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Highlights

Local Arabic and English Language Press

AU opposes Bashir indictment – delegation to visit Sudan

Local dailies report AU Foreign Ministers have drafted a resolution to be submitted to the AU summit meeting tomorrow in Addis to reject the ICC indictment of President Bashir. “I reiterate our rejection to the ICC proceedings,” Tanzanian Foreign Minister Bernard Membi told journalists yesterday.

Associated Press reported that the AU urged the ICC Friday to suspend indictment of Sudan's president on genocide charges, saying it could jeopardize the peace process in Darfur.

OneWorld.net reports that AU Commission Chairperson Jean Ping, opening the 14th ordinary session of the executive council in Addis Thursday, said, the AU had requested the UN Security Council to suspend the ICC indictment.

Meanwhile, President Bashir yesterday met with his Senegalese counterpart Abdullah Waad on the sidelines of NEPAD. Foreign Minister Deng Alor said the meeting focused on Darfur and the ICC.

According to a **SUNA** report, President Al-Bashir met with the Libyan leader, Mu'ammar Al-Qadhafi, and with AU Commission Chairman Ping shortly after arriving in Addis yesterday.

In a related development, Sudan Deputy Ambassador in Ethiopia Akoi Bona Malwal said an AU delegation headed by former South African President Thabo Mbeki is to visit Sudan early February to assess the competence of the Sudanese Judiciary.

NCP, SPLM in one boat – Bashir

Al-Rai Al-Aam (30/1/09) reported that President Bashir reiterated rejection of dealing with the ICC. He told the London-based **Al-Sharq Al-Awsat** that he commands “unprecedented popular support” and that the NCP and SPLM are “sailing in one boat” and are committed to a peaceful transfer of power.

Partners to Darfur to meet in Doha next week

Local dailies report UN-AU mediator Bassole has proposed to the Presidential Assistant Nafie Ali Nafie that parties to the Darfur issue should meet in Doha in the second week of February.

Elections to be held this year – Commission Chairman

Al-Sahafa (30/1/09) reported that the Elections Commission had urged the political forces to assist it in ensuring rigging-free elections. While the Elections Commission Chairman Abel Alyeur told the paper that elections would be held this year, the Commission Deputy Chairman Abdullah Ahmed Abdullah said preparing an electoral roll depends on results of the census and border demarcation. Abdullah said the international community intends to monitor the elections and so did not rule out interference in the elections process.

90% of southerners for an independent state – Pagan Amum

Ajras Al-Hurriah reports SPLM SG Pagan Amum as saying that rumours about possible Southern Sudan secession before the 2011 referendum "intend to derail the CPA". He stressed the need for guaranteeing freedom for both secessionists and unionists in the south to speak their minds. All indications were that if a referendum were conducted now, 90% of southerners would prefer independence, he said.

HAC to inspect NGOs

Al-Sudani reports NCP official Qutbi Al-Mahdi accused some INGOs operating in Darfur of promoting their own agenda to sustain the impression of a crisis in the region. He claimed that the INGOs in question were being funded from unnamed foreign intelligence sources. Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs report stated that HAC is to launch a campaign to ensure INGOs compliance with the Humanitarian and Voluntary Work Law of 2006.

MFA urges US to engage in serious dialogue

Akhbar Al You reports MFA has called on the Obama Administration to engage in serious dialogue with Sudan on the Darfur situation. Reacting to the statement on ICC by the new US Ambassador to the UN Susan Rice, describing the court as a reliable and transparent tool to apprehend perpetrators of war crimes in Darfur, Congo and Uganda, the MFA Spokesperson Ali Al-Sadiq said: "Why doesn't Washington sign the Statute to become part of the ICC?" He accused the US of "political hypocrisy and double standards". He also categorically denied Rice's claim that the government was bombing civilians. However, he welcomed the new Administration's overall statement on a wide range of regional and international issues as indicating the possibility of a more positive approach to a serious dialogue with Sudan.

NCP welcomes election of Somali President

Al-Raed reports NCP official Taha Awad Mohamed as saying that the NCP "welcomes the constitutional legitimacy and the free and fair elections through which the Somali President Sheikh Sherif is elected".

SAF spokesman on governance and regime change

Akhbar Al-Youm (29/1/09) carries a by-lined item by SAF Spokesman Lt-Col Sawarmi Khalid Sa'ad saying that the Darfur rebellion is the most dangerous threat to any anticipated (constitutional) change. If conditions do not stabilize, "it would be quite dangerous to conduct the process of presidential or governmental transition, meaning that it might be impossible to turn over power to a new authority", he wrote. "If the elected government is going to struggle with armed rebellions, it will not have an achievement in the sense of development. If it makes an achievement, this will only be in quelling the armed rebellions. This in itself would be semi-impossible for a new government. The rebellion in Darfur is considered a danger to the future of governance of Sudan. Quelling armed rebellions has priority over any change in ruling regimes."

Websites/International News Coverage

SPLM says CPA will not be impacted by Bashir arrest warrant

Sudan Tribune website 31/1/09 SPLM has called on the NCP to "act with calm" if the ICC issues an arrest warrant for President Omer Hassan Al-Bashir.

SPLM secretary general Pagan Amum told reporters: "I don't think an indictment or anything else can prevent or obstruct implementation of the CPA"

Amum called on the NCP to cooperate with the ICC on a legal basis and "avoid confrontation with the international community" to preserve the country "from collapse and dangers".

Some observers in Khartoum told **Sudan Tribune** that Amum's remarks imply a division within the SPLM leadership on the ICC, suggesting that Salva Kiir wants SPLM to support the NCP.

Amum said any "reckless" reaction would "make things worst" and could put the Sudan on the path of Somalia and the former Yugoslavia. He also warned the NCP not to use the ICC confrontation as an excuse to crack down on political freedoms.

He denied any plans that SPLM had to announce a unilateral independence should Bashir be officially charged the ICC.

Sudan flashpoint oil town starved of funding

Reuters, 31/1/09, Juba -- Senior south Sudanese politicians on Saturday accused government officials of withholding funding from the country's contested oil town of Abyei, stoking tensions and raising the risk of new violence.

GoSS Minister for Presidential Affairs Luka Biong told **Reuters** that a \$126 million fund to establish the Abyei administration and rebuild the town had been passed by Sudan's national parliament and agreed by Sudan's President Omar Hassan al-Bashir but that the transfer of cash had been blocked by Khartoum's Finance Ministry. Meantime, Pagan Amum, SPLM secretary general, told reporters he plans to bring up the funding shortfall during meetings with northern officials next week. The leader of the new Abyei administration, Arop Moyak, said some key members of staff were considering leaving their jobs after receiving no pay. "There are no services. People are getting fed up," he added.

Sudan expels U.S. INGO over bibles

KHARTOUM (**Reuters**) - A US aid group has been thrown out of Sudan's Darfur region after officials found 3,400 Arabic-language bibles stacked in its office, state media reported on Saturday.

Sudanese authorities told they had decided to expel the Texas-based INGO "for its violation to the Voluntary Work Act, the Country Agreement and the regulations on registration of organizations in Sudan."

Russian envoy notes progress, calls for Darfur conference

ITAR-TASS reported that an international conference on Darfur and Southern Sudan might be held in Moscow this autumn according to the Russian special envoy to Sudan Mikhail Margelov after meetings in Khartoum with President al-Bashir and other senior officials. "The West cannot and must not have a monopoly on discussing the problems of Sudan. The involvement of Russia and China - two permanent members of the UN Security Council - in the discussion of these problems is a guarantee of objectivity and impartiality in the Sudan case," Margelov told **ITAR-TASS**.

Margelov also said he had discussed Sudan's relations with the ICC in his meeting with President Al-Bashir. Moreover, his trips to Darfur and Juba had shown there had been positive changes since his previous visit two years ago.

South's second largest party opens office in Yambio

Sudan Tribune website reported that South Sudan Democratic Forum (SSDF) had officially

opened its office in Yambio, Western Equatoria State under the chairmanship of Hon Mary Roman Yaya. At the opening ceremony, SPLM's State Deputy Secretary of Planning, Monoko Leone, noted that "the new policy is NO office NO representative will be in the parliament." Leone also said that it would be "a mistake in the upcoming referendum to vote for the unity of one country Hon Mary Romano Yata stressed that SSDF was "for the separation of the Sudan" and that the party planned "to explain the CPA and enable (the people) to make a right decision by separating from the north."

Western offer less than expected

SMC reports MFA Spokesman Ali Al Sadig said "Although Sudan has accepted the appointment by many countries of special envoys to help resolve Darfur dispute, their contribution, particularly those from western countries, is far less than expected."

Joint UN/AU mediator for Darfur calls for end to renewed clashes

UN News Centre, 29 January - The UN/AU joint chief mediator for the peace process in Darfur today expressed grave concern over renewed combat in the southern part of the vast region, saying it undermines hopes for a peaceful settlement of the conflict. "The escalation of violence violates the spirit of the Humanitarian Ceasefire Agreement on the Conflict in Darfur of 2004 and constitutes a breach of various Security Council resolutions," Djibril Bassolé said in a statement. He called on the parties to cease fighting to minimize civilian suffering and create "a conducive environment for a political dialogue."

Condemning the renewed attacks, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has called on all parties in Darfur to commit to an immediate and unconditional cessation of hostilities and to intensify efforts to come to a comprehensive political agreement with the assistance of Mr. Bassolé.

Sudanese men arrested over adultery charge

Sudan Tribune website, 30/1/09 -- Two truck drivers of the Khartoum-based Eyat Company have been arrested for committing adultery during midnight with women alleged to be married. According to a police officer, Captain Meddy Magido, "a mob of young energetic men stormed the playing ground of Nakpangau [Western Equatoria State, southern Sudan] Primary school with sticks and batons in their hands in pursuit of the two ladies involved in the adultery."

Magido stated that, "It was past midnight, that the two young looking drivers by the names of Abdullah I. and Hassan M., found their way into the honey pot of the two unidentified girls whose names were not disclosed to PNU, as they told their lovers that they were not married neither one was a virgin nor a house wife, but they are for business like (prostitution)."

Local observers say, these two drivers, after starving in the wilderness in northern Sudan for decades, got the golden chance and made their way with these two unidentified lovers to the base where they made themselves comfortable.

Speaking at the door in front of Yambio police maximum security prison, the adulterers confessed that they had taken two women to their transit camp base, after the women had told the drivers they were not married.

"We slept till midnight and they took off. After a while, we suddenly heard noise, quarrels and a fight broke into our quarters; we were attacked, beaten and arrested," said Abdullah.

Consequently, these men did not fulfill their duties to their expectation due to the heavy fighting which broke among the drivers and men believed to be close to the family of the virgin and the married woman, the women were shortly rescued to their home. On a sad note, one of these

was a virgin aged 15 years old and the other a married woman.

Abdullah however disclosed that, "this is the first of its kind in my life for such a terrible misery to happen to me."

"I am terrified but I pray that, if released, I will stay away from ladies within," he said. He warned his fellow colleagues in the company "to take precaution on what has happened to us and let this serve as the first and last example to all of them."

Capt. Meddy stressed that, "with immediate effect after the trials of the two drivers and their prostitute ladies, the company should with no delay transfer to their destination in Diabio in order to leave the minds of the residents free about their women."

He added that, "the presence of these drivers in the area has caused chaos to some families."

Therefore he encouraged the local authority in charge of security in conjunction with the police forces to ensure that these drivers are transferred or else the residents will strike and harm the drivers.

Eyat Company is a northern Sudanese company; it is being contracted by GOSS and funded by USAID to construct the trunk road from Diabio to Tambura County.

With the economic crisis hitting the world over, sex workers in Yambio are taking advantage of foreigners to make dollars and Sudanese pounds, as similar behaviors occurred when CIVICOM Company started road construction in Nzara.

Commentaries/Links

Southern Sudan is witnessing the benefits of peace

The Guardian, Commentary by Khalid Al Mubarak, 29/1/09 -- Ros Wynne-Jones claims that "since 2004, a western state of Sudan, Darfur, has instead come to be synonymous with genocide" (Where Darfur is a sideshow, 26 January). This is biased and unfair. It is commonly accepted now that the previous US administration used the word "genocide" in order to placate the Christian right before the 2004 presidential elections. The word has not been used by the UN, the African Union or any major human rights organization. Indeed, Hillary Clinton avoided the word during her confirmation hearing this month.

Wynne-Jones gives the impression of an impending catastrophe, and paints a very pessimistic image of the implementation of the 2005 CPA. But her ideas are not shared by the independent Assessment and Evaluation Commission that is tasked with monitoring CPA implementation. Its chairman, Tom Vraalsen, said in October 2007: "Significant progress has been achieved by the parties in implementation of CPA since 2005, through inter alia, the adoption of the Interim National Constitution and the Interim Constitution of Southern Sudan ... as well as the general compliance with the ceasefire."

And what is Wynne-Jones talking about when she concludes that "the international community has the power to bring the SPLA in the south and the government in the north back to the negotiating table"? The SPLA rules the south through the government of southern Sudan, which was formed in 2005 as a result of the CPA. The president of this interim government, Salva Kiir, is the first vice-president of the national unity government.

Wynne-Jones focuses on Abyei, a "charred town" which is "at the centre of new sectarian

violence". Yes, Abyei has witnessed clashes between SPLA and government soldiers more than once in the last three years; it is oil rich and many fear that it could become a spark for a new war. But the two parties to the CPA (which has since been endorsed by most opposition parties) have now agreed on arbitration to solve the unrest in the region - both Sudan's President Bashir and President Kiir have declared that war is out of the question - so Wynne-Jones's fears seem exaggerated.

Wynne-Jones supports the ICC prosecutor's accusations against Bashir. In the same breath, she warns against the failure of the CPA. This is ironic because President Bashir made both the CPA and the Darfur Peace Agreement possible. Undermining his position is a direct threat to the treaties, and those who ostensibly worry about peace in Sudan should be aware of this.

This is the faultline at the core of the current campaign in the west to demonise Sudan and perpetuate anti-Arab and Islamophobic propaganda.

Wynne-Jones writes about her visits to the south during the civil war. I have been there after peace was restored and have seen the efforts to resettle millions of returnees, and to rebuild and move on towards the elections later this year and the 2011 referendum. Sudan needs support - not sanctions, which will only destabilize it.

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Alex De Waal's unconditional support for Article 16

Sudan Tribune, Commentary by El-Tahir Adam El-Faki, 29/1/09 -- While the international community is bracing for a decision by the judges of the International Criminal Court (ICC) against Sudanese President Omar Hassan Al-Bashir, Alex De Waal of the New York-based Social Science Research Council wrote on his Blog 'Making Sense of Darfur' saying: 'My proposal is that the UN Security Council should invoke Article 16 without condition'.

I thought by now Alex De Waal has enough experience to merit the title; 'Expert on Sudanese Affairs '. Instead he has chosen to demonstrate once again - to me at least - in this thesis to remain 'A- so-called Sudan's Expert'. The failed DPA that was part of his enchanted mastery led to more misery for Darfuris. Yet De Waal continued to support it until almost all of its architects accepted its failure and finally ditched it. Now he comes up with a thesis that calls for unconditional deferral of the arrest warrant against Bashir. He has based his argument on assumed reactions by the NCP to derail the CPA and on holes in the case presented by Luis Moreno Ocampo to the Pre-Trial Judges at The Hague. Let us look at those assumptions in more details.

Firstly we agree that the atmosphere in the capital Khartoum is tense and littered with rumors and counter-rumors about the ICC. It doesn't take much to realize that the tension has been carefully orchestrated by the NCP supporters to create feelings of impending unrests and disasters if the ICC goes ahead with the arrest warrant. All the statements against the ICC were brought about by senior leaders of the NCP, mainly Dr. Nafi Ali Nafi and Salah Gosh the chief of Intelligence and Security Forces. The silent Sudanese majorities struggling for their daily living and seeing the lavish life styles of NCP members are in no mood to support Bashir. The marginalized people in Darfur, Kordofan, the South, Blue Nile and the East and within Khartoum itself are more than happy to see him in the dock and pay for the evils he committed in Darfur and the miseries they are in.

Secondly if we argue that ambassadors and diplomats will face a legal challenge to engage with an indicted head of state, we fail to comprehend that national interests of individual countries

can not fall hostage to a single country such as Sudan. The democratic Western countries are in no mood to make the mistake and support a tyrant like Al Bashir who contradicts their values. It is up to the Sudanese people to decide how they want to deal with him if they chose to be part of the international community.

Thirdly the NCP is in real dilemma and risks losing 20 years of its rule continue to haunt it. It knows for sure that the CPA has given it new life, legitimacy and engagement with the international community. It will not be in its favor to endanger it and lose everything. It is therefore not in its interest to derail the CPA and open a new front against international community and the SPLM. It has already lost Darfuris who used to be its manpower for military support. Furthermore the mounting recent military successes of the JEM in Darfur against SAF and positioning itself in areas it can defend will certainly weaken the NCP's power to scrap the CPA. There are smart persons within the NCP hierarchy whose lines of thought are in the national interests and the future of the party. What they publicly say in support of Al-Bashir does not reflect their real intentions and views behind the scenes. They know for sure of the impending disaster that awaits the country and the party if they failed to cooperate with ICC.

Fourthly Alex implied that the survival of the CPA is dependent on the existence of the NCP in power. The untimely death of Dr. John Garang did not derail it and nor would the arrest warrant or the removal of Bashir from power would succeed to tear it apart. However, if the CPA is fatally traumatized by the arrest warrant then there must be serious problems with its security provisions at the start. In that context, the CPA will defeat the arguments for the democratic transformation that De Waal is calling for. The real threat to the success of the CPA is in fact the continuation of Al-Bashir in power and not vice versa. CPA was meant for creation of a new Sudan reliant on providing tangible measures which would make unity attractive. NCP has proven so far that such measures are way down in its agendas. The high tensions which have befallen Sudan are the creations of the NCP. They do not reflect images of the Sudanese societies outside Khartoum. De Waal should remember the last few days and hours of President Nimeiry's regime. Millions who claimed to rally in his support melted away as soon as the oppositions took to the streets in Khartoum leaving Nimeiry to face his demise. The same people who are forced to stage anti- ICC demonstrations will be the first to celebrate the indictment in jubilation.

Fifthly De Waal knows very well that the coming elections will not be different from previous ones. In those elections, the results were always known and celebrated well in advance and distribution of power rather than its transference always took place prior to elections. Article 16 and deferral of Al-Bashir's arrest warrant will not pave the way for fair elections. It would rather entice NCP further to ensure Al-Bashir rolls the election results and win.

Let us assume that the elections took place and the NCP lost; what would the reactions of the winning party be relative to the CPA? And assume once again that SPLM won the elections and the arrest warrant is pending. Would the SPLM face the international community and refuse to hand him over to The Hague and risk internal and external support? Furthermore if ICC warrant is nullified and all capitulated to the demands of the NCP what are the guarantees on the table to assure honoring of the CPA when there are so many potential issues under the bridge to derail it? Article 16 will not be an answer but its revoke is the practical option.

Calling for unconditional deferral of the arrest warrant is not only an insult to the millions of victims whose sole demand is justice but equally to those who seek to implement the CPA. Deferring the indictment would certainly create an atmosphere of uncertainty that would play into the hands of radicals seeking justice with possible escalation of events and further humanitarian disasters not only in Darfur but possible in the center as well. De Waal's perception of the chaos the ICC will throw Sudan into is shaped by his own failed experience

with the DPA. Our own view is that justice, at least when sought will work even where the NCP response is unpredictable.

To conclude Alex failed to differentiate between the moral values of the ICC and what he thought might be some of its possible absurdities and accordingly concentrated on the latter and based his thesis on the anticipated difficulties that may complicate the political and security future for the survival of the CPA. His inclination, it seems is to do nothing but to focus on the CPA and look backward in isolation of justice as opposed to looking forwards to what will happen to the victims in Darfur.

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