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By Public Information Office

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Main News

New Abyei Unit to Deploy Today

(**Sudan Vision/Al-Gowat Al-Musalaha**) Official spokesperson of the Joint Defence Board (JDB), Bior Ajang, said the commander and deputy commander of the new Abyei Unit would arrive in the region tomorrow, Wednesday, as part of the arrangements made for the deployment of the JIUs agreed upon in Abyei roadmap.

Ajang told Sudan Vision that the new Unit, formed jointly out of SPLA and SAF, would arrive in Abyei today to take over its new tasks in the region, indicating that the Unit will seek to maintain peace and order in Abyei and repatriate the inhabitants displaced by the recent incidents.

He noted that the commander and deputy commanded as well as the JDB representative would receive the new Unit. The Unit does not include any of the elements that participated in the recent incidents in Abyei. He added that following the deployment of the new Unit both SPLA and SAF would withdraw from the region.

According to Al-Gowat Al-Musalaha, newspaper JIU deployment in Abyei is being coordinated between SAF, SPLA and UNMIS. The JIUs are ready to go to Abyei for deployment; they are just waiting for transportation UNMIS pledged to provide.

JDB spokesperson Maj. Gen. Bior Ajang said the JIU battalion to be transported to Abyei was currently in Juba awaiting plane to be flown.

UN/Agencies

Security Council presses Sudan to cooperate in ending impunity for Darfur crimes

(**UN News Centre**) 16 June 2008 – The Security Council today urged the Sudanese Government and all other parties to the conflict in Darfur to cooperate fully with the International Criminal Court (ICC) to ensure that those responsible for crimes committed in the war-wracked region are held to account.

Sudan is obligated under Council resolution 1593 of March 2005 to fully cooperate with the ICC and to arrest and surrender those indicted by the Court.

In a statement read out by Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad of the United States, which holds the rotating presidency of the Council for this month, the 15-member body also took note of the efforts made by the Court's Prosecutor to bring to justice the perpetrators of war crimes and crimes against humanity in Darfur.

Ban, Security Council voice deep concern at renewed fighting in eastern Chad

(UN News Centre) 16 June 2008 – Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and the Security Council today condemned the series of attacks by armed rebels in eastern Chad over the past week, warning that the renewed fighting between Government forces and the Chadian Armed Opposition Group will only worsen an already grave humanitarian situation.

Mr. Ban has called on all parties to immediately stop their hostilities, abide by previous peace accords and turn to dialogue to achieve a negotiated settlement of the crisis, according to a statement issued by his spokesperson.

“The Secretary-General condemns all attempts to destabilize the country and is concerned about the risk of a deterioration of the already grave humanitarian situation, especially in eastern Chad, where the international community is actively engaged in providing relief and securing the voluntary, safe and sustainable return of refugees and displaced persons,” Mr. Ban said.

In a statement read out by Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad of the United States, which holds the rotating Council presidency this month, the 15-member body also deplored the attacks and reiterated “its commitment to the sovereignty, unity, territorial integrity and political independence of Chad.”

The presidential statement added that the Council “conveys deep concern at the direct threat the activity of armed groups pose for the safety of the civilian population and the conduct of humanitarian operations, and urges all parties to comply fully with their obligations under international humanitarian law.”

Last year the Security Council authorized the deployment of a multidimensional UN presence – known as MINURCAT – in eastern Chad and the northeast of the neighbouring Central African Republic (CAR), which have both been beset by fighting, armed banditry and massive civilian displacement in recent years.

The situation has been made more complicated by the conflict across the border in the Darfur region of Sudan, which has displaced hundreds of thousands of refugees into camps and makeshift settlements in eastern Chad.

U.N. council says Sudan must heed court on Darfur

UNITED NATIONS (**Reuters**) - Sudan must stop turning a blind eye to crimes committed during the conflict in Darfur and hand over suspected war criminals to the International Criminal Court, the U.N. Security Council said on Monday.

"The council urges the government of Sudan and all other parties to the conflict in Darfur to fully cooperate with the court, consistent with resolution 1593 (from 2005), in order to put an end to impunity for crimes committed in Darfur," the council said in a unanimously approved statement.

UN finds 89 bodies in Sudan's Abyei

(ST) June 16, 2008 (KHARTOUM) — The United Nations has so far found 89 bodies in the disputed oil-rich Abyei region of Sudan from fighting that erupted last month, a senior U.N. official told Reuters on Monday.

Following a heavy fighting in Abyei on Tuesday May 20 between Sudan Armed Forces and Sudan People's Liberation Army, SAF spokesperson said they repelled a SPLA attack and lost 22 soldiers, while the southern Sudan army didn't communicate human casualties.

The U.N. official, who declined to be named, said 89 bodies had been found in Abyei. "Dead military are 68," the official told Reuters.

However, UNMIS Deputy Spokesperson speaking to Al-Rai Al-Aam has denied reports of location of 89 bodies in Abyei area. He said UNMIS did not issue statement or report about killed or wounded persons, military or civilians. He said UN was now focused on the issue of deployment of forces to ensure stability for IDPs return. He has described the information as strange and UN had no knowledge about them.

Costa Rica UN envoy mocks his Sudanese counterpart

(ST) June 16, 2008 (NEW YORK) – The Costa Rican envoy to the UN Jorge Urbina dismissed remarks by his Sudanese counterpart labeling his country as a "banana republic".

The Sudanese UN ambassador Abdel-Mahmood Abdel-Haleem made the remark during a tour for the UN Security Council in Africa earlier this month where they made a stop in Khartoum.

Abdel-Haleem was angered by a draft presidential statement introduced by Costa Rica demanding that Sudan cooperate with the International Criminal Court (ICC) and hand over two Darfur war crimes suspects.

"We are very respectful of the Sudanese government. Of course we cannot take it that we are a banana republic," Urbina told reporters today in response to a question.

"In the UNDP [United Nations Development Programme] human development index Costa Rica is [ranks] 48 while Sudan is 147" he added.

The Sudanese envoy, described by Sudan expert Eric Reeves as "thuggish", is well known for his blunt statements in defending his government's positions. In recent weeks he directed harsh criticisms of the ICC prosecutor describing him as a "terrorist".

“I assume that reflects very much the different levels of respect for international law that is also measured as a sign of human development” the Costa Rican envoy added.

Today the UNSC unanimously adopted a presidential statement urging Sudan to “fully cooperate” with the ICC.

Noureddine Mezzine: UNAMID did not transgress environment in North Darfur

(**Al-Khartoum**) UNAMID spokesperson Noureddine Mezzine has denied that UNAMID personnel have encroached upon the green belt in South Darfur. He said none of UNAMID personnel has cut a single tree in the region. The Mission is keen to conserve and develop environment, he added.

UNICEF and Reuters conduct media workshop

(**Khartoum Monitor**) UNICEF and Reuters Foundation held a one-day media workshop on the ethical reporting on children’s rights on 15th of June 2008 at the Diplomatic Club in Khartoum.

The workshop was attended by the Sudanese journalists, representative from GoNU and NGOs.

GoNU

NCP and SPLM likely to ask Lino and Zacharia Atem to run Abyei, FVP meets with Dinka on Abyei roadmap

(**Al-Sahafa**) NCP and SPLM are likely to retain their political supervisors, Zacharia Atem and Edward Linio, to take over Abyei administration.

Meanwhile the FVP Salva Kiir met yesterday with Dinka Ngok leaders in Juba for consultation on the roadmap for the implementation of Abyei protocol.

On the other hand, EU urged the parties to commit themselves to the roadmap on Abyei and pledged to assist in IDPs return.

Parliament endorses Police Act

(**Sudan Vision**) The National Assembly yesterday unanimously endorsed National Police Act for the year 2008 in its third reading following a protracted debate over the act in the political circles, in addition to differences among parliamentary groups over it since it has been tabled in the Assembly last October.

Among the article of the act was number (14) which has empowered the President of the Republic to form additional police force as well as article (45A) relating to immunities and article (66) concerning investments as members of the Assembly considered this article as conflicting with the neutrality and professionalism of police forces.

The amendments presented by the Assembly, security and defence and legislation committees were unanimously approved.

The head of the Assembly security and defence committee said the amendments entered to the act have totaled (73).

Meanwhile, the Deputy Assembly Speaker Atem Garang saw the police as one of the tools of the democratic transformation adding that the endorsement by the assembly to the law at this time has restored to police force its professionalism as a national institution.

For his part, the Minister of Justice Abdul Basit Sabdarat said the new police force act is considered a big achievement since it has preserved the national character of the police force, noting that the endorsement of the law has dispelled fears as to its adaptability to law and the constitution.

Sabdarat said the amendments to the act have been basic; adding that the door has now been open before tabling (4) acts namely, those of traffic, prisons, and civil record.

For his part, the Director General of Police said the new police act has taken into consideration Sudan's constitution and will enable the police force to carry out its duties. He pointed out that the act has empowered police to play their role in maintaining security and protecting people's human rights.

However, other newspapers reported that the Act was endorsed by overwhelming majority.

ICC secures support for Darfur investigations from UN & EU

(ST) June 16, 2008 (NEW YORK) – The International Criminal Court (ICC) received a boost today from the UN Security Council (UNSC) and the European Union (EU) who issued formal statements voicing support for the work of court in Darfur.

The UNSC unexpectedly reached a unanimous agreement this morning on a presidential statement introduced by Costa Rica calling on Sudan to “fully cooperate” with the ICC.

The statement read by the UNSC president for June, the US envoy at the UN Zalmay Khalilzad, urged “the Government of Sudan and all other parties to the conflict in Darfur to cooperate fully with the Court, consistent with resolution 1593 (2005), in order to put an end to impunity for the crimes committed in Darfur”.

Libya, a non-permanent member at the UNSC refused to endorse the statement unless the text was watered down to support an "end to impunity" instead of explicitly demanding compliance with ICC arrest warrants, council diplomats told Reuters.

It was also reported that Costa Rica threatened to table the text as a resolution which does not require unanimous approval by UNSC members.

The statement represents a political setback to the Sudanese government which appeared confident that the UNSC could not reach consensus on the text. A previous attempt to adopt a similar statement in December 2007 was blocked by China, Russia and Qatar.

Human Rights Watch (HRW) was quick in welcoming the adoption of the UNSC presidential statement saying it "signals international impatience with impunity for Darfur war crimes suspects".

ICC says arrest of Darfur suspects is responsibility of states

(ST) June 16, 2008 (WASHINGTON) – The International Criminal Court (ICC) said today that the responsibility for arresting Darfur war crimes suspects lies with the states.

“The ICC does not have a police force to execute arrest warrants. We rely on countries to help us on that” an ICC official told Sudan Tribune on condition of anonymity.

The disclosure of the arrest attempt angered the Sudanese government which described Ocampo as a “terrorist” and demanded that he be removed from office.

Sudan’s envoy to the UN Abdel-Haleem Abdel-Mahmood told Reuters that it was especially infuriating that other countries were willing to help the ICC in the failed operation.

Workshop on the role of journalists commences

(Khartoum Monitor) The workshop on the CPA and the role of UNMIS for the Sudanese journalists commenced yesterday Monday at the National Council for child welfare in Khartoum. The workshop was organized by UNMIS PIO.

Mr. Jordan Dakamseh of the UNMIS Public Information Office said that the workshop objective was to familiarize the Sudanese journalists with the CPA protocols so that in turn they could raise the awareness the whole public in the Sudan about it. The workshop is scheduled for three days and would be concluded on Wednesday with the certificates distribution. He revealed that the role of UNMIS is to encourage the two partners to the agreement to implement it adding that the Sudanese people should understand the CPA provisions.

Elections may delay, says Speaker

(The Citizen) National Assembly Speaker Ahmed Ibrahim Al-Tahir said Monday that elections may delay if the electoral law is not passed.

Al-Tahir accused some political entities without naming them of hindering the endorsement of the elections law. He added that the National Assembly can not make a deadline to arrange the elections as it is the mission of the political forces. “our mission in the National Assembly is limited to the endorsement of the law,” he said.

He said elections law could be passed without arranging the elections but it is impossible to arrange elections without passing the law.

Situations do not allow Security Act amendment – Speaker

(Al-Ahdath) The Speaker of the National Assembly Ahmed Ibrahim Al-Tahir said the prevailing security situations do not allow the amendment of the National Intelligence and Security Services Act as SPLA was still stationed in Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile, insecurity in Darfur and spread of arms.

If the Act is amended at the present juncture, lives of innocent civilians would be risked, he said.

GoSS

Destroy the LRA through peace, not through war – Sudan’s Machar

(ST) June 16, 2008 (JUBA) – The Vice President of the Government of Southern Sudan and Chief Mediator of the Uganda Peace talks Dr. Riek Machar Teny said it is cheaper to persuade the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) leadership to sign the Final Peace Agreement than to go for military option against the rebels.

In a press conference held in his office on Monday, Machar told a group of national and international journalists that the Government of Southern Sudan would continue engagement with the LRA to persuade its leadership to sign and implement in full the Final Peace Agreement (FPA).

Machar distributed to journalists the final copy of the Final Peace Agreement ready to be signed by President Yoweri Museveni of Uganda and Joseph Kony of LRA together with a summary report he compiled as the Chief Mediator on the peace talks recommending the continuation of a peaceful path to end the 22 years of war in northern Uganda.

“We are caught up in this war... and lost over six thousand people before the Juba peace talks started on July 16, 2006,” he said, referring to the number of Southern Sudanese killed over the years by the LRA before the peace process began.

Machar said security situation improved in Northern Uganda and in Greater Equatoria in the last two years during the Juba peace talks.

When asked by journalists whether it was easier to destroy the LRA through military means, Machar replied that “it is cheaper... and easier to destroy the LRA through peaceful means than through military means.”

He however added that it is the duty of the Government of Southern Sudan to protect its citizens and pointed out that he had earlier requested for deployment of a full battalion of SPLA forces around the LRA assembly area of Ri-kwangba before the recent attacks took place.

Machar said he has sent to all representative partners of the Uganda peace talks his summary report and recommendations on the peace process.

He proposed in his 12-page report that some elements of the agreements signed in Juba should be implemented immediately, in good faith, pending signature of the Final Peace Agreement. He added that these agreements provide for important interventions, including social and economic provisions for the benefits of war-affected communities, “who deserve those benefits now.”

Machar argued that the formal negotiations of the peace process were over and what remained were just the signatures.

“I can therefore report, with full satisfaction, that by 25th March 2008, the Parties had achieved consensus on all the Agenda Items. They signed or initialed eight substantive agreements which, altogether, constitute the Final Peace Agreement. A short text which was to be ceremonially signed by General Joseph Kony and His Excellency President Yoweri Museveni was initialed,” the report stated.

The Juba peace process, which was seen as the best chance to end the 22-years of brutal conflict in the region witnessed a setback in April this year when the LRA leader, Joseph Kony failed to appear and sign the Final Peace Agreement on April 10, 2008 at Sudan-DR Congo border.

President Yoweri Museveni was also scheduled to sign the document on April 14, 2008 if Kony signed his part.

The LRA leader voiced concerns over how he was supposed to face justice for war crimes he committed, citing International Criminal Court (ICC) arrest warrants as an obstacle to peace.

The agreement on Accountability and Reconciliation reached in Juba last year between the two parties stipulate that the LRA leadership shall be tried in a Special Division of the High Court in Uganda and also by using Acholi traditional justice mechanisms.

Darfur

SLA breakaway group sign agreement with Government (Al-Sahafa)

(**Al-Sahafa**) a group led by field commander Ibrahim Sulaiman Ahmed which defected from Nur-led SLM/A signed yesterday in Nyala a peace agreement with the State government.

The agreement provided for cessation of hostilities, opening routes, IDPs return and reconstruction and securing of villages.

Darfur States suffer acute food gap

(**Al-Sahafa**) MP Al-Tijani Saraj who wrapped up visit to north Darfur said Darfur States were suffering an acute food gap as the price of a sack of sorghum reached 150

pounds. He said he would press for an urgent question in the Parliament to address the problem.

Darfur JEM to file lawsuit against British organization: Official

(ST) June 15, 2008 (WASHINGTON) – A Darfur rebel group declared its intent to file a lawsuit against a British organization over a report alleging that they recruited child soldiers.

Last week the London-based human rights group Waging Peace, said in a report that refugees from the Darfur conflict as young as nine years old are being sold to armed rebel groups including Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) as child soldiers.

JEM officials were outraged by the report and alleged that it is part of a campaign directed against them.

“All the information contained in this report is absurd, false and baseless” JEM’s deputy chief of staff Suleiman Sandal told Sudan Tribune by satellite phone from an undisclosed location.

“Since the foundation of JEM we never recruited children in our ranks. Our movement is in full conformity with Geneva convention prohibiting enlistment of children as soldiers” he added.

The issue of child soldiers in Darfur rebel groups came into the spotlight following a surprise attack on the Sudanese capital last month. The Sudanese government managed to repulse the attack and accused Chad of backing JEM in its attempt.

Hundreds of people were arrested after the attack including 89 children who the government said JEM had used as soldiers and showed them on national television.

But Sandal dismissed the government claims and the TV footages as “political propaganda”.

“Even when we launched our operation inside Omdurman we had firm instructions not to attack civilians. We were only targeting the institutions of the National Congress Party (NCP). How can we then be accused of using children to fight for us? It is illogical” Sandal said.

“The JEM statute strictly prohibits recruitment of men under the age of 18. We have a humanitarian coordinator officer who ensures compliance with this rule” he said.

“From a military standpoint children cannot travel hundreds of kilometers in the desert to the capital then take a week long journey back to the bases with only water and no food” he added.

The JEM official said the rebel group invites visits by any organizations “to verify that we have no child soldiers in our ranks”.

He also accused ‘Waging Peace’ group of working to promote the views of the Sudanese government.

“We are consulting with a number of lawyers on taking them [‘Waging Peace’ group] to court for smearing our reputation. Why did they pick this particular time to publish such a report? This not a mere coincidence” the JEM official said.

International experts also say more than 300,000 were killed and 2 million have been driven from their homes by the conflict in Darfur, a region that is roughly the size of France.

Miscellaneous

Workshop: 900 babies borne out of wedlock in Khartoum every year

(Rai Al-Shaab June 15) A workshop organized yesterday by the National Assembly’s Social Affairs Committee in collaboration with UNICEF revealed that 900 babies were born out of wedlock in Khartoum State every year, taken to Maigoma nursery.

Chairman of the Committee Al-Reyah Mahmoud has warned of the danger of the phenomenon and called for efforts to ensure proper upbringing of those children.

Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly Mohamed Al-Hassan Al-Amin has called for enactment of legislation to address this issue.

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