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HIGHLIGHTS:

United Nations and the Transition Debate

National Congress Party and SPLM to discuss Abyei issue and the deployment of international forces in Darfur next Saturday

(*AlAyaam* – 10th Aug. **Khrt.**) The National Congress Party and SPLM are to discuss the Abyei issue and the deployment of international forces to Darfur next Saturday, reports a source.

Following the creation of a joint special committee, the NCP and the SPLM will set to discuss outstanding issues pertaining to the political, economic and security domains and say they will set out to work immediately.

On Saturday, the two partners will re-discuss the Abyei issue and the issue of the deployment of international forces to Darfur.

Mc.Cormick says US will push for a United Nations force to Darfur asap

(*AlRai AlAam* – 10th Aug. **Agencies**) Mc. Cormick, White House spokesperson, said that American administration has welcomed the forming of high level committee to look at the possibility of sending United Nations troops to Darfur.

He also praised the appointment of Mini Minnawi as Senior Assistant to the President and head of the Darfur Transitional Authority.

He said that the political process to resolve the problem is ongoing and emphasised that the process will be complete once the GoNU accepts the deployment to Darfur of United Nations forces.

Dr. Turabi likens the deployment of UN troops to Darfur as swallowing a bitter pill

(*AlHayat* – 10th Aug. **Khrt.**) Dr. Hassan Turabi, the Secretary-General of the opposition Popular Congress Party, says the United Nations Charter is obligatory upon all member-states but has called for reforms for the organisation.

Speaking at a symposium on international intervention organised by the youth wing of his party at the party offices yesterday, Dr. Turabi pointed out that the right thing would have been to bring radical solutions to the problems of Darfur in order to let the Africans (the AMIS) and the others out of the country.

He pointed out that the United Nations is in fact already in Darfur and has succeeded in some of its functions there but failed in others.

On his party's support for a United Nations military intervention in Darfur, the opposition figure said that the party likens such an intervention to "Being forced to eat pork" [*adherents of the Muslim faith are not allowed to eat pork but certain extreme situations do permit it when extremely necessary. The allegory is likened to the saying: swallowing a bitter pill*].

Southern Sudan/GoSS/SPLM

Museveni declares ceasefire

(*AlHayat/Agencies* – 10th Aug. **Kampala**) Ugandan president Yuwari Museveni has declared a ceasefire and a cessation of hostilities with the Lord's Resistance Army, the *New Vision* daily of Uganda reports.

Sources in Kampala say that this declaration may have reached the Lord's Resistance Army yesterday.

The sources further reveal that the announcement also names the government monitoring team for the ceasefire.

Uganda rebels pull out of talks

(*BBC News* – 9th Aug.) Uganda's Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) rebel group has pulled out of peace talks, demanding the government declare a ceasefire as the LRA has done.

An LRA spokesman told the BBC the government's refusal to do so showed it was not serious about the talks.

But the government says it wants a ceasefire to be part of a comprehensive settlement as the LRA has used previous ceasefire declarations to rearm.

It says its team is in discussions with the mediators to find a way forward.

LRA spokesman Obonyo Olweny said that during the recent recess in talks, the rebels had been told by mediators that a unilateral ceasefire was a precondition for the resumption of negotiations and, as a consequence, the rebels had declared a unilateral ceasefire, starting last Friday.

"Therefore we think it is inappropriate for the talks to resume without the government of Uganda declaring a cessation of hostilities," he told the BBC's Focus on Africa programme.

Mr Olweny said the government had recently killed eight of its fighters, which was against the "spirit of the peace talks".

But Ugandan government spokesman Robert Kabushenga said the government was unsure of the rebels' commitment to peace, as they had breached previous ceasefires and harmed innocent people.

"The point is very simple, we have said that if you are committed, then do it on paper because then it is verifiable. Sign that you are committed to a comprehensive peace agreement," he told the BBC.

South Sudan, Egypt agree to cooperate on water resources

(*ST* – 9th Aug. **Khrt.**) The Ministry of Irrigation of the GoSS signed on Wednesday a Memorandum of Understanding with the Egyptian Ministry of Irrigation and Water Resources for the rehabilitation of stations to measure rain-fall in south Sudan.

In a press statement, the Minister of Irrigation of South Sudan Government, Joseph Dower, said that the agreement included extension of technical equipment, the assessment of water resources, forecast on flooding and drought as well as reviewing studies on Jonglei Canal and the development and management of water resources.

Meanwhile, the Undersecretary at the Ministry of Irrigation of South Sudan Government said that the memo of understanding deals with enhancement of the rural economy and pushing ahead the development process in south Sudan.

He said that the memo was signed in consultations with the Federal Ministry of Irrigation and Water Resources.

The Undersecretary for the said federal ministry described the MoU as the beginning of continued cooperation between the two countries.

Darfur/Darfur Peace Agreement

Deferment of Beshir-Deby talks, setback to Senegalese mediation efforts

(*AFP/ST* – 10th Aug. **Dakar**) The indefinite postponement of high-profile Senegalese-brokered reconciliation talks between Chad and Sudan has dealt a tentative setback to mediation efforts of President Abdoulaye Wade.

The much-billed mini-summit between Sudan's Omar al-Beshir and Chad's Idriss Deby had been slated for Wednesday in the Senegalese capital under the mediation of African Union appointed "facilitator" Wade.

Until Tuesday evening Wade was adamant the talks would take place despite a similar impromptu parley organised between the two former erstwhile neighbours by Libyan leader Moamer Kadhafi in N'Djamena earlier in the day.

The two neighbours agreed at the summit organised on the fringes of the investiture of Deby in N'Djamena, to immediately normalise relations which Deby broke off in April.

A western diplomat based in Dakar said following the N'Djamena talks, another meeting in Dakar would not have had "any additional value" to the process.

"If Bashir had not been in N'Djamena, such a summit would have taken place, but after what happened over there, we do not see what they could have done in Dakar except to shake hands in public," the diplomat said.

Deby and his Sudanese counterpart Bashir promised a "solemn commitment to put a definitive end to their differences by immediately normalising diplomatic and economic relations" after the Tuesday talks.

Tripartite committee of security chiefs of Sudan, Chad and Libya formed on border security

(*AlAyaam* – 10th Aug. **Khrt.**) The National Congress party has disclosed of the formation of a security committee by the chiefs of security in Sudan, Chad and Libya in order to work out on the deployment of border monitoring forces.

President el-Bashir's visit to Chad has helped resolve all outstanding issues related to the final settlement of tension in relations between the two countries, Hassan Bargo of the National Congress Party says.

NRF to launch conference to elect leadership by the end of this month

(*AlSahafa* - 10th Aug. **Cairo**) A prominent official of the NRF says that the movement will launch at the end of this month a conference to elect its leader and make up its structures.

He says that the JEM, a faction of the NRF, is currently carrying out diplomatic efforts within and outside the country to find solutions to the problems with the Darfur Peace Agreement.

[The official did not state where the conference will be held].

Other Developments

Ammo factory south of Khartoum explodes killing 18

(*All major dailies* - 10th Aug. **Khrt.**) An ammunitions factory in Shagara, south of Khartoum, exploded yesterday in a loud explosion sending up tongues of flames which could be seen up to within a radius of 1 kilometre.

Sources in the SAF say that the explosion was as a result of an electric short-circuit and have ruled out sabotage. The SAF has however formed a committee to investigate.

Some sources put the casualty figures at 12 dead while others say it was closer 18.

HAMAS calls for Sudanese mediation with AlFatah

(*AlRai AlAam* - 10th Aug. **Khrt.**) Following a meeting yesterday in Damascus with the political secretary of HAMAS, Khalid Mash'al, President Bashir's envoy to the Arab League, Dr. Mustafa Osman Ismail has agreed that Sudan will mediate between HAMAS and AlFatah.

Mr. Mash'al had underlined the need to defuse the tensions between the Palestinian leadership and HAMAS.

World Bank vows to push donors to meet Sudan pledges

(*ST* - 9th Aug. **Khrt.**) The visiting World Bank Vice-President for Africa vowed in Khartoum to urge donors to meet pledges of Oslo Conference and to normalize its relations with the Sudan.

The World Bank's Vice-President for Africa Region, Gobind Nankani, said that they would work with GoNU and the international community to urge donors to fulfill their pledges during Oslo Conference last year which amounts to 550 million US dollars to assist people of Sudan who had suffered for long time during the period of war and now they are waiting peace' fruits.

He pointed out that the bank would work for full normalization of its relations with Sudan.

Nankani opened Wednesday the World bank's office here in the presence of the Minister of Finance and National Economy, al-Zubeir Ahmed al-Hassan, State Minister for Finance, Lual Deng and the Governor of the Central Bank of Sudan (CBS).

Nankani, who is currently on a two-day visit to Sudan during which he will open the World Bank office in Juba town on Thursday, will meet senior officials of the Government of National Unity (GoNU) and the Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS) with the intention to review and improve effectiveness of the World Bank's operational programme particularly the Multi- Donors Trust Funds (MDTFs) operating principles and function.

Minister of Finance said that Nankani's visit to Sudan comes within the framework that the World Bank is the donors' trustee on the two MDTFs. he pointed out that Sudan will benefit from MDTFs in reconstruction and rehabilitation particularly in the war- affected areas besides benefiting from World Bank's technical assistance and consultancy which will help in donors' convince to fulfil their pledges of Oslo conference in April 2005.

He added that Sudan made wide strides on peace and this visit indicated that Sudan's relations progress towards normalization with the WB a mater that will enable it to benefit from loans and grants which are extended under the assistance and support of the bank.

Nankani considered his visit to Khartoum as a historical event in Sudan- World Bank relations, which commenced in 1957. He noted that the inauguration took place after 12 years of suspension in the relations.

Nankani said that the inauguration was a sign of partnership between Sudan and the WB and the bank will work with Sudan at technical level and capacity building to contribute to rebuilding and rehabilitation.