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By Public Information Office

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## Highlights

### Main News

#### **NCP and SPLM to discuss Abyei today**

(**Al-Rai Al-Aam**) NCP and SPLM political committee will hold a meeting today to discuss developments of situations in Abyei.

GoSS Vice President Dr. Riek Machar said the committee would discuss issues of border demarcation and national reconciliation.

#### **SPLM Secretary General: Sudan "on brink" of north-south war**

KHARTOUM (Reuters) - Sudan is on the brink of a new civil war following more than a week of north-south clashes in the disputed oil-rich town of Abyei, a senior southern official said on Monday.

Pagan Amum, secretary general of the southern Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), told reporters northern troops were building up around the remote central town, with southern troops likely to follow.

Amum said the way to avoid a full-scale conflict was for all troops to leave the town, to be replaced by a U.N. peacekeeping force or, eventually, joint north-south military units.

"We are on the brink of war as we speak. Clashes have already happened and forces are building up," he said before a news conference in Khartoum.

Sudan has witnessed sporadic, sometimes fierce fighting in recent weeks in the Abyei region, which is claimed by both Khartoum and the southern government.

Some 21 northern Sudanese army soldiers and an unknown number of southerners were killed last week in fighting that followed a week of skirmishes sparked by a local dispute. The clashes have displaced tens of thousands of people.

A two-decade-long civil war fought by Sudan's government and southern rebels and complicated by issues of ethnicity, ideology and oil ended with a 2005 peace deal and a coalition government formed by the SPLM and the northern National Congress Party.

However, ties have been strained by the failure to agree on borders or a local government for Abyei. At stake are a nearby oil pipeline and installations that produce around half of Sudan's daily output of 500,000 barrels of oil, and grazing grounds and territory coveted by northerners and southerners.

Amum said northern government forces had been building up positions close to the town since last week's heavy clashes.

"I'm sure this will get a response from the SPLA," he added, referring to the armed wing of the SPLM -- now the army of Sudan's semi-autonomous southern government.

Amum said the south was doing all it could to avoid war. "For us, war is not an option ... Moving forces out of the area is the most important step now," he said.

"The only logical common sense is to demilitarize the area, deploy U.N. forces into the area, then after that we can proceed to deploy fresh joint integrated forces into the area."

"If the parties cannot agree to form a joint administration, let there be an international administration," he said.

Amum accused northern forces of starting the clashes to clear the area's population and claim the land as their own.

"(They) might have thought they could find a final solution to the problem of Abyei by replacing the population of Abyei."

He said the SPLM condemned "this barbaric act" by the Sudan government. "This was an act perpetrated by SAF (northern Sudan Armed Forces) under the direct leadership and command of the National Congress Party," Amum said.

Didiri Mohamed Ahmed, the NCP official in charge of Abyei, said he would not respond to Amum's comments ahead of a meeting of military officers and senior officials from both the north and south, due to take place in Khartoum on Tuesday.

He said he was also waiting for the results of a U.N.-led investigation into who sparked the latest clashes in Abyei. "When we know the culprit, hopefully both sides will have the courage to take the culprit to account," he added.

Sudan's ruling party last week denied southern accusations Khartoum was sending more troops to Abyei.

[UN/Agencies](#)

### **Ashraf Qazi: protection of civilians in Abyei beyond UN troops' capacity**

(**Khartoum Monitor/Miraya FM**) SRSG Ashraf Qazi said they could not protect the civilians in Abyei because of the limited number of the UN Zambian contingent there.

The UN troops are mandated to protect civilians under Chapter VI of the UN Charter.

Speaking to reporters in Khartoum, Ashraf Qazi said the speedy developments did not enable the 200 Zambian soldiers to enter Abyei and protect the civilians. He however, stressed that the protection of civilians is the government's responsibility in the first place. Ashraf Qazi further described the situation in Abyei as "fragile". He said the ceasefire is still effective in Abyei since it was declared last week. He however pointed out that there are unconfirmed reports about movement of forces from both SAF and SPLA. Qazi called on the political leaders of both sides to commit to the ceasefire.

UN Acting Resident Coordinator for Humanitarian Affairs, Ted Chaiban, said that the UN would suspend the repatriation operations to Abyei due to the unstable security and humanitarian situation.

### **UNMIS is an impartial partner in Sudan peace process (UNMIS Abyei reacts to article by the Citizen)**

(**The Citizen**) As a regular reader of your newspaper, we have been deeply surprised to read in your edition of 24 May, 2008 inaccurate and misleading statements in an article under the title "Abyei UNMIS aided SAF". The accusations made by the writer, Mr. Mading Deng Koul are false and completely baseless.

UNMIS peacekeepers did not in any way, shape or form intervene in the fighting in Abyei along one side or the other. We did not fire a single shot at any of the combatants during the tragic days of fighting. To claim that we aided one side is a fabrication.

As a peacekeeping mission, UNMIS is mandated to protect United Nations personnel, facilities, installations and equipment and to ensure the security and freedom of movement of United Nations personnel and humanitarian workers. Thus, UNMIS protects UN personnel when they go out on their various missions to verify that the two parties to the peace agreement are meeting their commitments. UNMIS also has a mandate to protect civilians under imminent threat of physical violence and when civilians are in imminent danger and seek our help, as happened recently in Abyei.

Within the constraints of this mandate given to us by the Security Council, and the limits of our own capacity, we did our best to protect and support the civilians in Abyei.

Contrary to what was stated by Mr. Deng Koul, UNMIS in Abyei has sheltered more than 100 vulnerable civilians during the fighting and escorted many of them to safety.

The writer also claimed that our national staff do not come from Abyei area. We have around 95 Sudanese colleagues and over 90% of them come from Abyei.

UNMIS is mandated since 2005 to assist both sides in the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement without any preference to one side or the other. This was clear during the fighting of last week as UNMIS in a very impartial manner mediated and organized within its premises, an Area Joint Military committee meeting and a Cease-fire Joint Military Committee meeting between the two parties; SAF and SPLA in order to stop the fighting and to defuse the crisis.

Like all organizations, we do indeed have shortcomings, but we always grapple with these and try to find ways of improving our contribution to the peace process in Sudan. Constructive criticism is always useful in this regard, but it is unfair and unhelpful to heap unfounded allegations that could endanger the lives of our staff members. These are tragic and tense times for all concerned. The truth will help us pick up the pieces, fabrications could hurt us all.

Chris Johnson  
Head of UNMIS Office  
Abyei

### **[UN OCHA says food distributed to displaced from fighting in Abyei \(KUNA\)](#)**

GENEVA, May 27 (**KUNA**) -- The UN Office for Humanitarian Coordination (UN OCHA) said Tuesday that United Nation's agencies and NGOs started on 19 May distributing food to thousands of people recently displaced from Abyei in South Kordofan, Sudan. According to UN OCHA spokesperson Elizabeth Byrs the World Food Program (WFP) has distributed 57.8 MT of food to 37,600 people in Abatok, Awal, Wunpeth, Agok . Further food commodities are being transported by WFP to distribution sites, additional staff and logistics support are being deployed to support registration and distribution.

The escalation of fighting and reported bombings will further exacerbate the humanitarian needs of the already affected population including the displaced and could hamper the continuation of the humanitarian operation which is being established in Agok," she added. Byrs added that the fact that the rainy season has started brings additional threats of malaria and other diseases for the vulnerable displaced population, especially children. She added that locations and numbers affected in areas South of Abyei not yet confirmed but a planning figure of 50,000 displaced is currently in use by implementing agencies.

These developments follow the outbreak of conflict in Abyei starting on 14th May, when the majority of the residents of Abyei town have fled southwards to the areas of Abatok, Awal, Wunpeth, Malual Alio and Agok in the border areas and downwards into Twic County in Warrab State.

### **[GoNU](#)**

### **[Are the international troops in need of protection?](#)**

**(Ray Al-Shaab)** – *Gist of article* – When the CPA was concluded, UNMIS troops were deployed in South Sudan, Nuba Mountains and Southern Blue Nile to keep the peace.

When the humanitarian situations deteriorated, observers argued that troops under Chapter VII were required to protect civilians from Janjaweed attacks.

### **Janjaweed chasing UNAMID**

After much difficulty, the hybrid troops were deployed. However, the UN-AU troops came under attack of armed groups, latest was the attack on Nigerian contingent whose weapons were also seized. Who will come to the rescue of the international troops in Sudan and why the International Community is neglecting its troops?

### **UNMIS and Abyei scandal**

UNMIS is not better than UNAMID. After the recent clashes between Brigade 31 and SPLA in Abyei, observers were surprised by UNMIS silence on destruction, killing and displacement.

SRSG Ashraf Qazi broke the silence at press conference by stating that lack of resources and limited number of forces were the main cause for the UN standby while a humanitarian crime was being perpetrated in Abyei. He said the 200 Zambian soldiers could not protect civilians due to fast unfolding events and that protection of civilians lies with governments. This statement raises several questions about these troops and the use of their presence.

Events in Darfur and Southern Sudan put UN in a serious test and question sustainability of the peaceful process in Sudan.

Who will save the population in Abyei and who will protect the international troops from attacks?!

### **Governor of North Darfur: Hybrid troops performance weaker than AU troops**

**(Ray Al-Shaab)** The Governor of North Darfur State Osman Mohamed Yousuf Kibir has expressed displeasure over repercussions of presence of hybrid troops in El Fasher. He said the excessive presence of hybrid troops and their HQ in the city had negative impact on various walks of life in the form of price-hike and traffic problems.

In an interview with the newspaper (to be published later) Kibir said the performance of the hybrid troops was weak compared with AU troops. “Comparatively, hybrid troops are weak in terms of performance and efficiency,” he said.

Kibir appeared reserved with regard to chances of success of hybrid troops in performing their mission on the ground.

### **Authorities released 481 persons arrested in connection with incidents in Omdurman**

**(Al-Sahafa)** Authorities released 481 suspects yesterday for lack of concrete evidence of their involvement in incidents in Omdurman.

DG of Police Gen. Mohamed Najeeb Al-Tayeb said a large number of those arrested confessed their participation in attack on Omdurman and gave detailed information about how they started from Chad and the names of the commanders who led the attack.

He said extradition of the commanders who had fled after the attack would be requested through the Interpol.

### **Captured JEM child soldiers reach 89**

**(Al-Rai Al-Aam)** The Anti-terrorism Tribunal began investigations and interrogations with those arrested in connection with assault on Omdurman.

Chairman of the panel counselor Babikir Abdul Latif said there were 89 child soldiers arrested in connection with the incidents and they were minor, their ages range between 12 to 16 years.

### **Japan gives \$10m to UN to address Sudan's relief gap**

**(ST)** May 27, 2008 (KHARTOUM) – Japan extended 10 million dollars to the UN food programme to address funding gap in Sudan's humanitarian operations.

The UN humanitarian agency issued, last February an extraordinary emergency appeal to country donors to address the critical funding gap in our programmes created by soaring food and fuel prices.

The Japanese Ambassador to Sudan on Tuesday gave the UN World Food Programme nearly US\$10 million for WFP's operations in Sudan in response to an appeal from WFP Executive Director Josette Sheeran over rising food prices.

Japan Ambassador to Sudan, Yuichi Ishii and WFP's Representative in Sudan Kenro Oshidari attended the signing of the agreement at the WFP office in the Sudanese capital, Khartoum.

The US\$9.6 million will buy sorghum and corn-soya blend, which is highly nutritious and used to fight malnutrition in women and children.

The contribution to WFP Sudan is part of a US\$47.8 million Japanese package to assist the most vulnerable in Africa, Asia and the Middle East.

### **Regional Conference of UN societies in Lakes area kicks off today**

**(Khartoum Monitor)** The regional conference of the United Nations societies in the Greater Lakes countries will kick off today in Khartoum under the aegis of the First Vice president, Salva Kiir. The UN-Sudan Society held a press conference yesterday to prepare for the regional conference. Nine African countries will take part in the regional conference which is expected to handle several issues including climate

changes and its effect on the environment not to mention the peace process led by the UN.

It will also have a round table to discuss the role of UN societies in the realization of development in Africa. The conference will conclude by issuing a Khartoum declaration.

A member of UN Sudanese Society Ambassador Izzel Din Hamid said the Sudanese society is functioning to serve the objectives of the UN which encompass development, peace, stability, peaceful resolution of conflicts and strengthening of good neighborliness.

The strategic goal of the Sudanese Society is to contribute with the UN in reactivation of African societies in the lakes area.

### **Sudan president pledges serious peace dialogue**

SEOUL (AFP) — Sudanese President Omar al-Beshir said Tuesday that his country would return to peace, dismissing allegations that it is on the brink of war.

"In order to establish peace in the country, we're making every effort, engaging in serious dialogue, to stabilize the Darfur area," Beshir said at a news conference wrapping up a three-day visit here.

"We are peace-loving people and we have a peace accord in place."

Beshir was among more than 100 guests at this week's launch of the Korea-Arab Society, which was set up to promote links between South Korea and Arab states.

The United Nations says the death toll from five years of war, famine and disease in Sudan's Darfur region may be up to 300,000. Khartoum puts the toll at 9,000.

Human Rights Watch this week urged the UN Security Council to impose sanctions on Sudanese officials it said were behind attacks on civilians in West Darfur in February.

Beshir rejected claims of religious conflict or genocide in the region as groundless, saying violence there was caused by disputes between ethnic groups.

"In principle it's a problem related to the environment," he said.

"Of course, there may be other reasons and unwarranted accusations but that is a perspective of the Western powers who are anti-Sudanese in some respects," he said.

Beshir said his government represents all factions in Sudan, accusing US lobby groups of "interfering with improving relations" between Khartoum and Washington.

Beshir's comments came a day after Pagan Amum, a leader of the Sudan People's Liberation Army the main southern political party, told AFP the country was on the brink of war over the bitterly disputed oil region of Abyei.



## **Sudan dismisses Egypt claim of Iran role in rebel attack**

(AFP) Sudan and Darfur rebels on Tuesday dismissed as baseless a claim by an Egyptian government newspaper that Iran was behind a brazen rebel attack on Khartoum earlier this month.

"Iran played an important role in the coup attempt by the Justice and Equality Movement," Al-Gomhuria alleged in a front-page report, attributed only to unnamed "sources."

"Sudanese forces searching the rebel JEM movement found modern Iranian weapons with them," the paper said, claiming that Sudanese authorities had also seized large amounts of ammunition and Iranian equipment.

On May 10, JEM rebels attacked Omdurman, one of three adjacent cities that make up greater Khartoum, the first time that domestic conflicts gripping Sudan for decades have come so close to the seat of power.

Sudan organised a huge public display of trucks, weapons and ammunition apparently captured from the Darfur rebels, and blamed Chad for financing and backing the rebels. No mention of Iran has surfaced in public at any point.

JEM flatly denied any links with Iran. The Sudanese foreign ministry and a spokesman for the Khartoum government told AFP that the Al-Gomhuria article was the first they had heard of any allegations against Tehran.

"That's funny... It doesn't make sense. We don't have any relation with Iran. We don't talk to them, they don't talk to us," said London-based Gibril Ibrahim Mohamed, who calls himself an advisor to JEM commander Khalil Ibrahim.

"I don't think this Gomhuria newspaper has a real source... There is no issue like that in our media or our decision-making department," said Rabbie Abdul Atti, who speaks for the government in Khartoum.

The Sudanese army said more than 222 people were killed as troops countered the JEM advance. They included nearly 100 troops and 34 civilians, two of them Egyptian. Sudan has since broken off diplomatic ties with Chad.

Al-Gomhuria compared the JEM leader to Hassan Nasrallah, leader of Lebanon's powerful Shiite Muslim militant movement Hezbollah, and Khaled Meshaal, exiled political supremo of Palestinian hardline Islamist group Hamas.

Both groups are backed by Iran.

The Islamist-inspired JEM is the most powerful military rebel group fighting pro-government forces in the western Sudanese region of Darfur, where conflict has raged since 2003.

Egypt has blamed Iran for backing conflicts in the region, including Lebanon and the Palestinian territories.

Diplomatic ties were broken in 1980, a year after the Islamic revolution, in protest at Egypt's recognition of Israel, its hosting of the deposed shah and its support for Iraq during its 1980-1988 war with Iran.

Relations have recently warmed, with both countries signalling a willingness to restore ties. In January, Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak held talks with Iran's parliament speaker Gholam Ali Hada Adel, the first such high-level meeting in almost 30 years.

## [GoSS](#)

### **Watery diarrhea reported in Central Equatoria, Juba**

**(Miraya FM)** Daily cases of watery diarrhea are being reported at Nyukuron Health Centre in Central Equatoria State, Juba. Speaking to Miraya FM, Mr. Celestin Ojara, the Medical Assistant at the centre, urged the government of south Sudan to ensure that every family has a pit latrine and garbage dumping pits in order to control the disease. He said the centre has referred several cases of watery diarrhea to Juba Teaching Hospital.

The resurgence of cholera in Central Equatoria State this year was announced early in May and by mid May, the disease was reported to have killed over eight returnees in Eastern Equatoria State in Pajok, Owiny Kibul and Magwi.

A voluntary cleaning campaign has started in Malakal, the capital of Upper Nile State under the slogan: Keep your town clean.

300 women participate in the campaign after they had three week training on how to deal with garbage under the auspices of NDI organization.

The deputy director of the environment department in Malakal, Peter Nyang, said that the campaign would last for two months.

He said that the health authorities contributed cleaning tools to the campaign, in addition to supervising the work.

## [Darfur](#)

### **Two Darfur rebel groups rejects Geneva meeting on security issues**

**(ST)** May 26, 2008 (KHARTOUM) — Darfur Peace mediation team has failed to persuade two main rebel groups to participate in a meeting to discuss security arrangements in order to stop violence and fighting between the Sudanese government and the Darfur rebel.

The UN-African Union mediation planes to organise a meeting on security issues to commit the warrant parties to observe a ceasefire in Darfur to create favourable conditions to resume peace talks. The meeting is scheduled to begin on May 29 in Geneva, Switzerland.

The two main rebel groups, Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) led by Khalil Ibrahim and Sudan Liberation Movement led by Abdel Wahid al-Nur refused for different reasons to attend Geneva meeting.

JEM has refused to attend the security talks because the mediation invited smaller groups including a dissident one. The rebel group which attacked the Sudanese capital early this month considers such participation as move to weaken their position in the talks.

While the SLM of Abdel-Wahid al-Nur, who demands the deployment of peacekeepers on the ground and the ceasefire enforcement before peace talks, rejects to renegotiate a ceasefire agreement while Khartoum did not implement the already signed ceasefire agreements of 2004. Al-Nur says Khartoum must implement the signed deals.

Also the position of the Sudanese government towards this initiative seems unclear. Khartoum said following the 10 May attack on Omdurman that it would not negotiate with the movement of Khalil Ibrahim.

However, the mediators continue their efforts to bring the main rebel groups to the table of negotiations and to persuade Khartoum to discuss security measures with the rebel JEM.

Last October 2007, the mediation had failed to convince the rebel groups to take part in Sirte talks in Libya. At that time, JEM and SLM-Unity asked the mediation team to come to Darfur and to meet them in order to consult them on the preparations, and to determine who will attend. While al-Nur asked to change the venue of the talks besides the ceasefire implementation.

The SLA-Unity and JEM also refuse to commit themselves to a permanent ceasefire without a serious perspective for peace talks. The question of the participation of small groups will remain an obstacle in the peace process as long as the mediation insists on their involvement, they say.

The UNAMID says the ongoing violence and banditry hinder the implementation of the mission and makes from the ceasefire and the end of violence a priority for the success of the "peacekeeping" mission in Darfur. "There is no peace to keep" said the UNAMID spokesperson last week.

### **Egypt extradite JEM and SLA representatives**

**(Al-Intibaha)** In a total secrecy, the Egyptian security services extradited JEM and SLA (Abdul Wahid) representatives as well as six other cadres to Khartoum. Their detention and extradition was requested by Khartoum.

The Egyptian authorities arrested and transported the two movements' representatives these are: SLA representative Mr. Hafiz Yousuf Hamoda and four other cadres, JEM representative Mr. Ahmed Abdul Jawad and two other JEM cadres. Egyptian authorities did not deny the news.

## Miscellaneous

### **Charity: Aid workers raping, abusing children**

LONDON, England (CNN) -- Humanitarian aid workers and United Nation peacekeepers are sexually abusing small children in war-ravished and famine-gripped countries, a leading European charity has said.

Children as young as 6 are among those who have been forced to have sex with aid workers and peacekeepers in return for food and money, Save the Children UK said in a report released Tuesday.

After interviewing hundreds of children, the charity says it found instances of rape, child prostitution, pornography, indecent sexual assault and trafficking of children for sex.

"It is hard to imagine a more grotesque abuse of authority or flagrant violation of children's rights," Jasmine Whitbread, chief executive of Save the Children UK, said.

In the report, "No One To Turn To" a 13-year-old girl from Haiti told researchers: "My friends and I were walking by the National Palace one evening when we encountered a couple of humanitarian men. The men called us over and showed us their penises.

"They offered us 100 Haitian gourdes (\$2.80) and some chocolate if we would suck them. I said, 'No,' but some of the girls did it and got the money."

Save the Children says almost as shocking as the abuse itself, is the "chronic under-reporting" of the abuses. It believes that thousands more children around the world could be suffering in silence.

According to the charity, children told researchers they were too frightened to report the abuse, fearful that the abuser would come back to hurt them and that they would stop receiving aid from agencies, or even be punished by their family or community.

"People don't report it because they are worried that the agency will stop working here, and we need them," a teenage boy in southern Sudan told Save the Children.

The charity's research was centered in Ivory Coast, southern Sudan and Haiti, but Save the Children said the perpetrators of sexual abuse of children could be found in every type of humanitarian organization at all levels.

Save the Children is calling for a global watchdog to tackle the problem and said it was working with the U.N. to establish local mechanisms that will allow victims to easily report abuse.

"We are glad that Save the Children continues to shed a light on this problem. It actually follows up on a report that we did in 2002 with Save the Children. I think every population in the world has to confront this problem of exploitation and abuse of children," Ron Redmond, chief spokesman for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in Geneva, Switzerland, said.

"The United Nations has a zero-tolerance policy. It's one that UNHCR takes very, very seriously. In refugee camps, we have implemented very strong reporting mechanisms so that refugees can come forward to report any abuses or alleged abuses."

In 2003, U.N. Nepalese troops were accused of sexual abuse while serving in Democratic Republic of Congo. Six soldiers were later jailed.

A year later, two U.N. peacekeepers were repatriated after being accused of abuse in Burundi, while U.N. troops also were accused of rape and sexual abuse in Sudan.

Last year, the U.N. launched an investigation into sexual abuse claims in Ivory Coast.

The vast majority of aid workers were not involved in any form of abuse or exploitation, but in "life-saving essential humanitarian work," Whitbread said.

But humanitarian and peacekeeping agencies working in emergency situations "must own up to the fact that they are vulnerable to this problem and tackle it head on," she said.

The aid agency said it had fired three workers for breaching its codes and called on others to do the same. The three men were dismissed in the past year for having had sex with girls aged 17 -- which the charity said is not illegal but is cause for loss of employment.

Other UK charities said they supported Save the Children's call for a global watchdog.

"Oxfam takes a zero tolerance approach to sexual misconduct by its aid workers. All our staff across the world are held accountable by a robust code of conduct," Jane Cocking, Oxfam charity's humanitarian director said.

"We support Save the Children's calls for a global watchdog. We will do all we can to stamp out this intolerable abuse