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(By Public Information Office)

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UN/ Agencies

Pronk says ICC has created a new political reality in Sudan

Sudan Tribune The former UN envoy to Sudan Jan Pronk welcomed the announcement by the chief Prosecutor of the ICC Luis Moreno-Ocampo of filing charges against two suspects of Darfur war crimes. He further said it has created a new political reality in Sudan.

In a statement to Sudan Tribune Pronk said the ICC has “created a new political fact, where the Security Council had failed” and that it is “a great opportunity for the people of Sudan”. Pronk said he hoped that “the Government of Sudan will urge the two persons concerned to go to the Hague, if and when required” describing such a step to be “in the interest of Sudan as a whole and give the state a renewed international credibility”

On Tuesday February 27 the International Criminal Court chief prosecutor named a Sudanese minister and a militia commander as the first suspects.

Pronk told Sudan Tribune that he has met one of the suspects Ahmed Haroun, state interior minister during the height of the Darfur conflict. The former UN envoy said he believed the charges made by the ICC against Haroun of crimes against humanity.

However Pronk added that he doesn't think Haroun acted alone and that he expects the ICC prosecutor to file charges against other senior Sudanese officials. Pronk voiced his

concern that the ICC indictments will create more insecurity for the aid operations in Darfur, yet he thinks it was a necessary step and that it could be “the end of the present catastrophe, by ending the state of impunity in Darfur”.

Pronk said he hoped that “President Al Bashir will show himself as a real statesman and that he will tell his people in Sudan that the statement made by the Prosecutor of the ICC is not a political act, but a step in accordance with international law, above politics”. He added that “It would also be in the interest of Sudan as a whole and give the state a renewed international credibility”.

Jan Pronk was the UN Secretary General’s Special Representative for Sudan since 2004 but was declared persona non grata by the Sudanese government in October of 2006 for publishing information in his web log about the army’s military defeats.

Ki Moon report before UNSC

Sudan Vision, The UN Security Council will be deliberating on the UNSC Secretary General, Ban Ki Moon report on Darfur, within the coming few days.

That was stated by Sudan Representative to UN N.Y, Dr. Abdulmahmoud Abdulhalim, during an interview with Sudan radio.

Abdulhalim told the report emphasised the political, humanitarian situations, besides enhancing peace keeping mechanisms on the ground on Darfur.

While underscoring the necessity to speed up the peaceful solution to Darfur issue, the report re-affirmed the agreement of UN, AU and GoNU on the support packages implementation

Government of Sudan Admits difficulties hampering UN support package

Sudan Vision, The Ministry of Foreign Affairs Spokesman Ambassador Ali AlSadiq admitted that there are some obstacles hampering the implementation of the first UN package of support to the African Union Mission in Darfur.

The first package supposed to end in last December but there are some obstacles regarding offices and logistical matters AlSadiq said adding that the government will work to solve these obstacles.

Sudan ambassador to the UN renews Sudan`s commitment to Addis Ababa and Abuja resolutions on UN support to the AU.

AlHayat Sudan ambassador to the UN affirmed that Sudan is committed to Addis Ababa and Abuja resolutions which stipulate clearly on provision of logistic, technical and advisory UN support to the AU forces in Darfur and not combatant peacekeeping forces as circulated by some foreign political and media circles.

According to the ambassador, Sudan has fully fulfilled its commitments towards the light support package and would reply soon to the UNSG's letter pertaining to the heavy support package.

MFA rules out statements by Sudan ambassador to UN accepting international forces. Presidency: implementation of the third phase of the support package linked to AU forces needs.

AllIntibaha; AlHayat, Ministry of Foreign Affairs refuted reports of international media that the content of Bashir's letter to the UNSG may include Sudan's acceptance to deploy 3000 UN troops in Darfur as part of Phase Two of the tripartite support package. In an interview with AllIntibaha, an MFA source denied what has been attributed to the ambassador.

The presidency affirmed that the implementation of the last phase of the three packages is linked to identification of the needs of the AU forces in Darfur.

CPA

Renewal of disagreement between the SPLM and the Ministry of Interior.

Alwan SPLM parliamentary caucus in Khartoum legislature threatened the Ministry of Interior to resort to the Constructional Court if no agreement was reached with the federal police over Khartoum State Police Act.

SPLM considers police as state issue according to the national interim constitution and that persistence of the police leadership to keep it federal is clear violation of article 100 of the Khartoum State Constitution.

GoNU

Sudanese official criticize political forces supporting ICC

Sudan Tribune A Sudanese Presidential aide has criticized political forces that announced their support for the trial of those accused of committing war crimes in Darfur at the International Criminal Court (ICC), and described them of being ignorant.

Sudanese Presidential Assistant and deputy leader of the ruling National Congress Party (NCP), Nafie Ali Nafie reiterated his strong criticism of political forces that announced their support for the ICC decision and said they were politically ignorant. He said by taking this stance these parties were committing political suicide and that their supporters would be given a reason to abandon them and join the national rank.

He further announced that anyone who evidence indicated was involved in criminal offences that violated the rights of individuals or groups would be tried, to be proven innocent or guilty stressing no one was above the law.

Nafie denied the government was intending to put forward for trial in Sudan those whose names appear on the ICC list and said "this will not necessarily occur".

The opposition National Umma Party, led by Al-Sadiq al-Mahdi, has urged the government, to cooperate with the ICC in the punishment of the perpetrators of war crimes and crimes against humanity in Darfur.

In a statement, the party asked the government to stop its excitable manner, political buffoonery, procrastination and outbidding that have tarnished the country's reputation, and instead sensibly accept the results of the investigations into Darfur war crimes and take a sound legal position that will stand up to the case.

In the same regard, the opposition Umma Party for Reform and Renewal that is led by Mubarak al-Fadil, said the ICC in The Hague was the best place try the state minister for humanitarian affairs, Ahmed Haroun, and the other suspect, militia leader Ali Kushayb accused of war crimes in Darfur.

Sudan militia leader accused of Darfur war crimes denies charges

Sudan Tribune A Sudanese accused of war crimes by the International Criminal Court made his first press appearance in a local newspaper Sunday to profess his innocence.

In comments made to the pro-Arab, pro-Islamist Al-Intibaha, Ali Mohammed Ali Abd-al-Rahman, also known as Ali Kushayb, denied leading a group of janjaweed militias in attacking civilians. Instead, he claimed to be an ex-soldier recruited for the Popular Defence Forces to protect villagers and nomads from the "real janjaweed" in the areas of Wadi Salih and West Darfur state.

Luis Moreno-Ocampo, the ICC's prosecutor, charged Kushayb and Ahmed Muhammad Haroun, the former junior interior minister responsible for the western region of Darfur, with 51 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity on Tuesday.

Kushayb denied having met with Haroun to carry out the alleged crimes.

Prosecutors singled out atrocities in four separate towns and villages, saying janjaweed fighters targeted civilians suspected of supporting rebels.

Sudan denies disagreement in the presidency over Darfur crisis

Sudan Tribune Sudanese official has denied any disagreement within the presidency with regard to the Darfur crisis. He further said the position of the first vice president en favour of the deployment of UN peacekeepers in Darfur is the SPLM position.

In an interview broadcast on the Egyptian Voice of the Arabs Friday 3 March, Presidential Press Secretary, Mahjoub Fadl Badri, said that "the stance towards Darfur has been settled through the different levels of government institutions in Sudan starting

from the Presidency, the National Unity Council of Ministers to the national legislative authority"; hence, the official stance of the Sudanese government is coherent and unified.

Southern Sudan/ SPLM

Bashir directs south Kordofan government to enforce the law

Sudan Vision AlRai AlAam President Bashir directed South Kordofan State to utilize all the state resources for achieving development for the benefit of the citizens.

AlBashir said the federal government has provided 92 billion Dinars for South Kordofan State and therefore there is no ground for the delay in the payment of salaries.

Bashir called on the government to apply the law and regulations against those who organize illegal strikes. Bashir, who attended the South Kordofan State government meeting, said the state is rich in oil resources that are needed for development.

Bashir rejects dissolution of the Popular Defence Forces and allocates 200 billions to develop western Kordofan.

AlHayat; AlRai AlAam Bashir renewed refusal of the government to dissolve the PDF assuring commitment to absorb them in the army and police.

He called for reconsidering the role of Western Kordofan Development Fund stressing that it was established as an alternative to the dissolution of the state. He disclosed that the federal government has given the corporation 200 billion Dinnars, which is more than any state budget.

Bashir has denied any tribal discrimination in recruitment of personnel of oil institutions.

Equatoria governor: SPLA causing security disturbances in the state.

AllIntibaha, Eastern Equatoria governor warned of explosion of security situation in the state because SPLA affiliates are not committed to hand over their arms as part of the demobilization plan and that they have become a source of insecurity.

He fears this insecurity may affect greater Equatoria. An SPLA member bombed himself by granite following a clash with his wife after he came back drunk.

1000 affected and 43 died from Cholera.

AllIntibaha, Sudan Tribune, Increasing numbers of cases of cholera, meningitis and measles have been reported in Juba Teaching Hospital last week.

A medical practitioner in the hospital who declined to be named said that the hospital is ill-equipped and can not fight cases of the epidemic outbreak in the town.

“There is acute shortage of drugs, medical personnel and slow pace of the current rehabilitation work in the hospital”, he said.

Government of South Sudan to open diplomatic mission in Cairo "soon"

(BBC Monitoring) The Government of South Sudan [GoSS] intends to open an office in Cairo soon to represent its interests in Egypt and the Arab League. Formashina Makuek [phonetic], an official at the Ministry of Regional Cooperation in the southern government, is expected to head the office.

Makuek visited Cairo recently to find suitable premises. He is expected to return after two weeks to take up his post.

Sources within the movement [Sudan People's Liberation Movement, SPLM] said the mission of the southern office in Cairo was to represent the government of the south, encourage Arab investment in the south, and strengthen ties with Egypt and other Arab states and to follow up on signed accords.

The decision by the GoSS recently to open a representative office in Washington caused extensive reaction in Khartoum with claims it was a rival embassy. The SPLM had at the time responded by saying this was permissible under the peace accord signed between the movement and the [governing party] National Congress in 2005.

Darfur/ Darfur Peace Agreement

Sudanese tribe says it will not hand over Darfur war crime suspect

(BBC Monitoring) The Ta'aysha tribe of the suspect wanted by the International Criminal Court according to accusations made by Luis Moreno-Ocampo last week, Ali Kushayb, has rejected any talk about the possibility of handing him over to the international court.

The nazir [paramount chief] of the Ta'aysha, Abd-al-Rahman Busharah Ali al-Sanusi, spoke to Al-Watan yesterday over the phone from the Nazarah's [tribal administration] HQ in Rihayd al-Bardi in the far south of west Darfur.

The nazir said Kushayb is innocent of all 51 crimes he is suspected of committing and said he rejected Kushayb's trial even at a national court.

"The tribe is completely confident that the government will not take the step of handing him over," Busharah added.

US special envoy, Sudan agree to accelerate efforts for Darfur peace

(BBC Monitoring) The US special envoy to Sudan, Andrew Natsios, agreed with the Sudanese president assistant in his first meeting held in Khartoum on the importance to find a swift solution for Darfur crises.

At the end of meeting on Darfur peace process, Nafie Ali Nafie told reporters that the two parties agreed on the need “to search quickly for a negotiated solution to Darfur” where a civil war has been raging for the past four years.

US envoy, described the talks as positive adding that they had discussed how to reach a settlement and the role he could play in boosting peace in the country.

Sudan: Commentary says SPLM should be "more involved in Darfur"

(BBC Monitoring) When the first vice president and the president of South Sudan, Lt-Gen Salva Kiir Mayardit spoke about the failure of the government to safeguard the lives and property of the people of Darfur, and the necessity of UN intervention, he was condemned by the ruling National Congress Party (NCP). They called Salva an opposition leader, not a partner. What Salva said is nothing new. The Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) has said very many times that it favours international involvement in the Darfur war.

What is new is the reaction of the NCP. This is part of an unwarranted pressure on the SPLM which the movement must confront and defeat. The NCP wants the SPLM to lie and tell the world that the situation in Darfur is okay. It wants to drag the SPLM into its self inflicted confrontation with the international community.

The SPLM must stand with the long suffering people of Darfur. The abject poverty which has been imposed on the people of Darfur by successive governments in Khartoum, especially the current one, must be ended by Darfurians, aided by the SPLM. The SPLM is struggling for the marginalized people of Sudan. The people of Darfur are the most marginalized after south Sudan.

The people of Darfur want peace but they also want justice. They want UN troops to come and save them following the failure of African Union (AU) forces. The AU cannot even protect itself, as shown by the Thursday attack on the house of one of its peace monitors and the stealing of his car in El-Fashir, Darfur's biggest town. The justice the people of Darfur are seeking can only come from the UN and the International Criminal Court (ICC). The SPLM must stand firm in support of international legitimacy in Darfur and the whole Sudan.

The Sudan government is part the problem of Darfur. It is unwilling to surrender power to Darfur, unless forced to as was the case in south Sudan. The SPLM must become more involved in Darfur. It has to make the cost of continuing neglect of Darfur higher for the government in Khartoum. The SPLM should not be deceived by the government that there is a partnership. There is only cohabitation. The national Congress is a radical

Islamic, pan Arab, centralist party whereas the SPLM is a mass movement, pro poor, federalist and secular in formation.

The National Congress is no longer a partner to the SPLM but a rival.

Former minister criticizes Darfur reconciliation conferences

(BBC Monitoring) The head of the parliamentary trade and industry committee, [former minister of external trade], Abd-al-Hamid Musa Kasha has said that all the reconciliation conference held in Darfur these days are scams and do not achieve peace in Darfur. He said one of the reasons that further complicated the problem was that the three Darfur state governors sidelined Darfur leaders in Khartoum.

Kasha was talking yesterday at the workshop on the role of NGOs in achieving peace in Darfur organized by the Sudanese Society for Development and the Good Deeds Group at the Bankers Club. He said reconciliation conferences being held these days do not achieve results because they are arranged hastily and artificially. He said evidence to support this was that fighting had resumed between sides that had signed these reconciliation agreements.

NCP: SPLM's proposals over Darfur peace are unfeasible.

AlRai AlAam, NCP prepared a written reply to the SPLM's proposal which describes it as unfeasible. The proposal links the position of the SPLM on the ICC with the resolution of Darfur issue within two weeks on the basis of an integrated vision to resolve the problem. The NCP considers this period as insufficient.

NCP- SPLM to negotiate Abyei temporary status.

Khartoum Monitor, President el Bashir declared that the SPLM and NCP have agreed to negotiate a temporary status on the Abyei area. Bashir, speaking to a mass rally at Lagawa, in South Kordofan, stated that the boundaries Demarcation Commission would start their demarcation in the forthcoming year. He declared that the experts who had drawn the report on Abyei boundaries were favouring Abyei, and on this issue he described them to be unfair in their evaluation.

SLM- Minnawi arrests two policemen in Darfur

AlRai AlAam, SLM- Minnawi arrested two policemen in Southern Darfur State. SLM says the release of the two policemen depends on releasing an SLM member who was arrested for illegally carrying a gun.

Council of ministers postpones decision on Ocampo accusations. Popular Congress Party criticises government stand, Communist Party supports trial by ICC

AlSahafa Council of Ministers postponed taking a decisive stance to what has been stated by the prosecutor of the ICC. Government has missed a good opportunity, according to the leader of the PCP Dr. Hassan al Turabi, by not trying in public those who are accused by the National Commission of Inquiry. The communist party sees no surprise in the declaration of the first list of suspects.

South Darfur, AU discuss cooperation.

Sudan Vision, South Darfur Deputy Governor, Dr. Farah Abdallah met yesterday, at his office, with the leaders of the AU Mission and discussed with them the role to be played by the AU in resolving the Darfur issue and implementing the peace agreement on the ground.

The Deputy Governor told SUNA that the meeting was fruitful and positive, it will boost peace and stability in the state, he said.

Security arrests Zalingei University students W. Darfur State.

Rai AlShaab Security forces in Zalingei arrested many students who formed a committee to look after lighting, meals and sanitations. However they did not get a response from the student support fund, they were angered and protested. Students have not yet been released.

Minnawi ends his visit to Libya, returns back to Khartoum; Minnawi meets Diraij and seeks signing MoU with Abuja non-signatories.

AlSahafa AlSudani Minnawi has decided to end his visit to Libya so as to meet the American envoy to Darfur. Moreover, the SLM and the National Redemption Front delayed signing of an MoU because the leader of the Justice and Equality Movement did not arrive from France.

Minnawi held a number of talks, said to be successful, with Darfur rebel movements. He Met with Diraij; head of the Federal Alliance.

Other Developments

Al-Obeyed court sentences Russian pilot six month imprisonment.

Rai AlShaab Al-Obeyed Criminal Court sentenced a Russian pilot six months imprisonment in addition to a fine of 3 million Dinars. The pilot was caught smuggling 104 bottle of alcohol in a vehicle carrying the logo of AMIS ceasefire Committee

Sudan welcomes LRA rebels but only for talks.

The Citizen, President Bashir says the presence of Ugandan Rebel Lord's army in Sudan will only be tolerated for peace negotiations, a special envoy for the talks said on

Saturday. This week the LRA said they would not renew the truce, raising fears of a new chapter in the brutal 20-year war in northern Uganda, which borders southern Sudan. The UN envoy for the conflict, Joaquim Chissano, a former Mozambique president, said the Sudanese president had clarified that he welcomed the LRA in south Sudan, but only for peace talks.

Acholi leader says acting to convince LRA to resume Uganda talks

Sudan Tribune A traditional leader of Ugandan rebels' tribe said he is in contact with Lord's Resistance Army leaders to persuade them to resume peace negotiations with the Ugandan government in Southern Sudan, Kampala based the Monitor reported.

Acholi Paramount Chief Rwot Onen Achana II has said he is in telephone contact with the Lord's Resistance Army leadership in an attempt to persuade them back to the Juba peace talks. But at least for now, Rwot Achana's pleas [over the last one month] seem to have fallen on deaf ears.

"I am in touch with both Kony and Otti, and we are talking. I am impressing it upon them that it is crucial that this war ends, and for good," he said upon his arrival in Juba, Southern Sudan on Friday.

Sudan: Poll shows majority back refusal to hand over war crime suspects to court

(BBC Monitoring) Majority of respondents to a poll conducted by Al-Jazeera.net, have expressed support for Sudan's position not to transfer some of its citizens accused of committing war crimes in Darfur, western Sudan, to the International Criminal Court.

Seventy-nine-point-six [79.6] per cent of the respondents in the poll, which has been running from 28 February, supported Khartoum's position not to hand over any Sudanese citizen to an international body outside the country.

Some 20.4 per cent of those polled in the three-day survey in which 15,000 people took part, opposed the position of the Sudanese government to reject any trial of any Sudanese outside the country.

China wins \$1.15 bln Sudan railways construction contract

Sudan Tribune, Sudan and China signed 28 February a 1.15 bln USD contract to construct a railway line to link the Sudanese capital, Khartoum, with Port Sudan in the east of the country.

China Railway Engineering Group Co Ltd and China Railway Erju Co Ltd unit Transtech Engineering Corp have jointly won a 1.15 bln USD construction contract in Sudan, according to a statement on the Sichuan province Department of Commerce's website.

China Railway Engineering Group indirectly controls China Railway Erju Co Ltd.

Inked after two years of negotiations, this contract is considered as the biggest construction contract in the field of the railways ever signed between China and Sudan. The total length of the railway line is 762 kilometres.

Merghani arranges for meeting of political forces' leaders

Al Rai Al Aam, political forces have expressed their tentative acceptance to a meeting between Bashir, Kiir, Taha Turabi, Nugud, DPA signatories and non-signatories in order to agree on a political charter, which would end the stalemate and to find practical ways and means for resolving the Darfur crisis.

The meeting is part of al Merghani's initiative to bring the national forces together, which was launched after he made contacts with presidential envoy in Cairo and following a meeting with el Mahdi.

Al Merghani's move has been accepted and welcomed by Dr. Turabi. Moreover, it has been agreed with the SPLM leadership through a telephone conversation to send the SPLM's Secretary General to meet al Merghani in order to agree on preparations and agenda of the meeting. Consultations are on going to agree on the agenda of the meeting.