



Local Arabic and English language Headlines

- Abyei voluntary return, 235 police JIPU deployed (AJras Al-Huriyah)
- Parliamentary delegation to visit Geneva to help end Samar's mandate (Al-Rai Al-Aam)
- British Embassy regrets the incident of two UNMIS national staff injured by its vehicle (dailies)
- UNMIS staff reject British Embassy apology (Al-Rai Al-Aam)
- ICRC resumes activity in Gereida (Al-Rai Al-Aam)
- Hybrid patrol comes under fire (Al-Ayyam)
- Chinese Consulate officially inaugurated in Juba (Sudan Vision)
- After SPLM, SLM-Minnawi is likely to suspend participation in Darfur States' Governments (Al-Sudani)
- SLM-Abdul Wahid supports Kiir's presidential candidacy (Ray Al-Shaab)

Websites/International Headlines

- Sudanese media hail expected China 'veto' to block Bashir arrest warrant (ST)
- Darfur's Minnawi denies agreement with ruling NCP on outstanding issues (ST)
- 18 SPLM officials in Darfur suspend participation over camp attack (ST)
- SLM-Unity responds positively to call for Ramadan truce (ST)
- UNAMID protests officially over excessive use of force in Kalma (ST)
- Sudan's first vice president meets Chinese special envoy (Xinhua)
- Sudan Suspends English-language Paper - Managing Editor (AFP)
- South African soldier dies in Sudan (Independent Online)
- Sudan: Bashir's victory lap to South of country (The Monitor)
- Hamas denies reports that its chief moved from Syria to Sudan (Xinhua)

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Highlights

Local Arabic and English language press

Abyei voluntary return, 235 JIPU deployed

Ajras Al-Huria reported that the number of police currently deployed in Abyei stands at 235 personnel, 135 from the north and the rest from the south. Additional JIPU are expected to join soon, the number will reach 357 personnel.

Abyei police commander Col. Luka Deng said an agreement was yet to be reached on the size of the force to be deployed. "So far we can not apprehend anybody because there are no courts and prosecutions," he said

Luka said the area was witnessing increasing voluntary return and pointed out the contribution of UNMIS police towards training. He said the security situation in the area was stable and calm.

Parliamentary delegation to visit Geneva to help end Samar's mandate

Al-Rai Al-Aam carried a report stating that a parliamentary delegation will leave for Geneva on 7th September to take part in the UNHRC meetings 8-21 September.

Hamato Mukhtar, member of the delegation, told the newspaper yesterday that Sudan would endeavour at this meeting to block extension of Samar's mandate. He said the delegation would highlight the positive developments in Sudan such as democratic transformation, approval of the electoral law and the start of efforts to establish an elections commission. He said the delegation would also raise the ICC issue.

British Embassy regrets the incident of two UNMIS security guards injured by its vehicle

Khartoum dailies reported that the British Embassy issued press release regretting the incident that took place on 27th August 2008 in which two UNMIS security guards were injured.

British Ambassador wished the two UNMIS staff speedy recovery. The Ambassador and Ashraf Qazi agreed that the incident was regretful and assured total cooperation on investigation and pointed out the different accounts of the incident.

The Embassy said it maintains excellent relations with UNMIS and would work closely with the Mission to support its efforts in Sudan.

UNMIS staff reject British Embassy apology

Al-Rai Al-Aam stated that UNMIS National Staff Association (NSA) rejected the findings of the investigation conducted by UNMIS and British Embassy of the incident of two staff members injured by a British Embassy vehicle.

British Embassy spokesperson told the newspaper yesterday that the Embassy finalized investigation and pointed out that there were conflicting accounts of the incident and confirmed

cooperation of the Embassy with the UNMIS investigation team and emphasized the need to overcome it.

NSA source said UNMIS statement ignored the incident because it did not elaborate on the findings. The source said SRSG Ashraf Qazi met with UNMIS staff yesterday but the national staff remained stick to legal handling of the case as well as compensation for the victims.

UNMIS statement said the British Embassy admitted that its two staff members were wrong and regretted the incident.

Al-Watani newspaper published UNMIS statement as main news: **UN investigations reveal British Embassy driver was wrong.** The statement said comprehensive investigation was conducted and the conclusion was that the British Embassy driver and close protection officer were in the wrong because they refused to comply with UNMIS parking instructions. The statement said their attempt to forcibly park the vehicle in the wrong place was the cause of the injuries sustained by UNMIS security guards.

SRSG Qazi and the British Ambassador discussed the findings of the investigation. The statement said all diplomats visiting UNMIS are required to ensure strict compliance with UNMIS security directives.

ICRC resumes activity in Gereida

Al-Rai Al-Aam reported that ICRC resumed its activities in the town of Gereida (South Darfur) after suspending it to protest carjacking of its vehicle by Minnawi defectors.

Informed sources told the newspaper yesterday that the vehicle was returned to the ICRC after negotiations with the carjackers.

Hybrid patrol fired at

Al-Ayyam stated that UNAMID patrol (Nigerian troops) was fired at by armed men on Nyala-Khor Abeche road near Doma village last Sunday.

UNAMID statement said the convoy was fired at and had to retaliate in self-Defence.

Chinese Consulate officially inaugurated in Juba

Sudan Vision carried a report stating that the First Vice President and President of Government of Southern Sudan, First Lt. Gen. Salva Kiir Mayardit agreed with the Chinese envoy to Sudan that the resolution of Darfur issue can settle ICC issue. While meeting Kiir in Juba yesterday, the Chinese envoy affirmed that China was keen to develop relations with Sudan in general and Southern Sudan in particular.

The two parties discussed the political situation in Sudan. First Vice President assured the Chinese envoy that the NCP and SPLM are capable to overcome their differences.

Director of Asian Directorate at the Foreign Ministry Ambassador Adil Ibrahim told Sudan Vision that the meeting between the Sudanese and Chinese was successful and that they discussed matter of mutual concern.

The Chinese Consulate was officially inaugurated in the attendance of the Chinese envoy and Vice President of Government of Southern Sudan, Dr. Riek Machar and the consuls working in Juba.

The ambassador pointed out that China has provided Southern Sudan with health assistance such as Malaria drugs costing three million Yuan. China also would provide ready fabricated buildings in Southern Sudan in addition to drilling of wells which will cost of five Million Yuan.

After SPLM, SLM-Minnawi is likely to suspend participation in Darfur States' Governments

Al-Sudani learned from informed sources yesterday that SLM chairman Minni Minnawi would suspend participation of 42 of his movement's members in the three Darfur States to protest incidents at Kalma camp.

Sources revealed to the Sudan Media Centre (SMC) that SLM leader Minnawi and JEM chairman Khalil Ibrahim would meet within two days in Chad to discuss unification of the movements' efforts and to develop a common vision on pending issues.

Minnawi has commended and supported SPLM's suspension of participation in Darfur States' Government in protest at incidents in Kalma IDPs camp.

NCP criticized SPLM's suspension of participation in the GoNU in Darfur calling it "unacceptable approach".

SLM-Abdul Wahid supports Kiir's presidential candidacy

Ray Al-Shaab carried a report stating that SLM (Abdul Wahid faction) announced it would support Kiir candidacy to win upcoming presidential elections. The movement said ICC request for arrest warrant against Bashir might prevent him from running.

Meanwhile, GoSS Vice President Machar confirmed SPLM consensus on Kiir's presidential candidacy. Machar said in press release that SPLM recent meeting in Juba decided that Kiir would run.

Websites/International News Coverage

Sudanese media hail expected China 'veto' to block Bashir arrest warrant

(Sudan Tribune) – The Sudanese media appeared poised for a Chinese veto in the UN Security Council (UNSC) to block a possible arrest warrant by the International Criminal Court (ICC) for president Omer Hassan Al-Bashir.

The headline news of the *Al-Rae'd* daily newspaper, issued by the ruling National Congress Party (NCP), came under "Chinese veto awaits Ocampo". The pro-government daily *Al-Rayaam* used a similar headline "China does not rule out using veto to deflect Ocampo's allegations".

Yesterday the Chinese Assistant Foreign Minister Zhai Jun delivered a letter from the Chinese President Hu Jintao to Al-Bashir. Sudan's deputy foreign minister Ali Karti said the letter from Jintao contained "the biggest and strongest truthful expression of support to Sudan's different stances".

But the Chinese envoy denied to reporters any intention to use the veto "at this stage" when an arrest warrant has not been issued yet. He also said that Beijing believes that there are "criminal issues [in Darfur] that require resolution".

It is not clear what veto Jun Zhai Jun was referring to. Under Article 16 of the ICC Statute the

UNSC only has the power to suspend ICC prosecutions through a chapter VII resolution. But any such resolution introduced appears to have little chances of surviving a vote in the UNSC particularly with the veto wielding members such as US, UK and France opposing it.

Sudan official news agency (SUNA) quoted the Chinese official as criticizing the ICC move saying it does not help efforts undertaken to resolve the Darfur crisis.

Sudan has not ratified the Rome Statue, but the UNSC triggered the provisions under the Statue that enables it to refer situations in non-State parties to the world court if it deems that it is a threat to international peace and security.

Darfur's Minnawi denies agreement with ruling NCP on outstanding issues

(Sudan Tribune) – Sudan's senior presidential assistant Minni Arcua Minnawi denied that he has reached any agreement with the ruling National Congress Party (NCP) on outstanding issues.

Yesterday Omer Rahama, the rapporteur of the situation room in charge of implementing the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) said that two delegations from the government and the Sudan Liberation Movement - Minnawi reached an agreement on a road map to complete the DPA implementation.

But Minnawi told *Miraya radio* that has no knowledge of any new agreement with NCP. He also said that his group presented draft proposal to move the DPA implementation forward. He commended the move by the Sudan People Liberation Movement (SPLM) officials in Darfur who suspended their participation in the executive and legislative bodies of all three Darfur states.

The SPLM officials said they took this step in protest of the raid by Sudanese soldiers and security officers on Kalma IDP camp in South Darfur that resulted in the death of 30 people and injuries to 100, mostly women and children.

Minnawi left the Sudanese capital 4 months ago and informally suspended his participation in the government leading to speculations that he defected from the government of national unity. It was reported at the time that he arrived in the Chadian capital and met with President Idriss Debi. However the former rebel leader firmly denied these reports. Last week the SLM leader told Sudan Tribune that he has no intention of returning "until there is good will from the dominant National Congress Party".

He also downplayed the 'People of Sudan' initiative launched by President Omer Hassan Al-Bashir during his tour of Darfur last month. "The principle is not bad but other political parties must take the lead on it. The NCP cannot be in charge of it" he stressed.

18 SPLM officials in Darfur suspend participation over camp attack

(Sudan Tribune) – Over a dozen officials from the ex-Southern rebels Sudan People Liberation Movement (SPLM) suspended their participation in the executive and legislative bodies of all three Darfur states.

The SPLM figures, who are all from Darfur, included 3 ministers and 15 legislators. In a statement the officials said that they were not informed of the government plan to conduct a raid on the Kalma camp last week.

The attack by the Sudanese soldiers and security officers resulted in the death of 30 people and

injuries to 100, mostly women and children. The high death toll drew condemnation from the US, EU and the United Nations - African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID).

The Sudanese authorities had justified the raid by claiming to have received reliable intel about weapons smuggled recently into Kalma camp which is at a strategic position because of its proximity to the Nyala airport and railways.

Sudan official news agency (*SUNA*) quoted Al-Bashir during the weekly cabinet meeting last week as stressing “the importance of disarming the refugee camps particularly the Kalama camp for its negative impact on civilians living there”.

But the acting governor of South Darfur Farah Mustafa was quoted by the daily Al-Sharq Al-Awsat published in London last week as saying that “carrying out duties by the police and other agencies resulted in repercussions”.

“The police went a little too far in Kalma camp” he added.

The Darfuri SPLM officials said that they took this step after consultation with their leadership. They further said that it is “impossible” to conduct elections in the war ravaged region without resolving the crisis and returning refugees and IDP’s to their lands.

The names of the SPLM ministers are Omer Adam, minister of agriculture in South Darfur; Abdel-Shafie minister of Culture, Youth and Sports in North Darfur; Jamal Ramadan, Minister of Health in West Darfur.

The names of the SPLM parliamentarians include Mohi Al-Deen Ismail; Abdel-Rahman Al-Bashari; Hawaa Abdel-Mutalib; Ibrahim Al-Jak; Saleh Bahr Al-Deen; Al-Sayed Neel; Al-Sheik Doda Hamed; Aicha Ahmed; Abdel-Majeed Hassab Allah; Ahmed Fadl; Mohamed Abakr Goma’a; Khalid Daraja; Zubaida Ahmed; Sa’ad Hamed and Dohya Karama.

However Ibrahim Gandoor, a figure at the ruling National Congress Party (NCP) downplayed the impact of the move and called it “an attempt by the SPLM to make political gains”.

Gandoor also said he expects the officials to reverse their suspension decision.

Last week six South Darfur officials resigned over the Kalma camp incidents and said that the attack is a breach of Al-Bashir’s promises during his tour in the region last July.

One source told Sudan Tribune that the adviser to the South Darfur governor Al-Magdoom Salah Fadl confronted Al-Bashir during his tour telling him that his call for refugees to return to their homes is unrealistic.

“He bluntly told Al-Bashir that the refugees’ lands have been taken by re-settlers from other countries and that the displaced have nowhere to go” the source said.

Some observers and experts have alleged that Khartoum brought in Arab tribes from neighboring countries who took over the lands of the African population.

Kalma’s attack comes more than a month after the International Criminal Court (ICC) prosecutor Luis Moreno-Ocampo announced in mid-July that he requested an arrest warrant for Al-Bashir.

Most of the Kalma camp residents are from the Fur tribe.

SLM-Unity responds positively to call for Ramadan truce

(Sudan Tribune) —The Sudan Liberation Movement –Unity Command issued a statement today saying that it would halt all its military operations in Darfur during the holy Ramadan which started today. However the rebel group warned that it would be in alert state to repel any attack by the government troops.

"On the occasion of the holy month of Ramadan, and in response to the appeal launched yesterday by Rodolphe Adada, Joint Special Representative and Chief of UNAMID, the SLM Unity decided to stop its military operations during this holy month" said Mahgoub Hussein the SLM –unity spokesperson.

"Provided that the government commits its self too," he added.

Yesterday, Adada appealed on the Sudanese government and rebel movements to "cease hostilities, put an end to the suffering of the Darfurians, and pave the way for a lasting peace in this beleaguered region.."

UNAMID protests officially over excessive use of force in Kalma

(Sudan Tribune) – Darfur peacekeeping hybrid mission today protested officially the excessive use of force against Kalma Internally Displaced People (IDP) last week.

The Joint Special Representative of the African Union – United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur, Rodolphe Adada, Monday officially expressed UNAMID's "grave concerns" on the excessive use of power after the killing of dozens of IDPs in Kalma camp on August 25.

In a meeting with the Under Secretary at the foreign affairs ministry, Mutrif Siddiq, the head of joint mission stressed on the need to involve the hybrid peacekeeping operation in such situation and in order to prevent "the repeat of similar incidents." Adada emphasized that UNAMID mandate includes the protection of civilians in the troubled region of Darfur.

The Sudanese authorities, on August 25, showed to the hybrid mission officials a permission to enter the 90000 people camp to search weapons. They only asked the peacekeepers to join them but didn't coordinate with the UNAMID as agreed between the two parties.

Saddiq expressed the regrets of Sudanese government over the huge death toll in Kalam where Children and women were shot dead. He also renewed the Sudan's commitment to facilitate the work of the humanitarian agencies in Darfur.

Sudan's first vice president meets Chinese special envoy

(Xinhua) Sudanese First Vice President Salva Kiir Mayardit met on Monday with visiting Chinese Assistant Foreign Minister Zhai Jun who was here as a special envoy of the Chinese government. During the meeting, the Chinese envoy conveyed greetings of Chinese President Hu Jintao and Vice President Xi Jinping to Salva Kiir, who is also the president of the government of South Sudan.

The two sides exchanged views on bilateral relations, the peace process between North and South Sudan, the Darfur issue, among others.

Following the meeting, the Chinese and Sudanese sides signed a document on financial assistance which the Chinese government would provide to the government of South Sudan.

Also on Monday, Zhai and Salva Kiir inaugurated a Chinese general consulate in Juba, the capital of South Sudan.

Sudan Suspends English-language paper - Managing Editor

(AFP)--Sudan's security forces have suspended a local English- language daily newspaper, the latest in a series of threats and restrictions against the press, its managing editor said Monday.

Izzadine Abdul Rassou said when he took *The Citizen*, a southern newspaper, to be printed Sunday, security forces said the daily was being suspended. "They say we have been suspended indefinitely," Abdul Rassou said. "What they are doing? They don't have a right to do that."

The newspaper, whose head office is in the semi-autonomous city of Juba, has to go to press in the capital Khartoum due to a lack of a printing press in the south. However, editors have complained that government authorities have tightened restrictions on local media in recent months, demanding that southern-based newspapers move their head office to Khartoum.

Abdul Rassou said the National Press Council had issued letters demanding *The Citizen's* chief editor be based in Khartoum. It follows similar moves last month against the Sudan Tribune newspaper, which had its copies seized 17 times in August by Sudanese security forces.

The interim constitution in Sudan, ushered in for the six-year implementation of a peace agreement that ended two decades of civil war between north and south, upholds freedom of the press and expression. But censorship is practiced daily. The powerful security apparatus inspects newspaper editions nightly, while editors who refuse to remove articles deemed offensive risk a ban on their publications.

South African soldier dies in Sudan

(Independent Online) A South African soldier has died in Sudan after apparently shooting himself, the Department of Defence said on Monday. Corporal Sydney Melvin Williams, 40, died on Thursday last week, the department said in a statement.

"A board of inquiry will be convened to determine the circumstances that led to his death."

Williams, from 10 SA Infantry Battalion in Mafikeng, was stationed at the Mellit Military Base in Sudan in support of the United Nations and African Union mission there.

"His body is still to be returned home to South Africa, and funeral arrangements will be announced once confirmed by his family," the statement said.

Sudan: Bashir's Victory Lap to South of Country

[The Monitor (Kampala) - 31 August 2008 – by Badru Mulumba]

His journey was billed as a routine visit, but with the International Criminal Court (ICC) likely indictments hanging over his head, Sudan President Omar al Bashir's trip to Southern Sudan was always going to be nebulous. As he often does on such visits - four of them since the peace agreement - Bashir came bearing goodies - power dams for southern Sudan - and addressed the Legislative Assembly.

But coming just over a month following ICC prosecutor ICC Prosecutor Luis Moreno-Ocampo's request to the judges in the Hague that he be indicted, Bashir's journey would always have commentators read it in the context of his government's diplomatic offensive against the ICC.

If he came with heightened security, perhaps higher than the last time he was here, then he was scared of the wide reach of the arm of the ICC. If he came with only a sprinkling of soldiers, as he did, and moved around with a lot more ease than last time, then he was confident in a territory that has shown little love for him.

If he signed the contracts for power dams, as he did, then he was buying the southern Sudan love, so as to effectively fight the ICC.

But Bashir's trip was never ICC induced. The visit has been talked about since May, when al Bashir was supposed to open the National Security Headquarters building in southern Sudan. Bashir instead, sent his vice President Ali Osman Taha.

And southern Sudan has long been sold on the need to suspend the indictments against al Bashir - not for Bashir's sake -- and, therefore, doesn't need Bashir to convince them.

"Our late hero Dr John [Garang] one time said a stranger going to collect a cup among pots in a dark room, will definitely break the pots," the Speaker of the Southern Sudan Parliament, James Wani Igga said before welcoming Bashir to address the legislators.

"But the owner of the room will know how to safely collect the cup without any damage to the pots however dark it may be."

To Igga, the dark room is the Comprehensive Peace Agreement that ended a 21-year civil war.

"Only those who made it, the two partners, know its value and delicacy," Igga said. "Many parties in the Sudan do not even care about it, leave alone protecting and implementing it. Perhaps, we should inform Mr Ocampo to consider and put peace first and foremost in the Sudan." Igga was following a script. The Sudan People Liberation Movement long interpreted the indictments as a danger to the peace agreement, and, therefore, there to be rejected.

The ICC wants al Bashir arrested for allegedly masterminding and implementing a plan to destroy Darfur African tribes after they rose up in arms against his regime.

The same day that Ocampo-Moreno issued his statement, south Sudan's ruling Party, in a statement, said the party was taken aback by the speed of the developments. "This has understandably created a serious situation that could threaten peace and stability in the Sudan," the Party said, according to a statement.

But Sudan's ex-rebels also say that the only way out is for the ruling National Congress Party to cooperate with the ICC.

The ex-rebels also suggested that Bashir's government develop within a week's time, a roadmap for resolution of the Darfur conflict, in consultation with all political forces and civil society groups. Bashir is yet to develop any such roadmap. In fact, Bashir has all but ignored the SPLM roadmap on Darfur with no signs of repercussions.

Still, Bashir's trip, coming after what even critics agree has been a wildly successful diplomatic offensive - thanks in large measure to other presidents too scared of the ICC reach -- had the aura of a victory lap. Right from the moment Bashir alighted the Presidential plane, he swaggered like a winner - not a man who was cutting and running.

And when addressing Parliament, he did not plead with anyone to support him fight off the ICC indictments, perhaps because that, in the south, is mission accomplished.

Little doubt that in his address to the Parliament, here, Bashir skirted talk of his likely indictment, at least not until when at a brief press conference on his way out, a journalist asked what could happen to Sudan in case warrants of arrest were issued. The indictments, he said, are of no consequence to Sudan.

Hamas denies reports that its chief moved from Syria to Sudan

GAZA, Sept. 2 (Xinhua) -- Palestinian Islamic Hamas movement on Tuesday denied some Arab media reports saying that the movement's Damascus-based politburo chief Khaled Mashaal had moved his bureau from Syria to Sudan.

"Such reports are inaccurate and untrue," senior Hamas leader in Gaza Ismail Radwan said in a written statement sent to reporters, adding that "the ties between Hamas and Syria are still very strong."

Earlier, the Kuwaiti newspaper al-Rai quoted well-informed Palestinian sources in Syria as saying that Mashaal has already moved his bureau and his home from Syria to Sudan.

According to the report, the sources told the Kuwaiti paper that "an undeclared agreement was reached between the Syrian authorities and Mashaal that the latter leaves the Syrian territories."

The sources, meanwhile, didn't rule out that the reason behind Mashaal's leaving is the ongoing progress that has been recently achieved in the Israeli-Syrian negotiations.

Mashaal of Hamas, as well as some leaders of the Islamic Jihad (Holy War) and other Palestinian left-wing factions have been based in Syria for several years after they were expelled from Lebanon and Jordan.

The sources expected that in case a peace treaty is reached between Syria and Israel in the future, the latter would ask from Syria to expel all the Palestinian factions from its territories.

"Our relationship with our Syrian brothers is a deep, strong and strategic relation," stressed Radwan.