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UN

UN fails to provide the first batch of support to African Union

AIRai AIAam. The United Nations has failed to provide the first batch of support to the African Union forces in Darfur that includes providing experts and technicians. The Tripartite Mechanism meeting, yesterday, reviewed the three batches of assistance and the commitment of the United Nations to provide equipment, civil experts and technicians to the African Union forces operating in Darfur.

The Government coordinator in the Tripartite Mechanism and the Director of Peace Department in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, AlSadiq AlMaqli told AIRai AIAam and Sudan Vision that the United Nations has provided only 43 experts out of the 105 promised. AlMagli has revealed that the United Nations didn't provide any civilian experts from the planned 45 and has provided only 24 civil police personnel out of the 33 promised.

AlMagli said that the United Nations will hand those experts to the African Union this week, adding that the list provided by the United Nations was not complete, confirming that the government will provide the necessary facilitation for the United Nations support to the African Union.

AlMagli stated that the experts provided by the United Nations are Africans, confirming that the government has expressed its readiness to provide all the necessary facilities for the United Nations

Annan briefs the UNSC on Bashir letter; UNSC is to discuss Bashir letter over the UN support packages

AlSahafa; AIRai AIAam reports that the UNSC will discuss today Bashir's letter on the UN support packages for the African Union.

Sudan ambassador to UN, Abdulmahmoud Abdulhalim, said yesterday that the UNSC will discuss today in New York Bashir's letter on the UN support packages.

He added that Secretary General Kofi Annan will brief the UNSC on Bashir's letter. Copies of the letter had been distributed to the SC members, Abdulhalim, said.

UN starts phase one Support package.

Allintibaha The Tripartite Mechanism (AU, UN and GoS) has started the implementation of phase one of UN support package for AU forces in Darfur.

AMIS Spokesman Nouredine Mezni stated that the meeting held by the Tripartite Mechanism is considered to be the real beginning for implementing the support batches, confirming that the government and the African Union have provided a joint list of the needs of the first batch.

Mezni revealed that there are nine civil police experts in ElFashir and 15 others in Khartoum .Mezni stated that the government of Sudan has expressed its readiness to facilitate the United Nations support to AU.

On his part the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Spokesman Ali Al-Sadiq said that the second meeting of the Tripartite Mechanism aimed at coordinating activities will be convened in next January.

UN advisers to be deployed this week in Darfur.

SudanTribune.com The first group of UN military advisers will arrive in the troubled Sudanese region of Darfur this week to assist the African Union force currently in operation there.

Forty-three military advisers will be deployed in the western region as part of a three-phase UN plan aimed at bolstering the struggling AU force there, AU spokesman Nourredine Mezni said Tuesday.

"The first group of this contingent composed of nine policemen is already in place, and this week 43 military advisers and 15 police advisers will follow," Mezni said.

It was agreed that UN military and police officers will wear their national uniforms with a blue UN beret. In addition, they will wear an AU armband, the UNMIS bulletin said.

The move was agreed during a meeting between the United Nations, Sudan and the AU, on the implementation of the plan. The next meeting is due to be held on January 10. The tripartite mechanism will continue to meet regularly every 15 days to follow up on the deployment of UNMIS personnel and equipment support to AMIS under the light and heavy support packages.

GoNU

All press reported that Council of Ministers announced that the Adha Eid vacation starts from Friday 29th December2006 to Tuesday 2nd January2007.

Disagreement between the CPA partners in Blue Nile State.

Allintibaha reports that disagreements between the CPA partners have appeared in Blue Nile State after following a decision by SPLM minister of social affairs on ending the secondment of the Head of Zakat Bureau.

President Bashir receives telephone call from Al- Seniora.

AlRai AlAam reported that President of the Republic and chairman of the current session of the Arab League Field Marshal Omer EL-Bashir received Sunday a telephone call from Lebanese Prime Minister Fouad AL-Seniora in which he explained the process of resolving of the Lebanese crisis. He commended the efforts being exerted by Sudan for bringing the view points of the various political forces in Lebanon closer together. President Al-Bashir affirmed Sudan' keenness to continue its efforts with the participation of Arab leadership for resolving the crisis so that Lebanon would assume its pioneering position.

In another development, Al-Bashir left Monday for Saudi Arabia for the Hajj (Pilgrimage)

The president was seen off at Khartoum airport by Vice President Ali Osman Mohamed Taha, ministers and senior officials.

SLM- Minnawi expected to visit Chad to discuss bilateral relations between Sudan and Chad

AlHayat The SLM information advisor AlTayeb Khamis has revealed that the SLM-Minnawi will visit Chad soon in an attempt to improve Sudan-Chad bilateral relations.

Darfur

SLM -Abdul Wahid: Darfur armed groups to be unified soon.

AlAyam Head of SLM Abdul Wahid Mohamed Nur has stated that the DPA non-signatories armed groups are to be unified soon before conducting peace negotiations. Abdul Wahid added that the peace measures are still ongoing and handled by SLM-Secretary General Jar el Nabi Abdulkareem who is trying to bring all the DPA non-signatory groups together.

SLM Abdul Wahid: hybrid forces deployment not enough for protection of civilians; DPA implementation committee assures progress in evolving armed groups.

AlIntibaha; SudanTribune reported that A Darfur rebel leader criticized deployment of AU-Un force in support of the existing African Unions forces. He said this step could be considered as “complaisance towards genocide in Darfur”.

Abdul Wahid al-Nur the leader of the Sudan Liberation Movement, said that the deployment joint AU-UN force under the command pf the African Union is not a sufficient measure to re-establish security and to protect civilians in Darfur.

Al-Nur told Sudan Tribune by telephone that the current mandate of the AU force would not allow the protection of the civilians in Darfur. He added that their demand for international forces in Darfur is justified by the fact that UN resolution 1706 clearly stipulated the protection of Darfur people.

Meanwhile, the DPA implementation committee headed by the presidential advisor Dr. Majzoub el Khalifa has assured progress in evolving armed groups.

Darfur Janjaweed destroys a village in North Darfur.

SudanTribune The Khartoum backed militia is still waging attacks against the civilians in Darfur. A UN team reported last week that Janjaweed militia looted and burned a village in North Darfur.

A joint UNMIS and OCHA assessment mission on 23 December visited the village of Abu Sakin in North Darfur. The village was found to be completely deserted and

looted, with more than 50 houses burned to the ground, the UNMIS bulletin reported Tuesday.

Government police and National security have stepped up the number of road blocks in El Fasher (North Darfur), following the shooting on 23 December of a police officer and an increase in the number of carjackings.

Sudan accepts UN package for Darfur, willing to ceasefire

SudanTribune.com Sudan's president said he accepts a U.N. package to help end escalating violence in Darfur and is ready for urgent discussions on a ceasefire, according to a letter circulated Tuesday.

President Omar al-Bashir said in the letter to Secretary-General Kofi Annan that Sudan is ready "to start immediately" to implement two recent agreements that endorsed the three-step U.N. plan to beef up the beleaguered 7,000-strong African Union force on the ground in the vast conflict-wracked western region.

Council diplomats said the letter sounded promising, but cautioned that al-Bashir remains opposed to any large-scale U.N. deployment and has back-tracked on agreements regarding Darfur in the past. The letter also leaves the size and command of a hybrid African Union-United Nations force that would be deployed as the third step unresolved.

In the letter to Annan, al-Bashir dropped his opposition to the hybrid force.

He said the conclusions of a Nov. 16 meeting of key Sudanese and international diplomats in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, and the Nov. 30 summit of the African Union's Peace and Security Council in Abuja, Nigeria, which endorsed the three-step U.N. plan, "constitute a viable framework for peaceful settlement to the conflict in Darfur."

Al-Bashir said Sudan agrees that implementation of the first two phases of the U.N. support package for Darfur should start "as scheduled."

The first phase would add 105 military officers, 33 U.N. police, 48 international staffers, 36 armored personnel carriers, night-vision goggles, and Global Positioning equipment to the African Union force, according to a U.N. report last month.

A second, larger support package would include the deployment of several hundred U.N. military, police and civilian personnel to the African Union mission along with substantial aviation and logistical assets.

Sudan backs Darfur plan but concerns remain

SudanTribune.com Sudanese President Omar Hassan al-Bashir has told the United Nations he endorses a plan for a joint African Union-U.N. peacekeeping force to help quell violence and protect civilians in Darfur.

But in a December 23 letter to U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan made public on Tuesday, Bashir also said the plan should be carried out through a special panel on which Khartoum has a seat, a move diplomats said would effectively give Sudan veto power over all aspects of its implementation.

Diplomats who have seen the letter, distributed to members of the 15-nation U.N. Security Council on Tuesday, said that while Bashir's message contained positive elements, it was not clear whether it represented a real step forward in putting the plan into effect.

To help sort out the situation, the council is expected to invite Annan to brief it on the letter later this week, U.N. officials said.

The question of whether Bashir was now standing aside and eliminating obstacles to the plan, or clinging to ambiguities in an effort to further stall its implementation, was crucial as Annan is preparing to leave office this Sunday to make way for new Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon of South Korea.

He said he expected Bashir to agree "to a full ceasefire, a renewed effort to bring all parties into the political process, and deployment of the proposed hybrid African Union-United Nations force to protect the population."

GoSS

SPLM arrests Sudanese Armed Forces soldier in Rumbek accused of supporting National Unity

AllIntibaha reports that the SPLM has arrested a southern SAF soldier Colonel John Marwell. The SPLM has accused him of supporting National unity, and forming rebel militias against SPLM.

Meanwhile SAF condemned the arresting of its soldier by the SPLM and considered it as illegal.

Reactions to disclosing private bank accounts of SPLM leader in Kenyan banks.

AllIntibaha Documents disclosing the private bank accounts of the SPLM leaders in Kenyan banks which were published yesterday by *AllIntibaha* have attracted wide reactions among all Sudanese sectors. Some have called for more investigation on such cases.

Sudan's SPLM begins electoral campaign.

SudanTribune.com. The SPLM has begun to transform into a national political party, registering tens of thousands of members in north Sudan.

"This is the first time in modern history that southern Sudanese politicians are undertaking a political campaign in the north," said Yassir Arman, the SPLM's Deputy Secretary General.

Arman said the party had covered all the states of the north, except for the remote western Darfur region, where a separate conflict is raging.

The SPLM had elected secretaries in all the states and registered tens of thousands of members in the past few months.

It has more than 25,000 members in White Nile and more than 45,000 in Jazirah State, areas traditionally dominated by northern parties.