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(By Public Information Office)

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HIGHLIGHTS :

UN/ Agencies

Eliasson and Salim hoold talks with government officials in Khartoum

(*AlRai AlAam*) The SLM says a considerable number of citizens in the country intend to report to the visiting African Union and UN envoys on the shortcomings of the parties to the DPA when the envoys visit Darfur later today.

The visiting envoys meanwhile held talks separately yesterday with Minnawi and Dr. Majzoub el-Khalifa

They expressed hopes that the situation will improve in Darfur and pointed out that the international community is optimistic that their current tour will help bring about an end to the conflict in Darfur.

The two envoys told the press following their meeting with the government officials that they basically discussed progress in the implementation of the agreement. Salim Ahmed Salim said there were some differences in viewpoints over the best ways to guarantee proper implementation of the agreement.

Time running out for Sudan to allow in UN rights team

(*Reuters; Rai AlShaab*) The Sudan has formally requested the UN to replace a member of its rights team which Sudan has refused to grant entry visas to, reports *Rai AlShaab* daily.

Foreign ministry spokesperson Ambassador Ali el-Sadiq said that the government is not opposed to the visit as such but demands that a member of that team be replaced.

The United Nations said on Tuesday time was running out for Sudan to grant visas to a U.N. human rights team set to investigate alleged abuses against civilians in Darfur, but vowed to pursue its probe regardless.

Jose Luis Diaz, U.N. human rights spokesman, said on Tuesday the office had received no official objections to anyone on the six-member team, led by 1997 Nobel co-laureate Jody Williams.

"If we don't have an answer in coming hours we will take it as a 'No' and we will have to go to an alternate plan," Diaz told Reuters. "They need visas, all of them."

Asked whether this meant carrying on the investigation outside of the country, Diaz replied: "We can envisage that it can do its work even if it does not get into Sudan."

The team is due to report back to the 47-member state Council, which opens its next session in Geneva on March 9.

WFP to reduce food and increase recovery

(*Khartoum Monitor*) World Food Program (WFP) Country Director, Kenro Oshidari told the media yesterday in their meeting hall that they are going to reduce food distribution and increase recovery and reconstruction.

“We are reducing general distribution in the South Sudan and three areas while increasing school feeding” said the Director said now we want to decrease food so that it does not create dependency.

UNCHR prepares convoys for Blue Nile IDPs

(*Sudan Tribune*)The organized return of internally displaced people (IDPs)in South Eastern Sudan’s Blue Nile State back to their home villages in the southern part of the state is gathering momentum.

Eight convoys have brought 747 people home since January 23.the latest was yesterday Monday .Two more convoys are scheduled for this week.

UNCHR is coordinating the return, reintegration and protection of the IDPs in Blue Nile .Blue Nile State is also an area of return for Sudanese refugees in neighboring Ethiopia.

World Bank Development Marketplace 2007

(*Khartoum Monitor*) The Sudan World Bank Country Director, Asif Faiz,announced the launching of Sudan Development Marketplace(DM)2007 yesterday at a forum organized by the Sudan News Agency(SUNA).the Director said that the World Bank Country office is launching the Sudan DM for 2007 that aligns with the needs and development perspectives of post-conflict Sudan under the theme “towards an inclusive Sudanese society has been carefully selected to compare the aspiration of the Sudanese people for peace and development .

Faiz said the aim is to support the recovery and reconstruction efforts through pro-poor and pro-peace initiatives working towards consolidating peace and supporting the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) signed in January 2005.

CPA

CJMC its 45th Meeting in Juba

(*Sudan Tribune*) The Ceasefire Joint Military Committee (CJMC), chaired by UNMIS Force Commander, held yesterday its 45th meeting in Juba.

The Chairman shared with the CJMC members the latest Security-General’s quarterly report to the Security Council issued on January 2007 on Comprehensive Peace

Agreement (CPA) and UNMIS mandate implementation, which had lauded the role of the CJMC in diffusing the Malakal crisis .

The chairman commended the committee members for the enormous efforts they exerted and the cooperation they have shown in implementing Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) provisions that fall under the CJMC mandate.

Southern Sudan/ GoSS/ SPLM

Sudanese VP told to account for missing cash

(AFP) The Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) has given its leader Salva Kiir one month to account for 60 million dollars that administration officials claim is missing from the coffers.

A five-day meeting of SPLM leaders has also told Kiir, Sudan's first vice president, to sort out his administration which has been accused of corruption and bad management, newspapers said, quoting local officials.

The US\$60 million was advanced to the SPLM by Sudan's government after the former rebel movement signed a peace agreement with Khartoum more than two years ago, according to deputy leader Bagan Amom.

The meeting also decided to take steps to change the movement into a political party and to discuss with Khartoum ways of resolving their different views on implementing the peace deal.

In particular the SPLM wants greater transparency in the handling of oil revenues sent to the south and a resolution of the disputed region of Abyei, which lies between the northern and southern zones.

The SPLM is a member of the federal government of President Omar al-Beshir and has its own administration in the south following the end of the north-south war.

SPLM reiterates commitment to New Sudan vision

(ST) The Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) has reiterated at the end of a four-day meeting its commitment to the vision of the New Sudan. The SPLM stressed the national character of the movement.

In a meeting held in the period from 8 to 12 February in Yei in Central Equatoria, the SPLM National Council has clearly replaced the party in its vision of the New Sudan. The political body defined the elements of this vision as "to transform Sudan into a free, just, democratic, and decentralized system of government based on the free will and popular participation of its entire people."

The meeting also discussed the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA). In this regard, the council expressed concern for the non-implementation of key aspects in the peace deal such as the Abyei Protocol, the withdrawal of the NCP backed militia from the southern Sudan.

Regarding Darfur crisis, the SPLM reaffirmed “the legitimate cause” of the Darfurians. It also supported Salva Kiir initiative to find a common ground between rebel groups. The council backed the positive role played by the international community to relief Darfur people.

The meeting also backed the positions of the SPLM chairman “on good governance and combating corruption.” Salva Kiir was mandated to take the necessary measures in this regard.

Full text of the Communiqué of the SPLM Interim National Council sourced from the SudanTribune.com is attached separately

"External forces" said advising Ugandan rebels to boycott peace talks

(Daily Monitor via BBC Monitoring) Gulu District [northern Uganda] Chairman Nobert Mao has urged the government to investigate what he called 'external forces that are advising the rebel Lord's Resistance Army [LRA] to stay away from the south Sudan mediated peace talks'.

"I think the LRA are being cornered. The Ugandan intelligence should investigate whether there is a third party interest trying to confuse the talks," he said while appearing on KFM's Hot Seat talk show on Monday [12 February].

Mr Mao said the Uganda government should not blame the LRA for pulling out of the talks but instead identify and expose those people against the talks. "We need to identify the spoilers, dismantle their connections rather than merely blaming LRA," he said.

In preparation for what could be called image management, Mr Mao said LRA is preparing a second statement explaining its position on the talks. "The statement is being drafted by high roving peace consultants," he said. Last week, the LRA released a detailed statement giving 32 reasons for quitting the talks.

Mr Mao said LRA fighters who were supposed to assemble at Owiny-Kibul and Ri-Kwangba, the designated assembly points, have now crossed to the Nile banks and rejoined the top command at the border with DR Congo. UPDF [Uganda People's Defence Forces] soldiers were deployed along the Nile to stop LRA from moving outside the designated places.

Mr Mao said LRA's failure to assemble at Owiny-Kibul and Ri-Kwangba is due to lack of food and water, which has also forced them to loot from civilians. This, he said, has in turn caused tension between LRA and the government of South Sudan. "The civilians are

now putting pressure on their government to deal with LRA because the looting is causing friction," he said.

Ugandan defence and army spokesperson Felix Kulayigye said they are aware of external forces trying to derail the talks. "We said it before and we were not believed," he said.

Uganda govt, rebels want to restart peace talks

(Reuters) Uganda's Lord's Resistance Army rebels say they will not restart a brutal 20-year war and remain committed to peace despite a near collapse of talks with the government about ending the conflict, a charity said on Tuesday.

The report comes a week after LRA deputy commander Vincent Otti threatened to order his fighters into Uganda from the Sudanese border and attack Ugandan army positions unless the government agreed to a new venue for talks, outside Sudan.

Aid agency World Vision, which runs rehabilitation programmes for former LRA child soldiers, said it had organised a teleconference between the rebels and the Ugandan government.

"Top negotiators representing the Ugandan government and the rebel group ... reiterated their commitment to resume stalled peace talks during (the) teleconference," World Vision said in a statement.

Neither LRA nor government representatives were immediately available for comment.

"The people should be assured the LRA will not go back to war, and will do everything in our powers to deliver peace," the agency quoted LRA spokesman, Godfrey Ayoo, as saying.

His comments mark a turnaround from the LRA's threats to restart war last week.

World Vision did not say whether an agreement had been reached on the LRA's demand to move the talks venue from Sudan. Uganda's government team has repeatedly refused to bow to the demand. But the agency said both sides were committed to breaking the current impasse.

"We are ready to work with LRA to resolve some of the problems barring the peace talks," government chief negotiator, Ruhakana Rugunda, was quoted as saying. "We had developed good rapport ... that pushed us forward."

Darfur/ Darfur Peace Agreement

Rwanda replaces entire force in Sudan's Darfur region

(New Times via BBC Monitoring) The Rwanda Defence Forces (RDF) will today airlift the first contingent of troops to the war-torn Sudanese Darfur region kicking-off the process to replace all its current RDF protection force.

Military spokesman Maj Jill Rutaremara said yesterday the Darfur-bound team is part of the 2040-strong RDF force which will replace the present RDF force, comprising of the same number. He said that also to be replaced are 49 civilian police personnel currently stationed in Darfur. "Tomorrow's (today's) rotation will mark the beginning of similar activities which will run until February 24," he told The New Times by telephone.

He said that two Algerian C130 aircrafts will transport the troops to Darfur and return their predecessors back. Rutaremara said the two planes will be alternated throughout the exercise. "A plane will take RDF officers and men and bring others on the same day," he said.

He however could not say the capacity of each of the planes. Some of the troops being replaced have been in Darfur for about a whole year even when their mandate is supposed to be a maximum of six months.

The RDF Spokesman said the Rwandan troops would be stationed in El-Fashir (Sector One), Kabkabiyah (Sector Two) and Zalinge (Sector Three), all under Rwandan commanders. It is for the first time RDF replaces all its troops in Darfur at once, a development occasioned by events that took place last year within the mission.

Last year, the government of Rwanda refused to rotate the troops after some disagreements had ensued between parties involved in the Darfur crisis. Less than a month ago, RDF dispatched Brig-Gen Ephraim Rurangwa to Darfur to replace Brig-Gen Kamanzi Mushyo as the new AU Deputy Force Commander. Mushyo returned to the country days ago.

Military leaders tried for involvement in Sudan's Darfur crisis

(AlSahafa via BBC Monitoring, 13 Feb.) The deputy chief of justice Muhammad Hamad Abu-Sin has revealed that high ranking officials involved in the Darfur crisis, including high ranking military and security leaders, have received judicial sentences.

Abu-Sin, who was addressing the inauguration ceremony of the courts compound in Al-Qadarif [eastern Sudan] said details of these state officials' trials had been seen by the International Criminal Court delegation that visited the country recently. However, Abu-Sin refused to give details on how many people were tried, their positions or names.

Other Developments

El-Muqtada Group calls for revenge on killers of Nilein university student

(Rai AlShaab) A group calling itself "Ábu-Qatada Jihadist Group" has threatened "military action" inside the Nilein University campus and avenge the murder last week of a student.

In a statement issued yesterday, the group pointed out that students loyal to the SPLM, the independent students' body and the Democratic Front have besmirched the name of the martyrs who died for Islam and accused the SPLM of terrorising and killing helpless civilians in the residential areas of Khartoum.

The group has warned all student political groups in the university against carrying out any political activity until further notice.

Editors summoned for reporting on journalist murder case

(Akhir Lahzah via BBC Monitoring, 13 Feb.) The ministry of justice general prosecution headed by Judge Babikir Abd-al-Latif yesterday summoned the chief editor of Akhir Lahzah and the legal affairs editor Ikhlas al-Naw in relation to the report published Sunday 11 February on the case of the former chief editor of Al-Wifaq newspaper Muhammad Taha Muhammad Ahmad. The report related to statements given by the head of the defence council on the case. The editors were questioned about the report and the reasons and justifications for it.