



## Local News Headlines

- NCP, SPLM partnership in S-Kordofan stalls (**Akhir Lahza**)
- Sana'a Forum concludes sixth summit in Khartoum (**Sudan Vision**)
- UN lauds Government concern with disabled children (**Sudan Vision**)
- Police to secure New Year parties (**Al-Watan**)
- FVP off to US on Sunday (**Al-Khartoum**)
- JEM visit to US postponed indefinitely (**Dailies**)
- Thursday official holiday (**Dailies**)

## Websites/International Headlines

- UN-AU interpreter slain in Darfur (**ST**)
- Arab Gulf states criticize ICC move against Sudan President (**ST**)
- LRA attacks threaten food security- WES governor (**ST**)
- Qatari mediators disregard Darfur former rebels – official (**ST**)
- Sudanese parliament adjourns until February (**ST**)
- Sudan's SPLM delegation to leave for USA 30 December (**Miraya FM**)
- Machar's wife escapes assassination (**ST**)

## Commentary

- RDF boots in Darfur reshaping peacekeeping in Africa (New Times Rwanda)

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# Highlights

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## Local Arabic and English Language Press

### *NCP, SPLM partnership in S-Kordofan stalls*

**Akhir Lahza** reports NCP and SPLM in Southern Kordofan have traded charges over the slow progress of their partnership and the worsening situation. NCP official Ahmed Haroun said S-Kordofan Protocol is achieved by 16%. SPLM accused NCP of military buildup on the pretext of JEM presence in the area. S-Kordofan State Assembly member Al-Hindi Siddiq Mansour accused NCP of distributing arms to residents. State Governor Omer Suleiman criticized the International Crisis Group's claim that S-Kordofan could be another Darfur. However, Justice Party chairman Mekki Belayel claimed that what is happening in S-Kordofan could be even worse.

### *Sana'a Forum concludes sixth summit in Khartoum*

**Sudan Vision** reports leaders and heads of state of Sana'a Forum expressed deep concern over the ICC step which they said will adversely impact Arab and African efforts to achieve peace in Darfur as well as efforts to bolster peace in Eastern Sudan. Forum leaders also called on the Security Council to adopt the necessary measures to end to violence against civilians in Gaza and to resolve the Arab-Israeli struggle.

President Al Bashir meanwhile asserted Sudan's commitment to all its obligations toward UNAMID troops and said it was the international community and the United Nations that had failed to deploy UNAMID troops.

According to **Akhir Lahza**, President Bashir condemned the massacre in the Gaza Strip and accused the US of complicity with Israel. He said the UNSC failed to issue a resolution to end Israel aggression because it is influenced by policies of failed states. He reiterated his rejection of the ICC Prosecutor Ocampo's allegations. He again stressed the government's commitment to resolve the Darfur crisis within the framework of the DPA, Sudan People Initiative and the Arab-African-Qatari initiative.

### *UN lauds Government concern with disabled children*

**Sudan Vision** reports that the UN has praised the government's concern for people with disabilities and its support of organizations operating in that field. UNSC Envoy for the Handicapped Shiekha Hafsa bint Hamad Al Thani discussed conditions of disabled persons in Sudan, the challenges that face them and accomplishments in this field when she met with voluntary organizations yesterday.

Shiekha Hafsa also met with the North DDR Commission and the director of the Special Needs Department Ibtisam Khider on progress report about reintegration of disabled beneficiaries of the DDR programme.

### *Police to secure New Year parties*

**Al-Watan** reports Khartoum State police began implementing a plan to secure New Year parties. Khartoum State Police DG Gen. Mohamed Osman Mohamed Nur said police forces have been deployed and patrols intensified for the purpose.

According to ***Al-Khartoum***, Nur warned that police would not tolerate unlawful practices such as throwing eggs and flour at passersby. "Such practices would be strictly dealt with", he said.

Meanwhile, ***Ray Al-Shaab*** reports that members of the Supreme Islamic Council of the Ministry of Guidance and Endowment plan to request the Khartoum State Governor to ban New Year parties in solidarity with the people of Gaza.

### ***FVP off to US on Sunday***

***Al-Khartoum*** reports FVP Kiir is to leave for the US on Sunday on a 2-day visit to meet President Bush to thank him for his role toward Sudan. Sources said Kiir will also meet SG Ban Ki-moon to discuss peace, Darfur and the ICC issue.

### ***JEM visit to US postponed indefinitely***

***Local dailies*** report the US Administration postponed a JEM planned delegation visit to Washington indefinitely. JEM official Jibril Ibrahim said the visit was postponed due to the US Administration's transition.

### ***Thursday official holiday***

***Local dailies*** report the Cabinet General Secretariat announced that 1 January will be an official holiday across the country to mark Independence Day.

## **Websites/International News Coverage**

### ***UN-AU interpreter slain in Darfur***

***Sudan Tribune website***, 30/12/08, Nyala – A UNAMID employee died in a hail of gunfire in South Darfur on Monday along a road dotted with government checkpoints. He was traveling in a commercial bus when unknown gunmen halted it at Majok village, 5 km from Nyala, and 7 km from Kalma camp. The mystery attackers opened fire on the bus, killing or injuring several people. The slain man was a Sudanese national serving as a language assistant in Kalma.

### ***Arab Gulf states criticize ICC move against Sudan President***

***Sudan Tribune website***, 30/12/08, Muscat -- The annual summit of six Persian Gulf states issued a statement yesterday criticizing the ICC move against Sudanese president Al-Bashir. Leaders of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) concluded a two-day meeting in Oman and "expressed regret to the continuation of the humanitarian suffering in Darfur". The summit also "hailed efforts by the Sudanese government to resolve the crisis and its cooperation with all efforts undertaken for a settlement of Darfur conflict". The GCC summit also expressed solidarity with Sudan and rejected the "unbalanced" position of the ICC prosecutor. The GCC includes Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

### ***LRA attacks threaten food security- WES governor***

***Sudan Tribune website***, 30/12/08, Yambio -- Recent LRA attacks on the innocent civilian populations in Western Equatoria State pose a threat to food security and stability in the state, the state governor said yesterday. The LRA has long terrorized Acholis, southern Sudanese and others with child abductions, murders and trademark mutilations.

"Civil and food insecurity has grown in the villages bordering DRC," stressed Governor Jemma Nunu Kumba. "The LRA are attacking and looting communities, including parts of Maridi, Ibba,

Yambio, Ezo and Nzara counties, as they continue to escape the regional operations," she said, referring to areas bordering DRC.

Kumbu added that, "the state government is working hard for the head count of the refugees and internally displaced persons." She went on to note that "about 2,000 Congolese are believed to be in Nzara and Yambio" following LRA attacks over the last 10 days. UNHCR is screening the refugees, she added, but the continuous influx "is a burden to the state government." She appealed to the international community to provide humanitarian assistance to the state and to support regional efforts to flush out the LRA.

"The LRA insurgency is hampering the implementation of (Sudan's Comprehensive Peace Agreement of 2005) and the post-conflict development in WES," she warned.

She advocated changing the mandate of UNMIS, to match that of MONUC, the UN Mission in Congo, to allow the mission to protect civilians from attack. "The people are afraid to go farming for the second season harvest in fear of being killed or abducted by the LRA, hence causing food dependence," she noted.

According to the South Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation in the state, 260 households around Yambio and Nzara counties have been registered for humanitarian aid.

### ***Qatari mediators disregard Darfur former rebels - official***

**Sudan Tribune website**, 30/12/08, London – SLM-MM, which two days ago asked to be part of future peace talks to end the Darfur conflict, said yesterday that it had yet to be consulted by the Qatari mediation team.

SLM/MM political secretary Abdel Gabar Dosa told **Sudan Tribune** yesterday: "We remain a principal stakeholder in Darfur crisis and we cannot be part of the government delegation because we still have different visions in spite of the signing of Abuja deal". He pointed out that SLM-MM troops constitute a force totally independent from the Sudanese army and that no security arrangements could be decided or implemented on the ground without its participation.

Dosa said the SLM group is not opposed to Qatari efforts. He said the Qataris were acting in good faith but would need to understand all aspects of the five-year conflict before proceeding.

### ***Sudanese parliament adjourns until February***

**Sudan Tribune website**, 30/12/08, Khartoum -- Federal Parliament adjourned yesterday and decided to hold an emergency session at the beginning of February, according to an agreement between the NCP and the SPLM. The agreement was passed by a majority, after the boycott of two sittings by the SPLM and southern Sudan parties, which demanded to extend the work of the parliament.

The agreement requests the executive and the political parties to dispose of remaining bills before January 31 and to hold the first session of the National Assembly on the first Monday of February 2009.

Ghazi Salah Eddin, head of the NCP bloc said that the deal was based on the NCP commitments to the SPLM and other political forces to review a series of laws relating to the democratic transition and the 2011 referendum.

## ***Sudan's SPLM delegation to leave for USA 30 December***

**Radio Miraya FM**, 30/12/08, Juba --An SPLM delegation chaired by GoSS Minister of Presidential Affairs Dr Luka Biong leaves for Washington tomorrow to prepare for the 5 January visit there by first vice president of the republic, GoSS president Salva Kiir Mayardit. SPLM spokesperson Yien Matthew Chol confirmed Kiir would meet outgoing US President Bush, President elect Barack Obama, and UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.

## ***Machar's wife escapes assassination***

**Sudan Tribune website** 30/12/08 -- A senior South Sudan official reportedly escaped unharmed after an unidentified gunman pulled a gun at her but did not fire. According to a report in the London-based ***Al-Sharq Al-Awsat***, State Minister for Energy Angelina Mang was in Unity state when the incident took place. The gunman was taken into custody. Mang, who is the spouse of GoSS VP Riek Machar, told the newspaper that the attempt was politically motivated. She identified the gunman as a member of the SPLM in Alair area.

The paper said that the incident stems from a power struggle within the Nuer tribe between Machar and Unity State Governor Taban Deng. In the past, Deng accused Machar of attempting to remove him from office in order to make his wife governor of the oil-rich state.

## **Commentary**

### ***RDF boots in Darfur reshaping peacekeeping in Africa (The New Times – Rwanda)***

Globally, it is not always obvious that a country is recognized, rewarded and appreciated in peacekeeping operations. Rwanda's contribution to peacekeeping became the focus of the world and attracted international media attention after it become one of the first countries to offer troop contributions to the joint African Union-UN operations to intervene in the troubled region of Darfur.

Rwanda's participation in Peace Support Operations was this year mainly motivated by its need to take up its responsibility as an active member of the international community.

Significantly, in Darfur, Rwanda's deployment into the hybrid AU-UN force has largely satisfied the force's tactical objectives despite certain constrains.

It is in line with this satisfaction that the deputy force Commander's contract RDF two star General Karenzi Karake was renewed.

At the political levels within the UN such as the Security Council and even at the AU levers, this was proof enough that Rwanda's efforts in peacekeeping has been of a great recognition to the entire international community.

Gen. Karake is a distinguished, highly professional officer and his presence in Darfur and that of the entire RDF troop concentrations is likely to offer credence to the overall peacekeeping operations in Darfur during the force's entire tour of duty in Sudan.

As deputy commander of the UNAMID force, Karenzi is one of the key commanders leading the 30,000 strong hybrid force with Rwanda's contingents being considered among the best on the ground.

The resulting effect of this recognition is that the RDF is now considered by the international community as a stabilizing force capable of bringing peace in the troubled Great Lakes region of Africa.