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(By Public Information Office)

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HIGHLIGHTS :

UN/ Agencies

Acting SRSG Tayé-Brook Zerihoun meets with AUP&SC Commissioner Djinnit

AlWihda reproduces the full Arabic version of this report appearing in the UNMIS News Bulletin of 26 February 2007.

Sudan renews support to envoys' mission

(*AlWifaq*) African Union Spokesperson Nouredine Mezni said that Sudanese officials who met African Union Peace & Security Council Commissioner Said Djinnit yesterday expressed the government's support of the joint mission of envoys Eliasson and Salim Ahmed Salim.

He said that Commissioner Djinnit is in the country to discuss the political process for a solution to the Darfur problem and to bolster the military role of the AMIS.

On Sudan-Chad relations, Mezni said that the normalisation of relations between Sudan and Chad will help in the search for peace.

WHO reveals of deteriorating health situation in the Darfurs

(*Rai AlShaab*) The Regional Director of the WHO has revealed that the health situation in the states of Darfur is worsening. He attributes this to security problems.

The regional chief lamented the fact that polio has made a comeback and mainly attributes this to the irregular vaccination campaigns.

Medecine du Monde leaves Darfur in protest over security

(*AlSahafa*) The French agency Medecine du Monde has decided it will close down its offices in S. Darfur within the next two days.

In its letter to the Humanitarian Aid Commission, the agency cites security concerns as reason for their decision to walk out. The letter also says it will hand over assets it owns such as equipment and mobile clinics to other humanitarian agencies such as Action Contre le Faim that operate in the area.

But a high rank source believes that the decision is unjustified because the organisation has been operating without hindrance unlike other humanitarian agencies. He pointed out however that the organisation could not be convinced not to stay but believes the government may not allow the organisation to return. He further pointed out that the organisation contradicts itself by saying it is withdrawing for security reasons but still donates its assets to other agencies – meaning that the situation is still favourable for other agencies to work in.

The source goes on to say that he believes that other agencies may follow suit if only to send the signal that the security situation calls for an international intervention.

N. Darfur pleads for help from the humanitarian community

(*Rai AlShaab*) An association of the people of N. Darfur has called for urgent assistance from international and local humanitarian agencies to help the people affected by recent militia attacks in the area.

A representative for the association pointed out that the IDPs and refugees in camps lack the basic requirements such as food and drink. He called upon “people of conscience” and the humanitarian community to help these people.

The Transition Debate

Group threatens to strike on UN forces should they deploy to Darfur

(*Allntibaha*) A group that goes by the name the *Jama'at Abu-Qatada Al-Istishadia* [Abu-Qatada Suicide Bombers] has said any soldier that comes into the country as part of a UN force deployed to Darfur will be target to their military operations.

The group also says that US media persons and nationals will also be targets to such operations if the Sudanese journalist Sami el-Haj is not released from Guantanamo.

Also to be targeted are those who back the calls for a foreign intervention. The group says it will consider such people as spies and that elements of the SPLM, the Democratic Front and independent persons will be closely monitored.

UN takeover in Darfur has hidden motive - Sudan president

(Reuters) The U.N. plan to deploy its peacekeepers in Darfur would put Sudan under the trusteeship of the world body, President Omar Hassan al-Bashir said on Monday.

Speaking in Ethiopia, Bashir reiterated his rejection of the Security Council resolution, which calls for the deployment of some 22,500 U.N. peacekeepers and police to take over the African Union mission in Darfur.

"Resolution 1706 of the U.N. Security Council actually confirmed our suspicion because the content of the resolution places Sudan under international trusteeship of the United Nations," Bashir said at a press conference in Addis Ababa.

"That plan to transform the peacekeeping job in Darfur from African Union (AU) to United Nations held a hidden agenda aimed at putting Sudan under the United Nations trusteeship."

Opinion piece:

Plethora of weapons used by the international community to confront Khartoum

(AlSharei AlSiyassi) In its political analysis column, the paper points out that the international community is using a large number of tools to confront the Sudan government. It points out that among these are the pressures the US exerted on the rebel movements not to reach an agreement with the government during the recent meetings in Tripoli because it does not want to see an end to the crisis at the moment. It also says the US and the UK are trying to push the Security Council into issuing resolutions imposing sanctions on Sudan in a bid to weaken the government. It finally points out that the ICC has also come in as a tool to pressure government.

CPA

Presidency to hold talks today on GoNU and OAGs

(AlRai AlAam) The Presidency of the Republic convenes later today to discuss issues pertaining to the GoNU and other issues such as the OAGs.

VP Kiir is expected to fly in from Juba later today for the meeting, reports state minister for the Presidency, Tilara Deng.

The state minister denied any intentions from the part of the SPLM to carry out a ministerial reshuffle of its ministers in the GoNU or the GoSS.

He said that such a reshuffle will only take place through consultations between the parties and not through the "Yei meeting or statements from the Secretary-General [of the SPLM]".

Workers strike in Damazin

(*AlAyaam*) The labour union for financial and accounting concerns in Blue Nile State has declared a 24 hour sit-in starting today for non-payment of their salaries for the month of January and to push for payment of dues of finance ministry workers.

The fraternity has called upon all to report to the workplace but not to work.

GoNU

Security arrests prominent member of the National Congress Party

(*Rai AlShaab*) Security authorities arrested yesterday Mr. Hassan Abdalla Bargu, the National Congress Party member in charge of its dossier on West Africa and relations between Khartoum and N'Djamena. Mr. Bargu also heads the Network of Darfur Organisations.

Officials have declined to reveal the reasons for his arrest and he remains in detention since last Sunday.

Southern Sudan/ GoSS/SPLM

Finance minister says GoSS has no right to sign security and military agreements with neighbours

(*AlAyaam*) In answer to a question, foreign minister Dr. Lam Akol said he has not heard of a security and military cooperation agreement the GoSS has signed with the Uganda government but points out that the GoSS has no right to sign such an agreement.

Minister of Interior warns GoSS against curbing activities of the Popular Police in the south

(*AlWan*) The Minister of Interior has warned the GoSS against curbing the activities of the Popular Police forces in southern Sudan.

He pointed out that this force numbers up to 20,000 in different states of the south and is backed by the tribal and local leaders and have contributed much to consolidating and disseminating the culture of peace in different areas of the south. He said that the GoSS stands to lose much should it curb their activities.

Modern Southern Sudanese Front denies links to foreign minister Akol

(*Rai AlShaab*) Following allegations of his support to southern Sudanese militias, the Modern Southern Sudanese Front has denied any links to foreign minister Dr. Lam Akol.

In a statement to the paper, Paul Dong, a key member of the front, says the only link they have with Dr. Akol is the fact that he contributed to the founding of the movement in February 2001 when he signed the Khartoum Peace Agreement as leader of the United Faction.

He said that Dr. Akol had tried in vain to bring them on board the Khartoum Peace Agreement.

What lies behind accusations against the foreign minister

(AlSharei AlSiyassi) Sources reveal that a large number of SPLM bigwigs loyal to the late Dr. Garang are plotting against foreign minister Dr. Lam Akol.

The sources further reveal that this group has revealed to VP Kiir that the foreign minister is himself planning to form a broad-based political organisation made up of key academics from southern Sudan from both within and the Diaspora.

The sources also say that the investigation committee formed by VP Kiir on the issue may have put its hands on some important information that may be used against the foreign minister.

Amum to hold talks with Mirghani in Asmara

(Rai AlShaab) Pagan Amum has just concluded a visit to Asmara where he held talks with Eritrean officials and members of the ruling party there on a number of issues pertaining to strengthening of bilateral ties between the Asmara and the GoSS and between the SPLM and Eritrea's ruling party.

Sources also reveal that Amum will be back in Asmara in mid-March for talks with NDA leader Mohamed Osman el-Mirghani.

Darfur/ Darfur Peace Agreement

ICC prosecutor evidence on Darfur crimes; names first two Darfur suspects

(ICC/ST) Today ICC Prosecutor Luis Moreno-Ocampo presents evidence showing that Ahmad Muhammad Harun, former Minister of State for the Interior of the Government of the Sudan, and Ali Kushayb, a leader of the Militia/Janjaweed, jointly committed crimes against the civilian population in Darfur.

Based on evidence collected during the last 20 months, the Prosecution has concluded there are reasonable grounds to believe that Ahmad Harun and Ali Kushayb, (also known as Ali Muhammad Ali Abd-Al-Rahman) bear criminal responsibility in relation to 51 counts of alleged crimes against humanity and war crimes. The evidence shows they acted together, and with others, with the common purpose of carrying out attacks against the civilian populations.

The crimes were allegedly committed during attacks on the villages and towns of Kodoom, Bindisi, Mukjar, and Arawala in West Darfur between August 2003 and March 2004. The Prosecution has focused on some of the most serious incidents and the individuals who, according to the evidence, bear the greatest responsibility for those incidents.

In early 2003, Ahmad Harun was appointed as head of the “Darfur Security desk”. The most prominent of his coordination tasks was his management of, and personal participation in, the recruitment, funding and arming of Militia/Janjaweed – forces that would ultimately number in the tens of thousands. During a public meeting, Ahmad Harun said that as the head of the “Darfur Security desk”, he had been given “all the power and authority to kill or forgive whoever in Darfur for the sake of peace and security.”

The conflict involved rebel attacks on Sudanese Government installations in Darfur and a counterinsurgency campaign by the Sudanese Government against the rebels. The attacks carried out on towns and villages in Darfur did not target any rebel presence. Rather, they targeted civilian residents based on the rationale that they were supporters of the rebel forces.

The evidence shows that on several occasions Ahmad Harun incited the Militia/Janjaweed to carry out such attacks. For example, in early August 2003, prior to an attack on Mukjar, Ahmad Harun gave a speech where he stated that “since the children of the Fur had become rebels, all the Fur and what they had, had become booty” of the Militia/Janjaweed.

Ali Kushayb, an “Aqid al Oqada” (“colonel of colonels”) in West Darfur, was commanding thousands of Militia/Janjaweed by mid-2003. The evidence shows that Ali Kushayb issued orders to Militia/Janjaweed and armed forces to victimise the civilian populations through mass rape and other sexual offences, killings, torture, inhumane acts, pillaging and looting of residences and marketplaces, the displacement of the resident community and other alleged criminal acts.

The Prosecution has devoted considerable resources to assessing the admissibility of this case. Although investigations in the Sudan do involve Ali Kushayb, they are not in respect of the same incidents or conduct that are the subject of the case now before the Court. Therefore, the case is admissible.

The Pre-Trial Chamber I will review the evidence. If the judges determine that there are reasonable grounds to believe that the named individuals committed the alleged crimes, they will decide on the best manner to ensure their appearance in court.

[The ICC has featured as the lead story in most local dailies]

Sudan rejects ICC jurisdiction in Darfur

(Reuters) Sudan said the International Criminal Court has no jurisdiction over its nationals and the government would not allow any of its citizens, including rebels, to be tried outside Sudan, local media said on Monday.

Sudanese media also reported that Khartoum would put a number of people on trial next week, including military personnel and paramilitary troops, for alleged involvement in attacks in Darfur in Sudan's west. But the scope of the planned trial was not immediately clear.

The comments came a day before the ICC's chief prosecutor's office was due to name the first war crimes suspects for Darfur, where experts say about 200,000 people have been killed and 2.5 million driven from their homes since conflict flared in 2003.

National Congress Party to mobilise and stage demonstrations against the ICC

(AlSahafa) The Sudan government has reiterated rejections to handing over any Sudanese suspect to the ICC.

The head of the Directorate for International Treaties and Conventions at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs said following a meeting yesterday with the justice minister that the names the ICC prosecutor will be revealing today will only mark the beginning and not the end of a process. He pointed out that this will only mean that the prosecutor has completed investigations and will then raise the issue to the judges.

Ambassador Sireaj-el-deen Hamid said that this is a normal process that will give the suspects cited and the Sudan government the chance to prepare their defence based on the provisions of Article 17A of the ICC Statute. These provisions and the facts on the ground, he adds, will only prove that the ICC has no jurisdiction over the issue.

He pointed out that the Sudan government has not refused to cooperate with the ICC and has granted delegations from the ICC to hold meetings with officials in the country to allow them get acquainted to the process in Sudan.

On the other hand, reports have come in that the National Congress Party plans to mobilise and stage demonstrations against the ICC should names of its members be cited in the ICC list.

Darfur implementation committee continues meetings

(Sudan Vision) The Higher Committee for the Implementation of the Darfur Peace Agreement continues its meetings today to discuss issues related to the National Resources Allocation Commission.

Deputy chairman of the committee, Boubou Niang, says the meeting will also discuss reports that would be presented by the Head of the Darfur Rehabilitation and Development Fund.

Attempt at hijacking AMIS vehicle in Muhajiriya

(AlWihda) Two armed men believed to be from the SLA tried last Sunday to hijack an AMIS military vehicle from the market in Muhajiriya.

AlWihda daily extensively quotes from the UNMIS News Bulletin of 26 February 2007 on this story.

Renewed clashes between Rizeigat and Tergem tribes

(AlSudani) The town of Kass in South Darfur lived in panic yesterday following renewed clashes between the Tergem and Rizeigat in the Jebel Kargo area west of Kass.

38 Tergem tribesmen were killed during the clashes that also left 10s injured but sources on the ground say the dead numbered more than the number announced.

Sources also say that 4x4 vehicles and heavy guns were used in the clashes.

The regional government has been silent on the issue with the governor pointing out that he was in Khartoum for treatment while the acting governor could not be reached for comments.

High rank SLM elements walk out on the movement

(Rai AlShaab) A group of prominent members of the SLM's Minnawi faction have declared they are parting ways with the mainstream but will adhere to the SLM's objectives and the Darfur Peace Agreement.

A statement issued by the group attributes their decision to walk out on Minnawi to what they see as Minnawi's highhandedness and lack of institutionalisation within the movement. They claim he is running the movement in a narrow tribalistic manner.

The group says in its statement that the way in which the Darfur Peace Agreement is being implemented will not help realise peace in the region.

NRF leader calls on Sudanese to shelf their differences

(AlWihda) NRF and Sudan Federal Alliance leader Ahmed Ibrahim Direih has called on the people of Darfur and of Sudan at large to shelf their differences and endeavour to find just solutions to the plight of the IDPs and refugees.

Commenting on President Bashir's recent calls for dialogue with the non-signatories, he said that they will heed this call once agreement is reached on the basic principles that will bring solutions to the Darfur problems.

Asked to comment on the envisaged Darfur-Darfur Dialogue, Direij wondered what the objectives of such a conference are and whether the conference compliments or is an alternative to ongoing dialogue. He however underlined the need for talks between the different segments of the Darfur society to patch up the social fabric.

On the demands of the NRF, he pointed out that these demands are not impossible as portrayed and are based on the Declaration of Principles that the government and the other factions have agreed upon.

Chadian president expresses concerns over deployment of international troops on borders with Sudan

(AlWihda) Chadian President Idries Deby has expressed concerns that a possible UN troop deployment on the country's eastern borders may affect relations with Khartoum.

Western analysts say that his concerns stem from fears that these forces may be used as an advance force for troop deployment to Darfur and this may infuriate Khartoum.

On the other hand, the *SMC* reports that the chairman of the opposition Union for Development and Democracy in Chad has accepted a Libyan invitation to visit Tripoli to discuss ways to end the conflict in Chad.

He agrees that negotiations are the best way for solutions to end their differences with the Chadian government and pointed out that they resorted to arms when all doors were closed in their faces.