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Media Monitoring Report

United Nations Mission In Sudan/ Public Information Office

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Highlights

Local Arabic and English language press

Pro-NCP Political Parties support UNAMID expulsion

Akhbar Al-Yom/Al-Intibaha newspapers reported that the political parties and organizations Authority issued statement supporting President Bashir's declaration to expel UNAMID and the international troops if a warrant of arrest is issued for him. The statement also urged the President to sever political and diplomatic relations with USA, France and Britain for their pro-ICC stances.

The joint chairman of the Authority Mustafa Magzoub said the political parties and organizations - 26 parties allied with NCP - have declared full support for the government's efforts to achieve peace and development.

Adada downplays threat to expel UNAMID

Al-Intibaha stated that the JSR Rodolphe Adada in press statements yesterday played down President Bashir's threat to expel UN-AU troops in Darfur. He has confirmed Sudan Government's full cooperation with the Mission which, he said, was keener than them {UNAMID} to complete deployment of the remaining troops.

Adada said Bashir has reassured them that the troops would not be expelled and that all necessary assistances would be provided.

FM to visit Netherlands

Akhbar Al Yom reported that the Foreign Minister Deng Alor will pay an official visit to Syria on Wednesday and leave for the Netherlands on 14th September in response to an invitation from his counterparts in the two countries as part of efforts to boost bilateral relations.

Meanwhile, the Foreign Ministry is nowadays busy preparing a report in the light of the directives of the ICC Crisis Management Higher Committee on the way forward with regard to ICC. Alor said SPLM was trying to convince NCP to deal with the ICC through the Kiir-led Crisis Management Committee.

The Foreign Minister said some Abyei arbitrators would visit Sudan during this week and he would meet with them on Friday in Juba but he declined to elaborate on the purpose of the visit.

He also declined to elaborate on the French initiative to overcome the crisis. He said so far Government has not adopted final position on the French proposals despite NCP's categorical rejection to deal with the ICC but the SPLM position is opposite to that. He said SPLM was trying to prevail upon the NCP through the Crisis Management Committee which is expected to meet by the end of the current month. He said some circles, he did not name, have presented some proposals on the need for direct or indirect contact with the ICC. He added that the task of the Foreign Ministry in this regard would be to made recommendations in the light of NCP and SPLM stances and the French proposals. He said he would chair a meeting today at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to prepare the recommendations.

SPLM delegation meets with State Department officials

Al-Sudani carried a report stating that the SPLM delegation, currently visiting America, met with US Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Jendayi Frazer. The meeting focused on status quo in Sudan with regard to elections, negotiated solution for Darfur, ICC indictment for Bashir and the role US can play in this regard. Frazer said her government was ready to contribute efforts to ensure conduction of free and fair elections by rehabilitating national elections institutions, civil society organizations as well as the political parties.

The delegation also met with T. Williams, US Assistant Defence Secretary for African Affairs and discussion focused on a wide range of issues such as support to GoSS to set up institutions, food security, SPLA capacity building and development in southern Sudan. They also met with the Director of the Directorate of the US National Security Council and will address a mass rally today in Washington. The delegation will also attend tomorrow the Democrats' convention.

The SPLM delegation comprised Pagan Amum as leader, Yassir Arman, Luka Biong, O. Deng, Ann Itto and Shirilo Itang. (*See more details in the website section*)

Armed gangs killing civilians in Southern Sudan not SPLA – spokesperson

Ray Al-Shaab reported that SPLA spokesperson Peter Pariang has dismissed reports that a large number of civilians were killed by armed group on Juba-Bor road recently. He said what happened was that armed gangsters have killed one person and wounded two others at the area of Jemiza on Juba-Bor road last week.

He explained that the group was a gang carrying unlawful arms and roaming Juba-Bor road.

SPLM does not say Kiir is the Presidential candidate – Martin

Al-Rai Al-Aam carried a report stating that the Director of the office of GoSS President Martin Majot has dismissed reports that SPLM decided that Salva Kiir would be its presidential candidate during the upcoming elections. Martin explained yesterday that what was decided by the SPLM politburo meeting in Juba was that SPLM would contest elections at all levels including presidential but did not say Salva Kiir in particular would be its presidential candidate. "SPLM may pick up any member to run for the Presidency," he said.

River Nile flooded Jebel Aulia area

Local dailies of today reported that the White Nile flooded Jebel Aulia destroying tens of houses. Residents reported some casualties. Commissioner of Jebel Aulia Locality said precautionary measures have been taken and civilians were alerted about potential flood.

Joint Committee for Collecting Landmines Information

Sudan Vision carried a reported saying that the Director of the National Landmine Control Centre Alawad Al-Bashir said that the last landmine survey revealed 20 kinds of landmines.

He asserted that 19 states out of 25 in Sudan were affected by landmines as result of war. He made the statement while speaking to the "Armed Forces Radio". He said the affected areas were under the control of SPLA and maps were not received adding that one of the difficulties facing the work of landmines was lack of information. He revealed that trained personnel were ready but a mechanism has not been set up yet.

ICRC suspends activity in Gereida

Al-Khartoum reported that the ICRC suspended its activities in Gereida (South Darfur) because of carjacking of its tank cruiser vehicle from inside the town. The Agency threatened to relocate personnel in Gereida if the vehicle was not returned. Sources said the vehicle was taken by SLA-Minnawi and contacts were continuing between ICRC and SLA to return the vehicle.

Sudanese sprinter wins silver medal

Al-Sahafa stated that the Sudanese sprinter Ismail Ahmed Ismail won the first ever Olympics silver medal for Sudan in Beijing yesterday.

Websites/International Headlines

Sudan SPLM hints at withdrawing Kiir's candidacy for presidential election

(Sudan Tribune) – The Sudan People Liberation Movement (SPLM) left the door open for withdrawing the candidacy of Chairman Salva Kiir in the next presidential elections.

Luka Biong, the minister of presidential affairs in the southern Sudan government, told the pro-SPLM Ajas Al-Huriya newspaper that the political bureau “did not decide yet if Kiir would be the candidate for the SPLM or no”.

Biong made the remarks after an SPLM delegation meeting with US assistant secretary of state for African affairs, Jendayi Frazer in Washington yesterday.

The unexpected statements come a month after the SPLM political bureau announced in Juba that Kiir would run for president in the upcoming 2009 elections.

“The SPLM has officially decided to contest the elections on all levels including the president’s position” Yasir Arman, SPLM Deputy Secretary General for northern Sudan told Reuters at the time. He said Kiir would be nominated for the presidency.

“All the indications show very clearly that the SPLM is going to be a leading force and will definitely win the elections” he added.

The candidacy drew uneasy reaction from the ruling National Congress Party (NCP) who saw a connection with the International Criminal Court (ICC) move to indict President Omer Hassan Al-Bashir.

The SPLM delegation which arrived in the US to take part in the conventions of the Republicans and Democratic parties also include Dr. Shriilo Itang adviser for SPLM chairman, SPLM Secretary General Pagan Amum and his deputies for northern Sudan Yasir Arman and Dr. Ann Ito for Southern Sudan.

The SPLM official said another meeting took place with the Assistant Defense Secretary to discuss military aid by Washington to modernize the SPLA “in the post-war period”.

The issue of the ICC also came up during a third meeting with Bobby Pittman Special Assistant to the US President for African Affairs.

Biong said that the delegation discussed ways the US can help in resolving the ICC row “while

bearing in mind Washington's position" on the court.

Sudan accuse Darfur rebels of using drug trade to finance activities

(Sudan Tribune) – The Sudanese government today seized three tones of a drug shipment in Khartoum and accused Darfur rebels of using narcotics to finance military activities.

The daily Al-Sharq Al-Awsat published in London quoted the Sudanese police chief General Mohamed Nageeb as saying that Darfur rebels harbor drug dealers for money.

Nageeb said the police will step up their efforts to combat drug trade.

"We will be on watch to anyone who targets the minds of our youngsters" he said, The shipment of marijuana is worth \$2 million and is the second one in less than a week according to the newspaper. Another one was confiscated in West Omdurman.

The head of the narcotics division in Sudan police Major General Hamid Mannan said that the shipment represents 10% of the drug quantity expected to be sneaked into the Sudanese capital.

Mannan said that the drug dealers were monitored by the police for over two months and that they were storing marijuana batches underground.

He further said that his division uses planes to obliterate drug farms in certain areas in Southern and Western Sudan described as "unreachable" through normal transport routes.

Darfur JEM reject 'People of Sudan' initiatived

(Sudan Tribune) – The Darfur Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) rejected the 'People of Sudan' initiative made by President Omer Hassan Al-Bashir last month.

The Sudanese head of state invited all political forces and the Darfuri figures, including the non-signatories rebels, to take part in it.

JEM said in a statement that the ruling National Congress Party (NCP) continues military operations on the ground while talking about peace.

"Al-Bashir cannot be the defendant and the judge at the same time" JEM said.

The Darfur rebel group also condemned threats by the Sudanese president to expel peacekeepers if an arrest is issued for him and vowed to protect them from government retaliation.

JEM's rejection of Al-Bashir's initiative cast doubt over its success despite Khartoum's enthusiasm at the proposal aimed at defusing row with the International Criminal Court (ICC). The SLM unity Darfur rebel group and Umma Reform and Renewal party both dismissed the initiative this week.

Following the ICC's move Sudan has been looking into steps that could be taken to block Al-Bashir's indictment.

On the judicial side the government pledged to conduct national proceedings against Darfur suspects. On the political front, Khartoum would bolster efforts to negotiate a political solution with Darfur rebels.

Darfur rebel group urge new mediator to maintain impartiality

(Sudan Tribune) – The newly appointed Darfur peace mediator met with representatives of the Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM) Unity faction in London today to explore their views on the conflict, a rebel official said.

Mahjoub Hussein, a leading figure in SLM-Unity faction told Sudan Tribune that Djibril Bassole wanted to get an understanding on the roots of the Darfur crisis as they see it during the two hours meeting.

“We conveyed to him that the crisis is not related to the issue of so-called multiple movements. The Darfur people have a cause; the government knows that and it has to solve the problem” he said.

“The rules for the participation in any upcoming negotiations are clear. We don’t want another distortion to the conflict. This is a sacred cause” he added.

Hussein said that “only four Darfur movements have real military presence on the ground” qualifying them for taking part in peace talks.

Peace talks brokered by the United Nations (UN) and the African Union (AU) between Sudan’s government and Darfur rebel groups in the Libyan city of Sirte last October failed after main movements boycotted them including Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) led by Khalil Ibrahim and Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM) led by Abdel-Wahid Al-Nur.

Bassole, the former Burkina Faso foreign minister, has been chosen as the new mediator to replace the dual negotiating team of AU special envoy for Darfur Salim Ahmed Salim and his counterpart at the UN, Jan Eliasson.

He will arrive to Sudan next week to begin officially his duties. The full time mediator will be based in North Darfur.

The SLM-Unity official warned Bassole about the need to maintain impartiality throughout his tenure.

“We told Bassole that he needs to deal impartially in his mediation and refrain from taking any positions of supporting the Sudanese government” he said.

Hussein said they are prepared to negotiate anywhere without conditions “when there are clear and serious conditions”.

However he stressed that the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) signed in Abuja in May 2006 “does not constitute any reference to negotiate”.

He also dismissed a government brokered initiative known as ‘People of Sudan’ announced by Sudanese president Omar Hassan Al-Bashir during his tour of Darfur in July.

The Sudanese head of state invited all political forces and the Darfuri figures, including the non-signatories rebels, to take part in it.

“The Darfur conflict can only be resolved through direct negotiations and the presence of the international community and regional players” Hussein said.

“We do not want the Darfur crisis to be a market for the initiatives” he added.

Sudanese authorities arrest bus driver with pro-ICC logo (ST)

(Sudan Tribune)– A Sudanese man was detained by security officers for having a logo on his bus considered to be sympathetic with the International Criminal Court (ICC).

The daily Al-Sharq Al-Awsat newspaper published in London said the unidentified man was taken into custody for having a sign on his bus saying “Ocampo is coming”.

The newspaper did not say what charges would be brought against the bus driver if any. The ICC prosecutor Luis Moreno-Ocampo asked pre-trial judges in mid-July to issue arrest warrants for Sudanese president Omar Hassan Al-Bashir.

Ocampo filed 10 charges: three counts of genocide, five of crimes against humanity and two of murder. Judges are expected to take months to study the evidence before deciding whether to order Al-Bashir’s arrest.

Following that the Sudanese security services have stepped up censorship of Sudanese newspapers to prevent any articles or reports appearing to support the ICC move.

Sudan orders temporary reduction of storage fees at Port Sudan

(Sudan Tribune) – Sudan’s finance ministry issued a temporary rule reducing fees for shipments received at Port-Sudan for two weeks.

Awad Al-Jaz, minister of finance met today with representatives from Transport ministry, Port authority, Customs & Tax department, Central Bank and labor union.

Al-Jaz ordered 10% reduction in storage fees for incoming shipments and 50% for existing ones at Port-Sudan starting Sunday.

Sudan official News Agency (SUNA) quoted Al-Jaz as saying that decision aims at facilitating trade and stopping increase in prices of goods for Sudanese citizens.

However he warned that owners of containers stuck at the port have 3 months to remove them before the authorities will confiscate them.

Al-Jaz finance minister also pledged to modernize Port Sudan and develop working mechanisms there.

The labor union hailed the ministry’s decision saying it will be effective in halting price increases in goods.

East Sudan leaders in damaging internal power struggle

(AFP) - East Sudan leaders are lost in transition from guerrilla fighter to bureaucrat, sunk in a power struggle that threatens to blow apart their coalition and destabilize a peace accord, analysts say.

In one of a series of conflicts to have enflamed Sudan for years, the Eastern Front signed a peace agreement with the government in October 2006 after rebels fought for a decade over

lack of power and wealth.

The rebels in the east rose over similar grievances as their better-known western counterparts in Darfur and southerners who signed a comprehensive peace treaty in 2005 that ended a 21-year civil war with Khartoum.

But a year after being sworn into a share of central government, chairman Mussa Mohammed Ahmed and deputy Amna Dirar are at loggerheads over how and who should best represent the undeveloped east in the corridors of power.

"The peace agreement has led us to a new competition between the different groups in the Eastern Front for sharing in power," conceded Ahmed, sitting in a huge reception room at his grace-and-favour Khartoum guest house.

"This competition has had a negative effect on the Eastern Front. This is a crisis of transition. It's only been two years and it's normal," he added.

The Eastern Front began as an umbrella alliance linking the Beja Congress, named in the 1950s after the largest eastern ethnic group, and the Free Lions of the Rashidiya Arabs.

Last August, chairman and Beja man Ahmed became an assistant to President Omar al-Beshir. His deputy Dirar became a presidential adviser and secretary general Mubarak Mabruk became a state minister for transport.

"It is power struggle on tribal-ethnic lines," said one foreign diplomat.

"In the end, we could see the disintegration of the Eastern Front... It will also have a negative repercussion on the already slow-moving implementation of the Eastern Sudan Peace Agreement."

Apart from apportioning the spoils of power on paper, little else in the peace agreement has been implemented in a region that is home to Sudan's main port and a crucial oil pipeline.

Easterners have yet to be fully incorporated into the civil service, there is little evidence of sustained economic, cultural and social development, poverty remains and few jobs have been created.

The government allocated 100 million dollars in 2007 to the Eastern Sudan Reconstruction and Development Fund, which is supposed to receive at least 125 million dollars each year until 2011, but only 25 million has been spent.

The easterners' weakness has allowed the president's savvy National Congress Party (NCP) to divide and rule.

"The NCP is not serious enough and the Front is weak," said lecturer and journalist Murtada el-Ghali.

"He (Ahmed) is just sitting there as an assistant to Beshir but with no mandate. He can do nothing with the budget, the money, disarmament, demobilisation and rehabilitation, development in the east."

Easterners are overshadowed by a political climate obsessed with the Darfur conflict and a possible international arrest warrant against Beshir.

Although delays cloud implementation of the 2005 agreement that ended war between north and south, and there has been little dividend from the limited 2006 Darfur Peace Agreement, both accords had international guarantors.

"The role of the Eritreans was prominent, but there was no international guarantor and this is

where the NCP is trying to implement selectively, disregarding the concerns of the people of the east," said the diplomat.

Dirar says the Front is an independent political party open to everyone and dismisses the Beja Congress as a tribal throwback. Ahmed says it is an umbrella group that has failed to evolve into a party.

Dirar, who says people liken her to 20th century political icons Margaret Thatcher or Indira Gandhi, accuses conservative easterners of sexism.

"Most of the fighting against me came because I am a female. 'Why is she in this position? Why she can do that? Why she did that?'," she said.

Dirar announced this month that Ahmed had been suspended as Front chairman. The Beja Congress then suspended her and threatened to take action that could see Dirar and others dismissed from government jobs.

Both Ahmed and Dirar dismiss their suspensions as meaningless.

Although analysts do not agree, easterners warn fighting could erupt anew unless the peace agreement is better implemented, particularly with regard to demobilised forces who have not been given new jobs or been paid.

"You cannot continue without getting money, without knowing what your future is. The war in Sudan has not finished. It is still existing. So it's easy for them to go back again," said Dirar.

