



Media Monitoring Report

United Nations Mission in Sudan/ Public Information Office

Local News Headlines

- Joint Ministerial team visit Abyei (*Akhbar Al Youm / Al Akhbar*)
- Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and SSRRC dispatch an aid convoy to Abyei (*Al Watan*)
- Vice President urges the parties in Abyei to take immediate actions (*Akhbar Al Youm*)
- Abyei Administration rejects the budget allocated by the Presidency to the area (*Al Sahafa*)
- Joint Defence Board orders investigations on Abyei incidents (*Al Ayaam*)
- SPLM Council in Southern Kordofan discusses security developments (*Al Akhbar*)
- President Al Bashir visits today Sinnar (*Sudan Vision / Al Khartoum*)
- Taha visits Juba (*Al Sahafa*)
- NCP to review SPLM's propositions on Referendum Act (*Al Wifaq*)
- GoSS calls for translation of the curriculum (*Al Sudani*)
- Sudan police official calls on Abyei displaced to return (*Sudan Tribune*)

Websites / International Headlines

- Jonglei Governor to be the next minister of Southern Sudan army (*Sudan Tribune*)
- "Thousands made slaves" in Darfur (*BBC*)
- Gunmen Launch Yet Another Attack on Aid Workers in Darfur (*UNAMID*)
- Sudan statue find gives clues to ancient language (*Reuters*)
- Military drive against Uganda rebels will last weeks: minister (*AFP*)
- Sudan: Child soldiers reintegrated into civilian life (*Sudan Radio Service*)
- South Sudan to renovate rail network (*Sudan Radio Service*)
- Southern Sudan denounces corruption rumor of official in UK (*Sudan Tribune*)

Commentaries

- A Policy for Preventing Genocide (*New York Times*)
- President Salva Kiir credibility gap in Darfur (*Sudan Tribune*)

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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 News Headlines

Joint Ministerial team visits Abyei

Akhbar Al Youm reports a joint ministerial team representing GoNU and the Fund for Supporting Unity visited Abyei yesterday to set plans for emergency programs in the area. The team was led by the Federal Minister of Health Dr. Thabita Boutros and comprised the Minister of Irrigation and Water Resources Engineer Kamal Ali Mohamed, GoSS Minister of Interior Paul Mayom, Minister of the Presidency Luka Piong, State Minister of Humanitarian Affairs Ahmed Haroun and State Minister at the Ministry of Finance.

On the same development, *Al Akhbar*, the State Minister of Humanitarian Affairs Ahmed Haroun said that in a two-week period the joint team would approve the development projects that were discussed with Abyei Administration in order to transform the area into a bridge for unity and peaceful coexistence. He added that the meeting agreed to establish an emergency fund to develop the area.

In another development, *Al Akhbar* reports UNMIS Deputy Spokesperson Kouider Zerrouk said that the JIUs pull-out of Abyei was completed in accordance with the recent agreement between the Abyei Administration, the JIUs and the JIPUs. He expressed UNMIS readiness to support and assist the Abyei Administration in the implementation of this agreement.

Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and SSRRC dispatch an aid convoy to Abyei

Al Watan reports the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and the Southern Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (SSRRC) sent a delegation to Abyei in order to assess the humanitarian situation in the area following the recent incidents. SSRRC Operations Coordinator in the North stated that the mission would carry out an assessment on the conditions, needs and figures of IDPs in the area. He added that the Ministry and SSRRC would dispatch an aid convoy to Abyei in the next two days comprising of food items and medicines.

Vice President urges the parties in Abyei to take immediate actions

Akhbar Al Youm reports the Vice President Ali Osman Mohamed Taha urged the concerned parties to take immediate actions to calm the situation in Abyei area.

Mr. Taha met yesterday with the Minister of Foreign Affairs Deng Alor and discussed with him a number of issues including the recent developments in the area and the visit of the joint ministerial team to address the implementation of emergency projects in collaboration with the Abyei Administration. According to the daily, Deng Alor said that

a similar delegation from Southern Sudan is expected to arrive in the area for the same purpose.

Abyei Administration rejects the budget allocated by the Presidency to the area

Al Sahafa reports the Abyei Administration rejected the budget allocated by the Presidency and described it as insufficient. The Administration has prepared an alternative budget proposal which reflects the real needs in terms of development and infrastructure. The daily also wrote that Abyei Administration has decided to send a delegation to Khartoum in order to discuss the budget issue with the Presidency.

Joint Defence Board orders investigations on Abyei

Al Ayaam reports the Spokesperson of the Joint Defence Board Maj. Grl. Bior Ajang informed Al Ayaam that the next meeting scheduled on 16 January would form a committee to carry out investigations on the recent incident in Abyei. The meeting would also discuss the deployment of SAF in Jawa areas in Southern Kordofan and along the boundaries with Bahr El Ghazal as a result of the recent reports on imminent attack by JEM on Khartoum and El Obeid, said the newspaper.

SPLM Council in Southern Kordofan discusses security developments

Al Akhbar reports the SPLM Council in Southern Kordofan State starts today a three-day meeting with participation of 51 members to discuss a range of issues including the security situation in the state and the differences between SPLM and NCP on the dismissal of the State's Minister of Finance. According to *Al Akhbar* that Abdel Aziz Al Hilou and Dr. Ann Etto would participate in the meeting along with the movement's leadership in the State.

President Al Bashir will visit Sennar today

Sudan Vision daily reported that President Al-Bashir starts today a two-day visit to Sennar State to inaugurate the new premises of the government of the state and Al-Dali and Al-mazmum water project.

President Al Bashir, while there, will address a number of mass rallies and attend graduation ceremony at Sennar State University besides opening several public utilities. Meanwhile, Sennar State Governor Engineer Ahmed Abbas had described the visit as historic, affirming that all preparations have been completed for receiving the President of the Republic in the state.

In another development, *Al Khartoum*, revealed that President Al Bashir met with the leader of the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) Mohamed Osman Al Mirghani yesterday evening. The meeting discussed a number of issues including the implementation of the CPA, the Initiative of the People of Sudan on Darfur and progress on the process of democratic transformation following the formation of the Political Parties' Commission and the Elections Commission.

Taha visits Juba

Al Sahafa reports the Vice President Ali Osman heads to Juba today. Informed sources told *Al Sahafa* that, immediately after his arrival, Taha would discuss with First Vice President Salva Kiir the LRA issue and the closure of borders with Congo.

NCP to review SPLM's propositions on Referendum Act

Al Wifaq reports the NCP's Deputy Chairperson, Dr. Nafi Ali Nafi, affirmed that his party would review the propositions presented by SPLM on the Referendum Act.

GoSS calls for translation of the curriculum

Al Sudani reports the Ministry of Education decided to translate to English and French some programs in basic and secondary schools curriculum following the GoSS request. The Minister of Education Dr. Hamid Mohamed Ibrahim said an agreement was concluded to conduct training for teachers at all school levels in order to familiarize them with the English and French program.

Websites / International Headlines

Sudan police official calls on Abyei displaced to return

(Sudan Tribune website) A Sudanese police official called for residents in the disputed town of Abyei to return home after violent clashes that erupted last week. The deputy police director for operations General Tariq Osman Al-Tahir vowed that the prospective returnees would be fully protected along with their properties.

“The incident that occurred was not as big as media tried to portray it. It was limited and normal and could happen anywhere in Sudan” the police official told official news agency (SUNA).

General Al-Tahir also revealed that there will be an expansion of services in terms of producing photo identification for Abyei residents.

Concurrently, the head of the joint units in Abyei Colonel Blantinyo Tok expressed regret over last week fighting and pledged to prevent it from happening again. The military official said that it was “individual” act that triggered the clashes “and is not representative of any of the joint units”. Tok expressed hope that situation in Abyei “will change into the better”.

Jonglei Governor to be the next minister of Southern Sudan army

(Sudan Tribune website) Jonglei Governor Kuol Manyang has disclosed that he has been approached by GoSS President Salva Kiir Mayardit to fill the post of the Sudan People's Liberation Army Affairs Minister and has accepted the assignment.

He succeeds Dominic Deim Deng who was killed in the 2 May plane crash. Kuol pointed out that constitutionally his deputy Hussien Mar can lead the State pending selection of a new Governor.

“Thousands made slaves” in Darfur

(BBC) Strong evidence has emerged of children and adults being used as slaves in Sudan's Darfur region, a study says. Kidnapped men have been forced to work on farmland controlled by Janjaweed militias, a coalition of African charities says.

Eyewitnesses also say the Sudanese army has been involved in abducting women and children to be sex slaves and domestic staff for troops in Khartoum.

Sudan's government has not yet commented on the allegations in the report, published by the Darfur Consortium on Wednesday. The group of 50 charities says it has around 100 eyewitness accounts from former abductees.

Thousands of people from non-Arabic speaking ethnic groups in Darfur have been targeted, its report says.

Victims have been rounded up during joint attacks on villages by the Arabic-speaking Janjaweed and the Sudanese Armed Forces, according to the study.

Civilians are also tortured and killed while their villages are razed to ethnically cleanse areas, which are then repopulated with Arabic-speaking people, including nomads from Chad, Niger, Mali and Cameroon, it says.

Most of the abductees are women and girls, but there is new evidence in Darfur of kidnappers targeting men and boys for forced agricultural labour, says the report.

The abducted women and girls, meanwhile, are raped and forced to marry their captors as well as carry out household chores and sometimes cultivate crops, according to the study.

The report includes the testimony of children forced to become domestic workers.

One boy said he had suffered regular beatings from his Janjaweed abductors. "They were treating me and the other boys very badly, they kept telling us that we are not human beings and we are here to serve them, I also worked on their farms," he said.

A woman said she was kidnapped from a refugee camp and her captors "used us like their wives in the night and during the day we worked all the time.

"The men they abducted with us were used to look after their livestock. We worked all day, all week with no rest."

Sudan's government has always denied the existence of slavery in the country, although Khartoum has previously admitted abductions occurred in the north-south civil war of 1983-2005, when up to 14,000 people were kidnapped.

But a senior Sudanese politician who did not want to be named said kidnappings had also occurred more recently in Darfur. "The army captured many children and women hiding in the bush outside burnt villages," he told the report's authors.

"They were transported by plane to Khartoum at night and divided up among soldiers as domestic workers and, in some cases, wives."

The report urged Sudan's government to disband the Janjaweed and other militia and to fully co-operate with the United Nations and the African Union.

Dismas Nkunda, co-chair of the Darfur Consortium, said: "Urgent action is clearly required to prevent further abductions and associated human rights violations, and to release and assist those who are still being held."

The study also calls for the mandate of Unamid to be beefed up so it can use force to protect civilians.

The Darfur Consortium also wants Khartoum to prosecute all those responsible for abductions and ban them from holding public office. It notes that no-one has ever been arrested over the wave of kidnappings.

Gunmen Launch Yet Another Attack on Aid Workers in Darfur

(UNAMID) Two gunmen equipped with AK-47 assault rifles and a hand grenade stopped a humanitarian convoy in Sudan's war-ravaged Darfur region today, beat up the aid workers and stole money in the latest of a long series of such assaults that are impeding relief operations.

The NGO convoy of three vehicles with six local staff was stopped this morning in South Darfur on its way from Nyala, the provincial capital, to Kalma IDP camp, UNAMID said in a statement. The gunmen forced it to drive down to a nearby gully.

"Although the workers complied without resistance to demands for money, the attackers assaulted them up before leaving the scene," it added "Three out of the six workers were reportedly severely beaten and taken to the local hospital, where their condition is listed as stable and non life-threatening."

Initial reports suggest that the assailants were informed of the workers' movements and that they were transporting cash intended for the payment of salaries for the Kalma camp staff.

"If proven right, these suspicions would point to an act of banditry," UNAMID added.

Just yesterday, USG for Humanitarian Affairs John Holmes told the Security Council that 261 vehicles had been hijacked and 172 compounds broken into so far this year. Rebel movements, or those linked to them, appear primarily responsible for the majority of "these terrifying incidents" in rural areas, but many also occur in main towns in Government control, he said.

"I call on both the Government security forces and rebel leaders to put a stop to this banditry once and for all," he added. "It seriously damages the quality of assistance - just as one example, WFP rations are still only at 70% because of attacks on their convoys - and it damages the credibility of their promises to ensure our safety."

UNAMID, slated to reach 26,000 personnel but now only 10,500-strong, is being deployed throughout Darfur in an effort to bring peace to a region where more than five years of fighting between Government forces, allied Janjaweed militia and rebel groups have driven 2.7 million people from their homes.

Sudan statue find gives clues to ancient language

(Reuters) Archaeologists said on Tuesday they had discovered three ancient statues in Sudan with inscriptions that could bring them closer to deciphering one of Africa's oldest languages.

The stone rams, representing the god Amun, were carved during the Meroe empire, a period of kingly rule that lasted from about 300 BC to AD 450 and left hundreds of remains along the River Nile north of Khartoum.

Vincent Rondot, director of the dig carried out by the French Section of Sudan's Directorate of Antiquities, said each statue displayed an inscription written in Meroitic script, the oldest written language in sub-Saharan Africa.

"It is one of the last antique languages that we still don't understand ... we can read it. We have no problem pronouncing the letters. But we can't understand it, apart from a few long words and the names of people," he told reporters in Khartoum.

Sudan has more pyramids than neighboring Egypt, but few people visit its remote sites, and repeated internal conflicts have made excavation difficult.

Rondot said the dig at el-Hassa, the site of a Meroitic town, had uncovered the first complete version of a royal dedication, previously found only on fragments of carvings from the same period.

He said experts were still trying to work out the meaning of the words by comparing them with broken remnants of similar royal dedications in the same script. "It's an important discovery ... quite an achievement," Rondot said.

The statues were found three weeks ago under a sand dune at the site of a temple to the god Amun, an all-powerful deity represented by the ram in Sudan.

The site is close to Sudan's Meroe pyramids, a cluster of more than 50 granite tombs 200 kms (120 miles) north of the capital that are one of the main attractions for Sudan's few tourists.

Rondot said the dig, funded by the French foreign ministry, would also provide vital information on the reign of a little-known king, Amanakhareqerem, mentioned in the inscriptions on the rams.

"Before we started the dig we only had four documents in his name ... We don't even know where he was buried," he said. "We are beginning to understand the importance of that king."

Military drive against Uganda rebels will last weeks: minister

(AFP) A multi-national military operation against Ugandan rebel group in Democratic Republic of Congo aims to force them back to talks to end a two-decade-old civil war will last several weeks, Ugandan officials said Tuesday. Forces from Uganda, DR Congo, and southern Sudan are taking part in the joint operation.

"Our principle objective is to flush LRA out of its hideout so they can return to the negotiating table," Uganda's Foreign Minister Sam Kutesa told reporters. "Our view is the LRA has to be pressurised, otherwise this will go on endlessly. Unless there is physical pressure, the peace process will not be completed."

Kutesa said the offensive against the LRA, launched on Sunday, would be brief. "Our operation is intended to be short-lived," he said. "We do not intend to occupy DRC forever." Deputy Foreign Minister Okello Oryem said he expected the operation to end within weeks. "The intelligence we had is that the LRA is no more than 2,000 people and those who are armed are no more than 700," he told AFP. "The amount of firepower we have on the ground is so overwhelming that if we don't finish them off in a few weeks then we will have put them in such disarray they will not be able to gather themselves again."

Kutesa said it was not known where LRA leader Kony was and declined to say whether he would be handed over to the ICC if captured. "I wish I knew. We don't know whether Kony is alive or dead."

Chris Magezi, the spokesman for the joint operation, on Monday said a weekend raid of the rebels main camp in Garamba region had caused "caused considerable damage."

LRA spokesman David Nyekorach-Matsanga has condemned the attack but said they were still committed to peace. Lawmakers from northern Uganda, which is most affected by the war, also condemned the raid.

Sudan: Child soldiers reintegrated into civilian life

(Sudan Radio Service) The Southern Sudan Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration commission (SSDDR), integrated 68 child soldiers from the SPLA in Malakal last week.

Addressing a demobilization and reintegration program organized by the SSDDR in Kofti, the director of the Kofiat Military Academy, Colonel Marko Kolang, said that reintegrating child soldiers into civilian life was "creating future leaders for southern Sudan." Kolang said that the SPLA does not need child soldiers anymore because there is peace. He said that if the child soldiers are fully integrated into civilian life, they will be able to enjoy education and other basic services.

Speaking at the same ceremony, the coordinator of Southern Sudan DDR commission, Andro Goloko, urged civil society and international organizations to play an effective role in creating awareness about child soldiers used by the army. Goloko said that 28 of the 68 reintegrated child soldiers will join their families, while the rest will be housed in special camps until their families are located.

South Sudan to renovate rail network

(Sudan Radio Service) The Minister of Transport in the Government of National Unity, Philip Thon Leek, announced that his ministry has drawn up plans to rehabilitate the railway network in the country.

Speaking during the opening of a road linking Atar and Malakal last Saturday, Leek said that the first phase of the railway project will be to renovate the rail network and then replace the trains. He said there is a plan to link Sudan with neighbouring countries via a new railway network, adding that an agreement for such a link has already been reached with Rwanda.

Southern Sudan denounces corruption rumour of official in UK

(Sudan Tribune website) GoSS Ministry of Regional Cooperation has refuted allegations arising from an internet circulated report by a "news outlet" called IRS dated 5/12/08.

The report claimed Stephen Madut Baak, identified as an advisor to GoSS President Salva Kiir, had been detained by police at London's Heathrow airport asking about \$3 million in undeclared cash he was carrying.

The Regional Cooperation Ministry said Baak was carrying a sum of cash -- \$137,000 he had been advanced to cover staff and other expenses related to opening a GoSS office and buying a vehicle in London.

Commentaries

A Policy for Preventing Genocide

(*New York Times*) Darfur, Congo, Rwanda and, before that, Bosnia. It is hard to contemplate man's capacity for inhumanity without feeling despair and paralysis.

The world usually pays attention only after the killing has spun out of control, when ethnic, religious and political divides are rubbed so raw that the furies are infinitely harder to calm. By that point, the United States and others are faced with the agonizing choice of either intervening militarily or allowing the killing to go on.

A new report by a task force headed by former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and former Defense Secretary William Cohen offers some hope, arguing that it is possible to prevent genocide before it spins out of control. It offers practical policy suggestions -- what Mrs. Albright calls a "mechanism for looking at genocide in a systematic way" -- for the next administration.

The report says that early warning and prevention are key and calls on the White House to create a senior-level interagency committee directed by the National Security Council to analyze threats of genocide and mass atrocities around the world and consider appropriate preventive action.

When initial signs of mass atrocities are detected, the task force would also require the intelligence community to do a full policy review and prepare a crisis response plan. The goal is to engage leaders, institutions and civil society in affected communities urgently, and at an early stage when talk and other help may defuse the situation.

The task force urges the United States government to spend an additional \$250 million annually on crisis prevention and response efforts, with a portion going to help international partners, including the United Nations and regional organizations, build their capacity.

It is hard to generate political will to fix a problem before it has crested. But if there is any doubt about the need for a new policy and structure, consider the Bush administration's desperate failure in Darfur.

Four years after President Bush declared the mass killings there genocide, the horrors continue. As many as 300,000 people have been killed and 2.7 million driven from their homes. With the region increasingly engulfed in interrebel warfare, a political settlement appears to be even further out of reach.

We hope President-elect Barack Obama and his top aides will seriously consider the report's policy recommendations before they, too, find themselves grappling with such agonizing choices.

President Salva Kiir credibility gap in Darfur

By Steve Paterno.

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Address: UNMIS Headquarters, P.O. Box 69, Ibeid Khatim St, Khartoum 11111, SUDAN

Phone: (+249-1) 8708 6000 - Fax: (+249-1) 8708 6200