



Local News Headlines

- Sarkozy has to convince Abdel Wahid to join negotiations (*Al Raed*)
- Breakup within United SLA (*Al Sudani*)
- Museveni pledges not to hand over Kony to the ICC (*Al Sudani*)
- Crewmen of hijacked Ukrainian ship attempt to rebel (*Al Sudani*)
- A call to stop Ocampo's move (*Al Sudani*)
- Al Mahdi and Al Mirghani voice strong stands on Occampo's move (*Akhbar Al Youm*)

Websites / International Headlines

- Sudan defiant on warning by French president over ICC indictment (*Sudan Tribune*)
- Sudan's Bashir must change or face trial-France (*Reuters*)
- Human rights still not a reality for all, top UN official says (*UN News center*)
- Elections to be held on schedule says 2nd VP Taha (*Sudan Tribune Website*)
- UN Secretary-General Reiterates His Call for Immediate and Unconditional Ceasefire (*UN*)
- SPLM launches investigation into death of SLM's commander (*Miraya FM*)
- National roundtable alarmed by "deteriorating media freedom" (*Sudan Tribune Website*)
- JEM request for exclusive talks with government rejected (*Miraya FM*)
- South Sudan Parliament endorses 27 bills (*Miraya FM*)
- South Sudan Cabinet approves reduction of salary (*Miraya FM*)
- Scenarios-What next for Uganda's rebels? (*Reuters*)
- GoSS describes LRA as a 'terrorist group' (*Miraya FM*)
- Kony will not be delivered to the ICC if he signs peace- Uganda's Museveni. (*Sudan Tribune Website*)
- Russia intends to return to Africa - president's envoy in Sudan (*ITAR-TASS*)
- Policy group on genocide urges changes to US agencies (*Sudan Tribune Website*)
- South Sudan leader Kiir to visit Darfur for first time since peace deal (*Sudan Radio Service*)

Commentaries

- Sudan New Mandate: Post AL-Bashir arrest and failure of CPA (*Sudan Tribune*)
- Bashir's day of reckoning may soon be near (*The Washington Times*)

NOTE: Reproduction here does not mean that the UNMIS PIO can vouch for the accuracy or veracity of the contents, nor does this report reflect the views of the United Nations Mission in Sudan. Furthermore, international copyright exists on some materials and this summary should not be disseminated beyond the intended list of recipients.

Highlights

Local News Headlines

Sarkozy has to convince Abdel Wahid to join negotiations

(Al Raed) – The Government called on French President Sarkozy to stop putting pressure on Khartoum and to adopt a more helpful approach by convincing Abdel Wahid Nour to join the forthcoming Doha negotiations.

NCP Political Secretary Mohamed Mandour Al Mahdi told Al Raed that “Sarkozy has to put pressure on the armed groups since his country hosts Abdel Wahid who rejects to join negotiations”.

Breakup within United SLA

(Al Sudani) - The SLA faction led by Field Commander Siddiq Massalit who was killed a few days ago in Southern Sudan has strongly condemned dismissed United SLA Chairman Ahmed Abdel Shafi and the SPLA, accusing them of involvement in the Massalit killing.

The faction also announced formation of a new movement the Popular Democratic Front. Influential SLA leaders attributed Abdel Shafi dismissal to the recent incident and other organizational reasons. They also stressed the importance of identifying those responsible for the incident.

Meanwhile, an SPLM Spokesperson stated that the results of the investigation would be announced. He denied SPLM involvement on the incident.

Museveni pledges not to hand over Kony to the ICC

(Al Sudani) - Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni, meeting with Riak Machar and the LRA negotiator David Matsanga, pledged not to hand over LRA leader Joseph Kony if the latter signed a peace deal with the Ugandan Government. Matsanga conveyed a number of conditions put by Kony in order to sign a peace deal.

Earlier, GoSS Presidential Affairs Minister Luka Piong indicated that force may be used in response to what he called the violations committed by the LRA against citizens in Southern Sudan.

Crewmen of hijacked Ukrainian ship attempt to rebel

(Al Sudani) - Somalia's pirates who hijacked the Ukrainian ship said the captured crewmen attempted to rebel against them. "Some crew members on the Ukrainian ship are misbehaving. They tried to harm two of our gunmen late Monday," one of the pirates told AFP by phone. "Maybe some of the crewmen are frustrated and we are feeling the same but our boys never opted for violence, this was a provocation," he said, adding that the crewmen involved risked serious punishment.

The pirates on Sunday accused the owners the ship of stalling on a ransom payment and threatened to pull out of a deal for its release struck a week ago.

A call to stop Ocampo's move

(Al Sudani) - The Political Parties and Organizations Board has called on the SC and the ICC to halt the ICC Prosecutor's move against President Al Bashir. They described the process as an offence against the Sudanese people. The Board noted that the move would set back all efforts to achieve peace and stability in Sudan.

Al Mahdi and Al Mirghani voice strong stands on Occampo's move

Akhbar Al Youm reports via an editorial written by Chief Editor that Imam Al Sadig al Mahdi in Eid Speech commented on Ocampo's decision and said it might open a new front for confrontation and destabilize the country leading to more crimes. According to the paper, Al Mahdi agreed in principle with justice and accountability for any crimes committed in Darfur.

The paper also quoted Al Mirghani as saying: "We reiterate that we will not hand over Al Bashir and we will not let him down. However, we call on him to consult widely with those qualified to reach a minimum level of agreement to avoid the risk and block foreign intervention in Sudan".

Websites / International Headlines

Sudan defiant on warning by French president over ICC indictment

Sudan Tribune website, 9/12/08 (PARIS) — The Sudanese government reacted angrily to statements by French president Nicolas Sarkozy in which he warned that President Omer Hassan Al-Bashir has "little time" to take bold steps that brings peace to the war ravaged region of Darfur.

"Either he changes his attitude and the international community can hold discussions with him, or he does not change his attitude and will have to face up to his responsibilities, including before the International Criminal Court" Sarkozy said in an address to mark 60 years since the adoption of the UN rights declaration.

The remarks drew sharp rebuke from Khartoum.

"France has always played a negative role in the Darfur peace process since the Abuja talks in 2006" the Sudanese foreign spokesperson Ali Al-Sadiq told the daily ***Al-Sharq Al-Awsat*** today. "The statements by the French president sends wrong signals to Darfur rebels" he added.

France has been the only country to publicly offer Sudan a suspension of charges in return for concessions on the ground with regard to the Darfur crisis and relations with neighboring Chad. Sudanese officials had appeared increasingly optimistic that Paris and London would push for a suspension.

However, Eric Chevalier, the spokesperson of the French foreign ministry told reporters today that stalling the ICC move "is not on the table". "We are waiting from the Sudanese government what its people want to see particularly in Darfur" Chevalier said in statements reported by Italian news agency (AKI). "A radical and immediate change for policies taken by authorities particularly on ceasefire, strengthening relations with Chad, removing obstacles for deployment of peacekeepers and complying with ICC decisions" he added.

The French official further said that his government supports Qatari mediation efforts in Darfur "as long as it doesn't raise the issue of invoking Article 16 as its goal".

But Al-Sadiq reiterated his government's position that they will not cooperate with The Hague based court.

The Sudanese ambassador in Paris Suleiman Mustafa said that “no one will force to deal with the ICC or open channels with it or take any move in that direction”. Mustafa called on countries “that blame Sudan” to press the Darfur rebel groups to respond to peace efforts.

At the heart of disagreements between the two countries is the continuing presence in France of SLM leader Abdel-Wahid Al-Nur despite demands by Khartoum that he be expelled.

Sudan's Bashir must change or face trial-France

(Reuters) - Sudanese President Omar Hassan al-Bashir must move quickly to bring peace to the Darfur region or face trial for genocide, French President Nicolas Sarkozy said on Monday. "His future is in his hands," Sarkozy said in a speech to mark the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

"Either he changes his attitude and the international community can talk to him, or he does not change his attitude and then he will face his responsibilities, notably before the International Criminal Court," Sarkozy said.

"The choice that President Bashir, the Sudanese president, must make is a choice he must make not in the coming weeks but in the coming days," he said.

Judges at the International Criminal Court in The Hague are considering a request by the ICC prosecutor Luis Moreno-Ocampo for a warrant to arrest Bashir for alleged crimes in Darfur.

Moreno-Ocampo has expressed concern that the United Nations Security Council, of which France is one of five permanent members, might hinder investigations.

Arab and African states have proposed invoking Article 16 of the ICC statute, which allows the Security Council to delay investigations for a year or more. But Sarkozy said that Bashir was running out of options.

"If the Sudanese president does not change his policy, no one will talk to him any more," he said

Human rights still not a reality for all, top UN official says

(UN News center) - The promises enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) remain unfulfilled for tens of millions of people worldwide, the top United Nations human rights official said yesterday, on the eve of the landmark document's 60th anniversary.

After World War II, many were determined to ensure that there would never be another Holocaust and that everyone – especially the poor, hungry, displaced and marginalized – would have institutions and laws to protect them, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay told reporters in New York.

The Declaration states that everyone has the right to life, liberty and security and that all – regardless of race, gender, color, sex, language, religion or political opinion – are equal before the law.

“Despite all our efforts over the past 60 years, this anniversary will pass many people by,” the High Commissioner said.

“Tens of millions of people around the world are still unaware that they have rights that they can demand, and that their governments are accountable to them, and to a wide-ranging body of rights-based national and international law,” she added.

Ms. Pillay also stressed that the global financial crisis could compound the dire situation faced by the poorest and most marginalized people around the world, adding that poverty is both the cause and a result of human rights violations.

“We will need to be extremely vigilant over the coming months to ensure that development programmes and social safety nets are maintained or enhanced, so the effects of the crisis do not become calamitous,” she said.

Despite the growing influence of the Internet enabling journalists, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other civil society groups to expose human rights abuses, “no country in the world can sit back complacently and say, ‘We’re there,’” said the High Commissioner.

Welcoming the designation of 2009 as the International Year of Human Rights Learning, she encouraged governments, teachers, parents and “others in a position of responsibility all across the planet to take this opportunity to ensure that the next generation is given the maximum opportunity to claim what was promised to them in that extraordinary document known as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.”

In related news, a special UN advisor to the General Assembly President on water issues said today that the right to water must either be added to the UDHR or else be enshrined in a separate covenant.

Waterborne diseases are the leading cause of death for children, and “in every single case, if their parents could afford clean water, they would not have to die,” said Maude Barlow.

Characterizing the situation as “the most powerful and important face of inequity in our world,” she underscored the need to protect the world’s finite water sources as a human right.

“With declining fresh water sources and the demand growing so quickly, we’re now at a situation in the world where who owns and controls water is going to be very powerful,” the advisor cautioned.

Elections to be held on schedule says 2nd VP Taha

Sudan Tribune website, 9/12/08 (KHARTOUM) — The Sudanese 2nd Vice President Ali Osman Taha dismissed widespread speculations that the elections scheduled for 2009 would be delayed over logistical difficulties. “The reasons that would cause a postponement of elections in any country and not just Sudan are plenty and easy but the government proved its seriousness of moving towards the polls” Taha told the daily *Al-Sudani* in a rare interview. “Why would we establish an electoral board if there is any doubt that it will take place?” Taha asked.

The CPA signed on 9 January 2005 between the NCP and the SPLM calls for elections no later than July 2009 as part of a democratic transition in the country.

But observers raise doubts about the organization of the general elections next year. The independent commission is the sole institution that has the authority to fix that date of the elections and to delay it.

Last month a UN consultative team of experts advised the semi-autonomous southern Sudan government to postpone the next year general elections to November 2009 till the end of rainy season in order to avoid the logistical complications.

Furthermore the results of the fifth Sudan Population and Housing Census will not be released until next February. The constituencies are to be defined according to the number of population counted during the census.

The 2nd Vice President said that “there has never been an agreement over elections in the history of Sudan”.

However, Darfur rebel groups, including peace signatories, have called for postponing the elections until the conflict is resolved and displaced Darfuris can return to their villages.

UN Secretary-General Reiterates His Call for Immediate and Unconditional Ceasefire

(Statement attributable to the Spokesperson for the Secretary-General)

9 December 2008 -- UNAMID investigated reports of aerial attacks by the Government of Sudan from 21 to 22 November in Abu Dungal, South Darfur, and confirmed visible effects of air strikes, including four craters created by bombing and the presence of unexploded ordnance on the ground.

The Secretary-General reiterates his call for all parties to use restraint and renew their commitment to an immediate and unconditional ceasefire. The Secretary-General further expresses his disappointment that military activity by the Government continues in Darfur, particularly in light of the 12 November announcement of an immediate ceasefire by the Government.

SPLM launches investigation into death of SLM's commander

(*Miraya FM*) - The Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) Spokesperson Yein Mathew told *Miraya FM* that the movement formed a committee to investigate the death of United Sudan Liberation Movement's field commander Siddiq Abdel Kareem also known as Siddiq Masaleet, in Wau town last October, after the SPLA intervened in a conflict between leaders of the Darfur movement.

Mathew denied the involvement of the Sudan People's Liberation Army in the incident, pointing out that SPLA shall announce the findings of the investigations on time. The United Sudan Liberation Movement earlier called on the Sudan People's Liberation Movement to investigate the circumstances which lead to the death of one of its commanders in Wau, Siddiq Masaleet.

The United SLM spokesperson Issam el Haj told *Miraya FM* that a group of SPLA invaded SLM's military camp in Wau after a conflict between SLM leader Ahmed Abdel Shafie and Masaleet. A conflict over deployment of the SLM forces to Darfur led to arrest Masaleet and several other leaders last October. Al Haj pointed out that Masaleet's corpse was later found in the region.

National roundtable alarmed by “deteriorating media freedom”

Sudan Tribune website, 9/12/08 (JUBA) – A group of journalists, civil society groups, and international media development organisations are alarmed by "the deteriorating state of freedom of expression and media freedom in Sudan." The National Roundtable group forged a resolution December 2 during a meeting of 34 Sudanese journalists and media professionals in Juba, held

under the auspices of the Sudan Consortium, a coalition of media groups supported by the European Commission and Norwegian Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

The roundtable discussed in-force and draft national media legislation, and highlighted the need for urgent reform of National and Southern Sudan media legislation, ahead of the scheduled 2009 national elections. "The meeting was deeply concerned by the crackdown on journalists, media professionals and media houses throughout the country, and most particularly in Khartoum," said a statement issued by London-based ARTICLE 19. "The increasing of censorship of newspapers, the harassment, detention and torture of media practitioners has reached alarming levels in Sudan," it added.

The meeting was opened by Gabriel Changson Chang, the Southern Sudan minister of information and broadcasting.

Freedom of expression and media freedom are guaranteed under the provisions of the Interim National Consitution and the Interim Constitution of South Sudan, which were established in accordance with the terms of a peace agreement in 2005. However, the roundtable called for an end to what it called "acts of repression against the media" and drew attention to the particular role of the Sudanese National Security and Intelligence Forces (NISS) in imposing censorship on the media.

The journalists also called for repealing the Press Act of 2004.

JEM request for exclusive talks with government rejected

(Miraya FM) - The Sudan Liberation Movement-United Faction rejected the Justice-and-Equality-Movement's call for exclusive negotiations with the government.

Issam el Haj told Miraya FM that this demand shows a narrow view of Justice-and-Equality-Movement.

Leader of SLM-Unity faction Suleiman Jamous said JEM's position in the field does not allow it to ask for bilateral negotiations with the government. Jamous told Miraya FM that most of JEM forces are based in Chad. He stressed "all parties to the crisis in Darfur should jointly negotiate a resolution"

Earlier, JEM had made a condition to the government to hold exclusive bilateral talks, if it is willing to participate in the upcoming Darfur peace talks in Qatari capital, Doha.

South Sudan Parliament endorses 27 bills

(Miraya FM) - The Minister of Parliamentary Affairs in the Government of Southern Sudan Dr. Martin Elia Lomoro, assured that the Southern Sudan Legislative Assembly has endorsed twenty seven bills including investment, contracts, revenue and SPLA. The minister did not overrule the assembly's delay in approving several draft bills saying that the process involves revision and redrafting.

South Sudan Cabinet approves reduction of salary

(Miraya FM) - Juba- As southern Sudanese celebrates Eid al Adha, feast of sacrifices and Catholic diocese of Eastern Equatoria marks silver jubilee of its existence today, the Council of

ministers approved for salary reduction of ten per cent on constitutional post holders starting from January 2009, official spokesman Gabriel Changson Chang has said.

Minister Chang said the decision was taken in order to remedy GOSS from Global Economic crisis where oil price fell to \$50 per barrel. Adding that those affected ranges from South Sudan, states, independent commissions, commissioners, speakers, deputy speakers, chairpersons and deputy chairpersons respectively.

Addressing journalists, Minister Gabriel Changson says the precautionary measures are taken in order to avoid the current short fall in oil prices likely to affect coming South Sudan government budget of 2009.

The cabinet also directed minister of finance and Economic planning to prepare 2009 budget based on current oil price so that it does not affect socio-economic development and to compelled ministries, governors and commissioners accountable during implementation faces.

The meeting also resolved to reduce traveling for short courses abroad and directed that government officials living in hotels at expenses of government must stop immediately.

The council further directed ministries of Agriculture and Animal resources to give priority to food security by introducing large scale mechanization farming to boost agricultural production and reduce market prices.

The council also resolved that ministries and commissions are to merging or amalgamated to pave way for a lean size cabinet. While state governors are required to render full report on their activities to council of ministers. The extraordinary eight hours meeting was chaired by Gen. Salva Kiir Mayardit.

SCENARIOS-What next for Uganda's rebels?

(Reuters) - Following Kony's latest no-show, countries in the region may opt to attack the rebels, currently holed up in eastern Congo.

In June, Uganda, Sudan and Congo agreed in principle to joint operations against the LRA, which some analysts say could put enough pressure on Kony to force him to sign.

But a swift victory would be unlikely against the guerrillas who have been in the area for some time and are used to launching hit-and-run attacks against much larger, better-equipped forces.

Congo's army lacks the capacity to fight the LRA and is already under strain after being routed by its own insurgents in eastern regions.

A U.N. peacekeeping force in eastern Congo is overstretched and still haunted by a botched attack in 2006 when eight Guatemalan special forces were killed by battle-hardened LRA rebels.

It is unlikely Congo would allow Ugandan forces onto its territory to chase rebels given Kampala's past interventions in eastern Congo.

In Sudan, the semi-autonomous southern government is preoccupied by problems with a 2005 peace deal with the northern Khartoum government.

Kony signs

Kony demands guarantees that he will not be prosecuted by the International Criminal Court (ICC), which wants him for war crimes, but the court has made clear it has no intention of dropping the case.

The LRA chief has snubbed mediators for months since failing to turn up in April to sign a final peace deal.

He met Ugandan elders at the end of November after mediators gave the guerrilla chief until the end of the month to sign, but again refused to sign when the moment came.

Uganda says it will ask the ICC to defer the arrest warrants once Kony signs, but the rebel leader is wary. Even if he does sign, Kony will mostly likely stay in the bush and not disarm until the ICC warrants are scrapped.

Return to war in Uganda.

Since a ceasefire between rebels and the government more than two years ago, northern Uganda has enjoyed unprecedented stability and renewed economic activity.

Uganda's army has fortified its positions in the north to prevent future LRA incursions.

But the rebels usually operate in small groups, which might infiltrate across the border and then dig up weapons' caches hidden in some northern areas, according to analysts.

It would only take one or two well-publicised attacks by the rebels to undo some of the gains in the north.

The rebels are more of a menace outside Uganda's borders in the unstable region taking in parts of south Sudan, Congo and the Central African Republic.

Regional destabilization.

There is a possibility that the LRA rebels could be used as a proxy force against south Sudan's semi-autonomous government if Sudan's 2005 peace deal falls apart ahead of national elections in 2009 and a secession referendum in 2011.

The LRA rebels were long-supported by Sudan's ruling National Congress Party (NCP).

Khartoum wants to protect its oil interests in the areas bordering northern and southern Sudan, which could be lost if the south secedes.

Status quo.

Kony's rebels have camped out in the remote regions bordering Sudan, Congo and Central African Republic since the peace process started in 2006.

Human rights groups say Kony has abducted hundreds of children during that time. The small-scale assaults on remote border villages could continue while world attention is focused on other conflicts in central Africa, leaving Kony to re-arm and recruit.

GoSS describes LRA as a 'terrorist group'

(Miraya FM) The Government of Southern Sudan described the Ugandan rebel group the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) as a terrorist group, stressing that it should stop its activities completely.

The Southern Sudan Minister of Cabinet Affaires Dr. Luka Biong told Miraya FM that activities of the LRA have negatively impacted many regions in the south.

He said the refusal of LRA leader Joseph Kony to sign the final peace deal with the Ugandan government is unacceptable, adding that the violations committed by the LRA in the south will make the Government of South Sudan use force in defense of its citizens.

Kony will not be delivered to the ICC if he signs peace- Uganda's Museveni

(Sudan Tribune Website) The Ugandan President has sent strong commitment to the elusive rebel leader Joseph Kony that he would not be handed over to the International Criminal Court (ICC) if he signs a deal peace negotiated with his government.

Yoweri Museveni met on Monday with the Vice-President of Southern Sudan and the top negotiator of the rebel Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) David Nyekorach-Matsanga who transmitted a number of demands made by the rebel chief Kony .

The Ugandan president renewed to Matsanga his commitment to not deliver Kony, who is indicted of war crimes and killing around ten thousands of people in northern Uganda, to the ICC. He further said ready to talk about the issue directly with the rebel leader by telephone.

The Ugandan government refuses to appeal to the UN Security Council for the deferral of the charges against Kony before the signing of peace agreement.

Under a protocol signed last February between Kampala and the rebel group in Juba on accountability and reconciliation, Kony and two other rebel officials would be tried after the signing of the peace deal by a local court.\

The peace agreement provides for the establishment of a special division of the High Court of Uganda to try individuals who are alleged to have committed serious crimes during the conflict. Traditional justice is also recognized in the agreement to form a central part of the alternative justice and reconciliation framework.

The ICC has repeatedly refused to withdraw the charges against Kony and his commanders in what is seen as a test case for the fledgling human rights court. The Ugandan rebel leader failed to show up three times to sign a final peace deal sealed with his delegation after two years of peace negotiations sponsored by the southern Sudan government.

Matsanga said that Kony wants lawyers to explain him the principle of complementarity or the relation between the Ugandan legal system and the ICC.

The two parties also discussed the need to supply the LRA troops with food. Museveni told the rebel envoy that they could receive food as long as they assemble in Ri-Kwangba as it is agreed in the agreement. Policy group on genocide urges changes to US agencies.

Russia intends to return to Africa - president's envoy in Sudan

ITAR-TASS, 8/12/08, Moscow -- Russia is returning to Africa after a pause in the 1990s, said Mikhail Margelov, chairman of the international committee of the Federation Council, who was appointed today [8 December] special representative of the Russian president in Sudan.

"In the recent times, the economic and, consequently, the political interests of the USA, the EU, Japan, China and India have been meeting in Africa. Russia is returning to this continent too, after a pause in the 1990s," Margelov told journalists. In particular, "Russia's relations with the largest African country, Sudan, are developing successfully, cooperation is under way in all sectors: foreign policy, the economic and military-technical sectors," Margelov said. Russia is supplying products of the machine-building industry to Sudan, joint projects on modernization of Sudanese railways are being developed, the partnership in the energy sector is being established, the annual trade totals 30m dollars, he said.

At a recent meeting at the Federation Council, Sudanese parliamentarians said that "they count on Russia's more effective participation in the economic and humanitarian life of the country, on it [Sudan] becoming Russia's gates to Africa," Margelov said. They are ready "to offer benefits to Russian companies," he added.

However, the development of mutually beneficial cooperation with Africa in general and with separate [African] countries "is subject to considerable political risks: Africa as well as the Middle East and Central Asia is in the focus of attention of the world community as a highly unstable region," Margelov said. Friendly Sudan is no exception, with the country's south and west - Darfur - affected by conflicts".

While developing relations with Sudan, Russia "is interested in political stability in this country and our position is that an end to the crisis can only be put by political means", Margelov said. The problems of Sudan and other African countries should be resolved without "direct interference", he said. What we need is "a complex approach to resolving conflict situations, a full consideration of all sides' opinions, first of all of the population of the region," Margelov added. [Passage omitted]

Policy group on genocide urges changes to US agencies

(Sudan Tribune Website) - Washington – Three U.S. institutions issued a policy plan for developing standing mechanisms in government agencies for preventing and addressing genocide worldwide.

The report deliberately makes few references to Sudan because it focuses on institutional reform and general approaches to mass atrocities. However, the report potentially has implications for Sudan because the U.S. government declared the situation in Darfur to be genocide in September 2004.

Former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and Former Secretary of Defense William Cohen headed the task force responsible for the 174-page document released on Monday. Other task force members included John Danforth, a former U.S. envoy to Sudan, and Jack Kemp, a former Republican Party presidential and vice-presidential candidate.

Under Danforth's leadership the current administration helped to broker a 2005 north-south peace deal in the Sudan, but another war had already begun in 2003 in the remote western region of Darfur.

The task force was jointly convened by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, the American Academy of Diplomacy and the United States Institute of Peace, beginning in November 2007.

Its ranks were joined by several members of President-elect Obama's national security transition team. For instance, the sub-group on "employing military options" included Sarah Sewall, who is a Harvard colleague of Samantha Power, another Obama advisor and Darfur activist.

The report recommends that the president create an interagency Atrocities Prevention Committee at the National Security Council. Special alert channels in the intelligence agencies and State Department would thus send information directly to the National Security Council.

"There would actually be very senior government officials who are able to take this information and understand the options," explained Victoria Holt, a researcher who worked primarily on the military aspect of the report. "The general theory of this is that both from senior leadership and by embedding in our government more of a focus on mass atrocities and genocide, this could be applicable to any case, but potentially also Sudan."

The American policy advisors also recommend developing military guidance on genocide response and launching a major diplomatic effort to create an international network for information-sharing and coordinated action.

"We are keenly aware that the incoming president's agenda will be massive and daunting from day one," wrote Albright and Cohen. "But preventing genocide and mass atrocities is not an idealistic add-on to our core foreign policy agenda. It is a moral and strategic imperative."

Other parts of the report determine that diplomats and intelligence officers should be trained to look for early warning signs of mass atrocities.

These indicators would "trigger policy review in a way that more generalized conflict would not," said Holt. "And so there's an argument about what the level of violence is and what the current challenges are in Sudan. But if this were in place—if there was an escalation or a vision that there are mass atrocities—then our government would be better

on its own and working with others to recognize that earlier and understand the implications."

If the United States were to intervene in a foreign conflict, said the task force, then UN Security Council Resolutions offer "unparalleled legitimacy in the eyes of world governments." But the team also pointed to policy options that could bypass the Security Council, such as strengthening regional organizations like the African Union or NATO.

Failing at that, the State Department could assemble a "coalition of like-minded actors" willing to intervene, according to the doctrine espoused in the report.

Generally, the task force encouraged an institutional approach to human rights consistent with that advanced by much of the incoming Democratic administration. But the document also reflects the influence of other diplomatic attitudes. For instance, the report's position on the UN Human Rights Council recalls certain opinions expressed by Ambassador Richard Williamson, the current envoy to Sudan.

Williamson, who was consulted by the task force, served as the U.S. representative to the Council's predecessor, the UN Commission on Human Rights. He viewed the body as needing reform.

South Sudan leader Kiir to visit Darfur for first time since peace deal

Nairobi-based, USAID-funded *Sudan Radio Service*, 9/12/08, Juba -- GoSS President Salva Kiir, is to visit Darfur for the first time since the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in 2005. In a press conference held in Juba on Friday [5 December], SPLM spokesman Yien Mathew, told the media that President Kiir is visiting Darfur this month to meet the people and to acquire "more understanding" about the peace process in Darfur. He said that the decision came after delegates to the SPLM's third political bureau meeting expressed their concern about the political and humanitarian situation in Darfur.

[Yien Mathew]: "Delegates decided that an advance team is to be sent to Darfur from the political bureau of the SPLM. They will go to Darfur to pave the way for the chairman of the SPLM to visit Darfur to understand what is happening, to meet civilians and the different agencies there." Mathew said that Salva Kiir will also visit some of the states in the north and east of the country. He will also go to Southern Kurdufan and the Nuba Mountains. He said that the decision to visit Darfur is in line with SPLM efforts to encourage anti-government groups in Darfur to come to a common understanding prior to peace talks with the Government of National Unity.

Commentaries

Sudan New Mandate: Post AL-Bashir arrest and failure of CPA

Commentary by Steve Paterno *Sudan Tribune*.08/12/2008

http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?page=imprimable&id_article=29512

Bashir's day of reckoning may soon be near. [Op-Ed].

By Nat Hentoff. *The Washington Times*.08/12/2008. (AM).

<http://unhq-apps-01.un.org/dpi/nmu.nsf/ac/2008-12-09GVEL-7M6JLS>

We're on the Web!

See us at:

www.unmis.org

United Nations Mission In Sudan - Public Information Office

Address: UNMIS Headquarters, P.O. Box 69, Ibeid Khatim St, Khartoum 11111, SUDAN

Phone: (+249-1) 8708 6000 - Fax: (+249-1) 8708 6200