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(By Public Information Office)

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Highlights

UN/ Agencies

UK, France soften UN text on new Darfur force

(*Reuters* – July 24, UNITED NATIONS) Britain and France softened a U.N. resolution on Tuesday that would authorize up to 26,000 troops and police in Darfur by dropping a threat of "further measures" against Sudanese obstructing peace efforts.

But Sudan's ambassador, AbdelMahmood AbdelHaleem, still objected to the revised U.N. Security Council draft.

"It's very ugly. It's worse than the first one," he said, prompting Andrew Natsios, the visiting U.S. special envoy for Sudan, to say that Khartoum "should not have veto power."

No date is set for a vote although the sponsors hope for adoption this week.

The new text, obtained by Reuters, also sets a target date of Dec. 31 to transfer authority from the African Union to a combined AU-UN force that would operate in Sudan's Darfur region, although full deployment is expected to take a year.

But the draft leaves intact a tough mandate, Sudan's biggest complaint, that would allow the use of force to ensure the security of the mission's personnel and humanitarian workers and "to protect civilians under threat of physical violence" as well as to seize or collect arms.

The resolution is under Chapter 7 of the U.N. Charter, which makes it mandatory. It would allow the mission "to use all necessary means," a euphemism for a use of force, "as it deems within its capabilities."

Sudan's AbdelHaleem said, "The way they put this resolution will make the force fight the Sudanese army," adding the draft retained "the same inflammatory language, the same condemnation."

"They want to transport the Iraqi scenario to us."

The draft also drops a call for an interim report by a panel of experts, who have reported on violations of U.N. resolutions and made proposals for sanctions.

Specifically, the text would authorize up to 19,555 military personnel and 6,400 civilian police. It calls on member states to "finalize" their contributions within 90 days of adoption. Sudan has agreed to the troop numbers.

British Ambassador Emyr Jones Parry, said the language of the resolution was more conciliatory towards Sudan. He said that African members of the council -- South Africa, Ghana and Congo Republic -- supported the draft.

But a unanimous vote is far from assured. Qatar, the only Arab member of the council, reflected Khartoum's position. Its ambassador, Nassir Abdulaziz al-Nasser, said that without Khartoum's agreement the resolution could not be implemented.

Indonesia's ambassador, Rezlan Jenie, agreed, saying, "We would like to have the cooperation from Sudan, and cooperation only comes when they give the consent of the deployment."

Natsios said he opposed any U.S. units in Darfur "because politically right now in Darfur it would create the wrong impression (and) would be used in terms of the Sudanese government. But he said Washington would contribute to air transport to get troops to Darfur.

Infantry troops are expected to be drawn mainly from African nations. The new operation, called the United Nations-African Union mission in Darfur, or UNAMID, will absorb the 7,000 African Union troops currently in Darfur.

Engineers and headquarters personnel are expected to be drawn from other nations.

UN resolution on Darfur should focus on endorsing joint AU-UN operation: Chinese envoy

(Xinhua via COMTEX – July 24, UNITED NATIONS) The UN Security Council should approve a resolution on Darfur that is focused on endorsing a proposed African Union (AU)-UN peacekeeping mission, the Chinese envoy to the United Nations said Tuesday.

Speaking to reporters after the council finished closed-door consultations on African issues, China's Ambassador Wang Guangya, the council's president for July, said the co-sponsors of a draft resolution on Darfur briefed the council on the progress they had made in talks with African countries.

He said the agreement reached by the UN, the AU and the Sudanese government on the joint operation is a very positive development that was welcomed by all.

While urging the 15-member body to take "quick action" to approve a resolution endorsing this agreement, Wang stressed that China would like to have a "good" resolution that would help maintain the current momentum that is "underway for the better."

A "good" resolution, he explained, "is that it should be focused on the Security Council should endorse this joint operation."

"If we want to have a resolution that will be helpful for this political process, I do hope that the co-sponsors will also discuss and consult with the government of Sudan, with their representatives here," Wang said.

Britain and France are leading efforts to hold talks with the three African countries in the Security Council: Ghana, South Africa and the Republic of the Congo, to make changes to the proposed draft that was circulated nearly two weeks ago.

UN diplomats said the co-sponsors have agreed to drop a reference to taking "further measures," which implies possible sanctions against Sudan, if the government fails to comply with the document.

They said the council has scheduled a meeting on Wednesday to discuss the draft's latest version.

UN human right Rapporteur to arrive in Sudan 25 July, visit Darfur

(*SUNA via BBC Monitoring* – July 25, KHARTOUM) UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in Sudan Sima Samar is to arrive in Khartoum today, Wednesday 25th July for a visit that would run until August 2.

Samar is due to meet Rapporteur of the Advisory Council for Human Rights Dr Abd al-Mun'im Osman Muhammad Taha.

On August 1, she will meet with Ministers of Justice, Interior and Humanitarian Affairs besides Commissioner of Humanitarian Aid.

Samar will also visit Juba to meet the Government of Southern Sudan on implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement and Wau, capital of West Bahr Al-Ghazal State.

She will also visit North Darfur and South Kordofan states.

The Advisory Council for Human Rights has welcomed Samar's visit. The welcome is an extension to the spirit of cooperation shown by the government to the Human Rights Council following the formation of the experts committee, said Rapporteur of the Advisory Council for Human Rights Dr Abd al-Mun'im Osman Muhammad Taha.

Dr Taha hoped that Samar's report expected to be tabled next September before the Human Rights Council will differ from previous in content and reflect the unprecedented progress in regional rule, distribution of power and wealth and development.

Violence impedes relief effort in Darfur, UN food agency warns

(*United Nations News* – July 25, NEW YORK) Condemning a sharp escalation in attacks on humanitarian staff and relief convoys in Sudan's Darfur region, the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) warned today that violence is hampering its ability to deliver assistance to millions of hungry people there.

"In the last two weeks, nine food convoys have been attacked by gunmen across Darfur," said Kenro Oshidari, WFP Sudan Representative. "WFP staff and contractors are being stopped at gunpoint, dragged out of their vehicles and robbed with alarming frequency."

Mr. Oshidari called on all parties to the conflict in Darfur to guarantee the safety of humanitarian workers so that the UN food agency and other aid organizations can continue helping Sudanese who rely on outside assistance for survival. [*See Press Release attached separately*]

So far this year, 18 WFP food convoys have been attacked by gunmen and four of WFP's light vehicles carjacked. Six WFP vehicles, including trucks and light vehicles, have been stolen and 10 staff, including contractors, have been either detained or abducted.

A lack of security has prevented WFP from reaching 170,000 people in June in what the agency termed in a news release a "sizeable increase from the lowest point last March when 60,000 could not be reached."

As a result of convoy attacks in recent weeks, the road between Nyala, the capital of South Darfur state, and the town of Kass, has been declared a "no-go" area for UN staff, while in North Darfur, food dispatches to the town of Kabkabiya have been

UN security personnel say attacks on vehicles are now the number one security concern for the aid community in Darfur, according to WFP, which cited a "recent and deeply troubling trend is that staff are being abducted when their vehicles are stolen, giving robbers time to get away before the alarm is raised."

To date, all WFP staff have been released, although some were injured and hospitalized.

GoNU (CPA; Darfur Peace Agreement; ESPA)

Southern Sudan leader urges Sudanese to "give priority to unity"

(*Sudan Radio via BBC Monitoring* – July 24) First Vice-President of the Republic and the President of the Government of Southern Sudan, Lt-Gen Salva Kiir Mayardit, has urged all the Sudanese to work for the stability of the country, and give priority to unity as provided for in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement.

During an interview with the Sudanese News Agency, Kiir said carrying out national development projects in the south and working on consolidating North-South relation would make a chance for unity more likely.

He also explained the efforts carried out by the Sudan People's Liberation Movement in finding a solution to the Darfur crisis, and improving ties with the neighboring countries.

Finance minister orders government body to assist flood-affected states

(*SMC*) The Minister of Finance and National Economy, Zubeir Ahmad al-Hassan, has ordered the Strategic Reserve Corporation (SRC) to assist all flood-affected states.

SRC Manager Badawi al-Khair Idris said that his corporation has branches all over the country, particularly in the flood-affected states.

He explained that the corporation has enough reserves to meet the demands of the affected states.

He added that the corporation has already started implementing the minister's orders for supplying the affected states.

Interior minister discusses security situation in Blue Nile and South Kordofan states

(*Khartoum Monitor*) The Minister of the Interior asserted his ministry's keenness to support and consolidate the police forces in the states of Blue Nile and South Kordofan.

In a meeting with governors of these two states and in the presence of the chief of police, the minister pledged his ministry's support for the two states with the necessary human and logistical resources.

The two governors hailed the Civil Defense Forces for their flood-relief efforts in their states.

Sudanese Journalist body slams ban orders on publications

(*AlRai AlAam via BBC Monitoring, July 24*) The chairman of the National Press and Publications Council, Dr Ali Muhammad Shamu, has criticized ban orders on publications, describing it as ineffective and calling at the same time for a review.

During a seminar which discussed a book by Dr Ahmad Abd al-Majid on electronic press publication crimes at Tayibah Press Centre yesterday; Shamu said that they did not support control of press publication, saying that it should be reviewed.

He added that the resolutions should be modified in a way which could guarantee a free press.

Furthermore, Shamu criticized journalists, saying that they did not use their legal rights and did not read the rules to know their rights when it comes to ban orders on publications [on some issues].

US envoy accuses Sudan of slowing CPA implementation

(*SudanTribune.com* – July 24, NEW YORK) Andrew Natsios, the special envoy of U.S. President George W. Bush accused the Sudanese government of delaying the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) that ended the 21-year North-South civil war.

“If the Sudanese government is serious about improving relations with the United States, they need to implement the peace agreement between the North and the South” Natsios said.

“They are not implementing the elections and the census provisions of that [CPA] which are critically important to have the elections that are required in 2009” the US envoy added. Under the CPA the census was a prerequisite for nationwide elections planned for 2009 and an eventual referendum on self-determination in 2011.

The US envoy also called on Khartoum to resolve the dispute over the contentious Abyei region and to finalize the demarcation of the North-South borders.

Natsios acknowledged that the Sudanese government has implemented important parts of the CPA such as disarming its militias in the South but indicated that more needs to be done.

“It is very important that the CPA be implemented as it was written” Natsios said.

South Urges Meeting Over Troops

(*All Africa Global Media via NewsEdge* – July 24, Nairobi) President Kibaki has been urged to call for an urgent Inter-Governmental Authority on Development meeting following failure by Sudan Government to remove northern forces from the south.

Southern Sudan ambassador to Kenya John Andruga Duku regretted that government forces from the north had not pulled out from the south by July 9 as per the Comprehensive Peace Agreement signed in Kenya in 2005.

Mr Duku said instead forces from the north were being reinforced in the south, a thing he termed as serious violation of the CPA.

"Kenya should assist us since it is the midwife of the CPA. The reinforcement is a serious violation of implementation of the CPA," Mr Duku said before Kenya's Public Service Minister Moses Akaranga launched a training and capacity building induction course for senior government officials from southern Sudan.

Mr Duku urged President Kibaki as the chairman of Igad to call an extraordinary meeting before the situation southern Sudan gets worse following failure by the northern forces to pull out.

The envoy further appealed for international assistance following flooding in parts of southern Sudan including Upper Nile and Bahr-el-Ghazal that has claimed scores of lives and livestock.

NCP, SPLM resolved to settle Abyei issue

(*Sudan Visio; AlSahafa; AlRai AlAam*) The Presidency of the Republic resumes meetings today in a bid to resolve the outstanding issues in the implementation of the CPA.

A source in the Presidency says that the President of the Republic and Vice-Presidents Kiir and Taha will hold discussions in which Abyei and the status of redeployment of forces are expected to feature prominently.

Atem Garang, a member of the SPLM politburo, said that the meeting tomorrow of the political committee will discuss, among other things, the concept of partnership between the partners to the CPA. He said that they have a feeling that the NCP is in an organized campaign against the SPLM. He said that they at the SPLM want to confirm the NCP's objectives and aims and to map the differences between them on a number of issues including the legislature for the elections and so on.

Meanwhile and in an interview with the Sudan News Agency during stopover in Dubai while en route to Khartoum from China, Vice-President Kiir conceded that the SPLA still has troops in areas of Blue Nile and the Nuba Mountains but pointed out that these troops are on their way out. Kiir pointed out that the SPLA only has force of 120 with the machinery in the southern Blue Nile area in Kurmuk. These, he adds, have not managed to pull out due to the rains. He said however that they may have redeployment south by now or are on their way to do so once the rains cease. On SPLA in the Nuba Mountains area, the Vice-President said that the SPLA force in that area was fully prepared to redeploy south as of one week ago.

On Abyei, the Vice-President said that the SPLA is also willing to open talks on the Abyei issue and has not lost hope on these issues. He said that the SPLM has accepted discussions over the issue of the boundaries and the areas of the Misseiriya after NCP insistence that the issue be discussed. He said that the SPLM consented to these issues in the best interest of the citizens of this area be they Dinka or Misseiriya.

The VP further said that the SPLM is prepared to play any role required of it to bridge the gap in relations between Sudan and the international community. He said however that the issue of sanctions may be an exception because they were imposed as a result of the happenings in Darfur and may not be lifted unless the Darfur issue is resolved. He mentioned the role the SPLM played in improving relations with Asmara and N'Djamena.

On the SPLM convention, the SPLM leader said that a date is yet to be set but the SPLM is currently drafting the agenda. He said however that the convention will be held by the end of this year. He said that the elections is one of the main reasons the SPLM is holding the convention. The movement, he said, will make its views on the elections known after the convention.

He further pointed out that the SPLM could not alone change the laws that do are not in compliance to the constitution but has been talking its partner in government on the issue. He pointed out that the SPLM could not be in government and in opposition at the same time.

SPLM refuses to endorse Khartoum human rights report

(*AlAyaam*) SPLM MPs at the Khartoum State Legislative Assembly have refused to endorse the Khartoum State report on the status of human rights in the state tabled by the legislative body's committee on peace and human rights.

An MP pointed out there are a number of issues that remain unclear in the report. He pointed out that they were discussing human rights while the press reports of death by torture at the hands of the law enforcement agents, violations of the freedom of expression and extra-judicial arrests.

Parliamentary commission of inquiry on Kajbar incident seeks release of detainees

(*Rai AlShaab*) The parliamentary fact-finding commission on the Kajbar Dam incidents is seeking the release of detainees arrested earlier in connection to the incident.

The commission has held talks with a number of relevant bodies including the Dams' Administration to draw out the facts on the benefits and harm that construction of the proposed dam will create.

GoSS

Southern Sudanese lawmakers angry, want parliament dissolved

(*The Citizen*) Angered southern Sudanese lawmakers turned their guns yesterday against the Deputy Speaker accusing him of dictatorship for denying them a chance to grill the Southern Sudan education minister.

The Assembly is acting like a rubber-stamp, lawmakers said, adding that if the executive wants a rubber-stamp, then they should dissolve this parliament and appoint another.

The uproar comes only a week after Deputy Speaker Tor Deng got a lashing from lawmakers for dismissing the Assembly last week, saying there was no agenda, yet the lawmakers expected the Legal Affairs minister to turn up and for grilling over the botched al-Cardinal investigation.

Southern Sudan trade ministry rules out price control amidst protests over high prices

(*The Citizen*) The GoSS trade ministry has ruled out price controls amidst outcry that the price of goods in Juba are too high.

The acting Undersecretary at the ministry acknowledged that prices are high but government could not introduce price control measures. He attributed the increase of prices of goods to unnecessary taxes levied on traders by both the Government of Central Equatoria State and the GoSS.

State leaders in Unity State request help on floods

(*The Citizen* [- July 25, JUBA) Representatives of Unity State warned Tuesday that thousands of people could die in the flood-stricken area if government did not hurry the repatriation process.

Unprecedented rains spelt destruction in the state more than a fortnight ago leaving most countries and payams under and the local population desperately searching for humanitarian assistance. Representatives say Mayom County was the worst hit.

No human deaths have been reported but disease is expected to follow in the wake of the flooding.

The MP for Mayom has called upon the Government of Sudan and development partners to avail sustainable medical supplies to help those who badly need health assistance in the state.

Darfur

Over 750 IDP and refugee families return voluntarily to their home areas in West Darfur

(Sudan Vision) Over 750 IDP and refugee families have voluntarily return from the IDP and refugee camps in Chad to their home areas in Zaghawa lands of West Darfur State, said the Commissioner-General for the Humanitarian Aid Commission.

In a press statement to SUNA, he sad that these returnees came fro el-Geneina, Hashaba and Muli IDP camps and the refugee camps in Chad.

10,000 IDPs from Kalma Camp return voluntarily to their areas in South Darfur

(Rai AlShaab/ SMC.sd) Some 10,000 IDPs from Kalma and Diraj camps have voluntarily returned to their home villages in Shairiya locality.

Commissioner Mansur Hassan Omar of the locality attributes this large number of IDP returns to the return of security and stability and the development projects in the area. He says the returns have considerably eased the dense population in the camps.

On the other hand, Nyala town receives today relief-laden aircraft from the UAE Red Crescent Society to support the voluntary returns program.

Commissioner-General for Humanitarian Aid, Hassabo Mohamed Suleiman, reveals that the air bridge consists of 14 aircraft laden with 5,000 tents and other stuff that returnees to their villages would need. He lauded the UAE for its response in support of the voluntary returns program.

Political:

Darfur rebels invited to UN-AU peace talks

(AFP/ST – July 24, KHARTOUM) The United Nations and African Union (AU) announced on Tuesday they have invited non-signatories of a Darfur peace deal to an August 3-5 meeting in Tanzania to seek a political settlement.

The announcement came in a joint statement issued in Khartoum by the UN and AU envoys on the Darfur peace process, Sweden's Jan Eliasson and Tanzania's Salim Ahmed Salim, respectively.

It did not specify the names of the groups and figures invited to the talks in Arusha, but Eliasson has said most of the non-signatories of a Darfur peace accord signed last year had agreed to attend.

At the talks in the Tanzanian city, international envoys and rebel groups which failed to sign up to the 2006 peace deal will try to fix a date and venue for the start of negotiations between the warring sides.

"The meeting takes place at a time of intensified consultations undertaken by the special envoys and the AU/UN Joint Mediation Support Team (JMST) as part of the second phase of the roadmap, the pre-negotiation phase," the envoys said.

"The objective of the Arusha meeting is to take stock of the progress made in the roadmap and for the special envoys to consult with the movements on the preparations for the upcoming final negotiations," their statement said.

"Discussions will focus on the key role to be played by the Sudanese parties concerned in ensuring a speedy, negotiated and sustainable settlement of the Darfur conflict, including the format and venue of and participation in the negotiations.

But AbdulWahid al-Nur, leader of Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM), told SudanTribune.com that his group has decided not to participate in the Arusha meeting saying that the international community needs to provide security for civilians in Darfur.

"We cannot go to the talks while Khartoum continues to kill our people on the ground" Al-Nur added.

"We are not warlords, we want peace but we want security for our people who are suffering in Darfur as we speak." he said.

Al-Nur was referring to the latest UN report which speaks of aerial bombardments by Sudan's air force in North Darfur up to late June. The report estimated that around 25,000 people fled their homes during the months of May and June.

However Andrew Natsios, US Special Envoy for Sudan, told reporters today that groups who do not attend the Arusha talks will be considered "obstructionists" by the Bush administration.

Official suggests Darfur peace talks be held in South Africa

(The Star via BBC Monitoring – July 24, JOHANNESBURG) An adviser to Sudanese President Omar el Bashir has recommended that peace negotiations which are expected to start next month between

the government and rebels still fighting it in the troubled province of Darfur should take place in South Africa.

Dr Sayed el-Khatib, director-general of the Centre for Strategic Studies in Khartoum, said the SA government had been informally asked to host the talks and would soon be approached formally.

Sudan thought that South Africa would be the most neutral venue.

He was speaking yesterday at the Centre for International Political Studies at the University of Pretoria. El-Khatib generally reflects Khartoum's line.

El-Khatib clarified the Sudanese government's position on the composition and other aspects of the controversial "hybrid" force of UN and AU members which Khartoum, the UN and AU have now agreed to deploy in Darfur.

Khartoum had been insisting since last year that the force must comprise mainly African troops but recently took a more flexible approach.

El-Khatib was asked if Sudan would agree to a hybrid force with no more than 30 per cent Africans as African troops were already overstretched in peace missions.

He said that would not be a problem. Khartoum had agreed with the UN and AU that the personnel for the hybrid force would first be sought in Africa and if Africa could not provide them, they could be sought elsewhere.

El-Khatib said the main obstacle to restarting the political negotiations was that there were between 14 and 18 movements all claiming to represent the people of Darfur. The UN and AU were now trying to persuade them to consolidate and to ensure that the many rebel commanders in the field in Darfur would respect any agreements reached by the politicians in the negotiations.

The failure to do so had been a problem with the previous negotiations in Abuja.

Bangui conference on Darfur supports efforts for peace

(SMC) Participants to a conference of people from Darfur held in the capital of the CAR declared support for efforts by the Sudan government and the African Union for peace in Darfur and rejects all attempts to impose sanctions on Sudan.

Participants however stressed the importance of achieving sustainable peace and development and maintaining basic services in the forthcoming stage.

Security:

64 dead and injured in renewed clashes between Turgum and Abbala tribesmen

(AlSahafa; AlAyaam; AlKhartoum et al) Renewed fighting for the last three days between the Turgum and Abbala of South Darfur State has left more than 70 people dead or injured *(AlSahafa daily reports 42 dead and 22 injured but adds that the figures obtained and that from government and tribal sources and reports of the cause of the clash remain contradicting)*.

A Turgum survivor injured during the clashes says that their Bedouin caravan was attacked by about 200 Abbala tribesmen while on its way from West Darfur to an area called Balail (Turgum land) in South Darfur. 12 Turgum tribesmen were killed on spot and about 20 injured he adds.

An Abbala tribal leader admits 30 people were killed in the fighting but did not say from which side. He accuses the Turgum of starting the attack.

The Chief of Police in South Darfur State reveals that reinforcements of the police, the army and security forces have been sent to the area to restore security. He said the Turgum caravan was attacked while on its way from Wadi Azoum in West Darfur to Bilail neay Nyala.

The Commissioner for Kass locality where the incident happened says that the Abbala lost 7 men and the Turgum 9 and the clashes left 20 men injured who are now receiving treatment in Nyala hospital.

The clash occurred near Tawurna, 52 kilometers west of Kass.

25,000 more Darfuris flee homes, strain camps - U.N.

(Reuters – July 24, KHARTOUM) Violence and insecurity in Darfur has forced 25,000 more people from their homes and is straining the capacity of camps swollen with refugees fleeing conflict in western Sudan, the U.N. said in a report on Tuesday.

"Aerial bombings by the military continued to be reported in North Darfur up to late June while clashes between the military and rebel factions continued to be reported ... in various locations," the United Nations said in a statement. [*Read more: [25,000 more Darfuris flee homes, strain camps - UN](#)*].

New Darfur rebels want 422 billion

(The Citizen) A committee formed to negotiate with a new rebel group in Darfur meets today as the rebel group demand 45 billion Sudanese pounds for fighting alongside Khartoum during the war in southern Sudan.

The new group that goes by the name "The Justice Front" are from Arab tribes commonly called the Border Guards who also were among the Janjaweed and are protesting the Government of National Unity's failure to pay them after they fought.

The group is said to be made up of 4,000 men and operates in the el-Deiein areas of South Darfur.

Chadian opposition forces warn EU against deploying troops to the region

(AlSudani) A coalition of Chadian opposition forces has condemned what they see as a French ploy devised to render military support to the government of Idris Deby under the guise of a European peacekeeping force deployed to protect Darfur refugees in eastern Chad.

The coalition called on the “European partners of France” to be more circumspect and to objectively analyze the situation before engaging in an exercise that smells of neo-colonialism.