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Media Monitoring Report

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Highlights

Local Arabic and English language press

MFA summons Ashraf Qazi

Al-Rai Al-Aam reported that the Sudanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs summoned yesterday SRSG Ashraf Qazi because of calling for review of sentences against persons accused of participation in the attack on Omdurman. However, Qazi has denied that he was summoned, saying his meeting with the Undersecretary Mutrif Siddiq was routine as he was preparing to submit a report to the SC.

Ashraf Qazi to brief SC on Sudan

Al-Khartoum stated that the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Mutrif Siddiq met yesterday with SRSG Ashraf Qazi. According to SUNA Qazi conveyed to the Undersecretary congratulations for GoNU for setting up an administration for Abyei area which he described as “positive development”.

Qazi said he would visit New York shortly to submit a report to the Security Council on CPA implementation.

Government accepts informal apology from Qazi

Al-Ahdath carried a report stating that SRSG Ashraf Qazi has apologized informally after the Sudanese government demanded withdrawal of his statements critical of trials of persons accused of participation in the attack on Omdurman.

Reliable sources said Qazi met influential personalities in the state two days ago to inform them that what he raised was not intended to derogate the Sudanese judiciary. According to the sources, the Government accepted Qazi’s informal apology. However, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs summoned Qazi yesterday but Qazi told the press that it was a regular meeting not a summon. He said he was preparing to leave for New York on 16 August to report to SC on CPA implementation.

Sudanese expert accuses UN official of concealing information on Darfur

Khartoum Monitor said the UN was withholding information on the current humanitarian situation in Darfur, a leading Sudan expert said in an article today.

Eric Reeves a professor at Smith College in Massachusetts who has published extensively on Sudan accused Ameerah Haq, the UN Humanitarian Coordinator in Sudan, of “emboldening Khartoum,”.

“Ms. Haq is the UN official most responsible for allowing the Khartoum regime to quash publication and dissemination of numerous reports on malnutrition, by both the UN and INGOs” Reeves said.

“By remaining silent about such actions, officials such as UN humanitarian Coordinator Aameera Haq succeeded only in convincing Khartoum that it can continue its brutal ways with impunity”, he said.

This month the undersecretary general for humanitarian affairs, John Holmes, called on Khartoum to take action to protect humanitarian aid workers in Darfur, where the deteriorating security situation has forced aid agencies to reduce rations for hungry people there.

Australian and Egyptian counsel to assist NCP on Abyei arbitration

Al-Rai Al-Aam said NCP leaders approved nomination of an Australian national Prof. James and an Egyptian national Dr. Nabil Arabi as senior counsels to guide NCP on Abyei arbitration in The Hague. NCP leader informed journalists yesterday that the Party formed a team of 40 counsels for advice on Abyei. He said NCP and SPLM would submit the counsels' names to the court in The Hague before mid August.

Minnawi meets US envoy, says his return to Khartoum depends on an active American role

Al-Sahafa reported that the Senior Presidential Assistant Minni Minnawi has reiterated commitment to DPA, saying his return to Khartoum depends on playing of a pivotal role by Washington in this regard.

Speaking to the newspaper on telephone from Muzbat (his birthplace) in North Darfur after meeting with US Envoy Williamson, Minnawi said no positive development have been achieved on contentious issues and ruled out returning to Khartoum soon unless a breakthrough was achieved.

Richard Williamson said peace and stability in Darfur a priority for his Government adding that Minnawi was a senior official and has the right to perform his functions from any place.

Sudan government accepts Arab League's plan to address ICC

Al-Intibaha said Sudanese Ambassador to Arab League Abdul Moneim Mabrook announced the acceptance of his government of the Arab League's plan to address the crisis between Sudan Government and ICC. However, the Ambassador did not elaborate. Mabrook said several Arab Ministers of Justice agreed to attend meeting in Khartoum to discuss crisis between Sudan and ICC.

NCRC Chairman Abel Alyer to head elections commission

Al-Sahafa learned from sources that NCP and SPLM agreed to appoint the present chairman of the Constitution Commission as head of the Elections Commission.

Consultations were continuing to finalize appointment of the commission's eight members by the end of coming week for submission to parliament for approval.

DDR integrates 500 war disabled

Al-Sahafa reported that a task force from North and South DDR Commissions will begin a visit today to Kordofan and southern Blue Nile areas to supervise setting up of joint DDR offices. The DDR Commission announced that 500 war disabled in Khartoum State have been integrated in collaboration with four voluntary organizations.

US: elements are playing a negative role to CPA

Speaking to Miraya FM, US Congressman and chairman of foreign affairs sub-committee on Africa and global health, Donald Penn, said that President Omer Bashir was playing a negative role in implementing the CPA.

Mr Penn and the Minister of Presidential Affairs in the Government of Southern Sudan, Dr Luka Biong, visited Abyei on Sunday [10 August] amidst preparations for the establishment of the administration. Mr Penn said that the visit of the delegation to Abyei is to look into the destruction that took place last May, talk to the affected people and see the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement.

Speaking to Miraya FM at Wau International airport on his way back to Juba, Dr Luka Biong, described the situation in Abyei as calm. However, Dr Biong said that the Sudan armed forces have not yet completely pulled out of Abyei as stipulated in the road map. Mr Penn and Dr Biong called for the full implementation of the Abyei Road map

UNAMID will not be expelled - Bashir

“We will not expel UNAMID, its presence is the result of lengthy negotiations and a phased track,” says President Bashir in a reply to a question by the London-based **Al-Hayat** newspaper on whether Sudan will expel UNAMID if crisis with ICC aggravated, according to **Akhir Lahza** (9 Aug).

Bashir’s apprehension puts UNAMID at risk

Al-Intibaha (10 Aug.) reported that NCP politburo member Mahdi Ibrahim has described Security Council resolution extending UNAMID’s mandate as “insensible”. “Safety of peacekeepers in Darfur will be at stake if SC allows ICC to proceed with the indictment,” he said.

ICC application, CPA and UNAMID

“If arrest warrant is issued for Bashir, CPA and UNAMID will face a new legal reality,” says Ibrahim Elias, **Al-Intibaha’s** writer, in an article captioned “ICC application, CPA and UNAMID”. “It will be very difficult or rather impossible for UNMIS and UNAMID to cooperate with the country’s President if the warrant is issued,” he says. “Expulsion of foreign troops becomes imperative if warrant of arrest is out,” he adds. “Why does not Sudan government make it clear that there will be no peacekeepers on Sudanese soil if Bashir’s arrest is ordered,” he wonders.

Websites/International headlines

Peacekeeping helicopter hit by gunfire in West Darfur

(Sudan Tribune) — A Helicopter of the hybrid peacekeeping force was shot in western Darfur by gunfire today as the U.S. envoy to Sudan visiting the headquarters of the mission.

The plane came under fire in the area of Jebel Moon, West Darfur State, and was forced to return to its base. The UNAMID spokesperson said they are not aware of who fired the helicopter.

However according to Reuters, the rebel Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) said it had shot at a white helicopter in the area, but believed it had been from the government’s Central Reserve Police.

The United Nations has in the past urged the Sudanese government not to use white aircraft that resemble its own, saying it endangered the peacekeepers.

The governor of West Darfur Abu Algassim Imam said the plane was shot during a flight from

Al-Geneina to Kulbus, and returned to base in the capital of West Darfur with no casualties.

Speaking to SMC, SAF spokesperson Al-Aqbash said the helicopter was shot at by JEM adding that the army would repulse any attempt to disrupt the peace process.

In the same time, US envoy to Sudan Richard Williamson, Monday visited the AU-UN peacekeeping mission headquarters in El Fasher, where he was briefed on the work of the UNAMID, the status of its deployment, as well as the challenges facing the mission.

Williamson expressed his concern over the slow deployment of UNAMID and urged the mission to do everything possible to "speed up its deployment," to enable it to better protect the civilians and its own Peacekeepers.

The visiting envoy was referring to the 8 July ambush where seven peacekeeper were killed and 29 others injured

Solana welcomes appointment of administrator in Sudan's Abyei

(Xinhua) Javier Solana, European Union's top diplomat, welcomed on Monday the appointment of an administrator for the Abyei region in Sudan. "This appointment is a further step in the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) signed by Khartoum and the SPLM (Sudan People's Liberation Movement) in 2005," he said in a statement. "It therefore consolidates peace between the North and the South and hence reinforces the unity of Sudan to which the international community attaches fundamental importance," he added.

Solana called on the Sudanese parties to continue on this path and to complete the deployment of the joint integrated units in Abyei as soon as possible in order to reinforce a lasting stability.

Former Sudanese official accuse ruling NCP of 'genocide' in Darfur

(Sudan Tribune) – A former Sudanese official and a senior figure in an opposition party accused the ruling National Congress Party (NCP) of committing atrocities in Darfur. Ali al-Haj, deputy secretary general of the Popular Congress Party (PCP) led by Hassan al-Turabi, told the daily Al-Sharq Al-Awsat that the seventh conference of the Sudanese Islamic movement held in Khartoum last week "does not represent the organization that took over power in a coup staged by Sudanese President Omar Hassan Al-Bashir".

"The irony is that the Islamic movement has become a government organization and is now colluding with it", said Al-Haj, who is from Darfur and was a powerful figure in the Sudanese government prior to the split between Al-Bashir and his ideological backer Al-Turabi in 1999.

The PCP official held the post of the Minister of Federal Affairs when he was part of the government. He is better known for handling negotiations with the Southern rebels in the early 90s.

The PCP official said that the Sudanese government committed "genocide, killing, dispersal, and burning of villages" in Darfur. Al-Haj also said that crimes in Darfur "are not figments of the imagination but are quite real and documented". He claimed that Taha "admitted to arming some tribes in Darfur to kill other tribes". Al-Haj blamed the Islamic movements "for not saying anything on Darfur until Al-Bashir was charged". "Al-Bashir himself has said that about 10,000 citizens have been killed in Darfur. But killing one soul is like killing all of mankind" he added.

Sudan may file charges against militia leader indicted by ICC

(**Sudan Tribune**) – The newly appointed special prosecutor for Darfur said that he would review allegations that were brought against a militia leader indicted by the ICC last year. The daily Al-Hayat newspaper published in London quoted Darfur prosecutor Nimr Ibrahim Mohamed as saying he would pull the case that was brought in local courts last year against militia commander Ali Mohamed Ali Abdel-Rahman, also known as Ali Kushayb. However Mohamed was noncommittal as to whether Kushayb would actually stand trial after being previously cleared of all accusations by Sudanese authorities.

ICC judges issued arrest warrants in April 2007 for Ahmed Haroun, state minister for humanitarian affairs, and Kushayb in connection with Darfur war crimes. ICC prosecutor Luis Moreno-Ocampo said at the time that Haroun and Kushayb “bear criminal responsibility in relation to 51 counts of alleged crimes against humanity and war crimes, including persecution, torture, murder and rape committed in Darfur in 2003 and 2004”.

Khartoum had long claimed that Kushayb was in custody since November 2006 for investigations into allegations of violations he committed during the peak of the Darfur conflict in 2004.

Sudan’s former Justice Minister Mohamed Ali al-Mardi told a news conference in Khartoum in February 2007 that “Ali Kushayb, along with two other individuals, was sent for trial. He was detained as a suspect, questioned, his statements were evaluated and witness statements recorded, and then the decision was taken to refer him to court”. But in March 2007, Kushayb’s trial was delayed when the defendants filed an appeal with the Justice Ministry after which Abu-Zeid told reporters that Kushayb’s appeal was denied that there is “sufficient evidence to proceed with the case”.

Shortly afterwards the Sudanese justice ministry ordered a ban on publishing reports or details relating to criminal cases on Darfur.

In early October Sudan’s former foreign minister Lam Akol told the pro-government daily Al-Rayaam from New York that Kushayb was freed “due to lack of incriminating evidence against him”. However Al-Mardi issued a quick denial, describing the Al-Rayaam report as “false” without directly commenting on Akol’s statements.

Last November, the former Justice Minister was asked once more by Al-Rayaam about Kushayb’s whereabouts. He reiterated that the militia leader had “never [been] released” and declined further comment “because it is under investigation”.

In April, Voice of America quoted the spokesman for the Sudanese embassy in London, Khalid Al-Mubarak, as saying that Haroun and Kushayb had not been prosecuted “because there is no evidence against them”. In June, Amin Hassan Omar, a leading figure in the National Congress Party (NCP) and a state minister, also confirmed Kushayb’s release.

Last week, Sudanese justice minister Abdel-Basit Sabdarat appointed the special prosecutor as part of legal means to deflect ICC jurisdiction over Darfur case. The Sudan news agency (SUNA) said that the special prosecutor will report monthly on the progress of his work.

Some political figures cautioned that the move was belated. Sudan’s former prime minister and leader of the Umma Party Al-Sadiq Al-Mahdi told Al-Jazeera Arabic TV that the move is “unfortunate” and “sends wrong signals to the international community”. Sudan’s communist

party leader Ibrahim Nugud told Al-Jazeera that "any decision [on special courts] made that doesn't convince rebel groups is worthless".

Sudan's penal code does not include punishment for genocide, crimes against humanity or war crimes. Moreover Sudanese military officials enjoy immunity from prosecution for acts committed during their course of duty. AFP recently quoted the Sudanese Media Centre (SMC), which is close to the intelligence services, as saying that the justice ministry is making arrangements to draft new legislation that would incorporate crimes listed in international law. However it is not clear how long the process would take.

Ocampo told Sudan Tribune in an interview yesterday that Khartoum established special courts before but "end up investigating no one".

ICC prosecutor briefs Senegal's president on Darfur case

(AFP) — ICC prosecutor Luis Moreno-Ocampo briefed the Senegalese president about the ICC Darfur investigation on Monday. The briefing was part of an effort to urge African leaders to help end crimes there.

"I think we have to keep explaining to African leaders the case, what we are doing and then they can fulfill their own responsibilities," Moreno-Ocampo said after the meeting with President Abdoulaye Wade. "I was providing him with some details as to why I am pursuing these cases in Sudan," he added.

"I believe these massive crimes (in Darfur) cannot be committed without political support so if the African leaders are clear about the crimes they will be very important in stopping the crimes, because at the end of the day the victims are African women who are being raped and killed in the camps, the victims are African children exposed to conditions that mean they will die," the prosecutor explained.

"I believe we have a common goal to stop the crimes," he said, adding that he would continue to regularly brief African and Arab leaders on the situation in Darfur.

The judges have not yet ruled on the request and Moreno-Ocampo said he is expecting their decision "two to three months after the end of August".

Senegal was the first country to ratify the treaty creating the ICC, the world's first permanent war crimes court, and sees itself as an African champion of human rights.

Recently Wade, who has good relations with the Sudanese government, called on the ICC to freeze the investigation into Beshir arguing the probe could plunge Darfur into chaos.

Despite Wade's friendship with Beshir, the ICC prosecutor said the Senegalese president again pledged his commitment to the ICC on Monday. "You can be friends but the law is the law," Moreno-Ocampo said, recalling that Wade had called several times for the violence in Darfur to stop. (AFP)

Paulino Matip arrives in Washington for medical treatment

(Sudan Tribune) — Gen. Paulino Matip Nhial, the Deputy Commander in Chief of the southern Sudan army arrived to the capital of the United States last week in a private visit for medical treatment. Nhial will also hold talks with U.S. Administration official to discuss their support to transform the Sudan People's Liberation Army to a conventional army. The US government allocated this year some US\$41 million to help these efforts.

Accompanied by his wife, Paulino Matip will receive medical exams in Rochester, Minnesota, said Ezekiel Lol Gatkuoth, head of the mission of southern Sudan government in Washington.

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