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(By Public Information Office)

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UN

Annan and Konaré to hold talks over Sudan in New York next week

(*AIRai AlAam* – 2nd Apr. **Khartoum**) UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan holds talks in New York next week with AU Commissioner Alpha Oumar Konaré.

The talks which are due to be held either next Tuesday or Wednesday are expected to focus on the slow pace of the Abuja talks and the African Union Peace & Security Council decision in principle to support a transition of the AMIS to a UN operation and on the humanitarian and security situations in Darfur.

Sources expect konaré to hold talks in New York with the five permanent members of the sc before proceeding to Washington for talks with US officials.

USG Jan Egeland's Tour Of The Region

Jan Egeland expected in Juba today

(*Khartoum Monitor* – 2nd Apr. **Khartoum**) The United Nations Undersecretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator Jan Egeland is expected in Juba today, says OCHA Public Information and Advocacy Officer, Dawn Blalock.

She said Egeland will meet with GoSS officials, the humanitarian community and with IDPs and the Lologo way-station and will review the humanitarian situation for people displaced by the 21 year conflict and the ongoing return process.

Blalock disclosed that Egeland and his team will travel from Juba to Bor where Bor Dinka IDPs are currently returning through a UN and NGO-organised return.

From Bor he will travel to Rumbek for a meeting with GoSS President Salva Kiir and from there to South Darfur, Chad and finally Sudan, added Blalock.

Uganda northern conflict is the worst form of terrorism: UN

(*AFP/ST* – 1st Apr. **Patongo, Uganda**) UN humanitarian relief coordinator Jan Egeland described the situation in Uganda's war-torn northern region as the worst form of terrorism and called for action to reverse the humanitarian suffering.

"Conditions here are totally unacceptable. It has to change because people have to live a better life and have a better future," Egeland said as he visited camps in Patongo in Pader district, some 400 kilometres (about 250 miles) north of the capital Kampala.

Egeland said there was a need to provide security for the 40,000 refugees at the Patongo camps so that they could live as they did before conflict erupted in 1986, which has thus far displaced some two million people.

"This is the worst type of terrorism," Egeland said. "It is unacceptable, intolerable and has to change."

However, he noted that there was renewed hope that the situation in northern Uganda was getting the necessary attention both locally and from the international community.

"There is now a hope that we did not have before because there is now attention in Uganda, in the region and in the world to change the situation," he said.

For the past 20 years, northern Uganda has been a battle ground between government forces and Lord's Resistance Army, who have terrorised civilians and are blamed for forcing millions of people out of their homes in addition to abducting children for combat and as sex slaves.

This week, humanitarian groups said the rate of violent deaths resulting from the conflict in northern Uganda is three times higher than in Iraq since the 2003 US-led invasion to topple Saddam Hussein.

Some 146 people die every week in northern Uganda, which represents 0.17 deaths per 10,000 people compared with 0.052 per 10,000 in Iraq, said a report prepared by 50 aid groups including Oxfam International, Care International, Norwegian Refugee Council, and Save the Children.

"Everybody has to do more; the government of Uganda has to do more. We are emphasizing that the army has to provide real security for the people not only when they are inside camps but also when they go out of these camps," he said.

On Friday, Egeland held talks with President Yoweri Museveni and discussed the possible appointment of a UN special envoy to northern Uganda as well as a peace mission there, according to a statement issued after their meeting.

The talks also delved into a possible UN role in the country's national reconciliation and the demilitarization of the police and justice systems in the northern region.

But Egeland said that Museveni favoured a regional representative rather than an envoy to the north, arguing that the problem had become regional.

The UN official, who is on a four-nation, nine-day tour of conflict- and drought-ravaged east Africa, will also visit Sudan, Chad and Kenya.

UNICEF launches massive go to Scholl campaign in South Sudan

(*UNICEF/ST* – 1st Apr. **Juba**) Hundreds of thousands of children will go to school for the first time in Southern Sudan this year, said the UNICEF today after the launch of "Go To School" campaign.

The massive campaign aims to more than double the number of children in primary school during the course of the school year, which starts on Monday.

The UNICEF-backed "Go To School" Campaign is being launched today in Juba, the capital of Southern Sudan.

Speaking at the event, attended by senior figures in the Southern Sudan government as well as schoolchildren, Rima Salah, UNICEF Deputy Executive Director, said that education is the key to future peace and prosperity in the region, which has been hammered by decades of civil war, ended with a 2005 peace agreement.

“Beyond the waters of the Nile, oil and minerals, Southern Sudan has a precious - an infinite - natural resource: the minds, the determination and the potential of her people, especially her children,” Ms Salah added.

Southern Sudan’s education system was ruined by the civil war. UNICEF estimates that only about 22% of an estimated 2.2 million school-age children are enrolled in primary school.

There are four times more boys than girls in school and only about 1% of girls complete primary education. About 8,600 teachers, the majority untrained volunteers, cover approximately 2,000 schools. Many of these “schools” consist of little more than a blackboard propped under a tree.

According to a UNICEF press statement, the Go To School campaign includes the following activities:

- ▶ Over 3.8 million textbooks and teachers’ guides are being delivered throughout the region.
- ▶ Basic school supplies for up to 1.6 million children have been purchased and are being delivered to schools all over Southern Sudan. From six million exercise books to 1.6 million pencil sharpeners, no child should go without the basics.
- ▶ Survey teams are roaming the vast region recording even the smallest schools under stress to produce a comprehensive list for planning purposes and to know exactly how many children are attending.
- ▶ Over 1,500 new classrooms are being constructed.
- ▶ Accelerated training is underway for teachers and classroom facilitators
- ▶ Major support is being provided to boost the systems of the incoming Government of Southern Sudan Ministry of Education Science and Technology
- ▶ Public awareness campaigns are mobilising children and parents to send their children to school, especially girls. The effort is led by the Government of Southern Sudan with the support of donors, UN agencies, NGOs and communities. About \$22 million has been received so far, with a similar amount still required to complete the targets for 2006.

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CPA

SPLA says LRA build-up in areas under SAF control

(*AlAyaam* – 2nd Apr. **Khartoum**) SPLA Operations Chief, Commander Biang Deng Koual, says the major problems they face in flushing out the Lord's Resistance Army is that the Ugandan rebel group uses SAF-controlled areas as launching pads for its attacks.

He pointed out that it is sometimes very difficult to differentiate between SAF and LRA especially in the areas around Juba such as the Khor Ramlaand Ajak where the SAF are present.

Despite government denials, the SPLA operations chief said that elements with links with the Lord's Resistance Army are still within the SAF ranks.

On the other hand, the Office of the Spokesperson of the SAF says they have not received any formal complaint from the SPLA and the international monitors on allegations of SAF support to the Lord's Resistance Army.

Some SPLA elements take over armoury in Blue Nile State

(*AIRai AlAam* – 2nd Apr. **Damazeen**) Authorities in Blue Nile State have launched an extensive investigation on allegations that some SPLA elements have seized a number of light weapons after seizing an armoury in Dindiru.

The Security Committee at the state convened an emergency meeting and branded the act as a gross violation of the CPA. They called upon the JMC to help arrest the culprits and bring them to justice.

The state governor called for the acceleration of the provisions of the Security Arrangements that also call for the formation of Joint Integrated Units in order to reduce such incidents.

NCP bloc threatens to resort to simple majority vote over Khartoum constitution

(*AlSahafa* – 2nd Apr. **Khartoum**) The National Congress Party bloc at the Khartoum State Legislative Assembly has threatened to take the debate over the Constitution of Khartoum State before the assembly for vote should their SPLM counterparts insist on pushing for the introduction of clauses that infringe on the principles of the Islamic Shari'a laws.

A member of the NCP bloc says they will use their simple majority in the legislative assembly to pass the draft should the SPLM bloc continue to challenge it.

On the other hand, a member of the SPLM bloc in the legislative body said that a majority vote does not allow the NCP to pass any clause that will not be in the spirit of the CPA and the Interim Constitution.

Bol Deng says the SPLM bloc intends to table a new draft tomorrow and added that the draft is based on the CPA, the Interim Constitution and the constitution of the GoSS.

Sudan peace pact could begin to unravel, warns ICG

(*ICG/ST* – 31st Mar. **Nairobi/Brussels**) The agreement that ended 21 years of war in Sudan could begin to unravel unless the parties refocus on their core commitments and the international community plays a much more supportive and forceful role, said a report by ICG think-tank.

[Sudan's Comprehensive Peace Agreement: The Long Road Ahead](#), the latest report from the International Crisis Group, examines Sudan's faltering Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), signed by the ruling National Congress Party (NCP) and the rebel Sudan People's Liberation Army/Movement (SPLA/M) in January 2005.

15 months in, there is little reason for optimism as the NCP systematically delays and undermines the implementation process, and the SPLM is in disarray.

“Sudan’s peace agreement is on shaky ground”, says Dave Mozersky, Crisis Group Senior Analyst. “The unstable partnership between a strong but unwilling NCP and a weak but committed SPLM is making the implementation process highly volatile”.

The CPA provides for a six-year interim period with democratic elections by 2009, followed by a self-determination referendum for the South.

Implementation of the agreement, however, has been an uphill battle, with the NCP exploiting the gaps within the CPA and the weaknesses of the SPLM to delay and frustrate the process. The SPLM is weak, still coping with its transition from a rebel movement to a government and with the untimely death of its late Chairman, Dr. John Garang, in July. A strengthened and better organised SPLM would help push implementation forward and hold the NCP.

A partnership between the two parties helped drive the negotiation process and remains the best strategy for the NCP’s longer-term political survival, but it has been discarded by the ruling party follow the death of Dr. Garang.

The NCP must begin to implement the agreement in good faith to help assure its political future in a peaceful Sudan by making partnership an attractive option to the SPLM, and unity an attractive option to southern Sudanese.

The international community has an enormous physical presence in Sudan today, led by a 10,000 strong UN mission (UNMIS) devoted to monitoring the CPA, but it has failed to live up to its envisioned role as a guarantor, and seems unwilling to seriously engage with the parties politically.

Beyond financial support, which has been promised but not yet delivered, concerned world actors must begin to coordinate and flex their political muscle to get the implementation process back on track.

“The CPA represents an historic opportunity to end Sudan’s recurring conflicts,” says Suliman Baldo, Crisis Group’s Africa Program Director. “But it cannot be allowed to fall apart during the implementation process, or future generations of Sudanese will experience the conflict all over again”.

For the full text of the report: <http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?l=1&id=4055>

GoNU

Vice-President Taha calls for clear guidelines in dealing with int’l and regional organisations

(AlRai AIAam– 2nd Apr. **Khartoum**) Vice-President Taha has called upon the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to set clear guidelines for dealing with international and regional organisations operating in the country.

Taha who was addressing a round table meeting with Sudanese ambassadors at the foreign ministry in Khartoum stressed the need to study to what extent the country has benefited from the international agreements and conventions the country has ratified in the past.

US makes Sudanese problems part of interior politics - Al-Bashir*

(*ST* – 29th Mar. **Khartoum**) Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir hit out at the US accusing it of making Sudanese problems "part" of American politics. The president blamed his country's frosty ties with the US on what he termed Sudan's "independent political position".

Speaking during an interview with Qatari Al-Jazeera satellite TV, President Al-Bashir has reiterated his opposition to the deployment of UN troops in the war-torn Darfur region saying the forces will "not solve the problem".

He said continued reports on Darfur were "a deliberate action" by the world to maintain the crisis.

On peace in southern Sudan, President Bashir said that his government was "committed" to the peace pact adding that the authorities have set up "implementation mechanisms" to ensure to sustainability of the accord.

**Attached separately in today's MMR is the text of President Bashir's interview with Qatar-based Al-Jazeera satellite television on 29th March.*

Darfur

AU chief mediator, UN envoy exchange views on Darfur peace talks

(*ST* – 1st Apr. **Abuja**) The African Union Chief mediator for the Darfur peace talks, Salim Ahmed Salim, and the visiting UN special envoy to Sudan, Jan Pronk exchanged views on the current situation in Darfur and on the status of the efforts being deployed within the context of the Abuja Peace Process to resolve the conflict in that area.

Salim underscored the determination of the AU Mediation to speed up the peace process in keeping with the Decision of the 46th Meeting of the AU Peace and Security Council held at Ministerial Level on 10 March, 2006, calling on the Sudanese Parties to conclude a peace agreement by the end of April, 2006.

Both Salim and Pronk stressed the importance of strengthening the African Union Mission in the Sudan (AMIS) to enable it to discharge its duties both presently and upon the conclusion of the expected Darfur Peace Agreement in Abuja, said Norredine Mezni

Two groups of Darfur rebels negotiating in Abuja, the Justice and equality Movement (JEM) and Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM) Minawi-faction expressed some discontent.

Khalil Ibrahim of JEM said in a press conference two days ago that the peace talks are futile and asked Khartoum to change the current chief negotiator of governmental delegation.

While SLM expressed opposition to the draft of the Enhanced Humanitarian Ceasefire Agreement (EHCA) because it fixes the movement of rebels troops.

Negotiations to resolve the Darfur conflict, which has forced more than two million from their homes and killed tens of thousands, revolve around how to share political power, economic resources and deal with the region's militias.

Chadian rebels deny receiving support from Sudan

(*ST* – 1st Apr. **Paris**) The Chadian rebel United Front for Change (FUC) which brings together several dissident Chadian armed movements, denied being backed by the Sudan as the Chadian government alleged.

In a rare interview with the press, the chief of the rebel FUC, Mohamat Nour, rejected repeated Chadian accusations of being in the pay of Sudan.

Nour told Radio France Internationale (RFI) “If we had received Sudanese assistance since 1994, [President] Idriss [Deby] would not be in power now”.

“I am a soldier. We are currently being forced to do it by the arms and we will then hold a national forum which will bring together all Chadians who will then decide on Chad’s political future and we, soldiers, will return to our barracks”, said Nour.

After violent clashes in eastern Chad on Thursday 30 March near the border with Sudan’s Darfur region with the FUC, the Chadian authorities admitted the death of over a dozen soldiers, but also the death of chief of staff of the terrestrial forces, Gen Youssouf Mahamat Itno, who is President’s Deby Itno’s nephew.

Nour said the government forces attacked with around 80 vehicles, eight charges and several DCA, defensive counter air missiles. They lost several men, as the officers say, and they turned back.

He said his troops had 24 injured and 10 deaths.

According to him, Chadian forces are currently trying to regroup very near FUC in a locality called Ade with the aim of attacking us, “but we are already to the west of Ade so he should realize that the game is over for him”.

Sudan denies supporting Chadian rebels

(*Xinhua/ST* – 1st Apr. **Khartoum**) The Sudanese army on Saturday denied reports which said Sudan’s military lent support to rebels who recently carried out a series of attacks in the eastern Chad, slamming the reports as "baseless and lack of evidences and witnesses."

In a press statement to the official SUNA, Spokesperson of the Sudanese Armed Forces Osman Mohammed al-Aghbash said that the army was completely committed to all international agreements and treaties, especially the Tripoli agreement signed by Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir and Chadian President Idris Deby during a mini African summit in the capital of Libya on Feb. 8. The agreement calls for a good neighborhood between the two countries.

Both Chad and Sudan promised in the agreement that they would not harbor rebels on their territories or conduct mutually hostile activities. The agreement appeared to put an end to a months-long row during which the two countries traded accusations of destabilization attempts.

"What is happening inside Chad is an internal affair of Chad and has nothing to do with the Sudanese army," the spokesman added.

Local Chadian media reported that a top Chadian army general was killed in a recent fierce clash in an eastern border area between the army troops and rebel forces backed by the Arab Janjaweed militias who had crossed over into Chad from the neighbouring Sudanese province of Darfur.

The Chadian government denounced earlier last month incursions by "Sudanese militias" into its territory and accused Khartoum of "failing to fulfil its promises", but the accusations were denied by the Sudanese government.

Armed groups seize Sudan refugees in Chad camps - UN

(*Reuters/ST* – 31st Mar. **Geneva**) Armed groups seized several hundred Sudanese refugees from camps in eastern Chad for military training in the neighbouring Darfur region of Sudan, the United Nations said on Friday.

The U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) condemned the recruitment of boys and men which took place over the March 17-19 weekend at the Treguine, Breidjing and Farchana camps.

"Forced recruitment of refugees, especially of minors, who came to Chad to seek asylum is totally unacceptable," UNHCR spokesman Ron Redmond told a news briefing.

Males between the ages of 15 and 35 were targeted, he said. Most were taken by force but some went voluntarily.

"Some of the refugees who were recruited have since returned to the camps and told our teams that they had been brought to training bases across the border in Darfur," Redmond said.

It is not yet clear who had carried out the recruiting operation, Redmond said.

While there have been no reports of recruitment from the camps after March 19, UNHCR said some young refugees afraid of being taken are believed to be hiding in villages near the camps.

US Security firm proposes peacekeeping troops for Darfur

(*World Tribune/UPI/Virginia-Pilot/ST* – 1st Apr. **Amman**) A leading U.S. security firm has offered to provide peacekeeping forces for Sudan's Darfur region to boost African troops there, press reports said.

Cofer Black, vice chairman of the Moyock, N.C.-based private military company, told an international conference in Amman, Jordan, earlier this week that Blackwater stands ready to help keep or restore the peace anywhere it is needed.

He said the company could bolster existing peace-keeping forces from the African Union. He further added the company would undertake such a mission only with the approval of the U.S. government. He said he has discussed his concept with the United States and NATO.

"I believe there is a contribution to be made by a small force," Black said. "The issue is who's going to let us play on their team?"

J. Cofer Black, a former U.S. State Department counter-terrorism coordinator, said Blackwater has been marketing the concept of private armies for low-intensity conflicts.

Unlike national and multinational armies, which tend to get bogged down by political and logistical limitations, Black said, Blackwater could have a small, nimble, brigade-size force ready to move into a troubled region on short notice.

"There is clear potential to conduct security operations at a fraction of the cost of NATO operations," Black said. "It's unusual and that's why I'm raising it. This is not what you do if your objective is more money."

Southern Sudan

Five LRA rebels captured in South Sudan

(*SRS/ST* – 30th Mar. **Juba**) Five suspected Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) rebels were captured early yesterday when they attempted to attack Lobonok IDP camp near Jebel Kujur, west of Juba town.

The suspected rebels were captured in joint ambush laid by Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) soldiers and a police patrol in the early hours of Wednesday 29 March morning.

A source at Central Equatoria police training unit in Buluk told Sudan Radio Service (SRS) that police are now interrogating the captives before handing them over to the United Nations police in Juba.

The source explained that one of the suspects was found wrestling with an unarmed civilian before he was arrested.