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Highlights

Calm returns to Nassir town

Miraya FM 16/6/09 - The Commissioner of Nassir Garhoth Gatkouth has said the area is now calm and the situation is under control, pointing out that the river shipping line has resumed normal operations.

Meanwhile, **Al-Intibaha** reports that the representatives of the town of Nassir, residing in Juba, issued a statement yesterday accusing unnamed quarters of attempts to smuggle arms and ammunition aboard convoy of barges carrying humanitarian aid. The statement wondered why there was need for SPLA escort since the barges are operated by UN. "UNMIS troops should have escorted the convoy," the statement said.

SPLM boycotts border demarcation meeting

SPLM representatives boycott the meeting of the Border Demarcation Committee which was supposed to take place yesterday, **Al-Raed** reports. A source said they boycott the meeting for unknown reasons but it could be due to differences over demarcation of "Jebel Al-Migainis" area.

Late census results could delay elections - NEC

Miraya FM 16/6/09 - The head of NEC Abel Alier, said that he expected the elections to take place as scheduled in both Darfur and the conflict areas in southern Sudan if the security situation in those areas is stable, but he indicated that the elections could be postponed as a result of the delay in announcing census results.

Alier reiterated the possibility of postponing the general elections due to the delay in announcing the national population census results and the dispute between the National congress Party and the SPLM over the issue.

Meanwhile, **Sudan Tribune website** 17/6/09 reported the Sudanese electoral commission said that it would allow international monitoring of the upcoming 2010 elections.

Abel Alier head of the body responsible for administering the elections process said that ensuring the fairness and integrity of the process is one of the main goals of the commission.

Alier was addressing a conference in Khartoum that brought together heads of the electoral subcommittees and 155 senior officers in the regional commissions.

He told the participants that the elections process will be based on the CPA, the 2005 Constitution and the 2008 national elections law as well as the procedures and rules developed by experts and approved by the commission.

Alier expressed gratitude to the role played by the representative from the Office of Evaluation and assessment Dirbek Belembi, Laurie Kennedy head of electoral assistance at the United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) and Ashraf Qazi, Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations in Sudan and the Ambassador of Italy.

"We look forward to provide useful working papers from experts in this conference to achieve

the desired benefit,” he said.

The deputy head of the commission Abdullah Ahmed said that the elections is a political and technical process on different levels that aim at establishing a democratic system that takes diversity into consideration.

Ahmed added that the board welcomes the principles of international monitoring to the regional and local elections so they can be a judge of the fairness, transparency and integrity of the process. However he stressed that only Sudan has authority over the elections.

Furthermore he said that the commission is working on establishing a media center and upgrading the performance of journalists adding that they are open to any assistance they can receive from abroad.

Plan in place to secure elections

Khartoum State police Chief Gen. Mohamed Al-Hafiz said a high committee was set up to secure the upcoming elections, *Al-Ayyam* reports. He has called on civilians to be calm during voting and exercise their constitutional rights. He explained that the role of police force would be to secure the process, not to manage it.

Washington conference last chance for CPA – SPLM

Al-Rai Al-Aam reports that SPLM has reiterated rejection of the census results, saying the process was rigged and warned that the NEC and the NCP would be held responsible for the consequences should they insist on the results. SPLM spokesperson Yen Mathew told a press conference yesterday that Washington conference would be the last change to implement the CPA. He said if mechanisms to salvage the CPA have failed, SPLM would resort to plan (B).

UN rights official says Darfur civilians assaulted by Sudan

Sudan Tribune website 16/6/09 - The Sudanese government forces continue to target civilians in the war torn region of Darfur, a UN rights officials said yesterday.

The UN special Rapporteur on human rights in the Sudan Sima Samar said in a report that fighting in Darfur took a heavy toll on civilians in terms of casualties, displacement and destruction of property.

“Land and air attacks by government forces on civilians in Darfur took place during the reporting period” she said in the report.

Samar said that in South Darfur “ground offensives and indiscriminate aerial bombardments by government forces in some instances, which failed to distinguish civilian communities, properties and objects from military targets”.

She also reported that cases of sexual violence continue to be received in Darfur and cautioned that the exact figures would not be known because such incidents are not regularly reported.

Furthermore Samar said that access to justice is limited outside main urban areas and added that human right activists in Darfur and throughout Sudan are targeted by security services particularly after the ICC issued an arrest warrant for Sudanese president Al-Bashir last March for seven counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity allegedly committed in Darfur.

On the South Sudan situation, Samar expressed concern at the inefficiency of the judicial

system to address issues of coverage, illegal adult and juvenile detention.

The UN human right official also recounted events that led to “Large-scale loss of life” in Jonglei and Malakal earlier this year during inter-tribal clashes.

However, Samar said that “positive steps” have been taken in the area of law reform by the GoNU and GoSS.

Abdel-Dayem Zumrawi, Sudanese undersecretary at the Ministry of Justice, said that Samar’s report fails to give a true picture of human rights in the country. Zumrawi urge the Human Rights Council to end her mandate saying that it is based on legacy.

But Human Rights Watch (HRW) said that the council must reject Khartoum’s request. “Sudan is enduring a massive human rights crisis that affects millions of people,” said Julie de Rivero, Geneva advocacy director at Human Rights Watch.

“For the council to drop its special scrutiny of Sudan at this crucial time would be to duck its responsibility to monitor and address major human rights violations” she added.

In Geneva, a Sudanese human right activist echoed HRW call. “Without Sima Samar, [President] Bashir will be handed carte blanche to do whatever he wants without serious monitoring of the situation,” Sudanese human rights activist Osman Humaida told reporters.

FM in Libya for consultations on Sudan-Chad relations

Al-Rai Al-Aam reports FM Deng Alor left for Libya yesterday on a short visit for consultations on Sudan-Chad relations. Meanwhile, MFA spokesperson Ali Al-Sadiq said that Dakar Mechanism, set up to mediate between Sudan and Chad, has failed to achieve a breakthrough, saying current security stability at the border offers an opportunity to arrange a meet between officials in Khartoum and N’djamena to address the issue.

Meanwhile, UNSG Ban Ki-moon has expressed grave concern over deterioration in relations between Sudan and Chad. The remarks came in the SG’s report on UNMIS and UNAMID mandate.

Mbeki calls on Darfur rebels to work for ceasefire

Sudan Tribune website 16/6/09 — AU Panel on Darfur (AUPD), led by the former South African president Thabo Mbeki, yesterday called on Darfur rebels to work toward a ceasefire in Darfur to achieve peace.

The Panel which includes two other former heads of state – Burundi’s Pierre Buyoya and Nigeria’s Abdulsalami Abubakar, met on Tuesday with the commanders of the Sudan Liberation Movement of Abdel Wahid Al-Nur (SLM/AW) in the town of En Siro, about 125 km north of El-Fasher in North Darfur.

The Chairman of the AUPD Panel, Mbeki called on all movements to work together towards a ceasefire in order to address issues of security which would enable the people to leave the camps and return to their homes.

In a workshop held from 18 April to 4 May 2009 in Switzerland, the SLM-AW reiterated that peace talks with the Government could not take place until the disarmament of the pro-Government militias, removal of new settlers from the land of the internally displaced persons

and a cessation of offensive military actions.

The panel also discussed steps taken to unify the rebel movements in Darfur and the security situation. On their part, the commanders expressed willingness and support to work with the Panel as well as all stakeholders in order to achieve peace.

The AUPD will conduct hearings across the three states of Darfur starting on 20 June.

They also held meetings with the residents of En Siru including the native administration, health practitioners, teachers, women groups and youth leaders.

Mr. Mbeki pointed out that the purpose of the visit was to listen to the local population in order to make recommendations of what needs to be done to end the conflict in Darfur.

Sudan says not surprised by Botswana vow to arrest Bashir

Sudan Tribune website 17/6/09 - The Sudanese government yesterday downplayed threats by Botswana to arrest president Al-Bashir if he lands on its territory.

The Sudanese foreign ministry spokesperson Ali Al-Sadiq said there are no diplomatic ties with Botswana and thus neither Bashir or any other official have any need to fly there. Al-Sadiq said it is likely that that Botswana came under international pressure as well as from the ICC president who recently visited the Southern African country.

However, he added that his government received no official notification outlining Botswana's position.

Sudan ready for new Darfur ceasefire - negotiator

Reuters 16/6/09 - Sudan's government is ready to call a fresh ceasefire in Darfur and is exploring new ways to end its related "war of attrition" with neighbouring Chad, a presidential advisor said on Tuesday.

Ghazi Salaheddin, who became the Khartoum government's new chief negotiator in Darfur, last month told **Reuters** he was increasingly optimistic an end to the six-year conflict was within reach. "I can see it, but I cannot touch it," he said in an interview.

Salaheddin, seen as a more conciliatory figure than his two predecessors in the negotiator's job, said he had recently toured Darfur and found public support for the insurgency, and the numbers of clashes, falling.

"The ordinary man is so fed up with the war. The people are longing to have peace ... All we can offer is to negotiate, without preconditions. We said, let's negotiate. And everything is on the table, for us, as far as we are concerned."

Asked whether Sudan's government was ready to call a fresh ceasefire, he replied: "Absolutely. Actually, we are demanding to have a ceasefire ... What we are saying is -- let's have a ceasefire agreement, let's have a framework agreement and move on."

Sudan is currently holding troubled discussions in Qatar with Darfur's rebel Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) that are supposed to pave the way to full peace talks.

But the meetings have stalled over what JEM says in Khartoum's failure to live up to an earlier

agreement to free prisoners, among other confidence-building measures.

Salaheddin said any full solution to Darfur depended on healing the rift between the Sudan and Chad, which borders Darfur.

"When you see the vastness of the territory there and the length of the borders, it is absolutely impossible to patrol the borders unless you reach a real settlement, a political settlement ... We have to find a way to stop this war of attrition between Chad and Sudan."

He refused to go into further detail about how Sudan was planning to reach an agreement. "But we are working on some new suggestions, some rudimentary ideas."

Salaheddin's comments come amid signs of thawing relations between Sudan and the United States, which has been pushing for an end to the Darfur conflict.

The presidential adviser was due to fly to Washington later on Tuesday, to lead a delegation from Sudan's dominant National Congress Party at a meeting on progress in the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement -- the accord that ended two decades of civil war between north and south Sudan.

Salaheddin said he hoped the high-profile conference would encourage more international donors to support key parts of the faltering peace deal, not least national elections scheduled for February 2010, and disarmament programmes.

He added he the Sudanese delegation would repeat its request for the United States to remove Sudan from its list of state sponsors of terrorism and to end sanctions, imposed on Khartoum for reported human rights abuses, support for terrorist organizations and the Darfur conflict. Sudan says it has been helping the U.S in the war on terror.

"We have been hearing nice words from them (the Americans). But we are looking for concrete steps," said Salaheddin.

"We need to explain why it is important for the United States to support the Comprehensive Peace Agreement by normalizing relations."

Leper sanitation improved

Al-Ahdath reports UNMIS yesterday inaugurated a project to improve sanitary conditions of people affected by leprosy in Mayo area. According to a press release, UNMIS in collaboration with the Ministry of Health constructed 10 pit latrines at \$23,000 to serve about 120 lepers.

Police apprehended 45 currency dealers, 98 homeless, 28 criminals

Local dailies report Khartoum State police yesterday launched a campaign to combat crime in the national capital. Khartoum state Police DG Gen. Mohamed Al-Hafiz told reporters yesterday that the campaign resulted in apprehension of 45 hard currency dealers, 98 homeless and 28 criminals. He said that the "nigger gang" had disappeared after 109 suspected elements were apprehended recently. According to **Al-Ayyam**, 724 suspected criminals have been arrested.

DUP leader left Khartoum unhappy

Al-Akhbar reports the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) leader Mohamed Osman Al-Mirghani yesterday left Khartoum angrily because of what he saw as NCP's feet dragging on the implementation of the Cairo Agreement. Al-Mirghani sees the implementation of the agreement as necessary to achieve national reconciliation before the upcoming elections.

MFA spokesperson insists on denying Akhir Lahza access

Akhir Lahza reports that despite the intervention of the General Union of the Sudanese Journalists and the petition handed over by a group of journalists, MFA spokesperson Ali Al-Sadiq insisted on denying its reporter Ms Ahlam El-Tayeb access to the Ministry's premises. Reportedly, Al-Sadiq was angered by Akhir Lahza reporter Ms El-Tayeb's report on possible transfers of Ambassadors from the Ministry to serve abroad including the spokesperson himself.

2500 towers in Khartoum built without clearance

Al-Khartoum reports that the Khartoum State Urban Development Control Unit has announced that about 94 buildings and towers constructed in Khartoum were found in violation of Khartoum State Building Organization Act, 2008 by adding stories more than what is specified in the license. The Control Unit has also discovered that over 2500 buildings in various areas in Khartoum have emerged during 2008 without prior clearance from the authorities concerned. Director of the Department of Buildings at the Ministry of Urban Planning Eng. Sanhoury Sigheiroon cited as an example Al-Hijaz building which is supposed to be a three-storey building but the building now has nine stories.

Officials in southern Sudan hamper oil production –Minister

In his report to parliament yesterday, Energy and Mining Minister Al-Zubeir Ahmed Al-Hassan said that the security situation in southern Kordofan, Upper Nile and Unity States was not conducive to oil industry, **Al-Rai Al-Aam** reports. He blamed county commissioners in Upper Nile for disturbing the oil companies in the area. He said that drillings are impeded, machineries are stolen and workers are being harassed.