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Media Monitoring Report

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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

Republican decrees issued, relieving Pagan Amum, appointing new ministers

Today's **Local dailies** reported that the President of the Republic Omer Al-Bashir issued republican decree relieving Pagan Amum from his post as Cabinet Affairs Minister and new ministers were appointed.

The President also issued a decree appointing Costa Manibi as Cabinet Minister, Professor George Boring Miami as Minister for Investment and Dr Peter Adock as Minister for Higher Education and Scientific Research.

The President also appointed Ali Majok Al-Mumin (SLM-Free Will) as State Minister at the Council of Ministers, to replace Prof. Musa who passed away recently.

GoSS Vice President Riak Machar told **Akhbar Al Yom** that the ministerial reshuffle involving SPLM's portfolios in the GoNU were conducted after consultations within SPLM and categorically denied that Amum was relieved because of his recent statements describing Sudan as a "failed and corrupt state,"

Machar said minor ministerial reshuffle would also be conducted in GoSS soon.

Similarly, **Al-Ahdath** newspaper stated that it contacted SPLM leaders yesterday who confirmed that the presidential decrees were issued after consultation with SPLM and they are consistent with SPLM constitution which provides that a secretary general should be free to concentrate on party matters and they denied that Amum was relieved because of his recent statements that Sudan is a "failed and corrupt state"

GoSS estimates elections cost

Al-Sahafa carried a report stating that GoSS, in collaboration with UN, estimated that elections in southern Sudan might cost more than \$ 150 millions.

GoSS Presidency Minister Luka Biong said the estimate was worked out by GoSS in collaboration with UN office in southern Sudan. They have determined the cost of infra structure and other facilities needed for elections in southern Sudan including the right to self-determination process.

Bion said a team from both sides tours the ten States and estimated that elections would cost more than \$ 150 millions. He reiterated SPLM's commitment to holding elections on schedule.

Taha to lead Sudan delegation for UNGA in NY

Sudan News Agency (**SUNA**) reported that VP Taha is to lead Sudan delegation for the coming 63rd session of the UN General Assembly, scheduled in New York during September 24 - October 03. Taha will also take part at meetings of the African Peace and Security Council on September 22nd on the sidelines of the UNGA in NY.

In a statement to SUNA, Sudan Envoy to the United Nations, Ambassador Abdul-Mahmoud Abdul-Halim, said that Taha would deliver Sudan address before the UNGA which will tackle the developments in Sudan, the Initiative of the People of Sudan for solution of Darfur issue, the government's efforts to realize comprehensive peace in Sudan, besides the ICC. Abdul-Halim said that Sudan diplomatic mission in NY arranged a number of meetings for Taha with a number of personalities and heads of delegations attending the General Assembly meeting.

Foreign Ministry says astonished by Ocampo's request for report on Kalma incidents

Akhbar Al Yom stated that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs expressed astonishment over Ocampo's request for update on incidents in Kalma camp and also strongly reacted to the US Envoy Richard Williamson's statements that Sudan is using relief as a cover for operations within Kalma camp.

Spokesperson of the Ministry Ali Al Sadiq has turned Ocampo's attention to the fact that ICC decisions were not binding on Sudan so it will not provide information whatsoever to the ICC. He described Ocampo's request as "strange".

The spokesperson also reacted to Richard Williamson saying this is "unacceptable". "In what capacity Williamson speaks," he wondered.

British and French State Ministers to visit Khartoum soon

Al-Sudani reported that the British State Minister Mark M. Brown and his French counterpart are expected to visit Khartoum shortly to discuss the possibility of deferring ICC indictment of President Bashir.

A high level Eritrean delegation is also expected to visit Khartoum for consultations with the political forces and Sudan government on Darfur and the Arab League's initiative to address the issue.

LRA leader to sign peace agreement on Wednesday in Juba

Al-Ahdath carried a report stating that LRA leader agreed to sign peace agreement in Juba on Wednesday.

A press release signed by LRA chief negotiator and spokesperson N. Matsenga stated that Kony agreed to sign GoSS-sponsored peace agreement on Wednesday in Juba. However, the press released said LRA would retain its forces and would not go for DDR until the ICC decision against LRA chief is addressed.

Minnawi accuses UNAMID of inaction

Al-Ahdath stated that SLM leader Minni Minnawi has criticized UNAMID troops accusing them of inaction as they standby while civilians in Darfur are being attacked.

Minnawi has reportedly ordered yesterday the closure of his office in the Presidency.

Websites/International News Coverage

Sudan VP Taha instrumental in mobilizing Janjaweed – ICC

15/9/08, **Sudan Tribune**, by Wasil Ali, (WASHINGTON) – Sudan 2nd Vice president Ali Osman

Taha played a key role in mobilizing the notorious Janjaweed militias during the Darfur conflict, according to International Criminal Court (ICC) documents seen by Sudan Tribune over the weekend.

The ICC released a 113-page heavily redacted version of the application containing the request for an arrest warrant for Sudan president Omer Hassan Al-Bashir which was submitted under seal meaning it would not be released to the public in its original form. Per ICC rules any application submitted by the prosecutor could be under seal in terms of its mere existence, content or both.

The ICC prosecutor Luis Moreno-Ocampo announced in mid-July that he requested an arrest warrant for Al-Bashir. Ocampo filed 10 charges: three counts of genocide, five of crimes against humanity and two of murder and accused Al-Bashir of masterminding a campaign to get rid of the African tribes in Darfur; Fur, Masalit and Zaghawa. Even though the prosecutor did not file charges against Taha, the application highlights his role during the violent conflict in Western Sudan.

Ali Osman Taha “played an important role in implementing Al-Bashir’s plan, in particular by assisting in the mobilization of Militia/Janjaweed” the application says. “GoS officials released from prison tribal leader Musa Hilal and Col. Shukurtallah. Vice President Taha instructed Hilal to mobilize his tribesmen into the force that became known as the ‘Quick, Light and Horrible Forces of Misteriha”.

The ICC prosecutor also mentioned names of other Sudanese officials that assisted in recruiting Janjaweed including Salah Gosh, the head of Sudan’s National Security and Intelligence Service (NISS), Presidential Assistant Nafi Ali Nafi, Defense Minister Abdel-Rahim Mohamed Hussein, Head of Military Intelligence and Deputy Chief of Staff General Awad Ibn Auf and State Minister for Humanitarian Affairs Ahmad Haroun.

Taha was the top official in charge of handling the Darfur crisis during 2003-2005. He secured the release of Hilal from prison to help mobilize Arab tribes to crush the Darfur rebellion. Hilal was serving a jail sentence for leading an armed robbery against the Central Bank of Nyala in which one policeman was killed.

Last June a senior Sudanese official told Sudan Tribune that Taha strongly opposed turning over two suspects accused of war crimes in Darfur to the ICC despite other National Congress Party (NCP) officials favoring that.

Taha was quoted in the ICC application as telling 15 Janjaweed commanders that the war in Darfur “had been imposed upon them and that, as Arabs, they should preserve the unity of their land and religion”.

“We are willing to supply weapons, ammunition, camels, salary and horses. Martyrs will get money. For every wounded personnel, we are ready to transport them to Khartoum and even send them abroad for medical treatment. Please also accept greetings from the President Omer Al Bashir.” Taha also said, “I don’t want one single village of Zurgas in Darfur. All the Zurga lands are yours”.

[Zurga is a derogatory term used to describe members of the African tribes in Darfur.]

Throughout the application the prosecutor provides numerous examples of the direct link between the Janjaweed and the government. Ocampo alleged that Al-Bashir was maintained

contact with Janjaweed leaders such as Ali Kushayb, Hamid Duwa'i, Musa Hilal and Mohammed Hamdan Himeiti.

Himeiti for instance was alleged to have met twice with Al-Bashir including once at his home "to receive orders to carry out campaigns in Um Sidr and Kiryari in Northern Darfur after they had been taken by Darfur rebels".

In asserting Al-Bashir's responsibility for the Darfur crimes the ICC showed how the Sudanese president had ultimate control over the progress of operations in Darfur. Al-Bashir told the Sudanese army that he "didn't want any villages or prisoners, only scorched earth", the prosecution said.

"Speaking on national television in 2004, Al-Bashir told the Sudanese public that he had given the Armed Forces a carte blanche (in Arabic "atlakto yad al-jaysh") in Darfur not to take "asra" (war prisoners) or inflict injuries".

The ICC prosecutor also said that Al-Bashir dismissed a number of officials who opposed using the Janjaweed militias in Darfur because it would lead to crimes. "In June and December 2003, Al-Bashir also dismissed about 20,000 members of the Armed Forces, most of who came from Darfur".

General Abd-al-Rahman Zayn al-Abidin told the ICC team in a testimony in Khartoum that he "encouraged the mobilization of the Militia/Janjaweed and provided weapons to them". He further accused the Sudanese head of state of protecting and rewarding individuals who committed crimes in Darfur.

In January 2008 Musa Hilal was appointed by Al-Bashir to hold the post of an adviser for the ministry of federal government despite his criminal background, drawing heavy criticisms from Western countries and human right groups.

Al-Bashir blocked a move by the Sudanese justice ministry to investigate Haroun after he was indicted by the ICC.

The prosecution said that Al-Bashir used the government agencies and the media to conceal crimes and to emphasize that the situation Darfur is stable and under control.

The National Commission of Inquiry (NCOI) formed by Al-Bashir to investigate war crimes in Darfur was "following strict limits".

The ICC quoting an unidentified source/witness who claimed that "following orders from the President and/or the Vice President, the final report of the NCOI omitted reference to Musa Hilal and to the documented criminal activity of Col. Shukurtallah in West Darfur, Lt. Hagaw in Tawila and Adam Jama (the Commissioner of Nyala)".

The NCOI identified militia leader Ali Kushayb and Military Intelligence Officer-Lt. Hamdi to be investigated. However Kushayb was released from custody after conflicting reports on his whereabouts.

The ICC application said that Al-Bashir blocked humanitarian aid for months after the eruption of the armed conflict despite the rising mortality rates among the displaced Darfuris. "Between October 2003 and January 2004 the GoS almost entirely obstructed international assistance to displaced civilians and provided no aid of its own" the prosecution said.

The ICC cited numerous examples of brutalities conducted by the Sudanese army and the militias throughout the conflict in Darfur.

In one example of Kyla village in South Darfur inhabited by the Fur tribe in August 2003, Sudanese forces and Janjaweed militias “encircled the village as villagers fled to the mosque or the local school” according to an eye witness who visited the area from Nyala right after the attack.

The witness visited the village in the aftermath of the government attack where he and other locals “saw numerous dead bodies as they walked through the village, including that of his uncle and of two local women”.

“A baby had also been killed and was lying on his back with his penis cut off and stuffed in his mouth” the witness said in a testimony that withheld the names of the victims he encountered. The group discovered and buried a total of 67 bodies in the village.

The prosecution gave examples of specific incidents that crimes inflicted upon the Fur, Masalit and Zaghawa satisfied the definition of genocide under the 1948 convention.

He also gave percentages of villages predominantly inhabited by the African tribes that were destroyed and/or abandoned as compared to those of the Arabs; Fur villages 81% (165 villages) were destroyed and abandoned, and 16% (33 villages) were abandoned but not destroyed; Masalit villages 57% (62 villages) were destroyed and 28% (31 villages) were abandoned but not destroyed; Arab villages - Fewer than 1% percent (1 village) were destroyed. Not a single village inhabited predominantly by Arabs was abandoned.

Moreover the application alleges that Sudanese forces targeted civilians in the villages despite the lack of presence by rebels in it.

“Al-Bashir’s forces singled out for attack those villages and small towns inhabited mainly by members of the target groups. The attackers went out of their way to spare from attack villages inhabited predominantly by so called “Arab” tribes aligned with Al-Bashir, even where they were located very near villages and towns inhabited predominantly by members of the target groups” the prosecutor said.

“Forces controlled by Al-Bashir consistently targeted not rebel forces, but civilians from the target groups. Attacks were typically launched against civilian targets, and did not cease until the town or village, as an entirety, had been victimized and its population forcibly displaced”.

The prosecutor then goes on to explain to the judges the issue of motive vs. intent in committing genocide using legal precedents and its application in the case of Darfur using the pattern of destruction and crimes that hit primarily the African tribes in Darfur.

The office of the prosecutor cited 10 sources used in his investigation including recorded interviews of Sudanese officials NCOI findings. However he redacted the names of two of the 10 sources.

At the conclusion of the application Ocampo made four requests of the judges including entering a finding “that there are reasonable grounds to believe that Al-Bashir committed the crimes charged in this application” and issuing an arrest warrant.

However the prosecutor withheld the other two requests he made to the judges of Pre-Trial

Chamber I.

Ocampo left the door open for changing the arrest warrant to a summons to appear if circumstances change and Al-Bashir appears willing to appear before court. (Sudan Tribune website)

Sudan launches fresh attacks in Darfur-faction leader

By Andrew Heavens

KHARTOUM (**Reuters**) - Sudanese forces on Sunday launched fresh attacks on a base held by Darfur rebels who signed a 2006 peace deal with the government, the faction's leader said.

Minni Arcua Minnawi, leader of the Sudan Liberation Army group, said he did not know why his headquarters in the East Jabel Marra area was attacked on Saturday and Sunday.

The rebel leader, who became a presidential assistant under the 2006 Darfur Peace Agreement, said he was closing his office in Sudan's presidential palace in protest.

No one was available from Sudan's armed forces to comment.

Other rebels say the fighting is the latest in a string of assaults on their positions in North Darfur over the past week.

Sudan has stepped up diplomatic efforts to suspend a move by the International Criminal Court to indict its president for genocide and other war crimes in Darfur.

More than 200,000 people have died since rebels from the remote western region took up arms against the government in early 2003, say international experts.

Khartoum mobilized mostly Arab militia fighters to quell the revolt and now stand accused of widespread atrocities. Khartoum puts the death count at 10,000 and says the western media exaggerates the conflict.

"They attacked us last night and they attacked us again this morning," said Minnawi. "Both times we defeated them ... I do not know why the government troops are attacking us. This is how the government of Sudan behaves."

DIRECT ATTACK

He said the base close to the town of Tabit, about 50 km (30 miles) south west of North Darfur's capital El Fasher, was attacked by government troops and allied militias, adding it was too early to estimate casualties.

Areas controlled by Minnawi's fighters have been attacked by government troops in the past. But the leader's Khartoum-based chief of staff Mohamed Bashir Abdullah said it was the first time the army had launched a direct attack on his men.

Minnawi left Khartoum and moved to another base in Darfur three months ago, saying he would not return until the Sudanese government found the will to implement the 2006 deal.

Abdullah said he had now received orders "to close down the office at the presidential palace and deliver the keys to the palace authorities."

He said Minnawi would keep his position as a presidential assistant and remain a signatory to the Darfur Peace Agreement. The office closure was a "symbolic protest" but Sunday's attacks marked a "turning point" in the group's relationship with the government, he added.

Leaders from three other rebel groups confirmed the attacks near Tabit and reported other clashes with government forces across North Darfur on Sunday.

"Bombing has been continuing up to now," said Sherif Harir from the Sudan Liberation Army's Unity wing, saying more than a week of ground and air attacks had forced residents to flee 20 villages in the remote area.

Harir said Unity fighters had killed more than 200 soldiers and forced the government troops to retreat to El Fasher and the town of Tawila. The figures could not be verified independently.

Reports of the fighting in the region were confirmed by commanders from the SLA faction led by Abdel Wahed Mohamed el-Nur and the insurgent United Resistance Front.

An army spokesman on Saturday said troops had entered the area to arrest armed bandits but did not mention any clashes.

Sudan army attacks peace signatory Darfur rebels

(AFP) - Sudanese armed forces have attacked the only Darfur rebel group to have signed a 2006 peace deal, killing four ex-rebels and threatening to end a two-year alliance, their leader said on Sunday.

Minni Minnawi, a leader of the Sudan Liberation Army (SLA) faction turned presidential assistant after signing the peace deal with Khartoum, said his forces came under attack at their base at Kolge in the east Jebel Marra region.

"We want to respect the peace process but we are fighting in self-defence," Minnawi said, speaking by satellite telephone from the base in the war-ravaged western Sudanese region.

"They attacked us with Antonov aircraft, helicopters and tanks," he added, accusing the ruling National Congress Party (NCP) of killing off the peace process.

"If the peace agreement is over, it is over from one side -- the NCP side," he said.

Four of his troops were killed and 16 wounded, while the ex-rebels captured 20 government vehicles, he said.

Government forces have now returned to El-Fasher, the capital of North Darfur state, he added.

Minnawi returned to Darfur three months ago, citing frustration with the poor implementation of the peace agreement.

"This was definitely a deliberate attack on our forces, because our base is very well known," said Mohammed Bashir, who heads Minnawi's office at the presidential palace in Khartoum.

"I am extremely surprised that the government has done this, but the government forces have now been chased back to El-Fasher."

Rebels from another SLA faction, which did not sign the peace deal, said that government forces on Friday launched a different offensive, southwest of El-Fasher, having by Sunday burnt three villages to the ground.

Sudan trial adjourned as defendants say they're minors

(AFP)--The trial of 19 alleged Darfur rebels accused of taking part in an unprecedented attack on the Sudanese capital in May was adjourned Sunday after six defendants said they were minors.

The judge at the special court in Khartoum ordered that the six - five of whom said they were 17 and one who said he was 16 - be given medical checks to confirm their ages.

Prosecutor Nasereldine Mohammed called for the defendants to face "heavy punishment" if convicted. The trial is to resume October 8.

Judges have already sentenced 50 people to death for their role in the assault which saw guerrillas from the rebel Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) reach the capital May 10.

They remain on death row pending a final appeal.

A further 19 people are scheduled to be tried next week, with another 22 waiting for a court hearing date to be set, defense lawyer Adam Bakr said.

More than 222 people were killed when the rebels drove upwards of 1,000 kilometers across the desert to Omdurman, just across the River Nile from the presidential palace on the Khartoum side.

Last month, Amnesty International condemned the Sudanese authorities' use of special courts for the trials and accused them of holding hundreds of others without charge since the May attack.

The United Nations has also voiced concern, calling for comprehensive appeal procedures and for Khartoum to abolish capital punishment.

Powerful Sudanese minister loses cabinet job

KHARTOUM, 14/9/08 (Reuters) - Pagan Amum, Secretary General of south Sudan's dominant Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), has been "relieved of his post" as Minister of the Council of Ministers in Sudan's national coalition government, according to a report by the state Suna news agency.

SPLM officials said the move was as the result of a new party constitution that meant members of its governing secretariat could not stand for parliament. "He was not fired," said Ann Ito, the head of SPLM's secretariat in the south. "It is just the new SPLM constitution." A source in Sudan's presidential office confirmed that the move had just been "procedural".

But the announcement and the abrupt way it was made will be welcomed by many northern politicians who were enraged when Amum was quoted describing Sudan as a "failed and corrupt state" during a public forum in Khartoum earlier this year. He was briefly suspended and faced calls for his resignation.

The SPLM joined a coalition government with the north's dominant National Congress Party under the terms of a 2005 peace deal that ended more than two decades of north-south civil

war. Relations between the two former foes have remained strained. Amum, who is out of the country on a trip to the United States, was unavailable for comment.

A second presidential decree announced a reshuffle naming new ministers for investment and higher education as well as the council of ministers post.

South Africa Mbeki to visit Sudan Monday for talks over ICC

(Sudan Tribune) — South African President Thabo Mbeki is expected today Monday in Khartoum for talks with his Sudanese counterpart on ways to block a possible arrest warrant against him over Darfur crimes.

President Thabo Mbeki who had to delay his visit to Sudan several times due to the Zimbabwean crisis, will arrive to Khartoum from Zimbabwe where he will witness the signing of a power-sharing agreement for the country, Pretoria said on Sunday. .

"Talks between the two sides will include issues of bilateral relations in addition to efforts to resolve the Darfur problem as well as allegations of the International Criminal Court," said Ali Sadiq the spokesperson of the foreign ministry today.

Mbeki is expected to reiterate support for African efforts to suspend the ICC investigations in Darfur. Last July, he said Bashir's indictment would hinder the implementation of a north-south deal and compromise chances to settle the Darfur crisis. At the end of last August, South Africa resolved to renew bid to defer ICC indictment against President Al-Bashir.

Mbeki will also meet the First Vice president Salva Kiir Mayadrit to discuss the implementation of the CPA. Mbeki will be accompanied by Foreign Affairs Minister Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma.