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Headlines

- Presidency to discuss post-referendum arrangements (**Al-Sahafa**)
- Misseriya leader calls for Abyei border demarcation (**Al-Ahdath**)
- Uganda's trade with Sudan triples (**the New Vision**)
- UN chief sends top "fix it" envoy to Sudan (**PANA**)
- NCP "steals" \$500 million monthly from south's oil shares – SPLM (**Ajras Al-Hurriah**)
- Sudan and Chad to sign agreements today ending tension in relations (**Dailies**)
- Darfur rebel leader cleared of war crimes charges (**ST**)
- Sudanese judges must sit in Darfur trials – AU (**AFP**)
- Mbeki in Kenya for talks on Sudan's peace process (**ST**)
- Ten passengers injured as aircraft stairs fall (**Dailies**)

Elections Special:

- Court rejects appeals against eligibility of Al-Bashir and Kiir (**Dailies/Reuters**)
- Ex-US President Carter in Khartoum on elections mission (**Al-Rai Al-Aam**)
- Darfur may obstruct elections process - URRP leader (**Al-Ahdath**)
- Al-Bashir stands greater chance for victory at the polls – VP Taha (**Al-Ahdath**)
- Independent candidates call on SPLM SG Amum to step down (**The Citizen**)

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Highlights

Presidency to discuss post-referendum arrangements

Al-Sahafa reports that the Presidency will resume meetings tomorrow as part of efforts to resolve the CPA pending issues including dispute over the census results and the demarcation of the border. Reportedly, the Presidency will issue clear instructions at the meeting with regard to post-referendum arrangements. GoSS President Salva Kiir Mayardit will hold a meeting today with a number of southern parties for discussion on the elections issue.

Misseriya leader calls for Abyei border demarcation

Abdulrasoul Al-Nur, a prominent member of the Misseriya tribe, has underlined the need for the demarcation of the boundaries of the Abyei Area, reports **Al-Ahdath**. He stressed the need to organize a conference to regulate movement of the Dinka and the Misseriya. **Miraya FM** reports Abdulrasoul as saying that the recent clashes between the SPLA and the Misseriya were caused by the former denying the latter access to pastures.

Uganda's trade with Sudan triples

The New Vision 8/2/10 - Close to \$260m (about sh508b) worth of goods was traded between Uganda and southern Sudan last year, Nelson Gaggawala Wambuzi, the trade state minister, has said.

The minister added that the goods to southern Sudan tripled. In 2006, goods worth over \$60m were traded between the two countries.

Wambuzi was speaking at a party organised to bid farewell to Atipo Orone, the ministry's former permanent secretary, at the Management Training and Advisory Centre (MTAC) in Kampala on Friday. Orone retired from public service last year.

UN chief sends top "fix it" envoy to Sudan

PANA / Afrique en ligne 8/2/10 - UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon has deployed an outstanding Eritrean diplomat, Haile Menkerios, as the new Special Envoy to Sudan, replacing Pakistan's Ashraf Qazi, who said on Sunday he was leaving earlier for personal reasons.

A top-ranking diplomat, Menkerios, who held the position of the UN Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, will take over the running of the UN Mission in Sudan (AMIS). He would be the UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy to Sudan and the head of the UNMIS.

His posting comes just months to Sudan's multi-party presidential elections in April 2010. A political referendum in Southern Sudan, which could see the semi-autonomous region gain independence, is also due in January, 2011.

'It is for personal reasons, family reasons, that I have requested the Secretary-General to relieve me of my responsibilities much sooner than I would have wished for because I certainly would have liked at least to see the elections,' Qazi told a news conference in Sudan.

Announcing his replacement, the out-going Special Envoy, Qazi, said: 'He is a wonderful individual and is known and is respected in the north and in the south and has huge UN experience. Haile Menkerios will do an absolutely splendid job and you will all find that out'.

Menkerios traveled with UN chief, Ban, during his last visit to Africa, where both attended the African Union Summit in the Ethiopian capital, Addis Ababa.

Menkerios served as Eritrea's ambassador to Ethiopia for almost 10 years. He was Eritrea's best known Ambassador to the OAU, now the AU. Eritrea has not had any diplomatic ties with Ethiopia following a military confrontation in the late 1990s.

As the UN's Director in charge of African Division, Menkerios executed some of the key decisions involving the conflicts in Africa during his tenure.

He is best remembered for his involvement in the mediation of the Inter-Congolese Dialogue, which led to the signing of an agreement, which was later to see the end of the civil war in the Democratic Republic of Congo. He was then the Senior Advisor to Mustapha Niasse, UN Special envoy to the Inter-Congolese Dialogue.

Menkerios has been involved in the mediation of the conflicts in Africa, taking his last mission as the special envoy to the crisis in Madagascar in February, 2009, where he attempted to resolve the stand-off between Malagasy President, Marc Ravalomanana and would-be coup leader Andry Rajoelina.

He also served as the UN envoy to Zimbabwe following the post-election crisis in the Southern Africa nation.

His posting to Sudan comes as the world's attention shifts to the country's multi-party elections.

NCP “steals” \$500 million monthly from south’s oil shares – SPLM

The SPLM has accused the NCP of deducting the amount of \$500 million from its oil shares each month, reports *Ajras Al-Hurriya*. SPLM Deputy Chairman and head of its electoral committee, James Wani Igga, said that these cuts have minimised opportunities for development projects in southern Sudan.

Speaking at an interview, Igga called upon President Al-Bashir to issue a provisional order in the absence of parliament to amend some sections of the Security Act that “violate human rights”.

He also expressed confidence that SPLM presidential candidate Yassir Arman has a good chance to win at the April polls, saying about 90% of southern Sudanese will vote for him. The NCP, he said, is worried about this.

Igga further pointed out that projected military spending has dropped to 25% in the GoSS fiscal budget and pointed out that SAF has not completed redeployment as it is still maintaining militias.

The SPLM Deputy Chairman also expressed confidence that southern Sudan would be a viable state should the people opt for secession.

Sudan and Chad to sign agreements today ending tension in relations

President of Chad Idriss Deby arrived in Khartoum yesterday and was received at the Airport by President Al-Bashir, *local dailies* report.

According to *Al-Rai Al-Aam*, the two sides will today sign several bilateral agreements to end a long-running tension in relations between the two countries. At the official talks yesterday, Deby raised a “white handkerchief” as a sign of resolution to normalize relations with Sudan, a gesture reciprocated by his Sudanese counterpart.

Sudan Tribune website 8/2/10 reported that Chad's President Idriss Deby arrived in Khartoum for the first time in more than six years, reaffirming his readiness to work together with his Sudanese counterpart to improve bilateral ties.

Five prior mediations and four agreements had failed since 2006 to normalize relations and bring Deby to Khartoum, but last week unilaterally he announced his decision to visit Khartoum to reassure Sudan and prove his willingness to implement a number of protocols and engagements signed recently paving the way to a return of trust and good neighborliness.

"We extend our hands for peace," said Deby after his arrival to Khartoum adding his visit to Sudan reflects a true will to normalize relations between the two countries and a commitment to peace and stability in both countries.

Deby further underscored that the two leaderships have to take the needed political decisions allowing them to restore bilateral "relations better than they were in the past".

Sudanese President Al-Bashir stressed Sudan's seriousness to improve ties between Khartoum and N'djamena pointing out that relation between the two countries should not be affected by difference between the two governments.

"We are able to restore (bilateral relations) to better than they were as long as we have a real will and sincere desire," Bashir said.

President Bashir and Deby this evening called Libyan leader Muammar Kaddafi, Saudi Arabian King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz, Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, Senegalese President Abdoulaye Wade and the Emir of Qatar Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani to thank them for the efforts they made to reconcile them. The presidents pledged to send them a joint delegation soon.

Al-Intibaha reports that the Presidency Protocol yesterday barred some journalists and media representatives from entering the Friendship Hall to cover Al-Bashir-Deby official talks on grounds that their names were not on the list of invitees.

Darfur rebel leader cleared of war crimes charges

Sudan Tribune website 8/2/10 – The judges of the ICC today ruled that there is not sufficient evidence to send a Darfur rebel leader to trial on charges that he commanded an attack on AU peacekeepers in 2007.

The panel of three judges said in their 103-pages decision on the confirmation of charges hearings that took place last October that the prosecution failed to prove that Bahr Idriss Abu Garda, leader of Darfur United Resistance Front (URF), played a role in the deadly assault that left 12 soldiers dead and wounded eight others.

The Pre-Trial Chamber gave the prosecution five days to submit a request to file a leave to appeal the decision though no statement was made by the prosecution office on today's decision. The judges also left the door open to submit more evidence that can support confirmation of charges against Abu Garda.

Sudanese judges must sit in Darfur trials - AU

AFP 8/2/10 - Sudanese judges must sit with foreign judges in a court to hear alleged war crimes committed in Darfur, in a move to inspire confidence that justice will be served, an

African Union panel said Monday.

The renewed call for a "hybrid court" came after the ICC announced last week it would consider adding genocide charges to an arrest warrant for President Omar Al-Bashir over Darfur.

The AU panel probing alleged war crimes in the war-torn western Sudanese province of Darfur reiterated a call made in December that Sudanese judges must be present at any trials.

"The court will be made up of Sudanese judges who will be joined by judges who will be appointed by the AU," said panel member and former South African president Thabo Mbeki.

"There will be that kind of court which will then inspire confidence among the people of Darfur that justice will be done," he told reporters in Nairobi.

The panel on Darfur has also suggested that a truth and reconciliation commission be established as part of a peace process that reparations for losses incurred during the ongoing conflict should be considered.

Mbeki in Kenya for talks on Sudan's peace process

Sudan Tribune website 8/2/10 –The former South African president Thabo Mbeki and the head of the African Union Panel on Darfur (AUPD) met today with senior Kenyan officials to brief them on the work of his panel and garner their support.

The Kenyan media reported that Mbeki held talks with President Mwai Kibaki and former president Daniel Arap Moi. The South African figure was accompanied by former Burundi President Pierre Buyoya, deputy African Union representative to Somalia Wafula Wamunyinyi and the South African ambassador to Kenya.

The Daily Nation newspaper said that Kibaki promised Kenya's commitment to ensuring peace and stability in Sudan, despite concerns over the slow implementation of the CPA.

He further stressed that CPA had remained resilient despite various challenges, and that its signatories must sustain commitment to the full and speedy implementation of its remaining aspects.

During a special AU summit in Abuja to discuss Mbeki's report on Darfur, Kenya said that success of the CPA would send a positive and re-assuring message of peace and stability in the Sudan.

Mbeki expressed concern over the escalating intertribal and ethnic violence in South Sudan over the last year.

"[South Sudan] President Salva Kiir is concerned. People are dying. That can be avoided ... it should be avoided ... to save lives and for stability" Mbeki said.

He warned that the violence could affect Sudan's first democratic elections in more than 20 years, scheduled for April this year.

On Darfur, the AUPD chair said that the plans to establish the hybrid court are going as planned expressing confidence that it would produce the desired results.

"It will inspire confidence among the people of Darfur that justice will be done," Mbeki told

journalists after a meeting with president Moi.

“The court will be made up of Sudanese judges who will be joined by judges to be appointed by the AU,” he added and noting that his team was determined to resolve the Darfur conflict before the country’s general elections that are slated for April this year.

The hybrid court was a proposal drawn up by the panel primarily to defuse the row between Sudan and the ICC which issued an arrest warrant for Sudanese president Omer Al-Bashir.

The panel did not make a formal opinion on the indictment though it said that the ICC cannot handle all Darfur war crime perpetrators.

At a meeting between Mbeki and the ICC prosecutor Luis Moreno-Ocampo, the latter told the panel that the judges had the final word on the case against Bashir and the others.

“He said the decision was with the judges and if anybody wanted to change any of those decisions or make an impact, those people would have to appear before the judges,” Mbeki explained.

Sudanese officials including Bashir have rejected the idea of the hybrid court saying it violates the country’s sovereignty but it is not clear if Mbeki has been able to overcome this hurdle.

Darfur rebels and critics accuse the AU and the panel led by Mbeki of seeking to protect Bashir from prosecution.

Last year, the former Egyptian foreign minister Ahmed Maher Al-Sayed who was a member of the panel said that the AUPD’s goal “was to find a way out [to Bashir] from the dilemma of the ICC that sparked a great deal of controversy”.

“Incriminating the president is out of question and fundamentally unacceptable” the former Egyptian foreign minister said in an interview with the Egypt based Al-Masry Al-Youm newspaper.

Mbeki was reportedly outraged over Maher’s statements and sent a “strongly worded letter” to the Egyptian foreign ministry protesting them.

Ten passengers injured as aircraft stairs fall

Local dailies report that ten passengers were injured yesterday in an incident of fall of an aircraft stairs. According to **Al-Sahafa**, ten passengers fell while descending from a Saudi aircraft at Khartoum Airport yesterday when the plane stairs collapsed and the condition of some passengers were reportedly serious. Police said legal measures would be instituted against the company. **Akhbar Al-Youm** put the number of victims at eleven, four seriously.

Elections Special:

Court rejects appeals against eligibility of Al-Bashir and Kiir

Local dailies report that the Supreme Court’s Panel of Appeals yesterday dismissed the appeals filed challenging eligibility of Omer Al-Bashir and Salva Kiir to run for elections.

According to **Reuters** 8/2/10, the Court ruled that two more presidential candidates could stand in the country’s first democratic elections in 24 years to be held in April, including the first

female.

Sudan's opposition parties had complained that the strict requirements to run for the presidency were aimed at preventing people from standing. Candidates needed 15,000 signatures from 18 of Sudan's 25 states.

"The court has added me to the list of presidential candidates," Fatima Abdel Mahmoud from the Sudanese Democratic Socialist Union party told Reuters after the decision.

A crowd of ululating women greeted her, shouting "God is greatest," and "Fatima is Sudan's next president."

"This is a victory for Sudanese women that for the first time a woman will stand for the presidency of the republic," Abdel Mahmoud said.

The court also accepted an appeal by Munir Sheikh el-Din Jallab, of the New Democratic Nationalist Party.

It said his party, and the Sudanese Democratic Socialist Union, had not been able to complete registration procedures for reasons beyond their control. Jallab's representative in Unity state had been arrested and his papers taken from him.

The electoral commission had rejected Abdel Mahmoud, saying she had not had her papers stamped by state committees, despite having previously told her this was not necessary. Many of Sudan's opposition parties have decided to field candidates for the first round to split the vote in order to prevent Bashir from gaining more than 50 percent of votes needed to win. This would force a second round between the two leading candidates and the opposition would then support any candidate against Bashir.

Journalist Hayat Humayda, who is running for parliament as an independent in Northern state, complained to police after she, her husband and her uncle all received threatening text messages warning her to withdraw.

"They were threatening me and my family and asking me how much money I wanted to withdraw," she told Reuters.

She did not know who was responsible.

Three other candidates are standing in her constituency, she said. Mohamed Khaled Hassan from the opposition Umma Party, Mohamed Ashara from the opposition Democratic Unionist Party, and Bashir's presidential assistant Nafie Ali Nafie from the NCP.

There are now 12 candidates running for president, including sitting President Omar Al-Bashir, who is wanted by the ICC for war crimes in Darfur.

Ex-US President Carter in Khartoum

Ex-US President Jimmy Carter arrived yesterday in Khartoum heading a delegation from his Centre on 4-day visit in connection with Sudan's upcoming elections, *Al-Rai Al-Aam* reports.

State Minister at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Al-Samani Al-Waseela who received Carter at the Airport told reporters that the Carter Centre would assign 60 observers to monitor Sudan's forthcoming elections.

Darfur may obstruct elections process - URRP leader

Umma Reform and Renewal Party leader Mubarak Al-Fadhil unveiled his elections strategy at a press conference yesterday, *Al-Ahdath* reports. He told a press conference in Khartoum that his party might not participate in elections in Darfur due to "Lack of security and the state of emergency". Darfur, he said, might hamper the electoral process.

President Al-Bashir has strong chance for victory at the polls – VP Taha

GoNU VP Ali Osman Taha has reiterated Sudan's commitment to hold elections on schedule, *Al-Ahdath* reports.

Speaking to the press in Cairo following a meeting yesterday with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, Taha underlined the need for the implementation of the CPA.

In a later development, the VP told Egyptian state television that President Al-Bashir has high chances for an elections victory and the ICC would not dent his popularity or charisma. "The Sudanese people, and indeed most sectors of the international community, are aware that the ICC charges against President Al-Bashir are politically-motivated," Taha said.

Independent candidates call on SPLM SG Amum to step down

The Citizen reports Alfred Ladu Gore, a contestant of the Central Equatoria State governorship, told a recent press conference that eight independent candidates across southern Sudan would not withdraw their nominations to run for elections.

The eight candidates were reportedly met with FVP Salva Kiir who requested them to reconsider their decision but they refuse to do so.

Alfred Gore pointed out that SPLM Secretary-General Pagan Amum should apologise for "creating negative impressions against the independent candidates".

"Such blatant assertions are baseless and are designed and calculated by the SPLM Secretary-General to confuse the public and to cast doubts on the independent candidates," he said.