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(By Public Information Office)

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UN/ Agencies

DDR must move forward, says UNMIS deputy chief (ST)

February 18, 2008 (KHARTOUM) — Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) stakeholders must move forward to implement DDR objectives in Sudan, UNMIS Principal Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General Taye-Brook Zerihoun said in Khartoum on 17 February.

"As the DDR effort and our own collaboration turns a new page, we need to move forward together ... most importantly, we must move now from the conceptual to the practical," Zerihoun told the 2008 inaugural session of the National DDR Coordination Council.

He stressed, however, that DDR timelines must be realistic. "We cannot declare demobilization without the necessary resources to provide benefits, whether they be goods, money, training or jobs", he said.

Praising the National Coordinating Council for recently adopting the DDR Strategic Plan, the Deputy Special Representative said the next step under the Comprehensive Peace Agreement was for the parties to begin the process of downsizing their armies.

He noted that reintegration projects should precede demobilization of ex-combatants. "Without successful demobilization and reintegration of former combatants, sustainable peace and the accompanying social and economic development will not be possible," he said.

UNMIS is playing a leading role in coordinating UN system support for DDR with the help of the UN Development Programme, UNICEF, the UN Population Fund and the World Food Programme.

(ST)

New U.N. force seeks to protect Darfur women from rape (ST)

February 18, 2008 (KALMA) — U.N. peacekeepers in armored vehicles and pickup trucks whizzed through this Darfur refugee camp, and a dozen women came to meet them, bringing their donkeys, water rations and homemade axes. It's time for one of the refugees' most perilous tasks: collecting firewood.

One of the first steps taken by U.N. peacekeepers since they launched their mission in Darfur in January is to restore "firewood patrols" to protect women on their forays outside Kalma, home to 90,000 refugees and one of the region's largest camps.

The women walking out of Kalma one morning in late January were smiling and waving hellos as their leader, Khadidja Abdallah, came up to greet the peacekeepers who had come to escort them.

It is a stark contrast to nearly a year ago, in May, when an Associated Press reporter first met Khadidja. Then, the "sheikha," or woman chief, was cowering in a mud hut deep inside Kalma, trying to comfort seven refugee women from her section of the camp who'd been gang-raped while collecting firewood.

UNAMID has restored the firewood patrols at Kalma in an attempt to quickly show they can improve security in Darfur.

"Now, it's every Monday and Thursday," a grinning Khadidja said of the patrols.

The column of U.N. police cars, pickups and three APCs escorted the women some 10 kilometers (6 miles) into the surrounding wasteland to a place known as "the forest," a comparatively less arid stretch of rocky hills where thorny shrubs grow among a few scarce baobab trees - the same area where the seven women were raped last year.

Peacekeepers hope to spread the firewood patrols to the dozens of camps around Darfur, but have begun with Kalma because incidents of rape and violence there have been among the highest. Located only a few miles from UNAMID's headquarters, it also allows for patrols with the UNAMID's current, restricted means.

Even during the firewood patrol, the dangers were still clear. As the peacekeepers began heading back to Kalma in the afternoon, a convoy of government paramilitaries known as the Central Reserve Police Force, rushed by - the force is believed to be largely made up of janjaweed put into uniforms.

The heavily armed men glared at the peacekeepers as their pickups sped within inches of the U.N. vehicles.

(AP)

Sudan not making payments to Darfur fund mandated by DPA – UN (ST)

February 18, 2008 (UNITED NATIONS) — The UN-AU joint mission in Darfur (UNAMID) confirmed that Khartoum is not remitting payments to a special Darfur fund per a peace agreement signed in May 2006.

The Inner City Press online website has asked UNAMID to confirm reports that the Sudanese government is not paying money to the Darfur Reconstruction and Development Fund (DRDF).

UNAMID told Inner City Press that the DPA states that Khartoum must “transfer from the National Revenue Fund into the Darfur Reconstruction and Development Fund an amount equivalent to \$300 million for the year 2006, not less than \$200 million in 2007 and not less than \$200 million in 2008”.

The UNAMID response quoted the DPA implementation team as saying that “as of 05 February 2008, and apart from providing funds to cover the operational expenses of the DRDF, the GoS [Government of Sudan] has not paid any money into the DRDF.”

The Inner City Press reporter suggested that the UN withheld the info from the public for political reasons.

“The UN is saying that the al-Bashir government is more than \$500 million behind in its payments. Why is the UN not saying this louder?” he said.

(ST)

GoNU (CPA, DPA, ESPA)

Ceasefire political committee (CPC) proposes training JIUs to be Sudan’s basic force (Sudan Vision)

By: Al Sammani Awadallah, The Ceasefire Political Commission (CPC) has instructed SAF, SPLA and the Joint Forces to take serious steps towards implementation of the Security Protocol. Following CPC meeting held yesterday, the Commission's Co-chairman, George Boreng,

said the meeting had discussed the Security Arrangements Protocol and the efforts made by the Joint Military Committee, underlining that the Commission has proposed training the Joint Forces to later become the basic armed force of Sudan.

Boreng revealed that the meeting has also reviewed the redeployment in the oil areas which was completed on the 9th. January and the status of joint forces in the Nuba Mountains and the Blue Nile area, adding that the meeting has underscored withdrawal of SAF and SPLA to the north and south of line 1/1/1956, respectively. He reiterated that CPC moreover discussed means of Joint Forces funding by the international community in accordance with CPA provisions.

Abyei, Equatoria crises could derail census (The Citizen)

Insecurity in parts of southern Sudan as the country prepares for the national census slated for April, has officials worried.

Martin Tako Moi (UDSF, Western Equatoria) said Monday that unfolding insecurity close to the border with Uganda and in Abyei could hamper the census. As he said this, armed tribe raiders, believed to be Mundari, invaded Banglo Payam in Mundari West County, ransacking the villages as they sought grazing land.

“You can no do a successful census without proper security on the ground,” said Moi.

he added that the current state of insecurity in Abyei, where Meseriya are said to have blocked north-south Communication route, is likely to discourage southern Sudanese in the North from returning home for census.

He urged all the internally displaced persons and refugees from neighbouring countries to return home before the census.

he said implementation of Abyei protocol as stipulated in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement is the way forward.

Martin Tako Moi called on all Southerners to remain united irrespective of tribal and political affiliation.

Six die as SAF, Commissioner’s guards trade bullets (The Citizen)

(The Citizen) At least four died when guards of a Commissioner in Unity State exchanged fire with the Sudan Armed Forces, sources have said.

According to sources, the car of the Commissioner of Baymen area was involved in an accident with a SAF truck. A usually reliable source added that the Commissioner was in his car at the time of the accident.

The source said that the guards thought the accident was intentional.

The source said the guards opened fire on the SAF truck. The driver of the truck and two other occupants of the truck died.

The source said SAF soldiers exchanged fire with the commissioners’ car and killed two of his guards.

Chiefs dead in Miseriya attacks (The Citizen)

(The Citizen) An association of the Sudanese living outside the country yesterday said four chiefs were killed during a Misseriya attack early this month. In a letter to the First Vice President, Salva Kiir and Vice President of the Government of Southern Sudan, the Ruwen Beimnon Association in the Diaspora yesterday condemned the murder of three Ruweng Chiefs and four soldiers at Biemnon and Abyei road two weeks ago.

The association described the incident as the sad and said the Baggara caused it.

The Association also urged the Western Upper Nile Governor Brig. Taban Deng Gai, the Beimnhom Country Commissioner Anothly Gal Deng, the Ruweng Chiefs Bol Maykik Deng and Mayom Ayii to make security priority for areas close to the Baggara so that such murders are not repeated.

Abyei youth hand over protest memo to JIUs road block north-south (Sudan Tribune)

Abyei youth launched a peaceful march crowd by handing over a protest notice, calling for reopening the blocked north-south routes, to security committee, the Joint Integrated Units, the United nations Mission in Sudan, the Humanitarian Affairs Commission, the Sudanese Peoples Liberation Movement and the National Congress Party in Abyei. The march and the memo followed security tension that claimed many lives in the area, besides armed highway robberies, insecurity especially to those linking the north to the south. The notice called for investigations to bring to justice the perpetrators and robbers. It also called for full implementation of Abyei Protocol and handing over the security committee to the region executive director. The memo urged for prompt opening of all north-south roads otherwise the country would be once again dragged into a historical interaction. The notice strongly deplored the vague stance of the partners, the Sudan Peoples Liberation Movement and the National Congress Party towards the current security committee.

Sudan SPLM vows swift response to military attacks in Abyei (ST)

Liberation Movement (SPLM) official issued a strong worded warning to those he describes as “war mongers” from the ruling National Congress Party (NCP) in Abyei.

Luka Biong Deng, Minister for Presidential Affairs in the Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS) said in press reports shown on the daily Al-Sharq Al-Awsat that the SPLA will respond swiftly to any attack “targeting any natives of Abyei regardless of their ethnicity”.

The Arab Misseriya tribe in the oil rich region on their end announced that they have appointed Mohamed Omar Al-Ansari as the governor of Abyei. The new governor gave the SPLM an ultimatum until next Saturday to abandon the administration to a group called “Abyei Liberation Front”, or else they will face a military offensive.

Al-Ansari said he is flying to Khartoum to consult with “security officials” and to address the Abyei natives in the capital and brief them on the latest developments.

The SPLM chairman Salva Kiir instructed SPLA units in December not to attack the Misseriya tribe or any other tribes in the area.

Deng accused the NCP of backing certain parties to fuel the conflict in Abyei despite the work done inside the presidency to resolve the issue.

“We tell those people that the phase of war is over and the Abyei issue is in the hands of the presidency” he said.

But Al-Ansari said that each of the five members of the “Abyei Liberation Front” appointed to administer the region is leading a battalion of 1500-3000 armed fighters surrounding the

governorate of the region from a distance of 20 kilometers.

The Misseriya leader said he has “the same legitimacy as President Omar Al-Bashir and his Vice President Salva Kiir”. He also urged the women and children to be evacuated from Abyei if the SPLM refuses to hand over the administration to them. The SPLM and the National Congress Party (NCP) have yet to resolve the issue of the oil rich region with both sides claiming ownership of the area.

Kiir told the semi-governmental Al-Ahram daily last week that the NCP is the party blocking the implementation of the Abyei protocol which is part of the Naivasha agreement that ended two decades of the civil war between the North and the South.

(ST)

Abyei is a northern area: NCP (Khartoum Monitor)

(Khartoum Monitor) A National Congress Party (NCP) Southern sector member; John Dor, announced that the Abyei area belongs to Northern Sudan. During a political forum organized by the student’s Modern Southern Sudan Forum (MSF) on the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), past bitterness and the future expectations on the Juba University Kadoru premises on 17th February 2008, Dor said that the NCP was not convinced with the experts’ reports that have destined Abyei to South Sudan. He revealed that they have given Sudan People’s Liberation Movement (SPLM) 3 options as solutions for the issue. These are the experts should come and convince the people about their report, the case is to be taken to the high court or the Abyei citizens should be the ones to decide their fate either to belong to the South or North.

On the coming elections for the Presidency, he asserted that people should not be pessimistic that they will rig the elections and that the Kenya incident will not happen in the Sudan. “Let us not cross the bridge until we reach it”. Dor proclaimed that they would win elections.

Abyei Liberation Front to close all SPLM offices in western Kordofan (AlWattan), Miseriya self-appointed “governor” of Abyei Mohamed Omer al Anssari meets with Head of National Assembly Security and Defence Committee, Minister of State for Humanitarian Affairs (Haroun), Coordinator of PDF (AlSudani), NCP holds SPLA responsible for tensions in Abyei (AIRai AIAam)

Abyei Liberation Front (ALF) adopted Monday a package of decisions spanning evacuation of the SPLA troops from the North border of 1/1/1956, suspension of Chiefs courts in the towns of West Kordofan, closure of all SPLM’s offices in the western sector and the roads, banning delivery of food supplies to Abyei and North of Bahr el Ghazal and Unity States as well as halting utilities pertinent to GoSS in Mairam area.

ALF’s Secretary-General Ali Kangi told (Alwatan Daily) that the decisions were taken in an inclusive ALF conference held at Abu Agbar area, 31 km south of Muglad town and in the presence of 2261 ALF members.

However, the ALF earlier demanded the Presidency to set up Abyei Administration and representation of the ALF in the administration.

Kangi said that the ALF directed the Miseria civil administration not conduct any kind of reconciliation before the implementation of Abyei protocol and the withdrawal of the SPLA to the South of 1/1/1956 borders, adding that the front decided to in case of failure to comply with these demands until next Friday, it would execute its second plan, which he did not reveal.

In the meantime, while the citizens of Abyie area called on the Presidency for the immediate interference to curb the escalating tension in the area, GoSS Presidency Affairs Minister Dr. Luca Biong accused NCP elements of escalating the situation in the area through exploiting some people of Miseria tribe against the SPLA.

Meanwhile, Miseria Chiefs in Mariam area warned of eruption of new clashes with Dinka due to attacks of Dinka Ngok against Miseria.

In a related development, the Youth of Abyie area said in statement they issued Monday the assassination and robbery incidents were increasing, indicating that the main strategic roads leading to Abyie were completely closed North and South wards.

They urged Abyie Dinka citizens to appeal to the Presidency and GoSS Officials to interfere to contain the situation, calling for the implementation of Abyie protocol and handing over the security administration to the Locality Executive Director.

In another development, the newly self-appointed Wali and Chief Commander of ALF Mohamed Omer Alansari arrived here Monday and is scheduled to meet with Chairperson of Defense and Security at the National Assembly General (Police) Galal Taour, Humanitarian Affairs Minister Ahmed Haroun and General-Coordinator of Popular Defense Forces (PDF) Kamal Eddin Ibrahim.

Alansari told (Alsudani Daily) denied ALF was armed by terrorist circles, saying that his assuming power in Abyie gained the consent of the citizens, adding, "I came to protect peace, I defend an issue that concerns my people and I have no relations with the two partners".

Alansari called on First Vice-President and SPLA/M Chairman Salva Kiir to dissolve the recently SPLM's established Administration and withdrawal of SPLA's troops to the South of 1/1/1956 borders.

He said that the government, which he set up in Abyie, comprising sons of Dinka, a matter which assures his conviction on peaceful co-existence with others.

Alansari disclosed that he was commanding an approximately 12 fighters ready to counter any attack from any side, expressing reservation over revealing military aspects due to security reasons.

In the same context, Miseria leading figure Ahmed Azoza the absence of Alansari's government in reality, explaining the denunciation of the citizens of Miseria in the area to Alansari's Government.

On the other hand, NCP's Secretary of Foreign Relations Dr. Mustafa Osman Ismael emphasized the government keenness and commitment to protect Abyie citizens.

He told reporters Monday that if the government failed to protect its citizens, there would not be any justification for its presence, holding the SPLA responsible of flaring up the situations.

Dr. Ismael denied accusing the NCP of fueling the clashes in Abyie, stressing that Abyie would remain until the referendum part of the North borders, should the parties reach any solution.

GoSS

Opening of Yirol hospital in Sudan's Lakes state (ST)

By Manyang Mayom, February 18, 2008 (RUMBEEK) – In a colourful ceremony, the Grater Yirol counties celebrated the opening of the newly renovated Beniamino Andreatta Hospital with the participation of the state authorities and an Italian delegation, on Saturday Feb 16.

The ceremony was attended by an Italian delegation headed by the Italy Ambassador to the Sudan, Roberto Cantone, and the Lakes State Acting governor as well as minister of local government, Awan Guol Riak, besides representatives of the State Assembly and heads of civil organizations and the civil society of Greater Yirol counties.

Riak while addressing the gathering accepted the dedication of the hospital to the former Italian Foreign Minister, Late Beniamino Andreatta, who had committed himself to work with the people of the Sudan.

“It’s not the first time we are getting good service from the Italian government, it was about two years that a bridge was handed over to the government of Southern Sudan,” Awan said.

He stressed that Payii Bridge is the most complete and accommodating bridge in Southern Sudan.

The Yirol county hospital is now called Beniamino Andreatta Hospital which is also the second achievement for Italian government in South Sudan especially in Lakes state.

The renovation of “Beniamino Andreatta Hospital” was done by the Doctors with Africa CUAMM and financed by the Italian Civil Protection.

Beniamino Andreatta Hospital is the second of the greatest achievements that the Italian Civil Protection has brought to Yirol after the Payii Bridge which was constructed two years ago.

(ST)

Ugandan rebels accused of killing 4 Sudanese as peace talks resume (ST)

The State Director of Central Equatoria Stan Yata, this afternoon said LRA has killed additional four people, and abducted another 11 persons including five girls and displaced over one thousand people from Katigri payam, 95 miles from Juba now camped at Jebel Kujur, about 15 miles from Juba town. As Sudan Tribune visited the camps this afternoon, the displaced are still being registering by state authorities.

(ST)

Darfur

Darfur villagers flee after last week offensive (ST)

February 18, 2008 (KONDOBE) — Three elderly Darfuri men hack away at a pile of logs, struggling to build a new home in Kondobe town more than a week after they fled their village to escape government attacks and militia looting.

They had hoped to return after the fighting subsided. But they can still hear shooting day and night and could no longer suffer the cramped arrangements with 11 people in a tiny hut.

"We want to return to Bir Dagaig (village)," says Abdallah Ibrahim Tour. "But it's still not safe."

A government offensive to retake three towns from rebels north of the West Darfur state capital el-Geneina unleashed a string of attacks by militia on horses and camels.

Residents say the army mobilised the militia for the attacks. The army denies any links and calls them bandits.

Since the offensive the militia have terrorised nearby villages, forcing thousands from their homes including Tour and hundreds more from his village.

People took refuge in Kondobe, the last urban bastion before el-Geneina, near the border with Chad or sought protection near police and army posts. Those from Bir Dagaig are being hosted by family members in overcrowded conditions in Kondobe.

Kulthoum Ibrahim Adam said she fled Bir Digaig more than a week ago after armed men on horses and camels whipped her and her four-year-old son before stealing everything they owned.

"All I managed to pick up was two dresses, this toub (wrap) and a sheet," she said. Her toub was torn and her tiny son's shirt was filthy.

All her worldly belongings hung from a piece of string in the gloomy hut.

"Didn't you bring me any biscuits?" her son asks. Her husband was killed two months before by armed men on the road to el-Geneina.

(Reuters)

Four killed during Sudan air strike in Darfur's Jebel Moun (ST)

February 18, 2008 (PARIS) — Four people are killed by Sudanese military aircraft during an aerial raid against the SLM controlled area of Jebel Moun in west Darfur, a Darfur rebel commander told Sudan Tribune.

The rebel stronghold of Jebel Moun, in West Darfur is controlled by troops loyal to the SLM founder Abdel-Wahid Al-Nur. The different displaced camps in the area were the subject of regular attacks by the Khartoum backed militias in the past.

Abbas Mohamed Offail, the commander of Jebel Moun, told the Sudan Tribune by telephone satellite that the attack occurred on Monday around 11:00 am local time. He said the Antonov bombed three positions in the area.

Adding that a woman was killed by a projectile cutting off her two legs in Aru Sharow, the military aircraft also bombed a second position in western Jebel Moun

but there are no casualties reported according the rebel commander. Further he said that 12 projectiles were launched against Bir Kjenko, the unique water well in the area where all the IDPs take the potable water.

In this third position among the deaths there was a child, the rebel commander regretted.

Adrian Edwards, spokesman for the hybrid peacekeeping mission known as UNAMID, confirmed to Reuters that they had received reports of bombing but said they did not know what they were targeting.

"Our primary concern has to be for the safety of civilians in this area," he said. "We will be seeking access to the affected area from the government as soon as possible to monitor the impact, if any, on the civilian population."

Abdelwahid Al-Nur, the SLM leader, condemned in the strongest terms the aerial attack urging the international community to put pressure on Khartoum to stop "these criminal and barbaric attacks against the innocent civilians."

(ST)

FACTBOX: China's unrelenting support to Sudan on Darfur (ST)

July 30, 2004: China abstains from voting on resolution 1556 that demands the disarmament of notorious Janjaweed militias in Darfur and threatens further measures in the event of non-compliance. The Chinese ambassador at the Security Council (UNSC) Zhang Yishan said that the resolution while it incorporated some of the amendments they requested "it still included references to measures that were not helpful and which could further complicate the situation".

September 18, 2004: China abstains from voting on resolution 1564 calling on UN Secretary General to set up Commission of Inquiry to investigate human rights violations in Darfur. In justifying the vote, the Chinese envoy at the UNSC Wang Guangya, said that "the Sudanese Government had shown sincerity in resolving the problem in Darfur".

March 29, 2005: China abstains from voting on resolution 1591 which calls for sanctions against those "responsible for committing violence in Darfur or impeding the peace process continues efforts to end impunity and as a down payment towards justice and accountability". It also imposes an arms embargo on the parties to the Darfur conflict.

March 31, 2005: China abstains from voting on resolution 1593 referring the situation Darfur to International Criminal Court (ICC). Wang Guangya said that his government "would have preferred that the perpetrators stand trial in Sudanese courts, which had recently taken action against people involved in human rights violations in Darfur. China did not favor the referral to the International Criminal Court without the consent of the Sudanese Government".

April 17, 2006: Reports from the UN say that China along with Russia blocked U.N. sanctions against four Sudanese individuals including a government official. The Chinese ambassador told reporters that now was not the time to impose a travel ban or an assets freeze on Sudanese individuals because of the ongoing peace talks on the escalating Darfur conflict, held in Abuja, Nigeria. The United States threatened to force a public vote on the issue.

April 25, 2006: China abstains from voting on resolution 1672 imposing financial sanctions and travel ban on 4 Sudanese. Ambassador Wang Guangya said that China “did not believe the timing of the vote was right”.

August 31, 2006: China abstains from voting on resolution 1706 expanding the mandate of UN Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) to include Darfur. Beijing had insisted that the resolution includes a phrase “inviting the consent of Sudanese government”. Despite that Guangya said that the abstention was due to the “the timing of the vote”.

February 02, 2007: Chinese president visits Sudan and signs accords for building new schools, a new presidential palace, reduced import tariffs on some Sudanese goods, granted a loan of 600 million Yuan (US\$77.4 million; euro59.5 million) for infrastructure, and gave a grant of a US\$40 million (euro30.7 million). China also canceled debts of 470 million Yuan (US\$60.7 million; euro46.6 million) and US\$19 million (euro14.6million). The economic agreements signed draw international criticism.

May 08, 2007: Amnesty International (AI) issue a report showing photos of Chinese-made military planes at airports in Darfur in violation of resolution 1591.

May 30, 2007: China says it will not support any resolution trying to force Sudan to accept UN peacekeepers in Darfur. Beijing also criticized decision by the US to slap financial sanctions on 31 Sudanese companies and 3 other individuals.

July 31, 2007: After working with other UNSC members on severely weakening the resolution, China votes in favor of resolution 1769 establishing a joint UN-AU “hybrid” force to replace resolution 1706.

August 18, 2007: The Small Arms Survey advocacy group releases a report accusing China of providing Sudan with “financial and military means for Khartoum to engage in its brutal campaign to suppress the Darfur rebellion”.

September 18, 2007: China’s special envoy to Africa Liu Guijin tells reporters that “relations between the Chinese and Sudanese governments are no more special than our relations with other developing nations”.

December 5, 2007: China along with Russia and Qatar, block efforts to issue a UNSC presidential statement supporting the arrest of Darfur war crime suspect and their extradition to the International Criminal Court (ICC) pursuant to resolution 1593.

December 7, 2007: China’s special envoy to Africa Liu Guijin says his country is not able to send helicopters to fill out the shortage for the UN-AU hybrid force.

January 30, 2008: The Special envoy of Chinese government Zhai Jun meets with Sudan's foreign minister Deng Alor in Addis Ababa and affirms his government support to Khartoum in the international arena. However he tells Alor that Sudan should "not to do things that will cause the international community to impose sanctions on them".

(ST)

Miscellaneous

Slovakia to send humanitarian aid to Sudan (ST)

February 18, 2008 (BRATISLAVA) — Slovakia's Interior Ministry said on Monday that it has decided to provide humanitarian aid to Sudan, where persistent rains have caused extensive flooding.

The floods have caused damage to housing, and led to a pressing need for food and healthcare.

The humanitarian relief will be trucked from the humanitarian base at Limbach (Bratislava region) to the Slovenian port of Koper on February 19. From there it will be shipped to Port Sudan.

Slovak embassy officials will then hand over the aid to a government agency.

Transport expenses will be defrayed from the 05T humanitarian programme and won't represent an extra burden on the 2008 budget.

(ST)

EDITORIAL: Intervene in Darfur: Stronger peacekeeping effort should be an (Buffalo News)

The Buffalo News, N.Y., Source: Buffalo News, The (NY) (KRT) Date: February 18, 2008--The worsening situation in the western **Sudanese** region of **Darfur** is a nightmare lived out by real people who desperately need the help of all nations. The latest news: Thousands of refugees are fleeing attacks by Arab militias and **Sudanese** Army bombs, to the point that the wave of humanity poses an enormous threat to neighboring Chad.

The chaos has made for a toxic brew of rebels, government forces and ethnic militias, as Chadian rebels based in **Sudan** have tried to topple the government of Chad President Idriss Deby, who Thursday declared a state of emergency after fighting that reached the gates of the presidential palace in Ndjamena.

The rebel group that had controlled the part of **Darfur** under attack, the Justice and Equality Movement, warned the new United Nations-African Union peacekeeping

force not to enter the area. Everyone is fair game in what has become one of the most significant acts of genocide in history. Perhaps most remarkable is that the genocide continues seemingly unabated.

Roughly 6,000 **Sudanese** recently reached the border town of Birak in Chad, while about the same number gathered in the nearby village. There already were 240,000 **Sudanese** refugees in Chad, and a nearly equal number of Chadians displaced because of what is occurring along the border.

The daily reports of the atrocities occurring in **Darfur** are truly horrific, and the ravages have continued since 2003 when the Arab-dominated government of **Sudan** let loose tribal militias known as the janjaweed on non-Arab rebel groups in **Darfur** that were seeking greater autonomy and a larger share of **Sudan's** wealth. President Bush has labeled the subsequent atrocities genocide. And yet, the bloodletting continues.

At least 200,000 people have been killed in **Darfur**, and 2.5 million people have been displaced. The **Sudanese** government has spent most of this time denying the undeniable.

Meanwhile, the spillover effect in Chad has worsened. The **Sudanese** government supports the rebels trying to overthrow Chad's government because it wants to block the deployment of European Union peacekeepers to eastern Chad, according to the group Save **Darfur**, which makes the salient point that **Sudan's** ruling party not only threatens its own citizens, it is a menace to the entire region. Deby has said the rebels in his country are **Sudanese** mercenaries paid by both **Sudan** and al-Qaida, although no hard evidence yet supports that claim.

The United States, France and the United Kingdom, working with China and Russia, should introduce a U.N. Security Council resolution authorizing targeted sanctions on senior **Sudanese** officials responsible for supporting the overthrow of a neighboring sovereign government, for opposing international protection forces in Chad and **Darfur** and for continuing to promote violence in **Darfur**.

Peacekeeping missions are needed in this region. That would take coordination of the United Nations and its major Security Council member countries with the more regional African Union, in an area where both humanitarian aid and peacekeeping forces have been periodically thwarted so far. The United States, France, the United Kingdom and China should form an international "Quartet" to work with the United Nations and African Union to promote an end to the interconnected conflicts in Chad and **Sudan**.