of insisting on conducting a census in Darfur despite the millions of refugees and displaced people scattered throughout Chad and Sudan.

“They know Darfur is hostile to NCP and will vote against them in the elections so they are not very interested in Darfuris being part of it” Hussein said.

“The timing of the census doesn't matter. What matters is the regime's interest in peace. As far as Darfur IDP's are concerned, their priority is to return home safely. They will resist any attempts to conduct census in the camps,” he added.

The SLM leader called for a moratorium on census throughout Sudan saying the environment “is not constructive”.

“The SPLM spoke of security concerns in the South that prevent the census. Needless to say that insecurity is prevalent in most of Darfur. So we are talking about a nationwide problem. The issue of security cannot be taken piecemeal. All Sudanese

people whether they live in the north or east are entitled to the right of feeling safe” Al-Nur said.

The rebel leader noted that the Sudanese government excluded the disputed Halayeb triangle on Egypt borders as well as areas in Darfur and the South.

“I urge all political parties to take a holistic approach to Sudan’s problems. There are persistent strategic long term issues that should not be used as tactical moves for short term gains” he added.

The question of whether Darfur should be included in the census stirred a great deal of controversy. The government insists that it can be conducted in most of the war ravaged region.

However the leader of the Umma party Al-Sadiq Al-Mahdi, largest Northern opposition party, as well as Minni Arcua Minnawi, senior Sudanese presidential assistant say that census cannot be conducted in Darfur.

The census is a prerequisite in terms of easing voter registration. Under the peace deal, its results will also redraw or confirm the ratio of central power sharing between the north and south.

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.

[Eliasson and Salim call conflicted parties in Darfur for cooperation](#)

(Miraya FM) The United Nations special Envoy to Darfur said that the Darfur crisis would not be resolved unless all parties involved in the conflict, including the neighboring countries, cooperate with the mediation team.

Speaking to Miraya FM, Jan Eliasson named the conflict between Sudan and Chad, the unification of the Darfur Factions and the deployment of the joint forces to Darfur as the main challenges for his mission.

Meanwhile, the African Union Chief Mediator in the Darfur peace talks said that the key role of the international mediators is to make reaching a comprehensive peace in Darfur easy.

Speaking to Miraya FM, Salim Ahmed Salim added that it is a long road to walk before peace is realized in Darfur.

However, he said that the mediators are working to make that happen during this year.

The Spokesman of the Sudan Armed Forces, Brigadier Mohammed Othman Al-Aghbash, said that they asked the Interpol to arrest the Captain in the Sudanese army who ran away to Chad after embezzling two million Sudanese pounds.

Speaking to Miraya FM, Brigadier Al-Aghbash said that the money was the salaries of the soldiers in Al-Geninna.

Earlier, the Chadian authorities announced that they arrested Captain Jamal Mahmoud Mohammed.

According to them, the officer confessed that he was assigned to give the money to the Janjaweed and the leader rebels in Chad.

Miscellaneous

Sudanese cargo plane crashes in Moldova, eight killed

April 11, 2008 (CHISINAU) — A Ukrainian made cargo plane, An-32, has crashed at the airport of the Moldova capital, Chisinau, eight crewmembers died.

Three of the crewmembers were Moldavians and five - Ukrainian citizens.

The plane, owned by a Sudanese airline company, crashed as it was attempting to make an emergency landing shortly after take off and burst into flames, airport officials said.

The plane was heading to Sudan via Turkey.

Next Tuesday to be holiday all over Sudan for implementing population Census

Khartoum, April 10 (SUNA) - The Council of Ministers' Secretariat General announced that next Tuesday, April 15, 2008 would be an official holiday all over the country for conducting the Fifth Population Census. The Secretariat General also declared suspension of traffic and means of transport between the towns in Sudan in the same Tuesday in order to guarantee participation of all the citizens on the population Census, and in accordance with the Republican Decree 40 for the year 2008.

Islamic extremism returns to Sudan capital

The recent killing of a USAID worker in Khartoum is the latest sign that a new generation of Islamists threatens what had been among the safest of African capitals.

By Edmund Sanders, Los Angeles Times Staff Writer
April 13, 2008

KHARTOUM, SUDAN -- The young assassins prowled Khartoum's streets for hours on New Year's Eve, looking for Westerners on the way home from parties.

They stopped a Land Cruiser but released it after seeing two children in the back seat.

Another foreigner was let go because he was the "wrong" nationality, said Khartoum state Gov. Abdul Halim Mutaafi. "They wanted Americans or British," he said.

Their victim was John Granville, 33, a USAID official and former Peace Corps volunteer, who was shot to death along with his Sudanese driver early New Year's Day.

The assassination, the first of a foreigner in Khartoum since the 1970s, was the latest in a string of troubling signs that one of Africa's safest capitals faces a growing threat from home-grown Islamic extremists, part of a conservative sect that has doubled in size here in the last decade.

In August, Sudanese police broke up a suspected bomb plot involving young men who planned to attack the British and U.S. embassies. Instead, they accidentally blew up their own apartment, Sudanese and Western officials said.

In February, graffiti began appearing in several Khartoum neighborhoods with slogans claiming to be from "Al Qaeda Organization of Sudan." Although clear links to Al Qaeda have been difficult to prove, some officials fear that the terrorist network and its leader, Osama bin Laden, who were ejected from Sudan in 1996, are trying to reestablish a base.

Most alarming to Sudanese officials is that this new generation of extremists appears to be almost as hostile toward the Arab-dominated Sudanese government as they are to the West, despite Khartoum's efforts to bolster its Islamic credentials. In a high-profile case last year, the government prosecuted and briefly jailed a British grade-school teacher who allowed her students to name a class teddy bear after the prophet Muhammad.

Sudanese police have arrested more than 40 people in a crackdown during the last six months, including those believed to be responsible for Granville's killing, Mutaafi said. Many are students or recent university graduates.

"These are young people with very strong religious feelings and very strong feelings against the West," said Ali Sadiq, spokesman for Sudan's Foreign Ministry.

Police suspect that the same cell behind Granville's assassination may have plotted the foiled embassy bombings, and they believe they have broken up the ring, Mutaafi said. Upon interrogation, the suspects admitted they also planned to target government facilities in Sudan, officials said.

American officials in Khartoum are expressing growing concern. In March, the U.S. Embassy issued a stark public warning, its second in a year, disclosing that "the U.S. government has received indications of terrorist threats aimed at American and

Western interests in Sudan." The consulate advised Americans to avoid travel to the country and said it had beefed up security measures.

After the New Year's attack and the 2006 beheading of an outspoken Sudanese newspaper editor, two previously unknown groups, one claiming affiliation with Al Qaeda, took responsibility for the killings in messages published on Islamist websites. The claims could not be verified, and Sudanese officials questioned their veracity.

Nevertheless, Sudanese and Western officials said that the young men recently arrested in Sudan display similar goals and ideology. One diplomat called them "Al Qaeda wannabes."

"I don't know if they are Al Qaeda, but they think just like Al Qaeda," Mutaafi said.

Sudanese President Omar Hassan Ahmed Bashir's regime has faced mounting criticism from both foreign extremists and domestic hard-liners since dropping his opposition to deploying 26,000 United Nations peacekeepers in the restive Darfur region of western Sudan. He has tried to soften the backlash by insisting troops chiefly come from African or Muslim nations. But in an October message, Bin Laden urged followers to strike not only U.N. troops in Sudan, but also the government that "let them in."

In addition, Bashir's regime has been criticized for its close relationship with the CIA. Sudan has quietly shared counter-terrorism intelligence with the U.S. for the last seven years.

"Now Sudan is being castigated because of all this," said Osman Khalid Mudawi, chairman of the foreign affairs committee in Sudan's parliament. The extremists, he added, "believe we have buckled to the U.S. and are selling them out."

But he said he doubted whether terrorist groups could gain a foothold in Sudan. "We don't have that brand of Islam here," he said.

Others in the government agreed, downplaying the terrorism risk and insisting that Khartoum remains safer than most other African capitals. In an apparent attempt to calm nerves after the Granville slaying, police at first circulated rumors that the attack was the result of a love triangle or gambling debt. Although government officials now confirm the shooting was the work of Islamic fundamentalists, they call the killing an isolated incident, not the start of a trend.

"These are really just lads," said Sadiq of the Foreign Ministry. "It's hard to even call them organized groups."

Most of those arrested are followers of Sudan's fast-growing Salafi movement, in which adherents seek to emulate the practices and ideology of early Islam through strict interpretation of the Koran.

They are motivated by anger over the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the U.S.-led invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq, and bombing strikes in Somalia, where U.S. and Ethiopian forces helped topple an Islamic regime in Mogadishu in 2006.

"They believe there is a Western war against Islam," said Alaa Eldeen Zaki, head of Islamic Studies at the University of Khartoum. "They feel there is no justice. That's why Muslims are turning into bombs."

Islamic extremism is hardly new to Sudan. In the 1980s, government attempts to impose Islamic law on Christians and non-Muslims in the south helped spark the country's 21-year civil war. In the 1990s, Sudan landed on the U.S. list of state sponsors of terrorism after it opened its borders to terrorists such as Bin Laden and Ilich Ramirez Sanchez, better known as Carlos the Jackal.

Back then, Islamic fundamentalists were largely controlled by the government, but in recent years the movement has drifted to mosques and university campuses.

Now authorities "are worried because forces are percolating beyond their control," said one Western diplomat who requested anonymity.

On the streets, some in the Salafi movement question the Bashir government's commitment to Islamic ideals, saying it appears to care less about ideology than enhancing the country's oil revenue.

"They say they are Islamic, but I don't see it," said Bin Omar Mohammed, 20, a university student. "They are too focused on listening to the rest of the world."

Sudan's complicated relationship with the U.S. is a key bone of contention. Hoping to get off Washington's terrorism sponsor list and have economic sanctions lifted, Khartoum began providing intelligence to the CIA in 2001. Sudanese officials say such information has saved American lives, providing details about terrorist cells operating in Iraq and Somalia.

But the arrangement has not paid off as they hoped. There is little momentum to lift sanctions or remove Sudan from the terrorism list, and the Bush administration continues to describe the conflict in Darfur as "genocide."

Although some critics question whether Sudanese officials are exaggerating the terrorist threat in order to garner sympathy from the West, those close to the government worry that Sudan's perceived closeness to the U.S. will increase domestic violence, as it has in Pakistan and Saudi Arabia.

"The U.N. is seen as an instrument of the West," said David Hoile, director of the European-Sudanese Public Affairs Council and a pro-government activist. "What worries me is that Sudan becomes a magnet for every crazy from Algiers to Zanzibar

