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UNMIS**

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(By Public Information Office)

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## **HIGHLIGHTS :**

### **UN/ Agencies**

UN's new humanitarian chief USG John Holmes held a press conference at UNMIS yesterday in which he highlighted his discussions with senior government officials in Khartoum, Juba and Darfur, gave his general impressions on the humanitarian situation and answered questions from the press.

Most major local dailies covered the briefing excerpts of which are to be found in the Special Media Monitoring Report attached separately. Below are some of the headlines run by the press:

Holmes describes government procedures as "bureaucratic"; says UN will not accept police and army protection of relief convoys (*AlSahafa*); UN humanitarian chief commends aid efforts in Darfur (*The Citizen*); Holmes describes situation in Darfur as calm and good (*AlRai AlAam*); UN humanitarian chief confirms Darfur humanitarian operations to continue (*AlIntibaha*); UN calls for freedom of movement for aid workers in Darfur (*SudanTribune.com*); UN humanitarian chief holds "positive" talks in Sudan (*SudanTribune.com*); Holmes rejects push for sanctions on Sudan and pegging the political process to the humanitarian operations (*AlWihda*).

### **Sudanese FVP discusses Darfur with UN, AU envoys**

(*SudanTribune.com*) First Vice-President and President of the southern Sudan government, Salva Kiir Mayardit, met at his office today AU and UN envoy, Salim Ahmed Salim and Jan Eliasson.

Salim described the meeting as excellent. In a statement to SUNA, he said the first vice-president lauded the efforts made by the AU and UN to bring peace and stability in Darfur.

Salim said the first vice-president's initiative to invite groups which did not sign the Darfur Peace Agreement to join the peace march, to be given full support because it would make negotiations easier and lead to the achievement of peace and stability in Darfur, and Sudan as a whole

### **Envoys meet Turabi, Nugud and el-Mahdi**

(*AlAyaam et al*) Envoys Salim Ahmed Salim and Jan Eliasson held talks yesterday with opposition leaders Dr. Turabi, Nugud and el-Mahdi. The talks focused on means to resume political dialogue, putting an end to the conflict and charting a unified course for a solution to the Darfur crisis.

***Envoys Salim and Eliasson highlighted in the meeting the pressures the UN is facing to solve the expedite solutions to the Darfur crisis*** mainly as a result of the humanitarian

situation and the draft resolution on sanctions against Sudan should it persist in rejecting the deployment of an international force to Darfur in addition to the pressures by pressure groups and international public opinion on the member states of the UN to find solutions to the problems. They said time is running out and the international community is losing its patience on Darfur so urgent solutions have to be sought.

*Dr. Salim was critical of the Abuja deal which he described as a “failure”* because it did not encompass the other political forces as had been requested by the international community during the negotiations process. *AlSahafa* reports however that the participants in the meeting agreed that the Darfur Peace Agreement was “dead”.

*Umma leader Sadiq el-Mahdi said that his party supports the deployment of international forces to Darfur* to protect the civilian population there and calls for political solutions as opposed to bilateral agreements. El-Mahdi described the Darfur Peace Agreement as “dead” and said that CPA is not comprehensive and called for a comprehensive conference to transform the CPA out of its bilateral garb.

The envoys, he said, had promised to study the proposals made and to open channels of communications on the issue.

*Radhia Achouri, UNMIS Spokesperson, meanwhile said that the meeting comes within the framework of consultations* and widening the scope of participation for solutions to the Darfur crisis and completing the CPA.

## **The Transition Debate**

### **Sudan Bashir, UN chief to discuss Darfur crisis**

(*SudanTribune.com*) Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir is due to meet UN chief Ban Ki-moon in Riyadh on Tuesday to discuss the Darfur conflict, in the face of Khartoum’s continued defiance of international demands.

An Arab League official said on Monday the Riyadh talks would also be attended by Saudi Arabia’s King Abdullah, Arab League chief Amr Mussa and the head of the African Union’s executive arm, Alpha Oumar Konaré.

Tuesday’s talks come on the eve of the annual Arab summit in the Saudi capital which Ban is also due to attend.

Sudanese Foreign Minister Lam Akol echoed Bashir’s comments in Riyadh on Monday, saying the ICC had “no right to put any Sudanese citizen on trial.”

## **EU wants tougher action on Darfur but sees limited options**

(*SudanTribune.com*) The European Union acknowledged Monday that the lack of a military option and China's U.N. support for Sudan will make it tough to take decisive action on the Darfur crisis, despite calls by EU leaders for tougher measures.

"You have to make sure that that you do not raise expectations that cannot be met," said EU spokesman Amadeu Altafai Tardio.

Military experts have also expressed doubt about the feasibility of imposing a no-fly zone over such a vast and remote area in central Africa.

EU foreign policy chief Javier Solana is to attend the Arab League Summit on Wednesday and hopes to raise the issue of Darfur on the sidelines,

EU officials said the government of Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir also seemed to act out of fear the international community was bent on ousting him or dividing up the country [*click on the link for the full text of this story* [EU wants tougher action on Darfur but sees limited options](#)]

## **CPA**

### **Parties to the CPA fail to resolve outstanding issues**

(*AlAyaam*) The Parties to the CPA have failed at a meeting yesterday to resolve the outstanding issues between them but did agree to refer discussions on the ICC and Abyei to a later meeting of their leaderships.

The meeting that was co-chaired by the leaders of the two sides also saw them agreed on the possibility to tap on the SPLM's relations with the armed factions in Darfur as well as its regional and international links to help resolve some of the problems.

## **GoNU**

### **Reactions to the Omdurman clashes**

(*Rai AlShaab et al*) The Minister of Justice says the State Prosecutor will take over responsibilities for investigations into the recent clashes in Omdurman between the police and SLM-MM elements.

He said he held a meeting yesterday with Minnawi on the matter and the latter lauded his ministry's efforts towards an impartial judiciary.

*The Minister of Interior has expressed support* for this action by the justice ministry.

*On the other hand, the legal advisor for the SLM says the SLM will only collect its dead from the Omdurman incidents after the release of SLM elements arrested in connection with the crime. He pointed out that this is necessary so there will be no mix-up in identifying the dead because some have been burnt beyond recognition.*

He further pointed out that authorities have also arrested SLM elements in areas far from the scene of the incident.

*In another development, the Director of Police* who addressed the funeral ceremony of a police officer who fell during the clashes with the SLA-MM in Omdurman, said that security in the capital is paramount and that authorities will evict militias from the capital even be it by the use of force, *AlWatan* daily reports.

He described the death of the policemen as a turning point in the police forces and vowed that from now on the police will enforce the laws with a strong hand.

### **Member of the Darfur-Darfur Dialogue Committee calls on government to implement militia disarmament laws**

*(Rai AlShaab)* A member of the Darfur-Darfur Dialogue committee has called on government to urgently disarm all militias in the capital to avoid anarchy.

Mjr. Gen. Adam Hamid Musa pointed out that it is wrong to allow armed elements into the capital and the government must implement the laws even if that requires the use of force.

### **Sudan, Uganda agree to develop transport, communications**

*(SudanTribune.com/ New Vision)* Sudan and Uganda have agreed to improve the transport and communication network between the two nations. The deal was reached during the fifth session of the Joint Ministerial Commission in Khartoum last week.

The two countries committed themselves to improving the road network by upgrading four key roads connecting the two countries, the daily *New Vision* reported.

The Gulu-Nimule-Juba-Malakal and Arua-Koboko-Juba roads will be tarmacked. The Moroto-Kotido-Kaabong-Kapoeta and the Kitgum-Ikotus roads will be made first class gravel.

The two countries also agreed to reactivate water transport on River Nile (between Packwach and South Sudan's capital, Juba) and build a railway network between Packwach-Arua-Yei-Juba-Wau or Gulu-Atiak-Nimule-Juba-Wau. Sudan Airways has also promised to resume flights to Entebbe next month.

Rugunda said the two countries signed a memorandum of understanding that provides for cooperation in health care and the prevention of malaria, HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis.

They also agreed on the need to put in place mechanisms to rehabilitate and resettle refugees and returnees.

## **Southern Sudan/ GoSS/SPLM**

### **South Sudan arrests minister of finance over corruption**

*(East African Business Week/ST)* South Sudan's finance and economic planning minister is under house arrest as President Salva Kiir cracks a whip on corruption.

Arthur Akuien Chol was stopped from traveling to the unity capital, Khartoum, and placed under house arrest on March 17, to pave way for a graft inquiry involving the procurement of some 300 vehicles for the Government of South Sudan (GOSS).

The cars meant for the police and other government departments, including use by top government officials, were reportedly heavily priced beyond market prices.

Ambassador John Andruga Duku, South Sudan's representative in Kenya, confirmed to Business Week of the arrest.

But he emphasized that the arrest was not a declaration of guilt but a means of allowing a free investigation into the case.

The arrest is the first high profile crack down on what analysts say are rising cases of corruption in the semi-autonomous nation.

### **University of Juba to be sent back home**

*(Khartoum Monitor)* Yesterday saw the travel to Juba of the first batch of students of the University of Juba as authorities start the process of returning the university to its original base.

A farewell ceremony was staged at the Khartoum airport as the 50 students from the faculties of education and community studies and rural development boarded their flight to Juba.

### **Lord's Resistance Army strikes in W. Equatoria**

*(The Citizen)* A senior SPLA officer announced yesterday that the Lord's Resistance Army on 25 March attacked a village 10kms. south of Maridi town, Western Equatoria State.

SPLA and JIU forces were immediately dispatched to the rescue.

## **Darfur/ Darfur Peace Agreement**

**Greater SLM/A accuses National Congress Party of trying to block change and transformation in the country**

(*Rai AlShaab*) The Greater SLM/A has denounced what it dubbed as the “assassinations that the liberation forces are being subjected to in Khartoum” and has called for confrontation against the government.

Referring to the recent clashes between SLM-MM elements and the police in Omdurman, the Greater SLM/A said these are programmed operations being carried out by the National Congress Party machinery.

The NRF has also denounced the clashes [[click on the link for the full text of the NRF statement Darfur NRF denounces killing of SLM-MM members in Khartoum](#)]

### **Darfur rebels say lack of preparation prevented Kiir meeting**

(*SudanTribune.com*) Darfur rebel group regretted that Sudanese First Vice-President had visited the neighbouring Chad without prior consultation to arrange a meeting with him.

The National Redemption Front (NRF) regretted in a statement Monday the “inability” to meet the Sudanese First Vice President Salva Kiir Mayardit during his visit to Chad on March 20-21.

In a press statement, the rebel group said this “opportunity was missed due to poor preparation for the meeting and lack of information prior to the visit.”

### **Rebels persist SLM commander killed for his defection**

(*SudanTribune.com*) Esam al-Haj, one a former member of SLM-MM, reiterates that Abdelshafi Juma Arabi was ambushed by the Sudanese security services because he was on his way to join rebel factions opposed to the peace deal.

Al-Haj disclosed that Abdelshafi was in secret contact with their group and his defection was imminent but was waylaid by the security.

"We are not sure who killed him. But he died in an area controlled by Janjaweed (militias)," said SLM spokesperson al-Tayeb Khamis.

### **New initiative unveiled to bring DPA non-signatories on board**

(*Rai AlShab*) Sources intimate that one of the advisory bodies within the Presidency of the Republic will soon unveil a new initiative in the latest bid to bring the Darfur Peace Agreement non-signatory groups on board.

This new initiative dubbed “Initiative of the People of God” is in collaboration with leaders of Islamic sects inside and outside the country.

### **Other Developments**

### **Masked armed group sneaks into oil-field control room; abducts workers**

*(Rai AlShaab)* A group of masked armed men sneaked at dawn last Sunday into the control rooms of the Dafra oil-field in South Kordofan and abducted four workers.

The Kalashnikov-wielding armed men then took the four to a place nearby where there were more than 100 armed men. The captives explained to the abductors that they are relatives of Mr. Ahmed Dehiya, the Secretary-General of the Misseiriya Free Forum, whom authorities are keeping under detention. They said before freeing the four that the government will have to bear responsibility for whatever happens in the oil-fields if Mr. Dehiya is not released within 72 hours.

*Rai AlShaab* notes that Chinese oil companies evacuated their employees from the oil areas yesterday morning.