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Media Monitoring Report

United Nations Mission In Sudan/ Public Information Office

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Highlights

Local Arabic and English language press

Trial of Militia leader Ali Kushayb and others to begin tomorrow in El Geneina

Al-Sahafa reports Khartoum yesterday categorically denied reports attributed to an anonymous diplomat to the effect that Sudan Government intimated its desire to France to relieve Ahmed Haroun from his post to be investigated for his alleged role in Darfur crimes. Sudan Ambassador to France Sulaiman Mustafa has dismissed **Sudan Tribune's** report, noting the delegation headed by the Presidential Assistant Nafie Ali Nafie had never intimated such a desire. "Sudan's position is firm, no Sudanese national will be handed over for trial abroad," he said.

CNN website attributed a report to **SUNA** stating that the militia leader Ali Kushayb, SAF captain Hamdi Sharaf Al-Din and Abdul Rahman Dawood would appear before a special court tomorrow in the town of El Geneina for their alleged role in Darfur crimes.

Sudanese Justice Minister Abdul Basit Sabdarat speaking at press conference in Cairo yesterday said the Arab Justice Ministers' support to Sudan was strong. "If an arrest warrant is issued for Bashir, it will provoke a devastating reaction," he declared. "Covert and overt dialogue with France is underway to address the ICC issue," he added.

Al-Intibaha reports the Peoples Defence Forces (PDF) General Coordinator Kamal Al-Din Ibrahim has strongly rejected the charges against the PDF and Ali Kushayb for alleged role in Darfur crimes. Ibrahim has also criticized those demanding dissolution of the PDF.

SPLA to raise European support to JIUs

Al-Sahafa reports SPLA has decided to raise the issue of a desire by five European countries to support JIUs, at JDB meeting tomorrow in Khartoum. SAF had earlier rejected the proposal.

JDB official Pior Ajang told the paper that the JDB meeting was postponed from Monday to Wednesday at the Officers Club. He said the meeting will discuss JIU budget and training. He said the SPLA representatives would raise the issue of a desire by five European countries to support the JIUs.

MFA summons Ambassadors of Kenya and Ethiopia

Local dailies report the MFA summoned separately yesterday the Ethiopian and Kenyan Ambassadors in Khartoum to protest the arms shipment seized by pirates off Somali coast and the cargo plane landed in Juba. The MFA asked the two Ambassadors to convey the protest to their respective Governments and expressed astonishment as the two countries maintain close relations with Sudan and they are founding members of the IGAD which sponsored the CPA and they are also members of the AEC.

The Ethiopian Ambassador to Sudan Abdo Sulaiman speaking at press conference yesterday in Khartoum said the reports by the local Sudanese newspapers were exaggerated, noting that forty Ethiopian companies were participating in Juba's trade fair organized by Ethiopian companies in collaboration with southern Sudanese companies. He said the arms to be displayed at the fair would be returned to Ethiopia after the fair is wrapped up.

SRSG to address symposium tomorrow

Al-Sahafa reports the SRSG Ashraf Qazi will address a symposium tomorrow on “Sudan’s peace process”. The symposium is organized by the University of Khartoum’s Institute of Peace Researches. (Venue: Faculty of Arts’ Mekki Shibeik Hall. Time: Wednesday at 11:00 am. The symposium will be conducted in English and Arabic and is open to public)

Misseriya-Dinka conclude reconciliation conference

Khartoum Monitor reports an informed source in Muglad (South Kordofan) said the Misseriya-Dinka reconciliation conference was concluded yesterday. The Conference was organized by the Sudan University’s Centre of Peace Culture Studies in collaboration with USAID and was attended by 250 civil society leaders.

The Centre’s Director Dr. Suleiman Yahia Mohamed said the conference aimed at promoting the culture of peace and called on conferees and civil society organizations to disseminate peace among the tribes of the area.

President Bashir addresses Parliament 7th session

Local dailies report President Bashir while addressing the National Assembly’s 7th session yesterday has reiterated Sudan Government firm position that it would not cooperate with the ICC, noting he was proud of the national consensus. He said the Government was committed to holding upcoming elections on schedule, adding results of the recently-conducted population census and North-South border demarcation would be finalized during the coming weeks to pave the way for elections and referendum. He said Government was serious to implement the CPA citing Abyei as an example. He has revealed ongoing contacts to coordinate Darfur initiatives and expressed keenness to implement the DPA and cooperate with UNAMID.

Akhir Lahza reports the President told the Parliament that the Presidency would announce formation of the elections commission next week and urged the political parties to get ready for upcoming elections.

Eritrean President to visit Sudan

Al-Watan reports the Eritrean President Issias Afwerki is to arrive in Khartoum during the two coming days to discuss bilateral relations and prospective Eritrean role towards efforts to address Darfur issue. Eritrea maintains good relations with Darfur movements which still have offices in Asmara.

Jordanian Monarch receives Sudanese Defence Minister

Al-Intibaha reports the Jordanian King Abdullah II yesterday met the Sudanese Defence Minister in Amman. A royal statement said discussions focused on bilateral relations, training and coordination between armies in the two countries in various areas.

Websites/International News Coverage

Sudan Arrests Militia Chief Facing Trial

By JEFFREY GETTLEMAN, **New York Times** (13/10/08) NAIROBI, Kenya — The Sudanese government has arrested one of the most wanted men in the country, a notorious janjaweed militia leader charged by an international court with orchestrating mass murder in Darfur, Sudanese officials disclosed on Monday.

The move is widely being interpreted as a way for Sudan to improve its image abroad and try to head off the possible genocide prosecution of the country's president, Omar Hassan al-Bashir, in the ICC.

Human rights groups have said the militia leader, Ali Kushayb— also known as Ali Muhammad Ali Abd-al-Rahman and the “colonel of colonels” — led attacks on civilians and ordered villages to be burned to the ground and the women in them raped. In 2007, the ICC charged him with crimes against humanity and demanded that Sudan hand him over. Sudan refused, denying that he had done anything wrong and insisting that any criminals it did arrest would be handled in its own courts.

But with Sudan under increasing pressure to curb the violence in Darfur and Mr. Bashir being pursued by international prosecutors, the government appears to have changed its tack. Mr. Kushayb is now in police custody, said Rabie A. Atti, a government spokesman, without disclosing where he was being kept. Nor did he say whether the government would turn the militia leader over to the international court.

“We are investigating him to see if he has committed crimes in Darfur or not,” Mr. Rabie said Monday evening.

Shortly afterward, Sudan's justice minister reiterated the government's longstanding position that it would conduct its own trials for war crimes suspects, according to The Associated Press.

In July, the prosecutor of the International Criminal Court in The Hague formally requested an arrest warrant for Mr. Bashir, saying that he had “masterminded” massacres in Darfur and that he should stand trial for genocide. The judges in The Hague are deliberating whether to push ahead with the prosecution. African and Arab leaders are urging the court to drop the case, arguing that it could unleash a backlash against civilians and aid workers and lessen the dim prospects for peace in Darfur, a region in western Sudan where hundreds of thousands of people have died in a complex conflict that seems to have no end.

In August, Sudanese officials said they had been offered a deal by France in which they would hand over another suspect, Ahmad Haroun, a government minister accused by the international court of war crimes, in exchange for a suspension of Mr. Bashir's prosecution. In that light, the arrest of Mr. Kushayb could be a compromise on a compromise. Instead of giving up a government minister who is suspected of committing wide-scale atrocities, the Sudanese have chosen to arrest a tribal leader who is one degree of separation away from the government.

Analysts said the arrest might help the Sudanese authorities appear to be cooperating, without going after one of their own. “Whilst my heart hopes that this is the start of a real, Sudanese-led, judicial process, my head tells me it's yet another ploy by Khartoum to buy some time,” said James Smith, chief executive of Aegis Trust, an antigenocide group.

But when asked if Mr. Kushayb had become a bargaining chip, Mr. Rabie said no. “This is not something for show,” he said. “This is part of President Omar Hassan al-Bashir's commitment to bring a final and comprehensive solution to Darfur.”

Sudan to conduct its own Darfur trials

By SARAH EL DEEB, **Associated Press** 13/10/08, CAIRO- Sudan will conduct its own trials for suspects implicated in crimes in the war torn Darfur region, the country's Justice Minister said yesterday, without specifying when they might take place.

Abdel Basset Sabdarat told reporters during a visit to Cairo a special prosecutor is nearly finished with a number of reports on unspecified crimes committed in Darfur where rebels are battling government forces and civilians are caught in the crossfire.

Rights groups say Sudan's legal system is not equipped to handle genocide and war crime trials, while rebels say any Sudanese-held trial would be a sham and no substitute for international justice.

Sabdarat denied the announcement had anything to do with a pending International Criminal Court decision on whether to issue an arrest warrant for Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir on genocide charges over the situation in Darfur.

"The trials are not like making omelets," Sabdarat said when asked if the trials will be held before an expected international court decision at the end of the year. "We will try everyone for whom there is a legal base to bring them to trial."

On Sunday, Sabdarat told The Associated Press that Kushayeb is in custody and will be held accountable for unspecified crimes. Haroun, however, has no official complaints lodged against him and will not stand trial, the justice minister said.

Ahmed Hussein, spokesman for rebel Justice and Equality Movement denounced the Sudanese trials, as "propaganda" tools for al-Bashir's government, noting that the head of the judiciary is a member of the president's party.

"All they are doing now is a reaction to counter the measures and the (campaign) of the ICC," he said. "Are they going to try to al-Bashir? He is the one that ordered the crimes in Darfur. Or are they going after small fish?"

Sudan protests neighbours arming south

KHARTOUM, AP, 13/10/08 -- Sudan's Foreign Ministry has summoned diplomats from neighbouring Ethiopia and Kenya to protest their alleged involvement in passing weapons on to semi-autonomous southern Sudan. **SUNA** reports that the ministry complained to the Ethiopian ambassador about an aircraft shipment of weapons that arrived Friday in Juba. The second ambassador to be summoned yesterday was from Kenya, which ordered a shipment of battle tanks from Ukraine that was later hijacked by Somali pirates. **SUNA** said it had obtained a manifesto showing the weapons were ultimately destined for southern Sudan via Kenya. Kenya has denied such allegations in the past.

Sudan president calls for national solution to Darfur crisis

Sudan Tribune website, 13/10/08 (KHARTOUM) – The Sudanese president Omer Hassan Al-Bashir has called on Darfur rebel groups to "resort to peace" and work on "reconciliation and healing". Al-Bashir who was addressing the opening session of the Sudanese national assembly also announced that the 'People of Sudan' initiative will be officially launched on Thursday.

The Sudanese head of state also said that the initiative will be coordinated with the Qatari mediation efforts and the joint mediation between the United Nations and the African Union, led by Djibril Bassole. "Preliminary results of those contacts show that we are in the right direction towards peace" he said.

Al-Bashir who faces a possible arrest warrant by the International Criminal Court (ICC) said that Sudanese judicial institutions are capable of carrying out their duties saying the move by The Hague based court "increase our responsibility to achieve justice and the rule of law".

"Our position is clear and categorical in refusing to deal with it [ICC]" he said.

Al-Bashir also stressed that the elections would take place on schedule in accordance with the terms of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) that ended the civil war between the North and South.

However he acknowledged that there are "technical requirements" including the census results, demarcation of the border North-South borders, implementing security arrangements for the three peace deals in the South, Eastern and Darfur.

Darfur Minnawi to return to Sudanese capital this week

Sudan Tribune website, 13/10/08 (KHARTOUM) – The senior presidential assistant Minni Arcua Minnawi is reportedly returning to Khartoum this month following an agreement he signed last month with Sudanese 2nd Vice-President Ali Osman Taha.

The daily independent Al-Sahafa said that Minnawi will arrive in Khartoum on Thursday to take part in the formal kickoff of the "People of Sudan" initiative launched by president Omer Hassan Al-Bashir.

In a related development, the Sudanese armed forces signed an agreement with Minnawi military wing establishing a detailed roadmap for restoring security in Darfur through cooperation of both sides.

Salva Kiir holds contacts with Chad over bilateral relations

Sudan Tribune website, 13/10/08 (KHARTOUM) – The First Vice President has undertaken contacts with the Chadian President to normalize Sudan Chad relations, according to Yasir Arman, SPLM's deputy secretary-general.

At a press conference in Khartoum yesterday, Arman revealed there had been contacts by Salva Kiir with the Chadian President Idriss Deby to normalize relations between the two countries. The SPLM official told the press conference that the stability of the two countries was interlinked. He stressed the importance of non-interference in their respective internal affairs and pointed out the significant role they could play as neighbouring countries in helping resolve the Darfur conflict.

Last week, Sudanese Presidential Assistant Nafi Ali Nafi told a press conference in Paris that Chad must first improve its relations with Sudan if N'djamena is to contribute to resolution of the Darfur conflict. He also said, "We are convinced they can play a positive role particularly with the Justice and Equality Movement."

SPLM officials to rejoin Darfur governments

Sudan Tribune website, 13/10/08, (KHARTOUM) —NCP and SPLM leaders have reached agreement that 18 SPLM officials, who resigned executive and legislative positions in the Darfur states to protest SAF's excessive use of force resulting in the deaths of dozens of IDPs in Kalama camp on August 25, are to resume their positions. A joint declaration issued in Khartoum said the agreement was part of consultations aimed at reaching a just and peaceful solution to the Darfur issue. It was signed by Yasser Arman for the SPLM and Mahdi Mandour for the NCP.

Indonesian police unit arrives to boost efforts of UN-African Union Darfur force **UN News Service**, 13/10/08 - A group of 130 officers from the Indonesian Formed Police Unit

(FPU) has arrived in Darfur to strengthen UNAMID. The Indonesian contingent will be based in El Fasher.

FPU's are comprised of police officers who have received specialized training in high-risk operations. The Indonesian unit is only the second FPU, along with the Bangladeshi unit deployed earlier this year – in the region out of the 19 such contingents recommended for UNAMID.

The new unit has arrived at a crucial time, UNAMID Deputy Police Commissioner for Operations, Adeyemi Ogunjemilusi, said yesterday, noting that its services are especially needed to support the work of the UNAMID Police, particularly in providing security to IDPs in the region. "The success of this mission will largely depend on your specialized training. I have no doubt that you have the ability to cope with the challenging environment in Darfur and will deliver your services to the people of Darfur," he told the unit upon their arrival.

Security for Darfur's IDPs was among the issues raised during USG Alain Le Roy's visit to the region last week. During a stop in El Fasher, representatives from three IDP camps requested Mr. Le Roy to boost the presence of UNAMID in and around the camps to ensure the security and protection of civilians. Mr. Le Roy reassured them that UNAMID is taking measures to address their concerns, including plans to deploy at least another 4,500 troops by the end of this year. This would bring the total deployment level to about 65 per cent of the envisioned 26,000 troops and police.

"Both the Government of Sudan and the United Nations are committed to accelerate the deployment of UNAMID," Mr. Le Roy told reporters after meeting with top Sudanese officials in Khartoum on Sunday. He welcomed last week's tripartite meeting in Khartoum between Government, UN and AU, which he said would speed up deployment of the force in the coming weeks and months. Mr. Le Roy noted that the security situation in Darfur had improved recently but that there were still serious concerns about banditry and potential clashes. The political process offered the only means to achieve peace, he stressed, adding that the Joint AU/UN Chief Mediator Djibril Bassole is working hard to engage the main actors in order to reach a framework agreement. He also welcomed the Qatari initiative in support of the Chief Mediator's work. Mr. Le Roy and Sudanese officials also discussed implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA).

Rights watchdog urges more pressure on Ethiopia over NGOs bill

Sudan Tribune website, 13/10/08, NEW YORK – Human Rights Watch today called on donor governments to put more pressure on the Ethiopian government to withdraw a draft law dealing with NGOs and civil society. The bill is expected to be introduced in parliament this month.

The bill called 'Charities and Societies Proclamation' (CSO law) would provide the government a potent tool to intimidate and weaken Ethiopia's long-beleaguered civil society, the rights body said.

"The only reason to have such a repressive law is if it would be used to strangle Ethiopia's few remaining independent voices," said Georgette Gagnon, Africa director at Human Rights Watch. "Donor governments should make clear to Ethiopia that enacting this law will threaten future funding."

The CSO law means to restrict the activities of national or foreign NGOs that receive more than 10 percent of their funding from abroad. They are barred from undertaking any activities in human rights, gender equality, children's rights, disabled persons' rights, conflict resolution, and strengthening judicial practices and law enforcement, among related activities.

The law would also exclude groups that are largely funded by Ethiopians living in the diaspora from working on these issues.

The law would carry severe criminal penalties for violations, including three to five years of imprisonment for minor administrative violations.

The draft law would establish a Charities and Societies Agency that could arbitrarily refuse to register an organization, order organization staff or leadership suspended and make onerous demands for documents and other information.

USAID assistant administrator for democracy, conflict and humanitarian issues Michael Hess, last September told reporters during a visit Ethiopia that the US Administration is concerned by this bill. He also disclosed they had raised the issue with Addis Ababa.

Ethiopia's bilateral donors provide more than US\$1 billion in aid each year to what is one of the world's poorest countries and an important ally in regional counterterrorism efforts. Key governments, including the United States, France and the United Kingdom, have quietly pressed Addis Ababa to amend the most repressive provisions of the proposed law.

Donor governments have refused to condemn serious human rights abuses in Ethiopia publicly, claiming that quiet pressure achieves more impact.

The bill, which intends to improve mechanisms to monitor nongovernmental organizations according to Addis Ababa, has been revised twice since May 2008. However the current version retains many of the most alarming provisions.

"Ethiopia claims the civil society law would promote accountability, but other countries achieve this without banning human rights activity," Gagnon said. "As the seat of the African Union, Ethiopia should be at the forefront of efforts to promote good governance instead of a leader in civil society oppression."

Final border report on Ethiopia-Eritrea dispute sent to Security Council

UN News Service, 13/10/08 - Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has transmitted to the Security Council the last report issued by the independent commission on Ethiopia and Eritrea's common boundary.

In 2002, the Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission handed down a final and binding decision awarding Badme, the town that triggered fierce fighting between the neighbouring Horn of Africa nations, to Eritrea. But the two countries have since been at an impasse on that demarcation.

The report notes that the body's mandate has been fulfilled and that all administrative issues connected to its termination have wrapped up.

The Commission has given both sides a deadline of 26 November 2007 in which to place pillars on the boundary.

In a letter sent to the two countries in June, it wrote that "as there has been no communication from the parties, the Commission must now reach the conclusion that... no further activity on its part is called for, and that it should therefore take the few final steps involved in winding up its operations," including returning resources to the United Nations.

The final report said that it received a response from Asmara, but none from Addis Ababa. In

July, the Security Council voted unanimously to terminate the UN peacekeeping mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea, known as UNMEE, after restrictions placed on the peacekeeping operation by the latter country undermined its ability to carry out its mandate.

As such, Mr. Ban said in his recent letter to the 15-member body that he will no longer provide regular reports on the situation between the two nations.

LINKS/COMMENTARIES

Sudan is incapable of bringing justice in Darfur. [Commentary]. By Tadjadine Bechir Niam. *Sudan Tribune*. 12/10/2008. (Noon).

<http://unhq-apps-01.un.org/dpi/nmu.nsf/ac/2008-10-13ASPN-7KDMLW>