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(By Public Information Office)

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Highlights

UN/ Agencies

A meeting is expected between the President of the Republic and the Secretary General of the United Nations on the margin of the AU summit, set at end of this month (SUNA)

Khartoum, Jan. 16 (SUNA) - The joint Representative of the United Nations and the African Union for Darfur, Mr. Radolph Adada, has revealed that a meeting is expected to take place between the President of the Republic, Field Marshal Omar Al Bashir, and the United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon, in the margin of the African Union Summit meeting set to take place in the Ethiopian capital of Addis Ababa, end of current January. The Representative has pointed out following the meeting with the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Deng Alor, that the meeting with the Foreign Ministry officials was to be seen within the context of the preparations for the expected meeting between the President of the Republic and the Secretary General of the United Nations, Ki-Moon, reviewing issues and questions that would be tackled and ways of handling them. Ambassador Adada has stressed his readiness to fully cooperate with the Sudanese government in all the domains saying there would be no achievement worthy of the name without coordination and cooperation between the various parties. He pointed out to the difficulties that face the hybrid operation including the shortage in the logistics such as transportation and equipment. He stated that the Secretary General of the United Nations has made contact with the various member states to contribute in this domain, expressing hope that this would take place soon. He said he was currently discussing with the Sudanese government the agreement that governs the relations between the hybrid operation and the Sudanese government. The Minister for Foreign Affairs, Deng Alor has meanwhile pointed out that the coming period was important for the Sudan foreign relations, with stress made on the bilateral and multilateral diplomatic relations. He said the hybrid operation was launched following long discussions between the three parties and that therefore it reflects the common understanding for peace realization in Darfur and the return of life to normalcy in the region. The official spokesman for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Ali Al Sadeq has meanwhile said the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Deng Alor and the UN-AU Representative have reviewed humanitarian and political issues as well as the process of the CPA implementation. He said ambassador Adada has stressed in his meeting with the minister that there was no hidden agenda

in the hybrid operation. He said the international community backs the unity of Sudan and its territorial integrity. He said ambassador Adada has expressed his thanks for the government of Sudan for the support it has been providing for the hybrid operation in Darfur.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs says GoS will provide support to the hybrid in Darfur (AlAhdath)

Minister of Foreign Affairs, Deng Alor, said in a meeting yesterday with the UN-AU Joint Special Representative (JSR) for Darfur, Rodolphe Adada, that the GoNU will fully support UNAMID and to cooperate with it in implementing UN Security Council Resolution (1769).

Rebels tell Darfur envoys to secure the release of their comrades (ST)

January 16, 2008 (EL-FASHER) — The rebel Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) told Darfur envoys that it is willing to meet them when they secure the release of its representatives in the ceasefire commission that Sudan detained while they were doing their duties in El-Fasher.

On December 30, an armed unit belonging to the Government of Sudan stormed into AU HQ in El-Fasher and abducted six JEM Representatives to the AU Ceasefire Commission (CFC). The AU condemned the arrest and described it as violation of the N'Djamena Ceasefire Agreement of 2004.

JEM leadership informed the UN and the African Union Special Envoys for Darfur that they have to secure first the release of their six representatives in the Cease Fire Commission before to meet them to discuss the participation of the rebel movement in the peace talks, Sudan Tribune has learned.

Envoys Jan Eliasson and Salim Ahmed Salim arrived to Khartoum last Sunday on their first joint trip to Darfur since a botched opening of peace talks in Libya last October which the main guerrilla factions boycotted.

According to JEM sources, the two envoys pledged to exert efforts to ensure their release from the jails of the Sudanese security where they are detained. The rebel movement said its members are tortured and one of them, Mohamed Bashar Ahmed, was shot in his leg by the Sudanese security.

During the last months JEM become militarily the most capable fighting force in Darfur after rearming and attacking the government in West and South Darfur. The group also succeeded to win the support of some former militias from Darfur Arab tribes.

Eliasson and Salim reiterated that they have no date to propose for the start of the talks but insisted that dialogue with rebel main groups would help to accelerate the peace process.

(ST)

GoNU (CPA, DPA, ESPA)

Peace challenges fiercer than fighting, Al Bashir (Sudan Vision)

President Bashir urged Darfur armed factions to join the negotiation table and avoid traps set by foreign conspiring parties that enter Darfur under the pretext of humanitarian work.

Addressing the Organization of Islamic Dawa Board of Trustees 22nd session, held yesterday at the Friendship Hall, Khartoum, Bashir stated that South, East and West Sudan peace agreements pose as a multi-faceted challenge as peace building is a more lengthy, risky and demanding process. Notwithstanding, added the President, through national reconciliation and alignment, consolidation of domestic front and brothers support, Sudan would manage to transcend those challenges and realize peace, security, comprehensive balanced development, rehabilitation of war devastations and social fabric restoration.

Bashir added that Sudan counts much on Islamic countries support that will help to bolster national unity, facilitate building of a unified, secured and developed Sudan.

The President renewed his call on donor international states and organizations that sponsored peace agreements to honor their pledges for speeding up reconstruction, rehabilitation, basic social services provision and development. However, he noted that Sudan Government has already started work on these pivots depending on its own resources irrespective of donors procrastination.

Bashir commended Organization of Islamic Dawa worldwide indiscriminating contributions extended without any hidden agendas, political maneuvers or private interests.

Wrapping up the session, Organization Trustees Board Chairman, Field Marshal Abdul-Rahman Suaral-Dahab addressed the occasion as well as Al-Maktoum Charity Foundation Chairman, Mirza Hussein, and Conference Steering Committees Chairman, Mohammed Osman Al-Beily, who stated that delegations from Bahrain, Qatar, Malaysia, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, Yemen, Malawi and Saudi Arabia have arrived in Khartoum to take part in the conference. According to him the Trustees Board embraces some 60 members out of which 30 are Sudanese nationals.

Sudan president appoints notorious Janjaweed leader as special adviser (ST)

January 16, 2008 (KHARTOUM) — The Sudanese president Omar Hassan Al-Bashir appointed a suspected Janjaweed leader as a special adviser.

Press reports in Khartoum said that Al-Bashir issued a decree appointing Musa Hilal, leader of the Darfurian Arab Mahameed clan, as an adviser for the ministry of federal government.

Hilal has been named by numerous eyewitnesses in Darfur as leading terror campaign against the African tribes in the war ravaged region.

The tribal leader denied any wrongdoings and told Human Rights Watch (HRW) in a videotaped interview in 2005, that he only recruited militias on behalf of Sudan's central government.

The 43 years old was jailed by the Sudanese authorities in 1998 for leading armed robbery of the central bank in the city of Nyala in Darfur. However the First Vice president Ali Osman Taha secured his release in 2002 for unknown reasons.

Hilal was named in the filings made by the ICC prosecutor in February 2007 as making a speech alongside with Harun in July 2003, which was characterized as "racist". However he was not named as a war crime suspect.

"Hilal was enthusiastic about unifying to fight the enemy and characterized the conflict as a holy war" the ICC prosecutor said in the document he submitted to the judges.

The UN Security Council imposed travel and financial sanctions on Hilal and three other individuals in April 2006. The US president George Bush issued an executive order enforcing similar sanctions on them.

(ST)

President Al-Bashir addresses opening session of meeting of Council of Trustees of Islamic Dawa Organization (SUNA)

Khartoum, Jan. 16 (SUNA) - President of the Republic Field Marshal Omer Al-Bashir has stressed the importance of the contribution of the Islamic Dawa Organization to surpassing the obstacles for pressing ahead with consolidation of peace, achieving balanced development and rehabilitation of war-affected areas. Addressing the opening session of the meeting of the Council of Trustees of the Islamic Dawa Organization at the Friendship Hall in Khartoum Wednesday, President Al-Bashir called on all the international institutions and organizations and all donors and the countries that sponsored the peace agreements to fulfill their commitments and contribute to the rehabilitation process and provision of services and boosting the development process which has already started by the government. President Al-Bashir called on the arms holders in Darfur to resort to dialogue to stop blood shedding. He called on the members of the Council of Trustees of the Islamic Dawa Organization to contribute to the rehabilitation of what had been destroyed by the war, pointing out that Sudan is capable of surpassing the bitterness of the past through peaceful coexistence and tolerance and constructive dialogue. The President praised the activities of the Islamic Dawa Organization, which cover the African continent in extending services to all the needy without discrimination on the basis of race, colour or religion. BT/BT

MPs postpone language bill over differences (The Citizen)

The National Assembly headed by Speaker Ahmed Ibrahim al Tahir concluded its fourth session yesterday after differences over the national languages bill.

Strong Ethiopia-Sudan ties benefiting to border people (ST)

By Tesfa-alem Tekle, January 16, 2008 (DEMAZIN) — A meeting on Ethiopia - Sudan border ties has kicked off in Benshangule Gumeze region's Sudan border town of Demazin .

Opening the meeting president of the Benshangule Gumeze region, Yaregal Aysheshim said "the mutual understanding and close ties of both nations has let peoples in the borders of both nations to be beneficiaries of peace and development."

According to the president the ever growing ties between bordering regions of Benshanguel Gumeze and Sudanese region of Blue Nile has made people of both regions the primary beneficiaries of infrastructures.

"To bring sustainable development to the border people of both nations, cooperation of both regions will be continued strengthened" Yaregal added.

Governor of the Sudanese Blue Nile region, Melik Agar to his side said "friendship of the two neighboring people is playing tremendous role in boosting development and scaling up further ties of both nations"

Over all ties of the two border region's has scaled up to a higher level in recent years. "Regional government of the blue Nile region will continue cooperating with Ethiopia" governor Melik Agar added.

In the 3days conference including Ethiopia Ambassador to Sudan Ali Abdu, some 150 delegations and officials from bordering region of both countries are attending.

(ST)

US court indicts a former congressman with close ties to Sudan government (ST)

January 16, 2008 (WASHINGTON) — A US grand jury today indicted an ex-lawmaker and a delegate to the United Nations with close links to Sudan accusing him of fundraising terrorist activities.

Mark Deli Siljander, a Michigan Republican when he was in the House, was charged with money laundering, conspiracy and obstructing justice for allegedly lying about lobbying senators on behalf of an Islamic charity that authorities said was secretly sending funds to terrorists.

Under US law a Grand Jury is the first step in determining whether there is enough evidence to prosecute an individual before a court of law.

Other defendants include Mubarak Hamed, 51, a naturalized US citizen from Sudan; Ali Mohamed Bagegni, 53, a naturalized US citizen born in Libya; and Ahmad Mustafa, 55, a US resident and citizen of Iraq.

A 42-count indictment, unsealed in U.S. District Court in Kansas City, Mo., accuses the Islamic American Relief Agency of paying Siljander \$50,000 for the lobbying — money that turned out to be stolen from the U.S. Agency for International Development.

Siljander, who founded the Washington-area consulting group Global Strategies Inc, was also hired by the Sudanese government to lobby in favor of removing certain organizations owned by Khartoum from frozen funds lists.

The United States under Clinton’s administration imposed comprehensive economic sanctions against Sudan in 1997 because of the country’s alleged support of international terrorist activities.

According to the US regulations on Sudan sanctions “all property and interests in property of the Government of Sudan that are in the United States, that come within the United States, or that are or come within the possession or control of U.S. persons, including their overseas branches” are to be blocked.

The former congressman came under fire in 2006 for facilitating a visit by Sudan’s State Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ali Ahmed Karti who is accused by human right groups of orchestrating a campaign of violence in the war ravaged Darfur region.

The US State department at the time said that Karti “was granted a visa for a private visit to the United States” and that he was a guest of Siljander. The latter defended his position by saying that he “only arranged his attendance at a congressional prayer breakfast”.

He further said that he is not aware of any wrongdoings by Karti in the past.

"I don’t know anything about that. As far as I knew he was in the cabinet" he added.

In a speech at Regent’s Park College, Oxford University Siljander referenced a visit he made to Sudan in August 2006 where he met President Omar Hassan Al-Bashir “a person I have courted friendship with over the last nine years”.

(ST)

Kasala receives 1,600 Eritrean refugees every month (AlAhdath)

Quoting the NCP official in charge of the NGOs, the Sudanese Media Centre reported that 1,600 Eritrean refugees arrive in Kasala every month.

GoSS

Egyptian company discusses illumination of South Sudan (ST)

By Roba Gibia, January 16, 2008 (CAIRO) – The Egyptian company building power stations in southern Sudan towns of Wau, Rumbek, Bor and Yambio, had a follow up meeting on Monday January 14 at GoSS Liaison Office to discuss the work progress in these four cities.

Engineer Hosni Al-Khouli, Chairperson of the project explained that almost 80% of the power stations have been completed, and that the projects will be executed as scheduled (Wau in March 2008, Rumbek and Yambio in June 2008 and Bor in July 2008).

He pointed out that some electric equipment have already called at Mombassa port since December 24, 2007 and other equipments are expected to arrive Mombassa within this month.

However he expressed fears that the current political problems in Kenya might delay the transportation of these equipments to Southern Sudan, and requested the involvement of the Government of Southern Sudan in order to facilitate the release of these power station machines from Kenyan port of Mombassa.

He further said that some electric equipments currently under production in Finland and is expected to be completed and shipped in April to south via Mombassa, Kenya.

Engineer Hosni said that the Egyptian company has already finalized its field research of testing the soil and technical preparations on ground in Rumbek, Yambio and Bor. He also called on the Government of Southern Sudan to start connecting electric cable network in these four towns, because according to their contract the GoSS is responsible in distribution of electricity within towns, streets, squares and houses which requires contracts between GoSS as provider and local consumers.

The Egyptian delegation is expected to South Sudan early coming February 2008 to meet GoSS authorities in Juba and also sight visit of the four towns (Wau, Rumbek, Yambio and Bor) to explore the work progress.

(ST)

Darfur

Jamous accepts to participate in preparatory talks on Darfur (AlAhdath), another meeting for Darfur rebels in Arusha within six weeks (AlSahafa)

The UN and AU envoys have persuaded the SLM Unity rebel leader Suliman Jamous to participate in a preparatory meeting to be held in Arusha (Tanzania) in an effort to unify the positions of the Darfur rebel groups. We are ready for any meeting in Arusha, said Jamous. The meeting may be held within 4-6 weeks.

JEM refuses to meet UN-AU mediation team (AlRai AlAam)

The rebel JEM refused to meet with the UN and AU envoys, Jan Eliasson and Salim Ahmed Salim, saying that it will not participate in any political process on Darfur before releasing its representatives in the AU ceasefire commission who were arrested by the government.

Rebel JEM denies clashes with Sudanese army in Darfur (ST)

January 16, 2008 (KHARTOUM) — A leading Darfur rebel group Wednesday denied Sudanese military claims that government troops defeated the rebels in a clash a day earlier in southern Darfur.

The leader of the Justice and Equality Movement told The Associated Press his fighters were nowhere near southern Darfur's Sheiria area, because they were fighting closer to the border with neighboring Chad.

On Tuesday, Sudanese military spokesman Brig. Osman Mohamed al-Aghbash was quoted by the government-linked Sudan Media Center as saying dozens of JEM rebels had attacked Sudanese troops in Sheiria. Soldiers repulsed the attack and caused several casualties among the rebels, al-Aghbash said.

JEM leader Khalil Ibrahim strongly denied the report, saying his forces were deployed instead around El Geneina, the capital of western Darfur where the government conducted new aerial bombings this week.

"The government is making completely false allegations. Nothing has taken place around Sheiria," Ibrahim told AP by satellite phone from West Darfur.

A U.N. official near Sheiria said there had been no reports of fighting there. He said it was possible the army had clashed with another of the many rebel factions or militias that roam Darfur.

"But it's unlikely anything took place with JEM - they're not in that zone," the official said.

Al-Aghbash also reportedly denied government forces were conducting new air raids in western areas of Darfur controlled by JEM.

But Ibrahim said two such raids took place Tuesday, killing several people. Civilians are fleeing the localities of Sileia and Saraf Jidad because more bombings are expected, he said.

Aid workers in West Darfur confirmed at least three civilians had died in two air raids earlier this week, and that government aircraft again bombed the Jebbel Moon area of West Darfur Tuesday.

The aid workers said they couldn't confirm reports of new casualties because most aid groups had evacuated the area.

(AP)

Rebel leader dismisses rights group report on detention and torture in Darfur (ST)South Africa urges speed deployment of Darfur troops (ST)

January 16, 2008 (PARIS) — The leader of Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM), Abdelwahid al-Nur dismissed accusations today by Amnesty International over the detention and torture of some SLM members because they are opposed to the political line of the movement.

In a statement issued on Wednesday Amnesty International expressed fears for the safety of 13 members of the SLM. The rights group said that Ali Haroun and his comrades are in favor of the reunification of the SLM factions and engagement in "political dialogue to end the conflict in Darfur."

Abdelwahid told Sudan Tribune that Haroun and the others are not detained and that there is absolutely no room for torture in his movement. The rebel leader also said that they were summoned to the headquarters of the SLA for grave irregularities putting at risk the live of his comrades.

However he emphasized no political motivation behind their summon request.

Abdel-Wahid al-Nur, who provided previously to Sudan Tribune with the phone number of the military spokesperson early January to speak with him on the issue, stressed he had never ever been a partisan for the repression of his opponents particularly when it is related to the political divergences within the movement.

The founder of the SLM underlined that the SLM had seen different dissidents and the emergence of several splinter groups starting from Minni Minawi, Abu Al-Gassim Al-Haj, Ahmed Abdel-Shafi, Abdel-Rahman Musa, Ibrahim Musa Madibo and Khamis Abdullah.

Al-Nur insisted that the SLM as a political movement is founded on democratic basis including the freedom of thought, freedom to join the party as well as to leave it.

The Darfur leader added that the SLM has "one leadership to solve problems and maintain order." With regard to the situation of Ali Haroun and the other comrades, he pointed out that they were summoned to the headquarters of the SLA in Dirbat, and that there are no restriction on their movements but they are suspended from their duties.

He disclosed to Sudan Tribune they had contacted the Red Cross late December and invited them to come and inspect the situation of Ali Haroun who was the liaison officer with the ICRC in Ain Siro.

Al-Nur also said he had a telephone conversation with Amnesty International today and he communicated satellite telephone of Abdelrahman Adam Nimer, the military spokesperson of the SLA, to contact him for more information on Haroun.

The rebel leader said he renewed his unconditional invitation to Amnesty to visit the areas controlled by the movement to investigate any violation of human rights generally and the situation of Ali Haroun particularly.

Nimer in a telephone interview with Sudan Tribune on January 2, had invited aid workers and human rights organizations to visit Haroun in Jabal Marra to verify if there are violations of human rights committed by the SLM.

Abdel-Wahid said he had visited Amnesty in London in 2004 and had proposed to their officials that they visit the SLM controlled areas and inspect human rights conditions.

(ST)

Sudanese government: Libyan mediation success depends on the commitment of Chad to the conventions (SMC)

Sudanese Government linked the success of the Libyan mediation to improve relations with Chad, with the commitment of Chad to cease supporting Darfurian rebel movements and starts internal dialogue with its opponents instead of blaming Khartoum.

Ambassador of the Sudan Abdallah Alsheikh, expected that the success of the Libyan initiative if Chad committed to the Tripoli and Riyadh Agreements. He explained that Sudan doesn't harboring any Chadian opposition. "Khartoum has always been playing the role of neutral intermediary in the negotiations between the Chadian government and the opposition".

Alsheikh said that the Government of Chad leads these days mobilization against its opposition, he indicated that the trend might serve some political purpose of the Chadian government, but does not mean the commitment of every party, to the signed agreements

Informed sources revealed that a serious initiative adopted by Senior Assistant to the President of the Republic Mani Arkoy Minawi, aiming at containment of the flamed situation between Sudan and Chad.

The sources expected that the Senior Adviser to the President will be visiting Chad in the next few days after his visit to Libya.