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UN/ AU-UN Transition

FOCUS ON THE BRAHIMI VISIT AND RELATED ISSUES

Government to declare today its position on UN troop deployment to Darfur

(*AlAyaam, AlRai ALAam* – 25th May. **Khartoum**) Talks between the government and the UN team led by Lakhdar Brahimi has not reached a common ground on the issue of deployment of international forces to Darfur.

The government says it will declare its position on the issue later today while the UN envoy is expected to hold talks with President Bashir and a press conference late this afternoon before departing.

In statements to the press in Khartoum yesterday, Brahimi said the UN delegation has been explaining the Security Council resolution in question to the government and that there is a good rapport between the two sides.

AlRai Alaam reports that Brahimi told the press following his meeting with foreign minister Lam Akol that the UN and the Sudan government have reached a common view on the issue of sending in UN experts to assess the needs for a deployment of international forces to Darfur and that the UN has left it to the government to let the public in on what agreement they have reached.

Majzoub el-Khalifa who also held talks yesterday with the UN envoy told the press that he pointed out to the UN envoy that the DPA does not expressly state that a transition of the AMIS to a UN operation be carried out so that the UN be called in to participate other than in the humanitarian domain in the implementation of the agreement.

He also pointed out that the government had accepted an increase in the number of AU forces within the context of the AU and not of a UN Chapter VII mandate.

He said any negative signals on a Chapter VII mandate for the UN will only inflame the local community in Darfur and elsewhere in the country against the UN because the DPA has ushered in a new reality and most people in Darfur distrust foreign forces be they from the UN or others.

Parliament in heated debate over Security Council resolution

(*AlAyaam* – 25th May. **Khartoum**) The much-debated issue of international intervention in Darfur came under fire from MPs at the National Assembly yesterday with many opposition MPs ganging up against NCP members.

Foreign minister Lam Akol had just briefed the house on the recent Security Council resolution. He said that there is no way the Security Council resolution in question could be

withdrawn or amended and called for flexibility on the issue. He pointed out that more punitive sanctions may be instituted against the Sudan should government fail to cooperate and added that these may include a Chapter 42 resolution which allows the Security Council the use of military force to implement Chapter VII resolution.

Cooperation, he added, will not mean national sovereignty is compromised nor does it mean Sudan will not be independent in its decisions.

He further pointed out that even should agreement be reached for the deployment of UN troops to Darfur, these troops may not be on the ground for a while and that during this period the UN will be supporting the AU forces on the ground.

Some MP was infuriated by the foreign minister's calls for flexibility on the issue and made statements seen as offensive by opposition MPs who demanded he withdraw those statements or walk out of the House.

Sudan suggests watchdog role for the UN force in Darfur

(*ST* – 24th May. **Khartoum**) Sudanese government today said it would not permit the deployment of International force in Darfur under Chapter seven; instead Sudan proposes that UN force to have a watchdog role of the Darfur accord implementation.

"The government does not accept the deployment of foreign forces under (UN Security Council) Chapter Seven," many Sudanese officials repeated Wednesday in Khartoum.

A UN Security Council resolution passed under Chapter Seven on 16 May urged speedy implementation of a peace accord reached in Nigeria early this month between Khartoum and the main Darfur rebel group.

Under Chapter Seven, the Council has broader power to decide what measures are to be taken in situations involving "threats to the peace, breaches of the peace, or acts of aggression". In such situations, the Council is not limited to recommendations but may take action, including the use of armed force "to maintain or restore international peace and security".

Theses statements came after talks with UN envoy Lakhdar Brahimi and deputy undersecretary general for peacekeeping operations Hedi Annabi, who flew into Khartoum on Tuesday to arrange access for the team.

The Security Council also called for the deployment of a joint African Union-UN technical assessment team within one week to lay the groundwork for a handover of the current AU peacekeeping mission to the United Nations.

Sudanese president advisor Gazi Salah Eddine Atabani said Sudan rejects the deployment of UN force under Chapter Seven and if "we decided to receive UN's Annan envoy Lakhdar Brahimi, it is just because we want to determine with him the role of this force".

Attabani further added that Sudan wants the UN force to have a "monitoring role" for the implementation of peace accord in Darfur to reinforce it.

The head of the Sudanese government delegation at Abuja talks, Majzoub al-Khalifa said he had told Brahimi of the sincerity of those who signed the May 5 peace deal "for achieving the aspirations of the people of Darfur for peace."

Al-Khalifa suggested the planning mission for a force of around double the current 7,000-strong AU mission was unnecessary as an earlier AU technical mission "studied the situation in Darfur and there is sufficient information on what is now going on there."

In the same trend, the Sudanese Foreign Minister Lam Akol, who held a meeting with Annan's envoy today, told Brahimi that "Darfur Peace Agreement does not include in its security arrangements any role for the United Nations or any other party except the African Union".

Brahimi, a former Algerian foreign minister who has been dispatched to several hotspots in recent years, is due to meet Beshir himself on Thursday to put his case for the UN technical mission to be allowed in.

African Union asks for more Darfur help - NATO

(*Reuters/ST* – 24th May. **Brussels**) "The AU has asked NATO to extend its support. NATO has already taken a decision to be willing to do it, so that will now go forward," NATO spokesman James Appathurai said.

He added that the AU had requested more help in airlift of troops and training until end-September, noting that by then it should have handed over leadership of the peace mission to the United Nations.

"It means a limited number of NATO personnel there. From what has been agreed now between NATO and the AU it would not require a significant expansion of the numbers we have now," he said, adding NATO has had at most 15 trainers on the ground.

UN-Sudan talks on Darfur fail as deadline passes

(*Reuters/ST* – 24th May. **Khartoum**) Top United Nations officials failed to gain Sudan's agreement to allow a technical team to plan the deployment of U.N. troops to the violent Darfur region as a Security Council deadline expired on Wednesday.

The council passed a resolution on Tuesday last week saying Khartoum had to allow a U.N. assessment team to begin work within a week on the plan to take over from an ill-equipped and struggling African Union force monitoring a shaky truce in the region. The government has refused the team visas.

U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan's veteran troubleshooter Lakhdar Brahimi and the world body's peacekeeping chief Hedi Annabi began talks in the capital on Tuesday to break the deadlock but, as the deadline expired, no agreement was reached.

"The assessment mission is still not decided upon by the government of Sudan," said presidential advisor Majzoub al-Khalifa after his meeting with Brahimi and Annabi. The U.N. resolution was passed under chapter seven meaning Sudan was now in violation of international law.

Tens of thousands have been killed and more than 2 million forced from their homes during three years of rape, murder and arson in Darfur, violence the United States calls genocide.

Khartoum rejects the charge of genocide but the International Criminal Court is investigating alleged war crimes in the region.

Khalifa said the political dialogue with the United Nations had to deal with the mandate of any U.N. troops before allowing the assessment mission to enter.

After two days of meeting government officials, Brahimi said the talks had been "very good" and a "joint vision" had been agreed. He declined to immediately elaborate.

U.N. spokesman Bahaa Elkoussy said talks were ongoing and that Brahimi was "optimistic".

Brahimi will meet President Omar Hassan al-Bashir on Thursday evening but has not been given a meeting time as yet with key player Vice President Ali Osman Mohamed Taha who instead left the country on Wednesday for talks in Eritrea.

The government signed a peace deal with one rebel faction on May 5. But two other factions refused to sign despite intense global pressure and thousands have been demonstrating in Darfur and Khartoum against the deal, saying it did not meet their basic demands.

Before the deal, Khartoum had rejected the idea of U.N. troops, saying their deployment could lead to an Iraq-like quagmire attracting Islamic militants. Since the deal they softened their position, saying they needed to be consulted on the mandate of any mission.

Khalifa, head of the government talks team, said he expected the outcome of the discussions with Brahimi to be "very positive," but declined to elaborate.

Attacks continue on civilians in Darfur with 250,000 forced to flee their homes this year alone and militias attacking AU troops.

Brahimi is due to leave Sudan on Friday morning.

UN to sponsor construction of a judicial institute

(*AlRai AlAam* - 25th May. **Khartoum**) A UN delegation held talks yesterday with the Sudanese Chief Justice on arrangements for the construction of the Sudan Judicial Institute in AlJazeera State that will provide training for Sudanese judges and lawyers.

The two sides agreed that the UN will sponsor the construction.

CPA

Hundreds die in clashes between SPLA and armed groups refusing to disarm

(*AlSahafa* - 25th May. **Khartoum**) Disarmament operations carried out by the GoSS have taken a violent turn with reports of resistance by some armed groups and clashes that left hundreds of dead.

SPLA Spokesman Bior Ajiang admitted yesterday that there are some groups against the disarmament process and that violence did occur. He did not however say whether these were tribal groups or groups that are politically motivated.

He said the GoSS will continue to carry out the disarmament process at whatever cost.

DPA

SLM's Nur urges UN's Annan to intervene in Darfur peace process*

(*ST* – 24th May. **Abuja**) A Darfur rebel faction urged yesterday the UN Secretary General to intervene in the current peace process in Darfur and to obtain concessions from Khartoum allowing them to join the signed peace agreement.

In a letter sent Tuesday 23 May to the UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, a faction of the Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM) led by Abdelwahid al- Nur appealed Kofi Annan to help “bridge the gap between us and the GoS with the ultimate goal of reaching a comprehensive and sustainable peace in Darfur”.

Al-Nur wants Khartoum to meet three key demands in an annex accord before he signs. The demands are for greater compensation for victims of the war, more political posts for the SLA and greater involvement in disarming the Janjaweed. But the government has already rebuffed him.

On Tuesday May 16, the UN Security Council passed unanimously a resolution that threatens "strong and effective measures" — diplomatic language for sanctions — against anyone who stands in the way of a May 5 peace agreement signed by the Sudanese government and Darfur's main rebel group.

In a communiqué released after the 51st meeting of the AU Peace and Security Council, the pan-African body urged SLM-al-Nur,, and Khalil Ibrahim of the rebel JEM to sign the peace agreement by May 31.

The communiqué said the AU would push the United Nations Security Council to take action against the two smaller rebel groups if they did not meet the new May 31 deadline. The action shall include a travel ban, asset freeze and weapons embargo.

** The complete text of the letter is in a separate attachment.*

Southern Sudan

Bishop accuses GoSS of supporting the Lord's Resistance Army

(*Juba Post* – 25th May. **Khartoum**) The Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Sudan has accused the GoSS of providing financial support and relief aid to the Lord's Resistance Army while thousands of people in southern Sudan are displaced and left without food due to its activities.

Bishop Andrew Mbogo Elia said the Lord's Resistance Army is even taking over some villages in Western Equatoria and settling thus displacing the original residents.

The Bishop considers the present state of affairs in Western Equatoria as worse than pre-CPA days.

The Commissioner for Nabanga County in Western Equatoria adds that the Lord's Resistance Army is settling and cultivating the area and that an airstrip has been established in the area to deliver food to them.

"I want peace", says Uganda LRA rebel leader

(*Reuters/ST* – 24th May. **Nairobi**) One of the world's most wanted rebel chiefs, Joseph Kony of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), has called for an end to his 20-year war with the Ugandan government in the first images of him seen for years.

And in an act bound to spark controversy around Africa, the video obtained by Reuters on Wednesday also showed the elusive Kony taking \$20,000 in cash from the No. 2 of the ex-rebel Southern People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A).

"Most people do not know me ... I am not a terrorist... I am a human being, I want peace also," the elusive Kony said in the lengthy clips of talks between the LRA leadership and the vice president of southern Sudan about three weeks ago.

Wednesday's footage, verified by sources in Uganda, showed about an hour of the meeting between the delegations of Kony and SPLM vice president Riek Machar in the bush of southern Sudan.

The pair pledged to end fighting. And Machar said he was ready to mediate between the LRA and President Yoweri Museveni.

Dressed in green military fatigues, and speaking with passion though rambling at times, the rebel leader looked wiry and more hardened than in the few other images existing of him.

After the Kony-Machar meeting, news of which emerged about a week ago, Museveni issued a statement saying he would guarantee the safety of Kony if he ends war. He had previously written off any further negotiations with his long-time foe.

While Museveni's offer and the SPLM-Kony meeting have raised the prospects of new peace talks, they have also, however, greatly complicated efforts by the ICC to catch him.

The cooperation of the SPLM, a sworn enemy of Kony in the past, had been viewed as key to helping hunt him down.

Responding to the footage, a spokeswoman for ICC Chief Prosecutor Luis Moreno-Ocampo referred to a statement saying governments of the region were obliged to give effect to the arrest warrants. "And we are confident that they will honour their joint commitment to do so," the statement said.

Machar said the SPLM was not among those seeking to collaborate with the ICC warrant.

At the end of the meeting, he is seen handing Kony an envelope stuffed with cash. "Twenty thousand dollars, ok? Buy food with it, not ammunition," Machar told Kony.

Analysts said Kony's aim in attending the meeting and allowing himself to be filmed was impossible to tell, but that those interested in peace should try and seize the moment.

"Is he genuine? You can't trust Kony's intention," said Paul Omach, political scientist at Uganda's Makerere University.

"It could be because they are very desperate and under a lot of military pressure that they are buying time but you have to be careful. Every peace offer should be welcomed. You should take advantage of this instead of writing it off."

In the only previous known footage of Kony, he was not heard speaking. But the images of his meeting with Machar showed his greetings and a lengthy address to the gathering, where both the LRA and SPLM delegations are flanked by soldiers.

"I am General Kony ... I thank Allah very much," Kony said at the start, surprising words for a man who has said he wants to rule Uganda by the Biblical Ten Commandments.

"There will be no exchange of fire between our people and your people," he added, saying LRA fighters were only defending themselves in past clashes with SPLA troops.

"We are all brothers, we are all Christians, we are all blacks, we are all Africans," he added.

Kony said he wanted to talk with the Museveni government, but was distrustful of his intentions.

"If we talk to Museveni, it will not take four, three days, he will come and attack us, in the middle like this.

"They say Kony is a terrorist...(But) I am fighting for the right cause."

Otti, who comes across as the LRA strategist in the meeting, warned the gathering that peace would be "very, very difficult." "Peace cannot come within a day or a year," added Otti, pictured with greying hair and wearing spectacles.

Machar said the SPLM was prepared to help mediate peace talks, but would not tolerate future fighting on southern Sudanese soil between the LRA and Ugandan troops.

"If you want to fight yourselves, you get out of our country. But if you want to make use of us, we are ready."

Other officials from around the region were present at the Kony-Machar meeting, and shook hands with the LRA leader one-by-one. The only white man present introduced himself to Kony in a French accent as "Simon Simon".