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UN/ Agencies

UN's Pronk - Darfur peacemakers must listen to Arab concerns

(AP – 22nd Nov. Cairo) Darfur peacemakers must take into account legitimate concerns of the region's Arab population*, distinguishing regular Arabs from the "criminal Janjaweed" militia responsible for atrocities, said Jan Pronk, the expelled head of the U.N. operation in Sudan.

"We should take away some of the motives which inspire the Janjaweed to attack," Pronk said in an e-mail to The Associated Press in Cairo.

Separately, Pronk said he would be returning to his Khartoum office in early December to prepare the transition to his successor, who has yet to be appointed.

"Without the Arabs in Darfur, there is no political solution," Pronk wrote Monday.

"If we could distinguish between, on the one hand, Arabs with legitimate concerns and demands and, on the other, (the) Arab criminal Janjaweed, we could further the political process," he added.

Pronk said that during his two and a half years in Darfur he regularly met Arab leaders, particularly those in West Darfur, to discuss security arrangements for U.N. humanitarian workers and to hear Arab views on peace initiatives.

Those Arabs who resort to violence have various motives, he said. "Many attacks are only criminal. Many are genocidal, aiming to cleanse an area. Some are (a) form of retaliation against other tribes, or against looting of camels, or against tribes which are considered to support the rebels."

Pronk said he also had tried to meet Musa Hilal, the reputed leader of the Janjaweed in North Darfur.

"At a certain moment Musa Hilal wanted to see me. We arranged a meeting, but (Sudanese) National Security prevented him (from keeping) the appointment. Thereupon I took the initiative to meet him. However, he avoided me," Pronk wrote in the email.

Hilal, a tribal chief, is believed to be living in government seclusion in Khartoum. In April the U.N. Security Council and the United States imposed financial sanctions on Hilal, accusing him of orchestrating atrocities in Darfur.

Sudan's government has long denied any connection with the janjaweed. But U.N. officials who investigated the conflict reported in 2005 that the state had armed the militia. And militiamen such as Hilal have confirmed in past interviews that the Janjaweed took its orders from the regular army.

* [AlHayat daily issues a translation of this AP report and translates this passage as: "... a specific legal framework has to be established to bring the perpetrators of crime to justice". It points out that Mr. Pronk has reiterated his accusation of the involvement of Arab tribes in the atrocities in Darfur].

UN official laments Darfur aid

(UPI - 22nd Nov. UN) After leaving Sudan with some very harsh words, the U.N. Emergency Relief Coordinator has issued a forceful call to action on the deplorable conditions in Darfur.

Speaking Tuesday at his office at U.N. World Headquarters in New York, Undersecretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Jan Egeland decried the persistent strife in Sudan and took the international community to task for its weak response.

"Many more people have become armed to the teeth in these recent weeks in preparation for new battles in which the civilian population will inevitably be caught in the crossfire," he told United Press International. "We see a repeat of the build-up of 2003 and 2004 when, really, Darfur was burning. And we see that the relative quiet of 2005 is definitely over."

"There seems to be a deliberate attempt to inject suffering on the civilian population," said Egeland, whose estimates of the scope of the crisis have grown alarmingly since he first visited and publicized the conflict two and a half years ago.

Before leaving the Sudanese capital of Khartoum early this week, Egeland held a news conference Saturday in which he described a worsening state of affairs, pegging the number of people in need of relief aid at four million.

Despite his consistent calls for intervention and relief from the United Nations, the situation in Sudan has deteriorated steadily. Current figures have the death toll at more than 200,000 with an estimated 2.5 million displaced since the start of the ethnically motivated warfare in early 2003.

Egeland is not expected to mince words when he confronts the Security Council Wednesday, where he will likely excoriate that body's inaction as well as what he sees to be a paltry overall U.N. effort in Sudan.

Tentative approval has been struck on a deal to replace the ineffectual African Union forces — only 7,000 soldiers with generally poor training and organization — with a beefed up force of 20,000 joint AU and U.N. troops.

The existing force was described in The Times Online by a senior AU officer as a "laughing stock".

Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir had been both reluctant and overtly hostile to earlier overtures, but last week agreed in principle to the "hybrid" force. Their full approval is necessary, but as they continue to send mixed signals, it remains to be seen if they will resist deployment.

Accordingly, the undersecretary will likely criticize not only the United Nations' efforts, but also those of the Sudanese, Libyan, and other local governments whose commitment to peace and stability has been called into question. Egeland issued them a stern rebuke in his Saturday statement, saying "national authorities are manifestly failing to protect their populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity."

As might be expected in perpetually strife-torn Africa, the regional dynamics have not helped much. Libyan leader Moammar Gadhafi, frequently an agent provocateur in other arenas, has added fuel to the fire by calling the intentions of the international community into question.

"Reject any foreign intervention," he told a meeting of Sudanese officials and members of a Darfur rebel faction. He added: "Western countries and America are not busying themselves out of sympathy for the Sudanese people or for Africa, but for oil and for the return of colonialism to the African continent."

A great deal of the humanitarian outrage surrounding the Sudanese situation has developed from a perceived lack of interest from the developed world, but it is relevant to note that there have been internal obstacles to surmount as well.

"I am now afraid that too much time will be lost on an international tug-of-war of words relating to the composition of the force or the intricacies of an AU-United Nations relationship when people are dying every single day for the lack of basic physical protection," Egeland told UPI. "Let's cut through it, get an effective force immediately."

His more poignant comments, however, were made in response to the horrific violence, widespread starvation, refugee crisis and political instability that have led the conflict to be described by many as a full-blown genocide.

"How can anybody shoot a 2-year old girl through the neck? How can any man do that deliberately? This is terror. I do not know any word for it; it is defined as terror," said Egeland, referring to a visit to a hospital in western Darfur that led him to describe the situation as one of "inexplicable terror."

Ugandan rebels promise UN to assemble fighters

(*Reuters* – 22nd Nov. UN) USG Jan Egeland, who had met the LRA's reclusive leader, Joseph Kony had a telephone conversation with LRA second in command, Vincent Otti, on Wednesday and was told the Lord's Resistance Army would regroup fighters at assembly points along the Sudanese border.

"He confirmed they are going to assemble, that they have noted with satisfaction that we will make it attractive to assemble. We will come with water, sanitation, food, et cetera, in the assembly points," Egeland said.

"I again demanded an answer to my question of release of underage wounded, sick," Egeland said. "He says he's actively pursuing that with the groups coming from Uganda (and) he claims there are only elite combatants in Congo with them."

Otti said he would have an answer within the "next couple of days," Egeland added.

Consignment of lentils for agencies sparks row with authorities

(*AlHayat*) The fate of a UN consignment of lentils still remains unclear with some concerned parties saying that the consignment has been cleared for import while the Ministry of Health has barred it from entering Sudan claiming that samples tested have proved it is not good for human consumption.

United Nations and the Transition Debate

Sudan's Bashir informs Blair and Annan of his rejection of UN force

(*SudanTribune.com* – 22nd Nov. **Khrt.**) In phone calls with British Prime minister and the Secretary-General of the UN, President Bashir has reiterated his rejection of any UN forces or UN command for the African Union peacekeeping forces in Darfur.

The President pointed out that the government position is unchanged and in favour of UN assistance of an African Union-led force in Darfur based on the understanding reached in Addis Ababa.

Expressing his welcome for the logistic and technical assistance to be provided by the UN for the African troops, al- Bashir said that the details of the reinforcement plan would be worked out by a tripartite committee formed by the Sudanese government, the African Union (AU) and the UN.

"I spoke to (Sudanese) President (Omar) al-Beshir today and he has indicated he will be writing to me shortly," Annan told reporters at the end of the closed-door council consultations. "I think I should wait for his letter."

Sudanese VP wants troops in Darfur even without Khartoum's OK

(*AFP* – 22nd Nov. **Cairo**) The international community should send peacekeepers to Darfur with or without Khartoum's approval, the Sudanese regime's number two Salva Kiir has said.

"My position has always been very clear... that international forces should come to save lives," the Sudanese first vice president told reporters in Cairo after meeting Egyptian Foreign Minister Ahmed Aboul Gheit on Wednesday.

Asked if the Sudanese government's consent should be a prerequisite to any deployment, Kiir said: "It should not be a condition. There will be no reason, if people are dying... and it should not restrict the international community from coming in to save lives."

SLM-Minnawi calls on Security Council and international forces to end Darfur bloodshed

(*Rai AlShaab*) The Press Advisor for SLM-Minnawi has reiterated SLM calls for an international force to help end the bloodshed in Darfur.

el-Tayeb Khamis says Minnawi will be back in Khartoum tomorrow following a successful tour of Darfur where he held consultations with field commanders on the security arrangements and the continued attacks by Janjaweed. He rebuffed reports that Minnawi is disgruntled and is heading towards joining the NRF.

Khamis says government is massing up more Janjaweed and has re-named them the "National Security Forces". He called on the government to protect the people of Darfur from these attacks.

Blair warns Sudan of 'tougher measures' over Darfur

(*AFP* – 22nd Nov. **London**) British Prime Minister Tony Blair warned Wednesday that Sudan would face "tougher measures" if it failed to act on an agreement calling for a UN-African peacekeeping force for war-torn Darfur.

"The only solution is to make sure that the agreement ... is implemented," Blair told the House of Commons during his weekly question-and-answer session.

"If the government (of Sudan) does not seize this opportunity then we will have to look at tougher measures," Blair said.

UN chief Kofi Annan has said he expected a response from the Sudanese government by Wednesday at the latest on outstanding issues regarding last week's deal for a hybrid United Nations and African Union force for Darfur.

He said Khartoum had wanted to consult on the size of the force, which the UN foresees at 17,000 troops and 3,000 police; the way the force commander should be appointed and the role of the special representative who would report to both the UN and the AU.

Pan-African parliament rejects international intervention in Darfur

(*AlHayat*) The Pan-African Parliament has called upon the international community to honour their pledges in order to enable the African Union carry out its mandated tasks in Darfur.

the pan-African body has also called on the non-signatory groups to join the peace process and underlined the need for an African primacy on the security issue in Darfur.

CPA

Parliament expresses concerns over returns

(*Rai AlShaab*) Parliament has expressed grave concerns over statistics of IDPs presented by the Minister of Humanitarian Affairs in answer to questions on government preparations for returns.

MPs have called for more political will to facilitate voluntary returns and the Speaker has called upon the parliamentary committee on humanitarian affairs to prepare an independent report on the voluntary returns of refugees and IDPs.

A report of the parliamentary committee on humanitarian affairs prepared in response to the Minister of Humanitarian Affairs reveals that the GoNU, the GoSS and the UN have not met their obligations to the returns program. It also reveals a lack of coordination between the relevant parties, that areas of return have not been made to prepare for returns, lack of the tenets of stability and basic security in areas of returns and lack of food security that has affected returns and has made some returnees to go back to the IDP camps.

Some South Sudan refugees prepare to head home

(*AP*- 22nd Nov. **Soba Aradi Camp**) Some of the more than 1 million refugees who have lived in squatter camps around Khartoum for decades are preparing to go back home to southern Sudan.

"They're the lucky ones. I don't know how long we'll be here for," said Salahedin Ahmed, a refugee from Darfur watching as a small crowd of southerners waited this week at an aid agency tent to register for the trip home.

In a country wracked by decades of humanitarian crises — drought, famine and at least two wars — the refugees from Sudan's many ethnic groups are taking a risk they will go home only to be caught up again in unsettled political struggles.

Yet people consider the first large-scale return of refugees to be progress.

About 6.5 million of Sudan's population of 40 million are living away from their homes. Government officials estimate about half the displaced live around Khartoum, the booming national capital in the north.

Of those, at least 1.5 million live in camps on the capital's outskirts, the U.N. International Organization for Migration says.

Some camps are legal and relatively well-furnished. Others, like Soba Aradi, are sprawling wastelands where tens of thousands live in mud-brick shacks amid garbage-strewn streets, fearing police raids and expulsions.

The camp is a microcosm of Sudan's ethnic differences:

The first of Soba Aradi's 60,000 squatters arrived from Darfur around 1984, when a severe drought killed tens of thousands there.

They were soon joined by tall, lanky Dinka tribesmen fleeing the civil war that devastated southern Sudan from 1983 until a 2005 peace agreement.

Others trickled into the camp from other Sudanese regions.

Then, after a 2003 rebellion and bloody government retaliation turned Darfur into the world's worst humanitarian crisis, yet another wave from Darfur poured in.

Aid workers estimate several hundred thousand people from Darfur could be living around Khartoum, although the vast majority of the estimated 2.5 million people who have fled their homes in Darfur have gone elsewhere in that region or crossed into Chad.

Abdurahim said she has no plans to go back. "Life is difficult here, but it was even harder in the village," she said.

In contrast, many southerners seem eager to go home.

A survey by the International Organization for Migration estimates 70 percent of the southerners in Soba Aradi and other camps around Khartoum want to leave.

"We're not encouraging people to go. They want to," said Robert Turner, who coordinates the return program for the U.N. mission.

Allen Cham Obu, 49, is one of them. He has spent nearly half his life in squatter camps around Khartoum.

"Even if there is still some shooting, I want to go home," he said, clutching four of his six young children as he lined up at a U.N. tent to register for the journey south.

He said he knew it would be hard to readjust to country life, farming on his family land.

"But here, I don't even have enough money to feed the children," he said, pointing at his youngest infant, whose sparse, discoloured hair revealed chronic malnutrition.

GoNU

President Bashir accuses foreign states of supporting Darfur rebels

(*AlKuwat AlMusalaha; AlSudani*) President Bashir has accused foreign states he did not name of supporting the Darfur rebels in their military operations in the region.

The President who was speaking at the closing session of a conference of the National Congress Party Consultative Council yesterday said that there are plans by foreign parties to bring Sudan into accepting UNSCR 1706 but threats will not compel the Sudan to back up on its rejection to a deployment of international forces.

According to the President of the Consultative Council, President Bashir also called upon the relevant parties to work towards returns and clearing the camps of IDPs and completing the Darfur Peace Agreement.

On southern Sudan, the president warned that secession of the south after the Interim Period will usher in the disintegration of the Sudan.

On the recent incidents of insecurity around the capital and elsewhere in the country, the president called for patience and pointed out that this is the outcome of the transition from a state of war to peace and said that unity should be made the central goal.

He said that relations between the National Congress Party and the SPLM have greatly progressed.

28 arrested in the slaughter of Sudanese journalist*

(*AP – 22nd Nov. Khrt.*) The kidnappers of a Sudanese newspaper editor slain in September put him on a "trial" before slitting his throat in a style used to slaughter camels, then decapitated his dead body, the justice minister said Wednesday.

The justice minister said 28 people were being held in connection to the slaying of Mohammed Taha Mohammed Ahmed, who was kidnapped months after some accused him of blasphemy for articles many saw as insulting the Islam's prophet Muhammad.

A group claiming to be al-Qaida's branch in Sudan issued a claim of responsibility for the murder soon after Ahmed's body was found in Khartoum on Sept. 6.

But Justice Minister Mohammed Ali al-Mardi attempted to dismiss that claim in a press conference Wednesday, saying the suspects carried out the killing using the methods of "extremist groups in Iraq so that the thinking would be diverted to Islamist groups in the Sudan."

He said "newspapers bearing photos of (slaughter) operations that were implemented in Iraq were found in the house of one suspect."

But al-Mardi refused to give details on the motive in the killing and forbid the Sudanese press from speculating on it — reflecting the sensitivities of the case.

A small group of relatives from Ahmed's tribe protested outside al-Mardi's press conference, angered at his refusal to give details on [the identity and motives of] those arrested in the killing. They blocked his car as he tried to leave, shouting "Step down, you failure," until police dragged them away.

Ahmed, the editor-in-chief of the independent daily Al-Wifaq, was snatched from his home in a northern district of Khartoum by masked gunmen a day before his decapitated body was found. The previous year, Ahmed had sparked controversy when his paper republished an article from the Internet that questioned the parentage of the Prophet Muhammad. Death threats were issued against him by angry Muslims, and the paper was fined by the government.

The editor's captors took him to a house in southern Khartoum, where they put him on "a summary trial," al-Mardi said. He did not specify whether the "trial" was for blasphemy. Kidnappers in Iraq often put their victims on a similar trial, accusing them of being infidels for support of the pro-U.S. government.

Afterwards, Ahmed was tied up and taken to another part of Khartoum. There, "in the presence of several people, including two women," one man stabbed him in the back between the shoulder blades with a knife, causing him to fall forward, then another man slit his throat — a method used in slaughtering camels, al-Mardi said.

The body was then taken to a remote location near a police training field, and the suspects cut off the head, he said.

Police arrested 68 people in the case, but 40 were released for lack of evidence. The remainder are being interrogated and could face trial, he said.

** The story on the minister's press conference has made the headlines in a number of local dailies*

Ministry of Defence welcomes formation of a parliamentary committee to tour Darfur

(AlHayat et al) The Ministry of National Defence has welcomed and promised to facilitate the initiative by the National Assembly to send a fact-finding mission to assess the situation on the ground in Darfur.

A statement issued by the Office of the Minister of National Defence lauded the MPs for the objective manner in which they discussed the defence minister's report on border security in the west and south of the country.

GoSS/Southern Sudan

Khartoum not responsible to end Juba security, says defense minister

(Juba Post) The Minister for National Defence has stated that the security of southern Sudan is the responsibility of the GoSS alone and denies allegations that the central government is sponsoring the insecurity as unfounded.

"The (CPA) Comprehensive Peace Agreement stipulates the competence for the south to resolve all the security issues in the south. The security procedures taken by the Government of Southern Sudan against the anti-peace is in place" he said.

He urged people of southern Sudan to have confidence in the GoSS and said he trusts that the GoSS can solve the security problem.

Workers protesting delayed pay in oil fields in Upper Nile seize 21 oil tankers

(*AlAyaam*) Workers of oil companies and the citizens of Falluj and Malut have seized 21 oil tankers belonging to oil companies operating in the region.

The workers protest unpaid salaries and that the companies are employing workers from other regions in these oil fields instead of employing indigenes.

Local authorities managed to bring the situation under control.

SPLA elements abduct and murder the head of Air Taxi company Juba

(*Allintibaha*) SPLA elements have abducted and murdered the head of Air Taxi company in Juba.

Mohamed el-Tayeb was abducted by three armed men in Juba market and his dead body was found on the 21st of November in a remote area with gunshot wounds and a broken skull.

Poor roads, taxes shoot up Yei market prices

(*Juba Post*) The price of basic commodities has risen sharply, according to the Yei market survey.

Traders say the price hike is due to the three mile long blockage on the Yei-Kai road between the Jombu and Ligi .

Difficult transport and taxation, traders say, has forced them to raise their prices to cover the losses.

Drug shortages, unpaid salaries hit Maraidi hospital

(*Juba Post*) Unpaid salaries for the medical staff and shortages of drugs are making it hard to administer Maridi Civil Hospital, said Dr. Esther Remy Oller, the hospital 's Senior Medical Officer.

According to Dr. Oller, Western Equatoria State government had failed to pay staff salaries since June 2006. She also complained of drug shortages, but said the state government did supply the hospital with some drugs .

Western Equatoria State has highest number of schools

(*Juba Post*) A recent mass survey of schools in South Sudan finds that Western Bahr el-Gazal has the lowest number of schools while Western Equatoria boasts of the highest.

According to the survey, a school or "learning space" can be anything from a permanent building with a roof to a common tree used as a classroom.

Juba news paper office staff detained by SPLA

(*Juba Post*) The staff and visitors to the Juba Post newspaper office were detained by SPLA soldiers last Thursday for approximately one and half hours.

Soldiers were sent to arrest the staff for an article considered offensive to the Governor of Central Equatoria State, Clement Wani, and soldiers who were formally part of Commando forces .

However, the offending article was not written in the Juba Post but another weekly English news paper “The Southern Eye”.

After realising the misunderstanding, all detainees were released with apologies for the inconveniences.

Darfur/Darfur Peace Agreement

African Union says Darfur rebels plan to attack its fuel tankers

(*SudanTribune.com* – 22nd Khrt.) The African Union said accused a Darfur rebel group of preparing attack on its fuel tankers saying such action will hinder peace efforts in the region.

The African Union Mission in Sudan on Wednesday said has received creditable information on a planed ambush against on its fuel tankers travelling of Um Kadada and El Nahud, near Al-Fashir.

In a press statement, the AU said some elements of the National redemption Front are behind this potential attack.

“Such actions constitute flagrant violations of the ceasefire and negate current efforts of broadening the peace process and making it more inclusive.”

The African body urged the rebel NRF leadership to refrain its elements from undertaking such action.

** Please see AU press release attached separately*

Editorials/ Commentaries

Do we really need this [*incidents of insecurity*]?

(*Sudan Tribune editorial*) the editorial mainly discuss the incidents in Khartoum during the past weeks and points out that these should not be left to pass without comment.

It points out that people are accustomed to a stereo type mode of handling issues and cites recent reports purporting the formation of a joint committee of tehe ncp and the SPLM to resolve these issues.

The editorial points out that rather than reporting on the formation fo such a committee, the issue of insecurity could be resolved through impressing upon the police force, the SPLA and the SAF the exigency of maintaining social peace and orienting the population on the need for change and acceptance of the new state of affairs ensuring from the CPA.

Is the gun the language of peace?

(Juba Post editorial) the government of south Sudan is in its way to democracy and the realization of the human and the expectation of the good governance and the respect to the human rights as guaranteed in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) .

The editorial cites examples of the rampant lawlessness, especially by soldiers in Juba and the story of the Juba post paper when a group of armed soldiers arrested and detained the reporters and the visitors of the paper accusing them of writing an article in their paper that tarnishes the image of the Governor of Central Equatoria State, Major General Clement Wai, and the Mundari Community. However, the article turned out to be written in the “Southern Eye” newspaper not Juba Post.

The editorial called for legal measures to be taken in such issues and for the establishment of good relations between civilians and soldiers.

Call for the release of eastern Sudanese leader

(The citizen editorial) We received with concern yesterday news from Sudanese opposition leaders alerting us that the Eritrean authorities have arrested some opposition leaders in Asmara. We consider this as technical political problem because Eritrea does not seem to believe that the deal they mediate is not genuine and will not last too long.

Eritrea should free our fellow citizen .If these fighters are inviting political problem between Asmara and Khartoum ,expel them to Sudan .We are concerned with the arrest of our leaders and since Eritrea is neutral in our problems ,the leaders of the Eastern Front is crushed .We in Sudan will blame Eritrea if it undermines the struggle of people in Eastern Sudan ,Eastern Front has a genuine cause ,a human cause that needs the Eritrean leadership's understanding .

In short, we appeal the Eritrea to release our leaders immediately and allow them to enter Sudan with their arms so that they can defend themselves from intolerant people .Unite them, they will stand, divide them, they will fall.