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(By Public Information Office)

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HIGHLIGHTS:

United Nations

Sudan requests United Nations to nominate 3 to replace Pronk

Alwatan: Sources say the Sudan government has decided to request the Secretary-General of the United Nations to nominate three people to replace Mr. Pronk as SRSG for Sudan from which the Sudan government will choose.

The sources added that the government will insist that Pronk's replacement must be impartial and committed to resolving the problems in line with mutual obligations between the government and the international community.

UN report says Khartoum failed to disarm militia

(*SudanTribune.com* – 4th Nov. **Geneva**) Recent attacks around the Jebel Moon area of West Darfur demonstrate at the very least a continued failure to disarm militia in that Sudanese region and at worst the Government's use of militia forces that continue to target civilian populations, the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) said Friday.

OHCHR says the attacks on 29 October around Jebel Moon left some 50 civilians dead, including 26 children. Hundreds of armed men in green camouflage uniforms, described by local people as "janjaweed", are said to have hit seven villages and one camp for internally displaced persons. As many as 7000 people were likely affected by the violence. Some remained in the area while others fled to the south, across the border to Chad, and in other directions.

The report notes that in response to the attacks the Governor of West Darfur established an Investigative Committee and promised to prevent similar events in the future. "However", the report recalls, "the Government of Sudan has initiated such investigations in the past, but many appear not to have been completed and there is no consistent attempt to carry out detailed, transparent, and timely investigations and bring perpetrators of large scale attacks to justice".

Among its recommendations, OHCHR is calling on the Government to conduct an impartial, timely and transparent investigation into the attacks in order to identify and prosecute those who planned, orchestrated, and conducted the raids. It should also identify those responsible for the failure to prevent the attacks by allowing armed militia to gather in the area and the Sudanese Armed Forces failure to protect the population during the attacks. The results of the investigation should be made public. Legal action should be taken against those found to be responsible and the victims of the attacks should be compensated.

"This report provides further evidence of the ongoing human rights and humanitarian crisis in Darfur and, at best, the failure of authorities to put a stop to the abuses", High Commissioner Louise Arbour said following the release of the document. "The attacks illustrate yet again the need to deploy a robust peacekeeping force in Darfur, as provided for in Security Council resolution 1706. Action must be taken now to stop the killings and displacement".

** A full text of the 5-page report is in separate attachment*

63, half of them children, killed by militias in Darfur

(Reuters – 3rd Nov. **Tine, Sudan**) Attacks in West Darfur have killed at least 63 people, half of them children, as rebels on Friday accused Khartoum of remobilising Arab militia after suffering two military defeats on the Sudan-Chad border.

"The government have begun mobilising the Janjaweed widely, especially in West Darfur, because they want to clear the area and move north along the border and defeat us," said Bahr Idriss Abu Garda, a leader of the National Redemption Front (NRF).

Rebels from the NRF alliance said of the 63 killed at Jabel Moun, 33 were children. The United Nations said 27 of those were under 12 and urged the government to protect civilians.

The African Union said the attacks occurred on Oct. 29 near Jebel Moun, where rebel and government forces are present.

Eight villages were attacked, a U.N. official said, sending a small number of Darfuris fleeing into Chad and thousands others seeking safer shelter around Jabel Moun and Seleha.

"Our team in eastern Chad reported a group of 10 refugees crossed the border fleeing from this incident, where reportedly 300 to 500 Arab militiamen on horseback raided at least eight villages as well as the Hajlija IDP camp," UNHCR spokesman Ron Redmond told a news briefing in Geneva.

A Sudanese army source confirmed 63 people had been killed but said the strike was in retaliation for a rebel assault on Arabs a month earlier. "They had killed two policemen and two women, one of whom was pregnant," the source said.

AU soldiers said the government was also bombing regularly in the area around and north of Tine town on the Sudan-Chad border. The last bombardment was on Oct. 23.

Sudanese officials deny they have mobilised Arab militia and the army denies using its Antonov planes, which would be a violation of a U.N. Security Council resolution.

Sudan government to discuss framework of the UN plan for 2007

Khartoum Monitor: The Ministry of International Cooperation held a meeting yesterday with United Nations agencies to discuss the framework of the organisation's plans in Sudan for the year 2007.

The government has asked the United Nations to focus its activities towards development programs and restrict support to emergency humanitarian relief.

The meeting agreed on the creation of a joint technical committee supervised by a ministerial committee to set down the final draft for the United Nations programs for 2007.

Umma Party says Pronk's expulsion reflects the chaotic situation in the government

Khartoum Monitor: The Deputy Secretary-General of the Umma Party described yesterday that the expulsion of SRSF Pronk as a mistake made by the National Congress Party that reflects the chaotic situation in the government and its institutions that lack consultation in decision-making.

Mariam Sadiq el-Mahdi who is also the party's Coordinator for Communications pointed out that UNMIS came in to monitor implementation of the CPA at the invitation of the National Congress Party and the SPLM and a unilateral decision to expel the SRSG was not right and shows that "Sudan does not abide by the agreements it signs".

United Nations and the Transition Debate

Government, African Union in consultations over the role of the UN advisors in Darfur

Rai AlShaab: Sources say that the government and the African Union will embark in consultations over the role of the United Nations advisors working alongside the AU in Darfur.

Quoting a government source it did not name, *SMC* says that African Union Commissioner Saeed Djinnit and the head of the AU's DPA Implementation Mission, Ambassador Sam Ibok, will soon be in Khartoum for talks with Majzoub el-Khalifa and other key Sudan government officials.

Salva Kiir suggests directs talks with Sudan's Bashir on UN forces

(*SudanTribune.com* – 4th Nov. **Khrt.**) Sudanese First Vice President has suggested direct talks with president al-Bashir on the deployment of the UN forces in Darfur, a press report said Saturday.

The Sudanese First Vice President Salva Kiir Mayardit during a meeting with the British Prime Minister Tony Blair suggested that President Omar al-Bashir personally join in direct negotiations on the mandate and the tasks and TCCs of the international forces.

State minister for cabinet affairs and member of the accompanying delegation, Telar Deng, said Tony Blair promised to discuss this proposal with the US president George Bush in order to find a solution to this issue of UN forces.

VP Kiir returned to Khartoum on Friday.

Telar indicated that the SPLM by its position in favor of the UN forces deployment wants to assure the protection of Darfur civilians. He further added this position does not mean that SPLM wants to topple down of the government of national unity because it is a part of it.

The state minister added that the British officials had stressed the need to continue dialogue with the Government National Unity to resolve the Darfur crisis and strengthen the peace agreements.

US envoy confirms back down on Darfur peace force

(*AFP* – 4th Nov. **Washington**) In a major policy reversal, Washington's special envoy for Darfur has confirmed the United States is backing away from demands for deployment of a UN peacekeeping force to the war-torn region of Sudan.

Andrew Natsios, President George W. Bush's personal envoy to Sudan, said Washington and other Western governments were looking for an "alternate way" to deal with the violence which has left at least 200,000 people dead and 2.5 million homeless in Darfur.

It was the first public acknowledgement that the United States was reconsidering its backing for a August 31 UN Security Council resolution it sponsored demanding the deployment of some 20,000 UN peacekeepers to halt what Washington has described as genocide in Darfur.

Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir has rejected the United Nations demand and refused to meet with Natsios during a visit to Khartoum last week, the US envoy said in an interview with the National Holocaust Memorial which was posted on the memorial's website on Friday.

Natsios said Bashir was furious over Bush's renewal this week of US financial sanctions imposed on Sudan for its involvement in the Darfur violence and alleged support for international terrorists.

In another report, the *AFP* says that following Mr. Natsios' comments above, the US has denied having a policy shift on Darfur.

US President George W. Bush "is committed to ending the violence in Darfur, and we're looking at multiple ways of doing that, but we fully support the UN resolution and the deployment of UN forces in the region as soon as possible," spokesman Tony Fratto said.

"The president believes that there needs to be a credible and effective international force. As you would expect, we will explore any option that would bring peace to Darfur, but those options would be within the context of the UN resolution," said Fratto.

"There is no shift in our policy, and that's not what the special envoy was describing," he said.

Natsios had said that Washington and other Western governments were looking for an "alternate way" to deal with the violence in Darfur, which has left at least 200,000 people dead and 2.5 million homeless in the past three and a half years.

"Our real interest here is not what it is called or what it looks like in terms of its helmet, but how robust and how efficient it is," Natsios said in an interview with the US Holocaust Memorial Museum which was posted on the museum's website Friday.

"If it does not have a United Nations helmet but it is very competent and very aggressive, then we have fulfilled our intention," he said.

Washington could accept either a strengthened African Union force or one led by Arab or Muslim nations, possibly backed by UN financial or logistical support, he said.

Mr. Natsios' comments on peacekeepers for Darfur has received much coverage and is a major headliner in most local newspapers (AlSahafa, AlHayat, AlAdhwaa, Akhbar Alyaum, et al) in what is seen as a major boost for the Sudan government position on an African Union-United Nations transition as has been reflected in the below story from the Sudan Vision:

The Sudanese foreign affairs ministry has cautiously welcomed reports that the US has backed down on its position on a Darfur United Nations force.

Spokesperson Ali el-Sadig told journalists in Khartoum yesterday that if confirmed, this would change relations between the Sudan and the US and between Sudan and the United Nations.

He attributes this change of position to the recent visit by Andrew Natsios.

Muslim Brotherhood accuses President Bush of trying to launch missionary campaign on Africa using Sudan as a launch pad

(Reuters, UPI via AlHayat – **Cairo**) Mohamed Mahdi Akif, a key figure in the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, has accused US president George Bush of trying to lead a missionary campaign for Africa through the pressures being imposed on the Sudan.

He pointed out that the US president wants to spread Christianity through separating southern Sudan from the predominantly Muslim north.

CPA

Abyei issue will not be referred to the IGAD for arbitration, says NCP

Alln tibaha. The National Congress Party has barred out all possibilities that the Abyei issue to the IGAD for arbitration.

National Congress Party's el-Dirdeiri Mohamed Ahmed said that the joint committee on Abyei will only be discussing the four options presented for a solution to the Abyei problem.

GoNU, GoSS and the UN set up 25 registration centres for IDP returnees

AlRai AlAam. The Government of National Unity, Government of Southern Sudan and the United Nations have set up 25 registration centres for IDPs intending to return from Khartoum to their homes in southern Sudan and South Kordofan.

Five mobile teams have been formed for that purpose and the partners yesterday launched at Haj Yusuf yesterday an Information Day on returnee registration and have cited the period between 4th November to 7 January for registering those who intend to return.

Speakers at the function said that this first phase targets 150,000 citizens.

GoNU

President Bashir says only 10,000 have been killed in Darfur

(Reuters – 3rd Nov.) Sudanese President Omar Hassan al-Bashir on Friday indicated the toll in Darfur had been exaggerated saying only 10,000 people had died in western Sudan.

At a news conference in Beijing where he was attending a summit of African leaders, he reiterated that he would not allow U.N. forces into Darfur, despite a U.N. resolution authorising 22,000 U.N. troops to replace AU peacekeepers.

"We decided that with such an army moving into our country, the impact is going to be the same as what's been happening in Iraq," Bashir said.

China, which has close business and diplomatic ties to Sudan, is a veto-wielding member of the Security Council and has been accused by human rights groups of protecting Sudan against any strong action over Darfur.

But at the Beijing meeting, Chinese President Hu Jintao appeared to be nudging Bashir towards accommodation.

"The Darfur issue is again at a critical juncture," Chinese State television quoted him saying on Thursday.

* This *reuters* story was also highlighted by local newspapers such as *AlAyaam* yesterday as the lead headliner.

Sudan says US sanctions renewal does not alter dialogue

(*Xinhua*) Sudan has ruled out that a U.S. decision to renew economic sanctions on Sudan would negatively impact a bilateral dialogue between Khartoum and Washington for improving ties, local daily Al-Sudani reported on Saturday.

The Sudanese government saw the decision by U.S. President George W. Bush coming within the framework of the U.S. election campaign and under the pressures which the Bush administration was facing from lobby groups and the opposition Democratic Party, the report said.

Al-Wasilla al-Samani, Minister of State of the Sudanese Foreign Ministry, told Al-Sudani newspaper that the decision to extend U.S. sanctions on Sudan was expected by the Sudanese government despite the fact that two states are in direct dialogue.

Government denies accusations of cooperation with the Janjaweed in West Darfur

AlAyaam: The African Union forces commander accused yesterday the government of cooperating with Janjaweed in West Darfur.

The GoNU and the SAF have rebuffed the accusations.

The UNHRC delegate Louise Arbour has on the other hand called for investigations over the attacks that took place in Darfur last week by the Janjaweed. She added that what has happened proves the Government disability to demobilize the militias in the region.

Minnawi to visit Nyala tomorrow

Khartoum Monitor. The Senior Assistant to the President of the Republic and President of the Darfur Transitional Authority, Mr. Minni Minnawi, was scheduled to visit South-Darfur state (Nyala) tomorrow.

SLM leader Mr. Mohamed Haroun disclosed that this visit will realize many political activities and increase public participation in the state that will mark the beginning of the Darfur Peace Agreement that was signed in Abuja.

Khartoum State reviews new police law

Sudan Tribune. The Khartoum State Legislative Assembly is currently reviewing a number of laws, for discussion at its second session.

Governor AbdulHalim AlMutaafi affirmed while addressing the opening session of the Khartoum State's Legislative Assembly yesterday that the state would set up a number of laws, of which the law of Khartoum State's police force comes on top, as the law of Civil Service, State Law and other law of fiscal and administrative function.

GoSS/ Southern Sudan

GoSS Vice-President names committee to investigate suspended senior officials

The Citizen: According to a press release from the VP's office yesterday, GoSS' Vice-President Dr. Riek Machar has named a committee to investigate suspended senior officials of the Southern Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning.

Southern Sudan Government President Salva Kiir ordered the suspension of five senior officials, including two Undersecretaries and three Directors-General of the Ministry of Finance over allegation of corruption.

Juba Conference on oil recommends transparency in oil contracts and accounts

AlAyaam: The first conference on oil is concluding its session in Juba to activate the work of the national commission of the oil regarding its importance as a tool for the fair distribution of oil revenues.

The 3-day conference recommended the Government of National Unity (GoNU) and the Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS) to use the open door policy in the management of the oil sector and oil contracts.

Bahr-el-Ghazal ordered suspension of the activities of the Popular Defence Forces

Rai AlShaab: The governor of West Bahr-el-Ghazal State has ordered a suspension of the activities of the PDF in his state with effect from Saturday 4th November.

The suspension order came during a meeting between the chief of the local police and the local coordinator of the PDF and other key officials in that state.

Museveni, Salva Kiir agree on Ugandan army withdrawal

(Daily Monitor – 3rd Nov. Kampala) President Yoweri Museveni and the Sudanese First Vice President , Salva Kiir, have agreed to the withdrawal of UPDF forces east of Juba-Nimule Road, the Ugandan Daily Monitor reported.

The withdrawal of forces from Palotaka and Tibika bases in eastern Equatoria is a pre-condition the rebel Lord's Resistance Army set before their fighters reassemble at Owiny-Ki-Bul, one of two designated assembly points in South Sudan.

Palotaka has been UPDF's major base since March 2002 when Khartoum and Kampala entered an agreement allowing the UPDF to hunt the LRA in South Sudan. Tibika houses the UPDF communication centre in South Sudan.

UPDF's mandate to fight in South Sudan expired on 30 April and its renewal is shrouded in confusion.

South Sudan's Security Minister Daniel Awet told this reporter earlier in September, that Khartoum declined to renew UPDF's mandate sending Kampala to GoSS. But GoSS according to Awet could not renew the mandate because it was mediating peace talks between the two parties that have fought for the last 20 years.

LRA Spokesman Godfrey Ayo said the LRA fighters currently in Jabilen and Nisitu will only return to Owiny-Ki-Bul if the UPDF withdraws but the Uganda government delegation spokesman, Capt Paddy Ankunda, said he could not comment on executive discussions but warned that the LRA should not peg their assembling to the said redeployment.

Ankunda said the Uganda delegation led by Interior Minister Ruhakana Rugunda would not hold further discussions if the rebels do not assemble.

As both delegations reconvened yesterday at Juba Raha Hotel, there was a general feeling that they both take a two-week recess to monitor the progress of the new Cessation of Hostilities Agreement signed on Wednesday this week.

Darfur

Eritrea says ready to mediate between Sudan govt, Darfur rebels

(*SudanTribune.com* – 5th Nov. **Khrt.**) Eritrea expressed readiness to mediate between the Sudanese government and Darfur rebel groups opposed to Darfur Peace Agreement signed in Abuja in May.

In a press conference, Yemane Gebreab who was in Khartoum for consultations with Sudanese officials, said that the Eritrean delegation for mediation has received positive response from both the Sudanese government of national unity and rebel groups.

A high rank member of the ruling Eritrean People's Front for Democracy and Justice, Yemane Gerbeab, held explorative meetings with the government and rebel movements that did not sign the Abuja agreement to evaluate the possibility of starting negotiations between the two sides as part of a new initiative aimed at completing the agreement.

Gebreab, told reporters at the end of his visit to Khartoum Friday that he had felt "a desire on both sides to begin negotiating but we have not reached a decision on when to begin".

He reaffirmed that his government is prepared and keen on dialogue with all the factions which did not sign the agreement.

Sudan expects more factions to sign Darfur Peace deal

Xinhua: Sudanese President Omer Hassan al-Bashir said in Beijing on Friday that he expects more armed factions to sign a peace deal to end the conflict in Darfur.

Al-Bashir, who arrived here for the upcoming two-day Beijing summit of the Forum on the China-Africa Cooperation, told *Xinhua* that his government is working hard to persuade more factions to join the peace agreement signed in Abuja in May.

The president said the Abuja agreement, if joined by more factions, would bring overall peace to his country.

SLM Minnawi says the Red Cross has listed 8 cases of rape

Rai AlShaab: The office of the SLM representative at the AMIS has accused militias coming in from Niger and Mali and supported by the Sudanese government of attacking yesterday the town of Tine near the Sudan, Chad border.

In a statement, the SLM claimed the ICRC has recorded 8 cases of rape perpetrated by these militias when they recently raided the market in el-Fasher and the AMIS office there.

SLM-AbdulWahid says no talks without international mediator and a DoP

Rai AlShaab – Asmara, Cairo, Khrt.: Representatives of the AbdulWahid faction of the SLM will meet later today in Cairo with Egypt's foreign minister and the Secretary-General of the Arab League to discuss the situation in Darfur.

A humanitarian coordinator for the faction says that they will not engage in negotiations with the GoNU without a clear Declaration of Principles and international observers. He said that their movement does not believe in adding annexes to the Darfur Peace Agreement.

The SLM has also called for a deferment of the Darfur-Darfur Dialogue.

Sudan's Mustafa Ismail to be in charge of Darfur file

(SudanTribune.com – 4th Nov. Khrt.) Sudan has relieved Majzoub al-Khalifa from responsibility for the Darfur dossier and replaced him with former foreign minister Dr. Mustafa Osman Ismail.

Informed sources said all sides closely linked to the Darfur negotiations had been officially notified of the change including the national rank unifying authority, the AU and neighbouring countries mediating between the government and Darfur armed movements.

Majzoub al-Khalifa was criticized for his rigidity by rebels groups and some officials during Abuja talks. Many members of the governmental delegation during the talks refused to work with him and preferred to distance themselves.

CAR rebels vow to resist, will allow relief mission

Rebels who are holding a remote town in northeast Central African Republic vowed on Saturday to resist any government counter-attack, but said they would allow humanitarian workers to travel to the zone.

Central African Republic's government says the armed raiders who seized Birao in the Vakaga prefecture on Monday crossed from neighboring Sudan's violence-torn Darfur region and included Sudanese and Chadian fighters as well as Central Africans.

President Francois Bozize's administration has protested to Khartoum and is calling for international peacekeepers to be deployed in the border zone to help contain what it portrays as a dangerous spillover from the conflict in Sudan's Darfur. (Reuters/agencies)

Arab militia work with Sudan army in Darfur town

Reuters: Sudan may deny that its army cooperates with the Arab militia at the heart of the Darfur conflict, but in Tine, on the border with Chad, little trouble is taken to hide the fact.

The militiamen, known locally as Janjaweed, arrived in Tine last week and set up base jointly with the Sudanese army to protect the strategic site against attack by Darfur rebels.

Heavy gunfire day and night keeps African Union peacekeepers on the alert, and vehicles packed with shouting soldiers tear along dirt tracks.

A Sudanese army source denied there were any Janjaweed in Sudan. "These are border intelligence troops, a force created one year and three months ago," he said. But the ragged youths, many in civilian clothes with rifles slung across their shoulders, did not resemble trained intelligence troops.

Tine market, now devoid of civilians, is teeming with heavily armed men and vehicles with no Sudanese army markings.

Asked where the civilians were, one armed man shouted: "There are no civilians here and we don't want any civilians here," cocking his weapon threateningly.

❖ 1,600 government employees in South Darfur threaten strike in protest over delayed pay

Other Developments:

❖ Gedareif state to launch polio eradication campaign today

❖ Citizens of Amri warn of an impending catastrophe ...Meroe Dam administration rules out the possibility