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(By Public Information Office)

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UN/ AU-UN Transition

Sudan ambassador to Brussels welcomes impending Security Council meeting in Khartoum

(*AlRai AlAam* – 22nd May. **Khartoum**) Sudan's ambassador to Brussels says that the Security Council meeting slated to be held in Khartoum is a welcome development that will enable members of the Security Council to have a better understanding of the views of the Sudanese leadership.

The ambassador pointed out that the Eu and the US remain major proponents for the deployment of international forces to Darfur.

He also urged them to consider the sensitive nature of the Darfur conflict.

The ambassador expressed the belief that the Sudanese government will put the interests of the people of Darfur at the forefront and will continue to reject or it will accept the deployment of international forces to Darfur should it deem that the interests of the region lies in either action they may choose.

CPA

SPLA to chair JDB

(*AlAyaam* – 22nd May. **Khartoum**) The SPLM takes over the chairmanship of the Joint Defence Board for the next three months.

Mjr. Gen. Mazoub Rahama, the official spokesman for the JDB, said that the JDB held a meeting yesterday in which a series of issues pertaining to the implementation of the Protocol on Security Arrangements were discussed.

Redeployment was among issues that featured prominently in yesterday's meeting under the chairmanship of Mjr. Gen. Wayay Deng, the spokesman said.

Sudan inks interim programme for disarmament and demobilization

(*ST* – 21st May. **Khartoum**) The interim Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) programme in Sudan was signed today on the part of the DDR Committee by its Chairman, Sulaf Eddine Saleh, and on the part of the UN by representative of the UN permanent delegate to Sudan.

Representative of the Presidency Minister, Ali Ahmed Hamid, pointed out that Sudan has witnessed major development after signing the peace agreement and the signing of the interim DDR programme in the north is representing an important step towards handling the issues of the demobilized combatants.

He expressed appreciation to the UN and donors, which offered funding to this programme, besides the international and non-governmental organizations.

Salih said that the interim DDR programme includes preparatory programme, establishment of partnerships and tackling the cases of handicapped, women, elders and combatants who were affected by the war, pointing out that the DDR programme will start in January 2007 in an expanded way in collaboration with other partners.

He added that the signing of the programme includes activities which amount to 70 million dollars, pledged by donors. On his part, the UN representative appreciated the efforts of cooperation between the Government and the UN, pointing out that the signing of the programme would boost the Comprehensive Peace Agreement.

SPLM supporters attack Sudan's Blue Nile governor in row over peace deal

(*ST* – 21st May. **Khartoum**) Former southern rebels assaulted a Sudanese state governor in the most violent row so far over implementing a 2005 peace deal that ended two decades of civil war in the south, reports said Sunday.

Supporters of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement pelted Blue Nile state governor Abdelrahman Abumedein with stones at a public rally Saturday evening, forcing him to flee the podium, Khartoum newspapers said.

The former rebels had been angered by comments made by the governor, a member of President Omar al-Beshir's long dominant National Congress party, over the peace deal's provisions for the contested south of Blue Nile state.

After six years of interim autonomy, residents of the south are to be granted a referendum on secession from Sudan.

But even though rebel fighters were active in Blue Nile state during the war, they will not take part in the referendum but instead enjoy greater autonomy and resources within the continuing Sudan.

Blue Nile "is a northern, not a southern state and there will be no referendum or negotiation about this," Abumedein crowed to the fury of the crowd.

Former rebel officials stepped in to reassure supporters that the peace deal meant they would now get 45 percent of all executive and legislative positions in the area as well as civil service jobs.

But the governor took issue with the reassurances, charging that the quota referred only to "constitutional positions" and prompting a rash of stone-throwing by the crowd.

Ironically, the former rebels had invited the governor to address the rally, organized to mark the SPLM's 23rd anniversary. In the end, Abumedein had to be ushered from the stage by SPLM stewards.

The former rebels have accused the president's National Congress of dragging its feet over implementing the January 2005 peace deal, warning that the delay could harm their uneasy relationship in the interim power-sharing government.

DPA/ Darfur

Darfur rebels say Sudan breaches cease-fire

(*Reuters/ST* – 21st May. **Khartoum**) Darfur rebels who signed a peace deal with Khartoum in early May said on Sunday the government has already breached the agreement by attacking their areas in North Darfur.

"In the evening yesterday Janjaweed began the attack with some of the government army with them," said al-Tayyib Khamis, spokesman for the Sudan Liberation Army (SLA). "They went in and took the civilians' money and possessions and then left again."

He said as yet they did not have information about anyone killed or injured during the attack.

Under intense global pressure, Khartoum signed an agreement on May 5 with one faction of the SLA. But two other rebel factions refused to sign saying the agreement was not fair. Thousands of Darfuris have demonstrated against the deal and clashes continue on the ground.

In the latest accusation, the SLA faction that signed the deal, led by Minni Arcua Minnawi, said Arab militia and government forces had attacked Dar es-Salaam in North Darfur, more than 100 km north of the state capital el-Fasher.

One AU source said they had not heard about the attack but that Arab militias, known locally as Janjaweed, had been moving in the area in the past few days.

The Sudanese army was not immediately available to comment.

Khamis said the Janjaweed, which the international community says Khartoum armed to fight the rebels, are still under the command of the government.

Under the May 5 peace deal Khartoum has to produce a plan to disarm the Janjaweed by June 22.

"The government has signed a peace deal but in reality they are not respecting the cease-fire," he said.

"That's why we are calling for U.N. forces to come in," Khamis added.

AU's Salim reveals Abuja handicaps, last-minute compromise*

(*ST* – 21st May. **Addis Ababa**) African Union Special envoy and Chief Mediator at Abuja talks, Salim Ahmed Salim presented a general assessment of the last-minutes secret negotiations to achieve Darfur Peace Agreement signed on 5 May between the Sudanese government and the main faction of the rebel Sudan Liberation Movement led by Minni Minawi.

In his six pages speech Salim before the AU Peace and Security Council, on 15 May presented a general review of obstacles that caused the slowness of the talks, the last-minute proposals formulated by the US, UK envoys; and contacts with SLM Abdelwahid al-Nur to join the deal.

According to Salim three points — mistrust between the parties, divisions among rebel groups and restrictions imposed by Naivasha peace deal signed between Sudanese

government and the former rebel Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) - constituted constraints that the mediation team has to deal with and to surpass.

These proposals covered essentially the security area and more specifically guidelines on the neutralization and disarmament of the Janjaweed, as well as the integration of the Movements' forces. They also helped to fill the blanks concerning the number of rebel forces to be integrated and the manner of their integration.

There were also minor modifications on power sharing. These included the increase of the numbers of Movements Representatives in the State Legislatures from 18 to 21 as well as strengthening of the Transitional Darfur Regional Authority (TDRA). There was also a further elaboration on the issue of compensation.

On the AbdulWahid al-Nur refusal of the peace accord, the Chief mediator said "I and my colleagues in the Mediation are particularly saddened by the indecisiveness of Mr. AbdulWahid. Throughout this Round he has been most enthusiastic about arriving at an agreement. He and/or his collaborators have been in a series of discussions with the Government of Sudan. And so the general expectation was that he would be among the first to sign". He further gave the details of the last contacts with him.

** Full text of Dr. Salim's remarks is in the separate attachment*

Group of SLM-AbdulWahid says they are ready to ink the DPA

(*AlAyaam* – 22nd May. **Khartoum, Abuja**) The economic affairs advisor to the SLM-AbdulWahid faction announced yesterday he and a group of followers are ready to sign the DPA thus joining another splinter faction that signed earlier.

Dr. Ibrahim Madibo who was the head of SLM-AbdulWahid's representatives to the committee on power-sharing said that he and his group decided to join in the DPA in response to the demands of the Rizzeigat people and the recommendations of the *Shoura* (Consultative) Council of the tribe.

Madibo refused to dub the action as a split from mainstream AbdulWahid and pointed out that there are others who would also like to follow the same path and will try to pressure AbdulWahid to concede and to consult with the government and the international community to respond as much as possible to their faction's demands especially those relative to compensations.

Meanwhile the other faction that split earlier from the AbdulWahid-led SLM and signed the DPA announced the formation of a new body calling itself the "Free-will"-SLM.

60 killed in recent Darfur clashes - UN, AU

(*AP/ST* – 21st May. **Cairo**) A new surge of interethnic and militia violence has killed at least 60 people in separate attacks in Darfur over the past few days, the African Union and the United Nations said Sunday.

Most of the recent attacks were launched by the so-called Janjaweed, a disparate group of Arab militiamen who are blamed for much of the atrocities in a conflict that has killed more than 180,000 people and displaced 2.5 million since 2003.

The Janjaweed are allegedly backed by the Sudanese government, which pledged to disarm them in the May 5 peace agreement signed in Abuja, Nigeria.

The U.N. said in a statement Sunday it received unconfirmed reports that the Sudanese army had fought a Janjaweed group in southern Darfur on May 18, killing six and arresting two. Sudanese authorities were not available to comment on the incident.

The U.N. said the Sudanese army and police had stated they would disarm armed bandits in the zone. Nazir Tigani, a local militia leader, warned he would resist such a move, the U.N. said.

Anticipating a possible increase in violence, the U.N.'s security assessment office in Sudan advised U.N. workers and international non-governmental organizations to limit their movement in the area and to update possible evacuation plans.

Darfur rebel groups affiliated to leaders who refused the May 5 peace agreement have also executed some of the latest deadly raids, the U.N. and the AU said.

"We've been witnessing a stiff raise of attacks over the last week," said Moussa Hamani, the chief information officer for the 7,300-strong AU mission to Darfur.

"The problem seems to be that everyone wants to maximize their territory before the truce and disarmament actually come into effect," he told The Associated Press on the telephone from Khartoum.

Some 150 people took up arms in the southern Darfur village of Kalaka to attack the nearby Arab militia position in Defeis on May 19, the AU and U.N. said. Eleven villagers died and eight were wounded during the assault that killed eight militiamen and wounded eight, the two international organizations said.

The U.N. statement said the raid was in retaliation for a previous militia attack during which the brother of Minni Minnawi, the main leader of the Darfur rebellion, was killed on May 5 - the very day Minnawi signed the peace agreement.

On the telephone from neighbouring Chad, Minnawi said his brother Yussef was a civilian who was not involved in the Darfur rebellion.

"The Janjaweed could still have targeted him on purpose, they have been known to do that," he told the AP.

Minnawi stated his troops were not involved in Friday's attack, and said he had heard reports the villagers had taken arms because Janjaweed were looting the area.

Hamani also said the AU was investigating a Janjaweed raid near Natiqa in South Darfur that left 29 people dead and five wounded on May 19.

In a separate attack in South Darfur on May 19, a group of Janjaweed from Niteaga raided the village of Baja Baju, controlled by a faction of the Darfur rebels, and killed six civilians, the AU and the U.N. said.

The U.N. and AU also said that a large group of about 1,000 Janjaweed on horseback were reported to be gathering near the town of Kutum in North Darfur, where deadly raids occurred earlier this month.

"This comes from local sources and cannot be fully confirmed," U.N. spokesman in Sudan Baha Elkoussy said on the telephone.

"The problem is there are so many incidents taking place over such a large area that it is hard to investigate everything," he said from Khartoum.

Misseiriya request protection from the government and the international community

(*AlAyaam* – 22nd May. **Khartoum**) Representatives of the Misseiriya in the three states of Darfur have urged the government and the international community and the AU to protect them from SLM-Minnawi targeting of their people despite the fact that they supported the DPA.

A spokesman for the tribe cited the SLM attack on Niteiga in Misseiriya land as an example.

The spokesman further called on the Misseiriya to exercise restraint and on the parties to the DPA to respect the ceasefire agreement.

Eastern Sudan

Sudan releases three detained eastern rebels before talks

(*Reuters/ST* – 22nd May. **Khartoum**) Sudan has released three members of the east's main political party, a key opposition demand before peace talks can be held in neighbouring Eritrea to end the simmering revolt, a party official said on Monday.

"The three who were arrested about two months ago in Kassala were released yesterday," said Abdullah Moussa Abdullah, general-secretary of the Opposition Beja Congress Party in Port Sudan.

He added they were the last of the political prisoners being held in the east, where emergency law is still in place.

Abdullah himself was arrested and detained last year for many months after police opened fire on a peaceful march in Port Sudan, killing more than a dozen people.

The political Beja Congress Party, active within Sudan, is linked to the military Beja Congress rebel group, which controls an area of the east called Hamesh Koreb along the border with Eritrea.

Eastern rebels share the complaints of their counterparts in Darfur in the west and in southern Sudan that Khartoum fails to develop the peripheral regions while exploiting their natural resources.

The drought-stricken east has some of the highest malnutrition rates in the country, yet is home to Sudan's largest gold mine, its main port and major oil pipeline. The main eastern tribe is the Beja.

Abdullah said the prisoner release opened the door for peace talks to end the low-intensity conflict in the east. Those talks are to be held in the Eritrean capital Asmara, as relations between Sudan and its eastern neighbour have warmed.

Sudanese papers said on Monday talks were to begin by the end of May but Abdullah could not confirm a start date. Previous deadlines for talks to begin have passed without progress.

Southern Sudan

Museveni offer to LRA's Kony sparks new concerns

(*Reuters/ST* – 21st May. **Kampala**) Uganda's surprise offer to protect one of the world's most wanted rebel leaders if he joins peace talks is seen as unlikely to bear fruit and could lead to a showdown with international prosecutors.

President Yoweri Museveni this week issued an August 1 deadline for Joseph Kony to end his 20-year insurgency after the chief of the cult-like Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) told officials in southern Sudan he was ready for talks.

The LRA leader's direct message to Museveni was his first in more than a decade.

Museveni, who had previously written off holding any further negotiations with his long-time foe, said he would guarantee Kony's safety if he was serious this time.

But that would put him at odds with the new International Criminal Court (ICC). Its first target is the LRA and it wants Kony in a dock, not round a negotiating table.

Many, however, doubt Museveni's real commitment to a negotiated settlement.

"Museveni is trying to sound reasonable, but I think he has always wanted a military solution to Kony," said Africa analyst Tom Cargill. "Certainly, with the U.S. comments this week, he will feel he has support for that."

Speaking in London on Tuesday, the top U.S. diplomat for Africa, Jendayi Frazer, said the Bush administration had made it a priority to "get rid" of the LRA by the end of the year.

Notorious for massacring villagers and kidnapping thousands of children, the shadowy guerrilla group has few clear political goals beyond rabid opposition to Museveni.

Led by Kony, a self-proclaimed mystic who believes he is possessed by the Holy Spirit, the LRA has spread terror from bases in southern Sudan, uprooting nearly 2 million people in northern Uganda and triggering a massive humanitarian crisis.

The war spread to a third country last year when a group of LRA fighters crossed from Sudan into the jungles of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). This week, Museveni said the U.N. should expel Congo for harbouring terrorists.

Reflecting rising pressure to bring an end to the war, leaders of Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) held three meetings this month with Kony and his deputy Vincent Otti near the Congolese border, United Nations sources in Sudan said.

South Sudan's Vice President Riek Machar said rebels agreed to stop terrorising local villagers and release those taken captive. The U.N. sources said he gave the LRA several thousand dollars and several tonnes of food.

"Of course, under the ICC indictments, the SPLA should not be meeting the LRA at all. They should arrest them," said one Western diplomat who works extensively in northern Uganda.

"In an ideal world, people like Kony would face justice. But (apart from the SPLA meetings) there are few other signs of this war ending in the short term, so it is a quandary."

Despite Museveni's guarantee of safety, Uganda's military were quick to say their operations were continuing.

Sporadic clashes with small bands of LRA fighters break out regularly in the north and southern Sudan, but Ugandan commanders say the top rebel officers are out of reach in DRC.

Following Museveni's offer, an ICC spokeswoman said it was he who had referred the LRA for investigation in December 2003, so he was now under an obligation to hand over the suspects.

Analysts say the ICC would face a dilemma if substantive talks began, as it would not want to appear to be a barrier to peace. But its supporters are determined the LRA leaders face trial, saying their atrocities make them exactly the type of targets the world court should be pursuing.

The ICC delayed announcing its arrest warrants to give more time to the last attempt at talks in late 2004. Those were the first meaningful dialogue for a decade, but stalled early last year after the main rebel negotiator surrendered.

The unveiling of indictments in October effectively ended the possibility of any further talks then with Kony. But he and his commanders have proved just as elusive as ever.

Kony's whereabouts are always hotly debated in Uganda, and if there was any doubt about the danger of trying to bring the LRA to justice, the risks were underlined in January when eight Guatemalan commandos were killed in a secret U.N. mission to catch Otti in Congo's remote Garamba Forest.

Many in northern Uganda see the conflict continuing, and say the ICC should step back if there are any hopes of talks.

"Kony will never come out of the bush peacefully if the ICC is waiting to nab him," said Norbert Mao, an opposition politician who took office this week as chairman of the north's Gulu district — the epicentre of the conflict.

"And if they really wanted to catch him, why not do it properly?" Mao told Reuters by telephone. "If Kony heard 1,000 NATO troops were landing in town, I can guarantee you he would very quickly start looking for an exit strategy."