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# Media Monitoring Report

United Nations Mission in Sudan/ Public Information Office

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Address: UNMIS Headquarters, P.O. Box 69, Ibeid Khatim St, Khartoum 11111, SUDAN  
Phone: (+249-1) 8708 6000 - Fax: (+249-1) 8708 6200

# Highlights

## Local Arabic and English Language Press

### UNSC fails again to condemn NGO expulsion

**Sudan Vision:** UNSC members failed on Friday for the second time to agree on a joint response to Sudan's expulsion of 13 INGOs from Darfur. Diplomats say that the SC had agreed to express their "concern" about the situation in Sudan during discussions on Friday but were unable to agree to a joint statement.

The paper adds in a separate story that HAC Commissioner, Hassabo Mohamed, has lauded the performance of INGOs operating in Sudan and has denied allegations that Sudan has pledged to expel more aid organizations. He pointed out that Sudan has warned that any organization not abiding by the regulations would face similar action.

### Aid groups expulsion decision irreversible – VP Taha

**Local dailies** report that the Government announced yesterday that the INGO expulsion decision was irreversible. "Their expulsion was a sovereign decision and would never be reversed whatever pressures or threats are made," VP Taha said at the opening session of a conference of Arab civil society organization, according to **Al-Rai Al-Aam**. He said the Sudan Government, UN and AU joint humanitarian assessment in Darfur confirms that the government continues to honour its international commitments. He said the outcome of the joint survey would refute claims about the humanitarian situation. "The Security Council should have sought first hand information including from the UN agencies that are conducting surveys with the government," he said. "The government will not heed to any report or figures that are not supported by the joint mechanism," said the VP.

"To those who recently referred to and threatened us over the humanitarian situation in Sudan, we say we are capable of handling the situation and do not need someone to remind us," he said. "This battle is not about Bashir as a person or of the regime; it is the battle of a nation that has chosen the path to honour and respect," he added.

"The West does not look at Sudanese as human beings," Humanitarian Affairs Minister Ahmed Haroun said, according to **Al-Sahafa**. "INGOs are being used to implement western policies," he added. MFA Undersecretary Mutrif Siddiq also told the paper that the government was ready to negotiate on alternative INGOs to fill the gap in Darfur, based on the outcome of the joint needs assessment.

Meanwhile, Presidential Assistant Nafie Ali Nafie swore that the ousted aid groups would not be re-admitted. "Their return to Sudan is impossible," he told a rally yesterday. **Al-Sahafa** reports Nafie dismissed claims that NCP is divided between a President Al-Bashir and VP Taha camps. "Claims that there are two groups within NCP, one loyal to President Al-Bashir and the other to VP Taha, are incorrect," he said.

**Local dailies** report President Al-Bashir yesterday inaugurated Tuti bridge linking the island with Khartoum city, built at a total cost of \$16.4 million. Addressing a launch rally, President Al-Bashir said the government would respond to the enemies' plots by constructing more roads and bridges across the country.

### Mounting pressure to prevent Al-Bashir from Doha trip

**Akhbar Al Youm** reports that the *Imam* of Al-Nilain Mosque and dean of post-graduate studies at the Holy Quran University has appealed to the President not to risk a foreign trip. The Sudan Islamic Scholars Board has also issued a *fatwa* (a religious opinion) advising the president not to travel abroad. "Fearing for the sake to prevent danger is following orders of god and the prophet and forfeiting chances of the enemies of Allah by staying inside Sudan with your people and angering the infidels," the *fatwa* says.

**Al-Sahafa** reports that President Al-Bashir's family and some of the country's military leaders have also joined others in stepping up pressure on the government to prevail upon the president not to risk travelling to Doha for an Arab summit. The higher committee for supporting Al-Bashir has also announced plans for a sit-in to pressure the Presidency to decide against Al-Bashir's.

Meanwhile, Presidential Adviser Abdullah Masar told the **BBC** that the government has yet to decide on President Al-Bashir's participation in the Doha summit.

### **Tri-partite needs assessment mission to Darfur finalizes report**

**Al-Ahdath:** The joint Sudan, UN and AU needs assessment mission for Darfur has finished drafting its final report.

Foreign ministry spokesperson, Ali Al-Sadig, has meanwhile slammed the US representative to the UN for putting Khartoum under pressure to revise the decision on the expulsion. "Rice and the whole world forget that 118 INGOs still operate in Darfur. They also ignore Sudan's commitment to work with local NGOs and UN agencies to close the gap left by those 13 NGOs," he said.

**Al-Sahafa** meanwhile reports that the NCP and the SPLM versions of a humanitarian needs assessment in the Three Areas are at odds. The SPLM report indicated negative impacts of the NGO ouster while the NCP report saw otherwise. The SPLM report said Southern Kordofan State would lose \$ 45 million and the Blue Nile State would lose nearly \$17 million and that Abyei would be most affected given its total dependence on assistance. The report said school and hospital constructions and borehole drilling have ceased. The NCP report disagreed with that of the SPLM, saying the gap could be bridged. The two sides, including the Humanitarian Affairs Ministry, have agreed on a one-week reassessment.

### **Sudanese president inaugurates Tuti Bridge**

**Sudan Tribune**, 21/03/09 - President Al-Bashir has inaugurated the \$14.2 million Tuti suspension bridge that links the capital with the isolated island of Tuti, located at the confluence of the Blue and White Niles.

The president used the opportunity to criticize the ICC arrest warrant and reaffirmed his determination to respond to the ICC indictment with more development projects, resolution of the conflict in Darfur and unification on the political internal front.

### **JEM forces sighted along Chadian border**

Quoting **SMC** sources, **Al-Sahafa** reports that JEM fighters have been sighted along the border areas with Chad. The sightings come shortly after JEM leader Khalil Ibrahim's decision not to participate at the Doha talks if the government refuses to review NGO expulsion decision.

### **Free Lions would back an Al-Bashir presidency bid**

**Al-Sudani** reports that the head of the Free Lions, Dr. Mubarak Mabrook Salim, has expressed support for the Sudan government against the ICC. Speaking to reporters in eastern Sudan yesterday following his re-election, Mabrook said that the party would support an Al-Bashir bid for re-election to the presidency to grant him continued immunity against the ICC. He said that

his party has registered in preparations for the forthcoming elections but added he would not accept a nomination for the presidency should President Bashir be nominated as the NCP candidate for the post.

### **Opposition say situation not conducive for general elections**

**Al-Khartoum**, 20 March - Major opposition parties have agreed to register their organizations at the Parties' Council in preparation for contesting the upcoming general elections. However, they also said they doubt whether it would be possible for the elections to take place on the date stipulated by the CPA. The opposition forces agreed to complete the registration process before the end of the month.

### **No dialogue with the NCP - PCP**

**Rai Al-Shaab** reports Deputy Secretary General of the Popular Congress Party as having denied recent press reports that the PCP has accepted in principle to hold dialogue with the NCP. He pointed out that there has been no progress on the issue.

### **Journalists Warraq and Al-Baz to be freed today**

**Ajras Al-Hurriya** reports that Al-Haj Warraq and Adil Al-Baz, senior journalists and board members of **Ajras Al-Hurriya** and **Al-Ahdath** respectively, may be freed later today. The two were arrested last Thursday in connection with articles published over two years ago that were perceived as defamatory to SPLM's Lam Akol and Deng Alor. Fellow journalists and other well-wishers contributed to raise the sum of 40,000 Sudanese pounds (20,000 each) that the complainants sought in damages.

**Ajras Al-Hurriya** is planning a symposium on freedom of expression and freedom of the press issues later today to mark their release.

### **Renewed tribal fighting in South Darfur**

**Al-Sudani** reports renewed clashes between Habbania and Fallata tribesmen in Burrum Locality, South Darfur. Reports say at least 32 people were killed in inter-tribal clashes over a water-point.

## **Websites/International News Coverage**

### **UN calls on Sudan to respect humanitarian aid agreements**

**UN news Centre**, 20/03/09 - Rashid Khalikov, the Director of the New York section of the OCHA, has urged Sudan to respect existing agreements and its own laws on the operation of relief groups in strife-torn Darfur. "We want to engage in transparent and productive dialogue with the Government based on these laws and agreements," Khalikov told the Security Council.

"As the conflict continues, and as many parts of Darfur continue to be unstable, or are under the influence of the rebel groups, the work of the UN and its partners will continue to be vital in helping Sudanese citizens affected by conflict receive the aid to which they have the right," Mr. Khalikov said. Unfortunately, the ability to provide that aid has been seriously compromised by the decisions of the Government Sudan, he added, citing a new "atmosphere of fear and uncertainty facing all aid organizations."

He said the expulsion of the 13 organizations had been followed by an increase in violence against UNAMID and aid groups, along with the seizure of humanitarian assets by the Government.

He urged the Government to end those practices, to minimize its rhetoric against foreigners and to ensure the safety and security of all UN and associated staff. He also called on armed groups in Darfur to take active steps to ensure the safety of UN and NGO staff.

"We must find a way to decrease tensions and ensure the timely and sustainable provision of protection and humanitarian assistance, based on the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, and impartiality," he stressed.

Mr. Khalikov said that much more would be known about the impact of the aid groups' ouster when the outcome of a joint assessment mission undertaken by the Government of Sudan and the UN is made public on 22 March.

It is already known, however, that a dangerous situation has arisen due to the absence of anyone able to carry out immunizations to prevent the spread of a meningitis outbreak in the Jebel Mara and Kalma refugee camps, he noted.

The assessments concentrated on four life-saving sectors: water, sanitation, and hygiene; health and nutrition, food aid; and non-food items and shelter, he said.

At the same time, he stated, the UN has continued to advocate, at all levels, for a reversal of the expulsion decision, and the Secretary-General has been in close contact with Arab and African leaders and members of the Council.

### **Sudan says will never reverse decision to expel NGOs**

**Reuters World Service**, 20/03/09 - "We urge the international community to press the government of Sudan to reverse its expulsion edict and to ensure it does nothing to worsen an already grave situation," U.S. Ambassador to the UN Susan Rice told the Security Council. "President Bashir created this crisis. He should rectify it immediately," she said.

Rice urged the council to unite to help the people of Darfur. However, diplomats said council members remained split on what, if anything, should be done and were unlikely to take any action during Friday's meeting.

British, Austrian, Ugandan and several other envoys also appealed to Khartoum to rethink its position. They cited a bleak report on the humanitarian situation in Darfur from a senior U.N. humanitarian affairs official, Rashid Khalikov.

But the Chinese and Libyan delegates were more cautious, focusing on the negative impact of the ICC arrest warrant on the situation in Sudan.

### **Sudan expulsions 'confirm crimes' – ICC prosecutor**

**Al-Jazeera**, 21/03/09 - The ICC prosecutor has criticized the Sudanese president's decision to expel 13 aid agencies from the country.

Moreno-Ocampo said that the ejection of the non-governmental organizations proves that the ICC was correct to pursue Omar al-Bashir, Sudan's president, on war-crimes charges. "This idea to expel the humanitarians confirms the (ICC) court decision," Moreno-Ocampo said in New York after the UN Security Council met to receive an updated assessment on the Darfur crisis.

A rebel group in Darfur, meanwhile, announced that it was pulling out of peace talks with the Sudanese government after the aid agencies were expelled.

"The movement cannot negotiate with the government of Al-Bashir," Khalil Ibrahim, the leader of the JEM, told Reuters by telephone on Friday. "There was supposed to be a conference [in Doha] after three weeks but we will not go," Ibrahim said.

Ibrahim said the government must allow the expelled aid agencies back into Darfur and free

JEM prisoners before talks could resume.

### **Ocampo says he received “zero” information from NGOs in Sudan**

*Sudan Tribune website*, 20 March, New York – ICC Prosecutor Luis Moreno-Ocampo has denied allegations by Sudan that his office received information from aid groups operating in Darfur. “I respect different mandates — I never requested information from any of these NGOs,” he told reporters at the UN headquarters in New York following a UN Security Council (UNSC) briefing on the humanitarian situation in Darfur.

The ICC prosecutor rejected criticism by some states that his move to charge Bashir led to the expulsion of the relief groups. “It is very interesting, the prosecutor is responsible not the criminal?” he said sarcastically. “The king is naked” Ocampo said, referring to Bashir. “It is not my responsibility that he is naked”.

“The court decided that Bashir committed extermination against the civilians in Darfur including affecting humanitarian health in the camps” Ocampo said. “Expelling them [humanitarian groups] is confirming the crime” he added.

### **Sudan security arrest 4 students at University of Khartoum over ICC**

*Sudan Tribune website*, 19/03/09 - Sudanese security arrested this week four students at public meetings inside the University of Khartoum for supporting an arrest warrant issued by the ICC against President Al-Bashir.

On Monday pro-NCP students in the university attacked a meeting organized by Democratic Forces Movement, a leftist party known in Arabic as HAQ, and beat them with the help of security forces who provided steel bars used to strike the students and disperse them. Two were arrested and several injured.

On Thursday afternoon, NCP students backed by security service attacked a meeting organized by the United Democratic Front (UDF), a student organization supporting SLM-AbdulWahid. Two other students were arrested and more injured

Last week the Sudanese authorities attacked a meeting by UDF students in the south Kordofan town of Deling and wounded several students.

### **Sudan dispatching delegations to UNSC member countries**

*Sudan Tribune*, 21/03/09 - London based *Al-Sharq Al-Awsat* said Sudan is dispatching delegations to UNSC member states. The first, headed by Sudan’s 2nd Vice President will travel to Uganda, Libya and Burkina Faso; the second, headed by Presidential Assistant Nafi Ali Nafi, Presidential Adviser Mustafa Ismail and NISS Director Salah Gosh will head to France and Britain; the third, headed by finance minister Awad Al-Jaz, to China, Japan, Russia and Turkey; the fourth, headed by Presidential Adviser Ghazi Suleiman, to Mexico, Venezuela and Brazil. A fifth delegation headed by presidential adviser Bona Malwal will go to Austria, Croatia and the Czech republic.

### **Calm returns to South Sudan border town after Salva Kiir’s visit**

*Sudan Tribune*, 21/03/09 – The situation at the borders towns of Yei and Nimule is back to normal following a visit by GoSS president Salva Kiir who ordered immediate payment of salary arrears to the soldiers who staged angry protests recently over non-payment of their salaries for the last seven months.

Demonstrations by SPLA war veterans last Wednesday morning paralyzed business in Nimule, Yei, Kaya and Moyo. Kajo-Keji was also affected by the protests.

President Kiir attributed the delay of payment to the late transfer of funds from Khartoum compounded with the global fall in crude oil prices that has greatly affected southern Sudan's share of oil revenue.

The war veterans were paid two months' pay and given sacks of grain to keep them waiting for the remaining balance of four months.

Kampala based **Sunday Vision** reported that Ugandan traders have appealed to President Museveni to take up the issue with GoSS President Kiir.

### **Turabi says Qatar behind his release**

**Sudan Tribune website**, 22 March - PCP leader Hassan Al-Turabi told the Egyptian **Al-Shurooq** newspaper that the Emir of Qatar convinced President Al-Bashir to release him during his visit to Khartoum last month. Turabi said he was "surprised" when he was released but later realized that was a result of international pressure on Khartoum.

Interviewed by **Al-Shurooq**, Turabi reiterated his call to Bashir to turn himself in to the ICC. "If the president wants to be a hero like he claims in his rhetoric in the microphones during speeches and rallies then he should go to court to prove his heroism" he said. "However he will not turn himself in but others may do that to succeed him in power and there are many who are waiting for him to disappear through death or extradition" the opposition leader added.

### **Sudan to destroy expired medicines in Darfur**

**Sudan Tribune website**, 21 March –Sudan Media Centre reports that HAC has decided to destroy important quantity of medicines found inside an MSF warehouse in El-Geneina, West Darfur. Health authorities plan to destroy the medicines within two days, the news service said.

### **JEM suspends participation in Darfur peace process**

**Sudan Tribune website**, 20 March, London – JEM today suspended its participation in the Doha peace process one month after signing a goodwill agreement with the Sudanese government in the Qatari capital. On Friday it said it was suspending its

participation in the peace process until the "return of all evicted international NGOs and resumption of their operations." The rebel movement underscored that the expulsion of the aid groups breaches the goodwill agreement which provides that the parties commits themselves to refrain from IDPs harassment and to not obstruct the delivery of humanitarian aid to the displaced. JEM also demanded that Khartoum reverse President Bashir's decision to "Sudanize" humanitarian activities and end the presence of foreign aid groups in Sudan by the end of the year.

"This irresponsible decision of Sudanization of NGOs threatens survival of poor people across the Sudan and not only in Darfur," said Ahmed Hussein Adam the JEM spokesperson. He also pointed out that the aid groups were "crucial for the success of repatriation of refugees and IDPs, and the rehabilitation and development" that would follow any peace agreement "in Darfur and the rest of the country."

### **SPLM says ready for general elections**

**Radio Miraya FM**, 20 March - SPLM has announced that the party will have candidates for all positions in the upcoming general elections, including the presidency. Following a three-day meeting, SPLM Spokesperson Yien Matthew Chol, told Miraya FM that the party is getting ready for the upcoming elections.