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(By Public Information Office)

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United Nations

60 die in tribal clashes in southern Sudan – NCP representative questions United Nations position

(*AlRai AIAam* – 18th Jul. **Khartoum**) More than 60 people have recently been killed in Lakes State in clashes between the Agok and Agar clans of the Dinka tribe before the SPLA stepped in to bring the situation under control.

The clashes, sources say, are as a result of conflict over water sources and pasture.

Meanwhile Khamis Haggar, the National Congress Party's spokesperson on southern Sudan, underlined the need to put in place mechanisms to end such clashes that threaten the unity of the stability, security and the unity of the social fabric.

He said that the citizens in the area have not had a taste of security and peace although one year and a half has elapsed since the signing of the CPA.

Speaking to the Sudan News Agency, SUNA, Haggar questioned the United Nations position, with its large humanitarian presence in the region, on such conflicts which now threaten peace, development and returns.

Annan, EU host conference seeking funding for Sudan peacekeepers

(*AP/ST* – 17th Jul. **Brussels**) U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan will seek Tuesday to coax international donors into providing funds to keep afloat the beleaguered African Union peacekeeping mission in Darfur and persuade the Sudanese government to accept a tougher U.N. force to follow the AU troops.

Annan will co-chair a conference hosted by the European Union that aims to ensure the implementation of a shaky peace deal between the Sudanese government and one of the Darfur's rebel factions, mobilize funds to keep the African mission going until the end of the year and press the government on the need for a U.N. force to replace the Africans.

"We hope very much that the government in Khartoum will accept that the United Nations can take responsibility for that force," said EU foreign policy chief Javier Solana. He told reporters the EU would seek to "mobilize all the resources" for Darfur.

The 7,000 AU troops have funding until early September at most, EU spokesman Amadeu Altafaj Tardio said Monday. "Further funds will have to be forthcoming and our hope is that other donors will step into the breach," he told reporters.

Altafaj Tardio said the EU had provided A329 million (US\$413 million) to cover the costs of the AU mission and urged the United States, Canada, Japan, Norway and other donors to dig deeper to keep it going. He declined to say how much was needed.

However, a group of international aid agencies said US\$270 million (A215 million) was required to fund the mission up to the end of December.

"The current scenario is a recipe for disaster," said Barbara Stocking, director of Oxfam Great Britain. "Donor governments must now put their hands in their pockets and fully fund the African Union force."

Oxfam joined Care International, CAFOD, Christian Aid International, Concern Worldwide, International Rescue Committee, Islamic Relief and Tearfund in a joint appeal to donors.

"This is an international problem, one of the worst humanitarian disasters in the world," said Haroun Atallah, chief executive of Islamic Relief. "All rich countries must step up their support urgently if the disaster of Darfur isn't to turn into an even worse catastrophe."

The talks will be attended by Sudan's Foreign Minister Lam Akol, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Jendayi Frazer, and Alessandro Minuto Rizzo, deputy secretary general of NATO which has offered to step up training, transport and logistical support to the African peacekeeping force.

AU peacekeepers ready to hand Darfur over to UN

(*AP/ST* – 16th Jul. **Kalma Camp, DARFUR**) Some 95,000 people who fled Darfur's violence are crowded into this labyrinth of huts scavenged from whatever is available – tree branches, plastic sheeting, scrap metal.

They have found only relative safety in Kalma camp, which offers a grim illustration of the challenges faced by an undermanned, under-equipped African Union mission sent to try to help civilians caught up in civil war. Some A.U. troops say they have failed. A.U. commanders on the ground and officials at headquarters in Ethiopia refused to comment for this report. But the A.U. has officially embraced the proposition that it be replaced by a larger, more robust U.N. force. The Sudanese government, though, has so far balked at allowing a U.N. mission.

Ethnic African rebel groups rose up against the Arab-led Khartoum government in early 2003. The government is accused of responding by unleashing Arab militias known as the Janjaweed who have been accused of some of the conflict's worst atrocities – but it denies those charges. Fighting continues despite a peace agreement the government and the main rebel group signed in May.

Armed men roam just outside Kalma, and young women who venture out in search of firewood have been raped. The marauders have even made raids inside Kalma. On one occasion, men on horseback reportedly entered the camp saying they were searching for stolen cattle, and shot and killed a man.

Aid workers report looters who prize the water pumps at the camp's wells are growing increasingly brazen. In a recent raid on one of the wells, usually guarded by men armed with little more than sticks to ward off snakes, looters arrived firing automatic rifles. Sudanese police stationed just outside heard the gunfire and began firing at random. No one was hurt.

Kalma's residents refuse to allow in Sudanese police, trust shredded by the war. That leaves only AU civilian police, who are not allowed under the mission's mandate to be armed. The A.U. police can investigate incidents, but can only turn evidence over to Sudanese police for prosecution.

The A.U. has 7,000 men and women in Darfur, a region of 150,000 square miles (388,500 square kilometres), roughly the size of France, where punishing heat and frequent sandstorms take their toll on troops and equipment.

Only about 400 A.U. security officers are assigned to the sector that includes Kalma, and they patrol the camp only sporadically _ when armed A.U. troops are available to protect civilian police. Patrols were suspended altogether for more than a month after a May 8 riot in the camp in which a Sudanese interpreter working for the AU was killed and an A.U. office looted.

The riot was a dramatic expression of the anger camp residents often direct at the A.U., which they charge does too little to protect them.

"I want to go home because we have failed here and the United Nations needs to come in and take over this failed job," one Nigerian soldier in the A.U. contingent, speaking on condition of anonymity for fear of being punished, told The Associated Press. "The people don't even want us here They have absolutely no respect for us and I am tired of this."

Aid groups, who need security to do their work, have been less harsh, saying the A.U. troops have made a difference, but are spread too thin and lack crucial equipment.

No one seems to have enough of what they need, whether it's radios or helicopters. In a region where it can take nearly three hours to travel 60 kilometres (40 miles) because of loose sand, there are too few Russian-made transport helicopters. When the rains that are expected anytime now come, the logistics situation will only worsen, and the need for reliable air transport will dramatically increase.

The authority to act also is in short supply. A.U. soldiers may only fire when fired upon and given authorization to do so.

"Mandates are made by the bodies that authorize them," said John Prendergast, an Africa analyst with International Crisis Group. "The AU should enhance its mandate much more than it has, but hasn't because of resistance from Khartoum. The U.N. will face the same problem if it ever gets approval from Khartoum to come. The ideal mandate would be one that focuses on the protection of civilians, the disarmament of the Janjaweed and support to returnees to their home villages."

While the U.N. may come in with more troops and equipment, it may have no more power to act. But in Kalma, many place their hopes on the U.N.

"I appreciate the A.U., but I want the U.N. here because the A.U. has no power," Sheik Ali Abdirahman Tahir, head of all the local leaders in Kalma, said through a translator. "The U.N. has the resources to get the job done and we need this because the A.U. has not been able to accomplish anything."

Jan Egeland says government has rejected his request to visit Darfur

(*AlRai AlAam* – 18th Jul.) United Nations humanitarian coordinator Jan Egeland says the Sudan government has rejected his recent request to tour the Darfur region.

Speaking to Reuters in Rumbek yesterday, the humanitarian chief said the Sudan government does not want him to see the deteriorating security situation on the ground in Darfur.

He said he has been barred from visiting Darfur and has been told that he is not welcome to Khartoum.

Sudan, EU set for clash over UN troops for Darfur

(*Reuters/ST* – 17th Jul. **Khartoum**) Sharp differences emerged on Monday between Sudan and the international community over the purpose of an upcoming conference world powers say is aimed at pushing for a United Nations peacekeeping mission in Darfur.

A draft pre-conference EU declaration obtained by Reuters said the European Union, the United States and U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan will urge Sudan to allow a U.N. mission into Darfur to replace an African Union (AU) force that has been unable to stem the violence Washington called genocide.

A senior EU official said the Brussels meeting on Tuesday would also seek funding for the AU mission until it is replaced by U.N. troops.

But Sudanese officials said the sole aim of the meeting is to secure more money for the under-funded AU peacekeeping mission in its sprawling west, where tens of thousands have been killed in three years of fighting.

"The delegation which left today is going to discuss with the EU what support is needed for AU forces ... (a U.N. force) is not the issue of the meeting," Sudanese Foreign Ministry spokesman Jamal Ibrahim told Reuters.

Omar Adam Rahama, a member of Sudan's negotiation and implementation team for the Darfur peace deal reached in May with one rebel faction, was optimistic the country could get more AU funding without any concessions that would increase the likelihood of a future U.N. deployment.

"I'm very optimistic that they will support the AU mission ... because it's the right thing to be done," he said.

The under-equipped 7,000-strong AU force is struggling to keep the peace in Darfur, an area the size of France, and has complained of escalating attacks against its troops.

The AU had wanted to hand over to the United Nations at the end of September but its leaders decided earlier this month to extend its mission for three more months because of Sudan's opposition to any U.N. deployment.

Sudan has likened a U.N. military presence to a Western invasion. Analysts say Khartoum fears U.N. soldiers would arrest any official or militia leader likely to be indicted for war crimes by the International Criminal Court.

Ibrahim said Sudan's stance on U.N. troops was the same as that outlined at an AU summit in Gambia earlier in July.

At the summit, Sudanese President Omar Hassan al-Bashir again ruled-out U.N. troops. U.N. forces cannot be deployed without his consent and diplomats say little leverage is available to persuade him.

Sudanese Foreign Minister Lam Akol will attend Tuesday's conference, but Sudan asked that rebel leaders, who have repeatedly demanded U.N. peacekeepers, not be invited.

Government delegation to the donors' conference in Brussels to lobby for no transition

(*AlRai AlAam* – 18th Jul. **Khartoum**) The United Nations will make a final attempt in Brussels today to convince the Sudan government to allow for a transition of the AMIS to a United Nations operation in Darfur.

Sources say that the United Nations, with Washington backing, has mustered support from not less than 100 voluntary agencies and a large number of representatives of donor states to provide funding for the African Union until the end of this year.

On the other hand, Secretary-General Annan, the EU'S Javier Solana and the US State Department's Jendayi Fraser are due to hold a meeting with Sudan's foreign minister Dr. Lam Akol and his delegation on possibilities for such a transition.

Informed sources describe the impending meeting as a tough diplomatic battle between the Sudan and the international community and rules out possibilities for a clear agreement on the international forces.

Meanwhile, Sudan's ambassador to Brussels says that the US and the United Nations will present the issue of the possible transition of the AMIS to a United Nations operation in the Brussels meet.

He said that the Sudanese delegation to the conference will present an integrated proposal for the AMIS troops to remain in Darfur while donor states provide the necessary support for these forces.

CPA

Assessment and Evaluation Commission prepares proposals to resolve the Abyei issue

(*AlSahafa* – 18th Jul. **Khartoum**) The Assessment and Evaluation Commission is preparing to hold intensive consultations with representatives of the National Congress Party and the SPLM in a bid to reach an agreeable solution to the problems of the Abyei boundaries.

Cabinet affairs minister Deng Alor says the AEC has shown much concern towards the issue of Abyei and sees it as a strong point that may save the CPA from collapse.

He said that among the AEC's proposals is that a political administration be formed for the region in consultations with representatives of the SPLM and NCP.

Sudan's Salva Kiir decries slow progress in peace implementation

(*Xinhua/ST* – 17th Jul. **Nairobi**) Sudan's First Vice President Salva Kiir on Monday lamented lack of progress in the implementation of the historic north-south peace agreement, which ended 21 years of conflict in southern Sudan.

Addressing a news conference in Nairobi, Kiir who is also the president of autonomous southern Sudan, called on the international community to move fast to start implementing specific aspects of the deal.

"The implementation of the CPA (Comprehensive Peace Agreement) is going slowly than it was expected simply because there is lack of mechanism which was supposed to monitor and to push the parties," Kiir told journalists in Nairobi.

"The assessment and evaluation committee even though has been formed, is not the right mechanism to push the parties to implement what they have committed themselves to," he added.

According to Kiir, there were areas where progress has not been made at all in the implementation of the landmark peace deal, which was signed after protracted years of negotiations.

The vice president said there has not yet been any progress on ascertaining the north-south borders, which will determine the division of the oilfields.

"These include the Abyei Boundary Commission. The report which was submitted by the experts has not been implemented and this needs the mediators who participated in the CPA to come along and put pressure on the National Congress Party which has reneged in meeting its obligations," Kiir said.

Despite the formation of the government of national unity last year, Kiir said progress in several key commissions and committees and other bodies, which were supposed to implement the agreement, are yet to be realized.

Other commissions like the Border and the Petroleum Commissions though they have formed, no progress has been achieved, he said.

"Even though there has been no progress but still we have not lost hope that there would be no progress. It needs the commitment from those who worked day and night to bring peace to the Sudan," Kiir said.

One of the peace deal's key tasks is to demarcate a north-south border, which would establish control of oil fields.

Under the agreement, oil revenues from the south would be split roughly equally between the northern and southern governments.

The vice president decried the fact that the international community, which played a crucial role in the success of the peace deal, is merely watching as the situation deteriorates.

He also said the much needed help from the international community has been slow in pushing for the honouring of various aspects and the much needed financial assistance.

"We have not been abandoned but there are areas which we feel the international community has distanced themselves from us which they would have been in a position to intervene," Kiir said without elaborating.

"Yes, we need the international community's support so that the CPA can be implemented," Kiir said but refused to say whether he is comfortable with his current position.

Although the international community welcomed the adoption of the CPA, analysts feel that many problems are preventing its implementation.

That the CPA does not address the problem of the conflict in western Darfur — or the marginalisation of the Beja community in the east - could be another stumbling block.

The vice president said he was leaving for Washington at U.S. President George W. Bush's invitation.

"I cannot explain why President Bush invited me. Whatever he wants to know from me is something which I cannot talk about," said Kiir, who heads the former southern rebel movement.

SPLM describes as “symbolic” the handover of the Equatoria and Bahr-el-Ghazal military zones to the JIU

(*AlRai AlAam* – 18th Jul. **Khartoum**) The Chief of Operations of the SPLA, Mjr. Gen. Biong Deng, said that the SAF is still present in many areas of Bahr-el-Ghazal and Equatoria and that the handover of the military zones in Juba and Wau from the SAF to the JIUs is nothing but a symbolic gesture for propaganda purposes.

He said that security situation is calm in the south but added that Khartoum still continues to support the militias in the area. He said the SPLA has noticed helicopters coming in to supply ammunition and other supplies to these militias.

The operations chief said that the SPLA reserves the right to respond against such activities at the appropriate time and intends to file a formal complaint before the next meeting of the Joint Defence Board.

He rebuffed reports that the SPLA, during its redeployment from the east, signed into its ranks many conscripts from other parts of the Sudan. He said that like any other army, the SPLA is also composed of a number of people from western and other parts of the Sudan.

GoNU

Rebecca Garang says she will declare her position on the death of her late husband after next Bashir, Kiir meeting

(*AlSahafa* – 18th Jul. **Khartoum**) The widow of late John Garang has pledged allegiance to SPLM leader Salva Kiir as the President of the GoSS.

Rebecca Garang who was speaking at a press conference in Khartoum yesterday strongly rebuffed recent reports that she and SPLM Secretary-General Pagan Amoum were at the head of a conspiracy being brewed against Vice-President Salva Kiir.

“Salva Kiir was Garang's deputy and has become our leader and there is nothing to show that he has deviated from the principles of the SPLM and is implementing the decisions of the institutions of the SPLM”, she said as she reaffirmed support for the V-P.

She said that she will declare her position on the death of late John Garang after the forthcoming meeting between President Bashir and Vice-President Salva Kiir.

She urged all the people of Sudan to come out at the Green Square to commemorate the death of her husband at the end of this month.

Southern Sudan

Sudan's Kiir optimistic about Uganda-rebels peace talks

(*Xinhua/ST* – 17th Jul. **Nairobi**) Southern Sudan President Salva Kiir on Monday expressed optimism that peace talks between the Ugandan government and the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) rebels aimed at ending a 19-year-old insurgency would be successful.

Addressing a news conference in Nairobi, Kiir who is also Sudan's First Vice-President, however warned the talks in southern Sudan would not be easy because they are dealing with an elusive rebel group, which is known as a "terrorist group".

But the president of autonomous southern Sudan said the notorious rebel group had now chosen the path of peace and was confident a deal would be reached before the end of September 12 deadline.

"The issue of LRA has not been easy because this is an organization that has been known as a terrorist organization and its leaders have been indicted by the ICC (International Criminal Court)," Kiir told journalists in Nairobi.

"Negotiating with these people has not been seen as right course but since they have agreed to negotiate and for the first time agreed come face to face with the Ugandan government, we expect they would commit themselves to the responsibilities they have been assigned," said Kiir who was on his way to United States.

His comments came as peace talks between Uganda's government and rebels are due to continue, a day after the government said the rebels must disarm to receive amnesty.

The historic talks in southern Sudan had a difficult start when rebels accused the Ugandan government of corruption and threatened to continue fighting.

The government delegation then called on LRA fighters to hand over their weapons.

Thousands have died in the two-decade conflict between the LRA and the Ugandan government, and some two million have been forced to flee their homes.

"We have talked to both parties and they have committed themselves to negotiating in good faith to bring a lasting peace in northern Uganda and southern Sudan. So we are expecting a peaceful solution to the conflict at the end of the period which the talks were supposed to be completed," Kiir said.

"We took this decision (to mediate) because the people who they kill are southern Sudanese, the women they rape are southern Sudanese women and girls, and the boys they abduct are southern Sudanese," said Kiir.

Over the weekend, mediators in the southern Sudanese town of Juba have been trying to calm tensions between government and rebel delegates.

The government side has been angered by what it regards as belligerent remarks by rebels at the opening ceremony.

The government said it had taken a "painful decision" and agreed to the peace talks and further given LRA leader Joseph Kony and four of his top commanders indicted by the International Criminal Court "total amnesty" in order to give them "soft landing. "

The ICC wants the notorious Ugandan rebel group leader Joseph Kony and four of his commanders for war crimes but Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni has offered them a full and guaranteed amnesty as long as they renounce violence.

Kiir said his government has approached some members of the global community, which he said, had committed them the mandate to mediate despite protests from the ICC.

The ICC has no police force of its own and relies on member nations to comply with arrest warrants. Sudan has signed but not ratified the treaty creating the ICC.

The talks in the southern Sudan capital of Juba are seen by many as the best chance to end the war, which is regularly described by aid agencies as one of the world's worst and most forgotten humanitarian crises.

Uganda turns down rebel calls for dissolution of army

(*Sudan Tribune* – 17th Jul. **Juba**) The rebel Ugandan Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) has demanded the dissolution of the national army at peace talks to halt nearly two decades of fighting, but the government flatly refused the call and instead demanded the insurgents give up all their weapons.

The LRA position paper, presented to southern Sudan mediators at talks here aimed at ending a 19-year-old insurgency in northern Uganda, said there was an urgent need of "reorganising of the army and other forces" as well as the signing of a comprehensive ceasefire agreement with the government.

"The present army, the Uganda People Defence Forces (UPDF), does not reflect a national character. It is ethnic, partisan and pledges its loyalty to President Yoweri Museveni personally and not to the nation," said the rebel position paper, obtained by AFP.

"We demand its total disbandment so that an internationally supervised recruitment is done taking into account regional balance and integration of those in the LRA and other armed oppositions who have the qualification or are trainable and wish to join the army," it added.

In addition, the insurgents demanded the disbandment of camps in northern Uganda housing around two million people, respect for human dignity, protection of their land and compensation from the government, the document indicated.

Mediators said the stance on the national army was the most controversial among a series of other rebel demands.

But government spokesman Paddy Ankunda said Kampala had flatly rejected the rebels' demands, on a day when both sides adopted the agenda of the talks and agreed to start discussing cessation of hostilities late on Tuesday.

"We told them that this was not possible because there is a constitution that puts in place such institutions. You cannot not merely go and meet a delegation in Juba and decide on that.

You have to go to parliament and it changes some laws ... we hope they will not push it further," Ankunda told AFP.

"The talks are progressing well and today we adopted the agenda for the talks. Tomorrow we are going to discuss the cessation of hostilities and each party is expected to present a paper outlining how this cessation of hostilities should be like," Ankunda added.

In its position paper, the government demanded the LRA cease all forms of "terrorism" and start demobilising, reminding the insurgents that the amnesty offer was on the table.

"The Ugandan government demands the LRA cease all forms of hostilities, dissolve itself and hand over all arms and ammunitions in its possession together with their inventory and assemble in agreed locations where they will be demobilized, disarmed and documented," it said in the position paper, which lays down the basis for negotiations.

In Nairobi, Sudan Vice President leader Salva Kiir expressed optimism that the peace talks would succeed despite a rocky start when the parley briefly snagged at the weekend.

The hitch came after Kampala's team complained and threatened to walk out because the LRA warned in its opening statement on Friday of new violence should its grievances not be addressed.

At the same time, Kiir, also the vice president of the semi-autonomous region of southern Sudan, warned that failure would likely lead to fighting between the LRA and his forces in south Sudan, where large numbers of rebels have been driven from northern Uganda by Kampala's army.

"We have talked to both parties and they have committed themselves to negotiating in good faith," Kiir told reporters in the Kenyan capital Nairobi, where he was en route to Washington for talks with US officials.

"We are expecting a peaceful solution to the conflict at the end of the period that was ... given," he said, referring to a September 12 deadline laid down for an agreement by Museveni.

Tens of thousands of people have been killed and some two million displaced in northern Uganda since the LRA took leadership of a regional rebellion among the Acholi ethnic minority in 1988 in a bid to oust Museveni and replace his regime with one based on the Ten Commandments.

The talks in the southern Sudan capital of Juba are seen by many as the best chance to end the war, which is regularly described by aid agencies as one of the world's worst and most forgotten humanitarian crises.

South Sudan militia says government ineffective

(SRS/ST – 17th Jul. **Nairobi**) The South Sudan Defence Force says the Government of Southern Sudan is not effective because of corruption and inexperience in running a government.

A representative of the SSDF in Nairobi, Peter Kor, told Sudan Radio Service (SRS) on Thursday that the Government of Southern Sudan has not been able to deliver any services or build infrastructure because it lacks the capacity.

“If you have been in juba you can even tell me today what he SPLM has renovated so far - from the buildings, roads, electricity water - people are still suffering. Even there is no big hospital and there is money. There is mistrust within SPLM, people, people do not trust each other, and the problem is that there is corruption”, Kor said.

Kor says the Government of Southern Sudan should unite southern Sudanese and to move more quickly to deliver basic services, as well as raise the standards of living of ordinary citizens.

Interview with Pagan Amum, Secretary-General of the SPLM

(*IRIN/ST* – 18TH Jul. **Juba**) Following the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) between the southern Sudan People’s Liberation Movement (SPLM) and the ruling National Congress Party (NCP) that ended 21 years of civil war between north and south Sudan, the establishment of the new interim constitution on 9 July 2005 formally marked the beginning of a six-year interim period. At the end of that phase, in 2011, a referendum will determine whether southern Sudan will remain part of a united Sudan or become independent.

IRIN spoke to Pagan Amum, Secretary-General of the SPLM and former member of the SPLM negotiating team for the CPA, about progress in implementing the peace agreement, the impact of the untimely death of the movement’s leader, John Garang, in a helicopter crash on 30 July 2005, and the prospects for peace in southern Sudan.

[Excerpts of the interview are in a separate supplement to this MMR]

Darfur/ Darfur Peace Agreement

Aid agencies in Darfur deplore donors’ failure to fund the African Union and jeopardising lives as a result

(*Sudan Tribune* – 18th Jul. **Khartoum**) A group of leading aid agencies today combined forces to call for urgent action to end the continued violence and suffering in Darfur.

As a donor’s conference starts in Brussels today, the aid agencies warned that the African Union Force, supposed to be protecting people, was chronically under funded and unable to do its vital job.

At present there are reportedly only enough funds to pay salaries for the operation until the end of July. According to the African Union the African Union Mission in Darfur (AMIS) has a shortfall of well over \$50million for the April-Sept 2006 period. An additional \$270m is now required to fund the mission to the end of December 2006.

This is the first time the eight agencies: CARE International, CAFOD, Christian Aid, Concern Worldwide, International Rescue Committee, Islamic Relief, Oxfam International and Tearfund, have spoken out as a group.

“While an enormous amount of energy is being spent debating what will happen in 6 months time, no one seems to have noticed that people are still being killed today. Many countries have still not given enough money to support the troops already on the ground. This lack of funding means patrols in and around camps are impossible or have been scaled back and we are seeing people attacked, killed or raped as a result,” said Denis Caillaux, Secretary General of CARE International.

Due in part to shortage in manpower and equipment, AMIS 24-hour patrols in the camps do not exist leaving people vulnerable at night, despite some earlier efforts patrols to protect women gathering firewood barely exist, and patrols on road and to villages are sporadic. So far the only donors to offer serious levels of support for the force are Canada, the EU, the UK, the US and the Netherlands.

“This is an international problem, one of the worst humanitarian disasters in the world, yet only five donors seem to be properly engaged. All rich countries must step up their support urgently if the disaster of Darfur isn’t to turn into an even worse catastrophe,” said Haroun Atallah, Chief Executive of Islamic Relief.

The eight agencies warned that the security situation on the ground continues to deteriorate despite the recent peace agreement. This peace agreement gave the African Union Force more responsibilities requiring more resources, despite the fact that it was already chronically under funded and failing to protect civilians.

“The African Union force is being set up to fail. It simply cannot be expected to fulfill its mandate without proper support. The current scenario is a recipe for disaster. Donor governments must now put their hands in their pockets and fully fund the African Union force,” said Barbara Stocking, Director of Oxfam Great Britain.

The agencies today call on donor governments to make generous commitments to support AMIS up until the end of December 2006, whether or not there is agreement for a transition to the UN. Civilians should not be used as a bargaining chip.

Funds should cover running costs - in particular food, medical care and salaries of personnel - capacity building, more vehicles and armoured personnel carries. Night vision equipment is particularly needed so that 24-hour patrols seven days a week can commence in the camps.

Eastern Sudan

Sudan, Eastern Front start peace talks in Eritrea

(*Shabait/ST* – 17th Jul. **Asmara**) The second round peace dialogue between the Sudanese government and the East Sudan Front started here today under the auspices the Eritrean government.

In this round, the two sides would hold discussions on a four-item agenda, namely political power, security and military issues and share of national resources, as well as on implementation procedures regarding previously reached agreements.

In a speech he delivered at the opening session at Hotel Intercontinental Asmara representing the Eritrean government, the Secretary of the Eritrean ruling PFDJ, Al-Amin Mohammed Seid, noted that the two sides have already made a major stride forward as regards the peace process involving the Sudanese government and the East Sudan Front. He also expressed conviction that in the second round dialogue both sides, by overcoming all constraints and differences, would sign an agreement leading to a lasting solution to the problem.

Also in separate speeches they delivered on the occasion, the head of the Sudanese delegation and Presidential Advisor, Mustafa Osman Ismail, and the Chairman of the East Sudan Front, Mussa Mohammed Ahmed, lauded the people and Government of Eritrea for their continued care.

Stating that the two sides managed the current stage thanks to their participation with open mind and heart in the first round of the peace dialogue, they expressed conviction that they would reach a comprehensive solution of the problem and proceed to the development of Sudan.

Present at the opening session were Eritrean government officials and members of the diplomatic corps accredited here.

It is to be recalled that the first round peace dialogue between the Sudanese government and the East Sudan Front was held from 13 to 19 June in Asmara, during which they signed two agreements that laid the cornerstone for the current dialogue.

Other Developments

1 killed, 23 injured in hand grenade explosion

(*Khartoum Monitor* – 18th Jul.) One person was killed and 23 others injured in el-Mujlad, South Kordufan, when a hand grenade exploded in a clash between an SPLA and a SAF soldier.

The explosion occurred when the SAF soldiers attempted to arrest Karbino Kual of the SPLA for wearing SAF military fatigues.

23 people were seriously injured in the ensuing argument and one SPLA soldier died.