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HIGHLIGHTS:

United Nations and the Transition Debate

Coverage on the humanitarian press briefing, Monday 7th Aug.

(*Various local dailies* – 8th Aug. **Khrt.**) The United Nations has warned of a deterioration of the security situation in the Darfur region as a result of increased violence and splits within the ranks of armed groups in the region.

He said the armed groups are largely to blame for the increased violence in the region that has obstructed humanitarian work and described the rebels who perpetrated this violence as “hooligans”* [*according to Akhir Lahza daily*].

In a press briefing yesterday, Manuel Aranda da Silva, the United Nations Humanitarian Coordinator and Deputy SRSR, said that the African Union is facing a lot of difficulties in providing protection for civilians and humanitarian workers in Darfur and has to be strengthened in order to carry out its tasks in Darfur. He pointed out however that the primary responsibility for security to humanitarian workers is the responsibility of the government of Sudan since it has rejected a United Nations force to be deployed to Darfur. He said that now more than ever before, the government in Sudan is responsible for guaranteeing security in and its failure to do so in Darfur will largely hamper humanitarian operations.

Da Silva also urged for international funding for humanitarian activities in Sudan. He pointed out that the United Nations has received about 700 million dollars in funding for these operations and that this covers only 46.9% of the estimates required.

He said that the United Nations and its agencies will provide 220 million dollars which, with the 9 billion from the government, will be used for the implementation of development projects in the country.

The Humanitarian Coordinator said that positive achievements have been realised in the humanitarian domain in Sudan during the first half of 2006 despite the difficulties.

He also pointed out that ongoing fighting between the factions of the SLA has hampered the flow of humanitarian assistance to the needy but confirmed that the United Nations is prepared to continue to provide humanitarian assistance despite the difficulties faced and announced that the United Nations has resumed humanitarian operations in the IDP camps in Zalingei.

He condemned the killing of 8 Sudanese humanitarian workers in the region in the month of July alone which he described as a harsh period for the humanitarian workers in Darfur.

The Humanitarian Coordinator further pointed out that three employees in a UNICEF-supported water project were killed as a result of untrue rumours that they had poisoned water sources.

He called upon all parties to the conflict in Darfur to respect the impartial nature of humanitarian work in order to facilitate access to humanitarian assistance. He said the United Nations is committed to continue dialogue with beneficiaries of humanitarian assistance to facilitate access.

Da Silva attributed the increased violence in Darfur to the feeling of frustration in the IDP camps in the wake of the signing of the Darfur Peace Agreement because, he says, not all people in Darfur support the deal.

He called upon the African Union to disseminate the Darfur Peace Agreement to all the people of Darfur.

He also criticised the slow pace in the implementation of the Darfur Peace Agreement – especially the security aspects of the agreement.

The Humanitarian Coordinator further said there is an increase in violence targeting civilians and that there is a dramatic increase in car-jackings in recent times.

** The DSRSG described the perpetrators as “bandits” and not hooligans as the paper put it.*

Muslim World League calls on Kofi Annan to put an end to the massacre in Lebanon

(*AlKhabar* – 8th Aug. **Khrt.**) The Muslim World League has called on UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan to put an end to the massacres of the people of Lebanon and to refer the issue to the ICC.

[*The paper carries a text of the statement*].

CPA

National Congress Party, SPLM hold talks today

(*AlAyaam* – 8th Aug. **Khrt.**) The National Congress Party and the SPLM hold today at the National Congress Party headquarters in Khartoum a meeting to discuss outstanding issues between them.

National Congress Party’s Nafei Ali Nafei said that the talks will cover the formation of sub-committees and their functions and the two sides will discuss the political developments in the country since their last meeting last May. Abyei and South Kordofan, among other important issues, will also feature in the talks, he said.

North-South boundaries commission prepares for survey

(*AlKhartoum* – 8th Aug. **Khrt.**) The North-South boundaries commission has drafted a plan to tour the key towns of the states along the boundary areas.

The commission is to first visit Juba and will send delegation to collect pertinent information from Egypt, France, the UK, Turkey and Kenya.

The commission will then send a team to survey the area to determine and agree on the north-south boundaries before tabling its final report to the Presidency of the Republic.

More than 20,000 IDPs wish to return to the South

(*Allntibaha* – 8th Aug. **Khrt.**) Unity State has implemented the third stage of its returns program for IDPs from Khartoum.

More than 700 IDPs returned to Finjar region in Unity State through Kosti inland port.

Mr. James Lily, the Minister of Information and communication in the GoSS and the head of the IDPs committee assured that all preparations are complete to receive the convoy.

He said that the state bought 40 tractors during the current agricultural season in addition to preparing the infrastructure necessary to receive the IDPs. He added that the State has prepared a major program to inform the population about IDPs return and the next stage.

GoNU

Defence minister says plans underway to build a smaller but more robust, high mobility SAF

(*AlRai AlAam* – 8th Aug. **Khrt.**) Defence minister Gen. AbdelRaheem Mohamed Hussein says that his ministry is planning to build a smaller but more robust, high mobility Armed Forces which will be able rapidly deploy to cover all parts of the country.

Speaking to *AlRai AlAam* daily, the minister pointed out that the ministry's plans shall seek to make the country self-dependent in terms of conventional weapons, and to review military doctrine and combat skills.

He further pointed out that military intelligence and strategy also dictate a review in the information gathering and analysis domains.

Of the most prominent amendments to the Armed Forces Act, the minister says, is the existence of an independent military tribunal and an article on human rights that covers crimes against humanity.

President el-Bashir travels to N'djamena today for talks with Debby and Gadaffi

(*AlRai AlAam* – 8th Aug. **Khrt.**) President el-Bashir travels to the Chadian capital N'Djamena today to participate in the re-instating of Iddris Debbé as the President of the Republic of Chad.

El-Bashir, as the current chairman of the Arab League, will hold there a bilateral meeting with the Libyan president Gadhaffi in order to create a pro-Lebanon and Palestine stand.

Southern Sudan/GoSS/SPLM

Uganda-LRA rebel talks delayed until Tuesday

(*Reuters/ST* – 7th Aug. **Nairobi**) Talks between Ugandan negotiators and representatives of Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) rebels in southern Sudan were delayed on Monday as the Ugandan delegation held discussions with the hosts, an official said.

"Since we arrived we have been meeting officials of the south Sudan government. Talks should now begin on Tuesday," the Ugandan spokesman Captain Paddy Ankunda said by telephone from the southern capital Juba. He gave no details of the meeting.

South Sudan's regional government says it wants broker an end to the LRA's 20-year war, which has uprooted nearly two million people in northern Uganda and destabilised south Sudan.

Uganda and southern Sudan's Vice President Riek Machar, the chief mediator of the talks, had wanted the rebel's leader Joseph Kony or his deputy Vincent Otti to attend in person.

But both men are wanted for war crimes by the International Criminal Court in The Hague, and have stayed in their forest hideout in lawless eastern Democratic Republic of Congo.

Last week, Otti said he thought plans to bring him to Juba were a "trap" to have him arrested, but that he and Kony had full confidence in the existing delegation of LRA negotiators.

Rebecca Garang calls to increase women's representation in S. Sudan

(*Sudan Radio Service/ST* – 8th Aug. **Juba**) The Minister of Roads and Transport in the Government of Southern Sudan, Rebecca Garang, has called on the Government of Southern Sudan to increase women's representation in government institutions.

In an address to the public at the first anniversary of the death of her husband and SPLM leader John Garang, Rebecca said the Government of Southern Sudan has failed to keep its promise of the 25 percent share of representation for women in the government institutions. Nyandeng pointed out that not a single woman was appointed to a diplomatic position in foreign missions and embassies, the Sudan Radio Service (SRS) reported.

"I say this particularly with regard to women representation. There has been a drop in the 25 per cent allocated to women in most institutions and totally forgotten altogether in other cases. For example no woman diplomats or ambassadors have been included in the recent appointment", Rebecca Garang said.

She urged the SPLM to keep to its promise.

Madam Garang also called upon youth in southern Sudan to take advantage of peace in Sudan to develop themselves. Speaking at the first anniversary of the death of her husband who died in a helicopter crash last year, Rebecca described women and youth as "leaders of tomorrow." She said women and youth are the only people who can bring peace and reconciliation to the people of Southern Sudan.

Madam Garang urged all Sudanese to work together for peace in Sudan, saying it is the only way to build Southern Sudan after two decades of civil war.

Dr. Benjamin: GoSS has never known how much oil Sudan produces

(*The Citizen* – 8th Aug. **Khart.**) The State Minister at the Ministry of International Cooperation, Dr. Barnaba Marial Benjamin confirmed to the press yesterday that his ministry is representing the Ministry of Regional Cooperation in the Government of South Sudan and that any funds from donors must come through the ministry of International Cooperation which will then forward to the GoSS what concerns it.

Dr. Marial noted that Norway was a very important partner in the Naivasha peace talks and had promised to support Sudan in its development efforts.

Dr. Marial acknowledged the CPA implementation faces some difficulties, observing that each party interprets the CPA in their own way. He stressed the importance of establishing the boarder commission, which should have been done by now.

The International Cooperation State Minister noted that there are differences between SPLM and NCP concerning the administration of the petroleum Commission. “SPLM wants the Secretary of Energy to be an independent person while the NCP insists that the secretary be someone appointed from the Ministry of Energy and Mining.” Dr. Barnaba disclosed.

He also called attention to the need for everyone to participate in the peace process including that in the east of Sudan and the people of the far northern part of the country who may think that Sudan has neglected them and given their piece of land in Halaib to the Egyptians.

Darfur/Darfur Peace Agreement

Darfur rebel leader sworn in as Sudan presidential aide

(*AlAyaam* – 8th Aug. **Khrt.**) President Bashir has reiterated government commitment to national unity through the implementation of the Darfur Peace Agreement in cooperation with just-appointed senior aide, Mini Minnawi.

Following Minnawi’s swearing-in ceremony, the President thanked all organisations that contributed to the Darfur peace deal. He mentioned the N’Djamena Agreement that ushered in the AMIS and to consolidate security in Darfur and the Abuja agreement that was meant to improve the security and humanitarian situation in the region.

Following his swearing-in as senior aide to the President of the Republic, Minnawi said that his movement is not against a transition of the AMIS to a United Nations operation, should the current situation in Darfur continue, but does not have the “invitation card” to invite them in.

He said his movement will continue to urge the holdout rebel groups to join the Darfur Peace Agreement.

To the people of Darfur, Minnawi promised that his administration will strive to guarantee development, stability and security and encourage the return of IDPs and refugees to their areas and to rehabilitate those areas affected by the war.

He pointed out that the Darfur Peace Agreement stipulates that the forces be integrated at one point and pointed out that there are some other routine procedural measures that have to be taken without which it will be difficult to implement the agreement.

Minnawi further said that he travelled to Washington before coming to Khartoum in order to seek international support for the implementation of the Darfur Peace Agreement.

Former rebels, govt make false start to Darfur peace

(*Reuters/ST* – 7th Aug. **Khrt.**) The arrival in Khartoum of the only Darfur rebel leader to sign a peace agreement with the government might have heralded a new era of cooperation.

But the street parties planned for Sudan Liberation Army leader Minni Arcua Minawi fizzled after he abruptly cancelled his visit when the government failed to award him a promised official position.

And though he eventually arrived and the government eventually acquiesced, the political dispute has generated fresh mistrust between the rebels who agreed to put down their arms and the government which agreed to treat them as partners.

As with so many other water-shed events in the more than three-year-old Darfur conflict a hopeful moment has been clouded by doubts.

Analysts say Minawi's indecision does not bode well for his role as leader representing the ravaged region and the government's seeming hesitation to award him a job as special assistant to the president raises fears more controversial elements of the peace deal will not be implemented.

"The last minute adjournment of the arrival of SLA leader Minawi in Khartoum aroused the ridicule of observers," an editorial in the state-owned Sudan Vision daily said on Sunday.

"Minawi emerged the loser by being labelled as hesitant and undecided, two qualities that conflict with real leadership," said the editorial entitled "Minawi move ridiculous".

Al-Hajj Warag wrote in the semi-independent al-Sahafa daily on Sunday that the dominant National Congress Party (NCP) was to blame for not appointing Minawi as promised.

Others apportioned blame to both sides.

"It is clear that the government is not serious and Minni was stupid to sign this deal," said Darfuri Farid al-Nur Adam on Monday. He fled the war in his home of Mornei in West Darfur to the capital two years ago.

One analyst following Darfur closely said on Monday he was pessimistic for the future as the appointment of Minawi was the only tangible proof of implementation of the deal to date.

"It's not a very good start to the agreement," he said, declining to be named for security reasons.

The analyst added that even before Saturday's dispute the deal had failed at the first and most important step, which was the government plan for disarming the Arab militia known as Janjaweed and blamed for much of the violence in Darfur.

That plan was sent weeks late to the African Union, which has still not announced anything on disarmament almost a month after receiving it.

The SLA said they had not even seen the plan.

Minawi, meanwhile, has been accused of detaining and torturing opponents to the deal, some cases of which have been confirmed by the AU monitoring a shaky truce in Darfur.

"The Darfur peace agreement did not end the war in Darfur and Minni is not seen nationally as a peacemaker nor has he proved himself as such or articulated any vision which is popular in Darfur let alone throughout the country," the analyst said.

"The government seems to be doing the same old things and the rebels seem to be as divided as ever," he added.

SLM-Freewill challenges Minnawi's appointment before the African Union

(*AlRai AlAam* – 8th Aug. **Khrt.**) The SLM-Freewill faction says it will contest the appointment of Mini Minnawi as senior aide to the President of the Republic.

The faction argues that the protest they will present before the African Union and the international community is based on the fact that the Darfur Peace Agreement stipulates that the position should have been nominated for in consultations between the parties and pointed out that this has not happened.

Darfur rebels say they shot down govt warplane*

(*Reuters/ST* – 7th Aug. **Khrt.**) Rebels in the Darfur region of western Sudan said they shot down a Sudanese military bomber plane on Monday while it was attacking their forces.

But in Khartoum an army spokesman denied the report. A military plane had mechanical trouble but was able to fly back to base, added the spokesman, who asked not to be named.

Ahmed Tugod Lissan, a spokesman for the rebel National Redemption Front (NRF), told Reuters from Darfur: "We shot down an Antonov An-24 airplane an hour ago in Sayah."

Sayah is about 100 km (60 miles) northeast of el-Fasher, the capital of North Darfur state and the scene of recent fighting between the NRF and the Sudan Liberation Army faction led by Minni Arcua Minawi, who has made peace with Khartoum.

The National Redemption Front is an alliance of rebels opposed to the Abuja peace agreement which Minawi and the Sudanese government signed in the Nigerian capital on 5 May.

The army spokesman said: "This is a lie. A plane belonging to the army did have a mechanical fault while in the air but it has managed to return safely to Al-Fasher."

Lissan said the plane had been bombing NRF forces near Sayah since Monday morning in support of Minnawi's forces, and the rebels shot it down with anti-aircraft missiles.

He said Sudanese government forces had intervened after the NRF on Sunday attacked a military base belonging to Minnawi's forces in Sayah and chased them out.

In the operation, the rebels captured 12 Toyota Land Cruisers, the vehicle of choice in the arid region, he said.

Lissan said rebel forces were trying to find the remains of the bomber crew but the plane was in pieces over a large area.

** Please see the full text of the NRF statement attached separately*

EU is permitted to visit the Slovenian official detained in Darfur

(*AlSudani* – 8th Aug. **Khrt.**) Yesterday, the government permitted the EU to visit the Slovenian presidential advisor Tomo Karznar who is standing trial on suspicion of espionage, illegal entry in Sudan and sending wrong information about Sudan.

Representing the EU, the German ambassador, Steven Keller, told the Minister of Justice Mohamed Ali el-Mardi about his wish to visit the Slovenian official as he is one of the EU subjects.

The Minister of Justice accepted the request and instructed the head of the directorate of legal affairs in Darfur to permit the German ambassador visit to the accused.

400 Sudanese refugees return from Chad

(*Khartoum Monitor* – 8th Aug. **Khrt.**) Over 400 Sudanese refugees from Darfur who had fled to the neighboring Chad during the night of the conflicts there have returned from Chad on Saturday to the Jarera and Puja regions near the Kalbas Country of the West Darfur State.

The Sources from the West Darfur sate explained yesterday that the security situation in the state and country is good, but they need some of the basic services such as clean drinking water, food shelter education and health care. The source added that governor of the state is demanding quick help from the federal government in order to feed the refugees.

Eastern Sudan

East Sudan peace talks begin, long road ahead

(*Reuters/ST* – 7th Aug. **Khrt.**) A second round of east Sudan peace talks opened late on Monday in what promises to be a long road to resolving a lingering low-level revolt in the economically important region of the country.

The signing of the procedural arrangements for eastern Sudan peace talks, Asmara, May 25, 2006 (ERINA)

With peace deals already under its belt in the west and south, Khartoum's ruling National Congress Party is in a strong position to negotiate with the now isolated and weakest of its regional rebel opponent groups — the Eastern Front.

"Tonight we have a short opening session," said Amna Dirar, the Secretary-General of the main eastern political party, the Beja Congress, part of the Eastern Front coalition.

"Tomorrow we will discuss the agenda for wealth-sharing," she told Reuters from the Eritrean capital Asmara. "I think it will take some time — there are many main issues that we still haven't discussed."

The east has Sudan's largest gold mine and its main port where its oil pipelines take exports to the world market. But despite its rich resources it remains one of the country's poorest regions.

During about a decade of low-scale conflict, eastern rebels have allied themselves with former southern rebels and those from Sudan's western Darfur region.

But after some of those insurgents signed peace deals to join the central government the eastern rebels have found themselves in a weaker negotiating position.

This year they also lost control of the Hameshkhoreib area on the Eritrean border where, along with southern rebels, they had based their forces.

Under a 2005 north-south deal, the northern army took over the area earlier this year. U.N. peacekeepers monitoring that transition withdrew last week.

Dirar said Eritrean military observers had moved in after the U.N. withdrawal to the border town of Kassala to monitor the security situation but she could not confirm they were still present in the area.

In June, Sudan's government and the eastern rebels signed a pact to cease hostilities and agreed a framework for future talks.

This second round of eastern talks will discuss wealth and power sharing and security arrangements.

Slovenia continues with efforts to release Darfur envoy

(ST – 8th Aug. **Ljubljana/Khrt.**) The Slovene Foreign Ministry on Monday assured that it is doing everything in its power to secure the release of Tomo Kriznar, President Janez Drnovsek's special envoy to the western Sudanese province of Darfur.

The ministry has been cooperating with the German embassy in Khartoum which represents the current EU presiding country Finland in Sudan., the Slovene news agency reported.

The embassy provided Kriznar with a lawyer. Drnovsek's envoy is also to be visited in prison by the German ambassador to Sudan on Tuesday or Wednesday.

As the ministry furthermore explained, it again called on the Sudanese Foreign Ministry last week to speed up the procedure.

The trial against Kriznar, who was arrested on 20 July for lacking a valid visa for Sudan and is also accused of spying, is to resume on Tuesday or Wednesday in the town of El Fashir in the west of Sudan.

According to today's edition of the daily Dnevnik, the evidence against Kriznar includes photos of an alleged official government document given to him by Darfur rebels.

According to the daily, the document contains orders by the Sudanese authorities to kill everyone who would set out to unearth the mass graves in Darfur, even UN workers.

At the beginning of August, Kriznar admitted that he entered Darfur without a valid visa as he was denied one by the Sudanese embassy in Vienna. He, however, refused all allegations about being a spy.

He believes the Sudanese authorities are also aware that he is not a spy, yet, they are still trying to present him as such, the daily also writes.

Other Developments

Sudan envoy calls for Arab summit on Israel-Palestinian peace

(AP/ST – 7th Aug. **Cai.**) A Sudanese presidential adviser on Monday called for an emergency Arab summit to resume discussions on the stalled Middle East peace process for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Mustafa Osman Ismail said after meeting with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak that the Arab League summit should deal with "practical ideas to support Lebanon and create a situation capable of moving on the peace process."

Ismail also said the summit should concentrate on solving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict "which is the core of every problem...and if the West is really interested in ending the violence and the struggle, then the Arab-Israeli conflict should be solved."

He didn't provide details on when and where the proposed Arab League summit should take place.

Ismail said ending the Palestinian conflict also would lead to solving the Israeli-Hezbollah conflict in Lebanon, which entered its 27th day Monday, and would improve Syria's relations with Israel.

Yemen last week withdrew its call for an emergency Arab League summit to discuss the Lebanese crisis after too few of the league's 22 members agreed to it.

The Sudanese envoy also plans to visit Kuwait, Yemen, Syria, Saudi Arabia and Jordan to discuss his summit plans.