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Media Monitoring Report

United Nations Mission In Sudan/ Public Information Office

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Highlights

Local Arabic and English Language Press

Abyei Administration to be announced early next week

Al-Sudani reported that Abyei deputy chief administrator Rahma Abdul Rahman Al-Nour confirmed that the formation of Abyei executive and legislative councils would be announced early next week.

Abyei chief administrator and his deputy were sworn in last Sunday.

North-South demarcation to start after autumn

Sudan Vision carried a report stating that the technical committee for demarcation of North-South 1/1/1956 border line has approved the report of the maps and documents subcommittee which focused on the legal aspects of the border report.

Chairman of the technical committee, Prof. Abdullah Al-Sadig, revealed that the committee has reached an important phase that would enable it to procure the legal facts under which North-South border has been demarcated during the past fifty years.

He further revealed that the committee has reviewed the work of the maps and documents committee which would form the basis for the border demarcation final report on paper while the demarcation process will start on the ground after the rainy season.

He said the technical committee's meeting discussed the visit undertaken by two members of the commission to Egypt to get hold of some maps which the committee considered helpful for the border demarcation process.

Foreign Minister to visit Netherlands, French Envoy in Khartoum

Al-Rai Al-Aam carried a report stating that the French President's advisor for African Affairs arrived in Khartoum yesterday as French Envoy. He met with Vice President Taha who appreciated France's concern with Sudanese affairs and its keenness to establish good relations with Sudan.

The French Envoy affirmed his country's keenness to establish good relations with Khartoum and to support Sudan's efforts to achieve peace and stability in Darfur.

Meanwhile, the Sudanese Foreign Minister Deng Alor will leave for the Netherlands today on 2-day official visit for talks on bilateral relations between the two countries, CPA, Darfur and ICC. He will also address the Dutch Parliament on 9th Sept on relations between the two countries.

Egypt rules out ICC decision against Bashir soon

Al-Sudani reported that Egyptian Ambassador to UN Magid Abdul Fatah has ruled out that ICC would take new decision against President Bashir before the UNGA meeting during the second half of September.

The Egyptian Ambassador held UN responsible for slow deployment of the hybrid troops in Darfur. He made the statements in an interview (published yesterday) for the Egyptian Al-Ahram newspaper.

SAF and Darfur movements agree to UNAMID call for truce in Ramadan

Al-Ayyam stated that SAF and Darfur movements welcomed the Ramadan ceasefire initiative launched by JSR Rodolphe Adada. SAF said it ceased fire since a long time but Darfur movements said they would ceasefire provided that SAF abides by the truce.

SAF spokesperson's office welcomed the call for the truce adding SAF would not attack the signatory or non-signatory movements unless they initiate an attack on SAF.

SLA-unity spokesperson Mahgoub Hussain has declared cessation of all military operations in Darfur during Ramadan in response to the call by UN-AU JSR.

Sulaiman Margan of the SLA (northern sector) said the call for truce was welcome provided the government abides by the ceasefire.

JEM's External Relations official Beshara Sulaiman has welcomed JSR's call for truce during Ramadan provided SAF remains committed.

However, the JEM official said UNAMID should have contacted the field commanders before launching initiatives in the media.

Darfur consultations on 17 October

Al-Ahdath stated that Sudanese and British governments were about to wrap up intensive consultations whereby Britain will host Darfur exploratory talks during the second half of October, tentatively on 17th October in London.

Reliable sources said invitations were extended to some Sudanese parties and Darfur movements' leaders in many capitols. The sources said the step was the outcome of intensive consultations conducted by global mediators in Khartoum, Kampala and Washington.

Rwanda threatens to withdraw troops from Darfur

Al-Ahdath reported that the Rwandan President threatened to withdraw his country's military contingent if legal proceedings were initiated against the Rwandan General K. Karak. "If the International Community continues charging Rwandan Army officers in general, I see no reason for continuity of Rwandan contingents in Darfur," the Rwandan President said.

The General is among 40 Rwandan military wanted for crimes perpetrated against civilian nationals and internationals.

"The charges against the General are intended to distort his image," the President said.

Start of demobilization of 2900 soldiers in Eastern Sudan

Al-Ahdath stated that the Northern Sudan DDR Commission began integrating 2900 of demobilized soldiers of the Eastern Front, SAF and PDF in eastern Sudan. The chairman of the Commission Sulaf Al-Din Saleh has apologized for the delay of integration in Eastern Sudan adding that the process was enjoying the support of the state's highest political levels. He also pointed out the contribution of UNDP towards the process.

Representative of the Defence Minister Maj. Gen. Abdul Karim Abdul Faraj said 76 projects have been provided for reintegration purposes and 500 additional projects would be provided to the demobilized soldiers during this month as well as 750 jobs.

Websites/International News Coverage

SPLA to cooperate fully with UN DDR program

The Governor of Unity State, Brig General Tabin Deng Gai has assured United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) that the SPLA will cooperate fully with UNMIS disarmament project through the UN DDR program. During a meeting held in Bentiu recently between UNMIS sector III leadership and the Unity State Governor, Governor Gai said he welcomed the disarmament of the SPLA in his State and that he was very happy to work with UNMIS.

As part of programs marking the forthcoming celebration of this year's International Peace day, Ms. Winnie Babihuga, Sector III head of office suggested that weapons already collected in Unity State, be openly destroyed with the Governor of Unity State leading the ceremony.

AU/UN joint mediator in Juba

(Miraya FM) The AU/UN Joint Mediator on Darfur Djibril Bassole has arrived in Juba on Tuesday to hold talks on Darfur peace process with the Government of South Sudan officials. Addressing the press after a meeting with Southern Sudan Darfur task force Mr. Bassole said that he has come "to share experience with South Sudan on Darfur before laying down strategies to commence peace negotiation in the region."

He said that true peace should be established in Darfur by the Sudanese themselves. The AU/UN Joint Mediator on Darfur pointed out that all kind of hostilities should cease in Darfur in order to allow humanitarian workers deliver aid and services to those in need.

Sudanese justice minister orders to investigate Kalma killing

(Sudan Tribune) — Sudanese government has formed today a commission to investigate the killing of around 37 displaced in Darfur largest camp last week.

Sudan's Justice Minister, Abdel-Basit Sabdrat on Tuesday ordered the formation of a commission of inquiry in the events of Kalma camp in South Darfur state. He appointed Senior Adviser Babiker Abdel-Latif as chairman of this panel.

The ministerial decree has granted to the commission the power to investigate and prosecute in accordance with the provisions of Article 20 of the Code of Criminal Procedure of 1991. According to the decree, the Committee will start work during the next two days, and will submit its findings to the Minister.

Different national and international bodies condemned the excessive use of force by the Sudanese troops against the civilians in Kalma camp on August 25, when they stormed the home of 90000 people. The EU urged the Sudanese government to probe this deadly intervention, and to "respect international humanitarian law and not interfere with UNAMID action."

Following the attack, the displaced said this fifth attack meant to dismantle the camp and force them to leave the area. But the government said that troops entered because of a persistent state of lawlessness in the camp and reports of huge arms shipments.

"Sudanese forces faced huge resistance with a large number of citizens blocking the entry of the forces with barricades. Civilians were brought into the streets as human shields," a government statement said.

The official statement said that seven civilians and five soldiers were hit without specifying if any were killed. However, a Sudanese rights organisation (SOAT) published today a list with the names of 37 people killed during the attack. SOAT underlined that government troops killed directly 33 people including 8 women and 8 children.

The UNAMID said last week that the death toll raised to 31 IDPs during last Monday attack. "30 of the victims were killed by gunshots while a woman fell to her death in a ditch, while attempting to flee the shooting," said a statement issued by the UNAMID on August 27. Among the killed displaced there were "7 children, 10 women, and 13 men, aged 11 to 60" the hybrid mission added.

Sudan probes Janjaweed leader indicted by ICC

(Sudan Tribune) – The Sudanese special prosecutor for Darfur war crimes Nimr Ibrahim Mohamed confirmed that he is investigating allegations against a militia leader indicted by the ICC last year.

The judges of the ICC issued arrest warrants in April 2007 for Ahmed Haroun, state minister for humanitarian affairs, and Kushayb in connection with Darfur war crimes.

"We are continuing our interrogation of Ali Kushayb who is accused of committing war crimes in the region" Mohamed said in a brief statement to reporters.

The Sudanese prosecutor said that all the cases he is reviewing are "old" ones including that of Kushayb. He also said his office is taking testimonies from a number of witnesses whose names were mentioned in the cases he is handling.

The Sudanese justice minister Abdel-Basit Sabdarat appointed the special prosecutor last month as part of legal means to deflect ICC jurisdiction over Darfur case.

The ICC Statute prevents investigation into crimes that were looked into by local judiciary under the concept of "complementarity". Khartoum must prosecute Haroun and Kushayb for the same accusations brought against them by the ICC in order for the latter to lose jurisdiction over their cases.

Sudanese officials have said in the past that they investigated both suspects and cleared them of any wrongdoings. Al-Bashir said that he will not allow further investigations with Haroun nor will he remove him from office. Kushayb was reportedly in custody and released later despite official denials at the outset.

China tells Sudan not to rely on its 'veto' for ICC move: report

(Sudan Tribune) – China told Sudan it should not rely on a veto to block a possible arrest warrant for president Omer Hassan Al-Bashir, according to a newspaper report.

The daily Al-Hayat newspaper quoted an unidentified Sudanese official as saying that the letter from the Chinese President Hu Jintao delivered yesterday by Assistant Foreign Minister Zhai Jun, advised Khartoum "to deal with the ICC".

The Chinese however promised to press European countries not to stand in the way of a UN

Security Council (UNSC) resolution suspending Al-Bashir's indictment, the official said.

Al-Hayat said that Beijing will conduct extensive dialogue with the French government in light of proposals made by the latter last month to defuse the ICC row which included handing over two Darfur war crimes suspects to The Hague based court.

However Sudan rejected the French initiative despite recommendation by its foreign minister Deng Alor to accept it. "In my assessment, these proposals are good" he said. Alor also pointed out that to end the crisis; the government needs to provide certain things and they submitted specific ideas about that.

Sudanese officials expressed confidence lately that China and Russia will use their veto power to freeze Al-Bashir arrest warrant. Yesterday the headline news of the Al-Rae'd daily newspaper, issued by the ruling National Congress Party (NCP), came under "Chinese veto awaits Ocampo".

Hamas denies political chief Meshaal quit Syria for Sudan

(AFP) - The Palestinian Islamist movement Hamas on Tuesday denied that its political supremo Khaled Meshaal had moved from his self-imposed exile in Syria to Sudan.

"The movement totally denies media reports saying that Khaled Meshaal has left Syria for Sudan," a Hamas official said in a statement received by AFP. "These reports are false."

Meshaal visited Sudan in early August to express solidarity with President Omar al-Beshir after the chief prosecutor of the International Criminal Court requested an arrest warrant for the Sudanese leader over alleged war crimes. However, Hamas said Meshaal had since returned to Damascus.

The Kuwaiti newspaper Al-Rai on Tuesday, quoting unnamed Palestinian sources, said Meshaal had "moved to Sudan from Syria" allegedly because of the relaunch of indirect peace talks between Syria and Israel. According to the report, which was picked up by Israeli media, there was "an undeclared agreement between Syrian authorities and Meshaal stipulating that the latter should leave Syrian territory."

Al-Rai said its sources "did not rule out" that Meshaal's alleged departure from Syria was linked to "progress" in the Turkish-mediated talks between Syria and Israel.

The two countries announced in May they had resumed indirect peace talks after an eight-year freeze. Four rounds of talks have taken place so far and a fifth is due soon, according to Israeli public radio.

In Khartoum, Mahgoub Fadl, a spokesman for Beshir, said there was "no information" about reports suggesting that Meshaal had moved to Sudan. Meshaal settled in Damascus after being expelled from Jordan in 1999 amid accusations that Hamas was threatening the kingdom's security and stability.

Returning Sudan refugees find little left

(UPI) -- Refugees returning to southern Sudan in the wake of the 2005 peace deal between Khartoum and regional rebels are in desperate shape, humanitarian workers say.

While the long civil war pitting the Muslim Sudanese government against the mainly Christian and animist rebels of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement officially ended three years ago, large groups of refugees are only now coming back into Sudan and have found little is left to

reclaim, the Danish group DanChurchAid said in a statement Tuesday.

"Thousands of refugees are now returning home and the need for schools, roads and health clinics is huge, but the only things left by the war are landmines and destroyed buildings," the Danish non-profit organization said in a statement.

The group said weapons are still present everywhere and that the peace settlement is shaky. Some 250,000 refugees have returned to southern Sudan, while thousands more living in Kenyan refugee camps are awaiting for their chance to return.

South Sudan's 'Cuban' Diaspora brings life back to Juba

(IPS): Bona Bol's ambitions are even bigger than his 193-centimeter frame. Together with his partner Majok Wek, he has already started a company importing goods into war-devastated Southern Sudan. Bol and Wek break into Spanish from time to time while they confer during the interview, a habit they share with the other 91 "Cubans" Bol reckons have returned to the south already. They have already imported cars, food and building materials and are hoping to raise funds to buy a plane, and become the first south Sudanese to compete in the skies against an emerging market of charter-aircraft dominated by Kenyans and Ugandans.

Twenty years ago, Bol and Wek were two of 600 children sent to Cuba for an education during the bloody decades of Sudan's north-south conflict. Many of the children were already members of the southern rebel army when they walked across the south's swamps and vast plains and then crossed the border into Ethiopia. They were then flown or shipped halfway around the world to Cuba's Isla de la Juventud.

Described by outsiders as a close-knit group, they frequently dance salsa together at a night club in the south's dusty capital, Juba. "La Habana" was started by a handful of their number, named in tribute to their shared Caribbean childhood.

Martha Martin Dar, who trained as a doctor in Cuba and now works in Juba Teaching Hospital, clearly remembers the island's warm colors and the smell of fruit heavy on the humid air. When not in class, the children worked on plantations and sometimes camped on beaches at weekends. They slept together in dormitories at a school dedicated to the southerners. They were told their education - a gift from Fidel Castro - was to be crucial in the fight against northern marginalization.

In the good years, the best two students each year were awarded a trip to Ethiopia. They would return with photographs and letters from their - and sometimes other children's - families.

The sense of purpose endured. "We were not forced to leave, we were sent on a mission and it is not completed," said, Daniel Madit, one of 15 Cuban-trained doctors now back in the south.

By the time Madit and his fellow doctors graduated, the Soviet Union had collapsed and Cuba's economy was in trouble. But they could not go home as the south's insurgency raged on. Worse, the southern rebel movement split along ethnic lines in 1991, leading to thousands of deaths in a particularly bloody internal conflict. Communication with home dwindled.

Madit remember those days in Cuba. "Food became more difficult ... it was difficult for a good five years," he said.

For the first time, Cuba asked UNHCR to register the Sudanese as refugees to allow them to apply for residency in other host countries. The organization did and Canada gave around half

of them a new home. Because their Cuban degrees did not meet Canadian medical requirements, Madit worked in a meat-packing factory, while Dar worked in a bank.

When he heard about the peace deal, Madit approached the Christian Samaritans Purse organization, which was already working in the south and desperately looking for trained medical staff. "They were amazed when they found there were 15 of us," he said. After refresher training in Canada and then in Kenya, the doctors were finally brought back home, to begin their work.

A lack of facilities and medicines means the work is frustrating. But there are moments of great satisfaction, Madit says. He is certainly making his mark: four babies have already been named "Dr. Daniel" after Madit assisted their mothers in giving birth.

Being back is good, Dar says. She feels, deeply, that it is the right thing for her to be doing. She recalled her first impressions of south Sudan's best hospital in Juba. "There was a lack of everything, five or six children in a bed. People were on the floor," she said. South Sudan has some of the world's worst health statistics, and the 15 doctors have been eagerly sucked into the threadbare health care system that officials estimate only reaches 25 percent of the population. The south has the world's worst maternal mortality rate and over 13 percent of children die before their fifth birthday.

The very slow return of south Sudan's Diaspora - there are hundreds of thousands of southerners in America, Canada, Australia and the United Kingdom - has been disappointing to many who were counting on a post-peace influx of skills and cash.

However, those overseas have mortgages to pay and families to feed and no one is certain that the fragile peace deal will hold.

Getting Darfur all wrong – Op-Ed (Montreal Gazette)
(Montreal Gazette). [Op-Ed]. Justin Marozzi 09/02/2008.

Amid all the celebrity angst, "the level of misinformation about Darfur in 2008 is little short of extraordinary"

It wasn't the gleaming black helicopter parked on Second Avenue that raised eyebrows. New Yorkers barely blink at such a routine form of transport. No, passersby were more taken by the improbable banner hanging from its tail: "SEND ME TO DARFUR."

Last month's publicity stunt in Manhattan, in which a Robinson R44 helicopter was symbolically presented to the United Nations, was organized by the Save Darfur Coalition, the organization that has done more than any other to keep the issue of Darfur alive. The event marked the first anniversary of UN Security Council resolution 1769, which created the joint UN-African Union peacekeeping mission Unamid, and coincided with a report revealing how the international community has betrayed it by failing to provide the manpower and materiel it needs.

The Darfur lobby has heavyweight support. Archbishop Desmond Tutu, former U.S. president Jimmy Carter and Graca Machel, among others, have all supported this latest report, endorsed by more than 30 human rights groups, think tanks and NGOs, including the ubiquitous Save Darfur Coalition.

George Clooney, the most bankable Hollywood star of his generation, is also big on Darfur. "Many governments have offered expressions of concern, but few have offered the most basic

tools necessary to keep civilians safe and for peacekeepers to do their job," he says. "It is time for governments to put their helicopters where their mouths are."

He's quite right. UNAMID needs helicopters, not to mention another 16,000 peacekeepers. The failure of the international community to live up to its promises is shameful. The problem is, Darfur has become an emotive campaign in which awkward truths -- not least that the genocide is over -- have become hostage to a more superficially exciting story.

There are few causes more hip than Darfur these days. Darfur is to the Noughties what HIV was to the Eighties and rainforests were to the Nineties. Inevitably, Hollywood is in on the act, adding its inimitable melange of glamour, outrage and oversimplification.

Earlier this year, Steven Spielberg, having warned the Chinese president of his concern over the government of Sudan's policy in Darfur "which is best described as genocide," withdrew as an artistic adviser to the Beijing Olympics. Apart from Clooney, other stars such as Brad Pitt, Angelina Jolie, Matt Damon, Bono and Mia Farrow have all made commendable efforts to draw the world's attention to Darfur, publicizing a stark and heart-rending narrative. The problem is, the narrative they are peddling is five years old. The conflict has moved on.

The mass slaughter took place in 2003-2004, when the conflict was superficially explained as Arab nomad versus black African farmer, a fight for land and water. This was when we first heard about the Janjaweed, the government-supported assassins on horseback responsible for the killings, burnings and rapes. The UN has estimated that 300,000 Darfurians may have died as a result of the conflict. Khartoum claims an implausible 10,000.

The relative simplicity of those days has long gone. In 2006, there were two main rebel movements sitting at the negotiating table in Abuja: the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) and the Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM). Today, in a development wearily familiar to Monty Python fans (think all-out fight between the People's Front of Judea, the Judean People's Front, the Judean Popular People's Front and the Romans), they have split into as many as 30.

Take your pick from SLM-Minni, SLM-Unity, SLM-Mother, SLM-Free Will, SLM-Peace, the United Revolutionary Front, JEM, JEM-Peace, JEM-Unity, to name only the better known. Apart from government versus rebels, the conflict now pits Arab versus Arab, African versus African, rebel versus rebel, bandits versus civilians and aid workers, Janjaweed versus peacekeepers, Sudan versus Chad. In short, the rebels have become a major part of the problem, but Hollywood and the Darfur lobby don't seem to have caught on. Their story is a lot simpler: nasty government versus good-guy rebels.

Given that we live in an age when information has never been so readily and widely available, the level of misinformation about Darfur in 2008 is little short of extraordinary. When I met the correspondent of a highly respected U.S. newspaper during a three-month stint in Khartoum and Darfur this summer, I was amazed when he told me his editor had asked him blithely to "Give us an update on how the genocide is going."

The Save Darfur Coalition homepage includes a button asking "Is your mutual fund funding genocide?" The question is posed by Divest for Darfur, a campaign targeting "companies that help fund genocide in Darfur". No one appears to have told any of these people that the genocide is over. What remains is a highly complicated, extremely brutal, low-intensity civil war.

It is arguable that rather than help end this hideous conflict, groups like the Save Darfur Coalition and GenocideInDarfur.net ("Learn How YOU Can STOP the Violence Complete Anti-

Genocide Directory") have unwittingly helped prolong it.

The exclusive focus on bashing the government has emboldened the rebels, encouraging them to keep up the fight and shun the negotiating table. The peace process, as a result, has collapsed.

Though uncontroversial among seasoned Sudan watchers, such a view is politically incorrect in the West, where the debate has been held in the shadows of a glossy campaign long on sentiment and outrage, short on measured analysis. As Julie Flint, co-author of *Darfur: A New History of a Long War*, writes on the excellent blog *Making Sense of Darfur*, "In the current hyper-moralized debate over Sudan, anyone who questions Sudan's critics risks being called an apologist for Khartoum."

You don't have to be a fan of Khartoum to ask whether Hollywood has got it wrong. Personally, I think the government of President Omar al Bashir stinks. I watched a Sudanese official from the infamous Humanitarian Aid Commission (HAC) respond to charges that rape has been used as official policy by saying that rape was a Western concept.

HAC falls under the brief of Ahmed Harun, minister of state for humanitarian affairs. Last year, the International Criminal Court (ICC) issued an arrest warrant for Harun on 42 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity.

In June, I listened to the straight-faced governor of North Darfur tell a visiting Security Council delegation to Al Fasher that the humanitarian situation was "very stable." Never mind about the additional 150,000 refugees created in the first four months of 2008. Forget the World Food Program having to cut by 50 per cent its food distribution to refugees because of the deteriorating security situation. It was all a Western conspiracy against Sudan.

Although the Darfur lobby has run one of the slickest media campaigns of modern times, there is a chance, however slim, that the ICC prosecutor's move this summer to indict the Sudanese president for war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide will succeed where several years of Hollywood-led advocacy has failed. Reports from Khartoum indicate that with his back to the wall, the president may throw himself into finding a solution to this intractable conflict to stave off a full-blown indictment. Weirdly, against all the odds, it may yet be Bashir, the would-be war criminal, who brings peace to Darfur.

Incidentally, the Robinson R44 helicopter would be completely useless in Darfur. UNAMID needs gunships, not four-seater civilian runarounds. But why let the facts spoil a good Hollywood drama?

JUSTIN MAROZZI, the Spectator