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HIGHLIGHTS :

UN/ Agencies

World must protect Darfur civilians - UN team; UNHR report blames GoS for war crimes across Darfur.

All press The Sudanese Government has orchestrated war crimes and crimes against humanity in Darfur and resisted international attempts to intervene, according to a report Monday from a high-level U.N. human rights team, headed by Nobel peace laureate Jody Williams that was itself barred from the restive region by Sudanese officials. The report urged stronger U.N. Security Council intervention, sanctions and criminal prosecution.

The team said, as rape was widespread across Darfur, the U.N. SC should deploy the proposed U.N.-African Union peacekeeping force and provide full support to the International Criminal Court.

There also have been curbs on free speech and "credible information on torture, inhumane and degrading treatment by national Security and Military Intelligence during attacks and in the treatment of detainees."

Anti-government rebels were also to blame for human rights abuses including the rape and torture of civilians, the report said. Much of this violence was related to fighting between different rebel groups and an increase in violent banditry in the largely lawless region, it said.

Sudan wants limited UN role in Darfur

SudanTribune.com Sudan's president has detailed his objections to a U.N. plan to support AU troops in Darfur, saying in a document obtained Monday he wants fewer U.N. forces in the country and no helicopters or reconnaissance aircraft.

President Bashir said in a letter to UNSG circulated Friday that he did not agree to a proposal to send more than 3,000 U.N. military, police and other personnel, along with

substantial aviation and logistical assets, to beef up the 7,000-strong AU force trying to maintain security in the vast desert region.

The annex to the letter obtained Monday by The Associated Press details the government's insistence on maintaining control over the deployment of all international troops and police and on keeping the U.N. in a subordinate role to the AU.

The letter and annex focus on the U.N.'s proposed "heavy support" package, the second phase of a three-stage plan that is supposed to culminate in a 22,000-strong joint U.N.-AU peacekeeping mission. The first stage of the plan — a "light support" package adding some equipment, military officers and U.N. police to the AU operation — is nearly complete.

Sudan agreed to the three-stage plan at a meeting in November and it was endorsed by the AU's Peace and Security Council, but in January, al-Bashir said the U.N. troops were not needed because the AU force on the ground could handle the job.

The annex includes long quotations from the peace accord, which al-Bashir cited along with national laws to raise objections to the U.N.'s proposed deployment of humanitarian liaison, gender and protection officers.

On the military side, al-Bashir objected to deploying U.N. transport and cargo helicopters and said a proposed air reconnaissance unit went against the peace agreement. He said attack helicopters could be used to protect AU and U.N. forces — but not civilians.

UN, West facing pressure to impose sanctions on Sudan

SudanTribune.com Targeted sanctions against high-level officials could push Sudan to ease violence in troubled Darfur, some experts believe, after a U.N. report Monday blasted the West for not doing enough. But even such punishments might not sway Khartoum — and China or Russia might block any U.N. effort.

Pressure for action was increased with Monday's report by a top-level U.N. human rights team, which soundly criticised al-Bashir's government, saying it had "orchestrated and participated in" war crimes and crimes against humanity in Darfur.

The ICG is calling for sanctions targeting the officials in the Sudanese government and security forces who are involved in Darfur.

Many of these officials are believed to own stakes in companies in Sudan's oil, construction and communications industries, from which profits are funneled to pay salaries and buy equipment for janjaweed and other pro-government fighters in Darfur, the ICG says.

The ICG is calling on Western governments to impose restrictions making it impossible for these firms to trade with the West.

Targeted sanctions are supported by from opponents of al-Bashir's regime in Sudan, including the top opposition leader, Sadiq al-Mahdi, and Alfred Taban, editor of the independent newspaper, The Khartoum Monitor. However, there is scepticism whether such measures would work.

The International Crisis Group and the affiliated Save Darfur campaign have urged the U.S. and EU to impose sanctions by themselves.

New return corridors opened for Sudanese refugees in Ethiopia- UN

SudanTribune.com The voluntary repatriation of Sudanese refugees from Ethiopia to Blue Nile and Upper Nile States is gaining momentum, the UNHCR said today.

Over the weekend two new return corridors were officially opened. One convoy brought home some 323 rejoicing returnees from Fugnido Camp, Ethiopia through Pagak to Maiwut County in Upper Nile State. Another convoy transported 495 returnees from Yarenja Camp, Ethiopia through Bambodi back home to Damazin in Blue Nile State.

The returnees of both convoys received a warm welcome by local authorities, UNHCR, its partners and most of all by their friends and families. After years of living in exile, separated family members could finally be reunified.

Return movements through the Fugnido-Pagak-corridor are conducted in cooperation with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and other UN partners. The Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Sudan, Dr Lam Akol, described the opening of new corridors as a remarkable achievement by UNHCR.

GoNU

GoS reactions to report of the UN Human Rights Council

All press; The GoS rejected the UN Human Rights Mission's report in which it has called the international community to impose by force peacekeeping operations in Darfur. The UN Mission urged the international community and the GoS to organize a national conference for peace and human rights in Sudan which allows the participation of political forces, tribal and community leaders, women groups and human rights activists.

The Mission suggested that the conference be organized under the supervision of the UN and AU with participants from neighbouring countries and those concerned with reinforcing peace and human rights in Sudan. The Mission recommended establishing a mechanism or naming a Rapporteur for the human rights in Darfur. Minister of State at the MFA, **al Samani al Wasilla**, said the report is biased and based on information collected from biased organizations.

NCP and SPLM fail to agree on security arrangements.

The Citizens On arrival in Juba from Khartoum, First V.P, President of GoSS, and Salva Kiir said that Sudanese Armed Forces' accusations that 35,000 SPLA forces are present now in Blue Nile State are completely untrue.

Kiir disclosed that Presidency met for about 2 hours without reaching an agreement on security arrangements. He added that Joint Defence Board (JDP) Chairman, had enlightened the Presidential Council about problems the JDP faces concerning formation of integrated units, its distribution through out the states and their funding for the year 2005-2006.

Conflict between NCP and SPLM in Babanusa Locality (County), Security authorities intervene.

Allintibaha Alсахafa; Due to delays, according to SPLM followers, in handing over the position of the Executive Director of Babanousa Locality to SPLM named Executive Director, the followers of the SPLM rushed into the office of the Locality and threatened to close it. According to eye witnesses a number of SAF troops have been deployed in the town's market. However, the SPLM nominee for the position, Adam Karshom, has threatened to ask SPLA to intervene to enable him assumes his job.

Southern Sudan/ SPLM

Mini summit between GoSS President, Kiir and Ugandan president Museveni

The Citizens The First V.P and President of GoSS, Salva Kiir, returned from Kampala yesterday evening after a one day official visit to Uganda where he discussed among others bilateral relations between the two countries. Kiir visit was in response to an official invitation from President Museveni.

South Sudan President urges patience with peace

SudanTribune.com South Sudan's President Salva Kiir urged his people on Monday to be patient in waiting for results from a deal aimed at rebuilding the oil-rich region after more than two decades of conflict.

"People thought that we would turn southern Sudan into paradise within six months after the day of the agreement," he told journalists, "Expectations are very high (but) ... We have so many challenges in southern Sudan. It was destroyed by the war."

But southern Sudan accuses Khartoum of being slow to implement the agreement and of renegeing on key points of sharing oil revenue and drawing a common border through an area straddling Sudan's richest energy reserves.

South Sudan considers ways to regulate land conflicts.

SudanTribune.com The Government of South Sudan (GoSS) is mulling ways to improve its land policies to prevent land-related conflicts in southern Sudan.

In an interview with Sudan Radio Service (SRS) in Juba last, the chairman of the Land Commission, Robert Lado, said that land allocation and land ownership have resulted in conflicts between the government and some local communities. He added that there are also conflicts between host communities and internally displaced persons (IDP's) in some parts of southern Sudan.

Lado said the GoSS will work to improve land allocation and management policies to discourage people from grabbing land illegally.

Lado further added the lack of a proper policy on land has affected development in the region, saying that it is difficult for the government to construct schools, hospitals and roads because there is no distinction between government and private land.

Salary delay causes grave concerns in Sudan's Eastern Equatoria.

SudanTribune.com The Eastern Equatoria state spokesperson, who is also the minister for Information and Communication, Ben P. Loky said council of ministers has, today, in emergency meeting, directed all government units in the state to prepare their pay sheets based on new exchange rate of SD 200 per dollar than SD 230 per dollar.

Briefing journalists after emergency meeting, Loky said Cabinet took the decision in order to rescue families of employees now going without money since February this year. He appealed to all employees to accept what he term, emergency remedy and assured them that minister of finance has been directed to immediately go for further follow up in Juba.

He also appealed to Goss ministry of finance to rescue state authority before their workers could go on rampage.

Central Equatoria Muslim Community declares their SPLM membership.

The Citizen The SPLM launched a massive Mobilization and Organization Campaign at Peace Square in Juba yesterday. The campaign which drew a large number of people across Juba town is the first in the southern sector.

At the occasion, the representative of Central Equatoria's Muslim community declared himself and the entire Muslim community new members of SPLM.

Among other recognized new members is H.E Santronino Arika, the former regional Governor of Equatoria, who declared to southerners that time for unity has come, we must all complete the journey together.

Darfur/ Darfur Peace Agreement

Attacks on humanitarian agencies politically motivated, Commissioner. Western Darfur refuted reports on UN suspending humanitarian work in the State

AlHayat; Sudan Vision Attacks on governmental and relief agencies and organizations have been discovered to be politically motivated, Western Darfur Commissioner, Mohammed Al-Hassan Awad told journalist yesterday.

“These attacks are usually followed by a propaganda published on the internet with the aim of impressing on public opinion that conditions in Darfur are stable in addition to giving support to those calling for deployment of international forces in Darfur” Awad said.

The Commissioner affirmed that some IDP camps have been exploited as pressure tool on the Government to accept UNSC resolution (1706). The Commissioner, who talked to a press conference held yesterday in the town of el Geneina said IDP camps to portray

conditions inside them as deteriorating. He however added that if these camps were evacuated and IDPs returned to their home areas, there would be no rebellion in Darfur.

NCP welcomes new Western Darfur Governor.

Sudan Vision The Chairman of the NCP in West Darfur State Gaffer Abd Al Hakim has welcomed the appointment of the SPLM Chairman Abu al Gassim imam as a governor for the Sate. “All the National Congress Party organs in west Darfur State are preparing for receiving the new governor tomorrow in Al Geneina”, said Abd Al Hakim adding that West Darfur state has formed a council for peace that includes NCP and all the DPA signatories.

Darfur tribes agree to reconcile.

Sudan Vision Meeting in El Fashir, capital of North Darfur State of Conference of reconciliation between tribes ended activities yesterday in the legislative council of al Fashir.

The conference was attended by State Governor, Legislative Council speaker, Head of the Judiciary System, In addition to a senior delegation from UNMIS.

The Governor addressed the final session of the conference and greeted the reconciliation parties describing what was achieved as a major task.

The ICC question:

Reactions to ICC:

Alсахafa, a senior government official revealed that the GoS is studying a proposal on sending a high level team of legal experts to The Hague to challenge the allegations of the ICC Prosecutor on the need to try Sudanese suspects by the ICC.

Director of MFA Department of International Organizations and International Law, **Suraj al Din Hamid**, said yesterday in a statement to *Alсахafa* that there are specialized teams studying how to deal with ICC explaining that the teams are contacting all concerned parties. Sending experts to The Hague, he said, is under consideration of high levels in the government. Suraj hopes that the GoS takes this opportunity to ask a national team of experts to deal with the ICC.

Meanwhile, *Sudan Tribune* reported that Ambassador Suraj-el-Din Hamid described prosecution of Sudanese nationals by the ICC as beyond the scope of legal body formed on the basis of the Rome agreement, which has never been ratified by Sudan, ICC has no jurisdiction in prosecuting Sudanese national.

Arab Interim Parliament says ICC not eligible for prosecuting any Sudanese

Sudan Vision Arab Interim Parliament decided that the ICC is not authorized to persecute any Sudanese nationals. Head of the Sudanese parliamentary Committee for Foreign, Political and National security affairs, Mohammed Al Hassan Amin said in a press conference that the Arab interim Parliament, during its first Ordinary Session for 2007 which was held between March 8th and 10th, had taken several decisions and recommendations related to a number of Arab issues.

He pointed out that the Arab Parliament had, after it referred the ICC resolution about Sudanese suspects, decided to assert impartiality of Sudanese Judiciary and to reject any intervention in its affairs. It is also asserted that it is only party authorized to deal with all those who commit violations and crimes against human rights and freedom beside the necessity of preserving those rights and freedoms to national and international laws.

Sudanese cabinet divided over ICC issue

SudanTribune.com Differences among the members of the GoNU on the ICC led to postponing discussions on the issue till next week. During the meeting of Council of Ministers, differing points of views were expressed in the verbal reports on how to deal with the issue made by political forces forming the GoNU.

In a cabinet meeting chaired by the Second V.P, Taha, on Sunday, the Presidential Senior aide, Minni Minawi, demanded that minister Haroun be dismissed from his post and turned over to the ICC along with Kushayb. While the ministers of the SPLM advocated cooperation with the ICC provided that the accused are tried in Khartoum by international and Sudanese judges. The ministers of the National Congress Party, the senior government partner, led the trend for rejecting the trial of any Sudanese national outside the country. The cabinet postponed the discussion to next week's session. It urged the representatives of political forces to present written reports for consideration in working out a joint position by the various sides represented in the Government. The cabinet met in the absence of President al-Bashir and his First Vice-President General Salva Kiir.

Other Developments

US to build largest CIA Centre for East Africa in Sudan - report

SudanTribune.com The US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) reportedly would construct the largest operative centre for East Africa in Sudan, said a report published yesterday.

The Sudanese government has permitted 400 containers that belonged to the US embassy in Khartoum, to enter the country following long standing objections by the Sudanese treasury. According to the London based *al-Hayat* newspaper, the shipment is believed to contain special equipments and building materials used to construct the new US embassy in Khartoum.

The report added that the embassy will include a regional centre for the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) with spy equipment directed to East Africa in the context of the increased cooperation between the CIA and the Sudanese intelligence services.

The Los Angeles Times, last year has revealed that Sudanese intelligence Chief Salah Gosh was flown to Washington in April 2005 on board a private jet to meet with CIA officials as part of their partnership for the war on terror.

Britain describes Sudan's letter on Darfur as "a major setback"

SudanTribune.com Britain on Monday called a letter from Sudan's president contesting a plan for U.N. peacekeepers in Darfur "a major setback" that the U.N. Security Council needed to discuss. "The letter is very disappointing," British U.N. Ambassador Emyr Jones Parry said. "It's a major setback, and is tantamount to a requirement for a renegotiation of some of the points in the ... package." Security Council members intend to review the letter this week and Britain as well as other Europeans favor sanctions against Sudan, which Russia and China are expected to oppose.

Israel teaches Darfur refugees Holocaust

SudanTribune.com Israel took refugees from Darfur on a tour Monday of the Jerusalem memorial to the six million Jews exterminated in the Holocaust.

Around 300 Sudanese have sought sanctuary in Israel from persecution in Darfur after walking in from neighbouring Egypt. However, Most remain in custody, having been detained as citizens of an enemy state as Israel has no relations with Sudan. A little over 100 have been released to work on agricultural collectives and cooperatives.

The refugees were told that the complex symbolised the suffering that man can inflict on his fellow man.

China criticises Bashir letter to SG as mixing up. *Rai AlShaab*

China's UN envoy called upon President Bashir to interpret his last letter to the UN GS, Ban ki- Moon, in which Bashir rejected deployment of international forces into Darfur. The letter is bound to mix up the situation once again, he said.