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Sudan accepts UN hybrid forces to Darfur

- The Sudanese Government and a UN Security Council delegation confirmed yesterday that Khartoum has unconditionally accepted a joint UN and African peacekeeping force for Darfur. "I can tell you that the (Sudanese) foreign minister told us in no uncertain terms that the Government of Sudan has accepted the hybrid operation without any conditionality," said South Africa's ambassador to the Security Council, Dumisani Kumalo. "The president himself just confirmed the same thing to us," he stated after meeting Sudan's president Al-Bashir. The British ambassador to the Security Council, Emyr Jones Parry, said that the UN delegation also held positive talks on furthering the peace process between Khartoum and Darfur's many rebel factions. "There isn't going to be an enduring peace unless there is a political settlement," he said. "The (Sudanese) government confirmed its commitment to pursue that," he told reporters. Parry further called on Sudanese forces "to exercise a measure of self-restraint" even though they are "faced with lots of temptations in Darfur."

The UN Security Council delegation recommended funding of a joint AU-UN peacekeeping mission for Darfur after receiving assurances it would be controlled by the UN. Britain's UN ambassador stated that "funding will be necessary if indeed this operation is to be funded from the peacekeeping budget of the United Nations." (*Al-Rai Al-Aam, Al-Ayaam, Al-Sudani, et al*)

U.S. envoy U.S. has no hidden agenda in Sudan

- The U.S. Ambassador to the UN, Zalmay Khalilzad, asserted during the UN Security Council's meeting with the Government of Sudan that "the U.S. has no hidden agenda in the Sudan and that Sudan has a lot of suspicions towards the U.S. Foreign Minister Lam Akol objected to the

imposition of economic sanctions on Sudan and argued that it sends a wrong message to opponents of the Abuja agreement. He added that Sudan's suspicions of the U.S. intentions will continue until Washington proves otherwise. (*Al-Rai Al-Aam, Al-Ayaam, Al-Sudani, et al*)

Reporters detained in relation to Kajbar incident

- The Sudanese Journalists Union issued a statement yesterday condemning the detention of four journalists who were covering demonstrations in Kajbar region. The journalists have been detained four days. The union argued that their detention contradicted the rights granted by the Constitution and the press law. (*Al-Ayaam, Al-Sudani, Rai Al-Shaab*)

SLM refutes reports on threats to National Security of Sudan

- Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM) spokesman Al-Tayeb Khamees stated yesterday that the presence of the SLM's armed elements in Khartoum does not present a threat to national security. Khamees added that SLM armed groups in Khartoum cannot be referred to as an "army," but rather as groups of guards that protect certain personalities in power." (*Alwan*)

Umma Party leader criticizes the U.S.

- The Umma Party leader Al-Saddig Al-Mahdi admitted that some Western forces, especially the U.S., have interests in Sudan. "They exploited Sudan's problems to reach their strategic aims. Washington has been working to dominate the oil of Sudan and Chad." (*Sudan Vision*)

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