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Media Monitoring Report

United Nations Mission in Sudan/ Public Information Office

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- "From Relief to Productive Peace" (***Al-Ayaam editorial***)

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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

Mubarak, Al-Bashir discuss Darfur and the ICC

Al-Ayaam: "Issues of the ICC, solutions to the conflict in Darfur and the humanitarian situation topped the agenda of the Mubarak, Al-Bashir talks," Egypt's foreign minister told a joint press conference with his Sudanese counterpart in Cairo yesterday. He said that Egypt seeks to move a Chapter 16 deferral and a 12-month suspension of the ICC warrant to give peace in Darfur a chance.

On his part, Foreign Minister Deng Alor reiterated Sudan's rejection to the ICC warrant.

Meanwhile, **Al-Sudani** daily reports that the Council of Islamic Scholars of Sudan has denied reports that the Council was paid to issue a *fatwa* (religious opinion) banning President Al-Bashir from travelling to Doha in order to give him reason not to travel.

Sudan's Bashir goes to Libya, defying ICC

Reuters: President Al-Bashir arrived in Libya a show of defiance to an ICC arrest warrant, Arab media reported.

A Sudanese presidential palace source and a foreign ministry official had earlier said Al-Bashir was on his way to the Ethiopian capital Addis Ababa. But Arab television channels **Al-Jazeera** and **Al-Arabiya** later reported he had arrived instead in Libya.

The trip is Bashir's third abroad since the ICC decision on March 4. He also visited neighbours Egypt and Eritrea this week following invitations from those countries for talks on the ICC move.

Bassolé to brief UNSC on Darfur peace process

UN-AU Joint Chief Mediator for the Darfur peace process, Dijbril Bassolé, briefs the UNSC today on the Darfur peace process, reports **Akhbar Al-Youm**.

Sudanese official says Al-Bashir will travel to Ethiopia on 11 April

Akhir Lahzah, 25/03/09 - The government has confirmed that President Al-Bashir, will attend the Sudanese-Ethiopian summit in Ethiopia on 11 April. Head of the MFA Borders and Aliens Unit Ahmad al-Tijani said the summit would be preceded by a ministerial meeting of the two countries on 9 April.

No UN-Interpol discussions over ICC warrant – Ki-moon

Quoting agencies, **Akhbar Al-Youm** reports that Interpol action on the ICC arrest warrant for President al-Bashir was not raised when he met with Interpol officials recently. Discussions, he said, focused on strengthening cooperation between DPKO, UN Poilce and Interpol.

Former intelligence chief comments on Al-Qa'idah statement

Al-Sahafa, 25/03/09 - The former head of intelligence, retired Maj-Gen Hasaballah Umar, has strongly criticized the statement by the second in command of Al-Qa'idah, Ayman al-Zawahri, who said the Sudanese government was to blame for being targeted by the ICC because it had made the mistake of expelling "the mujahidin" most notably Usama Bin-Laden and that it was now reaping the fruits of its acts.

Umar told *Al-Sahafa* that the statement was worthless and untrue and asserted that by making the statement, Al-Zawahri had only meant to show that he was still alive.

Joint UN-Sudan team to carry out regular monitoring in Darfur

Sudan has announced that a joint team has been formed with the UN to monitor the humanitarian situation in Darfur on a daily basis in order to avert possibilities of a humanitarian gap, reports *Al-Sahafa* daily.

Commissioner Hassabo Mohamed also said that the HAC has talked with the African Development Organization and the Red Crescent on food distribution after the end of May. He also that the OIC has pledged funding for 20 of its implementing partners to assist in Darfur and has asked OIC to establish offices in Khartoum.

Al-Ayaam reports that the OIC has sent a delegation to carry out a humanitarian needs assessment in Darfur.

VP Taha to receive work plan for alternate NGOs

VP Taha is to receive an "Alternate Work Plan" today for national humanitarian NGOs prepared to fill in the humanitarian gap, reports *Al-Rai Al-Aam*.

Government gives health and water ministries Darfur funds for April

The Government provided funds to the Federal Ministry of Health and the National Water Corporation yesterday to cover requirements for Darfur for April and it has renewed commitments to continue cooperation with UN agencies. According to *Akhbar Al-Youm*, HAC Commissioner Hassabo Mohamed told the press yesterday the government would provide three months funding for water and health services in Darfur. The amount was not specified.

He said the Arab League, Qatar, the KSA, Egypt, Libya and the UAE have all pledged to fund humanitarian operations in Darfur with Qatar pledging "unlimited funding". He dismissed recent reports of deaths in the IDP camps from the NGOs expulsion saying that they were a JEM fabrication.

Oxfam asks government to review NGOs expulsion

Khartoum Monitor reports that Oxfam has formerly requested Sudan to reconsider its expulsion of some aid NGOs from the country. An Oxfam information officer told *Radio Miraya FM* from Nairobi that they are keen to resume humanitarian aid work in northern Sudan.

GoSS asks GoNU to hand over Tanginya

In an extraordinary meeting in Juba yesterday, the Southern Sudan cabinet has called on the GoNU to hand over Gabriel Tanginya over atrocities committed in Malakal, reports *The Citizen*. "GoSS still demands that the GoNU hand over Tanginya to authorities in southern Sudan to face justice," GoSS Spokesperson Gabriel Changson told reporters shortly following the meeting.

Egyptian medical team expelled from Equatoria

Al-Intibaha reports that Equatoria State Health Minister Huda Michael Layla has ordered an Egyptian medical team out of Equatoria. No reasons were given. The minister had earlier ordered a quality check on the medicines the team had with them but later asked them to leave and take the medicine with them. Egyptian medical teams conduct trips from time to time to southern Sudan to provide health services around Juba.

NCP has not proposed early elections – NCP official

Al-Sahafa reports that NCP's Political Affairs Secretary Mohamed Mandour al-Mahdi told the press yesterday that his party has never proposed that elections should take place earlier than scheduled. He pointed out that such a suggestion requires consultations with the other political forces.

The Communist Party of Sudan announced its rejections to similar proposals pointing out that it is for the National Elections Commission to decide.

Fire razes North Darfur village

A lawmaker told parliament yesterday that devastating fires caused by storms and heavy winds yesterday burned down the village of Dimkia (85km from Al-Fashir). **Al-Ayaam** reports that Ahmed Haroun (MP for Dar-es-Salaam locality) said that the fires burned down 80% of the villages resources and displaced 720 of the 1,500 inhabitants of the area. He estimates damage at SDG250,000 and called for assistance from the humanitarian affairs ministry and relief agencies.

Websites/International News Coverage

Sudanese-Egyptian leaders discuss ICC, Darfur, bilateral ties

SUNA website, 25/03/09, Cairo - The Sudanese-Egyptian summit meeting in Cairo between President Al-Bashir and President Mubarak discussed the general Arab situation, the ICC, efforts to realize peace in Darfur and overall progress in bilateral relations, Egypt's Foreign Minister Ahmad Abu-al-Ghayt told a joint press conference with Sudan's Deng Alor after the meeting.

Foreign minister Deng Alor told the press conference that President Al-Bashir, in briefing President Mubarak, had reiterated rejection to the ICC proceedings and spoke of the progress made in implementing the CPA and peace in Darfur. The meeting also dealt with the post-expulsion humanitarian situation, including the outcome of the government's joint assessment with the UN. Deng Alor pointed out that the meeting stemmed from an official invitation by the Egyptian government.

British PM urges pressure on Al-Bashir to lift NGO ban

UN News Centre/ AFP, 25/03/09 - British Prime Minister Gordon Brown appealed to the world to pressure President Al-Bashir into rescinding his expulsion of 13 INGOs from Darfur. "It is very important that we send a message to the President of Sudan that humanitarian agencies are doing vital work," Brown told a press conference with UN chief Ban Ki-moon at his side.

"Even at this stage I want the whole world to ask him to remove the ban on humanitarian agencies and to recognize that they are absolutely essential to the protection of people in Sudan," Brown added.

Ummah leader says expulsion of aid agencies was a "genocidal act"

Sudan Radio Service, 25/03/09, Cairo -- Ummah National Party leader Al-Sadiq Al-Mahdi told a Cairo press conference that expulsion of the INGOs from Darfur was a "genocidal act" that showed complete disregard for human life.

"Linking the expulsion of aid NGOs from Sudan with the ICC decision has revealed that it was a knee-jerk reaction. The only people who will be affected are the people who have been benefiting from the humanitarian aid. There is no doubt that this move has opened a new door for accusations of genocide, because that means disregarding peoples' lives. What happened seemed to be like a reaction to the ICC decision and not that the NGOs exceeded their mandate."

IDPs die in fire in Abu Zar camp

UNAMID, 25/03/09 - Two IDPs died today after a fire broke out at the Abu Zar camp near El Geneina in West Darfur, UNAMID reports. Residents told an UNAMID investigative team that two armed men in military uniform and two others in civilian clothes were seen entering the camp, starting a fire sometime after midnight before fleeing. One woman died at the scene and a 22-year-old man died later at hospital. Three seriously injured are receiving medical treatment at El-Geneina hospital.

Secretary-General calls for release of detained and missing UN staff

UN News Centre, 25/03/09 - UNSG Ban Ki-moon joined UN colleagues today in calling for the release of 19 staff members detained or missing around the globe.

"I call on Member States and non-State actors to release them immediately," Mr. Ban said at a ceremony in New York to mark the 24th International Day of Solidarity with Detained and Missing Staff Members. "Locally recruited humanitarian and UN personnel are the most vulnerable targets, and account for a majority of security incidents," he said. "But anyone serving the UN, supporting us as a partner or reporting on our work, is a potential victim, as recent hostage incidents in Niger and Pakistan attest."

Mr. Ban stressed ongoing efforts to free Robert Fowler and Louis Guay, the UN envoys to Niger, and John Solecki, a UNHCR official in Pakistan, as well as staff of UNMEE.

Between July 2007 and June 2008, there were 160 arrests by State authorities and 39 cases of detention by non-State actors, as noted by Mr. Ban in a separate message for the Day.

Ambassador Pablo Solón-Romero of Bolivia, delivering a message on behalf of General Assembly President Miguel D'Escoto stressed the need to act quickly when staff members are subject to kidnapping, arrest and arbitrary detention.

"We can and must do more to protect and assist them in their assignments. We must be relentless in our efforts to secure their release in the case of detention."

He called on Member States "to defend the security and safety of UN staff," as well as "to put an end to the impunity of these attacks and bring criminals to justice."

UN Staff Union Vice-President Thomas Ginivan stressed that "while there is a treaty in place protecting staff, States still do not fully comply. The UN establishes missions and offices, yet staff assigned find themselves increasingly in the line of fire with little support or properly security in place. Political factions reportedly have targeted staff while on humanitarian missions."

The International Day of Solidarity marks the anniversary of the abduction by gunmen, on 25 March 1985, of British journalist Alec Collet from his car near Beirut Airport. Mr. Collett, a former UNIC Director, was on assignment for UNRWA. He was never to be seen again and there has

been no final resolution to his case.

At least 125 journalists are behind bars around the world, according to the Committee to Protect Journalists, and at least 30 have “disappeared.”

South Sudan clashes leave 750 dead—UNHCR

AFP, 25/03/09, Juba,- Fighting in southern Sudan has left some 750 people dead, with growing insecurity in the wider region hampering aid efforts, UN officials said on Wednesday. Clashes in Jonglei State sparked by cattle raids began earlier this month between the Murle and the Lou Nuer. "We have seen reports of up to 750 dead, that seem to have been caused by cattle rustling," said Geoff Wordley, Assistant Representative of UNHCR in southern Sudan. "We have seen a number of disturbing and alarming events in terms of security in recent weeks," Wordley told AFP.

Officials said the situation in Jonglei's Pibor County now appeared to have calmed, but that it had had an impact on the work of relief organisations. "During the disturbances, at least one WFP convoy carrying food aid was attacked and looted near Pibor, and therefore the situation of the delivery of humanitarian aid in that area is also of concern," Wordley added.

An emergency response team from the UN is currently assessing the needs of those affected by the fighting.

"To the east towards the Kenyan border... we still have staff who are unable to move, and we are increasingly concerned about their welfare," Wordley said. UNHCR was forced to postpone five repatriation convoys carrying nearly 1,000 returning refugees from Uganda. The border with Uganda was also closed, but has since reopened.

"The net result of all these issues... is that we believe negative messages are being sent out to the refugees in the camps, who we are trying to repatriate," Wordley added. "We have noticed a dramatic fall in the number of refugees to return, particularly from the Ethiopian camps into Upper Nile and Jonglei."

Meanwhile in a separate story, *Sudan Tribune website* reports that the Lou Nuer Youth Association (LNYA) claims in a report that only 453 people were killed on both sides when their community clashed with Murle in Pibor County.

Deputy Chairman Charles Chol says LNYA is prompted to release its account after reports that 300 Lou Nuer are estimated to have died. These figures (300 Lou Nuer and 453 Murle killed) were obtained from a team that visited contested areas early last week. According to the report, the 453 people reported killed in the fighting in Murle Area were on both sides, and not just Murle alone. Murle dead totalled 250 people including women and children. Deaths among the Lou Nuer people came to 203 people. The number of injured people from both sides has yet to be confirmed.

NCP member quits to rejoin SPLM

Sudan Radio Service, 25/03/09 - Chol Deng Allak has left the NCP to rejoin the SPLM, SPLM Secretary-General Pagan Amum told a joint press conference in Khartoum on Tuesday. He noted that Deng's return to the party would make "a huge contribution" at this "critical moment in Sudan's history". Chol Deng said his return to the SPLM was in support of the CPA, something he maintained NCP was not serious about. NCP, he said, neither embraces nor reflects the national diversity of the Sudan.

Dr. Chol, who joined NCP in 1997 and has served in the GoNU as Minister for Social Planning and as state minister in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and, most recently, as ambassador to Russia and Ukraine, said: "It is obvious that there are groups inside the NCP whose programme

is not clear to the whole of Sudan because it is based on one identity, on one culture, one religious belief. I found myself chasing the wind and for that reason I have decided to return to the party that I still hold on its objectives over a quarter of a century now since we started it."

SPLM soldiers stage pay protest

Sudan Tribune website, 25/03/09, Juba - Groups of SPLA disabled soldiers in Kapoeta and Narus have reportedly rioted in protest over delayed payment of their salary arrears. GoSS Minister of Regional Cooperation, Barnaba Marial Benjamin, said on 25 March that the angry soldiers were holding some "foreigners" hostage in some areas. Minister for SPLA Affairs, General Nhial Deng Nhial, has left Juba for Eastern Equatoria state to calm the situation.

Southern Sudan passes anti-graft law

Reuters, 25/03/09, Juba, - Southern Sudan has passed a long-awaited law to give a watchdog powers to look into hundreds of complaints of corruption in the oil-rich region, officials said on Wednesday.

Staff at the Anti-Corruption Commission told Reuters they were already planning to use the legislation to launch at least 10 new investigations.

"It gives us the green light to be able to ask questions about any suspicions," SSACC Executive Director Francis Kupako Bassan told *Reuters*. He said commission staff had already received hundreds of complaints from members of the public frustrated at levels of corruption and other abuses in the region. But staff were initially planning to focus on 10 cases, "some financial, some of them malpractices."

Bassan said the anti-graft commission still faced sizable challenges, not least in the tracking down of vital documents for use as evidence. Financial documents would be particularly hard to find as the government's last auditor had left the job in 2008 and had not been replaced. The commission's work would also be risky. "We wanted to publish a list of those found to be corrupt ... the advice was that would be very risky to us," he said. "That risk cannot be lowered to zero."

Sudan offers 800k of Nile blend crude for May delivery

Sudan Tribune website, 25/03/09, Singapore - Sudan has issued a new tender to sell 800,000 barrels of heavy sweet Nile Blend crude for May loading, crude oil futures traders in NY's Mercantile Exchange told *Reuters* today. Sudan's offer came after it had skipped the April spot sales for unknown reasons. The volume of the current tender is less than the average of 1-1.2 million barrels per month (bpm).

The Greater Nile project which produces the heavy sweet, high-quality, Nile Blend crude has experienced diminishing productivity lately, down from 325,000 barrels per day (bpd) to 200,000. The tender closes 30 March, with bids valid until April 1.

Reportedly, the state oil firm Sudapet last tender sale was 2.2 million barrels of March-loading Nile Blend sold at a discount of around \$7.50 a barrel to the Minas Indonesia Crude Price (ICP), the Chinese traders Unipet and Chinaoil, as well as European trader Arcadia.

This week, India's Oil and Natural Gas Corp (ONGC), which holds a 25% stake in the Great Nile project, sold a 600,000-barrel Nile Blend cargo for May loading at a discount of around \$6.50 a barrel to Minas ICP.

Darfur tribe denies link to Al-Turabi party

Suna website, 24/03/09 - Sultan Bahr-al-Din, the Sultan of the Al-Masalit Tribe, has denied that the tribe pledged allegiance to Dr Hassan al-Turabi, Secretary General of the PCP. He said those members of the tribe who had visited Al-Turabi's house had "represented only themselves."

Israeli planes conducted air strike on arms smugglers in Sudan - CBS

Sudan Tribune website, 25/03/09, Washington - An air strike that targeted a convoy of arm smugglers inside Sudan last January was launched by Israeli planes and not American ones, according to the CBS. According to the *CBS* News report, unidentified US officials disputed the report and said that "Israeli aircraft carried out the attack". "Israeli intelligence is said to have discovered that weapons were being trucked through Sudan, heading north toward Egypt, whereupon they would cross the Sinai Desert and be smuggled into Hamas-held territory in Gaza" the officials said.

Yesterday a Sudanese government official said that a "major power bombed small trucks carrying arms" northwest of Port Sudan city killing Sudanese, Eritreans and Ethiopians passengers.

Ex-NZ PM to head UNDP?

AFP, 25/03/09 - Former New Zealand Prime Minister Helen Clark will be appointed to head the UNDP, according to local media reports on Wednesday. New Zealand political leaders would not confirm the appointment, which is expected to be announced by SG Ban Ki-moon.

Eritrean opposition reportedly raids military hospital in southwest

Sudan Tribune website, 22/03/09 - Eritrean opposition Democratic Movement for the Liberation of Eritrean Kunama (DMLEK), on Sunday said that it had destroyed a military hospital located in the south-west region of Gash-Barka on 16 March. The rebel group pledged to intensify its attacks against the government. "The military operations will be intensified until the repressive regime is toppled," a statement said. The DMLEK military campaign against Eritrean military facilities began last year. It accuses the Asmara government of having launched an ethnic cleansing campaign against Eritrea's Kunama minority, which has aligned itself with the opposition Eritrean Democratic Alliance.

Commentary

In its editorial piece today titled, "From Relief to Productive Peace" *Al-Ayaam* daily points out that USG John Holmes was right to say that the humanitarian situation in Darfur would remain stable for only the short term. What the USG missed out on is that these aid operations are emergency operations that should not continue for the longer term and become a way of life. The editorial said that concerned parties should instead provide political solutions to end the crisis in Darfur so that the people would no longer need relief. The paper also points out that Darfur would be better off if part of the funds the UN uses on its Darfur peacekeepers and on humanitarian activities were used to fund development activities in the next three years.

The paper calls on the UN to re-arrange its priorities and on Sudanese people to seriously work towards peace in Darfur.

Links

Al-Bashir and Sudan's Sovereignty. [Op-Ed]. By Abdullah Iskandar. *Al-Hayat (UK)*.25/03/2009. (Noon).

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Al-Jazeera TV airs part of message on Sudan by Al-Qa'idah's Al-Zawahiri. [News Story]. *BBC Monitoring*.25/03/2009. (Noon).

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