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**Highlights**

**Main News**

GoSS officials make conflicting statements on new census schedule, FVP says GoSS is committed to the new census schedule, GoSS Minister of Information says his government has not yet taken a decision with regard to date for start of census (Al-Rai Al-Aam/Miraya FM)

(Al-Rai Al-Aam/MirayaFM/Al-Watan/Al-Sahafa) The First Vice-President and President of the Government of Southern Sudan, Silva Kiir, has expressed GoSS’s commitment to the new schedule set by the Presidency for conducting census on 22 April.

However, the GoSS Minister of Information and Broadcasting, Gabriel Changson Chang, told Miraya FM that GoSS has not yet made up its mind to conduct the census on 22 April. He said the decision on the new date would be made by the GoSS Council of Ministers session to be held today Tuesday.

Mr. Chang refused to speculate on what the response of GoSS would be to the new proposal by the presidency.

Chief of Monitoring and Evaluation Commission, Abdul-Bagi AL-Gailani, announced the arrival of 21 foreign observers from Europe, Africa, US and Arab countries, along with other 34 national observers to monitor the census exercise.

In a related development, Chairman of the Census Information Committee, Abdul Dafie Al-khateeb, estimated the loss caused because of census postponement to be $27 million.

Al-Sudani newspaper published an article captioned “population census … likelihood of further postponement”.

The article said the Presidency issued a statement saying that the crisis over census was resolved and the exercise would be conducted on 22 April 2008 but all indications were that the census would not take place on the Presidency’s schedule.

One of the reasons for this conclusion is the statement made by the SPLM leader, Mr. Yassir Arman, who said, “the one week set by the Presidency is not enough to address all concerns,” “He said there were issues that should be resolved.

Mr. Arman also said the decision to postpone census in southern Sudan was taken by the Government of Southern Sudan not SPLM as an organization. He said the public were not showing support for the census and the civil society and political forces were also not showing enthusiasm for the exercise. “There is lack of trust in the process and its results,” he added.
GoNU

Presidential Advisor Dr. Mustafa Osman to represent Sudan at Security Council summit

(Al-Khartoum) Presidential Advisor, Dr. Mustafa Osman Ismaeil, will lead Sudan’s delegation to UN Security Council Summit, scheduled to convene tomorrow Wednesday.

Sudan’s Chief Delegate to UN, Abdulmahmoud Abdulhalim, told (SUNA) that the Summit would handle relations between the UN and regional organizations with a view to consolidate international peace and security.

Ismaill will convey a written message from President Bashir dealing with Sudan’s visions towards issues to be discussed by the Summit.

Cabinet: 22 April will be official holiday across the country on account of start of census

(Al-Sahafa) The General Secretariat of the Council of Ministers has announced that 22 April will be official holiday on the occasion of start of census.

In compliance with the Presidential decision to conduct the census on Tuesday 22 April 2008, all means of transportation will not be allowed to move across the various cities on that day.

President Bashir: the country is still a target of arrogant countries (El-Sharee El Syasi)

(El-Sharee El-Syasi) The President of the Republic Field Marshal Omer Al-Bashir has affirmed that Sudan was still targeted by arrogant powers through blockade and imposition of unfair sanctions.

The President made the statement while addressing the International Forum of Chiefs Justice and Law Experts on Intellectual Property at the Friendship Hall in Khartoum yesterday.

The President pledged to realize peace and security all over the country and resolve the Darfur problem through dialogue. He added that Sudan has achieved comprehensive peace despite war and economic blockade and deprivation from its right in the international funds and Sudan managed to maintain growing economy, which has become attractive for investors, referring to Merawi Dam, Housing and Construction Project, sugar production, heavy industry, energy, telecommunication and others.

Sudan NCP criticizes SPLM leadership for “wrong decisions”

(ST) April 14, 2008 (KHARTOUM) — Sudan’s ruling National Congress Party (NCP) questioned the decision making process within Sudan People Liberation Movement (SPLM).
The Information Secretariat official in the NCP, Kamal Obeid told the official Sudan News Agency (SUNA) said he is not sure “who is in the center of the decision making process within the SPLM”.

Obeid said the SPLM made “wrong decisions in the wrong times creating an unhealthy political situation”.

The NCP official cited examples of wrong decisions such as withdrawing from the government of national unity last year and appointing an administrative body in the disputed region of Abyei.

The remarks by Sudan ruling party comes after the NCP and the SPLM managed to defuse a crisis that erupted over the decision by the ex-rebels to block census in the south until the end of the year.

"It was postponed," South Sudanese Information Minister Gabriel Changson Chang told Reuters from Juba last Saturday. "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 impact 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.

But Sudanese president Omar Hassan Al-Bashir and his First Vice president Salva Kiir agreed to resume the census next week during a meeting held late Sunday.

Obeid accused SPLM of taking contradictory stances on the census citing remarks by their leaders of encouraging southerners to take part in the process hours before the kickoff.

“Not knowing the center of decision making in SPLM as partner in running the country hurts the political process and complicate any prospective resolutions,” he said.

Earlier today SPLM Deputy Secretary-General Yasir Arman told SUNA that the decision to suspend the census was taken by the regional Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS) and not the SPLM though the latter expressed concerns over the integrity of the process.

Arman denied that the census suspension decision was an attempt to avoid the upcoming elections.

However Obeid said that “the group which pushed for these decisions within the SPLM lost the opportunity to make a mature image in governance especially as it shoulders the responsibility to participate in a political transitional period, fragile by
nature and does not support any ill-considered decisions which are not backed by any legal or political justifications”.

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.

Sudan’s FM, US envoy to meet in Rome over Darfur and bilateral ties

(ST) April 14, 2008 (KHARTOUM) — The US special envoy for Sudan is expected to hold a meeting with a Sudanese delegation in Rome Italy on Wednesday to discuss the deployment of Darfur peacekeeping force and the bilateral relations.

Richard Williamson, who is in a European tour, will meet a delegation led by Sudanese foreign minister Deng Alor to discuss ways to speed up the deployment of Darfur peacekeeping troops and the normalization of the bilateral relations.

The US Administration wants Sudan to remove obstacles to the deployment of a U.N.-led peacekeeping force, stop violence against civilians in Darfur, and carry out the Comprehensive Peace Agreement between north and south Sudan, including elections in 2009, The Los Angels Times reported last month.

The U.S. offered to restore full diplomatic ties, lift sanctions and remove Khartoum from Washington’s list of state sponsors of terrorism, Williamson said.

Sudanese foreign minister visited Washington last January for one week where he discussed the normalization with US officials.

Speaking to Akhbar al-Youm, Deng Alors said he would fly to Rome on Wednesday accompanied by Nafi Ali Nafi, the presidential assistant, who is government top negotiator for Darfur peace talks and Mutrif Sidiq foreign affairs secretary general who is in charge with Darfur peacekeeping force file.

Deng Alor said that the meeting will discuss the deployment of more troops in Darfur. He further disclosed that Sudan agreed to receive troops from Italia, New Zealand, and Thailand. The US official should tackle, in exchange, the gradual normalization of relations with Sudan, Alor concluded.

Williamson early in April urged in a letter to the U.N. chief the United Nations to speed deployment of more U.N.-African Union peacekeepers to Sudan’s war-racked Darfur region.

Following his return from Washington, Alor said that Washington had welcomed Sudanese demand to normalize bilateral relations but wants the national unity government to swiftly act to end Darfur crisis.
Ugandan president says Kony "not serious" on talks

JUBA, Sudan, April 14 (Reuters) - Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni accused fugitive rebel leader Joseph Kony on Monday of not being serious about peace talks and hinted his forces could resume operations against the guerrillas.

Prospects of an end to one of Africa's longest wars were dashed last week after Kony, commander of the Lord's Resistance Army, failed to attend a signing ceremony on the Sudan-Congo border, stalling nearly two years of tortuous negotiations.

"You have been able to persist until it is clear that it's Kony who is not serious," Museveni told south Sudanese mediators during a visit to the southern capital Juba.

He accused LRA fighters of continuing to kidnap villagers from southern Sudan, Congo and Central African Republic and then forcing them into the rebel ranks.

"But the people of south Sudan should know we stand with them and we have the means to work together with them to solve some of these problems," Museveni told reporters.

Uganda's military fought the LRA across southern Sudan, but these clashes largely stopped in mid-2006 after peace talks began in Juba.

The U.N. envoy to the conflict told Reuters earlier on the Congo border that the negotiations with Kony were not dead, despite rebel infighting that apparently killed a fugitive commander and delayed the final signing.

Joaquim Chissano, a former Mozambican president, blamed a breakdown in communication with the elusive guerrilla boss.

"The peace process is not dead. There is a lack of effective communication, and that's what the LRA leader wants," he said.

"There are people who are assisting in establishing that effective communication, and once that clarification is made the peace process will be back on the road."

Chissano was expected to meet Museveni later in Juba.

Darfur

Authorities arrest UNAMID officer in connection with adultery in Nyala

(Al-Khartoum) National Congress in South Darfur State denounced immoral conduct of hybrid troops in Nyala after the arrest of a UNAMID officer in connection with adultery committed with a girl at Matar residential area.

The Governor of South Darfur Ali Mahmoud has denounced the incident, saying that his government would not tolerate such practices. He said a UNAMID leading figure
was caught with a female student in a residential area in Nyala. He pointed out that UNAMID Command demanded his release on the ground of possessing immunity.

However, the Governor stressed that immunity does not allow them to violate rights of people; rather it allows them to perform their duties in accordance with the agreement signed with the Government of Sudan.

US envoy, SLM leader discuss Darfur force and peace process

(ST) April 14, 2008 (PARIS) — The US special Envoy to Sudan, discussed with Sudan Liberation Movement founder leader the deployment of peacekeeping troops and international efforts for a comprehensive settlement to Darfur crisis.

In a meeting held in the French capital, Paris, Richard Williamson and Abdel-Wahid al-Nur discussed on Monday the deployment of the 26000 joint U.N.-African Union troops in Darfur charged with the protection of civilians in the region and the creation of a conducive environment to resume the peace process.

Al-Nur who described the meeting as “very constructive” told Sudan Tribune that the meeting discussed US efforts to speed up the deployment of the international troops in the region.

The security situation has dramatically deteriorated in the region despite the official take over of the hybrid force since last January, the rebel leader said.

“While we relentlessly repeating our demand for the conflict suspension the government and its militias continue to wage attacks and practice the conflict escalation policy,” he said.

Janjaweed attacks against El-Fasher inhabitants, Nyala and Korma, the killing of local chief in Kalma camp of IDPs, the bombing of last week in Jebel Marra "all these attacks are just a repetition of what happened last month, last year; or yesterday nothing new and nothing changed" he added.

The rebel leader said the meeting discussed Bush Administration efforts to support the effective deployment of the 26000 troops on the ground because it will help to change the course of “this tragic situation.”

In a letter to U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon early April, U.S. Presidential Envoy for Darfur Richard Williamson, urged the UN chief to deploy more 3,600 new African troops by June. Also, Washington pledged $100 million to train and equip peacekeepers to be deployed as part of the U.N.-AU mission in Darfur, known as UNAMID.

Only 9,000 of the required 26,000 international troops and police have been deployed in Darfur. Western governments have blamed Khartoum for the slow pace of deployment, saying it has dragged its feet in approving the composition of the force and set up unnecessary obstacles.
Al-Nur also said the meeting discussed the ongoing efforts to engage the political process to end the conflict. “We explained our vision in this regard to the US envoy” he added.

The rebel leader who requires the protection of civilians and the return of displaced to their villages, asks to dedicate the talks to discuss the root causes of the conflict in order to preserve the rights of Darfur people within a democratic Sudan.

He also said they agreed to continue dialogue and consultations in order to advance the peace process in the region.