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By Public Information Office

Main News

- Vice President to address donors conference today, Norway to allocate \$490 m for Sudan (Al-Khartoum/Akhbar Al Yom)
- Census exercise ends today, Gedaref and Northern Kordofan covered by 100% (Al-Sudani)
- Donors conference opens in Oslo (AP)

UN/Agencies

- UAMID top official calls for establishment of security in Darfur (ST)
- WFP Announces cut of humanitarian assistance to affected people in the three Darfur States (Al-Ayyam)

GoNU

- US envoy urges China to use influence in Sudan (ST)
- Sudanese army denies abduction of Egyptian oil workers (ST)

GoSS

- Council of States urges GoSS to strengthen security (Al-Khartoum)
- Funeral of GoSS Minister of Defense to be held in Juba today (Radio Miraya)

Darfur

- Senior Presidential Assistant accuses Government of dragging its feet on DPA implementation (Al-Khartoum)
- Darfur peace partner denies suspension of participation in government (ST)
- Veteran rebel says neighboring countries not neutral in Darfur crisis (ST)
- Head of ceasefire body slams Darfur civilian bombing (ST)

Miscellaneous

- **Ahead of donor conference, Sudanese women express concern over women situation and lack of funding (UNIFEM)**
 - **Sudan: Greater international support of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement important for progress in Sudan (RI)**
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Highlights

Main News

Vice President to address donors' conference today, Norway to allocate \$490 m for Sudan

(Al-Khartoum/Akhbar Al Yom/Al-Sahafa) May 5 - Sudanese Vice President Ali Osman Mohamed Taha will address today at Oslo, Norway, a two-day international donors conference with the participation of GoNU, GoSS, donor countries and concerned regional as well as international organizations.

Sudan Ambassador to Norway Dr. Mohamed Ali Al-Tom said the conference preparatory meetings were held yesterday and discussed the implementation of the pledges made by the donors for the period 2005-2007 as well as the situation in Darfur.

The Ambassador noted that a high-level participation was expected at the conference from Sudan, USA, European countries, and the regional and international donors.

Norwegian Deputy Foreign Minister announced that his country would allocate \$ 490 million to assist Sudan over the next three years, hoping that other countries would follow suit.

The paper said that a report submitted by GoNU to the donors urged donor countries to pay \$6 billion to cover development needs during the up coming three years.

On the other hand, Deng noted that Sudan would face new needs throughout the period until 2011, citing the elections in 2009 and the referendum in Southern Sudan in 2011 as examples.

Donors conference opens in Oslo

OSLO (AP) May 6 - Norway and the European Union on Tuesday pledged \$935 million in aid to Sudan over the next four years as a donors conference started in Oslo.

The conference hosted by Norway pledged \$500 million during 2008-2011 to help Africa's largest nation recover from 21 years of internal warfare.

The E.U. immediately followed up with a promise of \$435 million in the same period.

Sudanese Vice President Ali Osman Taha addressed the meeting calling on other delegates attending the conference to step up support for his country.

"You can't have peace without development, and you can't have development without peace," he said in his opening remarks to the meeting of 38 organizations and donor nations.

Norwegian Aid Minister Erik Solheim said. "Though there are difficulties as we all know, there are a number of provisions in the peace agreement that have been implemented."

Solheim opened the meeting by calling for a moment of silence in memory of Sudanese officials, including Southern Sudan's Defense Minister Dominic Dim Deng, who died in a plane crash last week. Southern Sudan's President Salva Kiir canceled plans to attend the meeting because of the crash.

Most countries are expected to announce their pledges at a special session near the end on the meeting, which lasts through Wednesday.

"It is evident that much has been accomplished," said Taha, the Sudanese vice president. "However, we honestly feel what has been offered (in aid) so far does not satisfy our national expectations and aspirations with the colossal demands of post-conflict reconstruction and recovery."

The Sudan Consortium, as the donors group is called, is chaired by the Sudan Government of National Unity, the n south.

Despite the peace pact, fighting has raged on in Sudan's troubled Darfur province. But Solheim said that mustn't be allowed to stand in the way of the broader peace effort.

"This is an opportunity to discuss the progress of the peace process, but it is also a donor's conference," said Solheim.

Census exercise ends today, Gedaref and Northern Kordofan covered by 100%

(Al Sudani/Khartoum Monitor) The 5th National Population and Housing Census, began 22 April, will wrap up today amid political controversy, which led to its delay for a week.

The Chairman of the Census Monitoring and Evaluation Committee Dr. Abdel-Bagi Al-Gailani described Monday the census exercise as excellent despite the difficulties encountered in South Sudan and Southern Kordofan States.

Dr. Gailani said the census exercise was proceeding well all over the country, revealing that enumeration rates in Gedarif and Northern Kordofan reached 100% while the count rates in Khartoum State amounted to 85%, West Darfur 85%, South Darfur 90% and North Dafur 8%5.

He underscored that the census exercise in South Kordofan was facing some difficulties that led to its delay for several days, maintaining that reports confirmed the process was currently progressing satisfactorily.

Meanwhile, Dr. Al-Gailani attributed the difficulties facing the census monitors in South Sudan to technical reasons. He put the percentage of census performance in Equatoria States at 70%.

UN/Agencies

UNAMID top official calls for establishment of security in Darfur

(ST) May 05, 2008 (OSLO) — a top UN official said today that security in Darfur is the top priority for peacekeeping force that is in the process of deployment.

The head of the joint UN and African Union mission (UNAMID), Rodolphe Adada said in prepared statements to the Sudan Partners Forum in Oslo held behind closed doors that the war in Darfur “consists of sharp spikes in violence interspersed with long periods in which chronic insecurity is the norm”.

“We should consolidate the secure zones, build confidence in the grey zones, and work hard for a ceasefire and civilian protection in the areas of active hostilities,” he said.

The UN official said that the deterioration in security situation in Darfur caused lack of access by humanitarian leading to “nutritional indicators above the emergency threshold for the first time since 2005”.

Groups of donor countries are meeting in Oslo, Norway to show their support for maintaining peace in Sudan by pledging development funds.

Adada said the priorities for UNAMID operations include securing humanitarian convoys, protecting IDP camps, reviving ceasefire commission engaging rebel movements and involving civil society groups and Darfur IDP’s in the peace process.

But he stressed that Darfur “cannot wait for UNAMID to become fully deployed and cannot wait for the peace process to unfold”.

UN Security Council adopted resolution 1769 on July 31st which authorized a hybrid UN-AU force (UNAMID) consisting of 26,000 troops and police but so far it only has only 9,000 personnel.

However the deployment was impeded by Khartoum’s objections to the composition of the force and lack of helicopters. The UN has for months been seeking 6 attack and 18 transport helicopters to support the force with no success.

Peace talks brokered by the United Nations (UN) and the African Union (AU) between Sudan's government and Darfur rebel groups in the Libyan city of Sirte last October failed after main movements boycotted them.

International experts also say more than 300,000 were killed and 2 million have been driven from their homes by the conflict in Darfur, a region that is roughly the size of France.

WFP Announces cut of humanitarian assistance to affected people in the three Darfur States

(Al-Ayyam May 1) WFP announced cut of some food commodities it is providing to the affected Darfur people beginning next May, affecting 2.4 million people in the three States based on its estimates. This is due to hijacking and banditry against its trucks.

Laurent Bukera, Head of WFP Office in North Darfur, said in a press conference held in WFP Al-Fashir Office yesterday that WFP was forced to make this cut because banditry against trucks carrying WFP assistance has led to slowing the rate of food deliveries to its warehouses in Darfur. These conditions have forced WFP to cut the food rations being distributed to the people across Darfur in order to ensure availability of sufficient quantities for distribution to every body carrying ration card during the next rainy season.

Bukera disclosed that since the beginning of the current year, 60 trucks were stolen of which 21 were recovered while 39 are still missing, in addition to 29 drivers unaccounted for and two drivers killed. He added that such attacks are forcing trucks to drive in large convoys moving very slowly for replenishing the food. He indicated that WFP has no alternative but to cut the ration of cereals, pulses and sugar by half while the remaining commodities of oil and high nutrient CSB will remain at their normal ration levels. The Head of WFP affirmed his concern about the nutrition and health situations of the citizens, indicating that children under five will receive special attention through the supplementary and therapeutic feeding. He announced the resumption of school feeding program when schools reopen in June.

As for the efforts being exerted by WFP to restore the rations, he said that they were discussing with the government for increasing police escorts for convoys. He called upon all rebel groups and their commanders on the ground to stop targeting the convoys in order to ensure safety along the roads on which the program is operating so that relief can be delivered to the needy people.

GoNU

US envoy urges China to use influence in Sudan

(ST) May 5, 2008 (OSLO) — China should use its economic might to influence events in Darfur and its absence from an international donors' meeting on Sudan was disappointing, the U.S. special envoy for the east African State said on Monday.

Richard Williamson told Reuters in an interview that Sudan remained the "world's biggest humanitarian crisis" and called the violence in its Darfur region a "genocide in slow-motion."

Williamson criticized China's absence from the start of an international donors' conference on Sudan on Monday.

"China is the country with the deepest economic involvement with the nation of Sudan — they buy the bulk of Sudan's oil," Williamson said. "I am told that close to 6 percent of the imported oil in China comes from Sudan."

"So if they were to choose to use that influence constructively, they could have an impact, and one that other members of the international community would like to see them take," he said.

Williamson said he told a closed meeting on Darfur in Oslo that there could be no progress on Darfur if the Comprehensive Peace Agreement unraveled. The 2005 peace accord ended 25 years of fighting between northern and southern Sudan.

"While there is an acute need for economic development in Darfur, no meaningful progress is possible until we have a secure situation," he said, calling reports on Monday of an air bombardment in Darfur "extremely troubling and unacceptable."

Sudanese army denies abduction of Egyptian oil workers

(ST) May 5, 2008 (KHARTOUM) — The Sudanese army today denied a report on the abduction of nine Egyptian workers in oil fields in Southern Kordofan, terming the report as "false."

The local press in Khartoum published reports saying that a rebel group called "Kordofan Liberation Movement" headed by Musa Rahouma, managed to kidnap nine Egyptians working in oil production areas, 5 in Hejlij and 4 in Abu Gabra.

In a statement on Monday, the Sudan Armed Forces said, "such false claims were intended to undermine peace, security and stability in Sudan and to scare the employees and oil companies with the aim to halt the development process which was overwhelming the country."

The army also reiterated its commitment to all the peace agreements and to its duty to defend the homeland and the national interests, calling on media and newspapers to abide by the ethics of the profession, verify the credibility of news and get the accurate information from official sources.

GoSS

Council of States urges GoSS to strengthen security (Al-Khartoum)

(Al-Khartoum) The report presented by Mr. John Dor Majok to the Council of States painted a grim picture of the security and humanitarian situation in the Unity State.

Mr. John Dor who is the chairman of the Council of States' Peace Committee visited Unity State recently. The Council of State Members after listening to the report have called on GoSS to impose authority and rule of law in the southern States pointing out that what was happening in Unity State was also happening in most of southern States.

The MPs also stressed the need to collect arms from civilians and one MP has described the report as the most serious as it reflects insecurity and lack of constitutionalism in Southern Sudan.

Funeral of GoSS Minister of Defense to be held in Juba today

(Miraya FM) It was announced in Juba that the body of the late Minister of Defense in the Government of South Sudan Lt. Gen. Dominic Dim will be buried today at the Sudan People's Liberation Army headquarters in Juba.

According to the official program, prayers will be held in memory of the victims of the plane that crashed on May 2.

Prayers will take place at the tomb of Dr. John Garang where speeches will also be made. Lieutenant General Dominic Dim and Justin Yak, the Presidential Adviser on Decentralization were at the top of the South Sudan Government officials who perished in the plane crash south of the town of Rumbek last Friday, which killed all the passengers on board.

Darfur

Senior Presidential Assistant accuses Government of dragging its feet on DPA implementation

(Al-Khartoum) The Darfur Transitional Authority (DTA) is determined to submit memorandum to the GoNU, DPA Partners including UN and AU with regard to the challenges DPA is still facing.

The Senior Presidential Assistant and Chairman of DTA Minni Minawi revealed that at press conference he addressed yesterday.

According to Minnawi DPA suffered a setback pointing out that the Presidential Assistant Nafie Ali Nafie who is in charge of Darfur dossier had reneged on some points agreed upon with regard to DPA. He has commended the performance of the late Dr. Magzoub Khalifa who was in charge of Darfur file.

Minnawi said DPA was still facing challenges such as non-inclusion in the National Constitution, lack of will to implement security protocol, continued marginalization and displacement of the people of Darfur and the continued presence of pro-government militias.

Darfur peace partner denies suspension of participation in government

(ST) May 05, 2008 (WASHINGTON) — The only Darfur rebel group to sign a peace deal with Khartoum denied press reports that they have suspended their participation in the government today.

“We never suspended our participation. We simply held a press conference expressing our dissatisfaction with the implementation of Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA),” Sudan’s senior presidential assistant Minni Arcua Minnawi told Sudan Tribune by phone from Khartoum.

“We were stressing our point. The responsibility for the lack of implementation lies with the Sudanese government” he said.

Exactly two years ago, the Sudanese government has signed the DPA with the Sudan Liberation Army (SLA) faction led by Minnawi who was appointed as the senior assistant of the Sudanese president in August of the same year.

However, Minnawi’s faction persistently accused the ruling National Congress Party (NCP) of ignoring the implementation of the DPA.

Minnawi also faulted the international community for not ensuring compliance of the Sudanese government with the DPA.

“International players have to closely monitor the progress of the DPA. It is a collective responsibility” the SLA leader said.

He also criticized the African Union and the UNAMID (United Nations / African Union Mission in Darfur) saying “they are not doing their jobs as they are supposed to”.

The Sudanese presidential adviser also reiterated his rejection of the current census process in Darfur and claimed that it is “failing”.

“The census is not going very well even in the main cities. The IDPs have refused to take part and demonstrated against it so the security forces surrounded their camps” Minnawi said.

All Darfur rebel groups have rejected the census saying the instability in the war ravaged region prevents a fair process.

Last week the census director in West Darfur, Ms. Wafaa Hassan Mansour said today the census would not be conducted in IDP camps because they are “not accessible.”

In 2009 Sudan will hold its first general elections since the 1989 coup that brought Sudanese president Omar Hassan Al-Bashir to power. A census is supposed to prelude the elections in terms of easing voter registration. Under the peace deal, its results will also redraw or confirm the ratio of central power-sharing between the north and south.

Minnawi lashed out at the Sudanese government after reports that its Antonov planes bombed the village of Shegeg Karo in North Darfur on Sunday. The raids targeted the market and a school killing at least 13 people, including seven children.

“The news came as a shock to us. We condemn in the strongest possible terms the attacks against civilians in Darfur” he said.

However the senior presidential assistant declined to say whether he formally lodged a complaint with his boss president Omar Hassan Al-Bashir.

The attack confirmed by UNAMID is a violation of UN Security Council (UNSC) resolution 1591 banning all offensive military flights in Darfur.

International experts also say more than 300,000 were killed and 2 million have been driven from their homes by the conflict in Darfur, a region that is roughly the size of France.

Veteran rebel says neighboring countries not neutral in Darfur crisis

(ST) May 5, 2008 (PARIS) — A Darfur veteran rebel, Suleiman Jamous showed reserves on the role played by the neighboring countries in the resolution of Darfur conflict, saying they are not neutral.

The leadership of the Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM) Unity Command led by Abdallah Yahia is touring European countries to explain the position of the rebel group. Besides Yahia and Jamous, the delegation consists of Osman al-Bushra, Sharif Harir, Sayed Sharif Jarelnabi and Mahgoub Hussein.

The secretary for humanitarian affairs, Jamous told the Sudan Tribune that they prefer to hold Darfur peace talks in a neutral country; adding that neighboring countries do not fulfill this condition of neutrality.

According to Jamous who was speaking from Paris, "these countries are not neutral, either they are favorable or against the Sudanese government, and we reject this." He further said that they are not seeking the interest of Darfur and achieve peace.

UN and African Union mediators formed a group from four countries — Eritrea, Chad, Egypt and Libya – called "the regional initiative for peace in Darfur" to help them in their efforts to end the five years conflict.

The mediators chose Libya to host Darfur talks speaking about its ability to deliver rebel groups. However, many of them rejected the venue of the talks among other demands.

The veteran rebel said that they came to Europe to express their concerns over the current deadlock of the peace process saying that they are ready to engage talks with the Sudanese government to settle the conflict.

Jamous however insisted on the role of the international community as sponsor of any talks to guarantee the implementation of any peace agreement.

Asked about the position of the SLM-Unity over the need for a cessation of hostilities before the peace talks, he underlined that Khartoum should negotiate a ceasefire

agreement with the rebel groups in presence of the international community. Further he said this ceasefire should be temporary and renewable.

Once this ceasefire is agreed and the geographical positions of the troops are determined then the peace talks can start, he said.

Jamous also underscored that talks should start from zero because they do not accept to start negotiations on the basis of Darfur Peace Agreement.

"We reject Abuja totally and it cannot be in any case a base for talks to solve the problem." Jamous said.

In October 2007, the SLM led by Abdel-Wahid al-Nur and Justice and Equality Movement of Khalil Ibrahim asked to start the talks with the same groups that were involve in Abuja talks. Abdel-Wahid said the talks should be focused on disputed issues that Khartoum had rejected in Abuja.

The Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) and Sudan Liberation Army (SLA) Unity, before Sirte talks, said they wanted unified rebel delegations to attend any talks. At that time the two groups had initiated a rapprochement to coordinate their position during the talks.

Asked on their efforts to reunite rebel groups, the veteran rebel said his movement has succeeded to convince small faction on the ground to join their group. He stressed that they are relentlessly working on reunite the rebel groups. He further added "at least we are determined to have a common ground and one vision between all the factions of the SLM. For us this is the minimum that we should reach."

Speaking about the SLM founder Abdel-Wahid al-Nur, Jamous said he understands Nur's position following his "bitter experience with Minni Minawi, who signed a peace deal with Khartoum. However he stressed on the need to find a common ground to achieve the aspirations of Darfur people.

Jamous further urged the international community to stop promoting what he called "fictive groups" which have no any existence on the ground.

"International community needs to stop dealing with fictive names and groups"

Head of ceasefire body slams Darfur civilian bombing

(ST) May 5, 2008 (KHARTOUM) — Chairman of the Ceasefire Commission (CFC) said unacceptable the aerial attacks carried out by the Sudanese army killing about 14 civilians in North Darfur state last week.

General Martin Luther Agwai, who is also UNAMID's Force Commander, expressed concern by the rising toll of civilian death following the Sudanese army bombing of villages in North Darfur.

Last Friday, An Antonov of the Sudanese army killed 11 civilians in Shegeg Karo area in North Darfur state and wounded 4 child and 2 women, the attack occurred on

the market day. The army bomber also killed three brothers in Ain Bassir area, east of Jebel Midoub.

Agwai said these bombings of villages, markets and populated areas "are unacceptable acts against civilians, compounding the extent of displacement, insecurity and untold human suffering."

UNAMID helicopters and medical evacuation teams are mobilized to evacuate casualties of the most recent attacks, he further said.

He also said the aerial strikes represent an evidence of total lack of commitment by Sudanese government and former rebel groups to the peace process and the signed ceasefire agreement.

After long time of timid reactions to the attacks carried out by the Sudanese army in Darfur, the peacekeeping mission multiplies communiqués of condemnation for Sudanese army bombardments of civilian targets in Darfur.

Darfur rebel groups and the IDPs criticized last weeks the silence of the UNAMID and its inaction over Sudanese army and militias attacks against the civilians.

The head of the ceasefire commission urged "all parties to the conflict to immediately cease hostilities and refrain from engaging in armed combat in populated areas."

He added that the joint mission will do everything in its capacity to speed up the deployment of the 26000 peacekeeping troops to fulfil their mandate with regard to the protection of civilians in the troubled region.

Miscellaneous

Ahead of donor conference, Sudanese women express concern over women situation and lack of funding (UNIFEM)

New York – Oslo: Ahead of the second Sudanese Donors' Consortium, to be held tomorrow and on Wednesday in Oslo, Norway, Sudanese women today expressed grave concerns about the situation of women in Sudan and sent an urgent appeal to donors for resources to specifically address women's needs. In a meeting facilitated prior to the Donors' Conference by UNIFEM, the Initiative for Inclusive Security and the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, a group of 20 Sudanese women from all over Sudan assessed progress made since the first Sudanese Donor's Consortium as too slow. In a joint declaration, issued today, the women point out the following:

'We are particularly concerned about the persistence of extremely poor human development indicators in relation to women and girls' literacy, maternal mortality, productive asset security, economic and political empowerment and protection from gender based violence. There are several gaps in aid performance from a gender equality perspective:

- Resources for women's empowerment and gender equality remain very limited. There is a need for dedicated gender equality expertise in major peace and

development trust funds, and for gender-sensitive indicators on the performance of aid;

- Mechanisms to promote women's rights such as the relevant national ministries do not have sufficient resources or influence in decision-making forums;

- Women's real access to justice is limited by significant capacity constraints in the judicial sector and the absence of reform of Family Law and adequate criminal law provisions for addressing violence against women. Legal reforms must be accelerated to bring judicial processes in line with constitutional equality provisions, including laws of particular relevance to women;

- Women are not given the opportunity to lead and to own peace building and development. They are insufficiently represented on the oversight committees of trust funds, and on all commissions overseeing the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement and the peace negotiations in Darfur.'

To address these issues, the women demand focused support for women's leadership, including through endorsement and realization of a 25 per cent quota for women in public office; fast-track efforts to address the most severe aspects of discrimination against women, notably in education and maternal mortality, as well as gender-based violence; enhanced cooperation between government and women's civil society organizations; and increased government and donor accountability to women through the creation of a body that is to monitor allocations and their impact on women. 'The time to invest in women is now', say the women in their declaration. 'Let us not lose this opportunity.'

Sudan: Greater international support of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement important for progress in Sudan (RI)

"This week's Sudan Consortium meeting provides an opportunity for the world to focus on the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) signed in January 2005 between north and south Sudan. Refugees International expects major donor governments to attend with high-level delegations, and it calls on the governments which brokered the CPA to provide strong and consistent diplomatic support for the process of full implementation of the CPA. Ending more than 20 years of fighting, the CPA sparked great enthusiasm and interest worldwide. But the attention of the international community and much of its diplomatic and financial support moved on to other issues too soon, particularly to the conflict in the west of Sudan, in Darfur. This lack of attention to the implementation of the north-south peace agreement in Sudan is short-sighted and counter-productive. If the north-south peace agreement does not hold, there will be little prospect of achieving peace in Darfur.

"The CPA sets out a number of milestones, such as withdrawal of northern armed forces from the south and southern armed forces from the north, reaching agreement on the border, conducting a population census, holding national elections in 2009, and holding a referendum on self-determination for the south in 2011. Border demarcation, the size of the population and oil revenues are crucial elements determining the sharing of the country's wealth. Yet, the process of meeting most of these crucial milestones is faltering, and both parties must be pressured to comply with their commitments. The parties continue to dispute whether redeployment of

armed forces is fully complete and there is still no agreement on border demarcation. In fact, fighting is taking place between northern and southern armed groups at the disputed border. The census is taking place in an atmosphere of great tension and distrust between the parties, and its results will no doubt be disputed. Elections and the referendum on self-determination are future potential flashpoints for conflict.

"Millions of southern Sudanese who fled during the war have returned to their home areas since the war ended, but they lack access to the most basic services, like clean water and health-care. The international community should pressure the Government of Southern Sudan to support these returnees and reserve adequate funding to rebuild their communities. Few have received assistance with livelihoods creation so they can re-establish their ability to feed themselves and be self-reliant. Failure to address reintegration and recovery needs generates frustration, has started to ignite communal tensions and could ultimately jeopardize the success of the peace process itself.

"Finally, the international community has not lived up to the financial pledges it made at the time the CPA was signed to support the south. International donors must identify an appropriate funding mechanism to meet people's basic needs now without sacrificing funds for emergency relief or long-term development activities. During the Sudan Consortium meeting, it is urgent for the international community to ensure that the people of southern Sudan start enjoying peace dividends, not peace penalties."