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# Media Monitoring Report

United Nations Mission in Sudan/ Public Information Office

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## Link

- Obama Can Make a Difference in Darfur. [Op-Ed]. By Jim Wallis, John Prendergast. *The Wall Street Journal* (US). 13/04/2009. <http://unhq-apps-01.un.org/dpi/nmu.nsf/ac/2009-04-13CREA-7R3GY3>

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# Highlights

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## Local Arabic and English Language Press

### Execution carried out against journalist murderers

The execution of the nine persons convicted of murdering the Editor-in-Chief of *Al-Wifaq* newspaper is the main story of the majority newspapers of Khartoum today. According to *Al-Rai Al-Aam*, authorities carried out the execution yesterday in the presence of relatives of the slain journalist and convicts amid tight security measures. *Al-Sahafa* reports the nine persons convicted of the murder were hanged to death yesterday at Kober prison. The nine convicts hanged are: Ishaq Al-Sanoosi Jumma, Abdul Hai Omer, Mustafa adam, Mohamed Abdul Nabi Adam, Sabir Zakaria, Hassan Adam Khamis, Adam Ibrahim Al-Haj, Jamal Al-Din Essa, Abdul Magid Ali Abdul Magid. The execution process lasted for almost six hours and police was heavily deployed in and around the prison and the slain journalist relatives were allowed see the bodies. Khartoum State police issued official statement confirming execution of the nine persons convicted of the murder and the execution was supervised by the Khartoum State Police DG Gen. Mohamed Osman Mohamed Nour and in presence of all judicial and security authorities concerned.

A relative of the victim told *AFP* that the nine convicted persons were hanged. "I saw the nine hang," the witness said on condition of anonymity. *AFP* said journalists were not allowed to witness the execution.

The former Editor-in-Chief of the pro-Islamist newspaper *Al-Wifaq* was considered close to the Muslim Brotherhood and had strained ties with Al-Bashir government. Ten people were sentenced to death in November 2007 for Ahmed's murder and beheading at the end of a trial that lasted nine months, but one of the suspects was later acquitted. The accused were members of the Fur tribe from the troubled region of Darfur.

Ahmed had angered rebels in Darfur after articles harshly criticizing them were published in his newspaper. The journalist had been arrested in 2005 after being accused of writing an article on the family of the Prophet Mohammed, and publication of his newspaper was suspended by the Sudanese authorities.

### President Al-Bashir welcomes Obama's overture to Islamic world

*Local dailies* and *international websites* covered President Al-Bashir's address to the National Assembly yesterday. "Diabolic machinations and conspiracies will never prevent us from achieving peace and stability in the country," President Al-Bashir said at the opening of the ninth session of the Parliament, according to *Al-Rai Al-Aam*. He said the path of confrontation was not Sudan's choice, it was imposed on the country, noting that the country would continue shouldering its responsibilities to fully implement the agreements and the security arrangements signed with movements and would also continue to fight banditry and armed robbery as well as providing security to aid groups in Darfur. "Quest for a lasting peace does not mean that our ongoing effort to build a strong army equipped with the most modern technology to defend the motherland and its gains will be ceased. Similarly, efforts would also continue to build a strong police force to protect civilian lives. He said the country's oil reserve was estimated at 150 million barrels. The President said 70% of laws and legislations regulating the state's machinery have been finalized especially elections, parties, army and police laws and that efforts were underway to review all legislations in force to ensure they are in harmony with the international,

regional and human rights agreements. The President indicated the efforts exerted by the state to ensure protection of human rights, to combat unlawful wealth accumulation, to increase courts to achieve justice, to build legal capacities to achieve peaceful co-existence as well as measures to control state machinery functioning. He said he expects upcoming elections to witness maximum degree of integrity and transparency.

On force integration, the President said 100 officers and 1000 soldiers from the Eastern Front were integrated in the police force, 353 SPLM soldiers were integrated into the police and NISS and 1100 of SLA (Darfur) were integrated in the various regular army units.

According to ***Al-Ayyam***, the President said the joint assessment between the government and UN confirmed stability of the humanitarian situation in Darfur and that the ousted INGOs barely contributed 5% which could be redressed by the government.

Meanwhile, ***Reuters*** yesterday reported President Al-Bashir welcomed "positive signs" sent by U.S. President Barack Obama to the Islamic world, striking a more conciliatory tone towards Washington, seen as an enemy of Khartoum in the past.

"We, our brothers and sisters, are seekers of peace and stability and we do not want our country to live under the shadows of swords and tension," he said.

"Our hands remain held out to those who call for peace and justice in accordance with the standards of fairness and dignity," he added, echoing a phrase used by Obama in his inauguration address.

"We even welcome the positive signs sent by U.S. President Barack Obama to the Islamic world on more than one occasion."

Bashir also used his speech Monday to defend a decision to expel 13 foreign aid agencies from Darfur last month after the ICC issued an arrest warrant against him for alleged war crimes in Sudan's western region. He said the decision was made "for the sake of protecting the sovereignty, security and independence of our country."

### **SPLM says CPA should not be amended**

Yassir Arman, the head of the SPLM caucus at the National Assembly, has warned against any amendments to the CPA or the National Interim Constitution, reports ***Al-Ahdath***. He revealed that the forthcoming meeting of the SPLM politburo will also discuss this issue to come up with a final view to preserve these two documents.

### **NCP confident of winning elections in southern Sudan – NCP official**

Greater Bahr el Ghazal NCP official Mathew Mayur said he was optimistic that the NCP would win upcoming elections in the South if the process is internationally-monitored and transparency ensured, reports ***Al-Intibaha***.

### **Government will not tolerate INGOs if pose threat**

***Al-Intibaha*** reports the Humanitarian Affairs State Minister Ahmed Haroun as saying the government will not tolerate the INGOs that pose threat to the country's security. Meanwhile, he said elections would take place on schedule despite the insurgency in Darfur.

### **Umma, PCP to hold consultations today**

National Umma Party Secretary General Siddig Mohamed Ismail said that the party has entered a new phase following the endorsement of the by-laws of its politburo and other internal regulations, ***Al-Sudani*** reports. He said that the party would now set out to hold talks with the other political forces especially the 8 political parties it has listed. He revealed that the Umma Party would hold consultations today with the Turabi-led Popular Congress Party.

## **Government, UN to discuss human rights in Darfur**

The third human rights forum between the Sudan Government and UNAMID will kick off today in the town of Al-Guneina in Darfur, reports **Akhir Lahza**. The government team to the forum will be headed by the Justice Ministry Undersecretary Abdul Daem Zumrawi. The forum, which will be addressed by the governor, will focus on important issues including UN human rights reports on which the UNSG based his recent report.

## **Committee on Darfur states to report to Presidency**

**Al-Ayaam** quotes the head of the committee tasked with looking into possibilities to increase the states of Darfur as saying that the committee would submit its findings to the Presidency at the end of this week. Committee chairman Fouad Eid said that they had amended the original draft of their report that contained their findings following consultations with representatives of the location communities in Darfur. The report, he adds, looks into the geographic aspects, existing tribal inter-actions and balances, livelihoods and resources available in the Greater Darfur area.

## **SPLM received \$1 million for Abyei – Al-Dirderi**

**Al-Ahdath** reports the Sudan representative at Abyei Arbitration Tribunal Al-Dirderi Mohamed Ahmed as saying that the Presidency has transferred the sum of one million dollars to the Tribunal on 9 April this year. He said that the government was committed to secure funds required for the Tribunal as per the agreement between the two sides provided that funds should be reimbursed through the Unity Support Fund.

## **SCOVA delegation refused access to Kalma camp**

**Al-Sudani** reports the 17-member delegation of the Sudan Council of Voluntary Agencies (SCOVA) as saying that it has noted a number of problems in the IDP camps in Darfur such as health, environment and water. SCOVA's Executive Director Ibrahim Mohamed Ibrahim told a press conference in Khartoum yesterday that the team he led to Darfur was able to enter all the IDP camps in Darfur with the exception of Kalma Camp where the IDPs refused them access. He called on authorities not to allow foreign aid groups to distribute food to Sudanese except through local partners. He also pointed out that the goal to "Sudanize" voluntary work within a year is a major challenge that requires intensified and concerted efforts.

## **Meningitis hit Gezira State**

**Akhir Lahza** reports Gezira State Minister of Health Al-Kheir Al-Nour as saying that 30 cases of meningitis reported in the state including five persons reported dead. However, he said the situation was under control.

# **Websites/International News Coverage**

## **ICC judges may soon rule on Darfur rebel case - prosecution**

**Sudan Tribune website**, 13/4/09 (THE HAGUE) – The ICC prosecutors say that they expect a ruling on the case against Darfur rebels in April.

The deputy ICC prosecutor Fatou Bensouda speaking a diplomatic hearing last week said in The Hague that her office hopes "to have a decision from the Judges this month". She said that given the public stances by the Darfur rebels in which they committed to cooperating with the ICC "judicial proceedings could start soon".

The ICC prosecutor Luis Moreno-Ocampo's third case on Darfur, opened in late 2007, investigates an alleged rebel attack on the Haskanita military base that left 10 African Union (AU) soldiers dead and one missing.

The counts against the rebel leaders in the case filed under seal included war crimes of violence to life, intentionally directing attacks against personnel, installations, material, units or vehicles involved in a peacekeeping mission and pillaging.

Attacking peacekeepers constitutes a war crime under the Rome Statute which forms the basis of the ICC.

The deputy prosecutor speaking about the arrest warrant issued last month against Sudanese president Omer Hassan Al-Bashir said that “Sudan is obliged under international law to execute the warrant on its territory”.

“If it does not enforce the warrant, the SCI, which referred the case to the ICC, will need to ensure compliance” she added.

Bensouda said that Bashir’s decision to expel more than a dozen aid agencies from Darfur after the warrant “is another step in the commission of the crime of extermination”.

She also called on State Parties to sever “non-essential” contacts with the Sudanese head of state.

The Gambian prosecutor criticized arguments made by African states that the court is targeting only African nations in its investigations.

The African Union (AU) strongly criticized the ICC move accusing The Hague based court of being biased towards Africans and said that the arrest warrant approved in March, threatens peace prospects in Darfur.

“As a Deputy Prosecutor, and as an African woman, I am dismayed by suggestions that this Court is targeting Africans. This Court has indicted the President of the Sudan because he pursues the extermination of 2.5 million Africans” she said.

“They [Khartoum] have done nothing. Worse, they have condoned the rape of women and girls for five years, African women, African girls. This Court is defending African victims and will continue to do so” Bensouda added.

The deputy prosecutor said that they are working with an African Union (AU) panel headed by former South African leader Thabo Mbeki that is looking into accountability mechanisms in Darfur and reconciling it with peace efforts in the war ravaged region.

“We explained to him that the ICC has conducted investigations against six individuals, including the three rebel commanders. There are no sealed arrest warrants and the Court is not conducting new investigations” she said.

“President Mbeki has the huge task of moving the process of accountability ahead for all the other individuals involved in the commission of crimes. We are committed to working with him” the ICC official added.

Some observers have expressed skepticism about the role of the panel saying its goal is to save Bashir from ICC prosecution.



## **US embassy says Obama may visit Sudan during African tour**

**Sudan Tribune website**, 13/4/09 (KHARTOUM) – The US Embassy in Khartoum said that President Barack Obama may stop in Sudan during his Africa tour later this year.

The spokesperson of the US embassy John Walter speaking to the UN sponsored **Miraya FM radio** in Sudan said that they have not yet been informed about President Obama's visit but that it might include Sudan.

## **Southern parliament on recess after passing local government bill**

**Sudan Tribune website**, 13/4/09 (JUBA) – The parliament of the Juba-based Government of Southern Sudan is on a 51-day recess after wrapping up some legislative business.

Legislators have left Juba, some planning to prepare for elections and sensitize their constituents about the Constituency Development Fund (CDF).

Speaker James Wani Igga on Thursday appealed to the assembly members to bolster full enforcement of enacted laws especially when on the 51 days recess. He also urged lawmakers who are going to sensitize their voters on the CDF newly released by GOSS to also prepare the ground for the coming general election campaign and wish them re-elected in the coming general scheduled for February 2010.

## **Southern Kordofan suffers from expulsion of aid agencies**

**Miraya FM** 14/4/09 reports the Minister of Social Welfare in the government of Southern Kordofan State, Awatif Al-Tom, has said that the INGO expulsion from Sudan had created health problems in the areas of Al-Kauda, Lagawa, and Abu-Jebeha.

Mrs. Al-Tom, who is also the head of the Committee responsible for closing the humanitarian gap created by the INGO expulsion in the State, warned that the conditions might deteriorate as the rainy seasons is approaching.

Earlier, a joint delegation from the UN, the Government of National Unity, and the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs visited different areas in South Kordofan State to assess the humanitarian situation following the expulsion of the aid agencies.

## **OIC Plans for humanitarian assistance in Darfur in two months**

**SMC** 13/4/09 reported the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) announced that it plans to implement relief and development program in Darfur region. The program includes shareholders of non-governmental organizations from OIC state members. Chief of OIC Akmal Al Dein Ehssan said the project designs for providing emergency assistance for IDPs and refugees from Darfur; and will contribute in funding reconstruction process. For his part OIC secretary general Atta al Manan said the project suggested for implementation in two month time from now. However he said the project is not a replacement of the expelled foreign NGOs, it is a humanitarian assistance program done in coordination with UN and NGOs which are active in the region, he said.

## **UN-African Union mission reports return to relative calm in Darfur**

**UN News Centre**, 13/4/09 – UNAMID in Sudan's war-ravaged Darfur region today reported that the security situation is now relatively calm despite some continuing acts of banditry and carjacking in North and West Darfur.

Over the past month, the hybrid operation tasked with quelling the violence and protecting

civilians in Darfur, known as UNAMID, had reported a rise in attacks on peacekeeping staff, carjacking, armed banditry, the burning of shelters in camps for internally displaced persons (IDPs) and harassment of civilians in Darfur.

There has also been concern over the safety of humanitarian workers, many of whom have been ordered to leave the region following the indictment on 4 March of Sudanese President Omar Al-Bashir.

In related news, the second regular meeting of the Darfur Human Rights Forum will kick off tomorrow in El Geneina, capital of West Darfur state. The one-day meeting is aimed at promoting transparent and constructive dialogue on human rights issues between the Government of Sudan and UNAMID.

### **Khartoum arrest human rights activist**

**Sudan Radio Service**, 13/4/09, (Nairobi) - A human rights activist has been arrested by the National Security Agents in Al-Fasher, northern Darfur.

Speaking to **Sudan Radio Service** in Nairobi on Monday, the executive director of the Khartoum Center for Human Rights, Faisal Al-Baagir, said that Mahjoub Abduol was arrested in Al-Fasher on Saturday.

[Faisal Al-Baagir]: "Mahjoub Abduol was detained by the National Security Service in Al- Fasher on the evening of 11th April. He was famous for defending the people of Darfur. His lawyer and his family still do not have access to him. Mahjoub Abduol was ordered by the security agency not to leave al-Fasher since 5th March when they closed his center. This is illegal. Why he is being detained? We believe that he will be subjected to torture and to ill-treatment. We ask the national government to release Mohamed Mahjoub as soon as possible."

Faisal added that Mahjoub is being harassed by the security agents because he is outspoken in condemning the torture and the ill-treatment of the people of Darfur.