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Media Monitoring Report

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Local News Headlines

- Czech Republic says can not provide helicopters to UNAMID (Al-Ahdath)
- Final report of North-South border soon (Al-Khartoum)
- More than 6000 children with armed factions (Sudan Vision)
- Constitutional court to consider today appeal to halt death sentences against JEM elements (Ray Al-Shaab)
- SLA robs Spanish MSF staff of SDG27000 in North Darfur (Al-Rai Al-Aam)
- Hamas leader Khaled Masha'1 to visit Khartoum today to address rally in support of Bashir (Al-Intibahad)
- After an experimental period of six months Cabinet approves Saturday holiday (Al-Rai Al-Aam)

Websites/International Headlines

- Sudan's Bashir vows no cooperation with court (Reuters)
- Bashir vows Sudan elections on time (AFP)
- Sudan confident China, Russia to block Al-Bashir indictment (ST)
- Sudan says no evidence received against Haroun (ST)
- ICC counsel criticizes Sudan handling of Bashir indictment (ST)
- Darfur rebels hail Uganda's stance on ICC (ST)
- Darfur force commander calls on Sudan to accept non-African troops (ST)
- NCP, SPLM resume talks on Sudan's peace implementation (ST)

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Highlights

Local news coverage (Arabic and English language press)

Czech says can not provide helicopters to UNAMID

Al-Ahdath reported that the Czech Republic decided not to provide six helicopters requested by UN for UNAMID in Darfur. Czech Foreign Ministry said the country does have enough helicopters as most of them are engaged in NATO operations in Afghanistan. "Although Czech possesses a relatively large number of helicopters but most of them are technically not fit for such operations," says the Ministry.

Final report of North-South border soon

Al-Khartoum stated that the North-South Border Demarcation Technical Committee set up sub-committees to prepare a final report to be submitted to the Presidency. Sources expected the committees to finalize the report during the forthcoming days.

Chairman of the committee Abdullah Al Sadiq has briefed the AEC chief on achievements of the committee over the past period. The AEC chairman expressed satisfaction with the work of the committee and promised to highlight that at the regular donors meeting next Tuesday.

More than 6000 children with armed factions

Sudan Vision newspaper quoted the General Secretary of Darfur organizations network Abu Zeid Ali as saying that there were more than 6000 children with Darfur armed factions and called for their release. Abu Zeid was speaking at a symposium organized by Darfur organizations network.

The chairman of Consultative Council of Human Rights, Abdelmoniem Osman stated that the government of Sudan exerted great efforts but the international community does not appreciate. "Darfur problem is an internal conflict where protection of civilians is difficult," he said. "There are 15,000 child soldiers in Darfur," he added.

Meanwhile, the Commissioner of Humanitarian Aid Commission Hasabo Abdelrahman stated that 90% of the children who had participated in Omdurman invasion were school-goers and the President issued a decree to forgive them.

Constitutional court to consider appeal to halt death sentences against JEM elements

Ray Al-Shaab carried a report saying that the constitutional court will hold an extraordinary sitting today to consider the defense appeal for halting carrying out of death sentence against JEM elements convicted by anti-terrorism courts in Omdurman, Khartoum and Khartoum North. Advocate Kamal Omer said he

expects the court to suspend the death sentences because the constitutional appeal against courts' proceedings has not been decided yet. 30 persons have been condemned to death and the sentence is executable once confirmed by the special appeal court.

Cabinet approves Saturday a holiday

Al-Rai Al-Aam stated that the Council of Minister at a meeting yesterday chaired by Vice President Taha agreed to the observance of Saturday as a holiday for the public sector. The Cabinet gave the final approval after an experimental period of six months. The decisions applies to the public sector as the private sector is governed by the Individual Labour Relations Act.

SLA robs Spanish MSF 27000 pounds in North Darfur

Al-Rai Al-Aam reported that a group of Minnawi-led SLA attacked the Spanish MSF compound in Shangil Tobai (North Darfur) last Saturday and got away with 27000 pounds. According to the source, the organization protested and relocated its staff from Shangil Tobai and Tawila to El Fasher.

Hamas leader Khaled Masha'l to visit Khartoum Tuesday to address rally in support of Bashir

Al-Intihaba carried a report stating that the the leader of the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) Khaled Masha'l will visit Khartoum tomorrow Tuesday to address a rally to be organized by the General Union of the Sudanese Students at the Friendship Hall in support of Sudan

against ICC. The chairman of the Union Omer Mahgoub said all preparations for the rally have been finalized.

Website/International news coverage

Sudan's Bashir vows no cooperation with court

(Reuters) - President Omar Hassan al-Bashir vowed on Sunday that Sudan would never cooperate with the ICC, which last month moved to indict him for genocide and war crimes in Darfur.

Speaking to trade union leaders visiting Khartoum from Arab, African and Asian nations, Bashir criticised Western states and said the court's move was part of a neo-colonialist agenda to protect the interests of developed countries. "Our position is firm ... there will be no cooperation with the so-called International Criminal Court," he said to cheers from supporters.

Regional powers have criticised the move to indict Bashir, saying it would threaten a fragile peace process in Sudan which has suffered civil turmoil since 1955. But rights groups have hailed it as a blow to impunity.

The Non-Aligned Movement, African Union and Arab League have all expressed support for Bashir, but neighbouring Uganda's President Yoweri Museveni said on Saturday the AU should take action to resolve the Darfur problem rather than condemn the indictment. "The correct position for the AU therefore, should be to investigate ourselves," he told a news conference.

Bashir said Washington was committing crimes every day in Iraq and Afghanistan and should be brought to account for the

atom bombs dropped in Japan during World War II. "These colonial superpowers are waging a targeted campaign against our country," he said.

Bashir vows Sudan elections on time

(AFP) - Sudanese President Omar al-Beshir on Sunday stepped up his diplomatic campaign to avert a possible international arrest warrant over crimes in Darfur by vowing that elections would go ahead on time.

Addressing African and Arab trade unionists, who crowded a Khartoum hall to express their support, Beshir delivered a stern speech outlining four policies in response to a request from the world court's prosecutor for his arrest.

"We would like to reiterate our confidence in our national courts and justice, and all the institutions of our government," said Bashir.

"We would like to affirm our striving for a political solution of the Darfur problem," he said before pledging to continue development and rehabilitation programmes.

"We shall also go on with the democratic process and start the elections on its date," said Bashir, who then thanked unionists for their cheering rally of speeches and music.

With Bashir seated on a sludge-colour platform before an audience of army officers, trade unionists and diplomats, supporters packed to the rafters interrupted speeches to shout "God is Great" and "Down, Down USA."

Bashir grinned and punched the air in time to nationalistic music, while his own speech was delayed for several minutes by a woman reciting a poem and castigating Darfur rebel leaders who rose

up against Khartoum in 2003.

Far from the angry reprisals that some predicted against UN peacekeepers in Darfur or mass demonstrations, the regime has waged a diplomatic offensive to persuade the UN Security Council to freeze any possible legal proceedings.

ICC judges are likely to take until at least mid-September to announce a decision on whether to formally issue a warrant for Beshir's arrest.

Bashir has already made repeated promises of working for peace in Darfur since the ICC prosecutor's accusations, but Sunday was the first time he himself referred to the elections going ahead on time.

Sudan's new electoral law grants women 25 percent of seats in parliament and introduces proportional representation in what has been billed as a road towards democratic transformation.

But massive delays have hindered preparations for the ballot and an independent electoral commission, which should be in place this month, has not yet been appointed.

Beshir's expression of confidence in the Sudanese justice came as Justice Minister Abdul Basit Sabdarat appeared not to rule out incorporating laws dealing with war crimes and crimes against humanity into the legislation.

The comments were made in an interview published in Al-Rai Al-Aam newspaper on Sunday.

Despite past promises, credible trials in Sudan for alleged rights abuses in Darfur -- which would see the ICC drop its charges -- have failed to emerge.

Sudan confident China, Russia to block Al-Bashir indictment

(Sudan Tribune) – The Sudanese government expressed confidence that China and Russia will step in to block any decision by ICC judges to issue an arrest warrant for President Al-Bashir, Sudan's minister in charge of Foreign Affairs Al-Samani al-Wasila told the pro-government Al-Rayaam newspaper. He said the UN Security Council "will not set a precedent of prosecuting a sitting head of state".

"China supports the reasonable request by the African Union and other organizations for the Council to take early action to suspend the indictment of the Sudanese leader by the ICC, in accordance with the relevant provisions" he added.

But any such resolution introduced appears to have little chances of surviving a vote in the UNSC particularly with the veto wielding members such as US, UK and France opposing it.

The Sudanese diplomat accused France of "backstabbing" and pushing the ICC prosecutor behind the scene to indict Al-Bashir. "We were waiting for them [French] a positive initiative to help resolve the crisis when they were actually helping Ocampo" he said.

Moreover, he said, the French and British had sought the extradition of Darfur war crimes suspects Ahmed Haroun, state minister for humanitarian affairs, and militia commander Ali Mohamed Ali Abdel-Rahman, also known as Ali Kushayb.

Sudan says no evidence received against Haroun

(Sudan Tribune) The Sudanese government said it will not bring a minister accused of war crimes to justice without evidence. Justice Minister Abdel-Baset Sabdarat told the pro-government Al-Rayaam that no complaint has been filed by any party against Ahmed Haroun, state minister for humanitarian affairs. "We will not file complaints against Haroun on behalf of Ocampo or any other foreign party" he said.

Sudan's justice minister also said that laws on war crimes and humanitarian code may be introduced if they appear not to be included in the penal code. According to Sabdarat, setting up a special court for Darfur takes time in terms of collecting evidence and bringing witnesses. He disclosed that there are cases filed with the authorities that will be made to court "in the right time".

INTERVIEW: ICC counsel criticizes Sudan handling of Bashir indictment

(Sudan Tribune) – The Sudanese government is mishandling the ICC case against President Al-Bashir, Al-Hadi Shalluf, an ICC-registered counsel, told Sudan Tribune in an interview today.

The French-Libyan born counsel followed the Darfur case in the ICC very closely, having been appointed by ICC Judges in August 2006 to represent and protect the general interests of the defence in the Darfur case during proceedings on the preservation of evidence and protection of witnesses.

Shalluf filed a series of motions to challenge the jurisdiction of the Court and the admissibility of the Darfur case at the ICC which the judges eventually rejected. Shalluf stressed that Khartoum's options are becoming limited as time passes and that Sudan should accept a special

regional court that includes Sudanese judges. He also warned that Al-Bashir could face arrest if he travels abroad.

As to the Security Council suspending Al-Bashir's indictment, Shalluf's view is that the Rome Statue does not allow a partial deferral; that a resolution would have to cover the other two suspects -- Ahmed Haroun, state minister for humanitarian affairs, and militia commander Ali Mohamed Ali Abdel-Rahman, also known as Ali Kushayb.

For full text of interview go to www.sudantribune.com

Darfur rebels hail Uganda's stance on ICC

(Sudan Tribune) – Darfur rebels welcomed statements made yesterday by the Ugandan president Yoweri Museveni, who told reporters he does not condemn indictment by the ICC prosecutor of Sudan's President Al-Bashir. Museveni claimed that Africans are the ones to blame for not investigating Darfur crimes.

Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM) leader Abdel-Wahid Al-Nur said Museveni's remarks "represent the true conscience of Africa". "This is a true African leader. We commend him for his courageous position" Al-Nur said.

Last month, the African Union (AU) urged the UN Security Council to suspend the probable ICC's indictment against Al-Bashir.

Nouri Abdalla, Chief of Staff for the leader of a Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM) faction led by Ahmed Abdel Shafi urged other African leaders to follow in "President Museveni's footsteps". "It is

time for the AU to redirect its efforts and energy to help the ICC Prosecutor to bring Al-Bashir to justice, rather than wasting its energy in trying to block the work of Mr. Ocampo" he added.

Al-Nur slammed the AU saying that Al-Bashir "killed 3 million Africans in South Sudan, hundreds of thousands in Blue Nile and Nuba as well as Darfur all in the name of race. They even killed people in Kajbar". "Where is the AU dignity on these issues? Al-Bashir never claimed to be acting as an African person anyways so that the AU defends him" Al-Nur said.

Darfur force commander calls on Sudan to accept non-African troops

(Sudan Tribune) – UNAMID Force Commander called for the inclusion of non-African contingents among his troops.

The Nigerian General Martin Luther Agwai wrote an article titled "There is no peace to keep" in the Egyptian daily Al-Ahram expressing disappointment over lack of support to UNAMID by the international community.

"It is time for the international community to take up its responsibility towards UNAMID. The force is undermanned and lacks equipments...We don't have any tactical helicopters that could have prevented the killings of our forces" he said.

General Agwai also said that it was "imperative" that discussions be conducted to expand the composition of the UNAMID force in terms of participating countries.

"Resolution 1769 which authorized UNAMID speaks about predominantly African character of the force but it does not say that it should be exclusively African" he added.

“With the known limitations of African countries that contribute to UNAMID we should now be able to turn to non-African countries that are willing and able to help us in a short period of time. People of Darfur deserve nothing less than that” Agwai stressed.

The UNAMID commander also called on Khartoum to do more to ease the crisis in Darfur.

“Allowing forces from other countries, removing genuine or artificial bureaucratic obstacles that faces UNAMID and aid organizations, dialogue with rebel groups and cracking down on their militias will send the strong message that the government is doing all it can to bring peace to Darfur” he said.

Agwai also hinted that the Sudanese government may be connected to the July 8th attack on UNMAID that left 7 peacekeepers dead and 22 wounded.

“The Sudanese government must realize that the attack in Umm Hagiba is not in the interest of any party. Involving the joint mission in the conflict will reduce chances for a peaceful settlement” he warned.

The UNAMID commander also criticized splintering rebel groups and said that “they do not represent their people who want peace”.

“For a long time these groups were safe from reprimand, making use of the focus of international community on Khartoum...It is time that the rebels show that they are serious about peace” he said.

Agwai said that the attack on peacekeepers last month is a reminder that “this conflict is getting out of control and that the international community, rebels and Sudan must work immediately to bring back peace and security”.

“I am determined to ensure that the lives of our brave peacekeepers under my

command who were killed in Umm Hagiba did not go in vain” he said.

NCP, SPLM resume talks on Sudan’s peace implementation

(Sudan Tribune) — The Joint Political Executive Committee meetings between the National Congress Party (NCP) and the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement (SPLM) on the implementation process of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) resume on Monday in Khartoum.

Shortly before his departure to Khartoum on Sunday, the Vice President of the Government of Southern Sudan and Deputy Chairperson of the SPLM, Dr. Riek Machar Teny, told the press at Juba International Airport that he was bringing 11 separate high-level specialized committees to Khartoum to deal with CPA issues.

Machar, who chairs the SPLM component of the joint panel, said issues to be discussed would include formation of the Electoral Commission, the Darfur peace process and formation of the Abyei Area Administration as per the Roadmap Agreement of 8 June.

He said the committees would try to tackle their respective issues separately before the overall meetings he is to co-chair with Vice President of the Republic Ali Osman Mohamed Taha.