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(By Public Information Office)

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HIGHLIGHTS:

United Nations

WFP concerned over African Union decision to pullout

A spokesperson for the WFP has expressed concern towards the African Union decision to pullout from Darfur by the 30th of September this year, *AlKhabar* daily reports.

The paper said that the WFP spokesperson was speaking at a weekly press briefing at the press office of the United Nations in Geneva and said that a pullout will affect the humanitarian situation in the region and pointed out that AMIS forces in the field were important for the facilitation of the flow of relief.

She also said that the WFP has about 700 employees in Darfur and uses two helicopters due to the risk of bad roads.

She estimated that the WFP may require some 350 million US Dollars between September 2006 and April 2007 to assist about 6.1 million people.

She commended the African Union forces for a job well done in Darfur and pointed out that despite the fact that it did not manage to realise the required security and stability in the area, it did contribute to securing the movement of many staff members of international humanitarian agencies around the region.

President Bashir in Kassala

President Bashir was in Kassala yesterday where he addressed a mass rally, as has been widely reported in the press.

Of resolution 1706 of the Security Council, the president continued his criticism of the resolution and rejection to a deployment of United Nations forces to Darfur. He says the US is behind the decision by the African Union to pull out of Darfur saying, “the [*African Union pullout*] decision is but a decision by the US beneath an African Union letterhead”.

He said that the resolution “pumps in new blood in the veins of the regime”.

The president says the National Congress Party will be ready to allow free presidential and parliamentary elections after the rainy season and added this will be an opportunity for the political parties to test their political weight against the National Congress Party and the National Congress Party will then be ready to hand over power to any party that the people may choose and not “to [*George*] Bush or [*Tony*] Blair”.

The president also called for the opening of training camps for Peoples’ Defence Forces where any able-bodied person will be trained to handle a gun.

Defence minister says US must be more concerned about the implementation of the DPA

Responding to recent statements by White House spokesperson McCormick in which he said the US was concerned about the situation in Darfur and that resolution 1706 can be implemented even without the consent of the Sudanese president, Sudan's defence minister said

that the White House should be more concerned with the implementation of the Darfur Peace Agreement instead of a transition of the AMIS to a United Nations operation.

According to *AlWihda* daily, the defence minister said that instead of imposing sanctions on holdout groups, the US Administration is busying itself with pushing for a transition. He also said the US claims concern over the humanitarian situation in the region but has made no effort to urge donors to meet their development pledges which are much more needed than a peacekeeping force.

On the protection of civilians, the defence minister pointed out that the SAF is capable of carrying out that job and enjoys the trust of all the people in Sudan.

Arab League supports Sudan's plan for Darfur

The Arab League has issued a resolution supporting Sudan's plan to deploy government troops in Darfur, said Secretary-General Amru Musa [*sourced from the SudanTribune.com quoting Xinhua*].

The Arab League's Secretary-General revealed this at a joint press conference with Bahraini Foreign Minister Sheikh Khalid bin Ahmad al-Khalifa after an Arab foreign ministerial meeting held in the League's headquarters in Cairo.

He told reporters that the resolution calls for the continuation of the African Union peacekeeping force in Darfur after its 30th September end of mandate, urges the promotion of dialogue between Sudan, the UN, the AU and the Arab League to agree on the implementation of the Darfur peace accord, urges Arab and African countries to boost their participation in the AU mission in Darfur and calling on the international community to meet its obligations to save the Darfur peace accord and offer the necessary assistance to the AU mission in Darfur.

SUNA also reports that the Arab Bar Association has described UNSCR 1706 as a violation of International Law and the United Nations Charter and an infringement in the internal affairs of a sovereign state.

The Arab Bar Association reportedly warned the United Nations not to fall prey to the interests of the US and the other big powers at the expense of the interest of African, Asian and Arab states.

Plan to dismantle Sudan and divert the Nile waters to Israel

AlWihda, quoting Agencies, says a French military analyst published a report on *Lu Monde* at the beginning of this week saying that the US seeks to deploy surface to surface missiles to strike the Aswan High Dam in Egypt and on Libya under the guise of an international peacekeeping force deployed in Sudan under UNSCR 1706.

The writer reportedly described the UNSC resolution as a first step to implement a US plan to cause chaos in Sudan through cooperation between the intelligence apparatuses of the US and Israel and with the assistance of the rebels of Darfur.

The writer goes on to say that he does not rule out possibilities that the US may use UNSCR 1706 as a cover to close the northern borders of Sudan to stop possible infiltrations into Sudan by fighters.

Britain warns of possible massacres should the African Union leave

A source in the British ministry for development and humanitarian assistance says the Darfur region may witness massacres should the African Union forces pull out by the end of this month, reports *AlKhabar* daily quoting foreign agencies.

The same source is reported to have hinted that the UK, France and the US may decide to deploy forces to Darfur without the consent of the Khartoum government should this happen.

GoNU

Police crackdown Khartoum peaceful demonstration

Yesterday, the Sudanese police forces used tear gas and sticks to break up a peaceful demonstration organized by the Sudanese opposition parties against the increase in prices of fuel, sugar and wheat. Tens of people participated in the peaceful demonstration were arrested by the police forces along with truck loads of prominent Sudanese Umma party members, Communist party members and Popular Congress party members and other Sudanese citizens. All were later released following the signing of a declaration not to be involved in such actions again.

Later on in the afternoon the police forces broke other riots in Al Souk Al Arabi in Khartoum, *AlAyaam* reports.

Journalist protest murder of colleague, call for resignation of the Minister of Interior

Khartoum Monitor reports that about three hundred journalists protested before the Federal Interior Minister, el-Zubair Bashir Taha, requesting him to resign, following the murder of Al Wifaq's Chief Editor, Mohamed Taha.

Al Sayed Ahmed AlHussain, Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) senior member, as the beheaded body of the late Taha was brought to the morgue of Khartoum Teaching hospital for an autopsy, said that what happened to the late journalist was a very dangerous precedent that should urgently be abhorred and condemned by the government.

Editor-in-Chief Mohamed Taha's body was found beheaded yesterday in a remote area between Kalakla and Jebel Auliya, south of Khartoum. The body was found after a night of suspense following his kidnapping from his home in Kobar, Khartoum North, around 23:00 hours last Tuesday. Motorcyclists took off in pursuit of the kidnappers but lost his trail somewhere near the Khartoum Airport vicinity.

The government has expressed its condolences as well as did colleagues and others.

Columnists have taken up the issue with some branding it an assassination of the freedom of expression and wondering who's next.

It is not clear who is responsible but many believe this unprecedented act may be a sign the country is slipping into a dark abyss.

Southern Sudan

(*AlHayat/ST* - 7th Sept Khrt) A commander of the LRA said a comprehensive peace deal with the government is threatened by international arrests warrants for him and other rebel leaders.

Vincent Otti, the second-in-command of the Lord's Resistance Army, called on the International Criminal Court to revoke the warrants. He spoke to a local radio station Tuesday night, a week after striking a truce deal calling for rebel fighters to emerge from the bush and gather in largely uninhabited areas across the border in southern Sudan, where they will be protected and monitored while a broader peace deal is negotiated.

Ugandan Deputy Defence Minister Ruth Nankabirwa said Wednesday that the country has no power to void the indictments. President Yoweri Museveni has said he won't implement the warrants as long as the group negotiates peace.

Otti said the rebels will still attend peace talks in Juba, southern Sudan, but that a broad peace deal is in jeopardy.

"The ICC issue will be first on the agenda," he said.

Commentaries:

Where will this persistence end?

In his column under the title above, Mahjoub Mohamed Saleh of *AlAyaam* refers to the National Congress Party's persistent rejection to a deployment of United Nations peacekeepers to Darfur.

He points out that the National Congress Party has been in power for 17 years in which the country has seen totalitarian rule. He says the party signed of its free will the CPA which lays the foundation for a transition to democratic rule and should depart from its totalitarian ways and use of force to silence the others if it really wants to see Sudan transcend its current suffering.

He says that all indications however point to that the National Congress Party will still continue in the same way while showing on the outside that it is committed to meeting its obligations as stipulated in the agreements it signed. This trend, he says, will only exacerbate the crisis the country faces and will have dangerous consequences on the country, its unity, progress and development. He says this obliges on anyone who has the country at heart to ring the alarm bell.

He goes on to say that the National Congress Party is not accommodating even to its partners in the GoNU. As examples, he says, the decision to reject the deployment of a United Nations force to Darfur was taken without consultations with neither SPLM nor SLM-Minnawi – both of which were to say later that the decision was a decision by the National Congress Party and not the GoNU. Another example he cites is the recent increase in prices on which the two parties were also not consulted. Yet another example is cited as the deliberations over the draft Political Parties' Act. The draft presented by the Future Trends agency following consultations with political forces in the country was dumped by the National Congress Party which then drafted an alternative cited as the "Draft by the Parties to the GoNU". SPLM and SLM-Minnawi representatives disowned the alternate draft claiming they were not consulted.

He says he could go on and on in giving examples of such totalitarian trends where the National Congress Party does not accommodate the opinion of the other political groups including its partners in the GoNU and says Sudan will continue to suffer as long as this trend continues.

The kidnap and assassination of Al-Wifaq editor in chief is unprecedented in Sudan

AlSharei AlSiasi daily newspaper writes in its opinion pages that during the history of the Sudanese press, as well as in the history of Sudanese politics, the crime of yesterday is unprecedented. The detention measures become normal in our community and the group of criminals who assassinated the journalist get benefits and came after the midnight and asked the killer to accompany them. If he does not have background about the detention he would never follow them.

If the summon and the legal detention occur during the noon time, then Mohamed Taha would never blindly follow them, and consent about their treachery, but he died to follow the martyrs in the Paradise.