

17 Sept 2008

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Media Monitoring Report

United Nations Mission In Sudan/ Public Information Office

Local Arabic and English language Headlines

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Highlights

Local Arabic and English Language Press

Elections in July is difficult – UN

Al-Rai Al-Aam reported that the SPLM deputy secretary general Ann Ito told Miraya FM that the SPLM delegation which visited America discussed with US Administration in Washington ways for holding free and fair elections in Sudan.

She said SPLM received reports from UN indicating that holding elections in July would be difficult and emphasized the need for coordination between NCP and SPLM on elections schedule.

De-mining in Southern Sudan and Kordofan resumes in October

Ray Al-Shaab carried a report stating that the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs announced that de-mining in Southern Sudan and Southern Kordofan would be resumed next month after the rainy season.

Director of Public Information at the National De-Mining Centre Mohamed Yagoub said the centre began holding workshops and seminars to build capacity of engineers who carry out the de-mining process.

Blue Nile and Southern Kordofan Protocols' Committee to meet next week in Khartoum

Al-Ayyam reported that the committee for implementation of the Southern Blue Nile and Southern Kordofan protocols would meet next week in Khartoum to discuss reports of sub committees on CPA implementation in the two areas.

The committee member and Minister of Humanitarian Affairs Ahmed Haroun said the Ministry of Finance allocated funds for developments in the two States. He said the security committee has trained 1500 police personnel to be deployed in the two areas to boost security pointing out that the security arrangement committee was monitoring redeployment of SAF and SPLM in the two States.

Haroun said next committee meeting would take place in Damazin.

Khartoum denies reports on Taha's involvement in mobilizing Janjaweed

Al-Wifaq carried a report stating that a Foreign Ministry official said the leaked reports about other names on ICC application were baseless. The official said the information was "unfounded" explaining that Sudan Government has a copy of Ocampo's application and it carries no charges against any other Sudanese.

Sudan Tribune reported that it was given access to ICC documents last week and they indicate that Taha played a key role in mobilizing the notorious janjaweed militias in Darfur. The electronic newspaper said names of other Sudanese officials who assisted in recruiting janjaweed were mentioned, these are: NISS DG Gen. Salah Gosh, Presidential Assistant Nafie

Ali Nafie, Defence Minister Abdul Rahim Mohamed Hussain, Military Intelligence Chief Gen. Awad Ibnouf and the State Minister for Humanitarian Affairs Ahmed Haroun.

Egyptian troops arrive to join UNAMID

Al-Intibaha reported that an Egyptian contingent of 76 soldiers arrived in Sudan to join UNAMID.

Egyptian Ambassador in Khartoum Afifi Abdul Wahab said his country was making efforts to meet the target of 2000 Egyptian soldiers to serve as part of UNAMID. He added that Cairo was doing its best to prevail upon Darfur movements to negotiate within the framework of the Arab league's initiative.

We are against Ocampo's move irrespective to the facts he cites, Mbeki

Sudan Vision reported that the Sudan government and the government of South Africa have agreed on forming a tripartite committee out of NCP, SPLM and South Africa to follow up implementation of the remaining items of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement and the obstacles that obstruct the peace process.

The two sides further concurred that Ocampo's report will greatly hamper ongoing efforts for realizing a speedy solution to Darfur problem, boosting the peace process and bringing about national reconciliation.

Thabo Mbeki, the South African President, affirmed that compliance with Ocampo's application will result in greater suffering for citizens and create a state of instability that will have adverse impact on both the region and Sudan.

The Sudanese government meanwhile underlined its commitment to realizing an equitable solution to Darfur crisis as President Mbeki was briefed on the People of Sudan Initiative launched by President Al Bashir which is aimed at reaching national solutions for the problems of Sudan via all-round political participation.

At the joint press conference they held, President Al Bashir congratulated Mbeki on the success of his efforts in Zimbabwe which gave a signal to all that Africans are capable of resolving their own problems.

President Al Bashir further said that the Sudanese parties have unlimited confidence in President Mbeki, adding that the South African President has been informed about all the details related to the peace agreement, the situation in Darfur, Sudan's scuffle with the ICC and Sudan's relations with Chad. He stressed that the elections will be held on time to be followed by the referendum in 2011, which is the last step in the CPA implementation.

Bashir referred to the factors that delayed North-South Sudan borders demarcation, affirming that all the necessary preparation has been completed and the committee will mark the border line after rainy season.

Thabo Mbeki announced that his country is against ICC Prosecutor's move which will adversely affect the peace process.

Northern State Government accuses SPLM of campaigning against Dams projects in the North

Sudan Media Centre (**SMC**) carried a report stating that the Northern state government accuses SPLM of leading a campaign to counter implementation of dams in the north. The state government said its council of minister endorsed establishment of Kajabar and Dal dams

according to resolution No 73 in the presence and agreement of SPLM minister of local government.

Northern government advisor Sheikh Al Dein Mukhtar urges SPLM leadership to distance itself from adopting contradicting stand of supporting establishment of Dams in the south and ignores them in the north.

Elections on schedule and Kiir is SPLM's candidate – Pagan Amum

Al-Sudani reported that SPLM Secretary General Pagan Amum at press conference yesterday said elections would take place on schedule, Kiir would be SPLM's presidential candidate, a committee would be set up to run elections and SPLM officials in Darfur who suspended their participation over Kalma incidents would not resume their participation until the crisis was resolved.

Amum said SPLM and NCP would meet six months before elections schedule adding that only the elections commission has the right to decide whether elections should be held on schedule or otherwise..

He said SPLM stance is that the elections commission should be formed in consultation with the political forces and emphasized the need for independence of its members so that the elections process is free and fair.

On census excises, he said SPLM would make its final stance public when results are out.

Kony may avoid ICC if he signs peace agreement – Machar

Al-Intibaha reported that LRA leader Kony has emphasized the need for presence of the parliamentary block chairman of the Acholi tribes, leaders of northern Uganda tribes and top Ugandan religious leaders at the signing ceremony of peace agreement with Uganda in Juba.

GoSS Vice President and chief mediator for talks between LRA and Uganda Riak Machar in an exclusive statement to Al-Intibaha yesterday said that the date for signing ceremony would be announced today after meeting with the Ugandan delegations in Juba.

He said Kony wants guarantees that he would not be handed over to the ICC. "We hope that Kony's signing of peace agreement will lead to change of stances of the International Community and the Ugandan Government towards him," Machar said.

Editorial: UN "abandoned" hybrid force in Darfur

(Al-Ayyam Editorial Sept 16: BBC Monitoring) The peacekeeping forces dispatched by the United Nations to Sudan amid an atmosphere of optimism that they will play a principal role in entrenching the foundations of peace in Darfur find themselves nowadays in an unenviable situation, for the UN which galvanized the world in order to send these forces to Darfur appears to have completely abandoned them and left them out in the open.

Nine months ago, these hybrid forces took over the full responsibility from the African Union, but they have not been able until today to deploy more than 40 per cent of the required forces and they still lack hardware, vehicles, and aircraft. Consequently, they are unable to even protect themselves or their property which is looted in broad daylight, let alone protect civilians or investigate violations.

The forces have failed even in transporting the equipment that arrived at Port Sudan. For instance, the international forces have not had the capability to transport from Port Sudan to Al-

Fashir the heavy military equipment the Egyptian contingent brought with it. This equipment were hit by disruptions on the road and technicians from Egypt had to be brought in to repair them.

If the conditions of these forces remain like this, they will soon become part of the crisis. They will be powerless to even protect themselves. Today, they are even unable to investigate the breaches of the cease-fire.

JEM leader threatens to negotiate separately with Government, Bassole says unification of Darfur movements isn't priority

Al-Sahafa reported that JEM leader Khalil Ibrahim has threatened to negotiate separately with Sudan Government if Darfur factions failed to unify. He has warned of the seriousness of coming to the negotiation table with the government with different negotiation positions.

UN-AU chief mediator Bassole said unification of Darfur movements isn't his priority. He said he would endeavour to bring the government and the movement desirous and ready for peace to the negotiation table.

Darfur armed movements holds International Community responsible for increasing displacement

Ray Al-Shaab carried a report stating that Darfur Movements have blamed the International Community for insecurity in Darfur and questioned the futility of UNAMID the region. They said displacement in north Darfur has increased.

United Resistance Front (URF) field commander Abdul Aziz Ahmed Omer said presence of UNAMID was useless.

He has called on the INGOs and NNGOs to intervene to aid civilians in Bir Meza, Disa, Maraheel, Um Haraz and Wadi Abar.

Websites/International News Coverage

Sudan Tribune report on ICC warrant 'false': Official

(Sudan Tribune) September 16, 2008 (KHARTOUM) – A Sudanese official today dismissed a report on Sudan Tribune showing excerpts of the International Criminal Court (ICC) arrest warrant for president Omer Hassan Al-Bashir.

Last week the ICC released a 113-page heavily redacted version of the warrant which among other things exposed the role of 2nd Vice president Ali Osman Taha in mobilizing the notorious Janjaweed militias during the Darfur conflict.

But Sudanese foreign ministry spokesman Ali al-Sadiq described the report as “false”.

“The report is baseless” Al-Sadiq told the daily Qatari Al-Sharq newspaper.

“We have a summary of the application. It does not contain any allegations against another Sudanese official” he added.

The ICC has initially released a summary in July while promising a public application later that omits references to some of the sources, witnesses and other portions of the arrest warrant.

A Sudanese journalist in Khartoum told Sudan Tribune that security officers banned newspapers from including the report in Tuesday's edition.

"The government was totally shocked. Sudanese officials declined to respond to questions on the content of the report including the Justice Minister" said the journalist who spoke on condition of anonymity.

"A gloomy atmosphere prevailed when it [the report] came out. They gained some confidence boost after news that Britain and France will support a suspension of Al-Bashir's indictment. Now they feel that more officials may be prosecuted in the future and not just the president" he added.

The ICC prosecutor Luis Moreno-Ocampo announced in mid-July that he requested an arrest warrant for Al-Bashir.

Ocampo filed 10 charges: three counts of genocide, five of crimes against humanity and two of murder and accused Al-Bashir of masterminding a campaign to get rid of the African tribes in Darfur; Fur, Masalit and Zaghawa

The ICC judges are still deliberating on whether to endorse the applications in a process that could take a few more months.

The issue is likely to come back in the spotlight during the UN General Assembly meetings which start this week. The African Union Peace and Security Council will also meet in New York during the same time period.

Sudan seeks to end mandate of human rights investigator

(Sudan Tribune) September 16, 2008 (GENEVA) — Sudan has called on the United Nations Human Rights Council to not renew the mandate of the current special investigator on Sudan, Sima Samar which expires in December. The move by Sudan is the latest in a series of attempts to block any criticism of its actions in Darfur

Abdel Daiem Zumrawi, under-secretary in the Sudanese Ministry of Justice, asked the U.N. Human Rights Council to not renew its mandate saying Samar had failed to condemn "terrorist attacks" by rebel groups. The Sudanese official said that other mechanisms exist to protect human rights. Some 180 human rights monitors were deployed throughout Sudan, and the office of the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights was also issuing regular reports, he said

The African and the Islamic groups backed the Sudanese move. The Egyptian representative supported Khartoum request immediately on behalf of the African Group, while the Pakistani delegate spoke in favour of the demand for the Organisation of the Islamic Conference.

Samar, a former deputy prime minister of Afghanistan, has served as U.N. human rights rapporteur for Sudan since 2005. Last December she faced the adversity from the two groups which failed to end her mandate. But, Sudan, in return, persuaded the U.N. council to ignore a high-level report from a commission chaired by American Nobel Peace Prize laureate Jody Williams.

In a report, released on September 9, Samar said the situation in Darfur remained grim with killings of civilians by both government and rebel forces, and arbitrary arrests and torture. Samar highlighted "indiscriminate" and "disproportionate" bombing of civilians by Sudanese

forces in the east of Darfur, as well as ongoing sexual violence and a wave of arbitrary arrests and disappearances.

France submitted a draft resolution on Tuesday on behalf of the European Union (EU) calling for the Council to renew Samar's mandate for another year. Samar, on her part, expressed hope that its mandate would be extended for another year. The EU resolution voices concern at arbitrary arrests and detention, "exacerbated restrictions on freedom of expression, association, assembly and movement across the country, and lack of justice and accountability for serious crimes".

The former Sudanese chargé d'affaires in Washington who is newly appointed in Geneva, John Ukec Lueth Ukec, slammed the rebel groups for the attack on civilians. He said that the rebels are to blame." "The problem is that these rebels put themselves with the civilians. When I was a rebel, I always stayed 50 kilometers (30 miles) from any civilians."

The Sudanese Ambassador vowed that his government would continue to attack the non signatory groups. He was particularly vocal against the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM). "The international community should be vigilant and understand what counterinsurgency is," Ukec said. "We have not signed a peace agreement with the JEM. We must pre-empt them. Why should we be sitting down and getting shot all the time?"

ICC move against Sudan Bashir counterproductive -- Mbeki

(Sudan Tribune) September 16, 2008 (KHARTOUM) — South African President wrapped up a two day visit to Khartoum today by reiterating his opposition to the indictment of his Sudanese counterpart by the prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC). He further considered it as counterproductive.

In a joint press conference Mbeki told the reporters that ICC prosecution against President Omer Al-Bashir "could seriously undermine the ongoing efforts aimed at facilitating the early resolution of the conflict in Darfur and the promotion of long-lasting peace and reconciliation in the Sudan." ICC charges against Al-Bashir could only "lead to further suffering of the people of the Sudan and greater destabilisation with far-reaching consequences for the country and the region", he said.

South Africa and Libya asked the U.N. Security Council last July to suspend the ICC investigation and prosecution on Darfur crimes but the Council only pledged to discuss it in the future while the U.S. delegate said there should be no impunity in crimes against humanity.

Mbeki pledged today to continue his effort to persuade the western leaders of the correctness of the African Union position over the indictment of Al-Bashir. "We will continue to persist in this position, and seek to convince everybody in the world about the correctness of our position."

President Bashir, who seemed pleased with Mbeki's support, congratulated the visiting president over the success of his efforts to end Zimbabwe crisis and spoke about the progress achieved in the CPA implementation.

Mbeki also met with the First Vice President and GoSS President Salva Kiir Mayadrit, to discuss implementation of the CPA and ways to support southern Sudan development.

Uganda rebel leader to sign peace deal despite ICC warrants – LRA

(Sudan Tribune) September 16, 2008 (JUBA) — LRA chief negotiator David Nyekorach Matsanga said rebel leader Joseph Kony has agreed to sign the Final Peace Agreement

between his movement and the Ugandan government despite the International Criminal Court's arrest warrants hanging over his head.

In a statement to the press on Tuesday shortly after his arrival with his team from Kenya, Matsanga, however explained that the LRA forces "will not be disarmed until the Ugandan government goes to the UN Security Council to remove the arrest warrants" after the signing of the Final Peace Agreement.

Matsanga said his movement had now dropped its previous demand or precondition which called for removal of ICC arrest warrants first before Joseph Kony could sign the Final Peace Agreement.

He said Kony had told him in a telephone conversation that he would this time sign the agreement, but warned not to implement the DDR protocol of the agreement before the ICC arrest warrants were removed.

"General Joseph Kony has assured that he would sign the Final Peace Agreement ..., but he will not disarm a single gun or a single bullet until the Ugandan government goes to the United Nations Security Council to remove the arrest warrants," Matsanga stated.

Members of Uganda parliament, religious and cultural leaders from northern Uganda also arrived in Juba on Tuesday to take part in the arrangements towards the signing of the agreement and to witness it. According to Matsanga, these leaders would meet with the Chief Mediator of the Uganda peace talks, GoSS VP Riek Machar in Juba before they travel to Sudan-DR Congo border to meet with Kony.

The Chairperson of the Juba-based Uganda Peace Talks Secretariat, James Reat Gony, confirmed that the meeting would take place on Wednesday.

The re-instated LRA chief negotiator also disclosed that the LRA leadership had already nominated a person to head the LRA component of a Joint Liaison Group (JLG), which would be set up after the Final Peace Agreement is signed to implement its terms.

Matsanga said the LRA move to nominate its own JLG member was to counter unilateral moves by the Ugandan government to implement parts of the Final Peace Agreement before signature and without due consultation. He conceded that the LRA would not object should the Uganda government implement development projects that did not require LRA involvement.

"If you are implementing on digging a road between Balebek and Gulu, fine, go ahead, it is not our problem. But if you touch something that you will be housing the LRA, you will be educating the LRA children, this is where we tackle you, and this is where we shall disagree," Matsanga explained.

Chad, Sudan to renew diplomatic ties, create peacekeeping force

LIBREVILLE (AFP), 16/9/08 - Sudan and Chad are to restore diplomatic relations, which broke off in May, mediators said yesterday, paving the way to create a peacekeeping and security force on their common border.

The contact group, which comprises Gabon, Libya, Congo, Senegal, Eritrea, Chad and Sudan, issued a statement Tuesday confirming the breakthrough, five months after Khartoum severed ties accusing Ndjamenana of backing rebels in its Darfur region.

"Fruitful exchanges have enabled the firm commitment of Chad and Sudan to formally restore

diplomatic relations with the exchange of ambassadors before the contact group's sixth meeting in October in Ndjamena," it said.

The statement came after a contact group meeting on Friday to discuss the issue in the Eritrean capital Asmara.

The meeting also decided to finalise preparations for a security force of 1,000 Sudanese and 1,000 Chadian soldiers to protect observers who would monitor the border. "The contact group is committed to deploying a peacekeeping and security force as soon as possible and open an operational command centre in Tripoli," the Libyan capital, the statement said.

Details on the force still have to be "finalised", Chad's Foreign Minister Moussa Faki told AFP by phone from Liberville on Tuesday. "We will have to finalise all that. The principle has been agreed. Chad supplies 1,000 men and Sudan supplies another 1,000." He ruled out further joint operations between Chad and Sudan, other than those carried out under EUFOR, the EU peacekeeping mission now in central Africa.

"Sudan needs to sort out the problem of Darfur and stop trying to make itself believe that Chad is part of the problem," Faki said.

Chadian rebels welcomed the agreement but threatened to take arms again if "a true peace process was not set in motion," rebel leader Abderaman Koulamallah told AFP.

"We reiterate our desire for a true peace process in Chad. If there is no peace process, there will be war," he said.

U.N. official says Sudan is still worth fighting for

GENEVA, Switzerland (AP) -- The United Nations' special investigator for Sudan said Tuesday she hoped her assignment would be extended another year, despite attempts by Khartoum and its allies to end her critical reporting to the global body's Human Rights Council. Sima Samar says she'd "be very unhappy" if the U.N. Human Rights Council voted to end her work in Sudan.

Sima Samar, an Afghan doctor and rights expert, said Arab and African countries were supporting efforts to eliminate her mandate, which has upset the Arab-dominated government of Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir. The European Union is proposing Samar continue for another year. A vote at the 47-nation rights council is expected next week.

"I would be very unhappy if they abolished the mandate," Samar said in an interview with The Associated Press.

She said a number of countries were ignoring abuses in Darfur and elsewhere in Sudan because of "political alliances." There has been a marked rise this year in attacks on humanitarian workers and convoys, she said. In her latest report, she said the government in Khartoum has contributed to the insecurity and is failing to prosecute serious offenders.

"If they are happy with my reports, it means that everything is OK. They should be unhappy," said Samar, who has been reporting on human rights in Sudan since 2005. "This is the reality on the ground. It doesn't help the situation of human rights to ignore reality."

Sudan's mission to the United Nations in Geneva declined to comment. Its representatives, however, have staged side events during the current human rights council session to publicize what they say is the good work the government is doing in the field of human rights.

The efforts have apparently convinced a number of countries that human rights in Sudan no

longer need the council's special scrutiny. Diplomats from rich and poor countries are expecting a close vote on the position of Samar, one of the global body's unpaid, independent human rights investigators.

Last week, Hassabo Abdelrahim, head of Sudan's humanitarian commission, told diplomats and rights campaigners that "99% is going well" in the aid sector and that the mortality rate in Darfur is now "normal." He said government forces were attacking rebels in Darfur to "protect the humanitarian workers" in the western region.

Sudanese Ambassador John Ukec Lueth Ukec, who was on the same panel, said that "the rebels are causing the problems all the time," and rejected claims that there had been misuse of force last month at Kalma camp in southern Darfur .

"We do not target schools, civilians or anyone else," said Ukec, a former southern Sudan rebel leader who joined Khartoum's unity government after a 2005 cease-fire ended that conflict. "The problem is that these rebels put themselves with the civilians. When I was a rebel, I always stayed 50 kilometers [30 miles] from any civilians."

The government, he said, will continue with such operations against rebel movements that have not signed on to a Darfur peace deal. He specifically cited JEM. While ICC prosecutors have said they may add the attack by troops at Kalma to a list of war crimes allegations against al-Bashir, the Sudanese panel in Geneva defended it as in the interests of human rights and humanitarian work. "All the issues raised by the media concerning Sudan do not represent reality," said Abdel Daiem Zumrawi, a senior Justice Ministry official.

Traditional leader in Uganda says rebel chief committed to peace process

From Uganda's Daily Monitor website, 16/9/08 -- Acholi paramount chief Rwot David Onen Achana II has said LRA leader Joseph Kony remains committed to the peace process and had said so in a 45-minute phone call. "He said he is tired of fighting and wants it all to end. He also said he wants to meet religious and cultural leaders on Tuesday" [16 September], Rwot Achana added. According to Achana, Kony said the reason he had not turned up at the last meeting was because "he was scared of his security as he had been tipped off that the government had organized snipers to kill him."

Joint communiqué issued at the end of South Africa President visit to Sudan

(Sudan Tribune) September 16, 2008 (KHARTOUM) – Below the full text of the joint communiqué issued today at the end of the two day working visit of the South African President Thabo Mbeki to Sudan.

1. At the invitation of His Excellency Omer Hassan Ahmed Al-Bashir, President of the Republic of the Sudan, His Excellency Thabo Mvuyelwa Mbeki, President of the Republic of South Africa paid a working visit to the Republic of the Sudan from 15 to 16 September 2008.
2. President Mbeki was accompanied by a high-level delegation comprising Mr. Aziz Pahad, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Advocate Mujanko Gumbi, Special Advisor to the President and other senior officials. President Mbeki and the accompanying delegation were accorded cordial reception reflecting the close relations between the two countries.
3. During the visit, President Mbeki held talks with President Al-Bashir on a wide range of issues that covered internal situations in their respective countries, and bilateral, regional and international issues of mutual concern. President Mbeki also met with the First Vice President of the Republic of the Sudan and the President of the Government of Southern Sudan, His

Excellency Salva Kiir Mayardit.

4. President Mbeki was briefed on the internal situation in the Sudan, particularly the situation in Darfur, the indictment of President Al-Bashir by the International Criminal Court, the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement and the situation in the Sudan as a whole.

5. The two sides agreed that the approval by Pre-Trial Chamber of the application by the International Criminal Court chief Prosecutor could seriously undermine the ongoing efforts aimed at facilitating the early resolution of the conflict in Darfur and the promotion of long-lasting peace and reconciliation in the Sudan as a whole and, as a result, may lead to further suffering of the people of the Sudan and greater destabilisation with far-reaching consequences for the country and region.

6. The Sudanese government reaffirmed its commitment towards finding a just and lasting solution to the Darfur crisis and to this end, President Mbeki was briefed on the people of Sudan initiative launched by President Al-Bashir. The initiative is aimed at achieving national solutions to the problems of the Sudan through the participation of all Sudanese political spectrum including, rebel movements, tribal leaders and civil society organizations.

7. With regard to the deployment of the United Nations African Union Mission in Darfur, the two Presidents urged the international community to support the African Union member countries that have deployed troops in Darfur through the provision of the required logistics and financial support.

8. The two Presidents noted progress achieved in the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, particularly development in Southern Sudan, the appointment of the Administrator and Deputy Administrator of the Abyei area, the enactment of the Election Act and the approval of the Maps and Documents Sub-committee report on the demarcation of the North-South border. The two Presidents committed to continue to attend to the outstanding matters in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement implementation.

9. The two Presidents noted with satisfaction the outcome of the recently held second session of the joint Bilateral Commission and the inauguration of the Ministerial component of the Commission in Khartoum, which was crowned by the signing of the Agreement on Mutual Assistance on customs Administration.

10. The Government of National Unity expressed its satisfaction with the implementation of the DFA-GOSS-UNISA Capacity and Institution Building Project for Southern Sudan, which has seen the training of over 900 Southern Sudan Officials. The Government of National Unity also expressed its gratitude for the donation of a 40-ton humanitarian consignment by South Africa for the people of Abyei area, which was delivered on 22 August 2008 in Juba.

11. The two Presidents agreed to maintain closer consultations and communications on bilateral relations and other issues of mutual interest.

12. President Al-Bashir warmly congratulated the Southern African Development Community mission led by President Mbeki for the success achieved in concluding the historic Power-sharing Agreement in Zimbabwe.

13. President Mbeki expressed his profound thanks and gratitude to President Al-Bashir and to the Government and the people of the Sudan for the warm reception and hospitality accorded to

him and his delegation during the visit.

[Issued in Khartoum, Sudan, on Tuesday, 16 September 2008]

Sudan arrest could spark Darfur disaster: minister

KHARTOUM (Reuters) - Trying to arrest Sudan's president for war crimes in Darfur could prolong and complicate the conflict, a minister accused by international prosecutors of inciting mass killings in the region said on Tuesday.

Ahmed Haroun, who denies the charges against him, told Reuters the International Criminal Court's move to indict President Omar Hassan al-Bashir was part of a Western plot to launch a "new colonization" of Africa and said it could spread instability across the whole region.

Last month, the chief prosecutor of the global court, Luis Moreno-Ocampo, asked its judges to issue an arrest warrant for the president, accusing him of orchestrating a campaign of genocide in Darfur.

Moreno-Ocampo's request came just over a year after the court issued an arrest warrant for Haroun, Sudan's state minister for humanitarian affairs, and a militia commander, accusing both of directing mass killings and atrocities at the height of the conflict.

Haroun on Tuesday said he had no fear of his own arrest, dismissing the accusations against him as "ignorant" and fabricated.

But he said legal moves against the president would have far-reaching implications, adding that the government was still planning how it would respond to any warrant.

"They (the court) have devised their plans according to their needs to target our country. We will devise our plans according to our needs to defend our country," said Haroun, refusing to go into further details.

South African President Thabo Mbeki, in Khartoum, added his weight to African Union calls for a halt to moves to try Bashir.

"(They) may lead to further suffering of the people of the Sudan and greater destabilization with far reaching consequences for the country and the region," a statement from Mbeki and Bashir said.

Lakes speaker rejects governor demand for apology

(Sudan Tribune) September 16, 2008 (RUMBK) — Lakes state lawmakers have rejected a demand for apology addressed by the governor Daniel Awet Akot. The governor said the state assembly has no authority to summon him.

After an attack by the SPLA soldiers against the deputy speaker of the Lakes State Legislative Assembly, the lawmaker voted a resolution asking the governor to appear before the parliament on Thursday September 11 to brief the members on the disarmament process.

Governor Akot in response to the assembly request, asked for apology saying terming their move as unconstitutional.

But the Speaker of the legislative body, Isaiah Alier Machinkon, denied to Radio Miraya the

accusation saying they asked him to brief the assembly on the incidents that accompanied the disarmament operations in the state.

He further said that the assembly would not apologize because it was performing its duties to control the action of the executive.

Seven civilians were admitted to Rumbek Hospital on Monday September 8 with severe or fatal injuries after a shooting by SPLA soldiers in the market. The forces had been ordered to enter houses and search them for weapons.

In a statement issued last week, the speaker underlined that "the honorable members are not disobeying the Government of South Sudan presidential decree that orders disarmament to be carried out in all Southern Sudan, but we as lawmakers are seeking" to resolve "problems intensifying against Rumbek civilians."

Relations between the governor and the assembly are tense since last year when the legislators impeached finance minister and the governor sought the support of Southern Sudan president Salva Kiir to maintain him despite the MPs vote.

COMMENTARIES

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