ANNEX V

Public
Sudan’s Bashir arrives in Chadian border town for Darfuri forum

March 29, 2014 (KHARTOUM) – The Sudanese president, Omer Hassan al-Bashir, has arrived in the Chadian border town of Um-Jaras on Saturday to take part in the closing session of the second forum on peace and security in Darfur.

The first Um-Jaras meeting was held on 26 and 27 October 2013. It brought together the leaders of the Zaghawa tribe in Um-Jaras and was attended by the Chadian president Idriss Deby who is also member of the same ethnic group.

According to a statement issued by the Sahwa [awakening] council the leader of the Darfuri Arab Mahameed clan, Musa Hilal, will also arrive in Um-Jaras in the coming hours amid reports that Deby is mediating between Bashir and Hilal.

Hilal’s forces seized five areas in North Darfur state following clashes against government troops over the last month. The tribal leader, who is leading an undeclared mutiny, is currently living in one of those areas after leaving Khartoum a year earlier.

Sudan’s justice minister and chairman of the high committee of Um-Jaras forum, Mohamed Bushara Dousa, said the forum which is being attended by all tribal and local leaders of Darfur represents a strong motivation for consolidating peace and stability in the region.

He said that the recommendations of the forum will offer hope for all Sudanese people, adding that all participants have abandoned their political, regional, and tribal affiliations in order to achieve peace in the whole country and particularly Darfur.

Dousa also mentioned that the forum enjoys support and participation of all Sudanese political forces, pointing to the attendance of the Popular Congress Party (PCP) leader Hassan al-Turabi, and the deputy chairman of the opposition National Umma Party (NUP), Fadl Allah Burma Nasser.

He said the forum reflects the consensus of the Sudanese nation, saying it recognized and supported all peace agreements signed between the government and the rebel groups.

The PCP leader for his part welcomed the convening of the second forum, saying it represents a good opportunity for providing viable solutions to the Darfur crisis and tribal conflicts on the borders between Sudan and Chad.

He expressed in a press statement upon his arrival in Um-Jaras on Saturday his delight to visit Chad, saying it was the first country he visited when he was Sudan’s minister of foreign affairs during the regime of the former president, Jaafar Nimeiri.

“We came to this country in order to find solutions for all our problems”, Turabi said.

Meanwhile, the rebel Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) said it is ready for dialogue and coordination with any political force to overthrow the regime and establish a transitional government in order to resolve the Sudanese crisis.

The political advisor to JEM’s chairman, Mahgoub Hussein, said they no longer believe in certain leaders or views of other political parties but they have their own vision and seek to meet aspirations of the Sudanese people.

He denied that JEM leaders met with delegates of the PCP in the Kenyan capital, Nairobi, wondering who would benefit from such rumors.

On Thursday, the PCP said its leading figure, Adam Al-Tahir Hamdoun, was reported to have held a series of meetings in the Kenyan capital of Nairobi with leaders of the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), Sudan Liberation Movement-Minni Minnawi (SLM-MM), and Sudan Liberation Movement-Abu Al-Gasim Imam (SLM-Imam).

The PCP afterwards said that the rebels agreed to engage in dialogue with the government offered certain guarantees which enable them to be part of the process in the Sudanese capital.

But JEM spokesperson, Gibreel Adam Bilal, denied such meetings. He said the group, together with other rebel groups, has a public position on what is called the National Dialogue and the regime has to fulfill a number of conditions first.

The rebel spokesperson was referring to the rebels’ demand of comprehensive cessation of hostilities and a comprehensive process to be held under the auspice of a joint international mediation.

HRW CONDEMNS BASHIR VISIT

Meanwhile Human Rights Watch (HRW) slammed Bashir’s trip to Chad despite an arrest warrant for him by the International Criminal Court (ICC) since 2009 on charges of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity in Darfur.

This is Bashir’s fifth visit to Chad which is an ICC signatory with theoretical obligation to arrest him.

“Al-Bashir’s visit to Chad highlights his continued status as a fugitive from justice. The Sudanese president faces charges of heinous crimes committed in Darfur – genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity” said Elise Keppler, Associate Director at HRW International Justice Program.

“The only place he should be traveling is to The Hague - Darfuri victims have been waiting too long to see him in the dock” she added.

(ST)
The president of Sudan is visiting neighboring Chad to take part in a conference on security in Darfur, hosted by the Chadian government.

‘Field Marshal Omar al Bashir, President of the Republic, arrived this afternoon at the Um Jaras airport in Chad to participate in the activities of the Second Um Jaras Forum for Peace, Security and Coexistence in Darfur,’ the state news agency reported today.

His arrival was preceded by that of Second Vice President Hassabo Mohammed Abdel Rahman, who led the Sudanese delegation to the opening of the forum, which began Wednesday in Um Jaras, eastern Chad.

Bashir was received at the airport by Chadian President Idriss Deby, according to the Sudan News Agency (SUNA). It is expected that the two leaders will be presented with a document on the conclusions of the three-day forum.

Deby has a potentially critical role to play in mediating rising conflict in North Darfur. He is a member of the Zaghawa Bidyat clan, which is related to Darfur tribes, and he is wed to the daughter of Musa Hilal, a Darfur militia leader who has recently defected from Sudan’s ruling party and established control over several towns in North Darfur.

During the opening session of the conference on Wednesday, President Deby expressed the hope that the Second Um Jaras Forum will produce tangible results for the achievement of peace and security in the region, saying, “I pledge to do all I can to push the peace process in Darfur.”

In a statement on its website, the Chadian presidency emphasized the significance of the conference, saying, “More than 300 people from different communities of the west Sudanese region have joined this significant meeting for reconciliation.”

Likewise, the Sudanese state media, citing remarks by the justice minister, reported that the forum enjoyed broad support from Sudanese political parties, mentioning the Popular Congress Party and the Umma Party.

Chad and Sudan war had hostile relations from 2003 until 2009, when a rapprochement between the two countries resulted in the end of Chadian support for the rebel Justice and Equality Movement (JEM).

JEM, which fights also in South Kordofan and more recently in the conflict in Unity State in South Sudan, has announced its boycott of the Um Jaras conference.

The movement’s spokesman, Jibril Adam Bilal, explained to Radio Dabanga that they see the conference as having a narrow focus related to only one group, noting that JEM will not respect any outcomes of the conference.

The first Um Jaras Forum took place October 2013. It was attended by Deby, Dr Tijani Sese, chairperson of the Darfur Regional Authority, Dr Amin Hassan Omar, the head of the governmental Darfur Peace Follow-up Office, and a number of prominent leaders of the Zaghawa tribe.

File photo: President Idriss Deby of Chad (left) and Omar al Bashir of Sudan (right) (SUNA)

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