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UNMIS

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(By Public Information Office)

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HIGHLIGHTS:

UN

One goes missing as humanitarian aircraft crashes in Sudan

(*SUNA* – 25th Jan. **Khartoum**) The UN, on Wednesday [25 January], said a helicopter plane crash-landed in Jabal Marrah area while transporting 13 workers with humanitarian non-governmental organizations in addition to a crew of three but said only 12 persons were slightly injured while one person working with an NGO is considered unaccounted for.

An official source at UNMIS told *SUNA* that the accident occurred in the areas of Dyalla near the town of Golo in Jabal Marrah area and that investigations were currently under way on the cause of the crash.

On the other hand OCHA in West Darfur State has pointed out that the plane crash-landed in the area while transporting 13 people from the Irish GOAL [an international humanitarian agency] organization in addition to three crew.

The source pointed out that the crash was probably due to technical failure.

Quoting a UN source, *Xinhua* in Khartoum reports that four international relief workers were slightly injured and a Sudanese missing when the aircraft exploded in an emergency landing while on its way to evacuate some 36 UN relief workers following violent crashes in the area.

Pronk, the news agency continues, expressed concern over what was taking place in the Jebel Marra area where 73 non-governmental organizations are operating and stressed the need for their evacuation. “He added that he informed AbdulWahid Mohammed Nur whose group controls the area to commit to the ceasefire and to stop military operations there,” added the news agency.

UN to study means to sanction states that smuggle arms to Darfur

(*AlRai AlAam* – 26th Jan. **Khartoum**) The UN is studying means to impose sanctions on states that supply arms to Darfur and says the report by a committee of experts that lately visited the region has clearly pointed accusing fingers on specific states that fuel the conflict in Darfur.

SRSG Jan Pronk further said in a briefing that the UNMIS might take over the functions of the AMIS in Darfur in the event the latter is not able to continue in its mission in Darfur. Pronk added that the African Union Peace and Security Council has informed the UN of its support in principle to the transition of AMIS to a UNMIS operation.

The SRSG also disclosed that contacts between Secretary-General Koffi Annan and AU Commissioner Alpha Oumar Konare culminated in the need to convene a pledging conference on the 20th of February to marshal financial and logistics support necessary for AMIS whose mandate, according to Mr. Pronk, runs out in March through a resolution by special session of the Security Council on Darfur.

Annan urges Security Council to send troops to Sudan’s Darfur

(UN News Center – 25th Jan. **United Nations**) UN Security-General Kofi Annan today called on the Security Council to take a firm decision on a peacekeeping operation to stop the suffering in the devastated Darfur region of Sudan.

However, Annan acknowledged that only a political agreement between the rebels and government can bring longer term stability and allow 2 million people to return to their homes.

In an opinion article published in The Washington Post, Annan said he'd felt "hopeful" when he visited Darfur last May but contrasted that with a feeling of pessimism now "unless a major new international effort is mustered in the coming weeks."

Recounting positive signs he'd observed during last year's trip, the Secretary-General recalled visiting a village whose people had returned after fleeing violence and were living in relative safety, thanks to the presence of African Union (AU) troops. He also pointed out that a cease-fire, albeit shaky, was in place, while the Sudanese Government and the rebels were holding peace talks.

"I wish I could report that all these efforts had borne fruit - that Darfur was at peace and on the road to recovery. Alas, the opposite is true," Annan noted in the editorial, adding that 2 million people had fled their homes and 3 million - half Darfur's population - now depend on international relief for food and other basics.

At the same time, he said, the peace talks were "far from reaching a conclusion," many parts of the region were becoming too dangerous for relief workers to reach, and fighting now threatens to spread into neighbouring Chad.

AU troops, despite facing a chronic funding crisis, were doing a valiant job, Annan said but added there were too few of them and they had neither the equipment nor the mandate to protect the people under threat or to enforce a cease-fire "routinely broken by the rebels, as well as by the Janjaweed militia and the Sudanese Government forces."

Pointing out that the AU had decided earlier this month to renew its mission's mandate until 31 March, he said the group's members had also in principle expressed support for a transition to a UN operation this year. Annan said this had put the Security Council "on the spot," noting that last year, UN members had for the first time unanimously accepted responsibility to "protect populations from genocide, ethnic cleansing, war crimes and crimes against humanity, pledging to take action through the Security Council when national authorities fail."

Calling the transition from the AU force to a UN peace operation in Darfur "inevitable," he said: "A firm decision by the Security Council is needed, and soon, for an effective transition to take place."

But he cautioned that this did not simply mean giving the present AU mission a "UN hat" because any new mission would need a strong and clear mandate and, given the situation on the ground, would need to be much larger and better equipped than the current force.

"Those countries that have the required military assets must be ready to deploy them," Annan said.

In the meantime, because such a force would take the UN months to deploy, the Secretary-General said the AU mission must be maintained and strengthened. Towards that end, he looked forward to a UN and AU donor conference next month addressing issues of money and logistical support.

“Finally, and above all, much stronger pressure must be brought on all parties - the rebels as well as the government - to observe the cease-fire and commit themselves to the Abuja peace talks with a sense of urgency,” Annan concluded.

EU advises Sudan government to accept transition of AMIS to UN operation

(*AlAyaam* – 26th Jan. **Khartoum**) The EU has advised the Sudan to accept the transition of AMIS to a UN operation as the optimum and most positive solution to the current crisis in the region and has described the Abuja talks as a mere waste of time.

The head of the AU mission to Khartoum, Kent Daggerfeld, reveals that the Special Representative of the EU to Sudan told the Sudan government and rebel delegations in Abuja of EU support to the proposal and added that it will be the most effective means to a solution on the ground and is currently being discussed in a number of circles.

He pointed out that the Sudan government does not seem likely to accept the proposal but in light of the conviction by most African states it may seem that it will give the go-ahead. He pointed out however that there are no plans yet to send European or US troops to the region but there seems to be an agreement of sorts that the AU forces operated under a UN mandate and be joined by troops from other countries.

He said that the African Union Peace and Security Council had given its support in principle to the “change of helmets” but this is yet to be endorsed by AU states next March. He added however that they are exerting pressures on both sides to the talks in Abuja to reach an agreement soon to end the problems of Darfur.

Norway allocates NOK 65 million to Humanitarian Fund for Sudan

(*The Norway Post* – 25th Jan.) Norway has allocated NOK 65 million to a humanitarian fund that will be used to address the most urgent humanitarian needs in Sudan. The fund will mainly be used for projects in Southern Sudan and Darfur.

The objective is to enable humanitarian actors to respond rapidly to the people who are in greatest need, and to improve planning and coordination.

- We are making this contribution to the Common Humanitarian Fund because we believe it is important for the UN to be in a better position to meet the humanitarian challenges in the whole of Sudan,” said Foreign Minister Jonas Gahr Støre.

The recent spiral of violence and attacks on civilians in Darfur is causing great concern. There are still major humanitarian needs one year after the peace agreement was signed by the government in Khartoum and the rebel movement SPLM/A.

Humanitarian organisations are afraid that the situation may become critical once again if they are prevented from doing their work in the area because of security problems.

- The international community must do its utmost to support peace in Sudan. In addition to active political support, Norway provides considerable funds for both humanitarian relief and

more long-term activities. The UN has a vital role to play in coordinating efforts," said Mr Støre.

The allocation was made at the request of the UN Humanitarian Coordinator for Sudan, Manuel da Silva. Last year, Norway allocated nearly NOK 300 million to humanitarian support in Sudan.

GoNU

Kiir meets Jendayi Frazer

(*Khartoum Monitor* – 26th Jan. **Khartoum**) Vice-president Salva Kiir Mayardit held talks yesterday with the US Assistant Secretary of State for Africa, Jendayi Frazer.

The talks held in Khartoum focused on Darfur and efforts made to reach a peaceful settlement which he describes as the top priority for the Government of National Unity.

Kiir says loss of AU chairmanship does not mean the summit was a failure

(*AlSahafa* – 26th Jan. **Khartoum**) Speaking to South African Radio and Television yesterday, Vice-president Kiir said that the fact that the Sudan has lost the bid to chair the AU this year does not mean the summit meeting was a failure.

He confirmed Sudan is capable of solving all its internal problems and to seek the right solutions to all the problems of the continent and renewed the GoNU's commitments to the implementation of the CPA.

On southern Sudan, the Vice-president said that security prevails in the area with the exception of LRA activities in certain parts of western and eastern Equatoria.

AU Summit:

UN force in Darfur must be African-led - AU's Sassou

(*Reuters, AlSahafa* – 26th Jan. **Khartoum**) The African Union would want to maintain control of peacekeepers in Sudan's Darfur region even if U.N. soldiers were sent to bolster the mission, the new head of the continental body said.

Congo Republic's President Denis Sassou Nguesso, who was appointed by African leaders on Tuesday as chairman of the AU, said he would welcome U.N. support for around 7,000 AU troops in Darfur but that the force had to remain African-led.

"The United Nations can bring forces, but all of that should be to support the AU forces, under the command of the AU and its officers who are there," Sassou told Reuters in a joint interview with French radio late on Tuesday.

"This dossier must be managed by the African Union. I believe that the international community will understand that it is better to operate like that," he said after an AU summit in Sudan's capital Khartoum.

The United Nations said earlier this month it wanted the United States and European countries to help form a tough mobile force in Darfur, where tens of thousands of people have been killed over the past three years.

The conflict began in February 2003 when rebels launched an uprising against Khartoum, accusing the government of marginalising the impoverished area. The government in turn armed Arab militias to put down the rebellion, who have been accused of conducting a campaign of rape, looting and murder.

The AU said earlier this month it may hand over its mission to the United Nations, as it was struggling to find the \$17 million needed each month to maintain it.

The operation depends exclusively on voluntary contributions by foreign partners of the 53-member body.

The United States has said it favours a major U.N. role in Darfur and has also said NATO could do more in the troubled region. Sudan has said it does not want non-African forces involved.

Sassou, chosen as a compromise candidate to head the AU after Sudan's bid caused deep division among member states, said preventing conflict would be his first priority during his year in office.

He said he would be speaking with Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi and Nigeria's President Olusegun Obasanjo about rising tensions between Chad and Sudan.

Chad accuses Sudan of supporting rebels bent on ousting its President, Idriss Deby, and has said it is in a "state of belligerence" with Khartoum, which denies the charges.

"There are clear signs. If we do not put in place mechanisms to stop the escalation this situation could flare up," Sassou said.

Rights groups welcome withdrawal of Sudan's bid for AU chairmanship

(IPS/Sudan Tribune – 25th Jan. Khartoum) Sudan's decision to withdraw its bid for the leadership of the African Union (AU) has been welcomed by human rights groups and local activists, who say it has enhanced Africa's reputation.

The two-day summit of Africa's leaders, which ended Tuesday, was dominated by debate over Sudan's bid for the prestigious job.

"I think it's a wise decision by the Sudanese leadership," Nhial Bol, editor of Sudan's independent daily newspaper, the Citizen, told IPS in an interview in the capital Khartoum. "It was going to undermine the peace talks between the Darfur rebels and the Sudanese government in Abuja." Talks between the rebels and the Sudanese government have stalled in Nigeria's capital, Abuja, over claims of violations of ceasefires and by Khartoum's decision to bid for the rotating chairmanship of the 53-member body.

Before the summit opened Jan. 23, the rebels had urged the AU to relocate the conference elsewhere in Africa. They fear Khartoum would use its new position, if elected, to cover up allegations of atrocities being committed by its army and pro-government Arab militia called the janjaweed in Darfur. The janjaweed have been accused of killing, rape and looting.

Asked whether Sudan pulled out of the AU race because of the allegations of human rights abuses in Darfur, Zahawi Ibrahim Malik, Sudan's information minister, told journalists Tuesday: "No. Some quarters hostile to Sudan prevented it from getting the chairmanship." He did not elaborate.

U.S. President George Bush had Monday expressed concern about Sudan's bid for the top AU job. Fugitive Osama bin Laden, accused by the United States of masterminding the Sept. 11 terror attacks on New York and Washington in 2001, lived in Sudan between 1991 and 1996.

Sudan's bid for the AU chairmanship had split Africa down the middle. The issue was resolved only after a panel of AU, comprising Gabon, Zimbabwe, Burkina Faso, Djibouti and Egypt -representing Africa's five regions -was formed to find a solution.

By Tuesday Sudan announced that a consensus had been reached for it to get the chairmanship in 2007. Sudan chaired the Organisation of African Union (OAU), AU's predecessor, in 1978.

Asked about Sudan's prospect of getting the chairmanship in 2007, Bol said: "Next year is next year. Anything can happen. Sudan's bid could be subject to ending the conflict in Darfur."

But President Bashir said he valued hosting the summit more important than holding the chairmanship.

"Sudan made the decision because we don't want a split in the AU. Our objective is to get the (African) people together and face the challenges ahead," Bakri Mullah, head of the Sudan's External Information, told IPS in an interview. "A split in the AU is not in the interest of the Sudan."

North Africa and east Africa initially backed Sudan's candidacy. While west and central Africa refused to support Sudan. Southern Africa was split with president Levi Mwanawasa of Zambia and Festus Mogae of Botswana said to be supporting west and central African positions.

In his acceptance speech Tuesday, the new AU chairman Denis Sassou Nguesso of Congo-Brazzaville said he would tackle famine, poverty and HIV/AIDS which is devastating Africa. He has replaced Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria, the outgoing AU chairman. "I think it's a good decision by Sudan to bow out of the race," Bol said. "AU was going to die."

"If they voted for Bashir, the casualty would have been Darfur and the people of Africa," Reed Brody of the New York-based Human Rights Watch told IPS in an interview in Khartoum. "AU's credibility would have been at stake."

Eastern Sudan

Negotiations between Govt and Eastern Rebels Postponed

(SMC – 25th Jan. Khartoum) Negotiations between government and eastern rebels scheduled in Tripoli are postponed to 7th February secretary general for eastern front from within Abdallah Musa said.

The secretary general added that the Libyan mediators have informed the leadership of the Eastern Front in Asmara that the negotiation should take place by 7th of February.

He said the agenda would most likely focus on power sharing for the eastern region at federal and state levels.

Darfur

US welcomes Slovene president's Darfur initiative

(*Slovene News Agency* – 25th Jan. **Washington**) The US State Department has welcomed the recent initiative by President Janez Drnovsek on building a camp for 10,000 Sudanese refugees.

"The US welcomes Slovene President Janez Drnovsek's willingness to marshal additional international resources to provide aid for the estimated 1.8 million internally displaced persons in Sudan's western Darfur region and 200,000 refugees in Chad," the State Department said.

The press release issued on Monday also mentions that Drnovsek's "The World for Darfur" initiative, which is sponsored by Slovene humanitarian organizations as well as by the Slovene government, is intended to provide shelter, water, food and schools for 10,000 Sudanese.

"Acknowledging the 'modest' scale of Slovenia's aid package given the magnitude of the humanitarian emergency in Darfur, Drnovsek said the initiative also is aimed at generating greater awareness about the crisis, which has resulted in as many as 180,000 deaths and has displaced millions in the past three years," the State Department said.

Moreover, US President George W. Bush "was the first head of state to speak out publicly on the unfolding violence and atrocities in Darfur in 2004, and the US was the first country to call for action in the UN Security Council, as well as later providing 160m dollars to help fund an African Union peacekeeping mission to Darfur".

Sudan-Chad relations

Chadian opposition leader lauds Sudan's support of Chad

(*Sudan TV/BBC Monitoring* – 25th Jan. **Khartoum**) The leader of the opposition Chadian Popular Alliance Party Hassan Fadl has expressed his appreciation for Sudan's support for Chad in various fora. He commended the Sudanese people's stance in respecting good neighbourliness and their [Chadians'] rights.

Hassan Fadl further condemned the statements of the Chadian president which [he said] are aimed at creating hostility with Sudan, without any justification. He affirmed that the Chadian people will reject any attempt to shake the stability of Sudan.

The Chadian leader also hailed the success of the AU summit in Khartoum despite the futile attempts by some to sabotage the holding of the summit in Sudan.

Chadian Colonel leads Attack against Civilians in N. Darfur Areas

(SMC – 25th Jan. **Khartoum**) About ten civilians were killed in a clash that erupted between elements loyal to rival SLM factions at Tina Abdallah in North Darfur.

Nas Al Dein, a commander from the AbdelWahid faction of the SLM, said that elements from the Minnawi faction besieged the local market in the area for five hours before withdrawing forwards Jebel Karo south of Tawila.

The SLM commander reiterated accusations against Chad for involvement in the war between his faction and the splinter group led by Mani Arkoy. He explained his movement has been monitoring the movement of Chadian forces towards Bamshi area led by Colonel Timan Sogr last week and presumably heading towards West Darfur.

Deby Advisor Reveals Chad's Role in Destabilizing Darfur

(*Sudan Vision* – 25th Jan. **Khartoum**) Former Chadian Presidential Advisor, Hassan Fadul Kito, has said that the Chadian government has a major role in the aggravation of the crisis in Darfur.

Kito revealed that the Chadian regime has established secret relations with Israel since 2003, adding that the regime sent a delegation to the Jewish State led by Abdul Rahman Mossa. On the other hand, Kito said all practices that targeted the AU forces in Darfur were perpetrated by Deby. He stated that he could not believe that the Sudanese forces would attack forces deployed to keep peace in the region but Deby made shuttle trips to instigate the world against Sudan and undermine the African Summit. Kito disclosed plans by Deby to rally internal opposition against the Sudan, noting that such behaviour was not unexpected from Deby, who intervened in Western Sudan with the intention of creating instability. “Chad does not have the capabilities to intervene in the domestic affairs of others,” said Kito. He called on the Chadian people to overthrow the current regime. Kito affirmed that the Chadian political forces and army would lead the ousting of Deby. The former Deby Advisor said the Chadian people would not accept any relation with Eritrea, which is targeting to destabilize the Sudan