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(By Public Information Office)

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HIGHLIGHTS:

UN/ AMIS-UN Transition

JEM says it should not be overlooked on eastern Sudan

(*AlRai AIAam* – 26th Apr. **Khartoum, Asmara**) The Justice and Equality Movement says it should not be overlooked on the issue of eastern Sudan.

AbdelAziz Ashir, the commander of JEM Forces in eastern Sudan, says overlooking the JEM in eastern Sudan will be meaningless as the JEM is the largest movement in the area and must participate in the quest for solutions to those problems in eastern Sudan.

The JEM commander slammed SRSG Pronk on his calls that the JEM leave eastern Sudan.

“Pronk’s utilization of the weakness of the Khartoum government and installing himself as Governor-General of Sudan is rejected”, he said.

He pointed out that eastern Sudan is part of Sudan and that the JEM does not need a permit from either Mr. Pronk or the UN in order to have a presence there.

UN votes sanctions against four Sudanese over Darfur

(*ST* – 25th Apr. **United Nations**) With Russia and China abstaining, the UN Security Council ordered financial and travel sanctions on four Sudanese blamed for bloodshed and rights abuses in Darfur.

Twelve of the council’s 15 members voted for the US-drafted resolution, which was co-sponsored by Argentina, Britain, Denmark, France, Japan, Peru and Slovakia.

China and Russia, two of the five veto-wielding permanent members, joined Qatar in abstaining. They argued that sanctions could adversely affect inter-Sudanese peace talks in Abuja, Nigeria.

"This resolution demonstrates that the Security Council is serious in its efforts to restore peace and security in the region and, far from interfering in the peace process in Abuja, it will strengthen that process," said US Ambassador John Bolton.

He said other Sudanese figures might be targeted for sanctions if they were also found to have perpetrated atrocities in Darfur.

The council also unanimously approved a non-binding Tanzanian-drafted statement expressing full support for the Abuja peace talks and calling on the Khartoum government and Darfur rebels to reach a deal by a Sunday deadline set by the African Union, which has organised the peace talks, and the international community.

Targeted for a travel ban and an assets freeze were: Sheikh Musa Hilal, a leader of the Khartoum-backed Janjaweed (Arab) militia seen as responsible for some of the worst atrocities in Darfur, Major General Gaffar Mohamed Elhassan, a former commander of the

Western (Darfur) military region, Adam Yacub Shant, a commander of the rebel Sudanese Liberation Army and Gjibril Abdul Kareem Badri, a commander of the insurgent National Movement for Reform and Development.

Hilal's militia were blamed for pillaging, rape, and scorching of villages in Darfur.

Elhassan had direct operational command of Sudanese government forces in Darfur from 2004 to this year and coordinated operations between the Janjaweed and government forces.

Shant violated a ceasefire agreement in July 2005 when he ordered SLA forces to attack government troops. Three government soldiers were killed.

Badri kidnapped African Union peacekeeping personnel last October and a month later threatened to shoot down an AU helicopter.

Explaining his decision to abstain, Russian delegate Konstantin Dolgov said the sanctions "might have a negative impact on the prospect for concluding the peace agreement" by the April 30 deadline "and thus would not promote efforts to establish peace and security in Darfur and Sudan as a whole."

Qatar's UN envoy Nassir Al-Nasser said he abstained because "we did not find proof that would condemn these people and justify sanctions being levelled against them."

China's UN ambassador Wang Guangya restated Beijing's view that sanctions "more often than not cannot bring expected results".

Bolton meanwhile expressed regret that the council vote was not unanimous.

But he noted that the council's veto-wielding permanent members "are fully aware that when they abstain assuming there's a nine-vote majority in favour that they are allowing the sanctions to proceed."

In a warning to the Sudanese government, he said: "the first thing we need is cooperation from the government in Khartoum to let in the UN assessment team" tasked with making a plan for UN takeover of the African Union peacekeeping mission in Darfur.

Britain's UN ambassador, Emyr Jones Parry, announced that he would be leading a mission to Sudan for the Security Council in the first week of June.

The Security Council vote came more than a year after it authorized sanctions against those responsible for the Darfur strife, where rebels and government-backed militias have been battling since February 2003.

Sudan: UN Human Rights Chief expects to visit Darfur

(UN News Service – 25th Apr. New York) United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Louise Arbour, at present on a visit to East Africa, is expected to visit Darfur later this week, less than a month after UN Emergency Relief Coordinator Jan Egeland was banned from touring the area.

Asked at a news briefing in Geneva today if Ms. Arbour had guarantees that she would be allowed to visit Darfur, spokesman José Luis Díaz said it was fully expected that she would be able to go and all indications confirmed this.

When Mr. Egeland was banned from visiting Darfur at the beginning of this month the UN Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) said it regretted the Government's decision and Secretary-General Kofi Annan sought to speak to Sudanese President Omar Hassan Ahmed al-Bashir.

The one-week visit beginning on Saturday is Ms. Arbour's second trip to Sudan. In addition to Khartoum, the capital, and Darfur she is scheduled to go to Juba in South Sudan where a peace agreement in January 2005 ended two decades of war between Government and rebel forces.

Since her first visit in 2004, she has issued two major reports on the situation in Sudan, one focusing on sexual violence and the other on the general human rights situation.

She now intends to see how the situation has progressed since the 2004 visit and the reports, in which she expressed concern about the disconnect between the commitments undertaken by the country in the area of human rights and the actual situation on the ground, Mr. Diaz said.

CPA

SPLA divides its forces going south into three groups

(*AlAyaam* – 26th Apr. **Khartoum**) The SPLA says its forces being redeployed from eastern Sudan to the south have now reached Rabak and will be divided into three groups passing through Malakal, Abyei and Bentieu.

The head of the joint technical committee of the Joint Defence Board says the remainder of the SPLA forces still in eastern Sudan will be redeployed to points below the 1.1.'56 line by the beginning of this May.

Mjr. Gen. Elias Waya commended the support the SAF has provided for the redeployment of the SPLA from eastern Sudan.

SSDF says it is “not talking” with the SPLA at the moment

(*AlRai AlAam* – 26th Apr. **Khartoum**) The SSDF dispelled recent reports that it is holding talks with the SPLA but says it has no objection to hold constructive dialogue with the SPLM leading to realistic results and based on the proposals presented before to the SPLM.

It is worth noting that Dr. Riak Machar, GoSS Vice-President, had said earlier that the SPLA had held talks in Juba with the Chief of Military Operations of the SSDF.

GoNU

Iran's Khamenei says willing to transfer nuclear technology to Sudan

(*AP/ST* – 25th Apr. **Tehran**) Iran's top leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, said Tuesday during a meeting with the president of Sudan that Iran is ready to transfer its nuclear technology to neighbouring countries.

Khamenei made the comments in a meeting with visiting Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir, who said last month that his impoverished, war torn country was considering trying to create a nuclear program to generate electrical power.

"Iran's nuclear capability is one example of various scientific capabilities in the country ... the Islamic Republic of Iran is prepared to transfer the experience, knowledge and technology of its scientists," Khamenei told al-Bashir during their meeting.

Al-Bashir congratulated Iran for its success in producing enriched uranium for the first time, saying the achievement was a "great success for the world of Islam."

Such a transfer would be legal as long as it is between signatory-states to the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty, and as long as the International Atomic Energy Agency that monitors the treaty was informed of the transfer.

Al-Bashir is the first foreign head of state to visit Iran since the country announced April 11 that it had for the first time enriched uranium with 164 centrifuges.

"Iran's capability and progress is, in fact, an increase in the power of the Islamic world," the state-run television quoted al-Bashir as saying.

Al-Bashir said last month that his government believes its energy resources will not cover an expected increase in needs for electrical power in the next 25 years in the Arab-African country.

He did not explain how Sudan might be able to afford a nuclear program.

Parliament calls on the Presidency of the Republic to launch disarmament campaign

(*AlAyaam* – 26th Apr. **Khartoum**) Parliament has called on the Presidency of the Republic to launch a nationwide disarmament campaign to collect firearms from illegal owners.

Speaker Ibrahim el-Tahir also underlined the need to implement the national DDR program.

Police denies having made excessive use of force

(*AlAyaam* – 26th Apr. **Khartoum**) In its first reaction to the recent reports of violence in Amri, northern Sudan, that resulted in 3 deaths, the police said that the police force dispatched to the areas in the vicinity of the Merowe Dam project is not as large as portrayed.

The Director-General for Police described the recent events in northern Sudan as of a limited impact and denied reports that the police used excessive force against the affected people. He said the police only uses live ammunition in very extreme cases and only in self-defence.

He says the citizens sparked off the SAF events by throwing stones at the police thus gravely injuring some police officers.

The police, he adds, is launching an investigation into the issue.

But some of the people nursing injuries sustained from the recent clash say that the police started off the attack by releasing teargas and firing live ammunition.

Darfur/ Abuja talks/ Chad

AU proposes draft Darfur peace deal as deadline nears

(Reuters/ST – 25th Apr. Abuja) The African Union proposed a peace deal for Sudan's Darfur region on Tuesday that would require the government to disarm its proxy Janjaweed militias as a key step towards ending the three-year-old conflict.

The draft agreement is the result of close to two years of arduous negotiations in the Nigerian capital between the Sudanese government and two Darfur rebel movements, mediated by the African Union (AU) which has set an April 30 deadline.

"This agreement does not give you everything you wanted, but it is an agreement you can live with," AU chief mediator Salim Ahmed Salim told government and rebel delegates at the presentation of the 85-page draft.

"You must bury your mutual suspicion ... This is decision time. No more procrastination," he said.

The AU said the proposed deal, which covers the three key areas of security, power-sharing and wealth-sharing, will test the sincerity of the Sudanese parties.

"The agreement will not satisfy those who want 100 percent of their demands to be met or who are interested in power for themselves," Sam Ibok, head of the AU mediation team, told Reuters just before the formal presentation.

"But if they are interested in a solution for the people of Darfur, in the guarantee of security, the return of refugees, economic development, ending the marginalisation of Darfur, then they will find a lot in this agreement," he said.

"Security is our number one priority," Ibok said.

"The agreement is sequenced so that one move triggers another. First the government disarms the Janjaweed, next the (rebel) movements disarm."

Khartoum denies controlling the Janjaweed and Ibok said the government's stance on the issue was complicating the talks.

"They come and tell us 'define the Janjaweed'. It's not serious. They know who the Janjaweed are. They use them. They are the counter-insurgency force that they armed and trained."

On the rebel side, Ibok said fears of what would happen after a peace deal was preventing some fighters from accepting the necessary compromises.

"They cannot see the way ahead if they sign an agreement. Right now fighting is a way of life for some of these people."

He also said that to achieve peace, the rebels would have to drop some of the demands that mattered more to leaders concerned about their political futures than to the people of Darfur.

A prime example is a demand for a post of vice-president to be created for someone from Darfur, in addition to the two vice-presidential positions that already exist. This has been one of the main sticking points in the talks.

The compromise solution proposed by the AU is a new post of "senior presidential assistant" from Darfur who would be the fourth highest-ranking person in the presidency.

SAF repulses SLA attack near Joghana

(*AlAyaam* – 26th Apr. **Khartoum**) The Office of the Spokesperson of the Sudan Armed Forces reports that the SAF moved in near Buram in South Darfur following confirmed reports of a threat to the town.

The SAF says it had requested AMIS to secure the town and the road linking it with Nyala but was attacked by SLA forces in Joghana midway to Buram.

The SAF says the SLA attack was held off and repulsed after the SLA suffered heavy casualties.

Police D-G dismisses allegations of rape in Darfur as baseless

(*Sudan Vision* – 26th Apr. **Khartoum**) The Director-General of Police told a press conference yesterday that allegations by the western media about rape in the Darfur states are unfounded.

Lt. Gen. Mahjoub Hassan Saad says these are mere fabrications of acts that are alien to Sudanese values in general and those of the people of Darfur in particular.

He pointed out that the reports from the police and the AMIS indicate that these reports by the western media are over exaggerated. He said the police works in close cooperation with AMIS CivPol.

The Director-General of Police further revealed that the Ministry of Interior has dispatched 20,000 police officers to maintain security in the Darfur states.

Southern Sudan

S. Sudan's Yambio conference on inter-tribal fighting ends works*

(*ST* – 25th Apr. **Yambio**) The Yambio Peace and Reconciliation Conference (19th - 24th April 2006) which brought together participants from the four neighbouring and common bordering states of Western Equatoria, Bahr el Ghazal, Warab and Lakes, ended on Saturday 23rd April in Yambio with a big ceremony attended by UN Special Envoy to the Sudan, Jan Pronk.

The conference agreed to repatriate internally displaced persons (IDPs) to their original homes. It was also decided to form joint committees to solve intra-tribal conflicts within and between States.

The conference talked about the insecurity generated by the presence of the Ugandan rebel LRA and the Ambororo of Nigeria. The Southern Sudan government was urged to negotiate

with the concerned countries (Uganda, Congo, Nigeria) the best ways for their return to their respective countries.

During the closing ceremony the hosting Governor of Western Equatoria State Col. Patrick Zamoi presented the UN Envoy with a special gift, a photographic portrait of Lt. General Salva Kiir Mayardit, 1st Vice President of Sudan and President of GOSS. On his part the UN envoy, Jan Pronk accepted the gift on behalf of the UN Secretary General and then he went to thank the Governor for the special gift which he said would be displayed at the UN Headquarters in New York.

The UN envoy further said that it was the first portrait of Lt. Gen. Salva Kiir Mayardit the UN has received and he really appreciated this very much. The UN envoy further thanked the participants for signing a covenant to strive to attain peace across the four neighbouring states.

Also on Sunday 24th April 2006, the Peace and Reconciliation conference delegates attended a concluding Ecumenical prayer for Peace and Reconciliation in the region of the four states and throughout the South Sudan and the prayers was attended by most of the delegates to the Peace Conference as well as Church leaders like Archbishop Paolino Lukudu (who attended the Peace Conference also), other Bishops, Church elders and dignitaries.

As with regards to the Conference itself, it was very successfully with the participants signing a covenant binding all the four states to do their utmost to prevent ethnic and tribal clashes or violence moving across their borders and resolving to address the current tension and ethnic clashes in Western Equatoria State.

A comprehensive report of the Peace and Reconciling Conference is being prepared and will be released in due course by the Conference Secretariat.

** For more information, please refer to the conference resolutions in a separate attachment to this MMR*

Eastern Sudan

Kassala state may close schools as meningitis spreads

(*AlSahafa* – 26th Apr. **Khartoum**) The health minister in Kassala State has announced there are 60 cases of infection with meningitis in the state since January this year with 14 of these cases fatal.

The minister who was speaking yesterday at an event organised to mark Malaria Day in Africa said the ministry expects more vaccines to be flown in but may be compelled to close down schools should the situation continue unabated.

Other Developments

Two Sudanese injured in mystery blast in Omdurman

(*ST* – 25th Apr. **Khartoum**) Two persons were slightly injured on Tuesday in an explosion of an explosive device at a 6-storey building housing the Al-Baraka Bank in Omdurman, the state-run SUNA said.

In a press conference Tuesday, the Police explained that a person has thrown a hand grenade at the building, a matter that led to the injury of two customers of the bank.

It explained that the police are currently investigating the incident to know who committed it and his motives, pointing that there is a suspect so far.

Director General of the Police Forces Gen. Mahjoub Hassan Saa'd said that the Police Head-Quarters has worked out a comprehensive programme for collection of arms along with strict regulations for possession and use of arms.

He affirmed the importance of increasing the presence of the policemen in the streets to discover and prevent crime.

He stressed the importance of the provision of security in the national capital, saying security in the national capital constitutes the greatest concern.

Security sources who rushed to the site say the culprit was inside the bank and released a grenade and escaped seconds before the blast.

The ensuing chaos was quickly brought under control by the local police and the director at the bank was thankful that no looting took place.