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(By Public Information Office)

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UN/ Agencies

Ban Ki-moon to appoint new UN envoy for Chad, Central African Republic (UN)

28 January 2008 – Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has informed the Security Council of his intention to appoint Victor Da Silva Angelo of Portugal as his Special Representative for the new United Nations peacekeeping mission to Chad and Central African Republic (CAR).

The mission, known as **MINURCAT**, was established by the Council last September to help protect civilians and facilitate humanitarian aid to thousands of people uprooted due to insecurity in the two countries and neighbouring Sudan.

It is a multidimensional operation including European Union military forces and comprising 300 police and 50 military liaison officers, as well as civilian staff, focusing on the areas of civil affairs, human rights and the rule of law.

Mr. Angelo has served since 2005 as the Secretary-General's Executive Representative for Sierra Leone, as well as Resident Coordinator of the UN system there. Prior to that, he was UN Humanitarian and Resident Coordinator in Zimbabwe.

His career with the world body also included positions with the UN Development Programme (**UNDP**) in East Timor, New York, Tanzania, the Gambia and the CAR. He also served as UN Population Fund (**UNFPA**) Representative in Mozambique and UN Adviser in Sao Tome and Principe.

Prior to joining the UN, Mr. Angelo worked as University Lecturer and Senior Statistician in the Portuguese National Institute of Statistics, and was a member of the Electoral Commission of Portugal.

Kiir, UN Chief meet over CPA (The Citizen)

FVP Salva Kiir and the UNSG for Peacekeeping Operations yesterday discussed ways how the world body could give a push to the CPA.

“We know this is the fundamental agreement for peace in the Sudan”, said Jean Marie Guehenno who was appointed by Secretary General Kofi Annan in 2000, following the meeting with Kiir.

He said his presence in Juba demonstrated the long commitment of the UN to support the volatile CPA. But the UNUSG said the implementation of the agreement was not the end of the road because border tensions escalated in the past few weeks following Miseriya attacks on Northern Bahr al Ghazal State.

He said the UN has seen the importance of addressing the issue in a peaceful manner. He added that he was encouraged by President of southern Sudan Gen Salva Kiir of his keenness to maintain SPLM commitment to the CPA.

“There is an extreme relationship between the whole of UN and the authority of South Sudan”, Guehenno said. The UN would support the upcoming 5th population and housing census in the Sudan, he said.

UN officials hold talks with Sudan on deployment of Darfur peacekeepers (UN)

28 January 2008 – Senior United Nations officials met with Sudanese Government and African Union (AU) officials over the weekend to discuss ongoing issues relating to the deployment of the joint UN-AU peacekeeping mission (**UNAMID**) to the war-racked region of Darfur.

The status of forces agreement (SOFA) between UNAMID and the Government topped the discussions, held yesterday in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, according to a press statement issued by the mission in El Fasher.

“The discussions were constructive and the parties indicated that they all look forward to the successful conclusion of the SOFA negotiations, as soon as possible,” the statement noted.

The meeting was also part of preparations for high-level discussions on UNAMID’s deployment, scheduled to take place on the margins of the forthcoming AU summit in Addis Ababa.

Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Jean-Marie Guéhenno attended yesterday’s meeting, along with Rodolphe Adada, the UN-AU Joint Special Representative for Darfur, the AU Commissioner for Peace and Security Said Djinnit and Mutrif Siddiq, the Undersecretary at the Sudanese Foreign Ministry.

UN-AU Darfur force needs much of 2008 to deploy (ST)

January 28, 2008 (JUBA, Sudan) — A 26,000-strong joint U.N.-African Union force hoping to bring peace to Sudan’s remote Darfur region will take most of the year to deploy, the head of U.N. peacekeeping said on Monday.

"I think it will take the better part of 2008 to deploy the full force," said Jean-Marie Guehenno, the United Nations under-secretary-general for peacekeeping. Just 9,000 members of the proposed force, which will be the U.N.'s largest, have been deployed so far.

The troops had been scheduled to be deployed by the end of 2007, but the Sudanese government had set conditions — such as disabling their communications during security operations and banning night flights — which the U.N. said cast doubts on whether the force could be effective.

"Some of the forces which we have planned to deploy we couldn't," Guehenno told reporters, referring to Khartoum's rejection of some non-African contingents.

Guehenno said the U.N. was in talks with the Sudanese government to define the rules under which the mission could operate in Darfur, a vast area roughly the size of France. He said the meetings were "positive" so far, but did not say whether Sudan had dropped any of its conditions.

Guehenno was in the south Sudanese capital Juba to inspect a separate, almost 11,000-strong peacekeeping force which is monitoring implementation of a peace deal which ended Sudan's decades-long north-south civil war in 2005.

Clashes on the border between northern nomadic tribes and the south Sudanese army in the past month has caused concern, and the oil-rich Abyei region remains disputed and tense.

"We will soon send a team to assess the situation in detail ... so as to make proposals to the (U.N.) Security Council to see how best the mission can evolve to support the implementation of the peace agreement," Guehenno said.

(Reuters)

UN police into Darfur refugee camp (ST)

January 28, 2008 (ABOU SHOUK) — Two refugee mothers handed their babies to a U.N. police officer and squeezed in for a picture. Nearby, other officers helped women fill jugs of water.

The friendly scenes — unthinkable just a few weeks ago because of the refugees' hostility toward ineffectual African Union peacekeepers — show that a new joint force is having some initial success helping Darfur's volatile camps. But top U.N. officials warn the operation could ultimately fail without more troops and equipment.

An Associated Press reporter was the first international journalist to see the interactions between the new U.N.-African Union force and refugees in the camps this week. Made up of police officers and military troops, it began deploying in Darfur in January, returning peacekeepers to the refugee camps for the first time in months.

"The color of the beret and the new mandate has changed it all," said U.N. police Superintendent Eze Emmanuel of Nigeria, proudly pointing at his new blue beret —

the color of U.N. peacekeepers worldwide — which replaced the African Union's green berets.

The mission is resuming at least two daily, unarmed patrols throughout Darfur's camps, said Superintendent David Eklou, of Ghana. "We're building up to have a 24/7 presence," he said.

But barely 1,400 of UNAMID's planned 6,000 police officers are in Darfur, and Bangladesh is the only contributing nation to have sent a new contingent so far. More urgently, the mission has only 7,000 troops instead of the expected 20,000, and wealthy Western countries are balking at offering crucial equipment such as helicopters.

With so many troops and gear still missing, "we can only fulfill some of the mandate of UNAMID," Gen. Martin Agwai, the force commander, told the AP last week.

For now, the U.N. patrols seem more geared at warming up to refugees than tackling crime in the camps. Officers were seen strolling around, shaking hands and holding discussions with camp elders. Eklou said this was part of a "confidence-building strategy."

"I know it's basic, but it shows we're here to help them. We're humans like them, we feel the pain," he said as one police officer helped a woman load a large plastic barrel of drinking water on her head. "We want them to identify our faces and our names, to know us."

At a later stage, there are plans to resume missions known as "firewood patrols" when police accompany women refugees to protect them from rape by armed militia members when they leave the camp to collect wood for cooking.

Eklou, the police superintendent, said the peacekeepers also hope to launch community policing in the camps and teach Sudanese police and rebels to "respect human rights and the rule of law."

Agwai, the U.N. force commander, said one of the biggest challenges will be to manage the refugees' high expectations with the force's meager capacity. But time is limited, he said.

He estimates the refugees will probably tolerate current levels of violence and insecurity for a little while as the U.N. builds up its presence. But he fears a "volcanic eruption" against the mission if any atrocities take place and Darfur civilians feel the U.N. has failed to protect them.

Abou Shouk's refugees are overwhelmingly loyal to rebel chief Abdulwahid Elnur, the exiled leader of one of the main Darfur rebel factions. When Elnur expressed support for the new U.N. force, local sheiks here said they also welcome the blue berets.

Agwai pleaded for the refugees to be patient as he tries to muster more peacekeepers.

"If they've waited five years, they could wait for another five months," Agwai said. "And definitely, they will begin to see changes on the ground."

In Abou Shouk, Omda Hussein Itzakh, a traditional tribal chief, eyed peacekeepers uneasily as they chatted with Sudanese police at the camp's entrance. But he said he welcomed the peacekeepers' return nonetheless.

"We know they're our last chance, so we hope they're serious about helping us," he said.

(AP)

GoNU (CPA, DPA, ESPA)

President Al-Bashir to leave for Addis Ababa Tuesday (SUNA)

Khartoum, Jan. 28 (SUNA) - President of the Republic Field Marshal Omer Al-Bashir leaves Tuesday for Addis Ababa to attend the African Union Summit, which opens session on Thursday. President Al-Bashir will also participate in the summit meeting of the African Peer Review Mechanism of the New Partnership for Africa Development (NEPAD) Wednesday. Sudan Envoy to the African Union Ambassador Mohi-Eddin Salim said to Sudan News Agency (SUNA) that Addis Ababa would witness Tuesday ministerial meetings of IGAD states and COMESA organization on the sidelines of the meeting of the ministerial council of the African Union. Ambassador Salim pointed out that the ministerial council of the African Union deliberated in its meeting Monday on a report on the government of the African Union and another report on the performance of the African Union. He said the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Deng Alor, made an intervention, stressing the importance of the unity and solidarity of Africa, calling for rational and practical vision concerning reaching the government of the African Union and boosting the organs of the African Union to play their role fully in serving the continent. BT/BT

Defence Minister visits Geneina, pledges to defend borders (Akhbar AlYom)

Minister of Defence, Gen Abdelrahim Mohamed Hussein, visited Geneina yesterday to assess the situation following recent Chadian attacks on the border areas and allegations by JEM on besieging Geneina. While in Geneina, the Minister held a meeting with the Council of Ministers of the Western Darfur State and security organs.

NCP, opposition Umma Party to agree on national issues, political roadmap (Sudan Vision, AlAyam)

By: ALSamani Awadallah, The NCP and Umma joint committee has agreed to discuss freedom issues on 6 of February in Umma party premises. The committee chairman and in charge of foreign affairs in NCP Dr Mustafa Osman Ismael expressed his optimism about reaching a national consensus on issues that used to be debatable

between NCP and other political forces.

In press conference after the meeting of the joint committee he stated that the meeting was fruitful and tackled a lot of issues.

Of his part, representative of Umma party in the joint committee Dr Abdelnabi Ali Ahmed sounded out that the talk between NCP and Umma Parties is progressing well and will arrive at positive results.

More than 11,000 Mujahid establish separate PDF camp in Muglad (Rai AlShaab)

Rai AlShaab, 29 Jan 07-- "More than 10,000 Popular Defence Forces (PDF) Mujahideen have established a camp under the name of Martyr Ombaya in al Muglad area due to differences between them and the PDF Coordination Office for the western area of South Kordofan based in al Fula. The Commander of the camp, Bakheet Mohamed Ali, told Rai AlShaab yesterday that the reason for establishing this camp is to ensure the rights of the Miseriya as the Government has not fulfilled its pledges on recruiting them to the security and police. Instead, 46 of those who had been absorbed earlier in security and 320 others in "nomadic" police have been dismissed. According to Bakheet these PDF soldiers will also defend the Miseriya tribe. Similarly, al Sadiq al Mahdi Bakheet, the Mujahideen Spokesperson, affirmed that the Mujahideen are insisting to get their rights as PDF Mujahideen. There are efforts for establishing branches (camps) in al Meram, al Mugadama, al Sitaib, al Dibab and Omrakiz".

Umma Party-Reform and Renewal to celebrate Peace and Independence Days Tuesday (SUNA)

Khartoum, Jan. 28 (SUNA)- Umma Party-Reform and Renewal is to celebrate Tuesday evening at its Headquarters in Omdurman the Peace Anniversary and Independence Day. Minister of Information and Communications and Chairman of the Party Al-Zahawi Ibrahim Malik said in a statement to SUNA that the celebrations reflect the party support to peace process in the country. He affirmed the party backing to the efforts for completion of the peace process and realization of stability and development all over the country. AS/BT

SLM Free Will Faction to launch coexistence initiative between Dinka and Miseriya (Khartoum Monitor)

Sudan Liberation Movement's (SLM) Free Will Faction declared that it will launch an initiative for coexistence between the Dinka and the Miseriya in Abyei. Spokesperson of the faction, Mohamed Abdallah Adam said the Chairman of the faction, Abdelrahman Musa will present proposals for the solution to the Abyei problem based on the relations between the Dinka and the Miseriya.

GoSS

US vows to help Southern Sudan build a ‘professional’ army (ST)

January 28, 2008 (WASHINGTON) — The US administration today affirmed its commitment to helping Sudan People Liberation Army (SPLA) transform into a modernized army.

“We are privileged to partner with the SPLA in transforming it into a professional military force wholly accountable to its citizenry and able to serve all the people in defending the legitimate rights and aspirations of the Sudanese people” Jendayi Frazer, Assistant Secretary for African Affairs, said in a statement.

The top US diplomat for Africa made these remarks on the occasion of inaugurating an interim SPLA headquarters funded by Washington.

The statement on the US state Department website did not specify the location of the new buildings.

“These buildings are more than a new home for the leadership of the SPLA. They are a symbol of the partnership that exists between the people of Southern Sudan and the people of the United States of America” the statement read.

Reuters reported last year that the US administration wanted to upgrade the capabilities of South Sudan army as part of a sanctions package against Khartoum for failing to halt the violence in the Western region of Darfur.

However a US official speaking to Sudan Tribune last April denied that the assistance to the SPLA was directed against Khartoum.

(ST)

South Sudan’s Bor-Mudari business resumes (ST)

Philip Thon Aleu, January 28, 2008 (BOR, Jonglei) — Business activities that were suspected following a fierce relationship between Bor Dinka and Mudari communities have resumed. Last week’s peace deal is likely fruiting.

Today, Monday January 28, a car loaded with sacks of mangoes arrived from Mongala, a town 47 miles on Juba-Bor road in Mudari territory. Mudari citizens were very happy to meet hospital faces from Bor residents, an expression they never anticipated.

Mary Kiden, a Mudari by tribe said she is very happy that there is peace and movement from Mongala to Bor is now normal. “We use to damp these mangoes when there is no market, but in Bor, people like fruits and one should be very, very excited about the new development, peace,” she said.

In Bor territory, mango trees are very few, since the climate does not allow growth of some tree species. On the hand, Mudari benefits from Bor unfortunate climate - a market. Groundnut is yet another crop that does very well in Mudari area and is being locally exported to Bor.

Movement of people along Bor-Juba road has totally normalized following last week's peace deal held in Gamezia, Mudari area. A sixteen member committee, resolved to be formed to solve litigious issues that caused tension between Bor and Mudari, was represented on Saturday January 26 in Gamezia by both communities.

The committee base is till a point to discuss. But a source close to the committee said the base is not vital at the moment. Pariak, an outlet of Bor town, is preferred by both sides. The members of the committee will be facilitated by Bor and Terekeka Counties 'to easy their work,' Mr. Ali Malou, the commissioner of Terekeka county suggested during the conference on Tuesday last week.

(ST)

Darfur

The two partners of CPA affirm necessity of unifying negotiating stance in Government of National Unity pertinent to Darfur negotiations (SUNA)

Khartoum, Jan. 28 (SUNA)- The two partners of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), the National Congress (NC) and Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), have affirmed the necessity of unifying the negotiating stance in the Government of National Unity pertinent to negotiations with the armed movements in Darfur and the importance of work for unification of these movements. The joint political executive committee between the two partners tackled in its meeting Monday the efforts for boosting peace in the south and the progress of the negotiations sponsored by the Government of Southern Sudan between the Ugandan Government and Lord Resistance Army besides East Sudan Peace Agreement and the Elections Act. Co-spokesman Al-Dirdiri Mohamed Ahmed, NC, said the committee reached a number of decisions to boost a unified negotiating stance between the two partners expressing the stance of the Government of National Unity regarding the negotiations with the armed movements in Darfur. He added that the meeting tackled progress of implementation of East Sudan Peace Agreement and welcomed the efforts being exerted by SPLM in the mediation between the Ugandan government and the Lord Resistance Army and continuation of discussion on the Elections Act. He pointed out that the committee would resume its work on February 11. Co-spokesman Paul Mayom, SPLM, on his part, pointed out that the meeting tackled the affairs of Muslims, northern traders and the Islamic institutions in the south. He explained that the SPLM has succeeded in its efforts to unify Darfur armed movements in only three groups, and working to unify these groups or their negotiating programme, pointing out that they agreed on the vision of the National Congress aiming at unifying visions and stances of the two partners to express the stance of the Government of National Unity pertinent to the negotiations. Concerning the Elections Act, Mayom said the two partners underscored the importance of sitting as quickly as possible to reach agreement with the political forces on the act. BT/BT

Miscellaneous

US embassy in Sudan denies misquotation by Reuters (ST)

By Wasil Ali, January 28, 2008 (KHARTOUM) — The US embassy in Khartoum issued a statement today denying that its charge d'affaires Alberto Fernandez was misquoted by Reuters in an interview conducted last week.

Hours after the embassy declined to comment to Sudan Tribune on the issue of misquotation, its public diplomacy officer Walter Braunohler said in a statement that “every quote of the Chargé d'affaires that appeared in the article was accurate”.

Fernandez told Reuters in an interview that a political crisis over stalled implementation of Sudan's north-south peace deal and other unfulfilled commitments would directly affect Darfur peace talks due in the coming months.

The Arabic fluent diplomat also said that he was still concerned at the lack of implementation of the peace deal which ended Africa's longest war in Sudan's south. He also voiced skepticism that the presidency will resolve the thorny issue of Abyei after years of political wrangling between the North and South.

Sudanese officials who were outraged by the statements summoned Fernandez and told him “not to interfere in the country's internal affairs”

The official Sudan news agency (SUNA) said that the US diplomat informed foreign ministry officials that he was “misquoted” by Reuter's reporter Opheera Mcdoom. However the US embassy denied SUNA's story.

“The embassy has not criticized the contents of the article, as has been reported elsewhere” the statement read.

However it is not clear why the embassy delayed its response to SUNA's story which was published last Friday. It is likely that the statement was under careful consideration by embassy officials to prevent further escalation with Khartoum while not compromising the credibility of Reuters.

"The United States remains committed to the freedom of the press" the US embassy stressed.

The daily Al-Sahafa reported that the Sudanese government was getting close to declaring Fernandez “persona non-grata” and expelling him. However the newspaper said that “some senior figures” averted the imminent decision.

(ST)