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Highlights

90% of SAF weapons indigenous – Defence Minister

Al-Sahafa reports Defence Minister Gen. Abdul Rahim Mohamed Hussein has announced plans to modernize the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF), saying 90% of SAF weapons are made in Sudan. The Minister, who was addressing a press conference yesterday to mark SAF 55 Anniversary, revealed that Sudan had begun a project since three years to manufacture unmanned aircraft.

Meanwhile, Gen. Hussein said Chad constitutes no military threat to Sudan, saying SAF could retaliate any time.

In a related development, MFA spokesperson Ali Al-Sadiq said the government would complain to the AUPSC if it is proved that Chad is recruiting Arab tribes in Darfur to beef up JEM.

Delegation visits Abyei

Al-Rai Al-Aam reports that a delegation comprising representatives from the NCP, the SPLM, UN, USA, UK, EU, AU, Kenya, the Netherlands and the League of Arab States visited Abyei yesterday to assess the situation on the ground after the PCA ruling. Abyei Interim Administration Secretary General Deng Kual said the delegation met with the Administration officials, security organs, police and the JIUs for discussing the implementation of the PCA Award and the Abyei Protocol.

Donors to discuss food crisis in South Sudan next month

The Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS) and the Federal Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs have started preparations for a donors' conference to be held early next month to discuss food crisis in Southern Sudan, says GoSS Voluntary Returns Coordinator, Kormaj Chol, according to **Al-Ayyam**. He added that a joint team from the GoSS and the UN would also report its findings at the conference scheduled for 10 August.

Sudan's stability is Egypt's priority – Abul-Gheith

Egyptian FM Ahmed Abul-Gheith said that Sudan's stability is a strategic priority for Egypt, **Al-Sahafa** reports. Abul-Gheith made the remarks at a farewell party for the Sudanese Ambassador in Cairo whose tenure has expired.

US holds reservations over excluding Sudan from terrorist list

Miraya FM 2/8/09 - The Public Relations officer at the American Embassy, Judith Robin, said the American administration still has some reservations regarding excluding Sudan from its list of terrorist countries and that the American administration is very concerned regarding the situations in the Sudan.

Sudan accuses the west of working to thwart AU's ICC decision

Sudan Tribune website 2/8/09 — The Sudanese government today accused Western countries of seeking to circumvent the African Union (AU) resolution halting cooperation with the ICC in apprehending president Omer Al-Bashir.

Ali Al-Sadiq, the Sudanese foreign ministry spokesperson and Ambassador designate to Greece, said that pressure from Western powers aims at annulling the AU summit accord on

ICC.

Al-Sadiq avoided referring to specific countries. However, it is likely the statement was in response to South Africa's announcement that the AU resolution is a violation of its country's constitution and as such, it will not abide by it.

The Sudanese foreign ministry also issued a statement today saying that the Rome Statute, the founding treaty of the ICC, confers "absolute immunity on Western industrialized nations".

The statement says it is disappointed that the Rome Statute was "carefully tailored to practically exempt the Western bloc from any possibility for the ICC to exercise jurisdiction on its citizens let alone officials and political leaders there,"

Meanwhile, South Africa formally announced that it would not abide by the African AU resolution taken last month to halt cooperation with the ICC in arresting Sudanese president Omer Al-Bashir.

South Africa's Department of Foreign Affairs issued a detailed statement outlining its final position on the AU resolution from a legal and political perspective.

Police announces plan to ensure secure elections

Miraya FM 2/8/09 - Sudan's Police has revealed a new plan to secure the forthcoming electoral process in all states.

Southern Kordofan Chief of Police, Major General Habila Abu Ziko, said the Federal Minister of Interior has organized a workshop in collaboration with the United Nations (UNMIS) to train all police officers and policemen to secure the upcoming general elections. He said that the police are prepared and willing to protect the 2010 elections and ensure its security.

South Sudan cabinet passes a number of media bills

Sudan Tribune website 2/8/09 – A number of the long-awaited media bills have been passed by the Council of Ministers for the semi-autonomous region of Southern Sudan, pending endorsement by the Southern Sudan Legislative Assembly and signing into laws by the President.

In its Friday's meeting chaired by President Salva Kiir Mayardit, the cabinet passed the Media Authority Bill, 2009.

The legal powers of the Media Authority shall be vested in its Board of Directors. A Managing Director shall be appointed and will be responsible for all regulatory and administrative functions of the Media Authority.

The Authority shall oversee media activities in Southern Sudan, consistent with constitutional and international guarantees of freedom of expression, and promote public interest in the media sector.

The Acting Minister of Information and Broadcasting, Gabriel Changson Chang, told the press that the functions of the Media Authority shall include issuing licenses for the provision of broadcasting, electronic and print media services and implementing a Broadcasting Frequency Plan to ensure orderly and optimal use of the broadcasting frequency spectrum, among others.

The Authority shall be responsible for overseeing the development and implementation of advertising, programs and technical codes and to ensure that license conditions are respected by the licensee.

It shall be impartial in the exercise of its functions and duties and shall, at all times, promote media policy.

The cabinet also passed The Right to Information Bill, 2009. The pending law shall give the right to citizens to have access to information of the government's documentations in public interest.

Dinka and Misseriya accept invitation to meet in Juba

Miraya FM 2/8/09 – VP Dr. Riek Machar said that the government would not compensate any tribe after the PCA ruling on Abyei.

He said the GoSS was coordinating with the Misseriya and the Dinka to determine a date to bring together leaders of the Misseriya and Dinka at a meeting in Juba in response to an invitation extended by FVP Salva Kiir Mayardit.

Sudan trouser woman ready for “40,000 lashes”

AFP 2/8/09 - A Sudanese journalist facing 40 lashes for wearing "indecent" trousers vowed on the eve of her judgment that she is ready to be whipped 40,000 times in her bid to change the country's harsh laws. Lubna Ahmed al-Hussein, who works for the media department of the United Nations Mission in Sudan, is to be judged on Tuesday after waiving the immunity granted to UN workers.

She is to be judged under Article 152 of Sudanese law, which promises 40 lashes for anyone "who commits an indecent act which violates public morality or wears indecent clothing."

Hussein, who is in her 30s and whose husband died of kidney failure, told **AFP** in a telephone interview: "I'm ready for anything to happen. I'm absolutely not afraid of the verdict."

Ugandan rebels launch new raids

BBC 2/8/09 - Civilians in both the Central African Republic (CAR) and south Sudan have come under attack from the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), aid agencies have said. The LRA is said to have killed people in several CAR towns, forcing survivors to flee. The south Sudanese town of Ezo was also attacked recently by the LRA, which has a history of rape and killings. The LRA uses its base in the Democratic Republic of Congo to launch incursions across poorly defended borders.

A number of people died in the latest attacks, according to United Nations workers and local aid agencies. It is also being reported that some LRA members were killed as CAR townspeople tried to defend themselves. The World Food Programme has already provided food aid to 60,000 people fleeing LRA attacks this year.

Humanitarian agencies, Darfur rebels meet in Geneva

Sudan Tribune website 30/7/09 – A rebel delegation from one of the main rebel groups met this week in Geneva with relief agencies to discuss ways to improve humanitarian conditions in the war-ravaged region of Darfur.

The two-day meeting with a delegation from the rebel Sudan Liberation Movement led by Abdel Wahid Al-Nur was part of a series of humanitarian consultations with rebel movements in

Darfur, said a statement issued by the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (HD). It is supported by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).

"The meeting was exclusively dedicated to discuss the terrible humanitarian situation in Darfur and to see how we can help aid agencies and groups to reach isolated population in Darfur," said the leader of the rebel delegation Youssef Isaac Yahia, one of the close aides to Al-Nur.

During the meetings of Wednesday and Thursday 29-30 July, the two parties discussed hijackings of relief aid, abductions of aid workers and attacks, the situation in IDPs camps and humanitarian needs.

No plans to release JEM POW's without ceasefire – Sudan

Sudan Tribune website 2/8/09 — The Sudanese government said it would not release any prisoners from the Darfur Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) without a progress in peace talks and a ceasefire.

The Sudanese presidential adviser Mustafa Ismail was quoted by the state news agency (SUNA) as saying that the government would not accept any pressure to change its position on the matter.

The statements by Ismail conflict with those made by Sudan's foreign Affairs Ministry spokesperson Ali Al-Sadiq who told Voice of America (VOA) in mid-July that the government would announce shortly the release of an unspecified number of JEM POW's.

"The government has welcomed the move, and [it] will reciprocate very soon," he said.

On the other hand, **Al-Raed** reports Mr. Ismail told reporters that a delegation from NCP would visit the US soon as part of ongoing efforts to normalize relations between the two countries. He said Sudan's foreign relations were developing especially with the EU countries except France which, he said, efforts were continuing to convince Paris to play a positive role toward Sudan.

Libya suggests international conference on Darfur – JEM

Miraya FM 2/8/09 - JEM revealed an invitation by Libya to attend an international conference in Tripoli at the end of this month.

JEM official Jibril Ibrahim said that they had met with Libyan leaders to discuss the necessary arrangements for the new round of negotiations with the government. He described the Mbeki-led AU Panel on Darfur as "biased".

Government troops and JEM clash in Darfur

Al-Sudani reports government army clashed with JEM fighters who attacked the town of Kerkedi (South Darfur) located between the oil-rich area of Al-Dugoon and Abu Jabra. A source told the paper there were casualties on both sides.

Reuters report Darfur rebels said today they clashed with Sudan's army in the neighbouring oil-producing region of Southern Kordofan, the latest sign of insurgent efforts to spread their struggle to other parts of Sudan.

The rebel Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) said its forces fought off an army ambush around midday on Sunday close to the town of Babanusa, leaving an unknown number dead.

A leading member of the area's dominant Arab Misseriya tribe confirmed there had been a clash, but said government forces had prevailed and now controlled the area.

No one was available to comment from Sudan's armed forces.

The Sudanese authorities will be concerned by any sign of a new JEM push from Darfur into Kordofan, a region with many of the ethnic tensions and grievances over perceived government neglect that sparked the six-year Darfur conflict.

The fighting is the first confirmed clash between JEM and Sudan government ground forces in more than two months.

JEM was due to restart troubled discussions with Sudan's government this month, designed to pave the way to peace talks. United Nations and African Union mediators are also trying to pull other insurgent forces into negotiations.

JEM leader Khalil Ibrahim told **Reuters** by satellite phone that a large JEM force had been travelling through the area, visiting what he described as JEM garrisons, when it was attacked.

"My army was on an administrative mission when they were ambushed by the Sudanese army. We destroyed many of their vehicles and killed many of them," he said.

Ibrahim said his force was visiting established JEM positions in Southern Kordofan, manned by local recruits.

"JEM is trans-national movement, not just a movement for Darfur. We fight for marginalized people and the people of Kordofan are also marginalized."

A Misseriya official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said there were no substantial JEM positions in the region.

"There have been small groups of JEM moving around in this area. There was a fight between government troops and JEM. The situation is now under the control of the government."

UN sources said there had been reports of government Antonov aircraft bombing a force of armed men near Haskanita, a North Darfur settlement close to the Kordofan border, two days earlier, on Friday.