

19 Oct 08

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Media Monitoring Report

United Nations Mission In Sudan/ Public Information Office

Local News Headlines

- CPA partners fail to agree on Abyei Area fifth arbitrator (Al-Sahafa)
- People of Sudan forum wraps up sessions (Dailies)
- Crisis over Ethiopian plane persists, SPLA refuses SAF search (Al-Intibaha)
- Parliamentary committee to summon minister on Ukrainian arms shipment (SMC)
- Lawmakers recommend sacking of Defence Minister (Khartoum Monitor)
- JEM ready to listen to Qatar (Al-Rai Al-Aam)
- LRA major threat to security in the south – commissioner (Ajrass Al-Hurriah)
- Report stirs up anger among Hausa tribesmen (Akhira Lahza)

Websites/International Headlines

- Sudan army takes over JDB chairmanship (Miraya FM)
- Communist leader says Ukrainian president involved in illegal arms trade (Interfax)
- Sudan confident ICC judges will reject Bashir charges (ST)
- Prosecutor to present third Sudan case within weeks (Reuters)
- Darfur forum resolutions could lead to constitutional reform – official (ST)
- Governor suspends probe of stolen assembly funds in Lakes State (ST)
- South Sudan seeks budget hike after army overspend (Reuters)
- Libya says Sudan and Chad to normalize ties (ST)
- Rebels absent as Sudan holds Darfur peace meeting (AP)
- Sudan launches Darfur peace effort, rebels boycott (Reuters)
- Darfurians say Sudan initiative dead in water (AFP)
- Bashir war crimes charges delayed (BBC)

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Highlights

CPA partners fail to agree on Abyei Area fifth arbitrator

Al-Sahafa reports NCP and SPLM have failed to agree on the Abyei Area fifth arbitrator. GoSS Presidency Minister Luka Biong said NCP and SPLM had failed to select one person from the list of five nominees to take over as the fifth arbitrator. He said the International Court submitted a new list of seven persons so that the fifth arbitrator could be selected within two weeks, noting that the court has the right to select if the two parties fail to do so.

People of Sudan Forum wrap up sessions

Local dailies report the People of Sudan Forum wrapped up its general sessions yesterday in Kenana (White Nile State). The forum set up seven committees to continue closed meetings and submit their recommendations not later than 30 October. President Bashir has promised to implement the recommendations immediately.

Crisis over Ethiopian plane persists, SPLA refuses SAF search

Al-Intibaha reports the controversial Ethiopian aircraft Antonov (12/1503) has flown back to Ethiopia. According to the paper's report, SPLA officers guarding the plane at Juba airport "threatened to kill" SAF representatives who wanted to search the plane. UN representatives were allowed to search the aircraft before take off but the SAF representatives were not allowed to take part in the search.

Sudan Vision reports that the NCP rejected SPLM claims that the CPA allows rearmament. NCP official Qutbi Al-Mahdi told the paper that the CPA Security Arrangement protocol did not provide for SPLA rearming and that this was a CPA violation. According to **Akhir Lahza**, Qutbi Al Mahdi (Sudan's former Director of External Security) alleged SPLM was preparing to declare independence before the referendum.

Parliamentary committee to summon minister on Ukrainian arms

SMC reported National Assembly's Defence and Security Committee is to summon Foreign Minister Deng Alor to account for Ukrainian arms shipment reportedly destined for GoSS. The Committee chairman Police Gen Jalal Ali Tawir told the **SMC** he had received applications from a number of MPs requesting explanations from Alor about the Ukrainian ship and its weapons cargo. Tawir said it was important that the Minister explain, given the SPLM statement that it had the right to import arms and train troops.

Lawmakers recommend sacking of Defence Minister

Khartoum Monitor reports Sudan's Parliamentary Commission has pointed an accusing finger at the army for failing to prevent Darfur rebels from attacking the capital last May. The lawmakers said that Defence Minister Abdul Rahim Mohamed Hussain was negligent in handling the assault on the capital and recommended his sacking.

JEM ready to listen to Qatar

Al-Rai Al-Aam reports JEM leader Khalil Ibrahim said he is willing to listen to what Qatar has to say about its initiative to address Darfur crisis. Khalil told Miraya FM that JEM representative met Qatari State Minister in Paris last week, adding his movement could welcome the initiative if proved serious.

LRA major threat to security in the south – commissioner

Ajras Al-Hurriya reports Commissioner of Yambio County David B. Abantiu as saying the LRA presence on the border between the Western Equatoria and DRC poses threat to security in southern Sudan. He said the authorities had decided to open a permanent office in the County to closely monitor the security situation, and that security personnel had been sent to the border area.

Report stirs up anger among Hausa tribesmen

Akhir Lahza (17/10/08) reported bloody incidents occurred yesterday and the day before in Kassala State involving Hausa tribe members protesting about a 2 August newspaper report claiming President al-Bashir described "the Hausa in Sudan" as foreigners and that there is no tribe in Sudan with that "name."

Akhir Lahza's sources claiming the incidents have resulted in a number of deaths and in scores of citizens and policemen in addition to damage to property. Meanwhile, on local radio the state government denounced the report as malicious rumour. Leaders of the Hausa tribe issued a statement yesterday commending the results of their meeting with President Bashir on 15 October. They also called on grassroots to exercise self restraint and to maintain security and stability. The statement, published by the Sudan News Agency, said the President had denied making the alleged statement. Tribal leaders said they would take legal action against the **Al-Ayyam** newspaper.

Website/International News Coverage

Sudan expresses confidence ICC judges to reject Bashir charges

18/10/08 (**Sudan Tribune website**) KHARTOUM – The Sudanese government hailed a decision by the judges of the ICC requesting more information on the prosecutor's request for an arrest warrant against president Omer Hassan Al-Bashir.

An unidentified Sudanese official speaking to the daily **Al-Sharq Al-Awsat** published in London said that judges' request "proves that Ocampo's evidence is weak and fabricated and that Al-Bashir is innocent". The head of the Sudanese lawyers syndicate Fathi Khalil also said that the judges found that the evidence is non-compelling to build a case. Khalil said that the prosecutor had exceeded his mandate by the UN Security Council (UNSC) which did not find genocide being committed in Darfur.

Darfur forum resolutions could lead to constitutional reform - official

18/10/08 (**Sudan Tribune website**) KHARTOUM — Former governor of South Darfur and NCP Darfur committee member, Al-Haj Atta Al-Mannan, said today that he expected ongoing national consultations related to the three-day forum on the Darfur crisis to launch constitutional reform.

The forum moved to Kenana in White Nile state, after its opening session in Khartoum. African, Arab and Western ambassadors in Khartoum were invited to attend the ongoing session.

Saturday's deliberations focused on ways to restore the authority of law, consolidation of the peace process, ensuring the return of IDPs and refugees and to avoidance of military force to resolve differences.

Musa Hilal, the Janjaweed leader turned special adviser for the ministry of federal government, has been chosen as co-chairperson of the Commission on reconciliation and social peace.

Governor suspends probe of stolen assembly funds in Lakes State

18/10/08 (***Sudan Tribune website***) PARIS – The Lakes State Governor has reportedly suspended a committee formed to investigate alleged misappropriation of public funds by a recently approved interim speaker in Rumbek. Re-instated Lakes State speaker, Isaiah Alier Machinkok, has alleged to the Sudan Tribune that 90,000 pounds had been taken from assembly funds during the 13 days he had been replaced in office. He said this amounted to the quarterly cost of running the state parliamentary operation. He accused his interim replacement, Bullian Kot, of confiscating the funds.

Machinkok was reinstated as speaker on 8 October by GoSS President Salva Kiir, having been suspended during an attempt by a group of assembly members and executive branch officials to impeach him.

Governor Daniel Awet Akot has blocked an investigation committee formed to probe Machinkok's claim, on grounds that an SPLM caucus meeting, to be held Sunday at the SPLM Lakes State headquarters secretariat office, must first authorize the move.

On Saturday morning heavy inter-clan fighting broke out between the Panyar-Apin and Panyar-Machor clans of the Dinka Agar tribe in Rumbek East County. The clashes could interrupt the proposed SPLM caucus. Nine people were reported killed in two separate incidents in recent weeks following inter-clan clashes in Rumbek East County and the in the northeast of Cueibet county in western the Lakes State.

Libya says Sudan and Chad soon to normalize ties

18/10/08 (***Sudan Tribune website***) KHARTOUM –Libya's deputy Foreign Minister for African affairs, Ali Abdel-Salam Al-Tereyk, has told reporters that the Sudan and Chad will soon exchange ambassadors in a step towards normalizing ties. He said a tripartite summit to discuss relations between the Sudan and Chad is scheduled for late October and will be attended by Sudanese presidential adviser Mustafa Ismail and Chad's foreign minister.

Communist leader says Ukrainian president involved in illegal arms trade

Text of 17/10/08 (***Interfax-Ukraine***), Kiev -- The leader of the Communist Party of Ukraine, Petro Symonenko, has accused Ukrainian President Viktor Yushchenko of being involved in illegal arms supplies to Georgia and the Horn of Africa.

"The shipments of Ukrainian weapons to the Horn of Africa were carried out on Yushchenko's direct order and in agreement with US Vice-President Dick Cheney, who, as co-owner, helps the American oil company Halliburton to seize oil fields in Sudan," the press service of the Communist Party quoted its leader as saying.

Symonenko added that Ukraine has twice shipped arms to the Horn of Africa since Yushchenko was elected president. "It was using the services of intermediary companies which, using contracts with Kenya as a cover, sent Ukrainian weapons to the African countries where pro-American governments are in power and get ready for war with Sudan for its oil, whose deposits make up 20 per cent of the world's deposits," he said.

Prosecutor to present third Sudan case within weeks

By Michelle Nichols, 17/10/08, NEW YORK (**Reuters**) – The chief prosecutor of the ICC said on Friday he will present a case within weeks for the indictment of some rebel commanders accused of attacking peacekeepers in Sudan's Darfur region.

"In a couple of weeks I will present my third case against some rebel commanders who were attacking African Union peacekeepers," Moreno-Ocampo told a Council on Foreign Relations symposium, sponsored by Hollywood actors Angelina Jolie and Brad Pitt.

Jolie, a goodwill ambassador for the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees, told the symposium that "peace is placed before justice, often instead of justice." "We let those who destroyed their countries decide the future for their countries," she added. "There is no enduring peace without justice."

Sudan army takes over JDB chairmanship

Miraya FM website, 16/10/08 -- The chairmanship of the Joint Defence Board (JDB) has been transferred from the SPLM to the SAF. This came during the board's regular meeting yesterday. JDB Spokesman Maj-Gen Bior Ajang told Miraya FM that the meeting discussed the issue of the chairmanship and the budget of the JIUs. He said the board would meet the Presidency today to pass the JIUs' budget and the provision of logistical utilities for the units. He noted that the meeting had discussed both the issues of the Ethiopian plane and the hijacked Ukrainian ship. He said that the weapons on the Ethiopian plane were for an Ethiopian arms exhibition in Juba.

Meanwhile, the Ethiopian ambassador to Sudan, Ali Abdu, said that he will convey Sudan government's stance to his government concerning the Ethiopian plane which was carrying weapons to Juba. Ambassador Abdu confirmed to Miraya FM that the weapons were brought specially for the trade exhibition and said they would return to Ethiopia after the exhibition.

Rebels absent as Sudan holds Darfur peace meeting

16/10/08 (**Associated Press**), KHARTOUM - Sudan's president opened a conference on the Darfur conflict Thursday with a call for a national vision for peace in the desert region, but his rebel foes stayed away, dismissing the meeting as a sham.

Rebel groups in the western Sudanese region said the three-day forum was an attempt by President Omar al-Bashir to avoid prosecution by the ICC.

ICC judges said Thursday that they had given the prosecutor a month to provide more evidence before they decide on his request for an arrest warrant.

The conference convened by President Bashir brought together delegates from a dozen political parties and civic groups in Sudan. Representatives of the African Union as well as some of al-Bashir's foreign supporters, including Egypt, Libya and Qatar, attended the opening session.

Sudan's government said rebel groups were invited, too, but none showed up. One group, the Justice and Equality Movement, called the forum a "desperate attempt" to garner support for al-Bashir, the first sitting head of state to face genocide charges at the international court. Another, the Sudan Liberation Movement-Unity, also said the initiative was just an attempt to "circumvent" justice.

Al-Bashir promised to bring back peace, set up fair and just trials, and commit \$250 million for development in the region in the coming year. "We insist on reaching a final solution this time,

based on the initiative and a broad national consensus aiming for a just and comprehensive and permanent solution," al-Bashir said.

Sudan launches Darfur peace effort, rebels boycott

17/10/08, **Reuters**, Khartoum -- Sudan's president Al Bashir, accused of genocide by the prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC), launched a national initiative on Thursday to bring peace to Darfur. Rebels dismissed the move as a public relations trick and boycotted the launch.

But Bashir, addressing top delegates from the Arab League, the African Union, Egypt, Libya and Qatar, along with several Sudanese political parties, said the initiative was serious. "Despite the difficulties and obstacles ... we declare our determination to reach a final solution this time," he said.

Bashir said the solution would be based on principles which included ending the violence and supporting the voluntary repatriation of hundreds of thousands of displaced people who have fled their homes since the Darfur conflict flared in 2003.

Government officials said the various Sudanese parties that are part of the initiative will hammer out recommendations on how to resolve the conflict next week.

Darfur rebels said Bashir was merely trying to avoid the issuing of an ICC arrest warrant by showing the world he was trying to resolve the conflict.

"They just want to gain time," said Abdel-Wahed Mohamed el-Nur, head of one faction of the Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM). "They want to show that there is a peace process ... but the fact on the ground is that they are killing people."

Bashir pledged more cooperation with UNAMID, to secure the passage of aid convoys, along with up to \$350 million of spending on development in the region until the end of 2009.

Arab League and African Union are leading efforts to prepare the ground for yet another round of peace talks between the Sudanese government and rebel groups, this time in Qatar.

Djibril Bassole, joint U.N./AU mediator for Darfur, noted the rebel boycott but said Bashir's effort was key to bring about peace. "I believe that this initiative is the main initiative because for peace we need the commitment of the government, and this initiative is a very good commitment," he said.

Alberto Fernandez, the U.S. charge d'affaires in Sudan, was more skeptical. "If it is a true process, if this is the beginning of a true change, a substantive change in the way Darfur has been handled, then it would be supported by people," he said. "But there is a problem. The government lacks credibility because of the last five years. So there is doubt in the minds of many people ... That doesn't mean that it can't be overcome."

Bashir war crimes charges delayed

(**BBC**) -- Judges at the ICC have asked for more evidence before deciding whether to issue an arrest warrant against Sudan's leader. Chief prosecutor Luis Moreno Ocampo, who wants the court to issue a warrant for President Omar al-Bashir over war crimes allegedly committed in Darfur, has been given a month to provide the additional evidence.

Mr Moreno Ocampo asked the ICC to issue an arrest warrant against Mr Bashir in July, saying

there were grounds to believe Sudan's president bore criminal responsibility on 10 counts of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes. But a statement from the ICC on Thursday said that prosecutors must submit "additional supporting materials in relation to some confidential aspects" of the prosecution's request by 17 November.

Alex de Waal, an expert on the Darfur conflict based in the US, said it was very unlikely that it would affect the likelihood that the pre-trial chamber would issue an arrest warrant against Mr. Bashir. "What is not in much doubt is that the charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity will pass the rather low threshold... It's almost inconceivable that the pre-trial chamber would throw out those charges."

But he said the court may say there is insufficient evidence to bring "credible charges" of genocide against the Sudanese president.

Darfurians say Sudan initiative dead in water

By Jennie Matthew (**AFP**), 16/10/08, EL-FASHER – Political opponents and victims of the conflict dismissed Sudan's initiative on Thursday to resolve the war in Darfur as dead in the water and a cynical attempt to keep the regime in power.

Rejected by 13 opposition parties and ridiculed by those living in militarized camps for the displaced, the so-called people's initiative failed to rally a national consensus behind efforts to resolve the conflict.

It has rallied only President Omar al-Beshir's National Congress Party and his coalition partners, chiefly the Sudan People's Liberation Movement, whose power depends on sticking to their own peace agreement with Khartoum.

For displaced persons spoken to by AFP, the initiative is ridiculous. They ask how a party to and an instigator of the conflict can find a unilateral solution to the nearly six-year conflict while it continues military operations and as insecurity deteriorates?

Bashir needs to curry favour with the UN Security Council, which can defer any chance of him being hauled before the International Criminal Court (ICC) to answer accusations of war crimes leveled by chief prosecutor Luis Moreno-Ocampo.

"It's only after Ocampo that Beshir started to do his best, but there is nothing serious," said Alawia Ahmed Mohammed, a 26-year-old displaced woman living in Abu Shouk camp, outside the government-held town of El-Fasher. "This peace, peace, peace we hear about is not true. It's a lie," she said.

"The right way is for the people of Darfur to make peace," she said quietly from behind her pink veil. No one was invited from the 2.5 million people estimated to have been displaced from the war, people in the camp say.

The Sudanese military has been pressing campaigns in the deserts of North Darfur, outside the state capital El-Fasher, for the past month.

In downtown El-Fasher, gunmen in military fatigues wove through the traffic stuffed into pick-up trucks that were mounted with machine guns.

"The government will bring peace by the gun," said Salah Salih Baku, a community leader living

in Abu Shouk and from the Fur tribe that Ocampo accused Beshir of ordering to annihilate. "At the time of any meeting, the soldiers will be outside shooting. This could go on for another 10 to 20 years," he said.

Bemoaning the government's failure to involve civil society independents, scholars and displaced people, Darfuri academic Abdul-Jabbar Abdullah Fadul believes regime change is the only route to a sustainable peace in Darfur. "With the presence of this regime, Sudan will never be healthy. Traditional peace negotiations are nonsense and they will not take place," he said. "I doubt Beshir can sign an agreement," he said.

Instead he sees the ICC chasing after top regime officials, and national elections scheduled for next year, as helping to weaken the NCP and quicken its eventual departure from power. "The ICC, as one of the pressures, will not solve the problem but will go towards weakening the regime, which will help withdraw this regime," he said.

Many believe the only way to overcome the intractability of the conflict is when international concern translates into sufficient pressure.

Yet Thursday's initiative only adds to the maze of competing efforts to ease the conflict, variously led by the Arab League and African Union, Qatar and the joint African Union-United Nations mediator, Djibril Bassole.

One UN diplomat in Darfur likened Sudan to a stove with three or four pans on the boil but with nothing to eat on the table.

"A credible peace process in Darfur cannot be achieved by negotiations alone between the rebels and the government," said the diplomat, speaking on condition of anonymity because he was not authorised to speak to journalists.

"They are too weak and too illegitimate to sustain or implement any deal they sign. The rebels are too fragmented and turning into tribal militias. The government has committed atrocities and is therefore not legitimate."

The UN diplomat believes that the NCP knows the people's initiative will fail and that improving cooperation with the AU-UN peacekeeping mission, which Khartoum obstructed for so long, is another weapon in its charm offensive. Still drastically under-manned, that force has proved unable to protect its soldiers and lacks the power to intervene to protect victims of the conflict.

South Sudan seeks budget hike after army overspend

By Skye Wheeler

JUBA, Sudan, Oct 15 (**Reuters**) - South Sudan's finance minister on Wednesday asked lawmakers to approve a supplementary budget equal to almost two-thirds the original plan largely because of overspending by the armed forces.

Both the semi-autonomous south and the north, which signed a peace deal in 2005, have been building up their armies with a number of possible flashpoint events on the horizon.

Finance Minister Kuol Athian told South Sudan's parliament it needed to cover another 2.08 billion Sudanese pounds (\$980 million) of spending on top of the 3.4 billion Sudanese pounds already included in the 2008 budget.

The minister later told Reuters the biggest over-spender was South Sudan's army, which had

burned through a budget of nearly 1 billion pounds by June.

South Sudan's national budget has been weighed down by the running costs of the large standing army it has maintained since signing the peace agreement that ended more than two decades of north-south civil war.

Athian told Reuters the 61 percent budget increase he wanted could be covered by a surge in the region's oil revenues in 2008. Oil revenues account for 99 percent of government income.

A recent fall in global oil prices could have a serious impact on next year's spending plans, Athian added.

"It will affect our budget for next year," he told Reuters. The budget for 2009 would be worked out on the assumption of an oil price of \$75 a barrel, he added. U.S. crude fell on Wednesday to a 13-month low of just over \$75.

Overall, South Sudan's government spent 70 percent of its budget by June, said Athian. Government departments exceeded budgeted spending in a range of others areas, including telecoms and food stores, he added. South Sudanese parliamentarians are due to vote on the supplementary budget request within the next two weeks.

The seizure by Somali pirates of a shipload of tanks that many believe were destined for South Sudan has highlighted the arms build-up in the region. South Sudan has said the tanks were not for its forces and Kenya says they were meant for its forces, but the U.S. navy, diplomats, maritime officials and the pirates have said they believe they were meant for south Sudan.

IMF confirms investigation of its director

WASHINGTON (AFP) – The International Monetary Fund has launched an investigation of its director, Frenchman Dominique Strauss-Kahn, for abuse of power while involved in a relationship with a subordinate, an IMF official said Saturday.

The probe was set in motion at the initiative of a long-serving member of the institution's governing board, Shakour Shaalan of Egypt. Shaalan "has asked external counsel to conduct an independent investigation and determine the validity of the allegations," an IMF spokesman told AFP. "All allegations -- particularly those involving senior management -- are taken extremely seriously," he added.

The Wall Street Journal reported that the law firm of Morgan, Lewis & Bockius LLP had been retained by the IMF to conduct the investigation expected to be completed by the end of the month.

According to the report, the investigation focuses on the former French finance minister's relationship with Hungarian-born Piroska Nagy, a married former senior official in the IMF's Africa department. The two are said to have exchanged emails about a possible intimate relationship, which apparently began early this year during a conference in Europe, according to The Journal.

The IMF and Strauss-Kahn have been in the spotlight in the past weeks as governments grapple with the extent of the worst global financial meltdown since the Great Depression of the 1930s.

In an interview published Friday, the IMF chief said the fund was ready to help developing economies stung by financial turmoil. In a statement, Strauss-Kahn said: "The IMF is examining an incident which occurred in my private life in January 2008.

"I have cooperated and am continuing to cooperate with outside counsel to the Fund concerning this matter," he said. "At no time did I abuse my position as the Fund's managing director."