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By Public Information Office

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## Highlights

### Main News

#### **Sudan census to start amid widespread skepticism**

(ST/Reuters) (April 20, 2008 (KHARTOUM) — Sudan's census, a vital step in the deal that ended decades of civil war in Africa's largest country, will begin on Tuesday but many Sudanese are skeptical results may not be accurate and fear they may spark new disputes.

No one underestimates the significance of the census. It is the first in Sudan since 1993 and is seen as a prerequisite for the country's first democratic elections in 23 years in 2009.

It will also be used to determine power and wealth sharing; including proceeds from Sudan's half a million barrels per day of oil.

The census has been delayed at least three times and months of debate on whether to include questions on ethnicity and religion or how millions of war-displaced Sudanese will be counted, ended without agreement.

The danger remains that anyone disagreeing with the results will simply deny them, causing further room for dispute.

Last week Southern leaders reluctantly agreed to a start date of April 22 with the count concluding on May 6 but said they would not be bound by the outcome.

"(The results) should not be used to determine the borders, the referendum or to determine the wealth or power sharing, or to determine the cultural identity of the

country," South Sudan Information Minister Gabriel Changson Chang said, effectively dismissing the aim of the count.

In western Sudan, the census has created a rare united platform for Darfur's rebels factions who have all agreed to reject it.

That in turn has prompted a similar reaction from hundreds of thousands of Darfuris who fled their homes during the fighting to squat in miserable camps.

Protests in the camps against the census have ended violently with one Darfuri killed and another injured for advocating for the count.

"The government is of course going to cheat so this census is valueless," said Suleiman Sandal, a senior official from Darfur's most militarily powerful Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) rebel group. "We will attack to stop this census wherever we find them," he warned.

### **All preparations in place for 5th population census**

(Sudan Vision) Administrative and technical preparations have been completed for the 5th population census to kick off in all the States of Sudan, starting at 12:00 noon tomorrow as 34 foreign and 36 national monitors, added to 125 locality observers, headed for the different States of Sudan to oversee the census exercise.

To that effect, Chairman of South Sudan Census Commission, Isaiah Chol, said preparations for the census had been completed in the southern States, revealing that the exercise would be supported by security committee and affirmed the army would counter any attempt to impede the process.

On the other hand, census director in the River Nile State, Muhasin Abdulghani, indicated that around 105 cars have been hired for the operation, added to 45 cars provided by the government of the State and urged citizens to cooperate with census enumerators.

The governor of the White Nile State, Mohammed Nour El-Tigani, for his part urged citizens to participate positively in the census operation by giving enumerators accurate information and stressed that the State was administratively and technically ready for the census.

Chairman of the Census Control Committee, Abdulgabi Al-Gilani, noted that delay of the census had cost the government about \$7 million.

### **Kiir fears "census tricks"**

(The Citizen) The First Vice President Salva Kiir said Sunday the questionnaires for the census leave a lot to be desired.

Kiir said most of the questionnaires delivered to the Southern Sudanese States were in Arabic.

“This looks like there is a trick behind,” Kiir said.

However, Kiir said the people should come out and be counted.

Kiir made the statements after prayers in Church where Archbishop Daniel Deng was enthroned.

## [UN/Agencies](#)

### **[SG to appoint new mediator for Darfur negotiations, Sahnoon top candidate](#)**

(Al-Sahafa) The Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon is reportedly in the process of appointing the Algerian national, Mohamed Sahnoon, as key mediator for Darfur, to replace AU and UN Envoys as majority SC members favour the step.

Sources confirmed to the newspaper there were continued consultations in NY on several issues concerning Darfur including appointment of Sahnoon to lead the Joint Mediation Team (JMT).

Sahnoon has served as SRSG in the Horn of Africa and played active role during Ethiopian-Eritrean war besides undertaking several other tasks.

## [GoNU](#)

### **[Messeriya calls on the Presidency to urge SPLA to withdraw south of 1.1.56](#)**

(Al-Rai Al-Aam) Chairman of the Messeriya Union Mohamed Khatir has called for the withdrawal of SPLA from Juruf and Bahr el Arab areas to south of 1.1.56 Line and the dissolution of Edward Lino's administration in Abyei to pave the way for opening Mujlad-Aweil and Keilik-Kharasan-Higlig roads.

He said Messeriya delegation delivered a memorandum to the Presidency calling for withdrawal of SPLA south of 1.1.56 Line and reconsideration of Lino administration in Abyei.

He added that an agreement was reached between Messeriya and Government of the Unity State whereby blood money would be paid to the Messeriya and the stolen cattle returned to them.

### **[SPLA Chief of Staff: JIUs lack equipment, weapons, training and vehicles](#)**

(Al-Ahdath) SPLA Chief of Staff, Lt. Gen. Wiyai Deng, interviewed by the newspaper said JIUs were seriously lacking communication equipments, weapons, training and vehicles at the time when SAF and PDF were continuously providing arms to their forces.

Lt. Gen. Deng said absence of agreement on redeployment in the areas of Kafria Kenjei, Hufrat al-Nahas besides the refusal of SAF to withdraw from Higlig created difficulties for the Joint Defence Board (JDB) and prevented understandings between SAF and SPLA.

Gen. Deng has called on the Presidency to pay attention to the JIUs, as they would be the nucleus of Sudan Army if southerners vote for unity.

### **27 persons killed and wounded in South Kordofan State**

(Al-Ayyam) 3 persons killed and 24 others wounded in a clash erupted over census between Hawaweer and Kawahla tribes in the area of Um Siyala, North Kordofan State.

Governor of Northern Kordofan Faisal Hassan Ibrahim said the conflict was initially over borehole and worsened over census but the situation was brought under control following deployment of police and security.

### **AEC: Partners' differences in Blue Nile do not affect implementation of CPA**

(Al-Ayyam) AEC wrapped up a filed visit to the Blue Nile State to familiarize itself with implementation of the Blue Nile Peace Protocol in the State.

Chairman of the AEC for the Blue Nile Peace Protocol, Abdul Rahim Osman, said the Partners in the State were in total agreement on the need to implement the Protocol adding and they share 100% identical visions.

Mr. Abdul Rahim said the differences between the Partners in the State were over political and executive issues and would not affect the implementation of the agreement.

### **SAF denies use of cluster bombs during war in southern Sudan**

(Al-Ahdath) SAF denied use of cluster bombs during war in southern Sudan or in fighting with the armed movements.

Representative of the Secretary General of the Defence Ministry, Lt. Col. Omer Edris, speaking yesterday at workshop marking International Day on Ban of Cluster bombs dismissed charges that Sudan used cluster bombs in the areas of Shikdom and Libino.

He said Sudan was free of cluster bomb and the western reports were baseless adding Sudan was committed to Oslo agreement on ban of cluster bomb.

### **Washington wants containers released as condition for normalizing relations with Sudan**

(Al-Ahdath) Sudan Government said US wants its containers, seized by Sudanese authorities for more than six months, released as a condition to pave the way for confidence building between the two countries.

On the other hand, the Government said FM Deng Alor would visit Britain on 28<sup>th</sup> April accompanied by Presidential Advisor Mustafa Osman Ismail.

Foreign Office spokesperson Ali Al Sadiq told press yesterday that Alor's visit had no connection with British offer to host Darfur peace negotiations.

However, he said the opportunity might be seized to discuss all issues.

He has called on western countries particularly France to put pressure on the armed movements to join the peace process and hoped that the problem would be resolved through efforts of UN-AU Envoys.

### **Meiram-Aweil road formally opened**

(Al-Ayyam) Meiram-Aweil road that links North Bahr el Ghazal State, Unity State and South Kordofan State, was formally opened yesterday.

The Governors of the three States, UN and JIUs attended the opening ceremony and a security protocol was signed to prevent insecurity.

According to the Security Protocol signed by the Governors of the three States, UN and JIUs would undertake the task of securing the roads.

ALF leader Mohamed Omer Al Ansari has welcomed the step saying it would lead to peaceful co-existence between the Dinka and Messeriya.

Mr. Al Ansari said the peaceful co-existence conference between Messeriya and Dinka had been postponed and the postponement was needed to give time for confidence building between the two groups.

### **Reports: There are 3000 child soldiers in Sudan**

(A-Wahda) An estimated 2, 826 children have been identified as child soldiers operating in military zones in a number of Sudanese States particularly in Darfur, disclosed a report.

The report, which will be submitted next May to the UN Child Rights Committee indicated the presence of some 1,773 child in Darfur States fighting along with JEM, SLA and SPLA.

The report added that 39 children in Khartoum, 622 in Kassala, 110 in Red Sea and 227 in Blue Nile States have been reunited with their families.

### **VP Taha: Presidency committed to guarantee political and press freedoms**

(Al-Sahafa) The Sudanese Presidency has pledged to guarantee and protect the press and political freedoms as stipulated in the Interim National Constitution (INC), warning of violation or abuse of this freedom.

Speaking at a ceremony for honoring talented journalists on Sunday at the premises of the National Press and Publications Council, Vice President Ali Osman Taha, conveyed to a gather of journalists and media persons the commitment of the presidency to guarantee freedom of expression to the political parties and trade unions.

He said that the freedom and responsibility are “two faces of one coin”, calling for deepening freedom and the sense of responsibility, adding “no freedom without responsibility”.

Taha assured the blessing of the presidency to the on going dialogue between the Ministry of Information and Communications, Editors-in-Chiefs and the parliament to put an end to the exceptional measures imposed on the press.

### **SPLA deploys in Hufrat al-Nahad to ensure census security**

(Ray Al-Shaab) Western Bhar el Ghazal State is determined to conduct census at Hufrat Al-Nihas and Kifiakingi, two disputed areas between Buram Locality, South Darfur State and West Bahr el Ghazal State.

A senior official told the newspaper that SPLA forces were redeployed in these areas.

In the meantime, West Bahr el Ghazal States’ Director of Statistics called on the State’s government to remove all obstacles confronting the census process, stressing the security stability in these areas.

### **President decrees appointment of Al-Dao Osman Governor of Gedaref State**

(Al-Rai Al-Aam) The President of the Republic Omer Bashir decreed the appointment of Al-Dao Osman as Governor of Gedaref State.

The new Governor was appointed after acceptance of resignation of the former Governor Abdul Rahman Al-Khidir.

The Speaker of the State Legislative Council Karamallah Abbas was also relieved and replaced by Mohamed Ahmed Al Hadi.

The decision was reportedly taken to end differences between the State’s legislative and executive.

### **Miraya FM contributes to census**

(Al-Ahdath) UN Miraya FM is determined to contribute seriously towards census exercise scheduled to kick off tomorrow.

UNMIS press release said Miraya FM intends to update listeners throughout census by regular broadcast on Miraya FM and website.

The Radio also decided to deploy teams of journalists across Sudan to report news and to reflect various viewpoints.

### **Pagan Amum warns of Sudan’s collapse**

(ST) April 20, 2005 (CAIRO) – Sudan’s cabinet affairs minister Pagan Amum has emphasized the importance of implementation of all peace agreements to realize peace in Sudan, warning that the current situation in the country could to Sudan’s fall.

Amum, who is also Secretary-General of Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), was addressing a meeting with the Sudanese community in Cairo organised by the SPLM chapter at Six of October City on Friday April 18.

He pointed that Sudan is at the watershed moment and is facing imminent danger of country's fall. Further he voiced his discontent and regret about the current anxiety where the country poses which is forcing the Sudanese people to desert the country and infiltrate to Israel.

Pagan called for the coexistence of all the Sudanese people and to overcome their difference and concentrate on the construction of the strong Sudanese nation, where the peace and democracy prevail and the peaceful transaction of the power.

"The Sudanese people are fed up of war," he noted, calling on the Sudanese people not to waste the present unprecedented ample chances for peace.

As regards Sudan's fifth census, Pagan Amum, SPLM Secretary General stressed that SPLM is much concerned that the fifth census form should include the question of religion and ethnicity, just for the cognition among the Sudanese people and quoted verse from the Holy Koran which says "God created people nations and tribes to live together."

He wondered, how can NCP insist on rejecting to mention ethnicity in the census form, while it is NCP spearheading the Islamization project from one hand, and on the other the Holy Koran asserts cognition among the tribes.

Pagan Amum said it is imperative to consolidate efforts to make Sudan a country that every Sudanese finds its dignity, satisfaction and live in absolute liberty, stressing on the importance of self acceptance as well as others.

He termed recognition of the other and pluralism as principles to attain peace.

Pointing that there is great opportunity before Sudan to become one of the greatest countries, underlining that SPLM is spearheading this through its strategic agenda to achieve peace and democratic governance system; peaceful share of power and wealth; and comprehensive development.

He further said that all the conditions are suitable to realize the peace subjected that all agreements which the National Congress Party signed in Naivasha, Abuja, Cairo and Asmara are implemented.

Amum called for reaching an acceptable formula to resolve the Darfur problem and the representation of Darfur people in the central government.

He also appealed on the Sudanese people not to be spectators in the row between the two partners (SPLM and NCP) but argued them to side and support the side which is advocating Sudan to become a democratic country and consolidation of peace at the midst of the Sudanese people.



## **Return of more than 1000 IDPs to Fanno Province in Unity State**

(Khartoum Monitor) More than 1000 IDPs returned to Fanno Province in Unity State in implementation of the voluntary return programme for the displaced in South Sudan.

They came from northern States and neighbouring countries to take part in the 5th census which starts tomorrow April 22 and the 2009 elections followed by the 2011 referendum on the unity or separation of south Sudan.

Governor of Fanno County Brig. Majib Lan Mading on receiving the IDPs in the town of Fanno asserted that his government will provide all basic services for the IDPs.

## **Darfur**

### **Darfur advocacy group criticize US-Sudan negotiations to normalize ties**

(ST) April 20, 2008 (WASHINGTON) — A powerful Darfur advocacy group in the US issued a strong worded statement criticizing a move by the Bush administration to negotiate normalizing ties with the Sudanese government.

“Darfur activists around the world were at-once stunned, confused and outraged by this report on the content of the U.S.-Sudan negotiations. It is so at odds with President Bush’s rhetoric on Sudan as to be simply unbelievable” said Jerry Fowler, president of the Save Darfur coalition.

“Special Envoy Williamson should clarify the administration’s views on Sudan when he appears before the Senate next week” Fowler added.

Save Darfur Coalition is a coalition of over 160 faith-based, humanitarian, and human rights organizations dedicated to ending what they believe is genocide in the western Sudanese region of Darfur.

Last week the New York Times (NYT) obtained a series of documents exchanged between the Washington and Khartoum on a series of steps to normalize relations between the two countries. The documents were leaked by an unidentified US official described as being “critical of the administration’s position”.

The report said that the Bush administration could remove Sudan from an American list of state supporters of terrorism and normalize relations if the Sudanese government agreed, among other steps, to allow Thai and Nepalese peacekeepers as part of the peacekeeping force.

The newly appointed US special envoy to Sudan Richard Williamson met in Rome last week with a high level Sudanese delegation to discuss normalization of ties. The meeting adjourned late Friday and will be resumed “within a month” according to Sudan official news agency (SUNA).

Fowler said in a statement that “normalizing ties with Sudan should be very far off, particularly given that Secretary-General Ban just this week issued a dire report on the

continued violence in Darfur and Sudan's blocking of the UNAMID civilian protection force".

"Khartoum sets the gold standard for breaking international promises which is why previous discussions of normalization have foundered" he added.

The leakage of the documents by the NYT may complicate the new US initiative and place the Bush administration under extreme pressure from US lawmakers and lobby groups to scrap it.

The US envoy will appear before the Senate Foreign relations committee headed by Senator Joe Biden next Wednesday to discuss the Darfur crisis. It is expected that Williamson will come under fire from the Senators to justify the latest move by the US administration to normalize ties with Khartoum despite the lack of progress on Darfur crisis.

Exactly a year ago the former US special envoy to Sudan Andrew Natsios appeared before the committee in a hearing that featured an angry exchange between him and Senator Robert Menendez.

The senator and the special envoy argued back and forth in loud voices, each repeatedly interrupting the other. Other US lawmakers at the hearing lashed out at the administration for delaying sanctions on Sudan.

International experts estimate some 200,000 have died and over 2 million have been driven from their homes during 4-1/2 years of fighting in Darfur. Sudan puts the death toll from the conflict at just 9,000.

### **Darfur rebel faction express opposition to census**

(ST) April 20, 2008 (PARIS) — The leader of a Darfur rebel faction sent a letter to the UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon rejecting the census process in Sudan due to start this week.

The leader of a Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM) faction, Ahmed Abdel-Shafi said in the letter that the "security situation in many parts of Darfur is so acute and so dangerous that citizens cannot assume normal life".

"The SLM hereby rejects in the strongest terms the 5th population census as planned by the NCP to take place on 22nd April 2008" the letter read.

The long awaited census has been delayed several because of logistical issues and disputes over the inclusion of questions on ethnicity and religion in the questionnaires.

On April 12 Sudan's semi-autonomous south withdrew from the census saying that there is a large number of southern Sudanese in northern Sudan which will affect the wealth sharing if not transported to the South according to South Sudan Information Minister Gabriel Changson Chang.

However South Sudan president Salva Kiir reversed the decision after meeting with Sudanese president Omar Hassan Al-Bashir last week.

The SLM leader criticized the census saying that the ruling National Congress Party (NCP) “will use any information of their planned population census as the basis for future negotiations on power and wealth sharing with the people of Darfur”.

All Darfur rebel groups including one which signed a peace agreement with Khartoum rejected the census.

Sudan’s senior presidential assistant and the head of Darfur transitional authority Minni Minnawi told Sudan Tribune last month that the insecurity in Darfur means that no population census can be conducted and consequently no elections.

"There is no such thing as having a census without security on the ground. There are millions of IDP’s and refugees all over Darfur. At the same time you cannot have elections without Darfur. If you do, then this means that you don’t consider Darfur to be part of Sudan" he said.

Abdel-Shafi speaking to Sudan Tribune by phone today said any census requires “peace and stability”. He added that there are “more than 4 millions of Darfur’s population lives as internally displaced persons (IDPs) inside Darfur or as refugees across the country’s international borders”.

“Less than 20% of the inhabitants of Darfur enjoy relative tranquility and may be able to take part in the so-called census. The NCP has no means or genuine intention to reach out to the IDPs and refugees from Darfur and include them in the census” the SLM leader said.

The Darfur conflict began in 2003 when an ethnic minority rose up against the Arab-dominated government in Khartoum, which then was accused of enlisting the Janjaweed militia group to help crush the rebellion.

### **SLM’s Nur says no need to sign new deal to stop Darfur insecurity**

(ST) April 20, 2008 (PARIS) — SLM leader Abdel-Wahid al-Nur welcomed efforts exerted by Darfur peace mediators to stop escalation of violence and attacks against civilians in the troubled region. However, he stressed that no need to sign further document to stop insecurity.

At the end of their fifth visit to Sudan, Darfur peace envoys Jan Eliasson, of the UN, and Salim Ahmed Salim, of the African Union told reporters in Khartoum yesterday on April 19 that warring parties are willing discuss security arrangements.

Abdel-Wahid al-Nur told Sudan Tribune that there is no need to hold new talks on security arrangements because the signed ceasefire deals and the UN Security Council resolution on the matter are quiet enough.

He underscored the need to implement it and not to sign new document.

"What we need is coordination meetings between the parties and the hybrid peacekeeping force to enforce these agreements and resolutions" al-Nur said.

The rebel leader said that international community should point that the attacks against civilians, the war crimes, and all the human rights breaches are the deed of the Sudanese army and the affiliated militias.

Abdel-Wahid refused to take part in different consultations organised by the mediators and to participate in Sirte peace talks last October. He asks to provide security to the civilians, to disarm Janjaweed militia, and to remove newly settled tribes in the region.

He said that the security issue is vital for Darfur people and the peace process. We demand since long time security before talks. So we have nothing against but it is a question of approach, he stressed.