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(By Public Information Office)

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IN THE NEWS TODAY:

➤ **UN**

- U.N. agencies appeal for Sudan's Darfur *BBC website*
- UNSC resolves to deploy international troops at the Sudanese-Chadian borders. *Alshafa*
- UN envoy meets with GoSS. *AlRai AlAam*
- UN, AU prepare for second phase of support to Darfur. *Allintibaha*
- Bush, UN's Ban to cooperate Darfur, Iran *SudanTribune .com*

➤ **Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA)**

- Pronk: UN New York coward, harassment in Sudan *The Juba Post*
- SPLM opposes political exploitation of rapes in Juba. *AlRai AlAam*
- Minister of Foreign Affairs mobilizes organs to follow up investigations of rape cases. *Sudan Vision*

➤ **UNCT statement**

- UN warns Darfur's aid operation may collapse. *All Press; SudanTribune .com*

➤ **Darfur**

- Darfur NRF to reject AU mediation if Sudan accedes to African presidency *SudanTribune .com*

- Rebel SPLM leader calls on Europe and NATO to intervene in Darfur *SudanTribune .com*
- China's special envoy, Sudanese president discuss Darfur issue *Chinese news agency Xinhua*; BBC service
- 64 accused of being behind tribal conflicts in S. Darfur, politicians and regular forces personnel were involved. *AlSahafa*
- Jamous family threatens to take UN to justice. *Akhbar Alyaum*
- Chad rebels take town on Sudanese border *SudanTribune .com*

➤ **GoSS**

- South Sudan opens liaison office in Washington *SudanTribune .com*
- Biong: SPLM to establish 16 diplomatic missions abroad. *AlRai AlAam*
- Cholong: GoSS should investigate LRA incidents in CES and EES *Khartoum Monitor*
- SPLM Ministers grapple with constraints: Nyamllel *Khartoum Monitor*
- Electricity an "expensive" commodity in southern Sudan *Sudan Radio Service* BBC service
- Progress said to move forward in south Sudan state *Sudan Radio Service* BBC service
- Sudanese official pledges to stop banditry in southern state *Sudan Radio Service* BBC service

➤ **GoNU/ CPA**

- High level security committee leaves for Abyei to contain tensions. *Alwan*
- Sudanese minister visits Iranian military airplane complex *SudanTribune*
- Cabinet announces Saturday 20 January public holiday. *AlSahafa*
- Bashir to visit AlFula end of this month. *AlSahafa*
- Sudan seeks apology from USA over storming of embassy in Iraq *Suna news agency website*
- Sudan: Southern militia joins ex-rebel army *Sudan Radio Service* BBC service

➤ **LRA**

- Ugandan rebels reject Sudan's Machar as mediator *SudanTribune .com*
- Panic grips northern Uganda as rebels threaten to re-enter country *Ugandan newspaper The New Vision website* BBCwebsite

➤ **Other Developments**

- Iran, Sudan agree to enhance defence cooperation *SudanTribune .com*
- Egypt foils illegal entry attempt into Israel by Sudanese national *Egyptian news agency MENA* BBCwebsite

IN THE NEWS TODAY:

UN

U.N. agencies appeal for Sudan's Darfur

KHARTOUM, Sudan, Jan. 17 (UPI) -- Mounting violence in Sudan's war-torn Darfur region threatens to permanently disrupt the fragile humanitarian lifeline ensuring the survival of millions of people.

Thirteen U.N. bodies involved in the operation issued the warning Wednesday following recent repeated military attacks, arbitrary bombing of villages and the targeting of aid workers, noting that relief access in December was the worst in nearly three years.

"If this situation continues, the humanitarian operation and welfare of the population it aims to support will be irreversibly jeopardized," said the joint statement issued through UNICEF in Khartoum, Sudan.

It called for protection of civilians and humanitarian workers and an end to impunity for perpetrators of human rights abuses.

"If not, the U.N. humanitarian agencies and non-governmental organizations will not be able to hold the fragile line that to date has provided relief and a measure of protection to some 4 million people in Darfur affected by this tragic conflict," it said.

The agencies said over the last two years humanitarian agencies saved the lives of hundreds of thousands of civilians caught up in the conflict, in which nearly four years of fighting between government forces, allied militias and rebel groups seeking greater autonomy have killed at least 200,000 people and displaced more than 2 million others.

Mortality rates have been brought below emergency levels, malnutrition halved from the height of the crisis in mid-2004 and nearly three-quarters of all Darfurians now have access to safe drinking water. In 2006 alone, 400,000 metric tons of food were delivered.

BBC website

UNSC resolves to deploy international troops at the Sudanese-Chadian borders; UN force sought to protect civilians along Darfur's borders

ST Jan 16, 2007 (UNITED NATIONS) The UN Security Council made a fresh push for heightened preparations to send a UN force along Sudan's borders with Chad and the Central African Republic (CAR) to protect civilians caught in the Darfur conflict.

In a statement read by its president for the month, Russia's UN envoy Vitaly Churkin, the council "reiterates its concern about the persistent instability along the borders between the Sudan, Chad and the Central African Republic and about the threat this poses to the safety of the civilian population and the conduct of humanitarian operations."

It expressed "readiness to consider the possible establishment of a mission intended to contribute to improve security on the Chad and Central African side of the border

with the Sudan and to foster regional peace and stability through the monitoring of cross-border activities" between the three countries.

It asked UN chief Ban Ki-moon to submit, by the middle of next month, a new set of updated and finalized recommendations on the force's size, structure and mandate.

The council also asked Ban "to deploy as soon as possible an advance team to Chad and the Central African Republic" and welcomed his intention to authorize "the immediate return of the technical assessment mission to the region in order to complete its observations that were curtailed on security grounds."

Last November, the United Nations sent a team to the area to assess how to protect refugees and displaced people in Chad and CAR from a spillover of fighting in Darfur.

But because of the fighting and political turmoil, the team was unable to get to many areas it had planned to visit.

Khartoum has rejected allegations that his country is backing cross-border by Chadian and CAR insurgents and in turn accuses Chad and CAR of supporting rebels in Darfur.

(AFP)

UN envoy meets with GoSS.

AlRai AlAam reported that the UNSG envoy for the conflict in Uganda has held two separate meetings with the president of the GoSS and his deputy in Juba to discuss what the UN can do on the issue of LRA. Dr. Machar the deputy president of GoSS said he had briefed the UN envoy on the agreement that have been concluded with his mediation.

UN, AU prepare for second phase of support to Darfur.

AlIntibaha; The UN and the AU started preparation for the second phase of providing UN support to AMIS in Darfur to facilitate the deployment of hybrid force in the region

Bush, UN's Ban to cooperate Darfur, Iran

ST Jan 16, 2007 (WASHINGTON) US President George W. Bush and UN chief Ban Ki-moon worked to push past any lingering US-UN ill will and vowed to work together on issues like Middle East peace and violence in Darfur.

"You want to talk, pick up the phone and call me," Bush twice encouraged Ban as they wrapped up an hour-long meeting that also covered Iran, Iraq and climate change, according to UN sources.

Ban, who took over January 1 as secretary general, told reporters after the meeting that he would push "vigorously" for UN reforms and urged the world community to give war-torn Iraq "all possible assistance."

During their joint public appearance in the Oval Office, Ban and Bush struck a cordial tone, noting their past cooperation on the North Korean nuclear crisis when the UN chief was South Korea's foreign minister, and vowed to work closely on other issues like Iran's atomic ambitions and violence in Darfur.

The US president was expected to lay out his climate change approach in his annual State of the Union speech on January 23.

(AFP)

Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA)

Pronk: UN New York coward, harassment in Sudan

The Juba Post Jan Pronk, former Special representative of the Secretary General of the UN, has condemned the Sudan harassment of the UN Mission in Sudan, and the inaction of his manager in New York, revealing that they never responded to the letter expelling him.

Pronk reports that the UN, by persistently failing to react to breaches of arrangements, and by its attempts to negotiate with Khartoum, has undermined its own position: "The Security Council has failed to address violations of earlier agreements concerning peace in Darfur"

Pronk also says the UN was too divided and bureaucratic to make a response to his expulsion, which was in breach of international conventions on UN personnel.

A clearly angry Pronk writes, "The letter sent by the Minister of Foreign affairs to the Secretary General, in which the Sudanese authorities informed the UN of their decision, has ever never been answered. It turned out that there was dispute between UN officials in New York about the tone of such an answer."

SPLM opposes political exploitation of rapes in Juba.

AIRai AIAam During the National assembly meeting held yesterday, the SPLM bloc head, Yassir Arman stated that the SPLM condemns the sexual abuse committed by UN members in southern Sudan. He added that such problems should be distant from political exploitation.

Minister of Foreign Affairs mobilizes organs to follow up investigations of rape cases.

All Press; Sudan Vision The Minister of foreign affairs, Dr. Lam Akol stated that his ministry will coordinate efforts with all the concerned government authorities to make pressure on the United Nations to receive the results of its investigations regarding the rape cases committed by UN peacekeepers personnel in south Sudan.

Dr. Lam Akol briefed the national assembly on the results of meeting conducted between Sudan and Ambassador to UN and the UNSG Ki Moon.

The UNSG confirmed during the meeting that the United Nations will take measures against those who violated UN regulations that govern peacekeeping operations. Dr. Lam Akol added that the UNSG confirmed that he will give special attention to the investigations looking for cooperation with the concerned Sudanese authorities.

Foreign Minister reiterated the government condemnation of the immoral crimes committed by the UN peacekeepers in south Sudan adding that the Sudan will request compensation for the victims.

Dr. Lam Akol called for punishing those who committed such crimes in their duty places to avoid escaping the punishment. He stressed that Sudan will ask the United Nations to provide it with the results of the investigations that started in 2005.

UNCT statement

UN warns Darfur's aid operation may collapse. *All Press; SudanTribune .com*

Jan 17, 2007 (KHARTOUM) — U.N. agencies issued an unprecedented joint appeal on Wednesday calling for an end to the violence in Darfur, where widespread attacks and insecurity threaten to collapse the world's largest aid operation.

The statement said in the past six months, some 250,000 people had been forced to flee violence, many for the second or third time, and a dozen aid workers were killed, more than at any other time during the four-year-old conflict in Sudan's remote west.

"The humanitarian community cannot indefinitely assure the survival of the population in Darfur if insecurity continues," said the statement from 14 U.N. agencies working in Sudan.

Experts estimate some 200,000 people have been killed and 2.5 million driven from their homes to miserable makeshift camps during the rape, pillage and murder in Darfur, which Washington calls genocide.

Khartoum denies genocide and says the Western media has exaggerated the conflict. The International Criminal Court is investigating alleged war crimes in the region.

British aid agency Oxfam added its voice to the U.N. statement.

"Increasingly violent attacks against aid workers are crippling the massive humanitarian response in Darfur, leaving hundreds of thousands of people vulnerable and under threat," said Paul Smith-Lomas, Oxfam's regional director.

"It is completely unacceptable for our staff to have to risk their lives while helping the people of Darfur," he added.

The roads in many parts of west and north Darfur are so insecure that staff can only be transported by expensive helicopter flights. In the past year the conflict has spread to

Darfur's main towns, forcing hundreds of staff evacuations staff and crippling operations.

In addition to insecurity, government-imposed bureaucracy and travel restrictions have also hindered the aid operation. Despite agreements ensuring freedom of movement and ease of access, hundreds of aid workers waste days waiting for permits or visas or filling out paperwork.

Foreign journalists have been banned from travelling to Darfur for the past two months to report on the situation.

The U.N. statement said the Darfur humanitarian operation, employing almost 14,000 aid workers and costing more than \$1 billion, had saved hundreds of thousands of lives since it began in mid-2004. But it said that work was being undone as staff are evacuated because of attacks.

"This reduction of services is leading to a deterioration of hygiene in ... camps reflected by the cholera outbreak that struck 2,768 and killed 147 people during 2006," it said.

"Global malnutrition rates are edging perilously close to the emergency threshold," it added.

Mortality rates among war victims in Darfur at the height of the conflict resulted in an estimated 10,000 people dying each month. The U.N. agencies warned the good work to reduce that rate could be reversed if insecurity continued.

They urged sustained efforts be made to resume the peace process, which broke down after a May 2006 peace deal signed by only one of three negotiating rebel groups.

Many insurgents who rejected the deal formed a new alliance and renewed hostilities with the government, escalating the violence.

"Solid guarantees for the safety of civilians and humanitarian workers is urgently needed," the statement said. "Those who have committed attacks, harassment, abduction, intimidation, robbery and injury to civilians ... must be held accountable."

A struggling African Union force has failed to stem the violence or protect humanitarian workers, a major part of its mandate. Many aid groups refuse to travel with an AU escort in Darfur, saying the force itself has become a target for attacks and is unable to defend them.

(Reuters)

Darfur

Darfur NRF to reject AU mediation if Sudan accedes to African presidency

New AU Chairmanship will End its Mediator Role in Darfur

The National Redemption Front (NRF) Sudan will suspend cooperation with the AU in Darfur if Albashir takes over AU Chairmanship.

ST Jan 16, 2007 The African Union will hold its 9th Summit of Heads of States and Governments in Addis Ababa, January 22-30, 2007. The Summit will transfer AU Chairmanship to Albashir, the current President of Sudan. Baring an unlikely coup, the transfer is automatic given last year's AU Chairmanship decision "Sudan shall assume Chairmanship of the African Union for the year 2007". The transfer will have a catastrophic impact on the AU role in Darfur.

If allowed to proceed, the new portfolio will give Albashir immense influence in AU decisions and performance in its role in Darfur. Albashir will have power over all major AU policies, appointment of AU key players and down to the financing of AU peacekeepers in Darfur.

Since Albashir is party to the Darfur conflict, it will be unrealistic to expect the institution he chairs to act as a neutral arbitrator in the same conflict. It is self evident that accession of Albashir to AU Chairmanship will strip the AU of its neutrality in Darfur which is already at stake and is diminishing at a formidable pace. As non-signatory to the DPA, the NRF will be forced into one choice: to cease cooperation with the AU in all matters related to peace in Darfur and to treat the AU peacekeepers as partisan forces.

It is unreasonable to expect the NRF to take any other course of action and the international community must take note of that.

NRF Secretariat

Asmara

16/01/2007

Rebel SPLM leader calls on Europe and NATO to intervene in Darfur

SudanTribune .com Jan 16, 2007 (**PARIS**) A Darfur rebel leader launched an appeal urging European leaders and the NATO members to send troops in the troubled western Sudan region, saying that they have a moral and legal obligation to protect Darfur civilians.

In a press conference held in Paris, the leader of the rebel Sudan Liberation Movement, Abdelwahid Al-Nur, urged the European heads of States and governments, and the EU leadership, the NATO to deploy troops in Sudan's Darfur region.

Al-Nur said there is no hope to see UN troops in Darfur as far as the international organisation subject the deployment of the bleu helmets to Sudan's government consent. "It is evident that al-Bashir who is killing innocent people, rejects

deployment of UN forces and if we wait his consent this means you authorize him to implement fully his genocide against Darfur people”

With Sudanese government allies— Chinese and Russia — the UN Security Council can not adopt any resolution to send an international force with a clear mandate to protect Darfur civilians under the authority of Chapter Seven, he told the French press.

In his “Appeal of Paris” al-Nur said "to not rescue the crime victim, is a crime". European leaders could not witness the ongoing genocide without sending troops to stop this heinous crime. “They have to act as they did in Bosnia”; the rebel leader said.

He told the French press that one can not speak about civil war in Darfur, because the attacks are carried by the Sudanese army and the militias “it is one side war against Darfur innocent people”. He reminded that his movement is fully committed to 2004 ceasefire and they only reply in self-defense if government troops or Janjaweed militia attack them. (ST)

China's special envoy, Sudanese president discuss Darfur issue

By official Chinese news agency Xinhua (New China News Agency)

Khartoum, 16 January: On 16 January, Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir met in Khartoum with Zhai Jun, special envoy of the Chinese government and assistant foreign minister, who is visiting Sudan. They exchanged views on Sino-Sudanese ties and the Darfur issue.

Zhai Jun conveyed President Hu Jintao's cordial greetings to President Al-Bashir. He also said: The Chinese government treasures the Sino-Sudanese traditional friendship, and pays attention to further strengthening the friendly and cooperative ties between the two countries and within the framework of the Sino-African Cooperation Forum so as to attain a mutually benefiting and win-win situation and common development. China is very concerned about the Darfur issue, and hopes that various relevant parties will continue to uphold dialogues and consultations in an effort to materialize peace and stability in the Darfur region in all-round manner at an early date.

Al-Bashir highly commended the Sudanese-Chinese cooperative ties that have been very fruitful for a long time. He said: After the Sino-African Cooperation Forum in Beijing, Sudan is willing to further strengthen friendly cooperation in various fields with China. He stressed: The Sudanese government is earnestly implementing the Darfur Peace Agreement, enforcing the UNSC-endorsed consensus attained at the Addis Ababa high-level dialogue and the resolutions of the African Union Peace and Security Council's summit in Abuja, actively facilitating the political process in the Darfur region, and improving the local people's living conditions. At present, the situation in the Darfur region is stable.

BBC Mon

64 accused of being behind tribal conflicts in S. Darfur, politicians and regular forces personnel were involved.

AlSahafa The Wali of south Darfur AlHaj Atta el Mannan admitted that administrative short comings from the part of official authorities and native administration contributed to the tribal conflicts in which 146 people were killed. The Wali said that individuals forces committed violations in these events he said also that some politicians were involved in the conflicts.

Jamous family threatens to take UN to justice.

Akhbar Al-Yom, 18 January 2007-- The family of Suliman Jamous, one of the leaders of the SLM who refused to sign the DPA, threatened to bring the UN to justice if he is not released in 24 hours due to failure of all efforts to contact him and enable him to leave Kadugli town in South Kordofan and given the UN insistence to keep him in one of the hospitals. According to the family the UN has also refused to release Suliman Jamous.

The family, wife and daughter, said yesterday, in a press conference which they held together with its lawyers, the UN had brought Jamous to Kadugli to provide medical treatment to him. However, it refused later to allow him to leave and kept him in one of the UN hospitals under tight security custody. The family said it has two options for the UN:

- a. Take Jamous back to the sites of the DPA non-signatories, or
- b. Assist him to travel abroad.

The family said, in a statement it issued yesterday, that the UN had promised to provide medical treatment to Jamous and return him to Darfur after four days. The UN has kept him for seven months (since 24 June 2006) and the family does not know the reasons behind this development. The family explained that it has contacted UNMIS many times inquiring about the circumstances of his arrest and requesting releasing him or taking him back to his site in Darfur. However, the family said we did not receive clear answers. We have the impression that the UNMIS cannot act without approval from the GoS. According to the family the officials of the Mission use to avoid meeting them and providing answers to their inquiries and those of their lawyer. The Mission treated Jamous in a similar manner. He did not receive feedback to the letters he had sent through the Mission to the UN Secretary General on 13 December 2006 and 31 December 2006. The family appreciates in particular the role of UNMIS office in Darfur but is disappointed as a result of UNMIS position on Jamous. The family concluded by saying that it does not see in the UN Charter and International Conventions and Charters a justification for the UN to arrest Jamous.

Barood Sandal, one of the lawyers, said they do not trust any governmental authority that could provide protection to Jamous. As lawyers who represent his family, he said they cannot receive Jamous inside Sudan.

Analysts link between the UN position and Jamous position which opposes the DPA.

Chad rebels take town on Sudanese border

SudanTribune .com Jan 17, 2007 (N'DJAMENA) Chadian rebels captured the small town of Ade on the border with Sudan on Wednesday, the latest in a series of raids in the lawless east of the central African country.

The rebel Union Forces for Democracy and Development (UFDD) entered the town early on Wednesday. It lies on the road to the main regional town Goz Beida, a hub for Western aid agencies.

"We took the town without any fighting," UFDD spokesman Ali Moussa Izzo told Reuters by satellite phone. "We are still here in Ade."

A Chadian army source confirmed a rebel column had taken the town, more than 800 km (500 miles) east of the capital N'Djamena.

The insurgency against Chadian President Idriss Deby has been characterised by hit-and-run raids by several groups fighting to end his 16-year rule.

The UFDD rebels said weekend attacks around the remote northeastern settlement of Ounianga Kebir, more than 600 kilometres (375 miles) north of Ade, would open up a new front in their low-intensity war in the land-locked oil producing state.

(Reuters)

GoSS

South Sudan opens liaison office in Washington

SudanTribune .com Jan 16, 2007 (WASHINGTON) The Government of Southern Sudan, Minister of Regional Cooperation Barnaba Marial Benjamin has officially opened the Government of Southern Sudan's Mission office to United States in Washington on Tuesday, January 16, 2007 at watch full eyes of the United States high level officials.

Among the high level officials, was the US special envoy to Sudan Andrew Natsios, former Senator majority leader Bill Frist, Congressman Donald Payne, the US based SSBIN reported.

"Indeed, the launching of Liaison Office on the Second Anniversary of the Signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) is a great milestone towards our commitment in the implementation of the CPA. The government of Southern Sudan shall establish, develop and maintain good relations and cooperation with foreign governments, Foreign Non-governmental organizations, and association for mutual advantage in trade, investment, culture, sports, education credit, loans, grants, technical assistance and other fields of development cooperation."

Southern Sudan liaison offices abroad work under the authority of the Ministry for Regional Cooperation. They have no diplomatic status. They shall only be entitled to diplomatic privileges and immunities if they become part and parcel of Sudan's diplomatic mission to the country concerned.

The purpose of the Liaison Office in United States will evidently enhances a better relation between the Government of Southern Sudan with its expatriate's communities living in the United States. It will foster future bilateral ties with United States.

The Government of Southern Sudan is expecting to other offices in United Kingdom, Ethiopia, and Kenya before the end of the year.

(SSBIN.com)

Biong: SPLM to establish 16 diplomatic missions abroad.

AlRai AlAam The minister at the presidency Dr. Luka Biong said in astetment to AlRai alAam that the GoSS is planning to open 16 diplomatic missions in other African and European countries.

Cholong: GoSS should investigate LRA incidents in CES and EES

Khartoum Monitor; The Member of the parliament in the Government of National Unity (GoNU), Ustaz Adam Cholong, told Government of South Sudan (GoSS) in collaboration with the Central Equatorial State (CES) and Eastern equatorial State (EES), should thoroughly investigate the LRA incidents that have at least killed 30 people and wounded many others along the Magwi Nimule and Torit Juba roads, in South Sudan this month.

“A proper investigation about those incidents should be made” said Cholong. Adding that it is the concern of the both the CES and EES governments to find out exactly who are behind those incidents, because the word LRA seems to be an umbrella for other groups to commit criminal activities.

SPLM Ministers grapple with constraints: Nyamllel

Khartoum Monitor SPLM ministers at the Ministry of International Cooperation , Elias Nyamllel, in a statement to Khartoum Monitor said the performance of the SPLM's ministers in the GoNU was not up to expectations because they had been grappling with the many constrains relating to nature, systems and structures of public service. In contrast, the performance of SPLM's MPs in the National assembly and the states Assemblies have been good because assemblies are characterized by openness and intensive discussion, he added.

Electricity an "expensive" commodity in southern Sudan

Independent USAID-funded Sudan Radio Service, Nairobi, 17 Jan 07

The recently introduced electricity supply in Yei town in Central Equatoria State may prove to be expensive for the average person.

In an interview with Sudan Radio Service on phone from Yei on Thursday [11 January], Executive Director of Yei County, Aggrey Cyrus Kanyikwa, said few rural people can afford a monthly fee of 140 dollars for electricity.

[Kanyikwa] "It is expensive at the moment; you know much of the power is used to light the streets. To the common man is expensive it's like one hundred 40 dollars a month, which is highly expensive. We are looking into helping the company by subsidizing the cost by providing some fuel."

He said about fifty households in town have already been connected to the electricity supply in the phase one of the project which covers a radius of one square kilometer. Most of the people who are connected to the thermal electricity supply are traders, NGO and government institutions.

Kanyikwa said that the availability of electricity in Yei town has improved security there, adding that the town is now supplied with electricity for about 12 hours each day. He said the electricity supply started in October last year.

The project was funded by the USAID and was implemented by a firm called the National Rural Electrification Corporations Association (NRECA).

BBC Mon

Progress said to move forward in south Sudan state

Independent USAID-funded Sudan Radio Service on 17 January

A government official from Jonglei state [southern Sudan] says that development in the state is progressing well.

In an interview with Sudan Radio Service in Nairobi on Friday [12 January], Jonglei State Peace and Development Advisor Reverend John Jock Chol said that a lot of development has taken place. For example, the Bor-Juba road has been de-mined, rehabilitated and is in use now.

Reverend Chol said the state government is working hard to construct and renovate schools so more children have a place to learn. Chol also revealed that some Arab countries have promised to build a big hospital and secondary school in the state.

[Jock Chol] "Recently Governor Thon Leek visited Middle East and came back with good news, he brought hospital and school which will be permanent building. The construction of the hospital that will have 300 beds will soon begin in Waat Payam. And a boarding school for all Jonglei children will be built in Ayod town. And in a short time the only girl boarding school in the state will be built in Pibor County. I am sure the Government of southern Sudan and Jonglei state are doing their work to deliver the services to the people."

Chol urged southern Sudanese to be patient and give the Government of Southern Sudan more time to deliver services.

BBC Mon

Sudanese official pledges to stop banditry in southern state

By independent USAID-funded Sudan Radio Service on 17 January

The Executive Director of Yei County [southern Sudan], Aggrey Cyrus Kanyikwa, has called on communities living in Yei County to work with security personnel to improve the security situation in the county.

Speaking to Sudan Radio Service from Yei County on Thursday [11 January], Kanyikwa urged the police to provide the necessary services to ensure that security is maintained in the region. He reiterated the county commissioner's message during the CPA celebrations that the army will be equipped to stop banditry along the Juba-Yei road.

[Kanyikwa] "This kind of incident happened in December. There are bandits on the road to Juba. In his message to the people in Yei, the commissioner said that the army will be empowered and will be enhanced to ensure that banditries are reduced, that means that anybody who is a bandit has to be identified, arrested and taken to court."

Kanyikwa said that the community can also provide information to the police by identifying suspected criminals in the area so that they are arrested before they commit crimes.

BBC Mon

GoNU/ CPA

High level security committee leaves for Abyei to contain tensions.

Alwan The security and defence Committee of the national assembly will visit Abyei in an effort to contain the tension there. The chairman of the committee Dr Jalal Tawer told Alwan that a high level security committee had already left for Abyei.

Sudanese minister visits Iranian military airplane complex

ST Jan 17, 2007 (**TEHRAN**) Sudanese defence minister has inspected today military aircraft complex in Iran's Esfahan Province. He hailed the technological progress achieved by Iran considering it as great honor for Islamic world.

Sudan's defence minister, Maj-Gen Abdelrahim Mohamed Hussein, heading a military delegation, inspected Iran HESA aircraft manufacturing industries and got a first-hand look at the specialized, scientific achievements of the complex.

During the inspection, Hussein described as very good, the production of Iran-140 aircraft as well as design and manufacture of different kinds of helicopters.

He praised the scientific progress of the Iranian youth and said that the capability and know-how of Iranian aircraft scientists are founded on faith and Islamic commitment and that such commitment is expected to usher in a quite bright future.

According to a military cooperation accord signed Wednesday between the two countries, Iran and Sudan would exchange expert delegations and expertise and promote mutual technical and educational cooperation. (ST)

Cabinet announces Saturday 20 January public holiday.

AlSahafa Cabinet of Ministers have announced that Sunday, 21st January 2007, will be observed as an official holiday on the occasion of the Islamic New Year.

Bashir to visit AlFula end of this month.

Al-Sahafa Deputy Governor of South Kordofan State, Dr. Easa Bushra had arrived yesterday to Khartoum for the preparation of President Bashir visit to S. Kordofan State. It is worthy to mention that the S. Kordofan state had witnessed wide protestations during the last days because of the deterioration of its development and public services. The President is expected to visit during the last week of this month a number of towns in S. Kordofan States top of them is AlFula.

Sudan seeks apology from USA over storming of embassy in Iraq

Suna news agency website 17 Jan 07 the Foreign Ministry has handed over a protest letter to the US deputy ambassador to Khartoum, Roberto Bors [as published], following the storming of the Sudanese embassy building by nine American soldiers.

The head of the US department at the Foreign [Ministry], Ambassador Abd al-Basit Badawi, informed the US envoy of Sudan's protest and condemnation over the act which contradicts the simplest diplomatic principles and the Vienna Convention.

In a statement to Suna, Foreign Ministry Spokesman Ambassador Ali al-Sadiq said the government asked for an official apology for the storming of its embassy in Baghdad by the US forces with a confirmation that such an incident would not happen again.

He said the US envoy promised to convey the message to his government and acquaint it of the [Sudanese] protest.

The Foreign Ministry also informed the US envoy of its rejection of the detention of the Sudanese journalist at Guantanamo for all this period without taking him to court. The ministry demanded his immediate release.

The USA envoy promised to study the issue. [Passage omitted]

BBC

Sudan: Southern militia joins ex-rebel army

By independent USAID-funded Sudan Radio Service on 17 January

Almost 200 militia soldiers allied to Tom Al-Nur [Commander of Peace Army militia in Bahr al-Ghazal] have joined the SPLA in Western Bahr El Ghazal during the celebration to mark the 2nd anniversary of the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement.

Speaking to Sudan Radio Service on phone from Juba on Friday [9 January], Western Bahr Al Bhazal state Governor Mark Nyipouch said other militias also appear poised to join the SPLA.

[Governor Nyipouch] "There was a motion that other forces will be joining, some from the Bora area, Raja area and Bazia areas." Almost 200 militia soldiers allied to Tom Al-Nur joined the SPLA in Western Bahr Al Ghazal during the celebration to mark the 2nd anniversary of the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement.

Speaking to Sudan Radio Service on phone from Juba on Friday, Western Bahr El Ghazal state Governor Mark Nyipouch said other militias also appear poised to join the SPLA.

[Governor Nyipouch] "There was a motion that other forces will be joining, some from the Bora area, Raja area and Bazia areas."

The governor said the SPLA top leadership will integrate these new soldiers into the SPLA as quickly as possible. He further said that the SPLA Chief of Staff and the Government of Southern Sudan have been informed and are making all the necessary arrangements for integration.

BBC Mon

LRA

Ugandan rebels reject Sudan's Machar as mediator

ST Jan 17, 2007 (**KAMPALA**) Uganda's Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) rebels have rejected south Sudanese Vice President Riek Machar as chief mediator at talks to end one of Africa's longest wars, the guerrillas' deputy leader said on Wednesday.

In another setback to a sputtering peace process, LRA second-in-command Vincent Otti said the rebels would permanently abandon talks with Uganda's government in south Sudan's capital Juba if an alternative venue cannot be found.

Otti's comments came after delegates representing the LRA said they would quit the talks because they feared for their security after Sudanese President Omar Hassan al-Bashir vowed to "get rid of the LRA from Sudan".

"I don't want Riek Machar. I don't want peace talks in Juba. Talks are closed in Juba forever," Otti told Reuters by satellite telephone from his hideout on the Sudan-Congo border.

Machar was not immediately available for comment.

South Sudanese officials have said they think they can persuade the LRA to return to Juba, where talks mediated by Machar began in July. Otti rejected this, saying he would block any attempts by Machar to restart negotiations.

A truce signed in August and renewed last month had raised hopes of an end to a brutal 20-year war that killed tens of thousands of people and uprooted nearly 2 million more.

(Reuters)

Panic grips northern Uganda as rebels threaten to re-enter country

Ugandan newspaper The New Vision website on 18 January

Panic has gripped northern Uganda following threats made by LRA [Lord's Resistance Army] Deputy Commander Vincent Otti on a Gulu [District] radio station and speculation that pockets of rebels have re-entered the country.

"A group of about 10 rebels abducted, gang-raped and abandoned two girls in Palaro sub-county in Gulu district and are proceeding towards River Aswa, bordering Kitgum and Gulu," Gulu RDC [Resident District Commissioner] Walter Ochora told The New Vision.

The group had reportedly been hiding in Uganda and never proceeded to one of the assembly points. Speculation is also rife that an LRA group commanded by Kwoyello entered the country.

"Kwoyello's MTN number is on, indicating that he might be in Uganda," Ochora said.

The new developments follow threats by Otti on Gulu Mega FM that he was considering sending his troops back to Uganda if Sudan did not give them security guarantees. "When Otti says he is going to send the LRA back to Uganda, he actually means the LRA is already in Uganda," a former rebel, who escaped last December, commented on Monday [15 January] on the same radio station.

In another setback to the sputtering peace process, the LRA leadership refused to meet the UN special envoy, Joachim Chissano, who waited in Juba for three days before flying to Khartoum yesterday.

BBC Mon

Other Developments

Iran, Sudan agree to enhance defence cooperation

ST Jan 17, 2007 (TEHRAN) Iran and Sudan on Wednesday signed a memorandum of understanding for expansion of mutual defence cooperation.

Iranian Defence Minister Brigadier General Mustafa Mohammad-Najjar and his Sudanese counterpart Abdel Rahim Mohamed Hussein signed the agreement based on the common will of senior Iranian and Sudanese political officials for promotion of bilateral relations, stabilization of peace and calm in the region and mutual understanding on regional developments.

Based on the agreement, signed at the end of the second round of talks between the two ministers, Iran and Sudan would exchange expert delegations and expertise and promote mutual technical and educational cooperation.

During his four-day visit to Tehran, the Sudanese defence minister held two rounds of talks with his Iranian counterpart and conferred with Majlis Speaker Gholam-Ali Haddad-Adel and Commander of the Islamic Revolution's Guards Corps Major General Yahya Rahim Safavi on defence-related issues.

He also inspected subsidiaries of Iran's auto manufacturing giant Iran Khodro.

(IRNA)

Egypt foils illegal entry attempt into Israel by Sudanese national

Egyptian news agency MENA

Rafah, 17 January: Egypt's security agencies managed to foil an attempt by a Sudanese to infiltrate into Israel via the international borders.

The Sudanese national was arrested while seeking to enter illegally the Israeli lands at the Mark "11" on the international borders, southern Rafah crossing. [passage omitted]

BBC