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Media Monitoring Report

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Highlights

UN/Agencies

New joint UN-African Union mediator for Darfur conflict appointed

(UN News Centre) 30 June 2008 – Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and the African Union Chairperson today appointed an experienced official from Burkina Faso as the new joint AU-UN Chief Mediator for Darfur as they seek new momentum in their efforts to resolve the five-year conflict.

Djibril Yipènè Bassolé, who has been Foreign Minister of Burkina Faso since 2007, will conduct the mediation efforts in the new post on a full-time basis from El Fasher, the capital of North Darfur state and the headquarters of the hybrid UN-AU peacekeeping force to the region (UNAMID).

The current UN and AU Special Envoys for Darfur, Jan Eliasson and Salim Ahmed Salim, will remain available for advice and engagement as required, UN spokesperson Michele Montas told journalists.

Mr. Bassolé, 51, has extensive experience in mediation process and in multilateral diplomacy, Ms. Montas said.

Between 2000 and 2007 he served as Security Minister in Burkina Faso and played a key role in devising last year's Ouagadougou Agreement, which Côte d'Ivoire's President Laurent Gbagbo and the rebel Forces Nouvelles leader (and now Prime Minister) Guillaume Soro signed to resolve their conflict.

Mr. Bassolé also worked as a member of the mediation committee for the Tuareg conflict in Niger in 1994-95 and was a member of the international committee for the monitoring of elections in Togo in 1993-94.

The appointment comes as Mr. Eliasson and Mr. Salim warned just last week that there is reason to seriously question whether the parties to the conflict are ready to negotiate and make the compromises necessary for an accord to end the fighting that has raged between rebels, Government forces and allied militiamen known as the Janjaweed.

Armed members of one of those groups, the Minni Minawi faction of the Sudan Liberation Army (SLA), held 38 UNAMID peacekeepers hostage at

gunpoint for more than five hours today.

The incident began this morning at the Zam Zam camp for internally displaced persons (IDPs) in North Darfur, when 21 UN police advisers, 12 military protection force members and five language assistants were confronted by SLA/M commanders carrying AK-47 rifles, hand grenades and other weapons as they tried to conduct a patrol of the camp.

The rebel soldiers surrounded the UNAMID staff and demanded money, claiming it was in compensation for an injured member involved in a motorcycle accident last week with a UNAMID vehicle. The accident is being investigated by both the Sudanese Government and the mission's military police.

After UNAMID reinforcements were sent to the camp, the patrol group was finally released following negotiations between the mission and the leadership of the SLA/M.

UNAMID's deputy head of mission Henry Anyidoho said the detention of the mission staff could not be justified.

"We condemn the attack and we condemn restrictions over the movements of peacekeepers," he said. "Protection of civilians and bringing peace to Darfur define the main purpose of UNAMID's mandate. We must be allowed to carry out our mandate without harassment."

Mr. Anyidoho stressed that in the case of the traffic accident involving the motorcyclist, legal procedure must be respected.

"We respect the law of the land and, in the same vein, we do not condone any party taking the law into its own hands."

This is the second time in less than three months that SLA/M members have targeted UNAMID peacekeepers at Zam Zam. On 9 April a police adviser was beaten and two vehicles were hijacked.

Meeting Japanese leaders, Ban praises Tokyo's contribution to UN work

(UN News Centre) 30 June 2008 – Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon met Japanese leaders in Tokyo on Monday and praised the “immense contribution” Japan has made to the work of the United Nations.

Speaking to the press after meeting Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda, Mr. Ban said that “As Secretary-General of the United Nations, I cannot over-emphasize the importance of Japan’s leading and active role in the Organization.”

“Japan should be proud of being ‘a peace-fostering nation’ and its commitment to multilateralism,” Mr. Ban added. “The Japanese people should know how much Japan’s global role is appreciated in the United Nations and worldwide.”

The Secretary-General welcomed the announcement made by Mr. Fukuda today that Japan will send Self Defense Forces personnel to the UN Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) and will provide financial support to establishing a peacekeeping training centre.

Mr. Ban said he and Mr. Fukuda “had an excellent discussion on the major challenges the world faces, as well as practical ways to address them through the United Nations.”

“I have expressed my appreciation to the Prime Minister for his strong personal leadership and tireless efforts to make the coming G-8 summit meeting in Toyako a great success. It will be a major milestone in our common effort to mobilize international action on such challenges as climate change, the food crisis and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).”

The Secretary-General will attend the summit of the Group of Eight leading industrialized nations, which will take place in the northern Japanese island of Hokkaido from 7 to 9 July. Mr. Ban has said that climate change, the food crisis and the MDGs are top on his agenda at the summit.

“I hope that the leaders of the G-8 summit will come out with concrete measures to address the challenges in a comprehensive manner. I commend the Prime Minister’s leadership in this process, in particular his efforts to combat climate change.”

The Secretary-General said his discussion with the Prime Minister paid particular attention to Africa, “given Japan’s long-standing effort to turn it into ‘a continent of hope’.”

“I am particularly encouraged by the Prime

Minister’s commitment to increase Official Development Assistance (ODA) and its contribution to implement the Millennium Development Goals.”

The two leaders also exchanged views on the Korean Peninsula. Mr. Ban expressed his hope that participants in the six-party talks – China, Japan, Russia, United States, and the two Koreas – will build on recent encouraging progress to promote peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula and beyond.

The Secretary-General and the Prime Minister also exchanged views on the need to move Security Council reform forward.

Earlier on Monday, Mr. Ban and Mrs. Ban Soon-taek had an audience with the Emperor and Empress of Japan, and held a meeting with Crown Prince Naruhito. The Secretary-General also held meetings with Foreign Minister Masahiko Koumura, Chief Cabinet Secretary and Minister of State for the Abduction Issue [of Japanese nationals by DPR Korea] Nobutaka Machimura, and leaders of the governing coalition partner, the New Komei Party.

Japan is the first leg of Mr. Ban’s two-week, three-nation East Asian tour. He will travel to China on Tuesday before visiting the Republic of Korea and then back to Japan to attend the G-8 summit.

WFP humanitarian air service to continue up to September

(Sudan Tribune) UN World Food Programme said that the humanitarian air service which flies aid workers to critical areas in Sudan will continue running until the end of September.

“These donations have arrived just in time. Our passengers – relief workers from more than 200 aid organizations operating in Sudan – would be unable to do their vital work without WFP-HAS,” said Kenro Oshidari, WFP Representative in Sudan.

After the World Food Programme (WFP) announced service cuts on June 10, and warned that the Humanitarian Air Service (HAS) it runs in Sudan risked being grounded due to a severe lack of funds, five donors stepped forward with contributions totalling US\$14.8 million.

Grants include: \$4 million from the United States, \$4 million from the UN Common Humanitarian Fund (CHF) for Sudan, \$3.8 million from the European Commission, \$2.5 million from Canada and \$500,000 from the US-based Annenberg Foundation. Additional pledges are also expected

in the next two months.

"The air service is especially important at this time of year, when the rains make most roads impassable. Added to that, banditry and insecurity have made it too dangerous for humanitarians to travel by road in many parts of Darfur – for example, each month an average of 3,000 aid workers are flown to the deep field in Darfur on WFP-HAS helicopters," Oshidari said.

While Oshidari thanked donors, he stressed that the service cuts must remain in place and warned that WFP-HAS has no funds confirmed beyond September – meaning it still risks closure in the fourth quarter of 2008.

Sima Samar visits Darfur

(Al-Rai Al-Aam) UN Special Rapporteur for Human Rights Sima Samar left yesterday for Darfur accompanied by the Rapporteur of the Advisory Council for Human Rights in Sudan Dr. Abdul Moneim Osman. She will hold meetings with officials in Darfur States and visit IDPs camps. She is also expected to visit Abyei and Juba.

According to sources, itinerary of Samar's tour in Darfur is kept in total secret but she is expected go public about her visit when she addresses a press conference in Khartoum. Samar is also expected to meet with the committee set up to investigate incidents in Omdurman.

GoNU

Presidency to hold decisive meeting today to announce Abyei Administration

(Al-Sahafa/Al-Rai Al-Aam) The Presidency will announce at a decisive meeting today the formation of an interim administration for Abyei Area. The FVP Salva Kiir will arrive in Khartoum today from the South to take part in the Presidency meeting on formation of Abyei Administration. The two parties have already reached an agreement on the issue of their nominees for the administration.

On the other hand, the Director General of Police Gen. Mohamed Najeeb saw off yesterday over 100 police personnel sent by the Interior Ministry to Abyei to make necessary preparations for deployment of over 500 of police officers, non-commissioned officers and policemen from various police sections to provide services to residents.

SPLM official Chol Chang told the newspaper that

according to the roadmap, SAF and SPLA withdrawal from Abyei was supposed to complete yesterday adding that IDPs said their return would depend on withdrawal of brigade 31. Mr. Chol has questioned the arrival and deployment of groups of police personnel in Abyei recently. He said groups of police personnel from Messeriya in Rebek and southern Kordofan have entered Abyei, their presence was not part of the roadmap.

North, south Sudan forces fail to leave Abyei in time

(Reuters) Sudan's northern and southern armies have both failed to meet an end-June deadline for withdrawal from oil-rich Abyei, where fighting in mid-May displaced thousands, southern army officials said on Tuesday.

Clashes between Khartoum's Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) and the semi-independent south's Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) in Abyei town threatened the fragile 2005 north-south peace deal that ended a 20-year war.

"SAF's Brigade 31 that caused the fighting is still in the town (and) the SPLA is still in its place in the area, but not in the town," SPLA spokesperson Peter Parnyang said.

Under a roadmap for a settlement of the dispute, both forces should have left the area, making way for a special joint unit of northern and southern troops and a new police force.

Quick implementation of these security arrangements, including free movement for the forces of the U.N. Mission in Sudan forces, is seen as key to the return of the 50,000 people U.N. officials estimate were displaced by the violence.

The joint unit is in place but a new police force has not deployed, said Salva Mathok, the southern army's deputy for operations. "Our partners said that if the police are not on the ground, they cannot move out," he said.

Mathok did not give figures for southern troops but said they are mostly in the southern part of the Abyei area. He said the number of northern forces there could be as high as 8,000 troops, including along roads linking Abyei town to the north.

Mathok said the southern army was committed to move further south this week, adding that a lack of transport for large equipment had caused the delay.

Abyei's oil and boundaries have long been a source of tension between north and south. A group of international experts demarcated the area

in 2005 but Sudanese President Omar Hassan al-Bashir refused to ratify its findings.

The two sides agreed in late June that the Hague's Permanent Court for Arbitration will decide if the international team of experts exceeded their mandate, as Bashir has said, or not.

Sudan civil aviation chief sacked; Russian planes grounded

(Sudan Tribune) The Sudanese president Omar Hassan Al-Bashir issued a decree today relieving the chief of the civil aviation authority Gen. Abu-Bakr Gaa'far.

Ibrahim Abdullah Abd Al-Karim was named as the new civil aviation authority chief.

Sudan official news agency (SUNA) also reported that Al-Bashir banned all Russian made planes from operation.

The decision by the Sudanese president comes in the aftermath of a cargo plane crash today near Khartoum airport shortly after takeoff killing four Russian crew members.

A plane (Ilyushin 76) chartered by a private company called Ababiel crashed near the airport in an empty area.

The plane crashed and the fire had already started while it was in the air, a witness said. While taking off the plane collided with an electricity pole and crashed, he added.

The plane was flying from Khartoum to Juba.

Earlier this month a Sudan airways passenger plane veered off the runway and burst into flames minutes after it landed killing 28 people.

The civil aviation authority came under heavy criticism for what was perceived as poor enforcement of safety standards.

"The civil aviation authority enjoys looking at the skies to see planes falling down without putting any effort or come up with plans to stop this cycle" Adel Al-Baz the editor in chief of the daily Al-Ahdath said in his column titled 'The Civil Aviation Empire'.

Sudanese officials have blamed the US sanctions for preventing delivery of aircraft spare parts.

But Washington said that aircraft spare parts are exempted from the sanctions.

The Sudanese president instructed the Justice ministry to draft a new law making the civil aviation authority more independent from governmental authority.

Some have interpreted Al-Bashir's proposal as an attempt to move the aviation body away from the control of military figures and have it managed by a staff with more hands on technical experience.

US says no normalisation with Sudan before November elections

(Sudan Tribune) June 30, 2008 (WASHINGTON)

The top U.S. official on Africa, Jendayi Frazer, said it was unlikely that talks about normalising relations with the United States would resume before the U.S. elections in November.

Washington has Sudan on a list of state sponsors of terrorism and operates economic sanctions against it.

"We were very clear from the outset ... normalisation depends on results on the ground and clearly things have not improved in Darfur and things have deteriorated in Abyei," she told reporters on the sidelines of the summit.

Among the terms of Sudan's 2005 north-south was a distribution of power and of the wealth stemming from Sudan's oil output of 500,000 barrels per day.

But at least 89 people died in May in clashes between northern and southern forces in Abyei, close to major oilfields coveted by both sides.

"At this point it doesn't look favourable because they haven't implemented those agreements," Reuters reported.

Sudan has appeared optimistic on normalizing ties with the US within a short period of time.

The Sudanese foreign minister Deng Alor told reporters after meeting with Williamson last February that he expects to normalize relations within 4-6 months.

The United States imposed comprehensive economic sanctions on Sudan in 1997 and included it on a list of state sponsors of terrorism. The sanctions have been stiffened subsequently particular in May 2007 when US president Bush issued an executive order barring 31 companies controlled by Sudan from doing business in the U.S. financial system.

Discussions begin on 2008 elections bill

(Miraya FM) The political parties in the National Assembly have started deliberations on the elections draft bill for the year 2008.

The discussions aim at narrowing the differences on a number of articles. The spokesman of the SPLM Bloc, Anyoti Arigo Nykwaj, told Miraya FM that the Legislation and Justice Committee is trying to reach consensus with the political parties before submitting its report on Tuesday.

On Sunday, The Presidency tabled the elections draft bill before the National Assembly. The bill was referred to Legislation and Justice Committee for study before returning it to the Assembly for endorsement. The Parliament will hold morning and evening sessions to discuss the bill.

Meanwhile, the Speaker of the Assembly, Ahmed Ibrahim Al-Tahir welcomed the UN participation in the discussion process through providing technical consultation.

Political parties in the Assembly welcomed the tabling of the bill before the Assembly.

Speaking to Miraya FM, prominent member of the Democratic Unionist Party, Siddiq Al-Hindi, stressed the importance of adherence to national consensus to sort out differences.

The political parties had delegated the SPLM to follow up of what has been agreed on with the National Congress Party regarding the bill.

However, member of the National Democratic Alliance, Farouq Abu Isa, said that the parties are committed to their rejection of the percentages specified in the draft bill.

Taha to begin official visit to Qatar on Tuesday

(SUNA) The Vice - President of the Republic, Ali Osman Mohamed Taha, is due to begin on Tuesday a two-day official visit to Qatar during which he will hold a series of meetings with Qatari senior officials. The visit comes in the context of the progressing relations between Sudan and Qatar.

In a press statement to SUNA, Sudan Ambassador to Qatar, Abdalla Fagiri, said that the visit of the Vice - President to Qatar provides a good opportunity toward consolidating the relations and the economic cooperation between the two countries, as well as opening new horizons for the Qatari investments in Sudan. He described the Sudanese - Qatari ties as historic, deeply rooted and constructive.

SPLM committee to oversee police integration element formed

(Khartoum Monitor) Southern Kordofan State AEC formed two committees one to oversee the integration of elements of SPLM into the police to address the problems related to reintegration of SPLM elements in the civil service. The other committee is assigned the follow up of the state governor's decree which he issued recently in a move to control the situation in the State.

AEC deputy chairman Arno Nagutti in a statement yesterday following the AEC meeting said the commission recommended the convening of a conference to resolve Western Kordofan problem before raising a report to the Presidency about the progress of implementation of CPA in South Kordofan.

GoSS

South Sudan says Ugandan behind attacks on civilians, orders them to leave (ST)

(Sudan Tribune) Vice President of southern Sudan government has pointed fingers at the Ugandan army saying they are responsible of recent attacks in the border areas with Uganda. He further ordered the Ugandan troops who are hunting the LRA rebels to leave the country.

Riek Machar who is also the chief mediator of the Ugandan peace talks had last March innocented the Ugandan rebels from accusations of committing attacks against civilians in different part of the greater equatorial.

Speaking to the Southern Sudan Legislative Assembly, Machar said that according to the findings of a committee sent to investigate the attacks, the Uganda People's Defence Forces (UPDF) is to blame on recent attacks in Western Equatoria State.

"I sent the committee to go and investigate it. The rest of the evidence is there. Indeed, it didn't turn out to be the LRA, but they were UPDF," Machar told parliament in Juba.

According to documents presented to parliament, the ceasefire monitoring team attached to the Ugandan peace talks investigated an alleged LRA attack close to the Sudanese-Ugandan border in which a 31-year-old man was abducted.

They reported that about 30 gunmen raided a homestead at Nyongwa village on June 19, looted

food and household goods and abducted Jino Moga Mandara.

The abductee was found dead three days later, apparently with a head injury and stab wound seemingly from a bayonet, three kilometres (two miles) away from the homestead on the route down which the attacker beat a retreat.

Machar told the lawmakers that his decision to expel the UPDF was intended to avoid past mistakes, adding Ugandan soldiers abducted and killed a South Sudanese man during anti-LRA operations this month.

"If there are any forces in Sudan that are UPDF, these should move back to Ugandan territory," he told the SSLA..

In a letter sent to the chief Ugandan negotiator who is also Internal Affairs Minister Ruhakana Rugunda, Machar expressed concern about the responsibility of the Ugandan army for the attacks.

The West Equatoria citizens on June 10, organised a protest against the Ugandan rebels accusing them of committing attacks against the local populations. They further urged the southern Sudan government to take the necessary measures to protect the civilians.

However the U.S. assistant secretary of state for African affairs, Jendayi Frazer warned on the sideline of the African Union Summit that the Ugandan rebels are rearming and said LRA violence against Congolese civilians demanded a response. She also suggested that the United Nations should boost its peacekeeping force in Congo to contain or catch their fugitive leader Joseph Kony.

Two years of peace talks between Kampala and the LRA broke down in April prompting Uganda, Sudan and Congo to threaten a joint military offensive against the guerrillas, now based mostly in northeastern Congo.

However the Uganda's military spokesman, Major Paddy Ankunda, told Reuters that his government had received no formal communication telling its soldiers to leave. He further said the LRA threat still exist in Southern Sudan.

Since 2002, Sudan allowed Ugandan forces up to 100km into southern Sudan to pursue LRA forces. The limit is near the town of Juba in southern Sudan.

FVP Salva kiir rejects census results

(Ray Al-Shaab) The FVP Salva Kiir has declared GoSS rejection to results of census exercise conducted recently in the country. He said census failed due to lack of questionnaires and inability of enumerators to access some areas in the South.

Kiir said the process of demarcating North-South border was facing numerous obstacles and called for their removal. The FVP made the statements while addressing gathering in the Unity State.

Boost UN force in Congo to tackle LRA rebels, US says

(Reuters) Uganda's fugitive rebel leader Joseph Kony is re-arming, and the United Nations should boost its peacekeeping force in Congo to contain or catch him, the top U.S. diplomat for Africa said on Monday.

Two years of peace talks between Kampala and Kony's Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) broke down in April prompting Uganda, Sudan and Congo to threaten a joint military offensive against the guerrillas, who are now based in northeastern Congo.

Jendayi Frazer, the U.S. assistant secretary of state for African affairs, said the talks established a mechanism for reconstructing war-torn northern Uganda and had been very positive. But she said LRA violence against Congolese civilians demanded a response.

"We need to pursue other avenues, particularly since we've seen that he has increased his attacks against local villages and forcing into service women, children," Frazer told reporters on the sidelines of an African Union summit in Egypt.

"He is re-arming himself. He's preparing himself militarily and so we can't just stand by when he is doing that."

Frazer said Washington was working with the region to help governments coordinate their operations against the rebels. That included the U.N. peacekeeping force in Congo, MONUC, she said.

"We would hope the U.N. would increase its capability so that it can provide support for the Congolese forces so that they can, at a minimum, contain him so that he can't attack villages, and preferably pursue him until he agrees to sign the agreement or until he's actually apprehended," she said.

Darfur

Sudan welcomes appointment of new Darfur mediator

(Sudan Tribune) Sudanese President Omer al-Bashir welcomed the designation of Djibril Yipènè Bassolé, the Burkina Faso Foreign Minister as the new United Nations and African Union joint Chief mediators for Darfur peace negotiations.

President al-Bashir pledged to provide all necessary support to facilitate his mission in the framework of finding a settlement to the crisis of Darfur as well as to facilitate his movements and contacts in Sudan.

The President Blaise Compaore of Burkina Faso said following a meeting with President al-Bashir on the sidelines of the African Union summit in Sharm El-Sheikh that he met the Sudanese president to tackle the issue of Darfur, the Sudanese Chadian relations and to present the newly appointed joint mediator.

While the presidential adviser Mustafa Osman Ismail announced that Bassolé will visit Sudan during the coming days and meet with officials and visit Darfur.

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