

14 August 2008

www.unmis.org



Media Monitoring Report

United Nations Mission In Sudan/ Public Information Office

Local News Headlines

- Foreign Ministry reacts to Ki-moon statements on ICC (Akhbar Al Yom/Al-Sahafa/Akhir Lahza)
- Sudan will respond to plots by more development – Bashir (SUNA/all dailies)
- International experts to aid Sudan on ICC (Al-Rai Al-Aam)
- Sudan's SPLM unveils roadmap to counter ICC move
- UN-AU chief mediator meets JEM delegation (Al-Intibaha)

Websites/International headlines

- Sudan's SPLM unveils roadmap to counter ICC move (ST)
- Arab League chief visits Sudan for talks on ICC row (ST)
- Most Arabs want to see their leaders stand before international tribunals – poll (ST)
- South Sudan dissatisfied with 'budget ceiling policy' (ST)
- Eritrean minister in Khartoum to discuss Sudan Chad relations (ST)
- Darfur rebels accuse Sudan of mounting major attack (AFP)
- Sudan 'launches attack in Darfur'
- German cabinet signals green light for extending Sudan mandate

NOTE: *Reproduction here does not mean that the UNMIS PIO can vouch for the accuracy or veracity of the contents, nor does this report reflect the views of the United Nations Mission in Sudan. Furthermore, international copyright exists on some materials and this summary should not be disseminated beyond the intended list of recipients.*

Address: UNMIS Headquarters, P.O. Box 69, Ibeid Khatim St, Khartoum 11111, SUDAN
Phone: (+249-1) 8708 6000 - Fax: (+249-1) 8708 6200

Highlights

Local Arabic and English language press

Foreign Ministry reacts to Ki-moon statements on ICC

Akhbar Al-Yom reported that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs urged the UNSG not to make statements insulting to member states in the organization he leads, reminding the SG of the country's right to refuse to deal with the ICC and to reject its decisions.

The Foreign Ministry is displeased by the SG's statement to the Egyptian Al-Ahram newspaper to the effect that he was confident that the ICC would enforce its decisions and that there would be no impunity for persons who committed crimes.

The spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Ali Al Sadiq said SG's statements confirm that ICC is political. "It was advisable for Ban Ki-moon, being the head of an international organization in which the countries which ratified ICC and those which have not ratified are members, to think twice before making statements insulting to member states," he said. "If Ban is determined to speak on behalf of a court which is not a UN institution then Sudan also has the right to refuse to deal with the ICC," he added.

(Below are excerpts from SG interview to the Egyptian Al-Ahram newspaper)

Q. What are your expectations for the scenarios of crisis between Bashir and ICC?

Ans. There are no expectations. I am confident that the ICC will enforce its decisions. We should prove that there is no longer immunity for those committing brutal acts. I will do my best to assist realizing peace in Darfur and in other parts of Sudan. There must be a balance between peace and justice.

Q. Is it true that the ICC is an independent institution and its decisions are not influenced by anybody?

Ans. Absolutely... Once again I would like to confirm ICC absolute independence. No third party can influence its proceedings and decisions.

Q. If it is independent as you have said why it is subjected to the SC which can suspend its decisions?

Ans. If the SC can defer ICC decision that does not mean in any form a derogation of the ICC independence. Similarly, when the SC refers a case to the ICC such as Darfur that does not mean it is interfering in the Court's work.

Q. There are other head of states who have committed war crimes and genocide but ICC does not move to indict them? Why Bashir is singled out?

Ans. As I told you, ICC moves to indict Bashir at the request of SC. The Court will investigate other war crimes in future regardless of who are the perpetrators and where the crimes were

perpetrated.

Q. AU invokes article 16 of Rome Statute to suspend charges against Bashir, do you support that? Do you support Arab efforts to contain the crisis?

Ans. It is true that the Arab League requests SC to intervene in the case but I think the SC members are the ones who will decide such intervention. In the resolution adopted on July 31, members were informed about the issues raised by the countries' representatives with regard to ICC and again they are the ones who will decide.

Sudan will respond to plots by more development – Bashir

SUNA quoted President Bashir as saying that Sudan would respond to plots being hatched against the country with implementation of more development projects such as heightening of Roseries Dam and construction of Merowe Dam. President Al-Bashir was addressing a rally at Roseries Locality marking the start of work to heighten the Dam.

International experts to aid Sudan on ICC

Al-Rai Al-Aam stated that the Justice Minister Abdul Basit Sabdarat said legal experts from USA and other countries would visit Sudan soon to discuss how to aid Sudan in its crisis with ICC. The Minister made the statement at a meeting yesterday with former Sudanese ministers of Justice and attorney generals for discussion on how to deal with ICC.

UN-AU chief mediator meets JEM delegation

Al-Intibaha reported that the UN-AU chief mediator Djibril Bassole held intensive consultations in Washington with JEM delegation. The consultations focused on the peace process between the Sudanese government and armed movements in the region.

Websites/International Headlines

Sudan's SPLM unveils roadmap to counter ICC move

August 13, 2008 (KHARTOUM) — A high ranking Sudan People's Liberation Movement official unveiled the content of a roadmap presented by his party to the National Congress Party to block the indictment of Sudanese president by the prosecutor of the International Criminal Court.

The unnamed official told the London based *Asharq Al-Awsat* that the SPLM roadmap consists of two separated approaches, judiciary and political, calling for those involved in Darfur crimes to be tried in Sudan under international supervision while taking serious steps to negotiate a political solution with Darfur rebels.

The SPLM proposal calls for reunification of Darfur rebel movements in order to start all-inclusive direct talks for a lasting and fair peace. The SPLM official noted that a political solution of the crisis is part of the solution for ICC crisis.

The SPLM official said there were no differences between the "People of Sudan's Initiative" announced by President al Bashir and the SPLM roadmap. adding a joint committee is formed to draw up a structural framework and timetable for the implementation of the initiative which is expected to take place by the end of the year.

He also said that Darfur Peace Agreement signed in 2006 in Abuja remains incomplete and

needs to be accomplished by implementing the demands of the Darfur people and putting an end to the war in the province.

Arab League chief visits Sudan for talks on ICC row

(Sudan Tribune) – The Secretary General of the Arab League Amr Moussa is to visit Khartoum soon to follow up on a plan aimed at defusing tension between Sudan and the ICC. Sudan official news agency (SUNA) quoted Moussa as saying that “it is important to remove obstacles facing resolution to crisis in Sudan”.

Moussa said that situation in Sudan requires “exercising restraint and moving collectively towards the future”.

The Arab League Secretary General carried a number of proposals to Al-Bashir last month, including internal trials for Darfur war crimes suspects. Another option he suggested was for Sudan to accept an African court to look into Darfur rights abuses under ICC supervision. At the time, Sudanese Justice Minister Abdel-Basit Sabdarat said his country does not accept “a regional court in Sudan or any foreign trials”.

However last week Sabdarat appointed Nimr Ibrahim Mohamed as the Darfur special prosecutor to look into rights abuses committed in Darfur since 2003. According to SUNA, the special prosecutor will report monthly on the progress of his work. The newly appointed prosecutor also hinted that he would review a case brought before local courts last year against militia commander Ali Mohamed Ali Abdel-Rahman, aka Ali Kushayb. However Mohamed was noncommittal on whether Kushayb who is also wanted by the ICC will actually stand trial after being previously cleared of all accusations by Sudanese authorities.

Most Arabs want to see their leaders stand before international tribunals - poll

(Sudan Tribune) – A majority of Arabs favour that their presidents be tried before international courts, according to an Al-Jazeera TV website poll. Some 52% of those responding to the poll said they supported having their leaders face international justice while 48% voiced opposition to the idea. The poll was conducted in conjunction with a talk show, “The Opposite Direction”, which normally draws millions of Arab viewers. Hosted by Dr. Hadi Shalluf, who was the defence counsel for Darfur at the ICC, and Dr. Ibrahim Al-Daraji, a Syrian professor in international law, the show focused on the recent move by the ICC Prosecutor to obtain a warrant for the arrest of Sudan’s President al-Bashir.

Al-Daraji said he has no objection to prosecuting Arab leaders but claimed the ICC was being used by the US to “punish those presidents who oppose its policies”. He said Washington “used the ICC to direct political accusations against Sudan”. The Hague base court should also investigate crimes in Iraq and the Palestinian territories to be fair, he added.

In response, co-host Shalluf pointed out that, unlike Arab leaders, US and Israeli governments do not engage in human right abuses of their own citizens. “The Arab rulers have no legal legitimacy so they commit all these criminal acts. The Arab people are submissive and did not resist these regimes so their only way out is the ICC” he added.

Only three Arab League states Jordan, Djibouti and Comoros are parties to the ICC. Yet, according to Shalluf, the fact that all Arab countries signed the 1998 Rome Statute which forms the basis of the ICC signifies Arab recognition of the court even if most did not ratify. (ST)

South Sudan dissatisfied with ‘budget ceiling policy’

(Sudan Tribune) – Yesterday, the GoSS independent Commissions and Chambers voiced dissatisfaction with current government policy of imposing budget ceilings on the institutions when presenting their respective annual budget proposals.

Most of the Commissions requested supplementary budgets from the GoSS Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, saying they had already exhausted their 2008 allocated budgets four months before the end of the fiscal year.

They complained that delays in the Ministry of Legal Affairs and Constitutional Development were holding up enabling legislation to help them function effectively. A case in point was the Anti-Corruption Commission, which awaits legislation enabling it to investigate cases of corruption.

GoSS set up more than ten specialized independent Commissions and Chambers in 2005.

Meeting with Vice President Riek Machar Teny earlier this week, the Commissions Chairpersons said inadequate budgets over the last three years had left them with not enough for civil works, operating costs and salaries for the last three years.

Machar referred them to the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning before the Council of Ministers deliberate on the matter.

Eritrean minister in Khartoum to discuss Sudan Chad relations

(Sudan Tribune) Eritrean foreign minister arrived in Khartoum yesty to hand over a message from President Isaias Afewerki to his Sudanese counterpart Omer al-Bashir on Sudan Chad relations. Eritrea is part of the contact group charged with the implementation of Dakar Agreement between Sudan and Chad. On August 26th, it will host a meeting of the group to discuss mechanisms related to the deployment of the joint patrols throughout border between the two countries.

Deng Alor, the Sudanese foreign minister Wednesday held talks with the visiting Eritrean foreign minister, Osman Saleh on Asmara efforts to mend relations between Khartoum and Ndjamen. He also said that Eritrea had played an important role in the resolution of Darfur crisis and Sudan welcomes any initiative in favour of a political solution to the issue.

Sudan announced it will open its embassy in Ndjamen next week.

Darfur rebels accuse Sudan of mounting major attack

(AFP) - Darfur rebels on Wednesday accused the Sudan government of mounting a massive attack to wipe out their strongholds in the far north of Darfur where they are losing ground for the first time.

Three days ago, government troops in 270 vehicles staged a ground assault on Atrun, a remote area in North Darfur state, and another location, driving out elements from the Sudan Liberation Army (SLA), one rebel commander told AFP.

"All these areas, we controlled since 2003. But now they are coming and attacking and now they are in the control of the government," said Suleiman Marajan from the SLA faction led by the exiled Abdel Wahid Mohammed Nur.

"We are not there now," Marajan said by telephone from Darfur, the western region of Sudan gripped by conflict since 2003 when SLA and another rebel group rose up against Khartoum

demanding more power and resources.

Marajan said eight civilians and nine SLA rebels were killed in the assault. He charged that government forces were poised to launch further attacks to reclaim other rebel territory in North Darfur State. "They are readying to move to other places... The government is cheating us and cheating the international community. They are going to destroy all the places to control them," said Marajan.

A spokesman for the Sudanese army stopped short of an explicit denial, refusing to comment on "any statements from Darfur rebels."

Sudan has warned that a request from the International Criminal Court chief prosecutor for an arrest warrant against President Omar al-Beshir over alleged crimes and genocide in Darfur could embolden rebels.

Commander Ibrahim al-Hillo from the same Darfur rebel faction said that government forces and Arab militia were moving north after the Atrun attack. "Government soldiers are shooting randomly in the area. Civilians have been killed and are missing. Some have fled," he told AFP by telephone, also saying he was in Darfur. "Government forces and Arab militia are moving north. The government is (conducting) the second round of ethnic cleansing in northern Darfur. I call on the international community to stop the killing of civilians," Hillo said.

A London-based spokesman for the Sudan Liberation Army-Unity faction also confirmed clashes with government forces in three areas of North Darfur, including one area on the Libyan border, but insisted no ground had been lost. "The movement is still in pursuit of enemy forces at various locations," Mahgoub Hussain told AFP in an email.

Rebel commander Marajan also alleged that Chinese oil workers had arrived in the desert area of North Darfur to begin oil exploration. The Dow Jones newswire reported last month that state-linked Chinese oil service companies were in talks to help Sudan exploit crude reserves in North Darfur where security would be provided by the Sudanese army. Block 12A, operated by Sudan's state-owned Sudapet, independent firm Ansan and Saudi Arabia's Al-Qahtani group is in North Darfur, the article said. State governor Osman Yusuf Kibir and a spokesman at the energy ministry denied any oil exploration had begun in North Darfur.

Sudan 'launches attack in Darfur'

Sudan's government has launched a major offensive against rebel bases in the far north of Darfur, two rebel factions have said. A commander from a faction of the Sudanese Liberation Army (SLA) said about 270 vehicles and 500 Janjaweed fighters were involved in the attack. Nine rebels and nine civilians had been killed, he said.

An army spokesman declined to comment. The government has previously denied links to Janjaweed fighters.

A commander from the Abdul Wahed faction of the SLA, Sulieman Marajan, told the BBC that the Janjaweed had attacked on camel and horseback. He said the attacks were part of a plan by the government to destroy all of the rebel bases in northern Darfur, adding that he believed rebels from neighbouring Chad were taking part in the operation.

Chad has accused Sudan of harbouring and supporting Chadian rebels. Analysts say the two countries are fighting a proxy war using each other's rebel forces.

The Sudanese army now controlled the area around Wadi Atron, near the border with Libya, the SLA commander said. A spokesman for a rival rebel group, the SLA's Unity faction, said rebels had been expecting an attack and were preparing to defend themselves. The government was trying to clear the rebels out of the far north of Darfur so that Chinese companies could explore for oil, he said.

North Darfur is part of Sudan's oil Block 12A, operated by a consortium led by the Saudi Arabian company al-Qahtani, the BBC's Amber Henshaw reports from Sudan.

Sudan's oil ministry could not immediately confirm whether any exploration had begun in Block 12A.

German cabinet signals green light for extending Sudan mandate

The German government approved here Wednesday the one-year extension of the military mission in Sudan, an official said. Talking to journalists, deputy government spokesperson Thomas Steg said the UNMIS mandate in South Sudan and the UNAMID mission in the western Sudanese crisis region of Darfur were to be extended since they were an 'indispensable stabilizing element in Sudan'.

Around 40 soldiers are presently based in the African country, mostly as military monitors. The German parliament is to vote on the UN mandate in Sudan when legislators meet in September, according to Steg.

