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Main News

Abyei document does not replace ABC

(**Al-Rai Al-Aam**) Foreign Minister and SPLM leader Deng Alor said Abyei document signed on 8th June 08 between NCP and SPLM did not supersede the experts' report. The experts' report would remain as it was until decided by arbitration, he added.

He said the parties were serious for implementation.

Presidency begins consultations to name chief of Abyei administration and deputy

(**Al-Khartoum**) GoSS Cabinet Affairs Minister and SPLM leader Luka Biong announced ongoing consultations within the Presidency to name chief and deputy of Abyei joint administration.

Speaking to Miraya FM, he said the new administration would take over within two weeks.

Meanwhile, native administration in Abyei has welcomed the agreement signed between NCP and SPLM to resolve the dispute over Abyei. All Messeriya Zuruq leader Hireika Izzel Din speaking to Miraya FM has described the agreement as a real end to Abyei problem while Dinka leader emir K. Arop urged NCP and SPLM to expedite implementation of the agreement particularly return of IDPs.

UN/Agencies

Sudan: Ban welcomes agreement to resolve dispute over Abyei

(**UN News Service**) 9 June 2008 – Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon today welcomed an agreement to resolve a dispute over the town of Abyei, which lies in an oil-rich area close to the boundary between northern and southern Sudan, and has recently been the scene of violent clashes that have displaced as many as 50,000 people.

On Sunday the National Congress Party and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement agreed on a road map to resolve the Abyei dispute, including through arbitration.

“The Secretary-General congratulates the two parties and urges them to implement this agreement in full to ensure a final resolution of this most serious challenge to Sudan's Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA),” Mr. Ban’s spokesperson said in a statement.

The CPA, signed by the Government and former rebels in January 2005, ended the long-running north-south civil war, but an impasse since then over the boundaries and status of Abyei has been one of the stumbling blocks to fully implementing the peace accord, as the area is contested by both sides.

The Secretary-General said today that he “particularly welcomes the commitment of the two parties to allow the UN Mission in Sudan unrestricted access and freedom of movement in the Abyei area,” and he gave his assurances that the UN would continue to provide assistance to the tens of thousands of people who have been displaced.

The UN “also stands ready to assist their return to Abyei, once security arrangements are put in place to enable a safe and dignified return,” he said.

The town of Abyei was largely destroyed after fighting broke out last month.

UN: Agreement on Abyei is a major step in CPA implementation

(Al-Ayyam) UN has welcomed the agreement on Abyei signed by NCP and SPLM to establish an interim administration, redeploy troops and return IDPs.

UNMIS spokesperson Mr. Khaled Mansour speaking to Al-Ayyam has considered the agreement as a giant stride and major development on the path of CPA implementation as it has paved the way for IDPs return and allows observers free movement in north and south of Abyei.

Mr. Mansour said the agreement confirmed the parties’ conviction that Abyei problem could only be resolved through agreement and pointed out that allowing JMT free movement in Abyei was extremely important as the JMT’s patrols defuse crisis and act as an early warning of conflicts.

Humanitarian agencies will begin repatriating the IDPs as soon as the security arrangements agreed up were implemented, he added.

Adada reveals new plan to protect aid convoys in Darfur

(Miraya FM) The head of the United Nations-African Union Mission in Darfur UNAMID, Rudolf Adada, revealed a new security plan to protect aid convoys in Darfur. He explained that currently there was a committee working on finalizing the plan which covers the area from Al-Obayed in North Kurdufan to the entire Darfur region. He said that military representatives from the government are participating in making this plan.

UN envoys end Africa tour

Envoys of the UN Security Council have rounded off a five-nation tour of African trouble spots in the Ivory Coast.

The delegation praised the West African country's progress towards holding its first elections since the end of 2002-2003 civil war, set for November.

The elections have suffered a series of postponements due to disagreements over disarmament and voter registration between President Laurent Gbagbo's government and rebels controlling the country's north.

Various UN-brokered agreements did not produce progress until a locally-manufactured peace deal in 2007 led to elections being called.

This deal helped launch reunification in the country.

'Things are happening'

Dumisani Kumalo, the South African envoy, said: "If you put things in the hands of the Ivorians it moves.

"There's been more movement in the past year than ever,

"You know all of these things, when we came here last year they were telling us they never would happen: they are happening now.

"The Ivorian people want elections on November 30."

The envoys met Gbagbo, military generals from both sides of the conflict and civil society and political party members.

The envoys had earlier visited Sudan, Chad, Djibouti – to discuss neighbouring Somalia – and the Democratic Republic of Congo on the tour.

Kumalo said: "I think it was a success. We did very well in Djibouti with Somalia and I think we did very well in Sudan.

"Chad was a lost cause. Congo was very good and we end here with a high note."

Somalia has agreed to an interim government and some opposition figures signed a peace deal on Monday calling for a UN stabilisation force in the country.

Idriss Deby, Chad's president, failed to turn up for a meeting with the UN group to discuss relations with neighbouring Sudan.

WFP to cut air service for aid workers in Sudan

NAIROBI, June 10 (**Xinhua**) -- The UN World Food Program said on Tuesday that the ability of 14,000 aid workers to travel to Darfur and other parts of Sudan will be reduced with immediate effect due to a lack of funding for the Humanitarian Air Service.

WFP said in a statement issued in Nairobi that its air service needs an infusion of 20 million US dollars by June 15 in order to avoid some of the cuts and maintain full service through the coming months.

"Since March, we have been facing the possible closure of the air service because of a lack of funds. The measures announced today are aimed to keep vital services going for longer, while we wait for new funding to be confirmed," said Kenro Oshidari, WFP's representative in Sudan.

The total shortfall is 48 million dollars on the 77 million dollars budget for this year.

WFP-HAS, the air service run by WFP on behalf of the entire humanitarian community in Sudan, must cut one helicopter immediately and two fixed-wing aircraft on June 19 from its fleet because it is unable to cover the costs of carrying aid workers to remote parts of Darfur and southern Sudan.

Also, fees for helicopter flights in Darfur will increase from July 1. "Undoubtedly, this is a blow to the humanitarian effort in Sudan. The impact will be felt by vulnerable people who depend on the international community for crucial services," he said.

Oshidari added that the cuts will also reduce the ability to respond to urgent medical evacuation requests and staff relocations because of insecurity. Last year, WFP-HAS carried out 267 security and medical evacuations.

WFP said the Darfur helicopter fleet will be reduced to five from six with immediate effect. About 3,000 humanitarian workers use WFP helicopters each month to reach remote parts of Darfur, where travel by road is impossible due to insecurity, banditry or poor road conditions.

One helicopter currently due for maintenance will not be replaced, bringing the fleet down to five helicopters, the UN agency said.

"Helicopter fees will be increased as of July 1. The user fees paid by humanitarian passengers on helicopters will be raised to 100 dollars per flight, from the current 40 dollars - a 250 percent hike. This makes the helicopter fee equal to that of the fixed wing aircraft," said WFP.

The UN agency also announced the reduction of flights to Darfur and south Sudan as of June 19 and noted that it will not renew contracts on two fixed-wing aircraft: one Dash-8 and one Beechcraft 1900.

"Flights to Darfur from the capital Khartoum will be reduced to five days a week from six. Service to Juba, the capital of south Sudan, will be reduced to three flights a week from four, while service to Rumbek and Malakal will be reduced to two flights a week from three," it said.

"The cuts announced today will reduce monthly spending from 6.2million dollars to 5.2 million dollars. About 70 percent of the budget supports Darfur humanitarian activities," it said.

So far this year, donors have provided 13.2 million dollars in confirmed contributions to WFP-HAS, about 17 percent of the required budget.

[GoNU](#)

Bashir to meet with Messeriya leaders today

(Al-Sahafa) President Bashir will meet today with Messeriya leaders to listen to the tribe's reservations on the agreement concluded by NCP and SPLM on Abyei on 8th June2008.

According to sources, the closed meeting would also discuss how NCP and Messeriya would be represented in Abyei administration.

Speaker rules out passing of Security Act at present juncture

(Al-Rai Al-Aam) The Speaker of the National Assembly Ahmed Ibrahim Al Tahir addressing MPs yesterday ruled out that the National Security Act would be passed by the Parliament at the present juncture due to the presence of armed groups and security tensions.

Registrar of political organizations calls for postponement of elections

(Al-Rai Al-Aam) The General Registrar of the Political Parties/Organizations Dr. Salim Ahmed Salim has emphasized the need for unification of national ranks of all the political parties so that a free and fair elections were held.

Addressing Khartoum State Legislature yesterday, Dr. Salim has called for postponement of elections for lack of sufficient time.

International Organizations position on children forced recruitment passive

(Sudan Vision) Humanitarian Aid Commission (HAC) Chief, Hasbu Mohammed Abdalrahamn has blamed the international organizations for their position on the forced recruitment of Children practiced by the Darfur rebel movements.

Hasbu said the High Commission for addressing the conditions of children forcibly recruited has notified the Human Rights Council and the Higher Commission for Refugees in addition to the international organizations concerned of this recruitment. He noted that no condemnation of these practices or calls for stopping them have come out of these organizations. He stated that Sudan is still concerned about the children recruited by the armed movements, adding that they have continued to call on the organizations concerned to demobilize these children.

In a related development, Abdalrahman stated that most of the children who were arrested as a result of their participation in the JEM sabotage attempt are Sudanese and attending schools.

He described the use of children in war as a humanitarian crime as well as it is a terrorist and war crime. He said some children were trained to fight while some others were pat boys to the commanders.

In this context, a media delegation led by Editors-In-Chief of the major Sudanese dailies yesterday visited those children camp in Garri and found that the Social Affairs Ministry has established rehabilitation centers for those children. The delegation has come to see that the children are in good health, with the children themselves affirming that they are receiving good care in the camp contrary to the treatment they received while in JEM camps.

According to one of the children they were given only three meals in 15 days while in JEM camps as well as their hands were tied to the vehicles transporting them .

HAC Commissioner demanded media representatives to highlight this case till the other children in rebel movements camps are freed.

Salva Kiir says Sudan unity is fundamental option of Southerners

(ST) June 9, 2008 (KHARTOUM) – First Vice-President of the Republic, head of the South Sudan government stressed that the unity of Sudan is the basic option for all the Southern Sudanese in their different components.

Salva Kiir Mayadrit met on Monday at his office in the Republican Palace in Khartoum with a delegation of Egyptian journalists headed by Makram Mohamed Ahmed, chairman of Egyptian journalists syndicate.

The top Southern Sudanese official told the visiting delegation that the political cooperation between the north and the south besides the development in the southern Sudan as well as the support of Egypt and Arab countries would make unity attractive in the south.

Salva Kiir added "We have to work on the ground to make people feel the fruits of peace and unity."

Makram said the interview with Kiir addressed the bilateral relations between Khartoum and Cairo and ways to upgrade it besides implementation of the peace agreement and development efforts in Sudan.

Kiir also received the Qatari Ambassador in Khartoum who delivered a written message from His Royal Highness Prince Hamad Bin Khalifa Al-Thani, related to the relations between the two countries

The Qatari ambassador in Khartoum emphasized the keenness to strengthen Sudanese peace process through implementation of a number of joint projects.

According to the Comprehensive Peace Agreement signed in January 2005, the southern Sudan has to decide through a referendum in 2011 whether it wants to remain within a united Sudan or to establish an independent state.

Sudan says no accusation against Libya over rebel attack

(ST) June 9, 2008 (KHARTOUM) — Sudan denied press reports accusing the neighboring Libya of funding and training a Darfur rebel group to attack Khartoum in an attempt to topple the Sudanese government.

Last Saturday, a newspaper known in Khartoum as pro- National Congress Party and close to the Sudanese intelligence service, Akhir Lahza, published a report saying that Khartoum will break off diplomatic relations with Libya because the neighbouring country was involved in the rebel attack.

During the first week following the coup, many officials launched insinuated accusations against a neighbouring country for its support to the attack carried out by the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) on the Sudanese capital on May 10.

The Sudanese foreign ministry notified on Monday to the Libyan Chargé d'affaires in Khartoum that reports published by some local newspapers accusing Libya of supporting the rebel JEM in its attack on Omdurman last month do not reflect the official position of the government.

Ali al-Sadiq the spokesperson of the foreign ministry stated that Sudan has diplomatic channels and mechanisms to transmit its positions. He further stressed that Sudan does not accuse Libya of involvement in the foiled rebel coup on May 10.

Different reliable sources confirmed to Sudan Tribune the fact that Sudanese authorities have sufficient evidence on the Libyan role in this coup but prefer to not sever ties with Libya in order to deprive the rebels from additional Libyan support.

Sadiq asserted that Sudan valued Libya's efforts to resolve the Darfur crisis and issues of the region, expressing hope that Libya continues to play its leading role to establish security and stability in the region.

For his part, the Libyan Chargé d'affaires Mohamed Salem Al-Osta told reporters following a meeting with the director of the Department of Arab Affairs Ambassador Omer Haydar that Libya, which is a sponsor of Darfur peace process, can not play such a role.

He further said Libya would continue in its efforts to defuse tension in the region.

He also underlined that relations between the two countries can not be influenced by rumors promoted by some newspapers or plots of external forces.

Libya has generally been a supporter of the Sudanese government's stance on the Darfur crisis and has been trying to foster a peace agreement between Khartoum and the Darfur rebel groups. Also, Libyan Gadafi sponsored reconciliation accord between Sudan and Chad.

Akhir Lahza said that prominent Libyan officials including relatives of Colonel Muammar Gadhafi were involved in the attack. They funded a purchase of between "300-350 vehicles "Land Cruiser" the daily said.

The newspaper added that the rebels had used 127 vehicles in their attack on Omdurman. It also indicated that some of those vehicles arrived in the Chadian capital N'Djamena by road from Libya.

The paper said that some detained JEM leaders acknowledged the Libyan role. They further said that Libyan trucks provided supplying services to the rebels in the desert.

The paper pointed out that Libya funded the operation and took actively part in the preparations by training the Sudanese rebels.

It also said that several meetings dedicated to discuss the preparation of the rebel attack had been held in March and April 2008 in Bab Albahr Hotel, The Grand Hotel, and al-Mahari Hotel in Tripoli-Libya, besides other meetings held in the Chadian presidential palace where the President Idriss Deby and JEM Chairman Khalil Ibrahim attended the meetings in presence of a senior Libyan intelligence official.

Akhir Lahza said the Libyan support is motivated by fears that the establishment in N'djamena of a regime led by the Khartoum supported Chadian rebels will renew the old bitterness between the two countries.

The rebel Chadian coalition supported by Khartoum is led by Mohamat Nouri, a former defence minister of the former Chadian president Hussein Habri. Nouri in the eighties. Nouri coordinated the open support provided by the Former US President Ronald Regan to the Libyan opposition from northern Chad.

Also the Gorane ethnic group of Hussein Habri fought against the Libyan troops and expelled them from the Aouzou Strip located in the northernmost part of Chad that Gadhafi had claimed as part of Libya on the grounds of an unratified treaty of the colonial period.

Sudanese Vice President in China for joint cooperation talks

(ST) June 9, 2008 (KHARTOUM) — Sudanese Vice President Ali Osman Taha has arrived to the Chinese capital Beijing starting a three day visit where he is expected to sign a number of agreements on economic cooperation between the two countries.

Taha visit comes after three high-level visits by the Chinese president to Sudan, president Omer al-Bashir and First Vice President Salva Kiir to China last year.

The follow-up visit is dedicated to discuss the implementation of the signed bilateral agreement but also to tackle on ways to enlarge some economic agreement related to the agriculture cooperation and agriculture industry.

Awad al-Jaz, the Sudanese minister of finance said they seek strategic agriculture cooperation agreement to make the Sudan one of the main producers of food in the world.

Taha is scheduled to meet the Chinese President and the Vice-President.

The Vice-President is accompanied by Minister of Finance and National Economy Awad Ahmed al-Jaz, Minister of Energy and Mining Zubair Ahmed Hassan, the Minister of Transport, roads and bridges Philip THon Leek, and the Governor of Khartoum, Abdel-Moniem Al-Mutaafi and a number of state ministers and official from the Ministries of Energy and Mining, roads and bridges.

Arab League welcomes roadmap agreement on Abyei

(ST) June 9, 2008 (CAIRO) — The Arab League welcomed today the signing of a roadmap agreement between the two Sudanese partners of the national unity government to settle the their difference over Abyei border.

In a press release issued on Monday, the Arab League's Secretariat welcomed and expressed support to implement all the necessary steps provided in agreement.

The League also praised the patriotic spirit that prevailed among the two parties which helped reach the agreement over

"The patriotic spirit of the ruling Sudanese National Congress Party (NCP) and the former Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) helped reach the agreement."

The agreement shows a strong national determination through constructive and calm dialogue which boosted unity and overcame obstacles to build a better future, stability and peace for the Sudanese people, the statement added.

Following heaving fighting between the Sudan Armed Forces and the Sudan People's Liberation Army, a joint committee of the NCP and the SPLM agreed to create an interim administration with an interim border for the disputed area. The displaced population should regain their homes by the end of the month.

They also agreed to deploy joint units and allow the deployment of UN peacekeepers in the region, a move that will be followed by the withdrawal of the SAF and the SPLA troops from the region.

According to the roadmap, the parties agree to refer their row over the border of Abyei to an international arbitration tribunal to settle i

Umma Party calls for sharing other political powers in Abyei administration

(Miraya FM) The deputy chairman of the Umma National Party, Fadl Allah Burma Nasir called for the inclusion of other political forces in the Abyei administration. Mohammed Al-Amin Khalifa Prominent, member of Popular Congress Party, urged the two partners to implement the agreement. Exclusively speaking to Miraya FM, Chief Kwal Arop called upon the SPLM and the NCP to speedily implement the articles of the agreement specially the return of the displaced.

Persons accused in Omdurman incidents to be tried next week at special courts

Khartoum, June 9 (SUNA) - The Minister of Justice, Abdul-Basit Sabdarat, announced that trials at special courts will be held next week for the persons accused in Omdurman incidents. In a briefing he gave Monday at the National Assembly, he said that these courts were established through a decision of the Chief Justice in consultation with the Minister of Justice.

Sabdarat disclosed the existence of 83 documents including names of the involved persons and their sleeping cells, adding that the National Security and Intelligence Organ has detected some of sleeping cells whose members will be brought before courts. He affirmed the trials will be just and prompt, indicating that no guilty person will escape punishment as no innocent one will be punished with the crime of another.

The minister said that the government began adoption of procedure to retrieve 20 of the leaders of the Justice and Equality Movement through the Interpol, top of them are Khalil Ibrahim, Ahmed Tugod, Ahmed Hussein and Suleiman Sandal, indicating that a number of countries have shown cooperation in this regard and closed down offices of the Justice and Equality Movement. Concerning the arrested soldier children of the Justice and Equality Movement, the minister pointed out the government is dealing with them kindly, and parents of some of them began contacts with the concerned authorities after photos of these children were published. He said that measures would be adopted to sue the persons who were responsible for recruitment of these child soldiers, explaining that the Ministries of Justice and Interior and the Interpol are gathering documents on the children files. The Minister of Justice said that 481 persons were released by the authorities, adding these persons were given good treatment.

Taha praises the Sudanese-Pakistani relations

Lahore, June 9 (SUNA) - Vice-President of the Republic Ali Osman Mohamed Taha has lauded the Sudanese-Pakistani relations and described them as deeply-rooted. This came when the Vice-President stopped over at Lahore airport in Punjab State of Pakistan en route to China, where the Speaker of Punjab Assembly and a number of officials along with members of Sudanese diplomatic mission in Pakistan led by Ambassador Dafaalla Al-Haj Ali Osman received him.

Taha reviewed at Lahore Airport with Punjab officials the commercial cooperation and aspects of enhancement of bilateral relations.

Speaker of Punjab Assembly, on his part, pointed to the deeply-rooted relations between Sudan and Pakistan, calling for further joint cooperation in a way that serves the interest of the two friendly peoples.

Workshop focuses on dangers of AIDS in States

(Sudan Vision) Deputy Director of National AIDS Programme Dr. Al Tayeb Mustafa has stressed the importance of setting up a plan that focuses on states regarding AIDS.

In the workshop staged yesterday in Grand Holiday Villa, he stated that all people, especially youth should be aware about the dangers of AIDS. He urged the

participants in the workshop organized by the AIDS National Programme and AIDS Commission in Southern Sudan in collaboration with UNAIDS and WHO.

They focus on the most vulnerable society sections such as youth, refugees, displaced people and women. The workshop also prioritized formation of a follow up committee to implement the recommendations of the workshop.

Assad to visit Sudan by the end of current month

(Sudan Vision) Syrian President, Dr. Basher Assad will visit Sudan by the end of the current month within the framework of his Arab tour to resolve the Arab-Arab disputes and reach a joint Arab stance against the present challenges facing the Arab nations.

SCOVA sends relief convoy to Abyei

(Al-Ayyam) The Sudanese Council of Voluntary Agencies (SCOVA) will send a relief convoy to Abyei on Thursday to assist the population affected by recent incidents.

SCOVA emergency unit urges NGOs, UN Agencies, and Sudanese to contribute to this convoy.

Sudan asks Interpol to arrest 20 rebel leaders

KHARTOUM (Reuters) - Sudan will ask Interpol to arrest 20 rebel leaders it says supported an attack on Khartoum, state media reported on Tuesday.

Those wanted include the leader of the rebel Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) Khalil Ibrahim, the organization London-based spokesman Ahmed Hussein and two other senior commanders, the state SUNA news agency reported.

JEM forces traveled across hundreds of miles of desert and scrub to strike Omdurman, a suburb of Khartoum on May 10, the first time insurgents have reached the capital in decades.

Sudan's Justice Minister Abdel Basit Sabderat was quoted as saying the government had "begun the adoption of procedures to retrieve 20 of the leaders of the Justice and Equality Movement through Interpol".

A number of foreign countries had cooperated by shutting down JEM offices, Suna quoted the minister as saying.

A spokesperson for the British Embassy said he was not aware of any official requests for the arrest of JEM officials based in Britain.

Sudan has announced a \$250,000 (128,000 pounds) reward for information leading to Ibrahim's capture.

Officials were also preparing to open special courts next week to try an unspecified number of people accused of taking part in the JEM attack, Suna said.

The justice minister said lawyers had collected 83 documents listing the names of people involved in the attack and details of "sleeping cells", Suna reported.

State media said a number of children arrested after the attack, that Khartoum says were being used as child soldiers by JEM, were being treated kindly. JEM denies using child soldiers.

Human rights groups accused Sudan of carrying out indiscriminate arrests and torturing suspects after the assault, a charge denied by Khartoum. The justice minister said 481 people had been released without charge, and all had been treated well, Suna reported.

Sudan broke off diplomatic relations with its western neighbor Chad, accusing it of organizing and bankrolling the attack. Soon after the assault a number of senior Sudanese officials were quoted as saying that another international power must have been involved in supporting the attack.

A spokesman for Sudan's ministry of foreign affairs distanced the government on Tuesday from recent reports in the local media blaming Libya for supporting Chad and JEM.

"Sudan does not accuse the Libyan Jamahiriya of involvement in what the Justice and Equality Movement did," Ali al-Sadig told Suna.

[Sudanese Bar Association's Human Rights Unit and UNMIS Human Rights organize workshop in Port Sudan](#)

(Al-Rai Al-Aam) The Human Rights Unit of the Sudanese Bar Association in collaboration with UNMIS Human Rights have organized a 3-day workshop in Port Sudan under the theme: legal reform in Sudan.

70 lawyers as well as judges, advisors, police and civil society organizations attended the workshop.

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[South Sudan to boost defences against LRA rebels](#)

JUBA, Sudan, June 9 (**Reuters**) - South Sudan will send more soldiers to the region bordering Democratic Republic of Congo to guard against further attacks by fugitive Lord's Resistance Army rebels, officials said on Monday.

The SPLA already has 3,000 troops in Western Equatoria State, where LRA fighters killed 23 people including 14 southern Sudanese soldiers in a raid last week that underlined the collapse of two years of peace talks hosted by the south.

"Instructions have been given to the headquarters of the SPLA to increase their presence," southern Interior Minister Paul Mayom told Reuters. "The LRA have proved to be a danger."

Mayom said the extra deployment was aimed at protecting civilians in the area who have often fallen victim of the LRA, which is notorious for mutilating its victims and abducting thousands of children as fighters, porters and sex slaves.

He said SPLA forces would not leave southern Sudan.

"We are ensuring they do not come into our country," Mayom said. "The war is in Uganda. They are supposed to be in Uganda."

Uganda's two-decade war uprooted 2 million people and also destabilised neighbouring parts of oil-producing southern Sudan and mineral-rich eastern Democratic Republic of Congo.

But most of the LRA's forces now operate out of hidden camps deep in the thick Garamba Forest of northeastern Congo.

Their elusive leader Joseph Kony, who is wanted for war crimes by the International Criminal Court, failed to appear on the DRC-Congo border in April to sign a final peace deal.

Uganda, Sudan and the DRC have agreed to launch a joint military offensive against the rebels if Kony does not return to talks. But analysts believe such an attack would carry big risks for the forces involved, and would be likely to fail.

Mayom said the difficult terrain in the region -- which is one of Africa's most inaccessible corners -- made it hard to keep track of LRA fighters who move quickly on foot through the bush and are hardened from their long guerrilla campaign.

"You would be lying if you said you were absolutely sure there were none in southern Sudan," he said. "Any number can easily penetrate." (Writing by Daniel Wallis; Editing by Matthew Tostevin)

Uganda: War-mongering against LRA 'Ill-Advised', warns northern leader

(**IRIN**) The northern Uganda peace process should still be given a chance despite signals that talks between the government and the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) have virtually collapsed, a key political leader in the region said.

"Our view is that until the chief mediator [Southern Sudan Vice President Riek Machar] comes up to declare the talks dead, and until they get a report from the Secession of Hostilities Monitoring Committee, war-mongering is ill-advised," said Norbert Mao, chairman of Gulu District, which was the epicentre of decades of conflict.

Mao, one of the northern leaders who has been at the centre of talks to end fighting between the Ugandan government and the LRA, urged both parties to restrain

themselves and give the peace process a chance. Hundreds of thousands of displaced northerners, taking advantage of relative peace in the region since talks began in 2007, have returned to their homes from camps.

Addressing the Ugandan parliament on 5 June, President Yoweri Museveni said his army was ready to flush the LRA out of its bases in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) if the Congolese government and the UN gave his country the go-ahead.

"I can assure all of you Ugandans that [LRA leader Joseph] Kony cannot disturb the peace in northern Uganda given the nature of professionalism of the Uganda Peoples Defence Forces (UPDF). We now have sophisticated equipment and are ready to respond," the president said.

"Since Kony is in Congo, it is now the responsibility of [DRC President Joseph] Kabila and the UN to call on us," he told the legislators. "In case Congo asks for our assistance, we are ready and prepared to go and destroy him."

Mao said Residents of Agweng camp in Lira dismantling their huts before leaving for their villages

leaders in northern Uganda feared that "trigger-happy elements in the Ugandan government have had the upper-hand" but this would not help build peace here. "For sure the majority of the fighters in the LRA want to come back home, but the ICC [International Criminal Court] warrants against their leaders are keeping them hostage," he told IRIN on 9 June. "The ICC is not helping Uganda at all."

The Rome-based court has prepared charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity, and indicted five top LRA leaders. But the charges have become a sticking point in the peace talks, with LRA leaders demanding that they be dropped before their fighters can renounce war.

"Our view in northern Uganda is that the [UN] Security Council should suspend the indictments and see how the alternative justice works. We are sure this will reassure the LRA to further pursue the peace process. The Rome Statute allows that," Mao, who is also a lawyer, explained, referring to the instrument that sets out the ICC's rules of procedure.

The situation has, however, been complicated by reports that the LRA killed 21 people including women and children as well as fighters of the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), in an attack in Southern Sudan on 5 June. Uganda government spokesman Capt. Chris Magezi said the LRA attacked the SPLA and civilians in Nabanga, near the Sudan-DRC border, where LRA fighters were expected to assemble if the talks had succeeded.

"The attack was near the assembly area and 21 people including women, children and SPLA fighters were killed," he said.

He denied reports that the attack followed another jointly carried out by the SPLA and the Ugandan army on the LRA bases. "The LRA has been making that accusation but

they are just trying to cover up many things they have been doing lately," he added. "Our nearest position is over 1,000 km away in Koboko [northwestern Uganda]."

Echoing Museveni's call, he added: "The UPDF is ready to help in jointly fighting the LRA through sharing intelligence with both the SPLA and the Congolese army. Should they also need our active participation, we are also ready."

But the government chief negotiator and interior minister Ruhakana Rugunda who had just met the UN envoy to the region, former Mozambican president Joachim Chissano, said that the government was still committed to the peace process and that it awaited a report from the mediators to make "a proper assessment of the process and decide the way forward".

"In any case negotiations were completed and what remained was appending signatures on the final agreement," he said.

[Darfur](#)

SAF inflicted heavy losses on rebels in North Darfur, 14 killed on SAF side

(Al-Rai Al-Aam) SAF foiled an ambush laid yesterday by SLA (Unity) in Umkadada in North Darfur.

SAF spokesperson Al-Aqbash said 14 soldiers killed on the part of SAF but succeeded to breakthrough the ambush and proceeded on a mission to secure the area.

SAF spokesperson said the rebels fled leaving behind a large number of dead, wounded and war equipment that were being counted.

According to Sudanese online, the Spokesperson of the SLA (Unity) Mahgoub Hussain in a statement he issued in London on 8th June 2008 claimed that SLA brigade 126 had laid an ambush and inflicted heavy losses on SAF in an area near Umkadada Locality in North Darfur.

The statement alleged SLA having killed 157 SAF soldiers, destroyed 19 SAF armoured vehicles and seized internationally banned weapons such as cluster bombs.

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