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Media Monitoring Report

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Highlights

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Sudanese Ambassador reiterates rejection of the ICC

Commenting on reports of a Sudanese rebel leader who would appear before the ICC today to listen to charges of war crimes, the Sudanese Ambassador to UN Abdul Mahmoud Abdul Haleem said, "We reject the trial or appearance of any Sudanese national before the Court" **Al-Rai Al-Aam** reports. "Appearance of Bahr Idriss Abu Garda before the ICC is a laughable play of bad production, intended to win the court a missing credibility," he said. According to **Al-Sahafa**, Abu Garda arrived in The Hague aboard a commercial flight and will leave The Hague after interrogation. "Abu Garda has surrendered himself to the ICC. But the government's decision is that it will not hand over any Sudanese national for trial abroad since the Sudanese judiciary is competent. It is strange that a person thinks he can find justice with foreigners," Director of Protocol Ali Yousuf, told **Al-Watan** yesterday.

Sudan Tribune website 17/5/09 reported the ICC managed to secure the appearance of the first suspect in relation to the Darfur case investigated by the Hague based court since 2005.

Bahr Idriss Abu Garda, the leader of the Darfur United Resistance Front, arrived in the Netherlands yesterday afternoon coming from Egypt aboard a commercial flight, according to an Egyptian journalist speaking to the **Associated Press**.

An ICC official speaking to Sudan Tribune declined to say whether the court coordinated Abu Garda's route with Egyptian authorities.

The rebel leader was believed to have been residing in Libya over the last few months. He stands accused by the ICC prosecutor of being the commanders who led a deadly attack on African peacekeepers in October 2007.

Abu Garda however has been ordered to remain within the confines of the confidential location that has been assigned to him by the court. He is also prohibited from discussing the case publicly or the evidence.

The Sudanese government downplayed the significance of Abu Garda's appearance saying that they stick to their position on the ICC.

"We are sticking to our position that no Sudanese person should be handed over to the court, even a Darfur rebel" Ali Yusuf Ahmed from Sudan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs told **Reuters**.

The ICC has issued three arrest warrants against Sudanese president Omer Hassan Al-Bashir, former Sudanese state minister for humanitarian affairs Ahmed Haroun and Darfur militia leader Ali Kushayb.

Other Darfur rebel groups also welcomed Abu Garda's surrender including Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM) headed by Abdel-Wahid Al-Nur as well as Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) led by Khalil Ibrahim.

Al-Nur lauded “courage” demonstrated by Abu Garda “in responding to call of justice”.

“This step should set an example to everyone; particularly Bashir and other suspects. If they are innocent it will show in this court of law. They should think twice about their position. We in SLM reiterate our full cooperation with the ICC” he said.

JEM spokesperson Ahmed Hussein said that this step proves that the ICC “is not targeting the Sudanese regime as they try to portray but it is prosecuting everyone who commits crimes in Darfur”.

Defence Minister fails to appear before Parliament

Defence Minister Gen. Abdul Rahim Mohamed Hussein has apologized for the third time that he would not be available for the Parliament to reply to an urgent question raised about the recent trucks convoy attack in eastern Sudan reportedly carried out by Israeli aircraft, **Al-Rai Al-Aam** reports. The National Assembly Security and Defence Committee Chairman Gen. Jalal Tawor said the Defence Minister’s excuse was unacceptable and his committee would insist on his appearance before the Parliament.

Foreign Minister meets SG Ban Ki-moon

Foreign Minister Deng Alor who is leading Sudan delegation for participation in the conference of UN agencies met yesterday with the UNSG Ban Ki-moon, **Al-Raed** reports. The meeting focused on relationship between Sudan and UN, the situation in Darfur and the ICC.

NCP, SPLM MPs to meet to resolve differences over Press Act

The NCP and SPLM parliamentary groups are to meet today in a bid to iron out differences over the draft Press Act that will be tabled before parliament tomorrow, **Al-Rai Al-Aam** reports.

“Sudanese state unjust” – Pagan Amum

Al-Rai Al-Aam reports SPLM SG Pagan Amum as saying that the “Sudanese state is unjust because it has concentrated development in the north and central Sudan only”. Amum made the remarks while addressing a rally in Ed-Damazin yesterday.

NCP official slams SPLM’s Pagan on recent statement

Senior NCP member, Amin Hassan Omar, has condemned recent statements by SPLM Secretary General Pagan Amum accusing the NCP of arming militias to cause insecurity in southern Sudan, reports **Al-Ahdath**.

SPLM responds to criticism from Eritrean President

Reacting to the recent Eritrean President Issias Afwerki’s accusations of corruption against the SPLM, GoSS Minister for the Presidency, Luka Biong, said that the SPLM welcomes constructive criticism and assured that the GoSS is exerting efforts to combat corruption and insecurity in southern Sudan, reports **Al-Wattan**.

Mediation between Khartoum and N’djamena difficult – MFA

Al-Wifaq reports MFA spokesperson Ali Al-Sadiq as saying that the situation between Sudan and Chad is presently tense, making engagement in dialogue difficult. However, he said Qatar is making efforts to that end.

Arab League, OIC and AU to meet in Khartoum

Local dailies report the Arab League SG Amr Musa, OIC SG Akmal Al-Din Ihssan and AU

Commission Chairman person Jean Ping and the Sudanese government will hold a consultative meeting today in Khartoum. **Al-Sahafa** reports MFA spokesperson Ali Al-Sadiq as saying that the meeting would focus on the need to revoke the arrest warrant issued for President Al-Bashir. The delegations participating in the meeting will also visit El Fasher to meet with UNAMID and will hold a press conference at the end of their mission to announce results of their consultations.

SUNA reports President Al-Bashir yesterday briefed both the Arab League's Secretary General Amr Musa and the Commissioner of the African Union Jean Ping on recent developments in Darfur. Speaking at a press conference following their official meeting yesterday, Sudanese Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Ali Karti said that "the President had discussed with the two officials progress of the Doha talks, other peace initiatives, the current conflict on the Sudanese-Chadian border in addition to other issues of mutual concern

Rebels say they take North Darfur town

AFP 17/5/09 — JEM rebels said yesterday they had seized a town in North Darfur after a clash with regular Sudanese forces.

"Yesterday afternoon our forces entered Kornoy after forcing out two Sudanese army brigades," JEM spokesman Ahmed Hussein told **AFP**. He said he had no information yet about casualties.

UNAMID spokesman in Darfur, said he had "information about fighting in the Kornoy region 300 kilometres (185 miles) west of El-Fasher," the capital of North Darfur.

"Sudanese soldiers arrived at a UNAMID base in the Ambaro region 50 kilometres (30 miles) from Kornoy, and told our people they had been attacked yesterday afternoon by heavily armed JEM forces on board 70 vehicles," Kamal Saiki told **AFP**.

The soldiers said the fighting lasted for three hours. Saiki said part of the government force withdrew towards Ambaro and another part towards Al-Tina. He said the UNAMID unit had seen two wounded soldiers. There was no immediate comment from the Sudanese military.

"JEM has taken Kornoi. We attacked a garrison there. We want to clear them out of the area," JEM leader Khalil Ibrahim told **Reuters** by satellite telephone, according to **Sudan Tribune**.

"We now control a very large area. JEM will proceed to control the whole area — the whole of Darfur, including the capitals," he said.

JSR Rodolphe Adada condemned yesterday's attack, said a statement from the peacekeepers.

"I call on all the parties to the Darfur conflict to refrain from the use of violence, to seek a peaceful resolution to their problems, notably through the Doha process, and to work towards a cessation of hostilities," said Adada.

Chad completes military operations inside Sudan – official

Sudan Tribune website 17/5/09 — The Chadian army announced yesterday its withdrawal from Sudan after capturing 100 rebels who had sought refuge there.

Chad air army raided three times the area of Jabel Sandu south of El Geneina, which lies about 60 kilometers inside Sudan. Chadian rebels said they were now based inside their country while Khartoum refused to react militarily to the Chadian incursions calling for political solution to

Chadian internal problems.

"After following mercenaries inside Sudan, exercising our right of pursuit, the forces of defense and security have withdrawn this afternoon (Sunday) from inside Sudan," said the Acting Minister of Defense, Adoum Younousmi at the presidential palace in N'Djamena.

"We cleaned all the bases of mercenaries within the Sudan up to 40 klm. We have destroyed seven pockets of mercenaries. The fugitives were treated by aviation without any collateral damage", he further said.

"We will no longer allow any country to host mercenaries against Chad. Regardless of the depth (in foreign territory), we will destroy them where they are," concluded the minister. "We captured about 100 prisoners who will be shown within 48 hours," he stressed.