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Address: UNMIS Headquarters, P.O. Box 69, Ibeid Khatim St, Khartoum 11111, SUDAN
Phone: (+249-1) 8708 6000 - Fax: (+249-1) 8708 6200

Highlights

Breaking News

Sudan's Bashir announces immediate Darfur ceasefire

(Reuters) 12 Nov – Sudanese President Omer Bashir announced Wednesday an immediate and unconditional ceasefire in the Darfur region of western Sudan.

Bashir said the government would also disarm the militias in the region. "I hereby announce our immediate unconditional ceasefire between the armed forces and the warring factions, provided that an effective monitoring mechanism is put into action and observed by all involved parties", Bashir said.

The ceasefire was recommended by the Sudan People's Forum -- a platform of government and opposition figures. Darfur rebels have boycotted the forum.

Bashir also said: "We will set up an immediate campaign to disarm the militias and restrict the use of weapons among armed forces".

The president, however, did not promise to release political prisoners from Darfur, another recommendation by the forum.

Associated Press reports also that Bashir said he was willing to pay compensation to Darfurians who lost their homes to help them return and rebuild.

Sudan's president announces immediate ceasefire in Darfur

(Xinhua) Sudanese President Omer Bashir today announced an immediate ceasefire in the war-torn western Sudanese region of Darfur to pave the way for the Arab-sponsored peace negotiations with rebel movements.

Bashir made the remarks during the final session of the Forum of the Sudanese People's Initiative for Solving the Darfur Issue which has worked out a strategy for enhanced security and other measures that would allow millions of displaced people and refugees to return to their home villages in Darfur.

The forum was organized by the Sudanese government to discuss a peace plan put forward by the Arab League during a special meeting in Qatari capital of Doha which calls for resumption of the peace talks between the Sudanese government and rebel movements in Darfur.

Addressing the meeting, Bashir said "I hereby announce our immediate unconditional ceasefire between the armed forces and the warring factions, provided that an effective monitoring mechanism is put into action and observed by all involved parties." Bashir said that the government "will set up an immediate campaign to disarm the militias and restrict the use of weapons among armed forces."

He also announced his agreement to the principle suggested in the final report of the forum on compensation for victims of the five-year-long conflict in Darfur, in which the Sudanese government said some 10 thousands have been killed and 2 millions displaced. The final

report of the forum recommends an immediate unilateral ceasefire and asks the government to provide security to the home areas of people who fled from military campaigns that began in Darfur in 2003.

The policy outlined in the report represents an effort to maintain the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) signed on May 5, 2006 by one main rebel leader, Minni Arkou Minawi, as the basis for future negotiations.

The forum accepted the principal of individual compensation for victims of the war, but also asked the government to prioritize collective compensation by family. The meeting also suggested re-establishing Darfur as one administrative region rather than three, which was one of the grievances that sparked the rebellion.

The sixty-seven pages report also urged Darfur to be represented by one vice-president in the national government, which already has two vice presidents.

These concessions approximate the rebel demands that Khartoum rejected at the Abuja peace negotiations mediated by the African Union in 2006. At that time, two main Darfur rebel groups, Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM) and Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), ultimately refused to sign an agreement that did not restore Darfur to one administrative region and dedicate a vice-presidency for the region.

Local Arabic and English Language Press

Abyei Area administration sown in, 700 IDP families return from Dongola

Al-Sahafa reports Abyei Area executive and legislative councils members were sown in yesterday. The Legislative Council held a procedural session in which Charles Abyei (SPLM) was appointed chairman of the council and Zakaria Atem (NCP) appointed deputy chairman.700 IDP households have returned from Dongola (Northern Sudan) to the area.

The Legislative Council chairman, Charles Abyei, has attributed the delay of the oath-taking process to differences over executive and legislative portfolios which he said were resolved yesterday. He told the paper that division of administrative units was carried out in accordance with the Abyei Area Roadmap. He said Local governments, services, health and education portfolios were given to the NCP and Finance, agriculture, resources and infrastructure were handed over to SPLM. "Security is handled directly by the chief administrator," he added.

He said the Area Executive would embark on endorsing its terms of reference and the laws for regulating work in Abyei Area as well as budget. He said the return of IDPs to the Area would be rescheduled.

Ocampo decision is a “mosquito buzz” in an elephant ear – Bashir

Local dailies report President Bashir lashed out against some western countries saying he does not fear any threat. "They are in the wrong if they think I am worried about my seat. USA can not unseat us," President Bashir told a mass rally yesterday at the town of Nuhud in Northern Kordofan. The President also attacked America saying, "We did not come to power on the basis of US consent and our stay in power is also not based on its consent and it can not unseat us even if it mobilizes its alliance," Bashir told the crowds. The President visited the area to inaugurate 103 km long of Western Salvation Highway (Khuway-Nuhud sector). He affirmed the state's keenness to realize development and to provide services at the rural areas in the country.

The President also criticized the ICC. He said, "Ocampo's decision is just a mosquito buzz in an elephant ear," "Threatening Sudan with the NATO and UN will not work," he added.

Parliament to regulate status of armed movements in Khartoum

Sudan Vision reports National Assembly's Security and Defence Committee recommended legalization of the status of armed movements in the capital and resuming collection of arms in Khartoum and in other states, in addition to speeding up demarcation of borders with neighbouring countries. At a session yesterday, the Assembly passed Interior Minister's statement on security status quo in the country during the period April-October 2008.

According to **Al-Sahafa** Interior Minister Ibrahim Mahmoud Hamid has admitted to the Parliament that prisons in Sudan were stretched beyond capacity due to rising financial crimes as well as modern crimes. He said plan is underway to ease prisons congestion and to improve their conditions.

On the other hand, the Minister said 70% of vehicles in Sudan are not licensed and called on the Parliament to push for collection of unlawful arms and to address the issue of armed militias in Khartoum as well as to work for improving bridges to minimize accidents.

UN drops charges of slavery and torture against Sudan

Akhir Lahza states UN Human Rights Council in Geneva yesterday dropped charges and a complaint leveled by the Christian Solidarity Organization against Sudan, alleging Sudan is practicing slavery and torture. MFA spokesperson Ali Al-Sadiq said the Christian Solidarity charges against Sudan were unfounded.

Student demonstrate in Juba, police react violently

Al-Intibaha reports Juba yesterday witnessed violent confrontation between students and police sparked by delay of payment of teachers' salaries. Sources confirmed 2 students have been killed and 25 others wounded but the State Government denied the figure saying at least one person was injured and was being treated in Juba hospital. According to the sources, teachers have not received their salaries since September this year.

Eritrean President to visit Khartoum today

Local dailies report Eritrean President Isias Afwerki will arrive in Khartoum today on two-day visit for consultations with President Bashir on a range of issues including Darfur. The Eritrean President will participate in a wrap up session of the People of Sudan Forum where President Bashir will receive its final recommendations.

Southern parties call on ICC to defer indictment

The Citizen states the Secretary General of the UDSF Jacob Dwang said the southern parties attending south-south dialogue in Juba urged ICC to defer President Bashir indictment.

Eight southern political parties are attending the dialogue to come up with a common position on issues relating to the south. In an interview with the paper, Jacob said the parties had resolved to seek deferment of Bashir indictment.

Mahdi calls for internal and external elections monitoring

Al-Khartoum reports opposition forces have formed an alliance to resolve Darfur crisis and to contest upcoming elections. The political parties celebrated formation of the alliance yesterday

at Umma Party HQs in Omdurman. Addressing the ceremony, Umma Party leader Sadiq Al Mahdi has called for internal and external monitoring of upcoming elections.

Websites/International News Coverage

Five newspapers protest censorship

(**Miraya FM website**) Journalists from five newspapers handed a memo to the Press and Publication Council protesting censorship on newspapers.

Editor-In-Chief of Ajrass Al Houriya Dr. Mortada al Gahli said that the security forces tried to prevent the journalists from submitting their memo.

He added that the police still surrounds the Press and Publications building and some of the journalists have been searched.

The five newspapers include Ajrass Al Huriya, Ray al Shaab, Al Medan, Khartoum Monitor and the Citizen.

Road linking Sudan to DRC to be reconstructed

(**Sudan Radio Service**) GOSS Vice-President Riek Machar says he has reached an agreement with UNMIS in Sudan to reconstruct the road linking southern Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Speaking in Nairobi on Friday, Dr Machar said UNMIS will construct the road from Maridi in Sudan's Western Equatoria state to Ri-kwamba on the border with the DRC.

MONUC, the UN mission to the DRC, has said it will also construct a road to the Sudanese border from the DRC side.

Dr Machar said that apart from connecting Sudan's UNMIS and the DRC's MONUC by land, the road would facilitate transport and trade between Western Equatoria state and the DRC.

Dr Riek Machar was in Nairobi to discuss a proposed peace agreement between Uganda and the Lord's Resistance Army.

Machar met DRC President Joseph Kibila at the meeting in Nairobi to talk about co-coordinating UN forces in Uganda and the DRC. The two discussed the possibility of stationing some members of the Cessation of Hostilities Monitoring Team (CHMT) with UN MONUC forces inside the DRC to monitor the movement and activities of the LRA.

CHMT is composed of senior army officers from Kenya, South Africa, Mozambique, Tanzania, the DRC, Uganda, southern Sudan and the LRA. The team was established in Juba to monitor the cease-fire agreement signed two years ago between the Uganda government and the LRA.

Sudan census result "inaccurate" – official

(**Sudan Radio Service**) The result of the recently-concluded census in southern Sudan may not be useful, according to an official report which highlights a string of obstacles which handicapped the census organizers in the south.

The Speaker of the Southern Sudan Assembly, James Igga, told lawmakers on Friday that the

census results would not be accurate, citing the challenges faced during the census.

Igga was reacting to an evaluation report presented to the parliament by the southern census officials which suggested that early rains, an influx of returnees, poor mapping, shortages of questionnaires and insecurity hampered the exercise.

According to the report, in some states where field mapping was done a year before the census, a significant number of villages had expanded by the time the census took place and as a result, many people may have been omitted from the survey .

The report also revealed that in Upper Nile and Lakes states questionnaires were destroyed or "mislaid".

Even before the census, the Government of Southern Sudan said it would refuse to be bound by the results. They accused the NCP, their partner in the Government of National Unity, of manipulating the census statistics.

Newspapers urged to comply with self-censorship and journalistic principles

(**Miraya FM website**) State Minister of Information and Communications, Dr. Kamal Obeid, urged newspapers' Editors-in-Chief to abide by the journalistic principles and self-censorship. Obeid told **Miraya FM** that some party affiliated newspapers try to create crisis out of nothing.

The minister added that the rules should be revised to guide partnership between the executive and newspapers' administrations.

Sudan hopes peace push will head off indictment – Alor

(**Reuters**) Sudan hopes a new peace push in Darfur will help persuade Western countries to support a postponement of war crimes charges against its president, the Sudanese foreign minister, Deng Alor said yesterday.

Sudan's president is expected to announce a new set of peace measures on Wednesday, including a fresh ceasefire in Darfur and the release of political prisoners, according to a copy of plans seen by **Reuters**.

Foreign Minister Deng Alor said the new plans would give Sudan the "moral authority" to ask the United States, Britain and France to back a campaign to defer any indictment of President Omar Hassan al-Bashir by the International Criminal Court (ICC).

"If we can come up with a clear framework ... we would have a strong argument to the international community that we are resolving this problem, that we need a chance to resolve this problem," the minister told Reuters in an interview.

Alor said Washington was pushing Sudan to make concrete moves towards settling conflicts in Darfur and other flashpoints in Sudan.

"The Europeans ... are also asking the government of Sudan to hold direct or indirect talks with the ICC as a condition for any discussion on deferral," the minister added.

Sudan's government has still not decided on how best to engage with the global court, he said. But it was hoping the new peace initiatives would be enough to persuade the three countries not to use their vetoes, he added.

Darfur forum to urge security for displaced and refugees

(**Sudan Tribune website**) The government-initiated Forum of the People of Sudan on Darfur will recommend Wednesday to President Omar Al-Bashir a strategy for enhanced security and other measures that will allow the millions of displaced people and refugees to return to their home villages.

The final report recommends an immediate unilateral ceasefire and for the government to provide security to the home areas of people who fled from government-directed military campaigns that began in 2003 against villages in Darfur.

The forum accepts the principal of individual compensation for victims of the war, but also asks that the government prioritize collective compensation by family. For this purpose, the report recommends classifying families as big and medium and small families. The policy would also dedicate funds for the construction of villages and services, instead of individual compensations. But the state's "capability to pay compensation" will be taken into consideration with these measures.

The meeting also suggested re-establishing Darfur as one administrative region rather than three, which was one of the grievances that sparked the rebellion.

The sixty-seven pages report moreover urges that Darfur be represented by a vice-president in the national government, which already has two vice presidents.

Sudan and Chad agree to normalize bilateral relations

(**Sudan Tribune website**) Sudan and Chad agreed yesterday on the needed steps to normalize bilateral relations, said a Sudanese presidential adviser after talks held in the Chadian capital yesterday with the President Idriss Deby in unannounced move.

Presidential Adviser, Mustafa Osman Ismail, met yesterday in N'djamena with the Chadian president to speak about concrete steps for the full normalization of bilateral relations. After his return in Khartoum he said he agreed with Deby on the required steps to normalize relations between the two neighboring countries.

Ismail, who is a close adviser to president Omer Al-Bashir in the on going power struggle within the ruling National Congress Party, said he transmitted a verbal message to Deby from the Sudanese president.

Al-Bashir expressed his sincere intention to return bilateral relations to their normal, said Ismail. He further added that Bashir's message dealt with required steps to achieve normalization.

Mustafa told the Chadian President, he is in charge of the bilateral relations and would do his utmost efforts to achieve this mission.

The Chadian president always requested Khartoum to stop its support to the Chadian opposition. In the past the mistrust between the two governments and the strong ascendancy of

the Zaggawa tribal links aborted such deal.

Khartoum, in return, want Deby to distance himself from the Justice and Equality Movement and to expel it from Chad. However, analysts say it is difficult for him to resist Chadian rebels without the dissuasive presence of JEM in Chad.

In Khartoum Ismail said that the national airliner, Sudan Airways, will resume its flights to N'djamena in the next days and the Sudanese school there will reopen soon.

Dinka, Misseriya promise each other peace, despite politics

(**Sudan Tribune website**) Peace talks between Dinka Malual and Misseriya El-Merram that representatives say are crucial for security in the north-south borderlands kicked off in Aweil town on Tuesday with both sides saying high-level politics had worsened fragile relations between the two.

The two pastoralist communities that straddle the north-south border have long had troubled relations marked by fierce competition over dry season pastures and water. But when fighting broke out between armed elements of the Misseriya and the SPLA just before December last year many feared for the CPA. The conference will continue until Thursday.

Arms race, uneasy peace in Sudan

(**The Christian Science Monitor**) 12 Nov, Juba - Although the Arab-dominated government of Sudan and the semiautonomous region of Southern Sudan have been at peace for three years, there are signs that both sides are stepping up the pace of a cold war-style arms race.

"This arms race has been going on for some time, with each side anticipating the worst," says Alex de Waal, a program director at the New York-based Social Science Research Council and a world-renowned expert on Sudan.

According to military analysts, the south buys tanks, armored personnel carriers, assault rifles, rocket propelled grenade launchers, mortar rounds, and ammunition. It also receives defense training from Ethiopia, Kenya, South Africa, the United States, and Britain. The north gets an even wider array of Eastern European and Chinese military equipment, including combat aircraft and fighter jets. An October report by Human Rights First says China, India, Kenya, Iran, and Russia, by their own admission, ship arms directly to northern Sudan. Many other countries underreport their exports to Sudan.

"They're both heavily armed," says a Western diplomat in Sudan, speaking anonymously because he is not authorized to speak to the media. "The SPLA has 170,000 armed men. That's bigger than any army in Africa, and there has been no appreciable disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration in Sudan," as mandated by the peace agreement, he says.

"It's a classic kind of deterrence exercise," says Robert Muggah, research director at the Geneva-based Small Arms Survey, an independent research project. "I don't think anyone wants the north and south to go back to war. But there is a sense that some kind of military balance of power can keep an uneasy stability as the political path works its magic."

"Even if Khartoum has no interest or intention of going to war, it has every incentive to maintain a credible threat of war to ensure that Juba will choose unity in the referendum. Likewise, even if Juba has nothing to gain from conflict, it must make conflict as costly as possible for Khartoum

to prefer peace over war if peaceful partition is to be a real strategic option for Juba."

Both sides deny that a covert arms race is taking place, but insist that one would be within their rights.

GoSS to force LRA out of Sudan after November

(**New Vision**) GoSS will attack the Lord's Resistance Army rebels if Joseph Kony does not sign the final peace agreement by the end of this month.

Martin Majut Yak, the director of presidential affairs in the South Sudan government, yesterday said his government had the capacity to "finish off" the LRA in seven days.

"We shall not allow them to continue attacking and killing our people. We will not tolerate the brutality," he told journalists in Kampala.

Majut is in the country to meet the Sudanese community, especially students.

He said his government was encouraging students to study in Uganda. Currently, there are over 4,000 Sudanese students at various institutions across the country.

Makut said President Salva Kiir of South Sudan had donated \$810,000 (about sh1.5b) to sponsor 1,850 students in Uganda. "Uganda is like our second home and we encourage our students to come to Uganda for education," he said. He will also deliver \$187,500 to Sudanese students in Kenya. Majut is also in the country to brief the Sudanese community about the progress in the implementation of the CPA and the challenges facing Sudan.

On just-concluded census in Sudan, Majut said: "We shall contest the results of that referendum because we understand that they reduced our numbers so that it can affect us during the national elections". He added that his government would ensure that Ugandans living or doing business in Juba are safe.

Sudan says Egypt making efforts to overcome ICC crisis

(**Miraya FM website**) MFA Spokesperson, Ali Al Saddiq, said that Egypt was making efforts to reconcile the view points between the Sudanese government and the United States, Britain and France, in an attempt to avert the consequences of a possible ICC arrest warrant for Bashir.

President Mubarak who paid brief visit to Sudan, said he discussed with Al Bashir the upcoming elections and the successful means to implement it, in addition to the referendum of south Sudan.

New equipment and studios to be delivered to Unity State's radio and T.V

(**Miraya FM website**) The General Manager of Unity State Radio and Television Hassan Abdulla said that new medium wave radio equipment and radio production studios will soon be delivered to the State in order to strengthen the transmission. Abdulla told Miraya FM that the equipment is a donation from the Italian Government. He further called on the Governments of Southern Sudan and National Unity to assist in training journalists.

It is expected with the arrival of the new equipment that the local radio transmission in Bentiu would reach the ten southern States through medium wave.