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Highlights

Main News

CPC arrives at decisions to resolve Abyei crisis

(Ray Al-Shaab) The Ceasefire Political Commission (CPC) held an extraordinary meeting yesterday in response to SRSG Ashraf Qazi's request.

The CPC arrived at several decisions with regard to Abyei crisis: It directed CJMC to investigate incidents in the Area, asked for the establishment of a JIUs battalion comprising of those did not take part in incidents in Abyei to keep peace and normalize situations. It also urged withdrawal of SAF and SPLA outside the town as well as the expeditious return of IDPs to Abyei and UN and Agencies should provide assistances to them. It and urged Presidency to expedite demarcation of boundaries of the area.

Co-chair Paul Mayom said the meeting also listened to a report by SRSG Ashraf Qazi and another report from the CJMC. He said ceasefire agreement was reached to allow investigation and measures should be taken against the personnel involved in the incidents.

Co-chair Al-Dirdiri Mohamed Ahmed said the CPC reaffirmed what the political leadership stated to the effect that there would be no return to war.

According to Sudan Vision Newspaper the following is the text of CPC decisions:

The Ceasefire Political Commission (CPC) Resolution of the Special CPC meeting of Tuesday 27 May 2008-05-28

1. The CPC takes full cognizance of the serious situation in Abyei and expresses its deep concern about the turn of events, which shall be immediately de-escalated.
2. The CPC reiterates the commitment of the two parties to the peaceful resolution of the conflict of Abyei and urges the Presidency to expedite the resolution of the Abyei conflict, according to the Abyei protocol.
3. The CPC asks the JDB to reconstitute the Abyei JIUs from the elements not involved in the recent incidents and redeploy it to Abyei as soon as possible.

4. The JIUs and the national police, as shall be determined by the Presidency, shall maintain law and order in Abyei.
5. The CPC confirms the decision of the CHMC that subsequent to JIUs taking-over the responsibility of security in Abyei, along with police, SAF and SPLA Forces shall be redeployed outside the area.
6. The CPC directs the CJMC to investigate into what has taken place in the area including the following:-
 - a) The incidents before 18, May 2008
 - b) The incidents of 19-20 May 2008-05-28
 - c) The incidents of detaining NCP's officials
 - d) The cause of burning the town of Abyei

The investigation shall be finished within a maximum period of four weeks during which, the CJMC shall have access throughout the concerned area
7. The CPC appeals to the two parties to exercise maximum self-restraint and, particularly, avoid any inflammatory utterances or statements to the media
8. The CPC urges the Government of National Unity (GoNU), UN agencies, NGOs and the international community to take immediate action to alleviate the humanitarian situation of the displaced people of Abyei.

NCP is studying SPLM proposals to resolve Abyei problem, SRSG meets with Salva Kiir

(**Al-Rai Al-Aam**) NCP and SPLM Joint Political Committee was asked to find a solution to the Abyei problem within 72 hours and submit report to the NCP and SPLM Executive Committee.

A fact-finding mission will be undertaken to Abyei today to inspect humanitarian situations in the area.

GoSS Vice President Riek Machar told Miraya FM that SPLM submitted proposals to resolve Abyei crisis at a joint NCP-SPLM meeting yesterday which was co-chaired by Machar and Taha.

On the other hand, SRSG Ashraf Qazi met yesterday with the FVP Salva Kiir and discussed with him ways to end crisis in Abyei. In press statements, Mr. Qazi has emphasized the need for withdrawal of SAF and SPLA from Abyei to allow the peacekeepers and humanitarian organizations to perform their work.

UN/Agencies

Ban Ki-Moon calls for continued presence of UNAMID

(**Al-Rai Al-Aam**) UNAMID will commemorate tomorrow in El Fasher the 60th Anniversary of the International Peacekeepers Day.

The newspaper has learned that two messages from SG and AU Commission Chairperson will be read out on their behalf at the function. According to sources, the messages emphasized the need for continued presence of the peacekeeping operation in Darfur.

SRSG addresses opening session of UN Associations

(Akhbar Al Yom) The Special Representative of the Secretary General in Sudan Ashraf Qazi addressed yesterday the opening session of the conference of the UN Associations in Great Lakes Region, emphasizing the need for Sudan cooperation with UN to protect human rights, child, environment as well as other MDGs.

Mr. Qazi has reaffirmed UNMIS support to implementation of CPA, protection of human rights and disaster control. He has pointed out the importance of the role of the UN Association in Sudan and the civil society organizations in making unity attractive.

Punish those responsible for Abyei attacks, says UN envoy

(Sudanese News online) Those found to have been behind the bombing of Sudan's oil-rich region of Abyei last week, leading to the displacement of thousands of people, must face the law, Mr Ashraf Qazi, special representative to the UN Secretary-General, said Tuesday.

Mr Qazi was briefing the press shortly before a committee set up to investigate the attack began its work.

“There are many accounts and the Ceasefire Joint Military Committee is to begin investigations into the matter,” Mr Qazi replied when asked whether the UN would pursue justice on behalf of the thousands displaced by the attack. “And when it does, our position is that whoever is responsible for the displacement of people should be held responsible.”

His remarks came after a particularly tense week, during which demonstrations were held in the South, with the demonstrators criticizing the UN's reluctance to intervene.

The demonstrations were in the South Sudan capital, Juba, Eastern Equatoria and Northern Bahr el Ghazal.

“We are sending a message that one part of the body will not rest if another part is not okay,” the Western Bahr el Gazal Provincial Information Minister, Baptist Sebit, told demonstrators in Abyei on Wednesday last week.

And last Friday, demonstrators including political parties, civil society members and provincial officials walked through the streets of Juba town and then to Mr Kiir's office to hand him a petition calling on the United Nations to act.

“We condemn the attack by the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) on civilians in Abyei,” Mr Kiir told the demonstrators while receiving the petition.

“When Omdurman was attacked, we stood behind the government in Khartoum but now they have turned on our people in Abyei.”

Earlier, Mr Kiir had called for the arrest of the SAF commander in Abyei for crimes against humanity after the town, including the market, was bombed to the ground last

week. The Southern Sudan President also called for the removal of the SAF forces from Abyei, adding that President Omar Al Bashir had promised to do so.

Mr Qazi said that according to the Comprehensive Peace Agreement signed in 2005, only the Joint Integrated Units, a combination of troops from the north and the south, should be in the area.

“But there are certain forces that are not supposed to be there,” Qazi said. “That includes the 31st Battalion.”

Mr Qazi dismissed allegations that the United Nations Mission in the Sudan (UNMIS) contingent in Abyei favoured the Sudan Armed Forces and even shot at people

Civilians still bear the brunt of armed conflicts, top UN official warns

(UN News Centre) 27 May 2008 – Millions of civilians worldwide are still victims of armed conflicts – losing their lives, being forced to flee their homes and becoming victims of physical and sexual violence – despite recent progress in some countries, the top United Nations humanitarian official told the Security Council today.

In a briefing to the 15-member body, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs John Holmes cited positive steps taken in places such as Kenya, Côte d’Ivoire, Nepal, Timor-Leste to prevent war, secure peace or at least protect civilians.

Additionally, he pointed to a meeting of over 100 States currently under way in Dublin which seeks to negotiate a treaty banning deadly cluster munitions.

“Important though this progress is, the stark reality remains that in conflicts throughout the world, countless civilians continue to see their hopes shattered by violence and displacement; their lives blown apart by suicide bombers or ground down by physical and sexual violence, deprivation and neglect,” Mr. Holmes said at the open meeting, which heard from over three dozen speakers.

He pointed to three particularly acute issues regarding current conflicts: the conduct of hostilities, sexual violence and humanitarian access.

Civilians comprise the majority of casualties in armed conflict, often in contravention of international humanitarian law.

The Under-Secretary-General gave the example of the Sudanese region of Darfur, where “civilians remain the principal victims of attacks by Sudanese Armed Forces and the Janjaweed militia.”

Regarding sexual violence, Mr. Holmes – who also serves as UN Emergency Relief Coordinator – called for vigorous measures to both prevent and respond to it.

“Anything less risks condemning current and future generations of women and girls, and boys and men, to indescribable humiliation and cruelty followed by, for those who survive or who are born from such violence, a life defined by pain, stigma and rejection,” he said.

Mr. Holmes also noted the need to boost efforts to make “zero tolerance” of sexual violence a reality by reversing the “continued failure of the police and judiciary to take sexual violence seriously.” He also urged an end to ineffective investigations, minimal prosecutions, and interference by the military and other officials in the administration of justice.

“They are an affront to the rights of victims and serve only to reinforce the culture of impunity on which sexual violence has thrived for so long.”

On humanitarian access, the Emergency Relief Coordinator cited examples of how aid workers have been impeded in providing assistance due to conflict, restrictions on the movement of staff and goods, checkpoints and roadblocks and bureaucratic requirements.

He appealed for the establishment of a Security Council group of experts on the protection of civilians, which would serve as an informal forum bringing together all of the Council’s Member States.

Mr. Holmes told today’s meeting that while the Council has made strides in addressing civilian protection, he believed the body “could go further” if it adopted a more consistent approach to integrating the issue into its work.

[GoNU](#)

From Haiti to Southern Sudan Peacekeepers 'abusing children

(Covered by seven dailies) SG Ban Ki-Moon expressed yesterday grave concern over charity report of SEA against children committed by UN peacekeepers and aid workers in several conflict areas including southern Sudan.

Children as young as six are being sexually abused by peacekeepers and aid workers, says a leading UK charity. Children in post-conflict areas are being abused by the very people drafted into such zones to help look after them, says Save the Children.

After research in Ivory Coast, southern Sudan and Haiti, the charity proposed an international watchdog be set up.

Save the Children said it had sacked three workers for breaching its codes, and called on others to do the same.

The three men were all dismissed in the past year for having had sex with girls aged 17 - which the charity said was a sackable offence even though not illegal.

The UN has said it welcomes the charity's report, which it will study closely.

Save the Children says the most shocking aspect of child sex abuse is that most of it goes unreported and unpunished, with children too scared to speak out.

No support

A 13-year-old girl described to the BBC how 10 UN peacekeepers gang-raped her in a field near her Ivory Coast home.

"They grabbed me and threw me to the ground and they forced themselves on me... I tried to escape but there were 10 of them and I could do nothing," she said.

"I was terrified. Then they just left me there bleeding."

No action has been taken against the soldiers.

The report also found that aid workers have been sexually abusing boys and girls.

"In recent years, some important commitments have been made by the UN, the wider international community and by humanitarian and aid agencies to act on this problem," said Save the Children UK chief executive Jasmine Whitbread.

"However, all humanitarian and peacekeeping agencies working in emergency situations, including Save the Children UK, must own up to the fact that they are vulnerable to this problem and tackle it head on."

After research involving hundreds of children from Ivory Coast, southern Sudan and Haiti, the charity said better reporting mechanisms needed to be introduced to deal with what it called "endemic failures" in responding to reported cases of abuse.

It also said efforts should be made to strengthen worldwide child protection systems. Heather Kerr, Save the Children's Ivory Coast country director, says little is being done to support the victims.

"It's a minority of people but they are using their power to sexually exploit children and children that don't have the voice to report about this.

"They are suffering sexual exploitation and abuse in silence."

Save the Children says the international community has promised a policy of zero-tolerance to child sexual abuse, but that this is not being followed up by action on the ground.

A UN spokesman, Nick Birnback, said that it was impossible to ensure "zero incidents" within an organization that has up to 200,000 personnel serving around the world.

"What we can do is get across a message of zero tolerance, which for us means zero complacency when credible allegations are raised and zero impunity when we find that there has been malfeasance that's occurred," he told the BBC

Authorities continue search operations in Omdurman, detain suspects and seize arms

(**Al-Khartoum**) Security authorities continued their search operations yesterday in Omdurman leading to seizure of large quantities of arms and arrest of many JEM elements.

Sudan president downplays prospects of normalizing ties with US

(**ST**) May 26, 2008 (SEOUL) — The top Sudanese official on Tuesday downplayed the possibility of normalizing ties with the US in the near future.

"We do not anticipate the normalization of ties in the short term" the Sudanese president Omar Hassan Al-Bashir told reporters in the South Korean capital where he attended

"There are many obstacles and lobbies in the US that do not want to see positive development of this relation" he said.

Al-Bashir statements come hours before the US special envoy to Sudan Richard Williamson was due to arrive in Khartoum for a second round of negotiations with Khartoum on normalizing ties.

Sudan official news agency (SUNA) said that Williamson will meet with Sudanese officials and also visit South Darfur.

However, it is not clear if the US envoy will visit South Sudan where some of the worst fighting has erupted between the Sudanese army and Southern ex-rebels in the oil region of Abyei.

The spokesman of the Sudanese foreign ministry Ali Al-Sadek said that both sides will discuss the situation in Darfur, Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) and the bilateral relations.

The talks were scheduled for early last week but were delayed for unknown reasons. However the head of US affairs in the Sudanese foreign ministry Abdel-Basit Al-Sanoosi told SUNA that the postponement was due to the attack by Darfur Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) on the capital May 10th.

Williamson met with in Rome last April with a Sudanese delegation headed by Sudan Nafi and included Sudan's spy chief Salah Gosh as well as foreign minister Deng Alor.

News of the meeting drew widespread in the US from lawmakers and Darfur advocates who think that the Sudanese government has not lived up to its previous commitments with regards to Darfur and partially to the North-South agreement.

Democratic White House contender Barack Obama issued a statement saying he was "deeply concerned" over reports that the Bush administration is negotiating with Sudan over normalizing ties.

The New York Times (NYT) obtained a series of documents exchanged between Washington and Khartoum on a series of steps to normalize relations between the two countries. An unidentified US official described as being "critical of the administration's position" leaked the documents.

The report said that the Bush administration could remove Sudan from an American list of state supporters of terrorism and normalize relations if the Sudanese government agreed, among other steps, to allow Thai and Nepalese peacekeepers as part of the peacekeeping force.

But yesterday Al-Sadek said his government has not accepted Thai and Nepalese forces in Darfur.

Williamson told US lawmakers that the NYT report is "not accurate" and that if it was "he would not defend it and would not engage in it". He further said that it was the Sudanese government, which approached Washington on the requirements for normalizing ties.

“Concrete, verifiable, significant progress must be achieved on the ground before we can contemplate improved relations,” Williamson said.

Williamson also told a group of Darfur activists in a conference call sponsored by Enough Project from Washington that he does not foresee improvement of ties with Sudan "during his tenure".

“There has to be changes on the ground before any improvement in relations” the US envoy said.

He further said that tougher sanctions remain an option on the table if the US president Bush deems them necessary.

But following the Rome negotiations the Sudanese government decided to release containers belonging to the US embassy that was being held by custom authorities in Port Sudan for over a year.

The containers contained equipments that were to be used for new embassy complex in south Khartoum that was under construction for over two years.

The daily Al-Sharq Al-Awsat quoting unidentified Sudanese official said that the US administration agreed to “re-open a bank account for the Sudanese embassy in Washington” in return.

Earlier this month Washington also released a number of Sudanese inmates held at the U.S. military prison in Guantanamo Bay.

Radio station says Russian pilot killed in Sudan during rebel assault

(ST) May 26, 2008 (WASHINGTON) — A MIG-29 fighter Jet was shot down killing its Russian pilot during the Darfur rebel assault on the Sudanese capital earlier this month, a Russian radio station said today.

The independent Russian radio station Ekho Moskvyy quoted a man by the name of Vladimir as saying that a colleague of his in Sudan told him that “a flight instructor flying a MIG-29 was shot down from a large-caliber machine-gun during this fighting [Darfur rebel attack]”.

The Darfur Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) fighters mounted an assault on the Sudanese capital on May 10th that took the government and international community by surprise. However the Sudanese government managed to repulse the attack and accused Chad of backing JEM in its attempt.

Vladimir said the slain pilot was a flight instructor training the Sudanese pilots on flying the MIG-29 fighter jets. In 2004 Khartoum said that Moscow supplied them with a dozen MIG-29's.

The report by the Russian radio comes almost two weeks after Sudanese authorities closed down the Arabic language Alwan newspaper for publishing news on a Russian fighter jet and its Russian pilot, who went missing after the attack by JEM.

“The rumor about the missing MIG-29 belonging to the armed forces during the incidents in Omdurman got no confirmation or denial from the government or JEM even though everybody is looking at the sky and inquiring about the fate of the fighter jet and the Russian pilot” was the text published in the newspaper that triggered the crackdown by Sudanese security.

The pro-government Sudanese Media Center (SMC) website have said that Salah Gosh, the head of Sudan’s National Security and Intelligence Service issued a decree suspending the publication of the newspaper and ordered a freeze on its properties and assets while filing a police complaint against its editor in Chief Hussein Khogali.

SMC said that the decree was issued because Alwan “disclosed sensitive military information harmful to the country’s security and its accomplishments”.

The Ekho Moskvyy radio also quoted Vladimir as saying that the flight instructor managed to eject after his plane was shot by JEM rebels “but the parachute failed to open and the pilot died”.

Vladimir did not provide the pilot’s name but said that “he was from the Ryazan higher military academy”.

The radio station also contacted the Russian Defense Ministry which denied the report and quoted its spokesman as saying that “if something like this had happened we would have received relevant documents. If we don’t have them, nothing has happened”.

The defense ministry also said they have no intention of checking on the report of the MIG-29 fighter in Sudan or the fate of its pilot.

Russia and Sudan have maintained strong military ties. In October 2006 the Russian electronic newspaper published in English Kommersant, said that Khartoum asked Moscow to provide the Sudanese army with modern weapons and train local specialists to work with new technology.

The newspaper said that the Sudanese President Omar Hassan Al-Bashir sent a letter to his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin, asking to sell a large consignment of military jets and helicopters to his country.

Last year Russia was accused by Amnesty International (AI) supplying arms to Sudan for use in Darfur in breach of a UN arms embargo per resolution 1591. But the Russian foreign ministry denied the charge.

AI said that in 2005 Russia sold \$21m of military material to Sudan.

American Envoy to Sudan to arrive Wednesday

Khartoum, May 27 (SUNA)- The American envoy to Sudan, Mr. Richard Williamson, is due in Khartoum Wednesday on a visit to Sudan during which he will meet a number of government officials and continue dialogue between the two countries in the context of the efforts of normalization of bilateral relations.

He is also to visit South Darfur State. Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Ambassador Ali Al-Sadik said to SUNA that the Sudanese and American sides would resume the dialogue that started in Rome and earlier in Washington on a number of issues including the situation in Darfur, implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement and the Sudanese-American relations.

SUNA learnt that the US envoy would visit Nyala on Thursday and that the Sudanese-American talks in the context of the bilateral dialogue would start on Sunday in Khartoum.

US adopts more pragmatic approach in dealing with Sudanese leadership

CAIRO, May 28 (KUNA) -- The United States has adopted a more pragmatic approach in dealing with the central government in Khartoum, according to an official of the ruling Sudanese party.

The head of the Sudanese National Congress' bureau in Cairo, Kamal Hassan, said in a statement, addressed to the Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs, that the recent botched attack by the opposition Justice and Equality movement on the capital's suburbs with the intention to take over the capital resulted in unifying the internal front.

The US, for its part, following the futile attack, has taken a more pragmatic approach and started holding negotiations with the central government, said Hassan, indicating at perceived concern by Washington on the destiny of the nation.

Sudan's various political parties and movements have become aware that the fall of the central government means will result in disintegration of the whole state, Hassan added.

He said nationwide polls, due next year, would be free and democratic and would be held under international supervision.

DDR programmes in eastern Sudan discussed

Khartoum, May 27 (SUNA) - Assistant of the President of the Republic Musa Mohamed Ahmed discussed at his office at the Republican Palace Tuesday with the Chairman of North Sudan Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Commission, Sulaf-Eddin Salih, programs of the commission in eastern Sudan.

The meeting included members of the committee for implementation and following - up of the programmes of the commission in east Sudan which works to involve all sectors of the Sudanese people in the implementation of the programmes.

Taha Meets AEC chairman

Khartoum, May 27 (SUNA) - Vice - President of the Republic, Ali Osman Mohamed Taha, received in his office Tuesday at the Council of the Ministers Chairman of the Assessment and Evaluation Commission, Sir Derek Plumbly, and discussed the latest events in Abyei, which represent an impediment facing the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA).

The meeting between Taha and AEC Chairman followed one of the joint political and executive committee of the National Congress and Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) which was co-headed by the Vice - President of the Republic, Ali Osman Mohamed Taha, and Vice - President of the Government of South Sudan (GoSS), Dr. Riek Machar.

The meeting between Taha and Sir Plumbly also came after two days from an emergency meeting of the Commission for Assessment and Evaluation itself for discussing Abyei issue, during which the committee members of the international community have shown concern with the events in Abyei.

Taha and Chairman of the Commission for Evaluation and Assessment reviewed the ongoing efforts to contain the situation at Abyei area and reaching a solution for the issue which will be satisfactory for all parties.

Meanwhile, members of the Commission for Assessment and Evaluation would visit Abyei area Wednesday to help the different parties achieve a solution for Abyei issue.

[GoSS](#)

SPLM suspends participation in dialogue with US

(Al-Ayyam) SPLM announced yesterday the suspension of participation of its ministers in US-Sudanese dialogue to protest violent events leading to destruction of Abyei.

Meanwhile, the US Envoy for Sudan Richard Williamson will arrive in the country today on several-day visit during which he will meet with state officials to set the ground of bilateral dialogue between the two countries.

[Darfur](#)

Fierce fighting reported between two JEM groups in Jebel Moon

(Akhir Lahza) Fierce fighting broke out between two JEM rebels groups yesterday near Jebel Moon, scores were killed on both sides.

The fighting broke out between Abu Garda group and another JEM group who were en route to Chad.

Governor of North Darfur calls for review of DPA

(Al-Ahdath) Governor of North Darfur State Osman Mohamed Yousuf Kibir has complained that the IDPs camps, home to 163315 persons, have become a centre of anti-government activities of INGOs and armed movements.

He said 78719 households have returned from Chad and border areas, leading to a food gap and acute water shortage which need urgent response.

Kibir who addressed the Council of States yesterday called on the Council to review the DPA security arrangements.