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## **Highlights**

### **Main News**

#### **SAF threatens to deal decisively with Lino, considers Abyei part of southern Kordofan**

(Al-Sahafa) SAF lashed out yesterday against SPLM political official in Abyei Edward Lino threatening to deal with him and those supporting him decisively if they fail to abide by recent ceasefire decisions in the area. SAF said it would not stand by while events continue unfolding in Abyei.

SAF statement issued yesterday accused Edward Lino of mobilizing heavily armed SPLA troops and of disregarding decisions of recent meeting. The statement said Abyei would remain part of southern Kordofan until borders were demarcated.

SAF Spokesperson Brig. Osman Mohamed Al-Agbash has urged SPLA to withdraw and called on JIUs to assume the task of securing points in north Abyei. He said UN was informed about the need for the return of civilians to their homes and that the central government would provide them urgent food by air via Higli.

He accused SPLA of deploying 3000 fully armed soldiers in Akej and Majok areas in Abyei forcing SAF to retain brigade 31 in the town.

He added that according to UN reports the presence of Edward Lino and his police in Abyei Area was one of the reasons for the current crisis.

On the other hand, UNMIS Sector Commander said AJMC meeting yesterday reached an agreement to end crisis between SAF and SPLA adding that UN could not establish the exact number of casualties since outbreak of fighting in the area.

#### **Mustafa Osman: Abyei administration will be established within days**

(Al-Sudani) Presidential Advisor Mustafa Osman Ismail speaking to Al-Jazeera TV said crisis over Abyei would be resolved within the few coming days. He said an interim administration in the area would be established very soon to address security issues and render services to civilians.

### **UN/Agencies**

#### **UN steps up efforts for humanitarian response in Abyei**

(ST) May 18, 2008 (KHARTOUM) — The UN mission in Sudan is intensifying its efforts to respond to the humanitarian need of thousands of displaced who fled their home in the disputed Abyei area following recent clashes.

“Many thousands of those people have been repeatedly displaced and have just come back home this year to be forced to flee again at a time when they were planning to till their land for the next planting season,” Ms. Ameerah Haq, the Deputy Special Representative of the UN Secretary General to Sudan, said today.

Ms. Haq, who also serves as the UN Humanitarian Coordinator in Sudan, said UN assessment teams are currently surveying the needs, especially medical care, water, food, and shelter.

### [GoNU](#)

#### **DDR criticizes UN for agenda inconsistent with security situation in the country**

(Al-Ayyam) Participants in DDR workshop at the Parliament yesterday emphasized the need to expedite implementation of the programme.

DDR General Commissioner Dr. Sulaf Al-Din has criticized UN saying it has an agenda inconsistent with security situation in the country despite the fact that it is a partner in the peace process.

#### **Mustafa Osman: JEM leader Khalil is either killed or on the run**

(Al-Rai Al-Aam) Presidential Advisor Dr. Mustafa Osman Ismail referred to a number of possibilities with regard to fate of JEM leader Khalil Ibrahim.

He said JEM leader might have been killed, fleeing or at a loss, not knowing what to do confirming that SAF was still pursuing the fleeing remnants.

He said Chad was involved in the attack referring to the documents seized from JEM leader Al-Jammali and the Laptop besides the UN report which spoke about Chad involvement in the matter.

He said GoS was not seeking regime change in Chad, what it wanted was that Chad should desist from backing Darfur rebels. “If it continues de-stabilizing us, we will also de-stabilize it,” he said.

#### **Police DG: security situation in Khartoum calm, civilians can go about their normal business**

(Al-Rai Al-Aam) Director General of Police Forces Gen. Mohamed Najeeb Al-Tayed confirmed stability of security situations all over Khartoum State.

In press release yesterday, he said security authorities conducted wide searching operations in Umbada and Gharb Al Harat areas pointing out that residents of those areas can now go about their normal business.

He said, however, the security authorities would continue monitoring closely the situations in Khartoum State and neighbouring States in order to ensure protection of lives and properties of citizens.

### **President Bashir: Sudan foreign policy based on good neighborliness**

(Al-Rai Al-Aam) At a meeting yesterday with AU Commission Chairperson Jean Ping, the President of the Republic Omer Bashir said Sudan foreign policy was based on good neighborliness.

Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Al Samani Al Waseela said the visit of the AU official comes within the framework of familiarizing himself with situations in the country particularly Darfur and the AU efforts to achieve comprehensive settlement. He said the AU Chairperson discussed with President Bashir the recent attack on Omdurman.

AU PSC Commissioner Ramadan Al-Amamira has described the meeting between President Bashir and AU Commission Chairperson as successful.

### **US talks with Sudan on normalizing ties may be postponed: Official**

(ST) May 18, 2008 (KHARTOUM) — the second round of negotiations between the US and Sudan that were scheduled for May 20th may be postponed, a foreign ministry official said today.

A delegation led by the US special envoy to Sudan Richard Williamson was due to arrive in Khartoum on May 20th for talks with Sudanese officials over normalization of ties between the two countries.

The head of US affairs in the Sudanese foreign ministry Abdel-Basit Al-Sanoosi told the daily Al-Rayaam that it is “likely” that the talks would be postponed.

The Sudanese official said that contacts are underway to decide on a new date.

Al-Sanoosi hinted that the rebel assault on the Sudanese capital and the ongoing Sudan People Liberation Movement (SPLM) convention may “impact the commencement of talks.

### **Sudanese official arrested in connection with rebel assault on the capital**

(ST) - Sudanese security forces arrested a leading member of the ruling National Congress Party (NCP) for suspected involvement in the rebel attack on the capital last weekend.

The daily Al-Hayat newspaper said that security officers took Hassan Bargo from his home a week ago to an unknown location.

Bargo’s family was quoted as saying that they have not received any communication from the authorities on his whereabouts.

Sudanese authorities began a wide-scale crackdown on Darfuris in the capital in the aftermath of the rebel attack. Rights group inside and outside Sudan as well as political parties criticized the move.

The NCP official, who belongs to the Zaghawa tribe, is in charge of the West and Central Africa bureau in the party and the relations with Chad.

Bargo has family ties to the Chadian president Idriss Deby and the leader of Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) Khalil Ibrahim who are both from the Zaghawa tribe.

### **France condemns attack on Omdurman, denies involvement**

France strongly denounced the attack launched on Omdurman by the rebel Khalil Ibrahim and his faction, calling on the parties to exercise self-control and respect international law.

A press statement issued by the French embassy in Khartoum yesterday urged for an immediate return to the peace process to reach a resolution for Darfur crisis. It further called for expediting the deployment of the hybrid forces and affirmed that France denounces any attempts at undermining stability and seizing power by force.

The statement on the other hand denied any French involvement in the attack on Omdurman at a time when wide sectors of observers and Sudanese citizens did not rule out a French role in the attack, mindful of French military presence in Chad and France's stand on Darfur crisis, including its accommodation of the rebel Abdulwahid.

### **AU optimistic on Chad-Sudan relations after talks**

(Reuters) — The new head of the African Union said on Sunday he was optimistic tensions between Chad and Sudan would ease, after holding talks in both countries.

Sudan severed diplomatic relations with Chad last week, blaming it for an attack on Khartoum, which killed more than 200 people. Chad denies responsibility and has accused Sudan of masterminding attacks on N'Djamena in the past.

"We are confident ... that we are going to engage in a process of de-escalation concerning Chadian-Sudanese relations," AU chief Jean Ping told reporters in Khartoum after two hours of talks with President Omar Hassan al-Bashir.

Ping arrived on his first mission to Sudan from the Chadian capital at the weekend after talks with President Idriss Deby.

"I got information coming from the two capitals which made me optimistic," he said, declining to give any further details.

Ping said the African Union should investigate accusations by Sudan and Chad of support for rebels in their respective countries.

After the attack on Khartoum by the Darfur rebel Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), whose leader is from the same tribe as Deby, Sudan branded the insurgents a "terrorist organization" and said it would not negotiate with them.

Ping said the peace process, mediated by the African Union and the United Nations, would not stop.

"We should engage in negotiations in order to gain peace in that region so the necessary action will be taken," he said.

JEM moved some 400 miles (600 km) from Darfur bordering Chad to attack the western suburb of Omdurman. It was stopped only at the bridges over the river Nile to the army headquarters and the Presidential Palace.

It was the first time rebels from Sudan's regions complaining of neglect had brought their conflict to the capital in decades of civil war.

Sudan put weapons and vehicles captured from the rebels on display in Omdurman, and on Sunday the interior ministry said six people had been injured after high temperatures caused a Katyusha rocket among them to explode a day earlier.

It said the weapons were secure. Dozens of people have been killed across Sudan by explosions at weapons depots.

### **Tahir: Delay of Electoral Act may delay elections on schedule**

(Al Sudani) The National Assembly urged the Presidency to expedite finalization of the Electoral Act and submit it to the parliament warning that delay of the law might result in delay of holding of elections on schedule.

The Speaker of the National Assembly said the Parliament was waiting for the Elections Act from the Presidency. He said the non-approval of the Elections Act by the current Parliament session might lead to the delay of elections and that in turn would complicate the situation.

Mr. Tahir said the remaining period was sufficient to finalize and approve the law.

### **Government to reveal Chadian political, military support to JEM soon**

Parliament Speaker, Ahmed Ibrahim Al Tahir, noted that the Government would disclose during the upcoming days the level of political and military support that the Chadian Government has extended to Darfur Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) in backing its recent heinous aggression against Omdurman.

Addressing the workshop on forces Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR), he remarked that documents have proved Chadian involvement in the said JEM aggression, concluding that severing of political relations with Chad was natural given its hostile attitude against Sudan.

The Speaker further underlined that resolution of Darfur issue should be effected through dialogue rather than bearing of arms, hinting that some political powers are focusing conflict continuation for particular private gains.

Al Tahir believes that the implementation of the DDR programme will facilitate in establishing deep roots of peace, security and development pillars in Sudan.

He further underscored that Sudan's security is primarily threatened by small arms proliferation due to infiltration from neighboring countries, affirming Parliament support to North Sudan DDR Commission (NSDDRC).

In that context, NSDDRC Chief, Dr. Sulafaddin Saleh noted that the DDR programme supports peace realization and social fabric restoration, proposing the formation of a committee that could monitor the implementation of the DDR programmes.

## [GoSS](#)

### **SPLM Convention retains three deputies to the Chairperson**

(ST) May 18, 2008 (JUBA) – Some clauses in the new Constitution of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) were amended by the Movement's Second National Convention in its Saturday's session which resulted into restoration of three deputies to the Chairperson.

Some members of the delegates to the Convention made a strong lobbying to retain positions of three deputies to the Chairperson in the Constitution so that a consensus could be reached to persuade Dr. Riek Machar Teny and Mr. Nhial Deng Nhial, the two contenders for Chairperson to withdraw their declaration of candidacy against the interim Chairperson, Salva Kiir Mayardit.

The SPLM Interim National Council (INC) passed the draft Constitution early this week reducing the number of previously three deputies to only one – a matter that prompted Mr. Malik Agaar, Third Deputy Chairperson to compete against Hon. James Wani Igga, Second Deputy Chairperson in the position of Dr. Riek Machar, First Deputy Chairperson.

Dr. Riek Machar also declared his candidacy for the SPLM Chairperson.

The SPLM Interim Political Bureau (IPB) held an emergency meeting on Saturday before the Convention's session convened to try to find a solution to these stiff competitions that caused the former leadership team to contest for each other's seats.

The restoration of three deputies' positions may lead the contenders to withdraw their declarations of candidacy for chairperson and leave President Kiir unopposed.

This may also relax Hon. James Wani Igga and Mr. Malik Agaar to withdraw to their previous positions.

Meanwhile, a prominent figure in the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), Madam Rebecca Nyandeng de Mabior, widow of the Movement's founding father,

late Dr. John Garang de Mabior, denied allegations that there is rift within the SPLM's ranks and file.

Nyandeng, a Presidential Advisor on Gender and Human Rights and one of the delegates to the Convention told the press on Saturday that the Movement's transformation into a viable democratic political party is in accordance with its principles.

The Convention is expected to elect the SPLM leadership on its final day on Monday, May 19 and to celebrate the Movement's 25th Silver Jubilee on Tuesday, May 20, 2008.

## Darfur

### **Darfur rebels challenge Khartoum to talks or war**

KHARTOUM (Reuters) - Khartoum must sit down to Darfur peace talks by the end of the year or face all-out war, the leader of the rebel Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) who launched an unprecedented attack on the capital this month said.

In an interview on Sunday, Khalil Ibrahim, who has a \$250,000 (128,000 pound) price on his head after the attack on Khartoum, in which more than 200 people were killed, also urged Egypt to release three JEM officials it arrested in Cairo afterwards.

"Within this year, we have to end the suffering of our people of Darfur either by war or by negotiating a political solution," he told Reuters by satellite telephone.

"Whichever the government accepts we will do."

The rebels were only stopped at the bridges over the Nile to the heart of Khartoum from the western suburb of Omdurman, a few kilometers from the army headquarters and the presidential palace on May 10.

It was the first time rebels from Sudan's marginalized regions managed to bring their war to the capital.

The attack was condemned internationally and by most political parties inside the country.

"There will be no peace in Khartoum without peace in the marginalized regions, in Darfur," Ibrahim said, warning he would attack the capital again if the government chose war instead of talks.

"We are people of one nation," he said. "Part of us cannot enjoy peace in Khartoum while others are dying. Either we are all at war or we are all at peace."

Sudan had asked world leaders to list JEM as a terrorist movement and extradite all members to Khartoum for trial.

Ibrahim urged Egypt to release three JEM officials they arrested after the assault. "They are civilians not military."

Darfur's peace process has stalled under joint U.N. and African Union mediation, appointed at the beginning of 2007. Ibrahim said the two envoys, Jan Eliasson and Salim Ahmed Salim, should resign.

"These men should be changed and a serious mediation who is interested to bring peace (should be appointed)," he said. "The international community failed to find a solution ... so they left us no choice other than to go to war."

Ibrahim's JEM is an Islamist movement whereas other factions from Darfur's fractured rebels support secularism. They launched their revolt in early 2003 accusing central government of neglecting the remote west.

JEM's agenda has always been national while other groups want a fairer deal for Darfur. Analysts agree with Khartoum's assessment that JEM's newly acquired military power was provided by Chad. In the early part of the conflict, JEM was militarily weaker than the other main Darfur rebel Sudan Liberation Army (SLA).

Sudan cut diplomatic relations with Chad after the assault. Chad denies links to JEM.