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Highlights

Presidency to meet today on Abyei

The Presidency will announce at a meeting today a host of decrees with regard to the mechanisms needed for implementing the PCA ruling on Abyei, ***Al-Sahafa*** reports. The meeting will also discuss the fate of the Abyei Administration as well as the budget for the area.

Meanwhile, GoSS President Salva Kiir Mayardit held a series of meeting yesterday in Juba with the chiefs of the Dinka Ngok and the Misseriya. Mr. Kiir urged the two tribes to renounce violence and to co-exist peacefully.

In related development, ***Sudan Tribune website*** 8/8/09 reported Southern Sudan Council of Ministers on Friday resolved to increase financial support to the Abyei Area Administration after the PCA ruling.

The Council called upon the international community to assist the people of Abyei. It also called for an international conference to solicit support for the region.

The cabinet expressed the need to address issues of insecurity in Abyei and encouraged Abyei citizens in the Diaspora, particularly from Northern and Southern Sudan to return to the area to contribute toward provision of basic services to the population.

On the other hand, GoSS VP Dr. Riek Machar Teny on Thursday held a meeting with Abyei representatives at his office to discuss the outcome of Abyei Arbitration Tribunal.

The meeting discussed repatriation of Abyei people from the north, security, and ways the government of Southern Sudan can support the administration.

"In order to attract people back, the administration should involve the SPLM party to mobilize people behind the above objectives, Machar told the meeting.

No rape in Darfur- Khartoum reacts to UNSG

Al-Sahafa reports Sudan government source has expressed astonishment over UNSG Ban Ki-moon's call for inquiry into use of rape as weapon in Darfur. The source said there was no rape or any form of violation in Darfur, adding that the situation in Darfur was stable.

According to ***UN News Centre*** 7/8/09, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon warned that rape is being used as a weapon of war with the same efficient brutality as a gun or a grenade and called on the Security Council to set up an independent commission of inquiry into such abuses in the conflicts in Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Sudan.

Such a panel, supported by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, should recommend to the Council "the most effective mechanisms to ensure accountability for these egregious crimes," he told the 15-member body at the start of a day-long debate on women and peace and security.

"Despite some progress over two decades, the deliberate targeting of civilians through acts of sexual violence continues on a widespread and systematic basis," Mr. Ban declared, also citing

abuses perpetrated by the LRA in Sudan, CAR, Uganda and the DRC.

Today he recalled his meetings with victims of sexual violence. "I am haunted by their testimony, and I will not relent in calling on States and non-State parties to prevent these terrible crimes," he said, adding that such abuse hurts recovery and peace building in countries such as Burundi, Liberia, and Sierra Leone, where the fighting may have ended but sexual violence persists on a very serious scale.

"I am also in discussions with UN System partners on appointing a new senior system-wide official to address sexual violence," he added.

"Victims of sexual violence are among the world's most vulnerable and traumatized people. For the sake of these innocent women and men, their families and their societies, we must come together and act. That will help victims and war-torn countries and set our world on a course for a better future," he concluded.

NCP sticks to 75% majority for secession

Al-Rai Al-Aam reports NCP official Prof. Ibrahim Ghandour yesterday called on the political parties to support his party's stand on the question of unity or secession of southern Sudan. He said unity or secession of southern Sudan should be decided by 75% majority in the upcoming referendum, adding his party would insist that the need for 75% majority be included in the referendum law. "You can not decide Sudan's unity or separation by a simple majority," he said. "If the constitution is amended by 75% majority so how can you decide unity or secession of a country by a simple majority," he wondered. Mr. Ghandour said differences between the NCP and SPLM over the referendum law had persisted especially with regard to the issue of majority and the definition of a voter, adding referendum should include not only the southerners in the South but also the southerners all over the Sudan.

SPLM says participation in elections depends on border demarcation

The SPLM has rejected the elections measures announced by the NEC, saying it would not be party to the process until the border demarcation is completed, **Al-Sahafa** reports. "Acceptance of the geographical constituencies announced by the NEC in the north or the south will implicitly mean acceptance of the current status of the disputed border," Atem Garang, National Assembly Deputy Speaker said. He reiterated the SPLM's categorical rejection of the geographical constituencies.

Government determined to seek Gration's clarification on stand

Al-Ahdath reports Sudan Government is concerned over US envoy Scott Gration's reversal of the positive statements he made before the US Congress last week where he called for easing sanctions imposed on the Sudan. A government source said Gration would be asked to clarify when he visits Khartoum next week.

Sudan Tribune website 8/8/09 reported that the Sudanese government expressed disappointment over the statements by Mr. Gration this week saying it is a "reversal" from his original position in front of the Congress.

A Sudanese presidential official speaking to the London based **Al-Hayat** newspaper on condition of animosity said he was surprised by Gration's "change of heart".

The official accused Gration of seeking to "pacify hawks" within the Obama administration who want a "tough" approach with Khartoum.

Miraya FM 8/8/09 reported that the US Embassy in Khartoum said that, Scott Gration, the US Special envoy to Sudan, backs economic sanctions on Sudan. The Foreign Relations Affairs officer at the Embassy, Judith Ravin, said the US administration was currently reviewing its policy on Sudan in all aspects. She added that Washington is adopting a balanced policy towards Khartoum, after which it will decide whether to lift the US economic sanctions or not.

According to **Reuters** 6/8/09, Mr. Gration has vowed to step up engagement with both Khartoum and rebels to help bring peace to Darfur, a strategy the commanding peacekeeper says has already won over some of the rebels.

In an interview with **Reuters** on Thursday, Gration said his priorities include bringing peace to Darfur and ending the humanitarian crisis in the remote and vast region of western Sudan.

Gration said he opposed relaxing U.S. sanctions against the government of Sudan's President Omar al-Bashir and his military. He said remarks he made to U.S. lawmakers last week - that Washington could "unwind" some sanctions against Sudan - had been misunderstood.

He said the only kinds of sanctions that should be amended are those preventing the United States from sending heavy machinery and other equipment to develop southern Sudan ahead of a 2011 referendum on whether to secede from the north.

Gration said he supported the indictment of Bashir but that he needed to engage Khartoum to help bring peace to Sudan. "We also have a mandate to save lives and bring peace to the Darfur region and also to implement the CPA. This is a mandate that requires us to have a dialogue, so that's what we're doing right now," he said. "But this does not in any way lessen our commitment to making sure that justice is done"

Secret documents lost by Sudan's SPLA - report

Sudan Tribune website 7/8/09 — The Sudan People Liberation Army (SPLA) recently lost a "big stack" of confidential documents, according to news report.

The Sudanese Media Center (SMC) website widely considered to be run by intelligence bureau said that a bag carrying classified documents including 2 CD's containing information on the Sudanese army and the National Intelligence and Security Services (NISS) have gone missing.

Reportedly, First Lieutenant named Ingor from the Shilluk tribe was arrested along with a driver and security after cameras showed them to be in the office where the bag was kept.

Sudan vows response to AU countries supporting ICC

Sudan Tribune website 7/8/09 — The Sudanese government today slammed African nations that have recently announced that they would not stand by the African Union (AU) decision halting cooperation with the ICC on arresting president Omar Al-Bashir.

A senior unnamed Sudanese official told the pro-government Sudanese Media Center (SMC) website that "voices coming out of some African officials in Pretoria and Kampala on ICC will not prevent Sudan from going forward in what it views as achieving pride and dignity for Sudan and Africa".

The Sudanese official said that the "embarrassing" conflicting position from South Africa and Uganda "reflects confusion in choosing between national sovereignty and defending the continent as outlined in the AU charter or bending down to Western countries that support the

ICC,”.

“Sudan has the tools and mechanisms that allow it to respond to the fluctuating position,” the official warned.

Adviser to visit Libya to meet Darfur movements

Preliminary and exploratory talks are expected to kick off tomorrow in Libya between the Sudanese Government and Darfur movements, *Al-Ahdath* reports. A source told the paper that the government delegation, headed by Presidential Adviser Ghazi Salah al-Din, will travel to Libya tomorrow for the talks. Government chief negotiator, Amin Hassan Omer, said US envoy Scott Gration and AU-UN mediator D’jibril Bassolé would also visit Libya for the purpose.

Sudan Tribune website 7/8/09 reported that differences between Darfur rebel factions have undermined efforts to hold an expected round of talks with the Sudanese government in Doha this month.

A number of rebel factions agreed since last March to join the Doha peace process to settle Darfur conflict. The members of Tripoli group said they agreed on a common ground paper and also established one delegation for the talks. Earlier last month they met with Bassolé to reiterate their commitment.

The Joint Chief Mediator Djibril Bassolé met on Thursday with the Sudanese presidential adviser Ghazi Salah Eddin Attabani, who is in charge of Darfur file, to discuss the new developments.

In remarks following a meeting with the AU-UN mediator, Ghazi announced the adjournment of the talks saying "So far, there are many differences between the various factions." He added that "there are efforts and attempts to consolidate their positions."

The Sudanese official reiterated the readiness of the government's delegation to start talks with the rebel groups whenever they are ready.

However, Attabani said he agreed with Bassolé on the need to determine a date for the meeting, "because the process cannot remain so forever."

Journalist thanks Paris, determined to continue the struggle

Al-Sahafa reports that journalist Lubna Ahmed Hussein, accused by Sudan's Public Order Court of indecent dress, yesterday received a telephone call from the French Human Rights Minister offering her a stay in Paris. She thanked the French Minister's offer, saying she was determined to appeal to the Constitutional Court against the Public Order law and the Criminal Code for inconsistency with the constitution.

Meanwhile, Ms Hussein claimed that she had received death threats, forcing her to quit her residence in the heart of Khartoum as a precautionary measure.

Sudan Tribune website 6/8/09 reported that French President Nicolas Sarkozy today pledged that France would continue to support a "courageous" Sudanese woman who faces 40 lashes for wearing trousers.

Sarkozy made his solemn promise in a letter he wrote in response to a query from the leader of the French Communist Party, Marie-George Buffet, who had drawn his attention to the subject

and asked him to intervene to protect the Sudanese journalist.

"We will continue to work with her to help in her struggle which is the struggle of all women and which honours her," Sarkozy wrote, in a letter made public by his office on Thursday.

President Sarkozy spoke of his "emotion" and "deep concern" for the fate of Lubna Ahmed Al-Hussein, whose trial on public indecency charges is "an intolerable attack on women's rights".

"Like you, I can only have profound admiration for the courage and the determination of young Lubna," wrote the French President. "Her battle is a just cause," he added.

The president disclosed that he had instructed the French ambassador to Sudan to "invite" Lubna at the Residence de France in Khartoum.

He recalled that at the request of the journalist, the representatives of the EU and France were on the benches of the court to show their support.

In a related development, *Khartoum Monitor* reports SPLM has accused the NCP of standing behind moves to strip its deputy Secretary General Yasir Arman of his immunity as MP.

The Public Order Police which enforces the indecency law adopted by the Sudan's Islamic regime reportedly filed a police complaint against Arman and began proceedings to lift his immunity in order to try him before the court in the light of his comments made on the case of journalist Lubna Ahmed Hussein.

Survivors of south Sudan massacre short of food-UN

Reuters 6/8/09 - Survivors of a tribal massacre that killed 185 people in southern Sudan are desperately short of food, a senior U.N. officer said on Thursday.

The head of the U.N. World Food Programme (WFP) in the south, who has just returned from the Akobo area, said she saw piles of bodies and signs of food shortages.

"I saw dozens and dozens of dead bodies. The stench and the vultures gave us a clue to the magnitude," Michelle Iseminger said in a statement. "Clearly women and children were the majority of victims.

"People said that a group of Murle from the east attacked them and pushed them into the river, and, using machine guns, spears and other arms, continued killing them," Iseminger said.

Iseminger said dried fish was the only food she could see for sale in Akobo markets and that some 350 children, suffering from earlier food shortages, were being treated for severe malnutrition in the town's hospital.

"Food assistance is the number one humanitarian need in Akobo, besides protection," she said.

According to **UN News Centre** 7/8/09, WFP today expressed fears of a wave of deadly retaliatory attacks on the heels of the massacre of more than 100 people in southern Sudan earlier over the weekend.

"WFP and its partners have called on the Government to put an end to inter-tribal fighting, which is endangering the delivery of humanitarian aid," UN spokesperson Marie Okabe told reporters.

SPLA continues to harass NCP leaders in Equatoria

Al-Intibaha reports SPLA intelligence continues to harass the NCP supporters in the South as two NCP leaders were detained yesterday in the Central Equatoria and later released. Meanwhile, NCP leader in the lakes State Yousuf Majok said over 10,000 people in the area have joined the NCP.

Sudanese Shiites make first public appearance

The first and largest gathering of Sudanese Shiites took place last Friday in Jebel Awlia area, 40 km south of Khartoum, where they gathered from various Sudan's states to take part in a function to mark the birthday of the Shiites' last Imam al-Mahdi, **Al-Intibaha** reports. The ceremony was attended by Shiite representatives from Northern Kordofan, the White Nile, Um Dawan Ban as well as university students and professors, executives, politicians and media persons.