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Highlights

President al-Bashir to visit Egypt today

Local dailies report President Al-Bashir will visit Egypt today for talks with his Egyptian counterpart Hosni Mubarak. **Al-Rai Al-Aam** quoted presidential press advisor Emad Sayed Ahmed as saying that the purpose of the visit is to hold a summit meeting with President Mubarak and senior Egyptian government officials on a range of issues including Darfur, CPA and the ICC.

Meanwhile, Egyptian Foreign Minister met yesterday with a number of Darfur movement leaders in a bid to unify their positions for negotiations to bring about a political settlement to the Darfur crisis.

GoSS downplays arms report

Miraya FM 11/7/09 reported GoSS has downplayed a recent report published by one of the US research institutes which says there are three million arms in the hands of civilians in the south, which causes a threat to the security of the region. GoSS Minister of Legal Affairs and Constitutional Development, Michael Makuei said that the spread of arms among civilians is a phenomenon that exists in all parts of Sudan.

Al-Ahdath reports GoSS has threatened to use force to disarm civilians and questioned the integrity of an international report which put the number of arms in civilian hands at 3 million. GoSS Legal Affairs Minister Michael Makuei said the arms in the hands of the organized armed forces do not exceed 500 pieces. Meanwhile, UNMIS DPIO Mr. Khaled Mansour told the paper that what was raised by the rights groups with regard to the failure of the Mission to disarm civilians was “inaccurate”, saying the mission has nothing to do with that since UNMIS mandate is limited to disarming the organized troops (SAF, SPLA and other regular troops). He pointed out the spread of arms in the hands of many tribes in the Sudan not only in the south.

“UN troops and GoSS have failed to disarm southern Sudan tribes. This alarming phrase was on top of a report by a US institute on the situation in southern Sudan” Mr. Ahmed Hussein, a columnist, writes in **Al-Khartoum** of today. “If we presume that this report is unquestionable, both UN and GoSS should respond to the question as to why they have failed to disarm civilians. UN has the capacity; it should not have failed. GoSS also should not have failed” he writes. “GoSS should have worked in close coordination with UN and should have benefited from its vast experience. This failure should not lead to search for other alternatives to do the job. They should review the reasons of their failure and create new mechanism to ensure security in the south” he adds. “Arms should be collected from all areas not only in southern Sudan to pave the way for the ballot and then the referendum for southerners to decide unity or an independent state” he says.

Meanwhile, **Al-Intibaha** reports military experts and strategists have painted a grim picture owing to the ongoing SPLM armament in the backdrop of the purchase of 100 tanks T-72, saying “it is a sign of early secession”. The experts said a north-south confrontation over Abyei, the border demarcation, referendum or elections is likely and called on the northern army to make necessary preparations. They said the south’s arms market is booming which are a serious threat to the Sudan’s national security.

Defence Minister off to China

Al-Akhbar reports Defence Minister Abdul Rahim Mohamed Hussein left for China yesterday on official visit for talks on cooperation in the military area to boost SAF capacity.

PCA urges parties to prepare for the ruling

Al-Sahafa reports the PCA urged the NCP and the SPLM to consult and decide on how the arbitration decision should be made public. Consequently, the two sides have engaged on contacts to agree on a unified position. GoSS Presidency Minister Luka Biong said the PAC is of the view that the arbitration decision should be celebrated so it requested the parties to agree on the form of the celebration and intimate the same to the Court by tomorrow evening. He said while SPLM position is that the parties should be informed beforehand for preparations at the local level, the NCP wants a grand celebration in The Hague to mark the decision. "The problem is not with traveling to The Hague, the point is that everybody should be available on the ground in Abyei to explain to the people the decision," he said. Biong has called on the NCP to conduct similar visits to the Abyei such as that of the FVP to prepare the people for the ruling.

Meanwhile, Abyei chief administrator Arop Moyak, accompanied by many administration officials and tribal chiefs will undertake visits today to Warrap, north Bahr el Ghazal and Unity states as part of preparations for the ruling. He also revealed a move to increase UN troops in the region by the end of this week but he did not elaborate about the additional number of troops. Moyak also downplayed the state of fear and suspense on the part of the civilians over the impending ruling.

According to **Sudan Tribune website** 10/7/09, the PCA in The Hague will issue its ruling on the disputed Abyei region between North and South Sudan on July 22nd.

But **Al-Sahafa** newspaper quoting "informed sources" said that the Sudanese embassy in the Netherlands received notification on the date of the decision.

Government to issue statement today on its legitimacy

Local dailies report the government will issue a statement today in response to the opposition which questioned its legitimacy and constitutionality. According to **Ajras Al-Hurriah**, the government will today issue a statement to the Sudanese people on its legal and constitutional status in reply to what was raised by the opposition which claimed that the government is no longer legitimate. SPLM SG Pagan Amum addressing a joint press conference with the NCP official Ghazi Salah el Din yesterday said "the government legal and constitutional status is sound" adding the government will continue implementing the interim period's programmes and to prepare for elections. Ghazi Salah el Din told the conference that the two partners reviewed the government's legal and constitutional status and concluded that the tenure of the government ends only when elections are held, saying the opposition's claims are incorrect.

Sudan Tribune website 10/7/09 reported A number of major Sudanese opposition parties met on Friday to deliberate in the first day of the "unconstitutional" government per their statements.

July 9th mark the deadline set by the 2005 CPA for conducting the presidential and parliamentary elections on national and state levels.

The opposition parties assert that as per the CPA, the current government should be disbanded as of July 9th and a new interim cabinet should be formed to prepare the country for elections.

However the NCP and its partner SPLM dismissed opposition demands.

Yesterday the Umma National Party, Popular Congress Party (PCP), Sudanese communist Party (SCP), Umma Reform and Renewal Party (URRP), National Sudanese Alliance and other smaller parties agreed to withdraw their 20 representatives from the National Assembly.

The Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) was absent from the meeting for unknown reasons.

The coalition agreed to hold talks with SPLM and DUP to agree on a "national democratic strategy".

"SPLM draft referendum bill alarming" – MP

Al-Rai Al-Aam reports the National Assembly's Legislation and Justice Committee chairperson and member of the referendum sub-committee Ms Badria Suleiman (NCP) has revealed differences between the two partners over the referendum bill. Interviewed by the newspaper, Ms Badria confirmed the NCP's move to make secession a difficult option. She has described the SPLM's draft referendum law as "alarming", saying the SPLM submitted three definitions for a southern citizen who has the right to vote for unity or secession.

Kiir says secession that brings peace is better than unity

Sudan Tribune website 11/7/09 — GoSS President Salva Kiir Mayardit said secession that brings peace is better than unity that returns the country to war.

Addressing a mass rally in Abyei on Thursday 9, Salva Kiir explained why the people of Southern Sudan should be allowed to have a referendum in 2011 in order to determine their destiny.

"When people hear that southern Sudanese will go for a referendum, some people would say, No, let them not be allowed to go for referendum because they would vote for secession. This is a wrong concept", he said. "Even if southerners live in a united Sudan and the war does not stop, such unity would be useless. Unity will be useful when people live in peace," he further said.

He continued to add "if the secession of southern Sudan will bring peace in Sudan, it is better that we let them go for referendum and we see what they will do."

However, he was quick to say we are ready for unity if the situation permits.

He went further to explain "When we founded the SPLM in 1983, we wanted to fight the government in Khartoum and chase them away so that we could establish a country called the New Sudan of Justice and Equality."

"Southern separatists who were with us escaped from us and attacked us and argued why should southerners go to fight in order to liberate the whole of Sudan, Let us just liberate our southern Sudan and leave it at that," he said.

"We told them in response that even in northern Sudan there are our people the Nuba and those of Malik Agar from Blue Nile State, the people of Darfur and those in the far north, we would like to tell them that these are all our people. If we cut off southern Sudan, we would have left many of our people out there," he said.

The Sudanese First Vice-President also urged the Dinka Ngok and the Arab Misseriya to live peacefully in the area and maintain their unity.

He further reiterated the commitment of the NCP and the SPLM to implement the CPA and he promised that the two partners will bring peace to Darfur.

He also promised to launch an extensive construction and development plan for Abyei.

"Despite all the destruction that occurred in Abyei, we wish to embark on construction and development in the area. The Unity Support Fund is there and they have already a master plan in order to come to Abyei and start developmental work here," he said.

Kiir pledged they will provide roads, electricity and running water in the area and after that the office of the administration and the residence of the administration. Then they will renovate the hospital and construct an airport and they will renovate primary and secondary schools, he explained.

Finally he concluded his speech with a pledge to build an elementary school in the name of the late Lino Wor Abyei and also there will be a secondary school in the name of Doctor John Garang de Mabior here in Abyei.

"We will construct the mausoleum of Chief Deng Majok, it should be well constructed so that it is tall so that when people come to the area they will visit it and see that this was the person who founded this area and ruled this area," he said.

He also paid a visit to the mausoleum of the late Sheikh of the Misseriya

, Babo Nimir, and promised to construct a dome or "guba" on the mausoleum in Muglad.

He donated 100,000 Sudanese Pound for the construction of the Abyei Chiefs' Council Hall and 50,000 SDP to the widows and children of the martyrs of the May clashes between the Sudan Armed Forces and the Sudan People's Liberation Army in Abyei last year. He also donated 50,000 SDP to war veterans in Abyei.

Kiir accompanied by Pagan Amum, SPLM Secretary General Pagan Amum, Sudan's Foreign Affairs minister Deng Alor, Deputy chairman of the SPLM and Governor of Southern Blue Nile, Malik Agar, and Governor of South Kordofan State Ahmed Haroun among other high ranking officials.

His visit was also attended by Northern Bahr el Ghazal State Governor Paul Malong and Warrap State security Advisor General Garang Mabil.

Sudan says Obama labeling of Darfur genocide "a step back"

Sudan Tribune website 11/7/09 — The Sudanese government decried statements by the US president Barack Obama describing the situation in Darfur as "genocide".

Obama speaking from the Ghanaian capital Accra said that the world "must bear witness to the value of every child in Darfur".

"When there's genocide in Darfur or terrorists in Somalia, these are not simply African problems — they are global security challenges, and they demand a global response" Obama said in a speech at the Ghanaian parliament.

"It is a step back... it is not helping. It is not constructive," Ali Al-Sadiq, spokesman for the

Sudanese foreign ministry, told **AFP**, referring to Obama's comments.

"We would like the president [Obama] to consult with his special envoy [Scott Gration] about this issue" Al-Sadiq said.

Gration has said last month that Darfur is witnessing "remnants of genocide".

AU Panel on Darfur denies taking position on the ICC

Al-Sahafa reports Sudan government yesterday officially received clarification from the Mbeki-led AU Panel on Darfur with regard to the statement attributed to the panel head. Director of Protocol Ali Yousuf said the panel informed the MFA yesterday that its report had not been finalized and dismissed what was attributed to it by the media.

Reuters 10/7/09 reported An AU panel led by South Africa's former President Thabo Mbeki backed on Friday an international court's indictment of Sudanese officials including President Omar Hassan al-Bashir for war crimes.

The panel's recommendation showed the differences around Africa over the indictment for crimes in the Darfur conflict. An AU summit in Libya last week voted to suspend cooperation with the International Criminal Court (ICC) in the matter.

Mbeki told reporters his panel of eight eminent Africans had consulted widely inside and outside Sudan.

"The consensus reached is that those charged with war crimes and crimes against humanity should appear in court and defend themselves," he said. "The warrant has been issued. There is nothing that can be done."

According to **Sudan Tribune website** 11/7/09, a Darfur panel formed by the AU last February, denied that they have made any formal position on the arrest warrants issued by the ICC against Sudanese figures.

However, the AU commission issued a statement on Saturday describing the **Reuters** report as "completely false and highly irresponsible".

"No member of the Panel has made any such pronouncement. Indeed, no member of the Panel could make any such pronouncement as the Panel has not yet completed its work" the statement read.

Reuters issued a corrected version of the original report stating that the AU panel made no determination on the ICC Darfur warrants.

However, the news agency left the quotations attributed to Mbeki without changes.

Yesterday a senior official at UNAMID who asked not be named told Sudan Tribune that the report created "a great deal of tension and fear of backlash".

The panel acknowledged in its statement that "some of the interested parties with whom the Panel has met had called for ICC trials".

The delivery of the panel's report to the AU was delayed from July until September.

Yesterday Mbeki speaking from the Ethiopian capital said that the panel is working within the AU public position calling for deferring Bashir's indictment.

"Our principal — the body that formed us (AU) — has said 'delay the serving of those warrants'," Mbeki said according to **AFP**.

"We will address the justice issue in a comprehensive manner that has been suggested by our interlocutors," he added during a press conference at the AU's headquarters.

The former South African president added that the issue of justice needed different handling than the ICC.

"Of course there are people who are saying... that people who have been charged by the ICC should indeed appear before the ICC," he said.

"But the central issue is that everybody agrees that this matter of justice is important and has to be addressed in different ways with a different sort of intervention," he said.

Sudan Tribune website 9/7/09 reported the US envoy to Sudan Scott Gration said that his government would continue dealing with embattled president Omer Al-Bashir despite an arrest warrant issued for him last March by the ICC.

"Right now President Al-Bashir is the president of the country and we have to work with him to solve those issues that are facing the people [of Sudan] and [that] are facing the region," Gration told AFP in an interview from the Norwegian capital.

However, Gration warned that Bashir would ultimately need to face justice.

"But that does not mean that (Bashir) does not need to do what's right in terms of facing the International Criminal Court and those charges," he told AFP.

"We in the United States believe that everybody needs to be accountable, and in due time, when the situation is right, the international community will hold [accountable] folks that may have been involved in crimes against humanity and genocide," he said. Asked whether the announcement would complicate his dealings with Sudan, Gration said: "We will work through it".

The US official is due to arrive in Khartoum next week for talks on bilateral relations and the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), according to pro-government Sudanese Media Center (SMC) website.

SMC reported that Gration will meet with Sudanese presidential adviser Ghazi Salah Al-Deen and will travel to Juba, Darfur and Abyei.

The US State department said that Gration wants to assess the latest conditions for internally displaced persons and for humanitarian workers in Darfur.

The visit to Abyei is in preparation for the ruling by the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague on whether the region follows the North or South,

Meanwhile, The Ugandan foreign ministry issued a statement yesterday reiterating its

commitment to the Rome Statute, which is the founding text of the ICC.

“As a signatory to the Rome Statute, Uganda Government re-iterates its commitment to the Statute and support to the ICC. This position is shared by the other African States Parties to the Statute who clearly expressed it during the Assembly meeting in Sirte, Libya,” the statement read.

“Uganda Government supports the African Union Assembly Decision....of February 2009 requesting the UN Security Council to defer the ICC indictment for twelve (12) months, in accordance with Article 16 of the Rome Statute”.

The statement makes no reference to the AU decision taken in Sirte or whether Uganda will adhere to it.

The ‘Ultimate Media’ website quoted Ugandan foreign minister Sam Kuteesa as telling reporters in Kampala that the decision is viewed by many as “a manifestation of lack of respect and support for the ICC Rome Statute by African leaders”.

Kuteesa said that the AU simply wants an AU deferral to allow African countries “to investigate further on Bashir’s case such that they can give their recommendations on his indictment”.

The independent Sudanese Al-Sahafa newspaper reported that Bashir is scheduled to visit Uganda on July 26 to take part in the Ugandan-Turkish forum.

South Africa NGO’s may challenge AU ICC decision before court

Sudan Tribune website 11/7/09 — A number of South African human right groups and non-governmental organizations challenged Pretoria’s endorsement of a resolution by the AU asking its ICC members not to cooperate with the court in the extradition of Sudanese president Omer Al-Bashir.

The AU summit in Sirte, Libya last week decided that its 30 members, who ratified the founding treaty of the ICC, shall not cooperate in apprehending Bashir despite their legal obligations to do so.

The resolution stirred outcry among human right organizations worldwide and Darfur rebel groups as well who said it amounts to granting impunity.

The AU criticized the warrant saying it imperils peace efforts in the region.

It was reported that the resolution was adopted by consensus but the Vice president and foreign minister of Botswana said that the issue was not properly debated and member countries were forced to accept it under pressure from Libya which chairs the pan-African body.

The South African government came under fire from newspapers and legal experts who said that President Jacob Zuma was reneging on his country’s legal obligations.

Professor Du Plessis from University of KwaZulu-Natal said that resolution directly conflicts the South African constitution.

“South Africa is also one of only three states on the continent to have domesticated the ICC statute’s provisions into its national law,” he wrote in ‘Cape Town’ newspaper

“South Africa’s ICC implementation legislation, passed by our Parliament as Act 27 of 2002, holds in Section 8 (2) that were al-Bashir to be present on South African territory, and the ICC were to request his arrest, the director-general of the Department of Justice “must immediately on receipt of that request, forward the request and accompanying documents to a magistrate, who must endorse the warrant of arrest for execution in any part of the republic,”

The South African NGO’s including the Centre for Applied Legal Studies, the International Centre for Transitional Justice, the Khulumani Support Group and Lawyers for Human Rights — will petition President Zuma and his government to take a stand against the AU’s position.

The South African ‘Times’ newspaper quoted the groups as saying that the resolution is “unconstitutional” if the government agrees to it.

The groups said that the meeting’s declaration “requires it to break its international treaty obligations and to defy its own law and constitution”.

They urged Zuma to publicly state that his government would honor its obligations or else the group “will decide how further to engage and respond”, which could include court action.

Unidentified South African officials speaking to ‘Cape Town’ newspaper acknowledged that government “is in a difficult position” over the resolution which conflicts with its obligations under the Statute.

The officials said that they are deeply involved in the Sudan peace processes of Darfur and South Sudan.

They further said that they blame the ICC for not engaging with the AU on trying to suspend the arrest warrant for 12 months under Article 16 of the Rome Statute. Only the UN Security Council (UNSC) is empowered to invoke a deferral.

“How is it going to help the ongoing peace processes in South Sudan and Darfur, if Al-Bashir is behind bars?” one official said. “We need him to take those processes forward.”

The AU decision on non-cooperation with the ICC will not take place until it is ratified by the parliament the officials said. It is not clear how long the process will take as it involves a complex legal issue

Business Day cited the spokeswoman of the Department of International Relations and Co-operation Nomfanelo Kota as saying that while South African government would explain its position in due course, the AU resolution was not indicative of the government’s attitude to the ICC.

Sudan, AU, UN meet Sunday to discuss Darfur hybrid force

Sudan Tribune website 10/7/09 – A Sudan, African Union and United Nations committee charged with the deployment of the hybrid mission in Darfur will meet during the week end.

During its sixth meeting to be held in Khartoum, the Tripartite Mechanism will discuss issues pertaining to the deployment of peacekeepers in Darfur. The issue of the five tactical helicopters is expected among the agenda of the meeting.

The helicopter provided by the Ethiopian government would be based in South Darfur capital

Nyala. The UNAMID needs to secure cooperation of the Sudanese authorities for these tactical helicopters.

Sudanese delegation will be chaired by Mr. Mutrif Sidiq, undersecretary at the foreign ministry who is also in charge of UNAMID file. The African Union will be represented by Ambassador Ramtane Lamamra, AU Commissioner for Peace and Security, while the United Nations will be represented by UN USG for Field Support, Ms Susana Malcorra.

GoSS approves SDG66 million for CPA celebrations

Sudan Tribune website 9/7/09 — The proposed budget for the fifth celebration of the CPA next year in Western Equatoria State was approved by the southern Sudan cabinet last week, said Governor Jemma Nunu Kumba after her arrival to Yambio last Tuesday.

Briefing the regional government at the State Secretariat Main Hall, Kumba said that, "the estimated budget was SDG85 millions; but was reduced to 66 million SDG." The allocated money will be used to build presidential villa, stadium, guest houses, and access to roads, water, and completing the establishment of the electricity power, and renovation of the administrative offices respectively, she further said.

English daily prevented from circulation outside Khartoum

Sudan Tribune website 9/7/09 — Sudanese authorities have prevented, for two days, the distribution outside Khartoum of a daily newspaper after its refusal to run a story related to the alleged killing of a local official of the SPLM-DC.

During two days, Wednesday and Thursday the security agents confiscated the copies of The Citizen at Khartoum airport to prevent its circulation in the rest of the country outside the capital, particularly in southern Sudan.

Nhial Bol Aken, the Editor in Chief of the Independent English language The Citizen said on Thursday "Today, they held the newspapers for two hours, and then released them when it was too late to fly them to the different states."

On Wednesday the security had confiscated the issue for the first time.

According to Nhial, on July 2, security agents brought a report from the SMC alleging that a member of the SPLM-DC of the former foreign minister Lam Akol had been killed by the SPLM in Upper Nile.

"I told them that we would need to verify the story before we could publish it. They started complaining about our coverage, about SPLM activities. They told one of our officials that if we don't cooperate with them they would sabotage our work," he said.

Kidnapped Darfur aid workers make regular contact: minister

Reuters 12/7/09 - Negotiations with the kidnappers of two aid workers in Darfur are progressing well, officials have established regular contact with the abducted women, a Sudanese government minister said on Sunday.

"I think we may have good news soon ... People are negotiating with them now," said state minister for humanitarian affairs Abdel Baqi al-Jailani.

"The two ladies are in contact with the mission in El Fasher every day. They are being very

brave and dealing with the situation they are in," al-Jailani told Reuters.

"The government is committed to a peaceful solution and is giving the kidnappers a lot of time. I am sure it will work, based on our past experience." The minister earlier said the kidnappers were bandits, hoping to get a ransom.