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# Media Monitoring Report

United Nations Mission in Sudan/ Public Information Office

## Local News Headlines

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- Government says UNICEF biased (**Al-Khartoum**)
- SPLM to terminate partnership in southern Kordofan (**Akhbar Al Youm**)
- Bush Administration keen to destroy the world – Government (**Al-Raed**)
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- Former Darfur rebels want to take part in peace talks (**ST**)
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# Highlights

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## Local Arabic and English Language Press

### *President Bashir to address nations on Independence Day*

**Al-Sahafa** reports SAF spokesperson Brig. Osman Al-Aghbash said the army would conduct military parade on Wednesday at the Green Square in Khartoum. Aircraft; Tanks, carriers and various heavy weaponry will take part. He urged civilians not to worry about military movements in streets in Khartoum as the movements are intended to prepare for the parade to mark the 53rd Independence Day celebrations. President Bashir will deliver an important speech to mark the occasion.

### *Government says UNICEF biased*

**Al-Khartoum** reports Sudan government accused UNICEF of being biased due to lack of transparency, methodology and integrity in its dealings despite the availability of mechanisms and open channels for dialogue with UN Agencies. The MFA issued a statement deploring the “irresponsible and unfounded” statements made by UNICEF’s chief on completing his assignment in Sudan in which he claimed Sudan had recruited 6000 children from Darfur and the rest from southern and eastern Sudan. The statement reiterated government’s total commitment not to recruit children particularly in conflict zones. “UNICEF chief’s statement runs counter to the recent UN comment and appreciation of the legal measures taken by the government toward children accused of involvement in Omdurman incidents” the statement added.

### *SPLM official threatens to terminate partnership in southern Kordofan*

**Akhbar Al Youm** reports an SPLM official and deputy governor of the Southern Kordofan state Daniel Kodi yesterday threatened that SPLM would terminate partnership with NCP within a month should the governor fails to reinstate the dismissed Finance Minister (SPLM). He also warned of a possible famine in the area due to poor harvest. He told journalists about a prospective meeting with President Bashir to discuss military buildup in the area.

### *Bush Administration keen to destroy the world – Government*

**Al-Raed** reports that the Sudan government has downplayed US Envoy Richard Williamson’s memo urging the Bush Administration to jam Khartoum’s communications and internet and to send aircraft to prevent Sudanese oil exports. “I do not think Bush Administration has the capacity to do that. It is part of an internal discourse,” State Minister for Information Kamal Obeid told journalists yesterday. Obeid also denied there were tensions in Sudan-Chad relations.

### *New Year parties may continue until dawn – Prosecutor*

**Al-Rai Al-Aam** reports the Community Security Prosecutor judge Mirghani Abdul Razig as saying that parties to celebrate the New Year are permitted to continue in clubs on the eve of the New Year and will not be interfered with except in cases of excesses.

### *Students to demonstrate against Israeli aggression today*

**Sudan Radio** broadcast the General Union of Sudanese Students announced that students would stage a demonstration today in Khartoum to protest Israeli aggression against the

Palestinians in Gaza. The demonstrators will march from the Union HQs in Mogran to UN premises to submit a memorandum of protest.

## Websites/International News Coverage

### *Sanaa Forum experts meeting kicks off in Khartoum*

**(Sudan Tribune website)** the Sanaa Cooperation Forum began preparations in Khartoum yesterday for a summit meeting on December 30.

Leaders of Ethiopia, Somalia, Sudan, Yemen and Djibouti will attend. Eritrea had been invited but declined. The Khartoum discussions will focus on implementation of earlier agreements, as well as the crisis in Somalia, Darfur and the Eritrea-Ethiopia border dispute.

Founded in 2002 in the Yemeni capital Sanaa, the forum aims to enhance security, political and economic cooperation in the volatile region.

### *United Democratic Front hints SAF-LRA link*

**(Miraya FM website)** the Chairman of the United Democratic Front, Peter Abdul Rahaman Soli, as saying that LRA attacks against civilians are unlikely to stop in the presence of what he called "the old cooperation between SAF and LRA".

### *Sudan says France apologized for Sarkozy remarks*

**(Sudan Tribune website)** the Sudanese government said yesterday that it has received an apology from Paris about warnings by President Sarkozy earlier this month that time is running out for President Al-Bashir.

The Sudanese Minister of State at the Foreign Ministry Ali Karti told the London based daily **Al-Sharq Al-Awsat**. "We do not pay any attention to these threats and we heard an apology from Sarkozy's adviser Monsieur Joubert saying that what Sarkozy said exceeded what is agreed on in French policy" Karti said. The Sudanese official also hinted that his government may suspend implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) if an arrest warrant is issued for Al-Bashir. "The international community must decide whether it wishes to continue to implement the peace agreement for Southern Sudan, in particular thousands of peacekeepers guarding it or he wants to give up his role in Sudan" Karti warned. "Does the [international community] want to stay and solve the problem or does it want to terminate all aspects of full cooperation with a responsible government. Everyone has the right to decide before the Sudanese government makes its own decision on what it wants" he added. Karti said that there will be no cooperation with the ICC "under any circumstances" and said it will amount to "giving up their sovereignty" if they did. He reiterated the ability of the Sudanese judiciary to deal with Darfur crimes and stressed that there is no evidence implicating two suspects wanted by the ICC including Ahmed Haroun, state minister for humanitarian affairs and militia commander Ali Mohamed Ali Abdel-Rahman, also know as Ali Kushayb. "All criminal investigations commissions did not press any charges against Haroun...Even Kushayb there were lots of allegations against him but none were confirmed. They mention his name [Kushayb] without asserting it was his him. They [victims] say that all attackers masked... then how did they identify him?" Karti said.

### *Year of failure in Darfur as ICC spectre looms over Sudan*

**(AFP)** Darfur ends 2008 more dangerous than ever with a much vaunted UN mission unable to protect civilians and a possible war crimes indictment against Sudan's president casting a pall over 2009.

Huge hopes 12 months ago that the United Nations could bring some measure of stability to the western Sudanese region by assuming control of peacekeeping have been largely disappointed as the mission struggles to find its footing.

"Genocide continues" was the blunt if controversial verdict this month from ICC prosecutor Luis Moreno-Ocampo, who is seeking an arrest warrant against President Omar al-Bashir over the six-year conflict.

Insecurity has spiraled as the war, which erupted in 2003 when Darfur rebel groups rose against the Arab-led government in Khartoum, mushroomed into a complex web of violence between myriad groups and also marred by widespread banditry.

What was to have been the world's largest UN-led peacekeeping force became operational last December 31, but by mid-December deployed just 12,723 troops and police, around half its total planned strength of 26,000.

UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon said in a report last week that the Darfur force continues to face "enormous challenges."

"Violence and displacement continue, humanitarian operations are at risk (and) clashes between the parties occur with regrettable regularity.

"I reiterate my appeal to those that are in a position to provide mission-critical capabilities to do so without further delay," Ban said, lamenting a lack of helicopters to patrol an area the size of France.

An "unconditional" ceasefire declared by Bashir in November as part of diplomatic efforts to stall international legal moves against him was dismissed by rebels as disingenuous propaganda, and fighting and bombing has continued.

The Sudan government has been heavily criticized in the West for brutally trying to suppress the uprising and unleashing Arab proxy militias, but insists the death toll stands at 10,000 and dismisses other statistics as a conspiracy.

Insecure roads and expensive air travel have forced cuts in food supplied by relief agencies.

In the first nine months of 2008, 11 aid workers were killed and humanitarian premises attacked or broken into 144 times, compared with 93 in 2007. The UN says it has humanitarian access to just 65 percent of the region.

Eleven UN troops have been killed, including seven in a July ambush that prompted the mission to boost security levels.

The force was criticized for standing back in August when 33 people died during a government raid on Kalma, Darfur's biggest camp for the displaced.

But the civilian chief of UNAMID, Rodolphe Adada, says managing the incident was a success for the force, which has challenged initial skepticism. "We have succeeded in establishing the relevancy of UNAMID and I think everyone in Darfur takes UNAMID into account," he told reporters recently.

There is some hope that a stronger UN peacekeeping force -- the UNAMID hybrid mission with the African Union -- will emerge in 2009. An initially reluctant Sudan is cooperating fully over UNAMID deployment. In some areas, regular patrols have made civilians feel more secure and improved access for aid workers. And UNAMID now has a 24-hour police presence in Kalma.

In May, the Justice and Equality Movement attacked Khartoum, the first time regional rebels have ever approached the seat of power, and although they were defeated the brazen assault humiliated Sudan's army.

Then in July, the ICC's Moreno-Ocampo demanded an arrest warrant against Bashir on 10 counts of war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide. Judges are expected to make a decision in early 2009 on whether to issue what would be the first ICC warrant for a sitting head of state.

Some say a furious Sudan will evict peacekeepers and aid workers, torpedoing hopes of resolving the conflict, jeopardizing a 2005 peace agreement between north and south Sudan and compromising the path to elections in 2009. Others believe the Khartoum regime will use diplomacy to stay in power and convince the United Nations it is serious about a solution in Darfur.

Efforts to resolve the conflict, stalemated throughout 2008, have shown signs of picking up with a new international mediator on Darfur and the Gulf state of Qatar also keen to host talks.

But the omens remain murky. The rebels are fragmented and their incentive to negotiate with a would-be indicted war criminal president unclear.

"It hasn't got any closer, if anything it's been receding," said Sudan expert Alex de Waal, referring to prospects of a negotiated peace. "If the referendum on self-determination goes ahead in south Sudan in two years' time and the south separates, I think then we're in for another five years of indeterminacy in Darfur, so I think it's a very, very long way away."

### ***Peacekeeper shot in carjacking in Darfur capital***

**(Sudan Tribune website)** armed men shot a peacekeeper in the leg during a car-jacking at El Fasher market on Saturday night. He was one of three UNAMID military officers car-jacked by three unknown armed men. The officers were forced to leave their vehicle and, in the process, one was shot. The car-jackers then drove off to the north with the vehicle. The wounded officer was taken to UNAMID's hospital in El Fasher for treatment and later evacuated to a hospital in Khartoum for further treatment.

### ***Former Darfur rebels want to take part in peace talks***

**(Sudan Tribune website)** Minni Minawi asked yesterday to take part in any peace talks to end Darfur conflict while accusing the Sudanese government of not implementing a peace deal they signed two years ago. Abdel-Gabar Dosa, a member of the SLM-MM leadership Council and former chief negotiator, in a statement emailed to Sudan Tribune today said that the NCP-led government has only implemented 8% of the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) brokered by the African Union on May 5, 2006.

Dosa, who is also the SLM Secretary of Political Affairs, said that his movement wants to participate independently in the expected peace talks that should be held in the Qatari capital Doha.

"No one can sign any Agreement on behalf of us, in particular security arrangements. No one

can force the Movement to comply with something that it is not part of its discussions, the same as the non-signatories to Abuja Agreement," Dosa stated.

Minnawi had left the Sudanese capital for 4 months and informally suspended his participation in the government to protest the poor implementation of Abuja deal. Also, his troops clashed several times with the Sudanese army since his disaffection with Khartoum.

However he signed an agreement on September 19 with the Vice-President Ali Osman Taha to enforce the DPA within one month. The two parties agreed to include the DPA in the Transitional Constitution of the Republic of Sudan, and to represent his movement in the different national institutions and administrations. Also they adopted a series of security arrangements.

The SLM official accused the NCP of intending to delay the implementation of the DPA saying this stagnation indicts Khartoum decision to cancel the Abuja peace agreement.

Dosa denounced the Presidential pledge made at the Forum of Sudan's People last November to allocate 20 million USD for individual compensation of Darfur people. He said they had agreed in the DPA on the sum of 30 million USD and it was supposed "to be allocated since the establishment of the Transitional Darfur Regional Authority (TDRA) and its Organs early April 2007."

He also asked Khartoum to stop violating the security arrangements, alluding to the ongoing military build-up in Darfur where the Sudanese army deployed troops across the troubled region and the border with Chad.

### ***Sudan mobilizes support for Palestinians***

**(Sudan Tribune website)** Sudanese officials mobilized rallies and emergency relief supplies for Palestinians in Gaza Strip after fighting broke out with Israel. Sudan announced that it will send an aircraft of relief supplies to the Gaza Strip via Egypt and also started extensive campaigns to donate blood for the Palestinian people.

In a speech before a rally of thousands of Sudanese students, Sudanese Parliament Speaker Ahmed Ibrahim Al-Tahir said, "We want to raise the voice of confrontation against Israeli aggression." He stressed the importance of unity and being a strong nation and the striving for the sake of God.

Tahir further said that his country extended an invitation to convene an emergency session of the Arab Parliamentary Union in Khartoum to support the Palestinian cause and breaking the Arab silence.

The head of the National Human Rights Group Ibrahim Abdel Halim in a speech at a march organized by civil society that an airplane of urgent relief will fly immediately to the airport of El Arish in Egypt to transport aid Palestinians in Gaza strip, medications, accommodation and food after deadly air strikes yesterday.

Halim said that supporting the people of Palestine is the duty of all brothers and civil society organizations are ready for Jihad and the face of the Zionist oppression against the Arab Islamic identity.

In an interview with al-Jazeera television, Sudanese President Omer al-Bashir urged Arab countries not to normalize ties with Israel and to review their relations with the United States.