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(By Public Information Office)

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HIGHLIGHTS:

CPA

Abyei security situation is very volatile - activist

(*Sudan Tribune* – 3rd Jul. **Khartoum**) Abyei civil society association in Khartoum warned of quick deterioration of the security situation in Abyei due to the suspension of Abyei Protocol's provisions signed between the National Congress party and the former rebel Sudan People's Liberation Movement.

In a press conference held in Khartoum on Sunday, the chairperson of the High Coordination Committee of Abyei Civil Society Sectors in Khartoum, Carlo Kojgor said the security situation in Abyei is very volatile.

He said there are militias that belong neither to the Sudanese army nor to the SPLM as is stipulated in the CPA. He also underlined that the Arab Misariyah tribe has it is proper militia.

The Misariyah and Dinka Ngok tribes have been locked in a heated dispute with each claiming ownership of the territory, and the Misariyah have angrily rejected boundaries proposed in a report by an international commission for the district.

Kojgor added that the ruling National Congress Party tries find a place for its Misariyah allies in the administration of the region contrary to Abyei protocol. He further said Misariyah participation in this administration is absolutely rejected.

On the joint meeting of the national unity government partners (NCP and SPLM) held at the end of last May, Kojgor said it was disappointing meeting.

He urged the presidency to meet a number of demands: first to accelerate the formation of Abyei administration, to consider Abyei report binding and definitive, rejection of the four options agreed in May joint meeting of NCP and SPLM, rejection of the Misariyah participation in Abyei administration, demand the government to facilitate voluntary return of IDPs, call international community to provide humanitarian aid to the returnees

Under the 9 January peace deal between the ruling National Congress party and the SPLA, the district is one of three granted special status during six years of interim autonomy in the south, leading to a referendum on independence.

Southern Sudan/LRA

Uganda, LRA rebels to start talks next week in Sudan's Juba

(*New Vision/ST* – 4th Jul. **Juba**) Talks between the Government and the rebel Lords' Resistance Army begin next week in Juba in Southern Sudan, a Ugandan official said Monday here.

Uganda is not putting any pre-conditions to the talks brokered by the southern Sudan government. "Our main interest is speedy conclusion of the talks and a peaceful end to the conflict" said Uganda's interior minister..

It was not immediately clear if Minister Ruhukana Rugunda's team, which included state minister for foreign affairs Okello Oryem, would meet with members of the LRA who have been in Juba since last month, awaiting a response from Kampala to south Sudan's mediation offer.

Machar held groundbreaking talks with the elusive LRA supremo, Joseph Kony, in early May, at which the rebel leader said he was willing to talk peace.

At a meeting in Kampala, the UN, however, warned that the peace in northern Uganda would be shaky if the stakeholders circumvent justice to negotiate with Kony.

The representative of the UN Secretary-General on the Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons (UNOG-OHCHR), Dr. Walter Kalin, yesterday said the International Criminal Court (ICC) indictment against Kony should continue as the Government goes for peace talks.

Walter, who travelled to Uganda for the workshop on the national policy for the displaced people, told journalists that the ICC indictment should go on as well as the peace negotiations.

Ugandan authorities in May said any direct talks remains uncertain as Kony, one of the world's most wanted men, has been indicted for war crimes by the Hague-based ICC at Kampala's request last year.

Four of his top lieutenants are also the subject of an international arrest notice from Interpol. The LRA rebellion, which started in 1988 in a bid to oust Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni, has claimed thousands of lives and left millions displaced.

In a rare media interview released last week, Kony denied he was a terrorist and renewed his call for peace talks with Museveni's government.

"I'm a freedom fighter who is fighting for freedom in Uganda. I am not a terrorist," Kony told The Times newspaper of London.

The LRA purports to be fighting to replace Museveni's government with one based on the Biblical 10 Commandments, but has become better known for atrocities, particularly killing and maiming thousands and kidnapping an estimated 25,000 children, mostly girls to be sex slaves and boys as fighters.

DPA/ Darfur

Darfur rebel alliance attack town, declare truce over

(Reuters/ST – 3rd Jul. **Khartoum**) A new alliance of Darfur rebel commanders and political parties have attacked a town on the road to the capital Khartoum, declaring a 27-month-old truce dead, rebels and officials said on Monday.

The National Redemption Front claimed responsibility for the attack and says it will withdraw from the town today or tomorrow and was just declaring a launch of its activities but the government has accused Chad of backing the JEM in this attack.

The rebel alliance said the attack is a signal to the government in Khartoum that they are a force to be reckoned with. They demand a comprehensive peace agreement that “grants everybody his rights”.

The field commander of the rebel group that attacked Hamrat al-Sheikh said over telephone that he and his forces are still in Hamrat al-Sheikh but will withdraw either today or tomorrow with a group heading east towards Khartoum and another heading to northern Sudan.

The governor of North Darfur says the rebels wore different cloths but some donned Chadian military gear.

President Bashir’s Assistant, Dr. Majzoub el-Khalifa, openly accused Chad of backing the JEM and said in an interview with AlJazeera television yesterday that the Sudan government will not negotiate with the holdout rebels.

They used about 50 light trucks, 10 of which blocked all roads leading to the town.

Eyewitnesses report at least 25 people killed and tens injured in the attack.

"The forces of the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) attacked a town in North Kordofan called Hamrat al-Sheikh," said a spokesman for the Sudan armed forces. "Sudanese planes have been deployed and the aggression is continuing," he added.

He further pointed out that there is no SAF military presence in the area but the police and security forces have resisted while civilians have fled the town.

There are conflicting reports coming in from the area with the government on the one hand and the rebels (JEM, the Federal Alliance and two other factions) on the other each claiming control.

The SAF spokesperson however confirms that the situation is far from stable.

Meanwhile AU spokesperson Nouredine Mezni said that Hamrat al-Sheikh is not part of their mandate area.

He deplored this use of arms and called upon the holdout groups to the Abuja agreement to join in the agreement.

On the other hand, the Kababeesh, one of the major local tribes in the area, said a delegation they sent to the authorities in Khartoum has failed in their efforts to seek audience with the ministers of interior and defence.

A source says the Kababeesh delegation sought audience to try to convince the government to refrain from the use of force in order to give them time to negotiate with the rebel groups and cited their past successful experiences on such issues but was told that it was a security issue.

Hamrat al-Sheikh is on the road between Khartoum and North Kordofan’s main town el-Obeid. It is around 200 kilometres (124 miles) from Sudan’s capital.

JEM has little military power on the ground in Darfur, where the other main rebel group, the fractious Sudan Liberation Army (SLA), controls most of the rebel territories.

JEM formed a new alliance last week called the National Redemption Front (NRF) with a few breakaway SLA commanders and a small political party, the Sudan Federal Democratic Alliance.

Adam Ali Shogar, one of the SLA commanders in the NRF, told Reuters his forces were still in control of Hamrat al-Sheikh.

AbdulWahid Mohamed Nur who heads the holdout faction of the SLM/A has denied any connection to the incident.

"God willing, we will be on our way to Khartoum," he said. "The government has shown it is not committed to the 2004 humanitarian ceasefire so this deal now has no meaning."

Informed sources report that a SAF infantry battalion from el-Obeid is on its way to Hamrat al-Sheikh while a Kababeesh contingent camped at a nearby town may join them.

It was the first time a rebel group in Darfur openly stated it was disregarding the April 2004 truce, which had in any case been widely ignored by all sides to the conflict.

During the more than three years of revolt in Darfur, rebels often attacked in Kordofan, which neighbours Darfur, saying they were close to the capital. They never reached Khartoum.

Monday's attack will be a heavy blow to the May 5 peace deal, already facing criticism from think tanks, Darfuri citizens and even the top U.N. envoy in Sudan, Jan Pronk.

Since the deal, the rebels have split many times and formed many alliances. Commanders have changed sides on numerous occasions.

Many Darfuris reject the deal saying they want more compensation for war victims, more political posts and more transparency in disarming government proxy militias, blamed for much of the rape, pillage and murder that has driven 2.5 million into wretched camps and killed tens of thousands.

AU launches people's court

(*IRIN/ST* – 3rd Jul. **Banjul**) The African Union on Monday launched the continent's first court that gives states and people equal rights to challenge governments suspected of human rights violations or other infractions.

Taking the podium and raising their right hands, 11 African legal experts pledged to "preserve, protect and defend" the African Charter of Human and People's Rights.

The swearing-in ceremony took place at the end of a two-day summit of the AU, which was set up to debate continent-wide issues.

The African Court on Human and People's Rights, established on paper in 1998, will be based in the Tanzanian capital Arusha. It can apply and rule on any international treaty or law ratified by the state in question, including treaties that do not themselves refer violators

to a court. States, AU organs, individuals and non-governmental organisations can all ask for rulings.

"This court will strengthen jurisprudence and contribute to the promotion and protection of human rights in the continent," AU Commissioner for Political Affairs Julia Joiner told IRIN.

"It means you have another level where states and people can seek recourse before the African Commission [on Human and People's Rights] and prosecutions can be made, not just judgments and resolutions," she said.

Impunity has taken centre stage recently in Africa. On Sunday, the AU requested that Senegal try former Chadian President Hissene Habre, who has been living in exile in Senegal since 1990. Habre has been charged with crimes against humanity, war crimes and torture. He has avoided trial so far because of legal wrangling over jurisdiction.

In June, former Liberian President Charles Taylor was extradited from Sierra Leone to The Hague to answer to war crimes charges. The UN-backed Special Court for Sierra Leone retains jurisdiction. Officials in Liberia and Sierra Leone feared Taylor could destabilize the region if he were tried locally.

Africans in other countries who are keen to take the stand will have to wait until a second court, the African Court of Justice, is set up, said Joiner. That court then has to be merged with the People's Court before cases, such as those involving former rulers, will be heard.

Although the People's Court is nascent, Monday's ceremony provided a glimmer of hope at a summit marked by the defeat of a proposed charter on democracy and governance, which was debated and eventually refused by African heads of state.

The charter was supposed to make it easier for power to change hands through the ballot box.

Negotiations broke down when some African leaders refused to agree to a clause banning standing presidents from extending their term limits by changing their countries' constitutions.

SLM-Minawi spokesperson denies being dismissed

(Sudan Tribune – 3rd Jul. Paris) In a new development the spokesperson of the Sudan Liberation Movement Minawi faction denied being dismissed from his functions saying he will exercise his function till the extraordinary conference.

The secretary general of the SLM-Minnawi, Mustafa Tairab Sunday had issued a decision dismissing al-haj from his position as spokesperson. He told the Sudanese al-Ayam that they need Esam to play another role in Abuja deal implementation.

But Esam, who is opposed to the peace deal, insists in a press statement saying decisions taken by responsible backing Abuja agreement are not binding.

Al-Haj further said the extraordinary conference will arbitrate all the illegal decisions taken since the signing of the Darfur Peace Agreement.

Since the signing of the peace deal by Minni Minawi on 5 May, every day it becomes clear that the movement is divided in two groups. Local commanders have changed sides, many

have joined Khamis Abakr, one of the founding leaders of the National Redemption Front (NRF).

Al-Haj had announced, in a press statement, the suspension of the DPA implementation.

Libya's Gadhafi seals Chad-Sudan reconciliation

(UPI/ST – 3rd Jul. Tripoli) Muammar Gadhafi has sponsored a reconciliation agreement between Sudan and Chad as part of the Libyan leader's efforts to iron out conflicts in Africa.

It said the reasons for the conflicts between Sudan and neighbouring Chad were reviewed and debated, and at the end Bashir and Debby agreed to set up a joint committee to prepare arrangements for normalizing relations between their two countries.

The two presidents reaffirmed their commitment to the "Tripoli Declaration," which they signed in February in a summit meeting hosted by Gadhafi during which they agreed to normalize diplomatic relations and ban the presence of rebels using their territories to launch attacks against each others' countries.

JANA reported that "Gadhafi expressed to the Sudanese and Chadian presidents his appreciation of their responsible attitude and positive response to his reconciliation initiative and their keenness to preserve peace, security and stability in the black continent."

The conflict between Sudan and Chad broke out last December, when Chad declared that it was in a state of war with Khartoum following an attack by Sudanese rebels against a Chadian village on the shared eastern border.

Gadhafi announced an initiative to settle the conflict in January, including shifting 3,000 African Union troops deployed in Darfur to the border between Chad and Sudan to monitor possible violations.