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Highlights

UNGA agrees to hold more talks on responsibility to protect

UN News Centre 14/9/09 – The General Assembly today adopted by consensus its first resolution on the responsibility to protect, agreeing to hold further discussions on the international understanding to intervene to stop atrocities from taking place.

The resolution noted “with appreciation” Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon’s July report calling for speedy action “to turn the promise of the responsibility to protect into practice.”

Agreed at a summit of world leaders in 2005 and sometimes known as ‘R2P’, it holds States responsible for shielding their own populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and related crimes against humanity and requires the international community to step in if this obligation is not met.

“It is most significant that this resolution was adopted by consensus,” Mr. Ban said in a statement. “I welcome it as an important step as we chart a common path towards meeting the commitment made at the 2005 World Summit.”

He said he looked forward to further deepening the dialogue on how best to implement R2P. “It was heartening to hear so many Member States, from every part of the world, reaffirm in a constructive and forward-looking debate the commitment made in 2005,” he added. “I found the statements by Member States that had suffered such traumas to be particularly meaningful.”

Mr. Ban asked his Special Adviser Edward Luck and Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide Francis Deng to continue their wide-ranging consultations with Member States, relevant departments and agencies, regional and sub-regional organizations, and civil society on the many implementation questions still outstanding.

“In all our efforts, we should be guided and united by the ultimate purpose of the responsibility to protect: to save lives by preventing the most egregious mass violations of human rights,” he added.

In July outgoing Assembly President Miguel D’Escoto, a former Nicaraguan foreign minister, warned that could pose a threat to national sovereignty, He told the Assembly that the legacy of colonialism gave “developing countries strong reasons to fear that laudable motives can end up being misused, once more, to justify arbitrary and selective interventions against the weakest States.”

Citing the case of Iraq as an example of the lack of accountability for “those who might abuse the right that R2P would give nation States to resort to the use of force against other States,” he also questioned whether adoption of R2P in the practice of collective security would undermine respect for international law.

The principle is “applied selectively, in cases where public opinion in P5 States [the five permanent members of the Security Council: China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States] supports intervention, as in Darfur, and not where it is opposed, as in Gaza,” he said, referring respectively to the conflict between the Government and rebels in Sudan and

Israel's campaign against Hamas in Gaza last December and January.

Civil society network submits petition to Presidency

Civil society network yesterday submitted a technical memorandum to the Presidency on the formation of the national human rights commission, **Al-Rai Al-Aam** reports. "We have objected to the nomination of the commission's members by the Presidency," the network coordination committee chairman Mr. Azhari Al-Haj said.

Electoral budget approved

Al-Rai Al-Aam reports the NEC yesterday announced that the deadline for receiving appeals against electoral constituencies had expired and that the received objections would be studied for response. The NEC also approved its budget in yesterday's meeting.

South Sudan Lueth says discussions on referendum should be honest

Sudan Tribune website 14/9/09 – A southern Sudan minister said today discussions on referendum law should not be win-win or loose-loose issue but need an honest discussion to arrive at peaceful, non-regrettable and Sudanese applauded conclusions.

Minister of Legal Affairs and Constitutional Development, Michael Makuei Lueth, who is part of a joint political committee to discuss pending issues in the 2005 peace agreement implementation, arrived yesterday to Khartoum to resume talks with the National Congress Party on the referendum issue and the census results.

Speaking to Sudan Tribune from Khartoum, the minister said discussions are losing meaning since they have been repeatedly resumed without reaching conclusions.

"It is long since we started on only two issues, the referendum bill and census and yet no conclusion has so far been reached," he said adding that "others (NCP delegation) want to pass time so everything is postponed."

The SPLM wants the electoral commission to use the percentages of the 1956 census for the geographical constituencies but the NCP vehemently rejects the idea.

On the referendum, the NCP insists that 75% votes in the affirmative to declare it favoring independence while the SPLM is pushing for a 51%. It is widely expected that Southerners would vote overwhelmingly for independence.

"This is not possible" he said, adding "there are no times we ever started to reach conclusions without raising and placing impossible demands."

Lueth who has been quiet on issue for some time albeit being SPLM legal advisor in the high executive political teams shared by both VP Ali Osman Taha and GoSS VP Dr. Riek added that no side should expect the other to suffer constant concession, the Sudanese needs honest discussion whose conclusions should enjoy equal appreciations.

Asked what have the two parties agreed at least today, he said "nothing has been agreed since the talks resumed yesterday. The NCP team members said will have to meet themselves first today before meeting us in our normal discussions later this evening. But it is already getting evening yet we do not know whether they have agreed on something or not," he said.

However, he added that the joint committee will concentrate on finding a way forward on the two

remaining unresolved sticking points for full implementation. "These are fundamental issues that must be resolved soon."

Status of freedoms in South Sudan better - Al-Turabi

PCP leader Hassab Al-Turabi told a press conference at his residence yesterday upon return from Juba that the status of freedoms in the South was comparatively better. He said he was allowed unrestricted freedom to speak to both print and electronic media as well as symposia and to lead a congregational prayer in Juba, **Ray Al-Shaab** reports. He said the PCP and the SPLM converged on many issues such as freedoms, elections and population census. According to **Al-Sahafa**, Al-Turabi said his feeling was that the majority of southern Sudanese were for secession.

FVP Kiir in Asmara to discuss peace and referendum

Invited by the Government of Eritrea, FVP Salva Kiir Mayardit arrived yesterday in Asmara, leading a high level GoSS delegation for consultation on a range of issues, the CPA and the referendum in particular, **Al-Sahafa** reports. A source told the paper that Kiir, during his one-day visit, will meet with Eritrean President Afwerki and senior Governments officials.

Egypt says preparing for possibility of South Sudan independence

Sudan Tribune website 14/9/09 — The Egyptian Government for the first time appeared resigned to the inevitability of a "Yes" vote in the 2011 referendum in South Sudan on whether they should establish their own state.

Egypt's assistant foreign minister for African affairs Mona Omar was quoted by Al-Youm Al-Sabe'e news portal as saying that her government has prepared for the probable scenario for the secession of South Sudan from the North.

Omer said that Cairo has carefully examined all possibilities in this regard adding that Egypt has a "strong" presence in South Sudan.

"We in the South are not meager [in terms of presence] with heavy [presence] more than anybody else with strong ties with the brothers in the South in addition to a number of hospitals and experts there" she said.

"The framework agreement achieves the goals of states including those of South Sudan if it separates," Omer said.

"The problem of the Nile basin countries is not in lack of water but in misuse," she said.

ICC confirmation hearings for Darfur rebel delayed a week

Sudan Tribune website 14/9/09 — A judge at the ICC issued a ruling today delaying the confirmation of charges hearings against a Darfur rebel chief accused of masterminding a raid on AU peacekeepers in 2007.

The rescheduling was a result of a request by the ICC prosecutors for additional time to provide to the defense Arabic translations of witnesses' testimonies originally due on September 10th.

The ICC judges have still not made any decision on the other suspected rebels. They met with the ICC prosecutor on August 26th in a close session regarding his November 20th application for the rebel commanders.

Sudan has dismissed the appearance of Abu Garda describing it as a “play” by the ICC prosecutor to pressure Bashir into surrendering himself.

South Africa's FM in Sudan for talks on CPA, Darfur conflict

Sudan Tribune website 14/9/09 - South African foreign minister arrived today to the Sudanese capital where she is expected to hold talks with the Sudanese officials on the implementation of 2005 peace deal and ongoing efforts to end Darfur conflict.

Mrs. Maite Nkoana-Mashabane is accompanied by South African's Minister for Monitoring and Evaluation in the Presidency, Collin Chabane and senior Government officials during the three-day working visit.

Nkoana-Mashabane who was received by her Sudanese counterpart Mr. Deng Alor will hold on Tuesday a meeting with Sudanese President Omar Al-Bashir and other senior officials including Mr. Alor, Dr. Ghazi Salah Al-Deen, presidential adviser in charge of Darfur dossier, presidential adviser Dr. Mustafa Osman Ismail, Abel Alier, chairman of Sudan election commission and minister of international cooperation Dr. Tigani Fidail.

"The conflict in Darfur, the 2010 election and other matters related to the implementation of the CPA will also be discussed," said a statement issued by SA foreign ministry..

The visiting South African delegation will also fly to Juba for talks on the implementation of the Capacity and Institution Building Project for Southern Sudan. The minister will meet Sudan's First Vice President, Salva Kiir Mayadrit and Southern Sudan minister of regional cooperation, Gen. Oyai Deng Ajak.

South Africa has also deployed troops and civilian police in Darfur as part of UNAMID.

School children in Abyei say never expected to resume classes

Sudan Tribune website 14/9/09 — Many school children in Abyei today said they never expected to resume classes adding the destruction of hundreds of schools during fighting between the northern and southern Sudanese armies in May 2008 left many of them with little hope of education.

Clashes between the two sides in the oil rich region of Abyei resulted into one of the largest internal displacements in recent times. About 50, 000 people fled their homes, particularly after fighting intensified on 15 May 2008.

However, with the arbitration court ruling last July giving centre of Abyei town to Nine Dinka Ngok chiefdoms, many of the internally displaced families who had fled the to neighboring states started to return gradually.

Their return comes in response to numerous calls by traditional leaders despite the existing challenges particularly many of children schools are in ruins.

In an interview with Sudan Tribune, Abyei boys' basic school head teacher, Monychol Alor Kuol, at school compound today, said the impact of the fighting has been quite dramatic on schools and students in particular.

Some of the schools such as girls' were blown up by the SAF before the fighting, while other schools were destroyed during the active conflict," he said.

Kuol further added that about 30 schools had been completely flattened, while some 40 schools had been damaged with collapsed walls and roofs caused by mortar fire, rocket-propelled grenades or bombs.

He accused the military forces of having problem with female education schools. He further said they blew up girls' schools when they controlled the area for about two years. "They attacked other empty schools alleging that most of the teachers were supporters of the SPLA."

More than 400 other primary and secondary schools also needed to be renovated, he said, adding that many had been converted into shelters to accommodate people fleeing the fighting.

"Lots of schools need to be cleaned up, repainted and refurnished after so many people have been living there," he said.

Reports of humanitarian agencies, which assess how to help war-ravaged areas such as the UNICEF, say schools are amongst the worst-hit infrastructure.

Presidency asks ministry to clarify oil revenue discrepancies claims

Al-Rai Al-Aam reports the Presidency has directed the Energy and Mining Ministry to clarify facts with regard to claims contained in the Global Witness' report about oil revenue discrepancies. The Ministry reportedly set up a committee to study the claims and report back to the Presidency.

Meanwhile, **Radio Miraya** 14/9/09 reported the SPLM Deputy Chairman James Wani Iga as saying that the GoSS would raise the issue of the oil revenues at the Presidency, the National Petroleum Commission and IGAD.

Chief Editors sign charter of honour

Local dailies report the editors-in-chief of daily newspapers yesterday signed a press charter of honour formulated by a group of editors in order to pave the way for lifting the pre-press censorship imposed on the newspapers since February 2008. According to **Al-Sahafa**, Ali Shummo signed for the Press Council, Mohi al-Din Titawi signed for the General Union of Sudanese Journalists and Brig. Mohamed Ahmed Ibrahim signed for NISS. A similar charter would be signed today by the sport and social newspapers and the Chief Editors would meet with NISS DG during the next two days to herald the lifting of the censorship. A joint mechanism comprising the Press Council, Journalist Union, NISS and six Chief Editors was set up to follow up the implementation of the Charter.

Police plan to secure Khartoum during Eid

Al-Rai Al-Aam reports Khartoum State police has worked out an integrated plan to secure the city during the Eid holiday. Khartoum State police DG Lt. Gen. Mohamed Al-Hafiz said the plan aims to secure mosques, vital and strategic facilities and residential areas. He said police would deploy at market places, casinos, mosques and banks adding police would also step up campaigns against crime, locally-brewed liquor and car theft.

Kidnapped Darfur peacekeeper sick - official

Reuters 14/9/09 - A female peacekeeper kidnapped in Sudan's Darfur region more than two weeks ago has fallen sick, her joint U.N./African Union force said on Monday.

The woman and a male colleague were seized by armed men from a compound in the west Darfur town of Zalinjei in late August, the latest in a new wave of abductions in the area.

Sources close to the kidnappers told officials the woman fell ill a few days ago, the spokesman for the peacekeeping UNAMID force, Nouredine Mezni, told Reuters.

"She has not been feeling well for a few days. We are trying our best to send them some medicine," said Mezni.

"They were both healthy before they were abducted. But being held captive for two weeks in the bush is not going to be good for your health." He said the male peacekeeper was in a "better condition", declining to give details about the woman's health.

Mezni said the force was concerned about the situation. "Our number one priority is to secure the release of our two colleagues."

UNAMID has not released the names, ages or nationalities of the kidnapped pair, who are members of the force's civilian staff. Sources from the United Nations and Sudan's government have said the woman is from Zimbabwe and the man from Nigeria.

Khartoum has blamed the kidnapping on bandits seeking a ransom, and said the abductors have already contacted UNAMID to try and negotiate a payment.

Kidnappers have seized four groups of foreigners in Darfur since March, and one international aid worker a few miles over the border with neighbouring Chad.

Two women working for Irish aid groups GOAL, one from Ireland, the other Ugandan, are still in captivity more than two months after they were taken from the north Darfur town of Kutum. Other workers were released unharmed after negotiation, with both Khartoum and their employers insisting no ransoms were paid.

Armed men spread panic in Nyala, two policemen killed

Al-Sahafa reports Nyala city, South Darfur, is gripped with panic and fear as a group of armed men using Land Cruisers have spread terror by intensifying assassinations, burglary and looting during the night. Two police men have been killed at the livestock market in the city, bringing the number of assassinations to four during the current week. Residents have called on authorities to step up patrols and to set up checkpoints to curb the rising crime.