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Media Monitoring Report

United Nations Mission In Sudan/ Public Information Office

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Highlights

Local Arabic and English language press

Sudanese airliner hijacked, landed in Libya for refueling

Local dailies of today focused on hijacking of a Sudanese plane carrying 87 passengers en route from Nyala to Khartoum. Two Darfurians diverted the plane to Libya yesterday where it landed in Kufra airport. The hijackers demanded refueling to proceed to France but Libyan authorities refused. Subsequent reports said the hijackers freed the passengers but held the crew (see more details below).

UN supports training of Joint Integrated Police Unit in Abyei

Al-Sahafa quoted UN as saying that it had completed training session for Abyei Joint Integrated Police Unit (JIPU). The training targeted 63 federal police personnel and 105 police personnel from the south. The training was organized by UNMIS and UNDP. UNMIS instructors trained the units and UNDP provided training facilities.

AEC says five challenges face CPA implementation

Al-Rai Al-Aam reported that the Assessment and Evaluation Commission (AEC) said that the ICC indictment against President Bashir would not affect the centrality of the CPA, pointing out the need for sustainability of partnership between the parties to the CPA and their international partners to address challenges.

It said referral of Abyei for arbitration was good news and called on the two parties to continue dialogue to address issues. The statement was made by AEC chairman Derek Plumbli at symposium yesterday on the CPA.

According to **Al-Sahafa** newspaper Plumbli said the challenges facing CPA were: dispute in Abyei and the three areas, border demarcation, reform of security sector, elections and referendum.

SPLM leader Lam Akol urged CPA parties to focus on development rather than on other aspects of CPA only while the presidential advisor Ali Tamim Fartak has urged the AEC to be more transparent in its reports.

Government promises to support efforts of UN-AU mediator

Al-Khartoum quoted the presidential advisor Mustafa Osman Ismail as saying that GoNU was ready to provide necessary assistances to make the UN-AU mediator Bassole's mission a success.

In press statements after meeting with Bassole yesterday, Ismail said they discussed the problem of Darfur and means and ways to achieve lasting peace. He said Bassole was briefed on the People of Sudan's Initiative and the ICC.

Foreign Ministry deploras incidents in Kalma, reacts to US State Department

Akhbar Al Yom reported that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs deplored the incidents at Kalma

camp in South Darfur which caused loss of lives of civilians and organized forces.

The Foreign Office spokesperson Ali Al Sadiq has turned the attention of the US State Department and other circles that what the authorities did was intended to maintain public order and to establish state's full control over its territories. He said the authorities broke into the camp after receiving information about the presence of thieves, criminals and unlawful arms within the camp.

He said the authorities' fears were vindicated because the force was met with resistance, meaning unlawful arms and rebels were inside using civilians and INGOs as a cover for their subversive activities.

South Darfur governor denies resignation of six State Assembly members over incidents in Kalma camp

Al-Sahafa said the Governor of South Darfur Ali Mahmoud denied reports that six members of the State Assembly have tendered their resignations to protest incidents at Kalma camp.

Several State Assembly members including the advisor to the governor have reportedly submitted their resignations to protest what they described as excessive use of force in Kalma camp.

Supreme Court confirms death sentence against nine persons accused of murdering journalist

Al-Sahafa reported that the Supreme Court confirmed death sentences against nine persons accused of killing the editor-in-chief of Al-Wifaq newspaper and commuted the same sentence for one accused to four years imprisonment.

Websites/International News Coverage

UN trains Abyei joint police unit

(Sudan Tribune) — United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) have concluded the first ten-day Police Basic Training Course for a total of 168 members of the new Abyei Joint Integrated Police Unit (JIPU).

The integrated police unit comprises 63 policemen from Government of Sudan Police (GoS) and 105 policemen from the South Sudan Police Service (SSPS).

In accordance with Abyei roadmap signed on June 8, the new JIPU works for restoring the rule of law and ensuring the safety and security for the return to Abyei of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs).

UNMIS Police training team (UNPOL) trained the new JIPU members on different policing aspects including democratic policing; human rights; Sudan Police Act; crime scene investigation; gender and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) issues.

In a bid to develop the professional capabilities of JIPU Officers to take over all law and order duties, UNMIS Police (UNPOL) will continue providing specialized training courses over the coming weeks.

In addition to the 168 JIPU members who are already patrolling in Abyei town, GoS Police and SSPS have agreed to deploy more JIPU members in the coming weeks in Abyei area.

Darfur UNAMID issue harsh condemnation of Sudanese authorities

(ST) August 26, 2008 (KHARTOUM) – The United Nations - African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) issued a strongly worded statement condemning the “excessive force” used by Sudanese authorities against residents of the Kalma refugee camp in South Darfur yesterday.

“UNAMID strongly condemns the excessive, disproportionate use of lethal force by the GoS security forces against civilians, which violated their human rights and resulted in unacceptable casualties” the mission said in an unusually harsh statement today.

Scores of people were killed on Monday and many more injured when hundreds of Sudanese soldiers and security officers entered Kalma camp early yesterday morning and opened fire.

Sudanese security officials said that they were fired upon first prompting their response. But UNAMID hinted Khartoum’s version of the story is inaccurate.

“The UNAMID team noted that GoS Military and Police were heavily armed, while the IDP’s seemed to carry only sticks, knives, and spears” the peacekeepers said.

The statement could not confirm the exact number of casualties but suggested that it may well be higher the initial figures of 27 deaths.

“On the basis of information provided to the UNAMID team while on site, the casualty toll amounted to 64 killed and 117 wounded, of which 49 were evacuated by UNAMID to the Nyala Hospital. While 11 eleven bodies were actually seen by the team, unconfirmed reports stated a higher number of fatalities”.

Hussein Abu-Sharati, the representative of the Darfur refugees and internally displaced people in Darfur camps, told Sudan Tribune yesterday that 86 people mostly children, women and elders were killed.

Noureddine Mezni, UNAMID spokesperson told Sudan Tribune by phone that the mission attended the funerals for 33 people.

The Darfur peacekeepers also accused the government of hindering their access to the camp as well a medical team.

“The team was stopped on its way to Kalma at a GoS National Security (NS) check-point, which demanded a written authorization from the NS General Commanding. While the UNAMID team was eventually allowed to proceed, this was not the case for the accompanying medical NGO team”.

UNAMID said that they had negotiated access to the medical teams for 2 hours before they received authorization.

The mission called the attack “a clear violation of the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA)” signed two years ago in Abuja.

The UNAMID statement will likely anger the Sudanese government which has reluctantly accepted the peacekeepers last year.

Many observers said that Khartoum placed obstacles to slow down the deployment of peacekeepers through bureaucratic requirements easing objections to the composition of the force.

President Bashir on rare visit to south Sudan

(AFP) — Sudanese President Omar Bashir is visiting the capital of autonomous southern Sudan on Wednesday for the first time in almost two years, an AFP correspondent said.

The head of state, who faces a possible international arrest warrant for alleged crimes against humanity, war crimes and genocide in the country's western region of Darfur, was greeted by a full guard of honour at Juba airport today.

Wearing a safari suit and accompanied by stringent security he then drove into town to sign a hydroelectric agreement, which officials in Khartoum said paved the way for three dams to be built in southern Sudan.

"The contract will be with a Chinese company to build three dams, two in Equatoria and the third in Bahr el-Ghazal," spokesman for the dams authority, Isam Omar, told AFP in Khartoum.

The president last visited Juba in January 2007 when he and First Vice President Salva Kiir, the former rebel who is president of the south, traded accusations over failures in implementing the peace agreement that ended 21 years of civil war.

Darfur officials resign in protest over refugee camp massacre

(Sudan Tribune) – A number of officials in the regional government of South Darfur handed down their resignations in protest over events that occurred in a refugee camp on Monday.

Scores of people were killed and many more injured when hundreds of Sudanese soldiers and security officers entered Kalma camp early yesterday morning and opened fire.

Sudan Tribune has learned that the officials include the state minister of agriculture Omar Fur from the ex-Southern rebels Sudan People Liberation Movement (SPLM); two advisors to South Darfur governor Al-Magdoom Salah Fadl & Al-Shertai Ibrahim; two Municipal officials Fatma Fangout & Sharaf Al-Jabal.

Two unidentified members of the South Darfur legislative body have also stepped down. Fur described Monday's attack as a "massacre" and called it a "big and serious violations on the part of the ruling National Congress Party (NCP)".

"The Security bodies involved must be held accountable. This assault is meant to destroy the peace. SPLM has nothing to do with it and was not aware of any plans to raid the camp".

The SPLM figure called for an immediate investigation into the Kalma camp events. The other officials who quit called it a "clear violation" of the Darfur peace agreement (DPA) before holding the South Darfur government responsible. They further demanded that forces currently surrounding the camp pull back.

The Sudanese authorities justified the raid by claiming to have received reliable intel about weapons smuggled recently into Kalma camp which is at a strategic position because of its proximity to the Nyala airport and railways.

However camp leaders who spoke to Sudan Tribune firmly denied the presence of any weapons.

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The South Darfur officials also said that the attack is a breach of Al-Bashir’s promises during his tour in the region last month.

One source told Sudan Tribune that the adviser to the South Darfur governor Al-Magdoom Salah Fadl confronted Al-Bashir during his tour telling him that his call for refugees to return to their homes is unrealistic.

“He bluntly told Al-Bashir that the refugees’ lands have been taken by re-settlers from other countries and that the displaced have nowhere to go” the source said.

Some observers and experts have alleged that Khartoum brought in Arab tribes from neighboring countries who took over the lands of the African population.

Floods leave thousands homeless in Jonglei’s Bor

(Sudan Tribune) - At least 3,350 persons, from 480 homesteads, have been left homeless following River Nile overflow at Baidit Payam, Bor County in Sudan’s Jonglei State.

3,900 cattle have their grazing lands tapered to anthills and 1,470 gardens are destroyed, an administrator told a team of reporters Monday at Payam headquarters (16 miles north of Jonglei capital Bor).

Baidit Payam civil administrator Michael Jok says children, pregnant women and the elderly people suffered the most. “Health has generally declined these days and many children suffer diarrhea,” he said.

Some families were seen moving to higher neighborhood and children catch fish on road. Goats by the roadside climbed anthills and trees branches. A distance of 2 miles has been covered by water on road heading to Payam headquarters from Bor Town.

Acting commissioner of Bor County Deng Akuei Kur told a press briefing on Monday at Baidit that his government is unable to combat the situation. “I call upon the State government, the Government of Southern Sudan and the UN agencies to intervene,” he said.

Touring the Payam on Saturday, Governor Kuol Manyang encouraged the population to build hand-made-dykes as the State analyzes the situation for possible assistance.

Sudan’s Nuba Mountains risk new conflict

(Reuters) — Sudan’s central Nuba Mountains region risks erupting into open conflict again because of a build-up of troops and weapons, analysts said on Tuesday.

The Switzerland-based Small Arms Survey research group said northern and southern forces were breaking the terms of a 2005 peace deal by taking on recruits in the politically tense but overlooked region.

The area, covered in large rocky hills, was a key battleground in Sudan’s two-decade, north-

south civil war, which ended with the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA).

But northern and southern leaders have accused each other of obstructing critical parts of the deal and major fighting has broken out twice between the two armies in other flashpoints.

"Tensions are mounting in the (Nuba Mountains) region ... development plans are overshadowed by the danger of a return to open conflict," the report stated.

"The area is highly militarized with both parties to the conflict actively violating the CPA ... by recruiting members of armed groups," it added.

The study said the Nuba Mountains had been largely ignored while international attention focused on Darfur and other north-south clashes, like the fighting that broke out over the central oil-rich region of Abyei earlier this year.

Under the CPA, the southern army was supposed to redeploy out of the Nuba Mountains area and northern forces were supposed to reduce their numbers to pre-war levels.

But the Small Arms Survey reported the southern Sudan People's Liberation Army had grown with 1,500 new recruits over the last six months.

The northern army has refused to let U.N. peacekeepers monitor their troop numbers in the area, said the report, adding that the Khartoum-supported Popular Defence Forces militia could now have as many as 20,000 men in the region.

The 2005 peace deal gave southerners a share in the country's oil revenues and their own semi-autonomous government. But many in Nuba have seen little change, said one international analyst, speaking on conditions of anonymity.

"Definitely there's trouble ahead. You just have to look at the frustration," the analyst added.

The Nuba Mountains lie in one of Sudan's special "transitional" areas, identified under the 2005 deal. Although currently administratively part of northern Sudan the region was promised greater autonomy under the peace deal.

Members of the many Nuba tribes, citing marginalisation by Khartoum, had joined the south during the civil war.

Southerners will have an independence referendum in 2011 but residents in the Nuba Mountains area have only been promised a vaguer "popular parliamentary consultation" on their status.

Sudanese plane hijacked from Darfur to Libya

(Sudan Tribune) — Unknown number of hijackers kidnapped a plane belonging to a private company with 87 passengers heading to Khartoum from the capital of South Darfur state on Tuesday.

The kidnapped plane landed at the small military airport of Kufra in Libya near border with Egypt and Sudan. Libya's Civil Aviation Authority said 95 passengers were on the Air Sun Boeing 737 plane. But the number of hijacker is not clear.

The plane took off from Nyala at 4:40 pm (local time) and was bound for Khartoum. 20 minutes after the departure, the pilot informed the airport of southern Darfur of the hijacking of the plane telling them he was heading to Tripoli Libya.

The Boeing was carrying some members of the Darfur Transitional Authority in charge with the implementation of Darfur Peace Agreement from Minawi group.

The Sudanese Civil Aviation Authority said intensive contacts are being held with the Libyan authorities on how to deal with the hijack issue.

Following reports that the plane was heading to Egypt but Cairo rejected to receive it, the Egyptian authorities said they had not been asked to receive the kidnapped plane. The hijackers rejected Libyan requests that they release women and children on the flight and allow provisions onto the plane, refusing any negotiations and demanding the refueling, the official said.

Darfur rebel SLM denied the responsibility of the kidnapping saying it is an attempt from the government to divert attention from Kalama killing by government forces yesterday. Sudanese troops attacked the immense camp of Kalma on Monday morning killing dozens of IDPs. The peacekeeping mission said today that they participated in the burial of 33 victims on Tuesday.

This hijacking is the second one conducted by Darfuri since the start of the conflict in 2003. In January 2007, a Sudanese from Darfur hijacked a plane taking off from Khartoum and forced the pilot at gunpoint to fly to neighboring Chad.

Darfur rebel chief denies involvement in kidnapping of Sudanese plane

(Sudan Tribune) – Abdel-Wahid Mohamed Al-Nur, the leader of the legacy group of the Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM) vehemently rejected news reports that hijackers of a Sudanese plane kidnapped today are members of his movement.

The Qatar based Al-Jazeera TV identified the hijackers as belonging to the SLM faction led by Al-Nur.

The Sudanese passenger plane was carrying about 100 people on a trip from Nyala to Khartoum. The plane landed in Kufra, Southeastern Libya.

Libya talks to Sudan jet hijackers after passengers freed

TRIPOLI (AFP) — Two hijackers claiming to be Darfur rebels on Wednesday released all 87 passengers from a Sudanese jet at a remote Libyan airport, keeping the crew captive for a reported bid to fly to France.

"All of the passengers have left the plane," a Libyan official told AFP from Kufra oasis where the aircraft was forced to land on Tuesday evening after being hijacked en route from Darfur's main city of Nyala to Khartoum.

"The two hijackers and the seven crew are still inside. We are continuing to negotiate with them," he said, requesting anonymity. A Sudanese official said there were eight crew on board. The jet was granted permission to land by Libyan authorities at the isolated World War II-era airport in the southeast of the country, close to the Sudanese border, after it ran short on fuel. The passengers had reportedly been given water but no food and some fainted when the air conditioning failed in the searing desert heat.

Sudan called on the Libyan authorities to arrest and deport to Khartoum the "terrorist" hijackers, saying that Libya was being "very helpful" as the crisis entered its second day.

"We are condemning first the hijacking of a civilian aeroplane and we are now in continuous contact and consultation with the Libyan authorities in Kufra airport," foreign ministry spokesman Ali al-Sadiq told AFP.

No Darfur movement has claimed public responsibility, but the director of Kufra airport said the hijackers belong to a faction of the Sudanese Liberation Army, whose exiled leader Abdel Wahid Mohammed Nur lives in Paris.

"It is not clear whether there is one or more, or whether they belong to Abdel Wahid. We're not expecting him to say yes," Sadiq said.

Nur, whose group was one of two Darfur movements that first rose up against the Arab-dominated government in 2003, denied any involvement.

Ibrahim al-Hillo, a commander in the same SLA faction denied any involvement from within the movement, but suggested in a telephone call to AFP that the hijackers could be sympathisers of the Paris-based rebel leader.

"We don't have any relation with that hijacking. Civilians, they're angry, they'll behave like that. They may agree with Abdel Wahid but in our structure we have no decision like this to hijack a civilian airplane," he told AFP.

The pilot said "the hijackers claim to have coordinated with him (Nur) to join him in Paris," Kufra airport director Khaled Saseya told Libya's official JANA news agency. Saseya said the hijackers have demanded a flight plan to Paris and fuel. But Nur denied any involvement. "We categorically deny the responsibility of our movement in this hijacking operation," he said in a telephone interview on Al-Jazeera television.

The SLA has fractured into multiple groups headed by different field commanders over the more than five years of war in Sudan's western Darfur region. In Paris, French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner said that "everything is being considered" to protect the lives of those on board, while not saying explicitly whether France was prepared to receive the plane.

Abdel Hafez Abdel Rahim, spokesman for Sudan's Civil Aviation Authority, said there were 95 people on the plane, including eight crew members, and among the 87 passengers were two Egyptians and a Kenyan. "No one declared responsibility for the hijacking. All the rebels until now denied the operation," the spokesman said.

Three high-ranking members of a former Darfur rebel movement that signed a peace treaty with the government in 2006 were on the hijacked flight, said an official in the Minni Minawi faction of the Sudan Liberation Movement. Sudan has a history of hijacking incidents, having both received and been the country of origin of hijacked planes.