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Media Monitoring Report

United Nations Mission In Sudan/ Public Information Office

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Highlights

UN to be investigated after seizure of 500 mobile phones

Local dailies reported that Khartoum Airport authorities seized more than 500 mobile phones smuggled aboard UN plane coming from Juba. **Al-Ahdath** newspaper claimed it was UNMIS aircraft.

Sudan Media Centre (**SMC**) quoted an informed source as saying that smuggling was increasing aboard internal flights pointing out that customs authorities have devised plans to monitor the internal flights.

The sources called on diplomatic missions and agencies to comply with regulations and laws. The source said a committee was set up to investigate the matter.

Taha to meet with SG and AU chairman in NY

Al-Sahafa quoted Sudanese Ambassador to UN Abdul Mahmoud Abdul Haleem as saying that over 60 meetings have been arranged for VP Taha who arrived in NY yesterday to participate in UNGA. Taha will engage in bilateral meetings with heads of states and delegations and a tripartite meeting will also take place between him, UN SG and AU Chairman to discuss the hybrid operation and Darfur.

He will also meet the Arab chief mediator emir of Qatar and UN-AU chief mediator Djibril Bassole.

Abdul Haleem said Taha would address the UNGA on ongoing efforts to achieve peace in Darfur, recent developments for peace in Eastern Sudan and progress of implementation of the DPA. He said Sudan government was confident that the regional and international support would help the government to overcome the ICC crisis and called on France to correct its movements if it is keen for peace in Sudan.

SLA threatens to strike GoS and UNAMID aircraft

Ray Al-Shaab reported that SLA (Unity Command) demanded that permission should be obtained for planes landing in and taking off El Fasher airport. It said if the permission is not obtained beforehand then the movement is not responsible.

In its headline, the paper attributed the statement to Mahgoub Hussain, spokesman for the SLA. However in the body of the text there is not attribution other than to say that the movement had announced that it would require aircraft using El Fasher Airport to obtain SLM clearance. It had decided to do so following SLA's recent victories over the SAF in El Fasher area. It said the decision applies to government's war and civilian planes as well as UNAMID aircraft. The movement said the weapons it seized from recent battles were enough to threaten the airport. While saying its warning should be taken seriously, SLA affirmed its cooperation with UNAMID.

SPLM succeeds in uniting 13 Darfur factions

Ray Al-Shaab carried a report stating that SPLM commander Maj. Gen. Yassir Ibrahim said in Cairo yesterday that SPLM succeeded in uniting 13 Darfur factions under one command known as "Darfur Popular Solidarity Front". He said SPLM was also planning to engage in consultations with other movements to unify their negotiation position.

US on Khartoum's sovereignty in Darfur

Akhir Lahza reported that the US Charge d'Affaires Alberto Fernandez has defended GoSS saying it is exerting efforts to implement developmental projects in Southern Sudan.

"I visit Juba every month and every time I go I see development," he said. "If there is corruption in the south it is also exists in the north," he added.

On Darfur, he said, "I believe in the government's sovereign right to maintain security but the first three years proved failure of the government".

EU seeks deal in return for continuity of Sima Samar's mandate

Al-Sahafa quoted Sudan Ambassador in Geneva Omer Dahab as saying that EU expressed readiness to tone down the UNHRC's resolution in return for Khartoum's discontinuation of demands for termination of Sima Samar's mission.

He said the Sudanese delegation has engaged in contacts and diplomatic activity particularly with the African group to terminate Samar's mission. He said if Sudan stick to its position then voting on the resolution will take place and hoped that voting would be in favour of Sudan.

Dinka and Messeriya concerned about Abyei administration delay

Al-Sudan stated that Dink Ngok and Misseriya have called upon the government to speed up formation of the executive and legislative Councils of the Abyei area so that the administration can start work for the return of IDPs and begin reconstruction.

All-Dinka chief Kual Ding told the newspaper yesterday that the two week deadline by which nominations should have been made to the presidency for other administration posts has elapsed. He warned that Kual any delay of completion of the administration would adversely affect the roadmap.

Chief of Messeriya Mukhtar Babu Nimir said they were not convinced of the reasons for delay of completion of formation of Abyei administration. He said delay could create problems.

Nine farmers killed by gunmen in eastern region

Al-Rai Al-Aam reported that nine farmers were killed and four injured yesterday in an ambush by gunmen in Mangistu Mountain near Al-Galabat area in Al-Qadharif State. Security sources said Ethiopians gangs were likely behind the incident. According to the report, as many as eight gunmen opened fire on a tractor carrying 15 farmers in an area 20km west of Al-Galabat. The injured were receiving medical treatment in Taya town.

Websites/International Headlines

UN Humanitarian Coordinator calls on parties to cease hostilities in North Darfur

19 September 2008 (**UN News Centre**) – Fresh fighting between Government and rebel forces in the north of Sudan's war-torn Darfur region has severely restricted the delivery of critical aid amid unconfirmed reports that thousands more people have been driven from their homes, the United Nations said today.

"The United Nations urges both parties to immediately cease hostilities and requests humanitarian access to the affected areas in North Darfur," the Office of the UN Resident and

Humanitarian Coordinator said in a statement.

Coordinator Ameerah Haq yesterday visited El Fasher, the capital of North Darfur state, and called on all parties to comply with their responsibilities to protect civilians and allow humanitarian access.

“In this context, reports of incursions into Zam Zam IDP [internally displaced persons] camp earlier this week by Government of Sudan police are of concern and the Humanitarian Coordinator urges restraint by all parties,” the statement said.

Meanwhile, Sudanese Vice President Ali Osman Taha today met in El Fasher with Minni Minawi, the leader of one rebel faction which has signed the Darfur Peace Agreement, and announced that they were turning a new page in their commitment to full implementation of the accord and the formation of a joint military committee to ensure an end to all hostilities.

UNAMID brought Mr. Minawi from his base to El Fasher and back on board one of its helicopters. Mission deputy head General Henry Anyidoho said he hoped the announcement would attract the non-signatories of the peace agreement to join the process in a more comprehensive accord.

Sudanese government and SLM-Minnawi sign agreement

(Miraya FM) The Sudanese government and the Sudan Liberation Movement/Minawi faction have agreed on a matrix to be implemented within one month. Both sides agreed to form a new military joint committee, and said the agreement should be included in the constitution.

Mini Arko Minawi affirmed his commitment to implement the DPA. He said he had absented himself from the presidential palace to protest DPA violations. He repeated his call on other Darfur movements to join the peace process.

Vice President Taha described the deal as a step forward towards Darfur road map. He also indicated an expectation that Senior Presidential Assistant Minawi would return to Khartoum soon.

However, a Spokesman for the SLM/Minawi faction, Safe Aldeen Haron, said that due to problems in the region, Minawi would not be returning immediately. UNAMID leadership welcomed the outcome of the meeting, which the mission had helped facilitate by flying Minawi and his delegation to El Fasher.

LRA kidnap 50 children in Sudan – denial by Kony

20/9/08, **BBC** --About 100 militants of the Uganda LRA have attacked a military base and three villages in southern Sudan, kidnapping about 50 children. The children were taken to rebel hideouts in the attack which occurred on Friday, a Catholic priest was quoted as saying, by the BBC.

A UN spokesman said the attack was an indication that the LRA was trying to increase its troop levels. [According to **RTTNews**, yesterday, MONUC accused the LRA fighters of attacking three Congolese villages near the Sudanese border earlier this week. Quoting local authorities, the UN mission spokesman said that some 40 LRA fighters attacked the villages of Kiliwa, Nawenangwa and Nambia, and abducted over 50 school children. Soon after the attack, the Congolese army deployed hundreds of troops in the area to repel further LRA attacks, he added.]

A four-year-old child and one SPLA soldier were killed in the attack, regional information minister Joseph Ngere said. A Ugandan military spokesman, Ronald Kakurungu, also confirmed the attacks. "The LRA attacked the SPLA defences in the area around Yambio. We are coordinating with the SPLA in case the situation becomes worse because we also have forces there," he told DPA.

Meantime, **AFP** reported that the LRA had rejected claims it had launched deadly attacks in southern Sudan's Western Equatoria region on Thursday and in areas close to reported LRA bases in Congo. According to AFP, LRA spokesman David Nyekorach-Matsanga, LRA leader Joseph Kony rejected the claims. "I have just telephoned General Kony, and he says it is he who is under attack, not they who have attacked people," Matsanga said. "These were not our forces who are responsible for this."

The Dungu Justice and Peace Commission, a Congo-based organization which logs attacks by the LRA, claimed more than 50 children were abducted and several homes burnt in Duru, Nambia and Kiliwa villages earlier this week.

No renegotiation of Uganda peace deal – mediator and LRA negotiator

19/9/08 (JUBA) –Juba peace talks between the Ugandan government and the LRA "cannot be renegotiated," according to a joint press statement issued 18 September signed by the Chief Mediator, GoSS VP Riek Machar Teny, LRA peace delegation leader, David Matsanga and the Paramount Chief of Acholi, Rwot David Acana II.

France could back suspension of Sudan probe

PARIS (19/9/08) - France on Friday raised the possibility of suspending international war crimes proceedings against Sudanese President Omar al-Beshir in exchange for a "gesture" of good will from Khartoum on Darfur.

"What we want is to relaunch the search for a peace settlement through dialogue," an official at the French presidency said, asked whether Paris could back a suspension of the probe by the ICC.

"If this dialogue resumes, gets under way in good conditions, makes good progress, if the Sudanese government makes gestures towards the ICC, then it would make sense to think about how the Security Council could take account of the new situation," he said.

The official at the French presidency stressed it was "very premature" to talk of a UN resolution on the question. But he suggested Khartoum could make a "gesture" concerning two other figures targeted by ICC arrest warrants, whom it has so far refused to hand over to the court.

Yesterday, the Foreign Ministry called on Sudan to respect the decisions of the ICC concerning the pair, Sudanese humanitarian affairs minister Ahmed Haroun and militia chief Ali Kushyb.

But five non-governmental organizations including Amnesty International wrote to French President Nicolas Sarkozy on Thursday saying they feared Paris was planning a compromise that would allow Khartoum to try them in Sudan.

"It is the eternal, difficult debate that faces governments. What is our priority? Is it to stop a war, to end the killings, to save human lives. Or is it to carry out justice via the ICC?" said the Elysee official.

U.S. conference spotlights Sudan 2009 elections

WASHINGTON, 19/9/08, (**Sudan Tribune** — Representatives from Sudan's ruling coalition highlighted the procedures of a new election law at a conference in Washington on Thursday, even as other participants expressed serious concerns about the prospects of the 2009 elections, specifically, serious gaps in voter education, the immense logistical difficulties of conducting elections in South Sudan in July during the rainy season, and the grim possibilities for free and fair elections in Darfur, where large areas are still in armed opposition and where rebel commanders did not allow the census to be held.

Civil society supporters expressed frustration that the aid they were ready to offer for election procedures has not been permitted by the national government, even though the government of South Sudan already solicited their support. Support for the elections could amount to millions of dollars from Western groups like the conference host, the National Endowment for Democracy (NED).

Sudan's new elections act, approved in July, calls for the establishment of a nine-member national elections commission, appointed by the president and approved by the first vice president and two thirds of the national assembly, within one month of the adoption of the law—a deadline that has already passed.

"It is very crucial for the National Election Commission (NEC) to be formed, because the election law is very general, and it had a lot of gaps that it left in the legal framework that is left for the NEC to fill. So we're waiting for a lot of rules and regulations to be in place, and some of them will in fact affect the voter education programs," said Zeinab Abdelkarim, who now represents the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES). IFES performed baseline civic and voter education studies last month in Sudan.

Susan Page, who just returned from a visit to Khartoum as a representative of the National Democratic Institute, explained that part of the delay was a disagreement over whether the commission should have two co-chairs or a chair and a deputy chair, as stated in the law.

The law is a step forward, acknowledged Mahgoub El-Tigani, who otherwise denounced an "arsenal of restrictive laws" and continuing torture, suppression and surveillance of trade unions, professional societies and religious sects. Now a professor at Tennessee State University in Nashville, USA, El-Tigani has worked with NED in Cairo since 1992 and is a founding member of the Sudanese Social Workers Association.

"We have set up commissions inside the country, with popular organizations to oversee the elections, to help any international monitoring group that will be able—despite China—to go in and work with the civilian people," said El-Tigani, referring to Sudan's ally China, which has provided economic, diplomatic and military assistance to the country. "We are having a little bit of support that is very highly appreciated by civil society. We want that support to be greater, through this direct, direct negotiations and funneling of support to the Sudanese popular movement inside."

The key government presenter, Mudawi El-Turabi, a member of the Sudanese parliament and assistant secretary general of the Democratic Unionist Party, argued that since the time of President Nimeiri (1969-1985), Sudan's legislature has been emerging from a rubber stamp body, to an arena for discussion and debate, to a more transformative institution.

By contrast, Ezekiel Lol Gatkuoth, head of the Government of Southern Sudan Mission in the United States, argued that "the [ruling] National Congress Party's (NCP) actions have clearly

undermined the elections in the CPA." Gatkuoth, citing unnecessary delays and violence of demarcating the borders between North and South, added, "the census, while not required as an element in the election process, could have fostered confidence in the electorate, had not Khartoum caused significant delays by withholding funds. This is also a sign of bad faith from the NCP. In fact, it is worse than that. The list of the elements necessary for a coherent national election but left undone or seriously delayed by the NCP is staggering."

U.S. Special Envoy to Sudan Richard Williamson spoke gravely of the 2009 elections, the situation in Darfur, violence and displacement in Abyei and the referendum in 2011. "The key is to get to 2011, when a referendum is scheduled to allow self-determination for the South. If the election does not take place, it will undermine the likelihood that a peaceful referendum will also take place and therefore the self-determination that was negotiated for the south will be denied, and could contribute to a spiral of new violence," said Williamson.

Williamson argued that the elections are an opportunity for Sudanese to change a pattern of handling divisions with violence, but ended his remarks by saying, "the challenges are great, the United States stands ready to be supportive and help, but ultimately this is a problem, this is a challenge that's owned by the Sudanese people. Organizations like the National Endowment for Democracy, National Democratic Institute, International Republican Institute, International Foundation of Electoral Systems and many others—civil society and elsewhere—want to help the Sudanese realize the opportunity for elections." (ST)

Darfur partners reiterate their commitment to hasten peace implementation

(Sudan Tribune) 19/9/08 (AL-FASHER) — Darfur peace parties, in a meeting held today, renewed today their commitment to a deal sign in May 2006 and agreed to hasten its implementation.

The Sudanese Vice-President Ali Osman Mohamed Taha, and the SLA leader turned Senior Presidential Assistant, Minni Minawi met in Al-Fasher to discuss the poor implementation of Darfur Peace Agreement. Also attending were members of the Transitional Darfur Regional Authority (TDRA) and a number of federal ministers.

In a communiqué released after the meeting, Taha and Minwai reiterated their adherence to the Darfur peace agreement and agreed to move forward in order to enforce it within one month maximum.

The agreement comes three months after Minawi's return to Darfur in a move to protest the poor implementation of Abuja agreement. He also voiced opposition to the conduct of the fifth census and the run of general elections next year asking to give priority to end Darfur crisis.

Also, Minawi troops clashed several times with the Sudanese army since his disaffection with Khartoum. Last week he accused the Sudanese troops of attacking his base west of Al-Fasher near Zam Zam camp where five people were killed.

The parties said they agreed to form a joint military committee to coordinate the security activities and to ensure halting of hostilities between them.

Taha and Minawi also agreed to speed up the enforcement of the constitutional aspects, and to refer the DPA to the Constitutional Commission. They also agreed to form a team of experts under the supervision of the civil service Civil Service Commission to appoint Darfuris in the Civil service institutions.

The former rebel leader had asked to include the DPA in the Transitional Constitution of the Republic of Sudan, and to represent his movement in the different national institutions and administrations.

The parties "agreed to work together to convince the non-signatory movements to join the peace" says the joint statement.

Taha and Minawi also agreed to work together to secure roads, protect civilians and to deliver humanitarian aid to the displaced and affected population.

After the meeting, Vice President Taha said the talks provided an opportunity to clear doubts and misunderstanding, stressing that peacemaking requires patience. He said he expected that the Senior Presidential Assistant would be in his office in Khartoum in the coming days.

For his part Minawi reaffirmed his commitment to the ceasefire and Darfur Peace Agreement. He also pledged to do his best to convince the other parties to resort to peace and realizing durable stability in the country.

The two officials also formed a joint committee to monitor the enforcement of all the decisions of the meeting. The committee will in Khartoum within one week maximum, they agreed.

Vice President Taha thanked UNAMID for its role and promised the government's continuing support when he met with General Henry Anyidoho, Deputy Head of the mission. He said they would solve all pending issues and clear any obstacles that may hinder its work.

The peacekeeping mission brought Minawi traveled to and from the meeting in Al Fasher on board a UNAMID helicopter. He thanked UNAMID for its support and praised the role it played in facilitating his meeting with the Vice President.

ICC Judges begin consideration of Sudan president arrest warrant

(Sudan Tribune) 19/9/08 (WASHINGTON) —ICC Judges have officially started consideration of the application by prosecutor Luis Moreno-Ocampo requesting an arrest warrant for Sudanese president Omer Hassan Al-Bashir.

Today the Judges of the Pre-Trial Chamber I -- Akua Kuenyehia from Ghana, Sylvia Steiner from Brazil and Anita Usacka from Latvia -- issued a decision convening a closed meeting with the prosecutor "to receive additional information".

The closed session will take place on October 1st but the items that will be discussed were not disclosed in today's decision.

Last year the Pre-Trial Chamber I convened a similar meeting with the prosecutor to discuss the application regarding Ahmed Haroun, state minister for humanitarian affairs, and Kushayb charged in connection with Darfur war crimes.

The meeting is believed to have discussed whether or not the two suspects will surrender themselves voluntarily to the court justifying a summons to appear rather than an arrest warrant. The Judges eventually decided to issue an arrest warrant for the two suspects which remains pending.

It is expected that Pre-Trial Chamber I will take between a few weeks to 3 months to decide on Al-Bashir's arrest warrant but it could take longer dragging into the next year.

The ICC prosecutor has a 100% success rate in all his previous requests for arrest warrants to the court's judges.

Sudan former PM accuses NCP ruling party of “exclusion” policies

(Sudan Tribune) 19/9/08 (KHARTOUM) – Former Sudanese Prime Minister and leader of the opposition Umma party Sadiq al-Mahdi lashed out the ruling NCP accusing it of excluding all other social and political powers.

Al-Mahdi speaking in a forum commemorating an Islamic event said that the NCP policies lead to extensive polarization within the Sudanese society. “This caused a recreation of closed areas that are gaining the support of secular figures in the North” he said, adding that “NCP policies are the strictest and most rigid in considering that Sudan has an Arab-Islamic identity.” The opposition leader said that while he is committed to his Arab-Islamic identity “we must respect the equal citizenship and freedom of religion “.

Sudan Vice-President seeks to rally international support to defer ICC move

20/9/08 (KHARTOUM) —Vice-President Taha left Khartoum today for New York to attend the United Nations General Assembly where he is expected to seek international support to suspend the indictment of President Omer Al-Bashir by the ICC. He is due to take part in the African Union Peace and Security meeting to be held Monday on the sideline of the UN meeting.

Sudan establishes additional committees for Darfur war crimes

(Sudan Tribune) 19/9/08 (KHARTOUM) – The Sudanese government has created committees assisting the recently appointed special prosecutor for Darfur rights abuses. A decree issued by Sudanese justice minister Abdel-Basit Sabdarat sets up three committees covering North, South and West Darfur states. Sabdarat also named 43 members to the committees described as “civil administration, popular leaders and figures and honorable citizens”. The mandate of the new committees will include “receiving citizens’ complaints, facilitate meetings of victims and witnesses with the prosecutor, preliminary assessment of material damages, foster national reconciliation, blood money”.

GoNU and GoSS sign joint cooperation accords

19/9/08 (KHARTOUM) —GoNU and GoSS signed last Thursday a series of agreements to enhance cooperation and coordination between the two governments in different sectors on 18 September. The two sides signed agreement Thursday on federal issues like taxes, customs, passports, the General Authority for Standardization and Metrology, National Authority for Communications, the Agricultural Bank and the official Sudan News Agency (SUNA), the National radio and TV. The two delegations delayed signing accords related to the civil aviation, river transport, social Insurance fund, national health insurance and pension fund. These issued are expected to be addressed at a meeting to be held in Khartoum.

