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(By Public Information Office)

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UN

UN report says Eritrea, Libya, Chad supply arms to Darfur rebels

(*Sudan Tribune* – 8th Feb. **New York**) A UN report accused Eritrea Libya and Chad of supplying arms and ammunition to the rebels groups in Sudan's troubled Darfur region.

The UN Panel of experts to monitor the implementation of the arms embargo imposed by resolutions 1556 (2004) and 1591 (2005); in a report released today said that “the Government of Eritrea has provided, and probably continues to provide, arms, logistical support, military training and political support to both JEM and the Sudan Liberation Army (SLA)”.

“Training of JEM and SLA has reportedly occurred at a number of camps in Eritrea on the Eritrea-Sudan border”, the report added.

But the report says the panel was not able to determine whether material support for the rebels in Darfur emanating from Chad and Libya was official Government policy or rather the independent actions of Government officials”.

The Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) is also mention in the report as training provider and arms supplier to the Darfur rebel SLA.

“The Panel has received multiple, credible reports that the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) provided training and supplied arms and ammunition to SLM/A”.

“It appears that shipments of arms facilitated by the Sudan People's Liberation Army continued until at least August/September 2004, after Security Council resolution 1556 (2004) had been adopted. It also appears that SPLM/A stopped its official support when it appeared that the Niavasha peace negotiations would be finalized”.

Regarding the Janjaweed militias, the report says it isn't possible to deny arms to these militias. Because the militias are already formally part of the Government security organs or incorporated into those organs, especially the Popular Defence Force (PDF), the border intelligence guard, the central reserve police, the popular police and the nomadic police.

Eritrea denies UN charges over Darfur rebel support

(*ST/AFP* – 8th Feb. **Asmara**) Eritrean government on Wednesday angrily denied charges by a UN panel that it is providing weapons and military support to rebel groups in Sudan's troubled western Darfur region in violation of an arms embargo.

Information Minister Ali Abdu said the panel's conclusion that Eritrea is helping the two Darfur rebel groups was false, accusing the United Nations of inept ineffectiveness and UN chief Kofi Annan of being corrupt.

"The report is totally groundless," he told AFP. "Instead of pointing futile fingers at others, the UN should question itself, its role in keeping peace and stability in different regions.

"The UN is inept, it needs (reform) more than any time in its history," Ali Abdu said. "It is an ineffective institution with a corrupt secretary general."

In a report issued this week, the panel of experts looking at the 2004 arms embargo on non-state actors in Darfur said the rebel Sudan Liberation Army (SLA) and Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) were getting illegal support from Eritrea, as well as from Chad, Libya and unknown other sources.

"The panel judges that the government of Eritrea has provided, and probably continues to provide arms, logistical support, military training and political support to both JEM and the SLA," it said.

"Training of JEM and SLA has reportedly occurred at a number of camps in Eritrea on the Eritrea-Sudan border," the report said.

Ali Abdu said the accusations were baseless, but allowed that Eritrea does give political and moral support to various Sudanese factions.

Asmara has long had a fractious relationship with the United Nations, which it accuses of failing to force arch-rival neighbor Ethiopia to accept a binding border demarcation that was part of the deal that ended their 1998-2000 war.

Those ties have deteriorated significantly in recent months after Eritrea imposed restrictions on UN peacekeepers monitoring the border with Ethiopia and expelled North American and European members of the mission from its territory.

The UN Security Council has threatened to slap sanctions on Asmara unless the restrictions are rescinded but Eritrea has thus far ignored the demand.

UN requests charge of dossier on eastern Sudan

(*AlSahafa* – 8th Feb. **Khartoum**) Following the postponement of the talks in Tripoli between the government and the Eastern Front, reports say that the UN has started to arrange for an

extensive meeting involving all factions of eastern Sudan and expects to take charge of the dossier on eastern Sudan.

This is especially so after the disclosure by SRSJ Jan Pronk that he has requested Secretary-General Kofi Annan to allow the UN to take charge of that issue.

Kamal Obeid, the officer in charge of external relations at the National Congress party, however ruled this out and said that the government has not requested UN mediation. He says that an offer for mediation by the UN was turned down by the government. He further pointed out that Pronk proposed the mediation as an individual and the government does not deal with him on that basis.

Jan Pronk to visit Blue Nile region

(*AlSahafa* – 8th Feb. **el-Damazeen**) SRSJ Jan Pronk was on a tour of Blue Nile state yesterday where he held talks with representatives of international organisations, the local administration and the state government. He was also briefed by the leadership of UNMIS' Pakistani contingent deployed there on the situation in the area.

Ahmed Karmano, the spokesperson for the government of the state, said that the talks were very successful and that the SRSJ commended the Parties. The SRSJ also noted that the situation in Blue Nile was better compared to that in the Nuba Mountains and Abyei and pledged UN assistance for the efforts for peace in the state.

The Deputy Governor who also attended the meeting told the SRSJ that the efforts for peace in Blue Nile state has suffered financial difficulties as a result of the weak support from the central government. He said however that the situation in that state was much better than other areas.

CPA

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Assessment commission forms four committees

(*AlSahafa* – 8th Feb. **Khartoum**) Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly, Atim Garang, held talks yesterday with the head of the Assessment and Evaluation Commission, Tom Vraaslen, and briefed him on the work of the National Assembly.

The deputy speaker confirmed parliament’s support for the implementation of the CPA and disclosed that it will complete deliberations on the other laws by next April.

Vraaslen, on his part, briefed the deputy speaker of the work of the commission. He said four work groups have been established as per the chapters of the CPA to cover issues pertaining to parliament, petrol, security and assessment of the implementation of the CPA in the Abyei, Blue Nile, South Kordofan and southern Sudan.

First batch of Sudanese refugees return home from CAR

(*IRIN* – 7th Feb. **Khartoum**) The first batch of 10,000 Sudanese refugees who have lived in the Central African Republic (CAR) for 16 years arrived home this week following a recent agreement between the two governments and the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

"The returnees are eager to reunite with their families," Mai Hosoi, the public information officer for the International Organization for Migration (IOM), said on Monday [6 February].

The tripartite agreement was signed on Wednesday in Bangui, capital of CAR.

IOM is arranging flights for the returnees, with the help of UNHCR and other organizations. Hosoi said the 50 refugees began returning home on Thursday with high expectations since they had been away for years.

"Skilled professionals such as nurses, teachers and agricultural technicians hope to find employment with NGOs or government departments and ministries.

"Farmers want to return in time for the planting season, clear their fields and rebuild their homes. The youth hope to find skills training opportunities to become drivers, technicians or start small businesses and children are eager to continue schooling in their home villages," he said.

At least half of the 10,000 Sudanese refugees now registered in CAR are due to return to Tambura and Yambio in Western Equatoria Province, from Mboki in CAR, within the next three months.

To ensure the successful reintegration into society on their return, NGOs are operating health programmes to treat endemic illnesses such as guinea worm, leprosy and river blindness - all concerns among these communities as they return home.

Government of National Unity

Sudanese president's visit to southern states postponed

(SUNA/BBC – 6th Feb. **Khartoum**) The government of southern Sudan's higher ministerial committee responsible for organizing the visit of President of the Republic FM Umar al-Bashir to Juba [capital of Bahr al-Jabal State, southern Sudan] and Rumbek [capital of Al-Buhayrat state] has said the visit has been postponed until further notice.

Al-Bashir was expected to visit the southern states, address a number of rallies and meet leaders on 8 February.

President Bashir travels to Tripoli today

(AlAyaam – 8th Feb. **Khartoum**) President Bashir travels to Tripoli today at the head of a Sudan government delegation to the AU mini-summit meeting.

The delegation also consists of foreign minister Dr. Lam Akol and Presidential Advisor Mustafa Osman among others while Dr. Majzoub el-Khalifa who heads the Sudan government delegation to the talks in Abuja is expected to fly in to join President Bashir and his aides in Tripoli.

Libyan television confirmed the arrival last evening of AU President Alpha Oumar Konaré.

Meanwhile official reports have confirmed that Chadian president Idreis Debe will attend.

The mini-conference shall seek to defuse the tensions between Khartoum and N'djamena and plot a course for the talks on eastern Sudan.

Khartoum rejects an Eritrean participation in the mini-summit in Tripoli

(AlRai AlAam – 8th Feb. **Khartoum**) The Sudan government has yesterday closed the doors before Asmara's attempts to play a major role in the talks on eastern Sudan scheduled to take place in Libya.

Dr. Kamal Obeid, the head of the government delegation for the talks and also the ruling party's officer in charge of political affairs, said that the Sudan government has clearly and directly told the Libyan mediators that it does not wish to see an Eritrean participation in the talks. He pointed out that despite the recent warming up of relations between the two states, relations between them have not reached the level to allow an Eritrean mediation in Sudan's internal issues.

He further pointed out that relations between Sudan and Eritrea and the issue of eastern Sudan are two different issues.

Obeid disclosed that contacts between the government and the Eastern Front continue in order to bring an end to this problem.

The Eastern Front has, on the other hand, insisted on an Eritrean role in the process.

Sudan reiterates opposition to UN peacekeepers for Darfur

(AP/ST – 7th Feb. **Khartoum**) Sudan's junior foreign minister has reiterated his country's opposition to plans to send U.N. peacekeepers to Darfur, saying money for such a force would be better spent bolstering an African Union mission already in the troubled western region.

"If there is a possibility of sending new forces to Darfur by the United Nations and the international community, forces that would cost double the costs of the African Union troops, then why shouldn't this money be used for boosting the African Union forces?" Samani Al-Wasila was quoted as saying Tuesday by the pro-ruling party Sudan Media Center (SMC).

Last week, the U.N. Security Council authorized planning for the expected U.N. takeover of peacekeeping operations in Darfur. The African Union has agreed in principle to transform its underfunded, understaffed and under-equipped force in Darfur into a U.N. force.

Such a move is supported by many Security Council members, including current council president the United States, but has been strongly opposed by Sudan.

"Government consent is an essential precondition for taking any such a move by the world organization," Al-Wasila was quoted as saying Tuesday.

Sudanese officials have portrayed plans for U.N. involvement as part of a Western plot to weaken Sudan.

"There are some invisible hands that continue to manipulate the question of Darfur for tearing up the unity of Sudan in preparation for controlling and looting its resources," President Omar al-Bashir was quoted by the Sudan Media Center as saying on Tuesday. The agency said the president made the remarks at the opening of a regional medical meeting in his capital.

Sudan prepares for donor conference

(SMC – 7th Feb. **Khartoum**) The minister of state at the presidency of the republic, Tilara Deng, today held talks with a World Bank delegation where they discussed preparations for the forthcoming donor conference to be held on 19 March in Paris, France, which the first vice-president, Lt-Gen Salva Kiir, will attend.

In a statement to SMC [Sudanese Media Centre], Tilara said the government of national unity and the government of the south would coordinate through their delegates participating in the conference. He said that the meeting presented studies of proposed projects and ways of implementing them in a given time.

Tilara told the World Bank delegation that the delay in implementing the peace agreement was because the donors had not committed to the pledges they made during the Oslo Conference.

Cabinet endorses Voluntary Works Act

(*AlSahafa* – 8th Feb. **Khartoum**) In an extraordinary session yesterday, Cabinet endorsed the Voluntary Works Act but has deferred deliberations on the amendments to the Criminal Law to its session next Sunday.

Justice Minister el-Murdi said he expects much debate to take place over the Act once tabled before parliament.

Gezeera state government formed

(*AlAyaam* – 8th Feb. **Khartoum**) The Governor of Gezeera State announced yesterday members to the government of that state. The government consists of 7 ministers, 8 commissioners and 6 advisors and representing 5 political parties.

SPLM representatives in the area have however expressed some reserve and say they did not participate in the discussions leading to the formation of the state government. They have sent note to their leaders in Khartoum to decide on the issue.

Darfur/ Chad

Preparatory meetings for summit on Sudan-Chad conflict continue in Libya

(*Sudan Radio* – 7th Feb. **Khartoum**) The five CENSAD [Community of Sahel and Saharan States] foreign ministers are continuing their preparatory meetings, that began yesterday in Tripoli, for a mini summit due to begin tomorrow in Libya to restore the relations between Sudan and Chad.

At the end of the second closed-door meeting, the secretary of the General People's Committee for Foreign Liaison and International Cooperation at the Great Jamahiriyah [Libya] said there was a great optimism that good results would be achieved: "As a mediating committee, we have agreed on the necessary and practical steps that need to be taken in order to find the right solution to the crisis between Sudan and Chad", he said.

Darfur gunmen steal 20 trucks from WFP

(*AFP/ST* – 7th Feb. **Geneva**) Gunmen have stolen 20 trucks carrying aid in Sudan's troubled Darfur region, the World Food Programme said on Tuesday. Christiane Berthiaume, spokeswoman for the UN agency, said the attacks on several convoys took place in recent weeks in zones controlled by Darfur's rebels.

"The roads are dangerous. Every day, trucks get attacked, their cargoes are stolen and their drivers are kidnapped," Berthiaume told journalists.

Security problems are putting the WFP's operations in Darfur at risk, she added.

Some 2.7 million people in the region rely on food aid from the WFP, and the agency is finding it increasingly difficult to recruit drivers because of the violence. That is raising fears that it will be unable to deliver enough supplies before the rainy season starts in April, turning the region's roads into a quagmire, Berthiaume said. Despite pressing Sudan's governments and Darfur's rebels, the WFP has received no guarantees that its convoys will be safe, she said.

Last week, gunmen in Darfur reportedly kidnapped eight workers — most of them believed to be Sudanese — with the French humanitarian group Action Contre La Faim. Sudanese authorities blamed the abduction on the rebels.

Two UNHCR officials briefly abducted in Chad

(*Reuters/ST* – 8th Feb. **N'djamena**) Two officials of U.N. refugee agency UNHCR were briefly abducted by gunmen and driven towards Sudan's violent Darfur region, but were freed when their vehicle got a puncture, U.N. officials said on Tuesday.

Two armed assailants who said they were Sudanese abducted the head of the UNHCR office in the eastern town of Guereda and a colleague late on Monday and freed them a few hours later, a U.N. official in N'Djamena, who declined to be named, said.

In Geneva, UNHCR spokeswoman Helene Caux confirmed the abduction, calling it the latest incident involving aid workers in eastern Chad. She said the two employees were not mistreated.

"Two armed men entered the compound and forced them into a car. They drove about 15 km north of Guereda where they turned towards the Sudan border and had a double puncture," she said.

The gunmen abandoned the two UNHCR officials and car "in the middle of nowhere", but they were later recovered safe and sound, Caux said.

Unknown gunmen attacked Guereda last month and seized five government officials, prompting UNHCR and other aid agencies to pull around a fifth of their humanitarian staff out of the town.

"There is definitely a trend where humanitarian aid workers seem to be targeted more and more," Caux said.

GoSS/ Southern Sudan

Salva Kiir void s Board of Directors of Nile petroleum company

(*AlSahafa* – 8th Feb. **Juba**) Vice-president of the Republic and the President of the GoSS Salva Kiir Mayardit has ordered a repeal of an earlier Presidential Order approving the appointment of a Board of Directors for the Nile Petroleum company and directed the Minister of Energy and Mining of the GoSS to take the necessary steps on the issue.

The head of the GoSS said that the order comes in light of the new developments in the company and follows consultations on the issue with members of the GoSS.

It is worth noting that Nile Petroleum Company was established by the SPLM during the years of war to drill, promote and monitor the petroleum industry in southern Sudan among other things.

SSDF denies Paulino's accusations

(*AlRai AlAam* – 8th Feb. **Khartoum**) The SSDF has called on Paulino Matip not to resort to a show of force and to focus instead on building southern Sudan.

Spokesperson Mohamed Shol of the SSDF denied Matip's accusations that the SSDF seeks to destabilise the south and said the SSDF confirms its total commitments to stability of southern Sudan.

He further pointed out that the SPLA and Paulino himself are aware that Gordon's soldiers are stationed in Malakal.

Shol made light of Paulino's claims that some of Gordon's forces have joined him. He pointed out that the southern Sudanese militias gave their officers the right to choose to either join the SAF or the SPLA and added that only 7 officers have joined Paulino's group while 500 others have joined the SAF and 49 of these have indeed arrived in Khartoum yesterday to be sworn in.

Watery diarrhoea outbreak reported in southern Sudan

(*IRIN* – 7th Feb. **Nairobi**) At least 12 people, two of them children, have died from an outbreak of acute watery diarrhoea in the southern Sudanese town of Yei, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has said.

The outbreak, UNICEF said in a statement on Monday [6 February], was first reported on 4 February when three deaths occurred and 48 patients were admitted to local health facilities.

The disease left hundreds of people needing medical attention - about half of them children.

"There are large numbers of cases and we are going through medical supplies very rapidly," Ben Parker, communication officer for UNICEF southern Sudan, told *IRIN*. "There is an especially urgent need for IV [intravenous] fluid in the treatment centres."

"Clean water supply in southern Sudan is generally lacking, with less than a third of the population having access to a safe source," UNICEF said.

"Yei town is typical of southern Sudan's urban centres in having insufficient boreholes for its growing population, leading to many people taking water directly from the river Yei, which is used for drinking, bathing and watering livestock," the agency added.

Noting that diarrhoea contributes to a very high under-five mortality rate in the region, UNICEF said very limited sanitation facilities and a generally poor hygiene situation worsened the threat.

"There is a need for high capacity electric water systems. The hand pumps currently being used are fine for rural areas, but for a large town like Yei, a much larger water system is necessary," Parker said. "It is also important to carry out public education on hygiene to prevent further outbreaks."

Eastern Sudan

East Sudan rebels call off peace talks

(*AlMashaheer website/BBC* – 7th Feb. **Khartoum**) The Eastern Front has declared an indefinite postponement of talks scheduled to start in Tripoli today with the Sudan government.

The statement released by the leadership of the Eastern Front [a coalition of rebel groups operating in eastern Sudan, the Beja Congress and the Free Lions] said: "In view of military developments in the east and due to actions over the past few days aimed at [planning] an assault on the camps of the Eastern Front, at a time when the leaders and cadres are meant to be in Tripoli negotiating with the government, the Eastern Front of Sudan announces the postponement of negotiations in Tripoli until further notice."

It is worth recalling that Libya is heading mediation efforts between the Sudanese government and the Eastern Front rebels, who are asking for wealth and power-sharing and for their region to be given a larger share in development projects.

Sudan/Uganda:

Ugandan opposition alarmed by Sudanese support to Museveni

(*The East African/ST* – 8th Feb. **Kampala**) Ugandan opposition politicians have expressed fears that an influx of foreign nationals from Sudan into areas that, coincidentally, also have newly gazetted polling stations, will undermine the integrity of the elections, the Nairobi based *The East African* reported.

"We know that President Yoweri Museveni wants to exploit his close links with the Sudanese People's Liberation Army to rig the election," claimed Gulu Municipality and Democratic Party chief campaigner Norbert Mao. "With the recent partisan conduct of Mrs Rebecca Garang, we don't need to guess who the SPLA men will vote for."

Rebecca Garang, widow of former Sudanese vice president John Garang, has appeared at Museveni's rallies, raising concerns that she is rallying the support of Sudanese living in Uganda for the Movement. Museveni is the presidential candidate for the National Resistance Movement.

Transparency International, which is monitoring the polls, has also questioned why Mrs Garang and other officials of foreign countries have openly shown support for a particular political group in the elections.

"What is the agenda of foreign countries sending officials to identify with a political group?" asked Charles Mubbale, the international anti-corruption body's country director. "There should be a dividing line between a political group and a government. We feel concerned when we see Mrs Garang on Museveni's campaign trail in areas where there are Sudanese refugees."

Reports of an influx of Congolese into Uganda from the west have also raised concern. They have been settled in Kabale and Nakivale refugee settlements.

Opposition sources last week told *The East African* that Sudanese refugees in northern Uganda - who reportedly also voted in 2001 - were being given voters' cards. They also claimed that SPLA men have been registered in the districts of Gulu, Adjumani, Yumbe, Koboko and Kitgum.

Mr Mao insisted that outside of the north, thousands of SPLA men and Sudanese refugees have been registered in Kiryandongo refugee settlement in Masindi district.

"We know that they have been registered. All that remains is to give them voters' cards," the DP chief campaigner said. "We have lodged complaints with the EC, but it is afraid even to

comment. The new polling stations are dubious; they are created for ghost voters in the concentration camps. We have had ghost soldiers in this country and so we are going to have ghost voters."

However, EC spokesman Okello Jabweli said in Kampala that the new polling stations were meant to rationalise the polling process, to ease voter access to some polling stations, and to reduce congestion at others. He told The East African that allegations of foreigners being smuggled into the electoral process could only be answered by the Immigration Department. He said that the EC had investigated the issue because it was not aware of any plans to use the SPLA in the voting process.

Both the Uganda Joint Christian Council and TI have said there are too many polling stations to allow effective monitoring of the polls. The Council said it can only monitor half the country's 20,000 polling stations. The organisation is only making available 10,000 monitors due to lack of resources.

Uganda's rebel leader flees southern Sudan

(AP/ST – 6th Feb. **Kampala**) An elusive Ugandan rebel leader has fled his rear base in southern Sudan and crossed to neighbouring Congo, a Ugandan army spokesman said Monday.

Joseph Kony and 15 fighters of his rebel Lord's Resistance Army left his hideout north of Juba, capital of the autonomous south Sudan government, early Sunday following pressure from Ugandan troops who have been permitted by Sudanese authorities to operate there, said army spokesman Capt. Dennis Musitwa.

Kony crossed into lawless northeastern Congo on Sunday afternoon, he said.

"Our latest intelligence reports suggest he may be heading to Central Africa and that he passed through Congo's Garamba National Park," Musitwa told The Associated Press. "We exerted pressure on their posts and now we've got them on the run. It is just a matter of time till they are caught."

On Jan. 23, Ugandan fighters ambushed Guatemalan special forces soldiers serving with the U.N. peacekeeping mission along Congo's remote northeastern border with Sudan, sparking a gunbattle that left eight Guatemalan troops and 15 attackers dead in the Garamba park.

Uganda's Foreign Minister Sam Kutesa had issued a statement accusing the LRA of killing the Guatemalans, and offering condolences to the families of the dead.

The Ugandan rebels operate mostly from bases in southern Sudan, but some fighters fled to eastern Congo late last year following pressure from Ugandan troops.

Small, highly mobile groups continue to hide in northern Uganda, where they launch sporadic attacks on civilians in Pader, Kitgum and Gulu districts.

Humanitarian

Danish organisation closes offices in Darfur following attacks

(*AlSahafa* – 8th Feb. **Nyala**) A Danish organisation, Danish Refugees Council, has temporarily closed two of its offices in Darfur following attacks they were subjected to by demonstrators protesting the recent cartoon issued by a Danish paper on prophet Mohamed.

A high placed official of the organisation said they closed their offices in Nyala and Zalingei last Friday because they were attacked and received threats from a number of people offended by the caricature.

He further noted that the NGO took this temporary step because Sudanese authorities can not guarantee the security of their 15 foreign and about 60 local staff employed in these offices.

Human shields against foreign forces in Darfur!!

(*Alkhabar* – 8th Feb. **Khartoum**) Most political forces participating at a symposium held last Monday at Sharjah Hall in Khartoum have expressed fears over the deployment of US and European forces to Darfur.

These political forces say such an intervention is totally rejected and they have expressed their willingness to stand against such a decision even if that requires that they stand as human shields against such an “invasion”.

The representative of the Muslim Brothers warned of the implications of such an intervention which they likened as bringing Sudan to a trustee status for the first time in its post-independence history. Dr. Hibir Nour-el-Daeim of the Muslim Brotherhood pointed out that unlike the AU forces, none will be able to take these international forces out of the country after their period of stay is over.

Qutbi el-Mahdi, the former Political Advisor at the National Congress party, said the introduction of international forces to that region is a political issue indicative of the ongoing conflict around the world.

AbdelRasoul el-Nour, a former prominent member of the National Umma Party, said that the presence of an international force in a country without the permission of the host state is a serious indication of foreign intervention and humiliation to the citizens of that state. He urged the government to close the door through which the specter of a foreign intervention looms and to seriously resolve the issue of Darfur away from Abuja and through the participation of its people and tapping on the people of the country. He stressed the need to change the political chart in order that the citizen may not remain as spectators. He pointed out however that some may believe that the solution lies in an introduction of foreign forces.

The symposium drew participants from politicians, the legal fraternity and religious clerics.

Other developments

Military tribunal to decide on the case of 21 saboteurs

(*AlSahafa* – 8th Feb. **Khartoum**) The counsel for the defence of military suspects to an earlier foiled sabotage attempt have received assurances from the military tribunal in charge of the case to respond today to their memorandum requesting a speedy trial of the suspects who have been in detention for more than 7 months.