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IN THE NEWS TODAY:

UN

Message from UN Secretary Ban- Ki moon to President Bashir.

Sudan Vision UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon has sent a written message to President of the Republic Field Marshal Omer el Bashir through the Mission of Sudan in New York in which he affirmed commitment of the international organization to work alongside Sudan for realizing peace in Darfur.

The SG pointed that the UN is giving top priority for the political solution to enhance the peace process on the basis of Abuja peace agreement.

Ban Ki Moon said in the message that he would send his special envoy Jan Eliasson to Sudan to boost the peaceful solution to the conflict in Darfur in close cooperation with the AU and the concerned parties.

UN, AU seeks to bring Darfur's warring parties to peace table.

Sudan Vision United Nations and African Union diplomats are pushing anew for peace in Sudan's war-torn Darfur region after months of stalled efforts that have foundered on the details of a new hybrid peacekeeping force.

The first step in the new efforts will be to “instil a sense of importance of reducing the level of violence so that we can create conditions for a political process” said Jan Eliasson UN special envoy for Darfur.

US diplomat expected to take over UN political affairs

(ST) Jan 8, 2007 (UNITED NATIONS) The current US ambassador to Indonesia is expected to be appointed shortly as head of an expanded UN department of political affairs, UN sources said Monday.

Lynn Pascoe is to succeed Ibrahim Gambari of Nigeria as under secretary general for political affairs, a sensitive post that involves tackling crises in world troublespots such as Iraq, the Near East, Sudan, Zimbabwe or Myanmar, said the sources who spoke on condition of anonymity.

The appointment of the 63-year-old US career diplomat would be the latest by incoming UN chief Ban Ki-moon since he took over his post on January 1.

UN sources said that as head of an expanded UN political arm (DPA), Pascoe would takeover some functions currently handled by the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), including disarming former combatants in post-conflict situations, procurement and peace mission support.

These activities within a beefed-up DPA are expected to be put under the responsibility of a senior Japanese official, the sources added.

The sources said France’s Jean-Marie Guehenno was expected to remain head of DPKO, a post which the United States had coveted.

The changes appear to be part a long-term drive by Ban to restructure and streamline the far-flung UN peacekeeping operations with nearly 100,000 blue helmets serving in 18 missions around the world, UN officials said. (AFP)

Foreign drunken (WFP) pilot rushes into Sheikh al Buarie Mosque in El Obied, attacks Imam

Rai Al-Shaab A drunken Ukrainian assistant pilot who works for the WFP entered into Sheikh al Buarie Mosque in El Obied while accompanied by a Sudanese girl. He attacked the Imam who threatened to call the police, which arrived later rescuing the Imam.

The pilot was taken to the police station where a report was made against him of nuisance and drunkenness article 78, and threatening public tranquillity.

In condemnation of rape of minors in Juba: Sudan Workers Trade Union Federation (SWTUF) to submit memo to Ban Ki-Moon

Rai Al-Shaab reported that *the* Sudan Workers Trade Union Federation (SWTUF) will submit to the UNSG a memo of protest condemning immoral violations committed by a number of the UN military personnel in south Sudan. The (SWTUF) will submit the memo through a rally during this week.

GoNU

Circulation of the new national currency tomorrow Wednesday

AllIntibaha The Central Bank Governor, Dr. Sabir Mohammed Al Hassan announced the start of circulating the new currency tomorrow, Wednesday. This will be done in two phases; in phase 1 will start tomorrow Wednesday, and phase 2 at the end of which the old currency will be withdrawn and replaced. The second phase will start in May and continue to next July 2007. After this period the Dinar will not be of Value. He stated that it is necessary to replace the old currency by the new one before July 2007.

Minister of Foreign Affairs receives response of the UN over children rape in south Sudan;

AlSahafa The Ministry of Foreign Affairs Monday received the UN response to the memo of the ministry on immoral violations committed by a number of the UN military personnel in south Sudan.

In après statement the Director of the Peace Department at the Ministry of Foreign, Ambassador AlSadiq AlMagli, said that the UN mission's response includes its pledge to convoy to the UN headquarters in New York Sudan Government anxiety over these immoral violations.

AlMagli said that the international Administration Office, which was set up in accordance with a decision of the UN to investigate in like such issues, is due to conduct the required investigation in these crimes on the light of the concern of the new UN Secretary General about the issue.

He said that the Sudanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs will follow up the developments in this issue with UNMIS and the Sudanese mission in New York to identify outcome of the investigations as soon as possible.

Student Union of Khartoum State condemns behaviour of UN troops in south Sudan.

AllIntibaha; AlSahafa Tens of students have demonstrated yesterday in front of Ministry of Justice in a protest against children rape in Sudan.

The demonstration was organized by the Student Union of Khartoum State who has submitted a memo of protest calling the government of Sudan to bring the UN personnel involved in the children rape to trial inside Sudan.

Mustafa Osman: Government of Sudan may accept non-African troops to Darfur; Sudan softens its stance on UN troops in Darfur *All Press*

(ST)Jan 8, 2007 (**KHARTOUM**) Khartoum has softened its stance on U.N. troops being deployed to Darfur, leaving the door open for blue-helmeted international troops to protect civilians in its vast west, a presidential adviser said on Monday.

On Monday, Presidential Adviser Mustafa Osman Ismail said the AU commander in Darfur could decide to send non-African troops to the violent region if the continent could not provide enough soldiers needed to preserve security.

"The priority is these troops should be African troops," he told Reuters. "But suppose we fail to have these troops from Africa. In that case we will be ready to accept ... non-African troops."

When asked whether there will be U.N. troops on the ground in Darfur, he told Reuters: "You are right."

President Omar Hassan al-Bashir, in his first speech of the new year late on Sunday, also took the most conciliatory tone towards the United Nations in months.

"We agreed with them fully on a role for the United Nations to support the African Union in Darfur," he said, thanking the United Nations and former U.N. chief Kofi Annan for helping Sudan.

For the first time in many months, he did not repeat his vehement rejection of U.N. troops in Darfur. (*Reuters*)

Ministry of Interior accepts to recruit number of SSDF in police forces

Allintibaha Ministry of Interior has accepted to recruit a number of southern Sudan Defence Forces in the Police Forces. A reliable source revealed that a meeting was held in the Presidential Palace yesterday. The meeting was attended by a number of leaders and the State Minister, Idriss Mohamed Abdul Gadir. The meeting focused on arrangements for the coming phase of peace.

Human Rights Advisory Council conducts legal study over rape cases in the south

Allintibaha The Human Rights Advisory Council is currently preparing a legal study on the rape cases committed by the United Nations peacekeepers in Southern Sudan against young girls. The Human Rights Advisory Council Rapporteur Dr. Abd Almoniem Osman Mohamed said that the study will be based on the United Nations agreement with Sudan and other countries besides the codes of conduct set by the United Nations for its peacekeepers.

Parliament recommends liquidation of southern Sudan development fund

Sudan Vision; AlSahafa The National Assembly Economic Affairs Committee directed the Ministry of Finance to form a committee for liquidation of southern Sudan Development Fund.

This came in the wake of a report submitted by the Committee to the National Assembly about a draft law to cancel the law for the development Fund for Southern Sudan and war- affected regions in 2006.

The National Assembly passed the report and approved it by the General Labour Administration and Grievances Committee about a 2006 draft law about accountability of national Service workers in the stage of the general features.

Darfur

Darfur talks hindered by rebel divisions

(ST) Jan 8, 2007 (**KHARTOUM**) A new African Union and U.N. push to restart peace negotiations between Darfur rebels and Sudan's central government will first have to overcome a major obstacle: Who is Khartoum to talk with?

At the height of conflict in 2003, there were just two Darfur rebel groups. During African Union-backed talks in May there were three rebel factions.

Since then the rebels have splintered into around a dozen official factions, in addition to the numerous individual commanders and political leaders who have resigned from various movements to follow their own agendas.

This leaves a troubling question for those trying to restart negotiations to stop the fighting which experts say have killed 200,000 people and driven 2.5 million from their homes. How many groups will sit at the negotiating table?

AU and U.N. mediation of new talks is to begin this year and U.N. special envoy Jan Eliasson was to arrive in Khartoum later on Monday to kickstart the process.

US Richardson calls for new ceasefire in Darfur; Bashir describes Talks with, US governor "positive"

AlRai AlAam; ST, Suna Jan 8, 2007 (**KHARTOUM**)

Bill Richardson, governor of the state of New Mexico and an experienced international envoy, went to Sudan Sunday on behalf of the Save Darfur coalition in a bid to persuade Khartoum to accept a joint African Union-United Nations peacekeeping force to halt violence in the region.

"Richardson told the foreign minister he was ready to work with the Sudanese government for the interest of Darfur and the maintenance of the territorial integrity of Sudan," said foreign ministry spokesman Ali Shadi on Monday.

Shadi said Richardson discussed delivering humanitarian aid to people in Darfur, the possibility of UN troops joining the Darfur peacekeeping mission, as well as broadening the current ceasefire to include all rebel groups.

Richardson, who is often mentioned as a possible 2008 Democratic presidential candidate, has a long history of dealing with foreign leaders not friendly to the West.(AFP)

President of the republic Umar Hasan al-Bashir expressed his appreciation for the positive views of the governor of New Mexico, Bill Richardson, that will contribute to the restoration of peace in Darfur.

In a meeting at the [government] guest house, the president and Richardson discussed views presented by the US governor on how to implement the Darfur peace agreement in collaboration with the UN, as stipulated in resolutions passed by the UN. Richardson showed interest in issues relating to violence against women.

President Al-Bashir reiterated government's determination to foster peace in Darfur and UN support for the AU so as to enable it fulfill its duties, saying that the government agreed with the UN in this regard.

Bush, Barroso discuss trade, Darfur

(ST) Jan 8, 2007 (WASHINGTON) European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso said he and President George W. Bush agreed stalled Doha trade talks had hit a "moment of truth" and urged action to end the Darfur "tragedy."

Bush welcomed Barroso to the White House for talks which also ranged through climate change, a controversial US visa waiver program, European Union enlargement and the crisis in Iraq. (AFP)

US governor sees some progress in Sudan stance on Darfur

(ST) Jan 08, 2007 (KHARTOUM) U.S. governor and potential presidential candidate Bill Richardson on Monday pressed Sudan President Omar al-Bashir to open the war torn Darfur region to U.N. troops, part of a global push for an elusive peace in the African nation.

Richardson met privately with al-Bashir for nearly an hour at his mint green residence and emerged talking progress. He provided no specifics, but the two plans to meet again Wednesday and will issue a joint statement.

"The meeting was good. We made some progress," Richardson told local reporters, choosing to keep details private as negotiations continued.

Back at his hotel, Richardson told an Associated Press reporter travelling with him that he and al-Bashir discussed the U.N. peacekeeping force, a cease-fire, protection for humanitarian groups working in the region, increasing sexual violence against refugees and a potential conference with rebel leaders.

AU denounces new government air strike in Darfur.

The Citizen; ST Jan 8, 2007 (KHARTOUM) The African Union denounced air bombardment by government warplane of two localities in North Darfur, saying Sudan ceasefire violations will hinder its effort for durable ceasefire.

“The Ceasefire Commission (CFC) observes with disappointment reports of air bombardment in Bamina and Gadir on 5 January 2007 by Government of Sudan.” Said a statement issued by the AU today.

The AU CFC condemned the aerial assault emphasizing that “continued violation of ceasefire is a stumbling block to the on going efforts at seeking a durable ceasefire and an all inclusive CFC.”

“Such counter accusations and acts of ceasefire violations will obliterate all the successes achieved so far.” CFC said.

The communiqué didn’t mention any casualties but the rebel NRF said the strike targeted civilian locations and water sources. It further said that «at least 550 animals were killed in the assault”.

According to the AU, Sudanese government said that the rebel NRF was amassing weapons and troops in Bamina area, near the Sudan Chad border. It also indicated that the rebels “preparing to attack Tina, Kornoï, Umbaru and El Geneina”. (ST)

Government ready to protect humanitarian aid workers and convoys in Darfur

AlHayat Government of Sudan assured readiness to protect humanitarian aid workers and convoys in Darfur. Ministry of Foreign spokesperson Ambassador Ali AlSadiq said that Minister of Foreign Affairs Dr. Lam Akol had discussed with Bill Richardson, governor of the state of New Mexico the humanitarian situation in Darfur, protection of civilians and security of aid workers.

US softens stance towards Khartoum over Darfur

(ST) Jan 8, 2007 (WASHINGTON) The United States eased back from threats to take coercive action against Sudan over its failure to allow the deployment of UN peacekeepers to Darfur, saying Khartoum was not solely at fault for the lack of progress on the issue.

US officials had earlier warned Khartoum that if deployment of the UN-led peacekeeping force was not underway by January 1, they would turn to an unspecified "Plan B" of tough measures believed to include sanctions and the imposition of a no-fly zone over Darfur.

But State Department spokesman Sean McCormack on Monday said it was still too early to take such action. (AFP)

GoSS

SPLM: Year 2007 will witness solution for the Abyei issue

AllIntibaha, SPLM headed by *First* V.P of the Republic Lt. Gen. Salva Kiir assured its readiness to find solutions for all problems that hinder the implementation of the CPA. The State Minister of Presidency Tilara Deing said in a statement that year 2007 will witness a decisive solution for the Abyei issue, the start of commissions

UN agency to feed nearly 2 million people in south Sudan in 2007

Sudan Vision The United Nations Food Programme (WFP) plans to feed nearly 2 million people in southern Sudan this year, the agency said in a statement today marking the second anniversary of a peace accord that ended 21 years of war between Government and rebel forces.

In 2007, we will increasingly focus on recovery and development oriented projects such as Food for Work, Food for Education, aimed at assisting people of the south to revive their economy and rebuild their lives and livelihoods so that they can sustain themselves, WFP country representative Kenro Oshidari said.

Ugandan driver, SPLA officer killed in Sudan ambush

Jan 8, 2007 (**JUBA**) A Ugandan driver and an officer from the Sudan People's Liberation Army were killed and 10 people wounded in a road ambush on Sunday near the south Sudan capital of Juba, witnesses and the SPLA said on Monday.

An SPLA spokesman blamed opponents of Sudan's 2005 north-south peace deal for the attack on the Ugandan trade convoy in which two vehicles were burned and others shot at. The north-south peace deal ended Africa's longest-running civil war.

"The attackers were anti-Comprehensive Peace Agreement elements ... I believe these are elements sponsored by the Sudan Armed Forces," spokesman Kuol Diem Kuol said.

A Sudanese army spokesman in Khartoum denied any government involvement: "We don't support any militias. It is not to our benefit. Why would we do this?"

A Ugandan merchant who survived the assault said the convoy was attacked by gunmen wearing military-style fatigues, though their identity was not clear.

The attack was the third road ambush in south Sudan this year. The SPLA said it believed the attackers behind Sunday's ambush aimed to disrupt celebrations marking the second anniversary of Sudan's north-south peace deal. (Reuters)

Other Developments

All Saints Cathedral decries tear-gassing

The Citizen At a press conference at All Saints Cathedral, Church Dean Sylvester Thomas made it clear that he and his parish were angry over the tear gassing of the congregation during New Years Eve mass.

Apart from the fact of the assault, the volume of tear gas the police shot inside the Church was outrageous, as if a terrorist act. Indeed the parish was terrorized during the Christmas Eve mass he stated.

Dean Thomas braved to talk to the police to find out why they should be tear-gassing the mass and was told that one of the street boys had stabbed another with a knife and fled inside the Church.

Dean Thomas reasoned this was nonsense as a supposed reason for terrorising the Church during mass.

He called upon the responsible authorities to take actions necessary to stop police from such molestation. He demanded that government give a public guarantee that such treatment would not be repeated in the future; noting that the government has so far showed no concern for this matter, not even an investigation.