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IN THE NEWS TODAY:

➤ **United Nations/ AU-UN transition debate**

- International community ups pressure on Sudan to accept a United Nations Darfur force
- Sudan reiterates rejection to a United Nations deployment in Darfur
- Salva Kiir and the SPLM support a United Nations Darfur force
- African Union Peace & Security Council to convene in New York tomorrow
- PDF readies itself for “invaders”
- Anti and pro deployment demonstrations

➤ **CPA**

- Commission for the rights of non-Muslims to be unveiled

➤ **GoNU**

- Reshuffles in SPLM ministers in the Government of National Unity may be unveiled on the 24th of this month
- SAF spokesperson rebuffs reports from the National Redemption Front of a rebellion within the SAF in el-Fasher
- EL-Bashir accuse Eritrea and Chad of supporting Darfur splinter factions

➤ **Southern Sudan/ GoSS**

- Kenya to train southern Sudan prison officers
- SPLM says committed to full implementation of peace deal
- Clashes between Southern factions in Upper Nile block access to humanitarian aid
- New TV studios to be constructed in Southern Sudan

HIGHLIGHTS:

United Nations/ AU-UN transition debate

International community ups pressure on Sudan to accept a United Nations Darfur force

President Bush suggested Friday it may be time to send international peacekeepers into Sudan's war-torn Darfur region over the objections of the government in Khartoum, reports AP from Washington.

Bush, bringing up the subject as an example of general frustration with the world body, appeared angry that "the United Nations hasn't acted" on Darfur and wants to see a "more robust" effort. His comments suggested the possibility of a new, tougher resolution that would explicitly bypass approval from the Sudanese government.

"What you'll hear is, well, the government of Sudan must invite the United Nations in for us to act," Bush said. "Well, there are other alternatives, like passing a U.N. resolution saying we're coming in with a U.N. force in order to save lives."

At the State Department, Assistant Secretary Kristen Silverberg said the United States insisted that last month's resolution permit deployment of new peacekeepers over Sudanese objection.

"We think that the likelihood of ending the violence is much better if we have support and cooperation from the government of Sudan," she told reporters. "But it's not required."

Meanwhile, the Reuters story on an incentive package proposed by the UK Prime Minister as part of a new initiative to end the crisis in Darfur and get U.N. peacekeeping troops on the ground has been widely reported in many major local dailies.

The *Reuters* report quotes UK's Prime Minister as saying in a statement in London that he will talk to other leaders in the coming weeks to agree on the initiative that he believes sets out the help Sudan can expect if the government lives up to its obligations and what will happen if they don't. Blair said in a statement.

The UK premier described the situation in Darfur as unacceptable and said that he does not understand the Sudan government's rejection of a United Nations force to Darfur or its threat to withdraw its welcome from the AU," Blair said.

A British official said Blair's aim was to get the African Union, European Union, the United Nations and the United States to back the initiative at the highest level.

The official said the plan would make clear what Sudan could expect to get in return for playing its part in ending the crisis, saying the incentives would be a road-map for normalising relations with international powers.

They could include ending suspensions of development and recovery aid, resolving Sudan's debt situation, establishing higher level political contacts and moving towards the lifting of sanctions, he said.

"If they do not shoulder their responsibilities, then they would face serious consequences," he told *Reuters*, declining to elaborate on what the consequences might be.

Meanwhile in Khartoum, *AlAyaam* daily reports that the spokesperson for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs said the government has not formally been informed of Mr. Blair's initiative.

Ambassador Jamal Mohamed Ibrahim, in a statement yesterday, said that the government response will be given once Khartoum is formally informed about the initiative.

Sudan reiterates rejection to a United Nations deployment in Darfur

Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir rejected the deployment of U.N. peacekeeping troops in his country's war-torn Darfur region during a meeting with U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan, reports the *AP*.

"Justice is and remains our objective but through diplomatic, political and other means," he told a news conference Saturday after talking with Annan at the Non-aligned Movement summit in Havana.

Annan urged the government of Sudan in an editorial distributed Saturday [*the press in Khartoum produced highlights of the Secretary-General's editorial with Akhbar Alyaum describing the editorial as "very dangerous"*] to accept the U.N. Security Council's decision to replace the largely ineffective African Union force in Darfur with better-equipped U.N. peacekeepers.

President Omar al-Bashir also met last Friday 15 September with the African Union chairman Denis Sassou Nguesso of the Republic of Congo, in Havana, Cuba, reports *SudanTribune.com*.

The Sudanese president disclosed that Arab countries started to send their financial contributions pledged during the Arab League Summit in Khartoum. Arab leaders on Tuesday 28 March reached a summit deal to provide funding for cash-strapped African Union troops in Sudan's Darfur region for six months.

The meeting focused on Sudan's stance in rejecting the resolution of the Security Council 1706 as well as means of funding the African Union Forces in Darfur in order to continue their mission.

Salva Kiir and the SPLM support a United Nations Darfur force

The possibility of U.N. intervention was welcomed by Salva Kiir Mayardit, Sudanese Vice-president, despite al-Bashir's rejection.

Differences between the Partners to the CPA over the issue of the deployment of a United Nations force for Darfur has made the main headlines on the Arabic Service of the BBC this morning.

African Union Peace & Security Council to convene in New York tomorrow

Foreign minister Lam Akol represents the Sudan in tomorrow's ministerial meeting of the African Union Peace & Security Council on the fringes of the United Nations General Assembly meeting in New York [*reported in most local dailies*].

AlAyaam also reports that Egypt's foreign minister has revealed that his country is in intensive contact with various groups to chart a workable framework to transcend the issue of a United Nations Darfur force and resolve the crisis in that region.

Nigeria's Obasanjo who was in Japan yesterday but is expected in New York, said that he does understand why the Sudan government rejects a United Nations force and sympathises with them but the African Union can not shoulder the burden alone.

PDF readies itself for “invaders”

Officiating at a function of the Popular Defence Forces, Sudan's defence minister echoed President Bashir's “total rejection” to the deployment of a United Nations force for Darfur.

The PDF mustered around 5,000 fighters, according to *AllIntibaha*.

Referring to the president's vows to lead a resistance in person, the defence minister said he was ready to lead the resistance - on behalf of the President of the Republic - against the international forces and added that death was a lot better than to accept a deployment of such forces into Darfur.

He said that the international community has opted to shelve the Darfur Peace Agreement and focus instead on deploying a United Nations troop to Darfur.

Of Sudanese who support a transition of the AMIS to a United Nations operation, the minister vowed to crush them and make them regret.

On his part, the PDF Coordinator-general described the UNSCR 1706 as only a means to bring into the country US and UK troops while Presidential Advisor Ahmed Bilal Osman says the push for a United Nations Darfur forces is but part of the war on Islam and Arabs. The advisor described Secretary-General Annan as a “slave to US interests”.

The Presidential Advisor also warned that any country that would contribute troops for a United Nations Darfur force will be considered as a country at war with Sudan.

Anti and pro deployment demonstrations

Representatives of the civil society in Khartoum will be staging a demonstration against a deployment of a United Nations force in Darfur today, reports *AlHayat*.

On the other hand, activists in many towns around the world stage a march calling for an international intervention to stop the crisis in Darfur.

CPA

Commission for the rights of non-Muslims to be unveiled

(*AllIntibaha* – 16th Sept. **Khrt.**) A prominent member of the Khartoum Legislative Assembly said that the commission on the rights of non-Muslims in Khartoum State will be unveiled next week.

Boutros Garang is also a member of the legislative body's Peace and Human Rights Committee.

GoNU

Reshuffles in SPLM ministers in the Government of National Unity may be unveiled on the 24th of this month

Sources speaking to Alwan confirm that the reshuffles in SPLM ministers in the Government of National Unity are to be unveiled on the 24th of this month.

The sources added that the reshuffles include Mr. Deng Alor as minister of foreign affairs, Abdel Aziz el-Hilo as minister of higher education and Nhial Deng as minister in the Council of Ministers.

SAF spokesperson rebuffs reports from the National Redemption Front of a rebellion within the SAF in el-Fasher

Akhbar Alyaum: The SAF spokesperson's office denied reports of a rebellion within the SAF in el-Fasher.

The spokesperson said there was a clash between one of the bodyguards of the Governor of North Darfur and a SAF soldier.

The spokesperson added that the National Redemption Front claimed that the incident was an attempt to kidnap the Governor.

EL-Bashir accuse Eritrea and Chad of supporting Darfur splinter factions

(*AlAyaam* – 16th Sept. **Khrt.**) President Bashir has accused some parties in Eritrea and Chad of providing support to the holdout factions of Khalil Ibrahim and Abdul Wahid Mohammed Nour.

The president was speaking at a press conference with his Senegalese counterpart Abdullah Wade at the Dakar International Airport on Friday while en route to Havana, Cuba, to take part in the 14th Summit conference of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM).

Southern Sudan/ GoSS

Kenya to train southern Sudan prison officers

(*SudanTribune.com* – 16th Setp. **Nairobi**) Kenya's authorities said on Friday that the east African nation would train southern Sudan prison officers to provide services to the vast region.

Kenya's Commissioner for Prisons Gilbert Omondi expressed the east African nation's readiness to assist the region with manpower to train prison staff and cadet officers who are expected to undergo a three-month training course in Kenya.

A delegation of prison officers from southern Sudan which has been on a week-long visit to Kenya said they were impressed by Kenya's prison facilities, adding that Kenya has also been instrumental in southern Sudan's reconstruction process by training its human resources and in the provision of goods and services to the region.

Southern Sudan, which currently has 65 prisons handling between 300 to 1,500 inmates, is trying to rehabilitate prison systems, which were ruined by more than two decades of civil war.

SPLM says committed to full implementation of peace deal

(*SudanTribune.com* – 16th Sept. **Juba**) At the end of its three-day meeting in Juba Saturday, the SPLM Politburo renewed its commitment to the full implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) signed on 9 January 2005 with the ruling National Congress Party (NCP). The Politburo called upon the NCP to honour its engagements and to implement the Abyei protocol and demarcate boundary between the North and the South accordingly.

The Secretary General Pagan Amum said “the SPLM chairperson reaffirmed in the meeting that Abyei protocol should be implemented whatever it takes. Salva Kiir in addition condemned the press restrictions and the crackdown on protestors imposed by the ruling NCP two weeks and reiterated the SPLM commitment to democratic transition in the country.

Acting Deputy Secretary General of SPLM Yassir Arman said the meeting reaffirmed commitment of SPLM to the vision of a new Sudan and the strategic approach of the founder of the movement late Dr. John Garang.

Meanwhile, the SPLM has formed a high committee to be headed by Salva Kiir to follow up on the issue of Darfur, Yassir Arman told *AlAyaam* in the wake of the SPLM politburo meeting.

Clashes between Southern factions in Upper Nile block access to humanitarian aid

(*AllIntibaha* – 16th Sept.) The Minister of Irrigation in the GoSS has revealed that recent clashes between southern Sudanese military factions in Upper Nile State have blocked access of humanitarian assistance to those affected by the flooding of the River Sobat.

Minister Joseph Dower says a technical team sent to the El-Nassir area in Upper Nile State to assess the humanitarian needs could not reach the affected areas due to these clashes.

New TV studios to be constructed in Southern Sudan

(*The Citizen* 17th Sept. **Khrt.**) The Federal Minister of Information and Telecommunication Zahawi Ibrahim Malik in a meeting yesterday in Juba with the regional minister of information and broadcasting, Dr Samson Kwaje, and of telecommunication, Mr. Ger Shewing, said that the Government on National Unity is keen to provide southern Sudan with all the necessary support to rehabilitate the information and communication sector in order to implement the 200 days plan was declared by the GoSS.

The federal minister praised the work of specialized committees and their recommendations and announced support for the construction of new TV studios in southern Sudan.