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## ONE) TOP SPONSOR U.S. TO RECOGNIZE SOUTH SUDAN SECESSION

President Barack Obama said on Monday the United States intends to recognize South Sudan as a sovereign country in July, as Washington began the process of removing Sudan from a terrorism blacklist. "After decades of conflict, the images of millions of southern Sudanese voters deciding their own future was an inspiration to the world and another step forward in Africa's long journey toward justice and democracy," Obama said in a [statement](#). "Now, all parties have a responsibility to ensure that this historic moment of promise becomes a moment of lasting progress," he said. The people of South Sudan voted overwhelmingly to declare secession in final results of a referendum announced on Monday, opening the door to Africa's newest state and a fresh period of uncertainty for the fractured region. **OBAMA NOW FOCUSES ON DARFUR** Obama said a peace agreement must be implemented fully. "At the same time, there must be an end to attacks on civilians in Darfur and a definitive end to that conflict," he said. The United States would work with the governments of Sudan and Southern Sudan to ensure a smooth and peaceful transition to independence, he said. "For those who meet all of their obligations, there is a path to greater prosperity and normal relations with the United States, including examining Sudan's designation as a State Sponsor of Terrorism," he said. "And while the road ahead will be difficult, those who seek a future of dignity and peace can be assured that they will have a steady partner and friend in the United States." Presence on the U.S. state sponsors of terrorism list bars a country from receiving U.S. arms exports, controls sales of items with military and civilian applications, limits U.S. aid and requires Washington to vote against loans to the country from international financial institutions. **STATE DEPARTMENT GVETS TOUGHER ON SUDAN** The U.S. State Department said it is initiating the process to remove Sudan from the state sponsors of terrorism list but stressed it would only be dropped if it met all criteria under U.S. law. "Removal of the state sponsor of terrorism designation will take place if and when Sudan meets all criteria spelled out in U.S. law, including not supporting international terrorism for the preceding six months and providing assurance it will not support such acts in the future, and fully implements the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement, including reaching a political solution on Abyei and key post-referendum arrangements," U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said in a [statement](#).

## TWO) – RIGHTS GROUPS FEAR QUID PRO QUO FOR PEACEFUL TRANSITION IN SUDAN

Amid renewed pockets of unrest throughout Sudan and continuing violence in Darfur, government officials in Khartoum announced Monday that a whopping 98.83 percent of southern voters – numbering more than 3.8 million in a country of over 42.3 million – cast their ballots in favour of secession during last month's highly anticipated referendum.

The results were received positively by Sudanese President Omar Hassan al-Bashir – a seemingly encouraging sign for the country's potential normalisation of relations with the international community.

"[W]e accept and welcome these results because they represent the will of the southern people," al-Bashir, who is under indictment by the International Criminal Court for genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in Darfur, said in an address aired on state television.

"Now, all parties have a responsibility to ensure that this historic moment of promise becomes a moment of lasting progress," U.S. President Barack Obama said in a statement Monday.

With the successful completion of the referendum and al-Bashir's acceptance of the results, the road to peaceful secession seems to be paved, but many contentious issues remain unresolved.

"The peaceful conclusion of the southern Sudan referendum for independence is an historic accomplishment, but recent troubling events underscore the importance of continued U.S. engagement in the north and the south," said Amir Osman, senior director for policy and government relations for the Genocide Intervention Network/Save Darfur Coalition (GI-NET/SDC), in a statement Monday.

Last week, seemingly inspired by the mass demonstrations of Tunisia, Egypt and elsewhere, hundreds of restive Sudanese youth took to the streets in protest of rising food and fuel prices and human rights abuses. Many were beaten, tear-gassed and arrested by police.

And in the volatile region of north Darfur, which is in the western part of the country, renewed fighting between government and opposition groups have prompted thousands of families to flee their villages, according to rights groups.

"The Comprehensive Peace Agreement must be fully implemented and outstanding disputes must be resolved peacefully. At the same time, there must be an end to attacks on civilians in Darfur and a definitive end to that conflict," Obama said.

"For those who meet all of their obligations, there is a path to greater prosperity and normal relations with the

United States, including examining Sudan's designation as a State Sponsor of Terrorism," Obama said. With the stakes of the referendum so high – namely, the threat of a recommenced civil war, which raged for over two decades, took an estimated two million, mostly southern, lives, and was finally halted by a Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) six years ago – Western policymakers have incentivised the full implementation of the CPA.

In seeming exchange for Khartoum's lawful and peaceful compliance in allowing the embattled, resource-rich south to break away if it so desired, a number of compelling carrots are being dangled.

One of them is the promise to reconsider Sudan's classification as a country that systematically supports international terrorism. As a result of this designation, the eastern African nation is subject to a series of restrictive sanctions.

"Removal of the State Sponsor of Terrorism designation will take place if and when Sudan meets all criteria spelled out in U.S. law, including not supporting international terrorism for the preceding six months and providing assurance it will not support such acts in the future, and fully implements the 2005 [CPA], including reaching a political solution on Abyei [a contentious region bordering Darfur, south Sudan and the rest of the country] and key post-referendum arrangements," added Secretary of State Hillary Clinton in a separate statement.

The Financial Times also reported Sunday that French and U.S. officials agreed to a summit to be hosted by the African Union, in which a one-year deferral of al-Bashir's ICC indictment would be considered.

Any postponement would have to be mandated by the United Nations Security Council and be made on the grounds that a delay is required to preserve international peace and security, according to article 16 of the Rome Statute, which established the ICC.

Rights groups argue that suspension sets a dangerous precedent, threatens the Council's credibility, and robs victims and their families who have been subjected to heinous crimes of potential justice.

"A deferral of the ICC's judicial role risks denying redress to the victims of horrific abuses and must be invoked with extreme caution," three Human Rights Watch officials wrote in a letter to the U.N. Security Council in September 2008, amidst a diplomatic campaign by Khartoum for an article 16 delay for al-Bashir, whose warrant was requested that year and issued the following spring.

"Khartoum has time and again made commitments to Security Council members and the international community that have proven to be worthless," they said at the time.

With the CPA set to expire in July of this year, pressure is mounting on all parties to comply fully for a peaceful transition.

### THREE) – SOUTH SUDAN'S KIIR ADMITS MASSIVE SAYS CORRUPTION IN NEW STATE

South Sudan will confront the endemic corruption it has ignored until now, its president Salva Kiir said on Tuesday, a day after official referendum results set the region on course to become a separate nation on July 9. Kiir will be the new country's first head of government but warned that the mainly rural south would not see change without huge support from donors. Southerners voted overwhelmingly to separate from the north in a January referendum, ending a cycle of decades of bitter civil war. But other than oil revenues it will share with the north, it has little income to build a nation from scratch. "We all know it is what people have been talking about, that there is corruption in the government of southern Sudan and that it will be a failed state if it becomes a free state," Kiir said in the southern capital Juba after returning from the announcement of the referendum results in Khartoum. "I concentrated on the implementation of the (peace accord) and that gave opportunities for the thieves to put their hands in the pockets of the government. Now that the referendum is over ... the war against them will now begin." **'ZERO TOLERANCE' FROM NOW ON** Kiir said "zero tolerance" of corruption was now in place across South Sudan. Donors have made it clear that with the global financial crisis, they will be more discriminating with the funds they give the emerging nation, whose leaders have been tainted by major corruption scandals. The southern government gets about 98 percent of its budget from oil revenues, which will still be shared with the north post separation, although the percentage has yet to be agreed. Kiir said urbanising the south's remote areas was his main concern. "Getting towns to rural areas shall remain the number one priority in the new state," he said, adding that more than 80 percent of southerners live in basic, rural communities. Billions of dollars in aid will be needed to sustain development in the south, which is roughly the size of France but has less than 100 km of asphalt roads. The United Nations says it is feeding more than 1 million of the south's 8 million population and hundreds of thousands more are expected to return south after separation. Southern Sudan has fought the north for all but a few years since 1955 over issues of ethnicity, ideology, religion and oil, culminating in a 2005 peace deal promising the secession vote.

#### FOUR) **SOUTH SUDAN MINISTER SHOT DEAD IN JUBA**

A South Sudan minister was shot dead inside his ministry on Wednesday, days after referendum results confirmed the region will become Africa's newest independent state, the southern army spokesman said. "The minister for rural development and cooperation has been killed by a driver working at the ministry. He also killed a guard at the door of the ministry then shot himself," South Sudan's army spokesman Philip Aguer said. Final results of a referendum on independence confirmed on Monday that South Sudan will become the world's newest nation on July 9. Three officials confirmed the dead minister was Jimmy Lemi. No motive was immediately clear for the attack, which underlines insecurity in the South Sudan capital Juba ahead of independence. Violence in the south remains persistent six years after a peace deal ended decades of north-south civil war. Ethnic tension and tit-for-tat cattle raids killed an estimated 3,000 people in 2009 alone, although clashes had subsided ahead of the January referendum.

#### FIVE) – **ASHTON 'FAILS' FIRST YEAR AS FOREIGN AFFAIRS CHIEF**

The Telegraph reports that EU foreign affairs chief Catherine Ashton has "failed" her first year in office, according to a survey rating the performance of European commissioners. Out of 324 Brussels policymakers, 69 per cent voted Europe's first foreign minister as "below average", the paper says.

Carried out by lobbying firm Burson-Marsteller, the survey had participants rate European commissioners with a grading from A to E, with none scoring lower than a D except for Ashton.

#### SIX) – **SOUTH AFRICA MINISTER SINKS MINING NATIONALISATION IDEA**

Nationalising South Africa's mines is "not the option", mines minister Susan Shabangu said on Tuesday in her strongest comments in a year against an idea that has unnerved investors in Africa's biggest economy. Under pressure at a mining industry conference to counter radical elements in the African National Congress (ANC) who want state ownership of the mines, Shabangu reiterated that nationalisation was "not currently policy". But she then went on to say nationalisation would mean South Africa missing out on a global commodities boom, just as it did for most of the last decade when prices soared and mining in countries such as China, Brazil and India posted huge growth, while investment in the industry stagnated in South Africa. "Is nationalisation going to give us jobs? No. We have got to make sure that we become responsible and we attract more investments, because we do need investments in South Africa," she told a news conference. "We have a boom in the mining sector. We can't afford to miss this opportunity. We lost it the last time. It cannot happen again," she said. "I still believe, I feel very strongly, that nationalisation would not be the option for South Africa." For years the pillar of white economic power, mining accounts for 8 % of South African GDP and directly employs more than 500,000 people, but it has struggled to adapt and grow since the end of white-minority apartheid rule in 1994. In the last few months, the government has placed it at the heart of plans to tackle 25 % unemployment, although most of its ideas involve more, not less, state involvement, leading to scepticism it will be able to turn the industry around.

#### SEVEN) – **EUROPE'S NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICY IS A FAILURE, SAYS MEPs**

Des eurodéputés de tous bords politiques ont pointé mardi l'échec de la [Politique européenne de voisinage](#) (PEV) avec les pays de la rive sud de la Méditerranée, jugeant que l'Europe n'avait pas suffisamment soutenu la société civile face aux régimes répressifs. De retour d'une visite dans le pays, les parlementaires ont appelé à une révision de cette politique, afin de mettre davantage l'accent sur les droits humains. Le socialiste italien Pier Antonio Panzeri, qui a co-dirigé la délégation, a reproché à l'Europe d'avoir axé ses relations avec ces pays uniquement sur les questions énergétiques et la lutte contre le terrorisme et l'immigration illégale. Il a appelé de ses vœux une politique basée sur la personne. Les eurodéputés ont réclamé que les clauses de droits humains - incluses systématiquement dans les accords passés avec les pays participant à la PEV - ne restent plus lettre morte. Ils ont aussi plaidé pour que des moyens supplémentaires soient dégagés en faveur des organisations de la société civile. Dans le cas de la Tunisie, les députés ont appelé l'Union à mobiliser tous les instruments disponibles afin de contribuer à la transition démocratique. Ils se sont félicités à cet égard de

l'invitation formulée par le gouvernement de transition d'accueillir la mission d'observation électorale proposée par l'UE. Certains ont pointé l'importance de soutenir le développement des partis politiques d'opposition, face à un establishment politique qui reste bien installé. **CALL FOR TUNISIA DONORS CONFERENCE** Des députés européens ont appelé mardi à une conférence de donateurs pour la Tunisie, destinée à coordonner l'aide internationale à la transition démocratique dans ce pays après la chute du régime de Ben Ali. Rendant compte lors d'une conférence de presse à Bruxelles d'une visite sur place, la présidente de la sous-commission du Parlement aux droits de l'homme, la Finlandaise Heidi Hautala, a estimé que "l'aide internationale devait être coordonnée". Une conférence des donateurs permettrait de mettre en place "une bonne division du travail entre l'UE, les Nations unies, le Conseil de l'Europe", a-t-elle estimé. L'UE a promis son soutien à la transition démocratique dans le pays après la chute de Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, en particulier concernant la tenue d'élections libres. "Nos voisins attendent notre aide, ils ont besoin de faire un long chemin vers la démocratie, et ce n'est pas un chemin facile", a estimé le président du Parlement Jerzy Buzek. "Il y a 20 ans, en Europe centrale et orientale, nous avons le même chemin difficile et peu carrossable devant nous", a estimé l'ancien dissident polonais. Outre les autorités, la délégation du Parlement européen a rencontré sur place tous les acteurs de la transition: forces politiques, associations de magistrats et avocats, acteurs de la société civile, notamment syndicaux et des droits de l'homme. Dans le pays, le débat fait rage entre les tenants d'une normalisation rapide, avec un scrutin présidentiel et législatif dans six mois pour répondre à l'impatience de la rue, et ceux qui mettent en garde contre une confiscation de la révolution. (See [more details](#))

#### **EIGHT) – IVORY COAST TREASURY BUILDING ON FIRE**

At least two floors of Ivory Coast's multi-storey treasury building were in flames on Tuesday, a Reuters witness said. Emergency services attempted to douse the fire and crowds formed nearby. Officials were not immediately available to comment on the cause of the fire or whether there were any injuries or deaths. Ivory Coast has been in turmoil since a disputed November election, with rival presidential claimants struggling for control of the country's coffers.

#### **NINE) – SWAZILAND IN CRISIS AS CUSTOMS UNION REVENUE IS SLASHED**

Apart from the looming job losses in Swaziland's public sector, small and medium enterprises (SMEs) have also warned of retrenchments following the government's decision to suspend procurement from small businesses. The government of the southern African autocratic monarchy has been forced to cut expenditure after its receipts from the Southern African Customs Union (SACU) shrunk with 60 percent.

SACU receipts contribute more than half of the country's national revenue; due to changes in the revenue formula, Swaziland's share has dropped from 741 million dollars to 281 million dollars.

The government's sudden exercises in fiscal discipline comes after recommendations by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) that the governments not purchase any new goods and services unless already committed to, postpone all new investment projects, and slow down the implementation of existing ones in line with available financing.

The Swaziland cabinet took a decision that all ministries that require financing for any basic materials should write to the minister of finance requesting authorisation.

A cash flow committee, consisting of the governor of the central bank, the accountant general and the ministry of finance, has been established to monitor developments, the minister of finance, said Majozi Sithole.

"It is such assessments that enable the ministry to decide which expenditure to accept and which not to accept," Sithole explained. The committee also helps prevent government from over-committing itself, which protects suppliers from not being paid for services and goods rendered.

The majority of SMEs in the country are sustained by supplying the government with stationery, building material and protective clothing.

"We are not getting any contracts from government right now, except those dealing with education and health supplies," Ezekiel Mabuza, vice-president of the Federation of the Swaziland Business Community (FESBC), told IPS.

FESBC has close to 300 members, the majority of which are dependent on state tenders and which are now losing millions of dollars.

The SMEs have been left with no choice but to downscale their services. "We can no longer justify the number of people in our employ because we are not getting as much business as we used to," said Mabuza.

FESBC has yet to sit down to work out the number of people whose jobs are on the line. "It would be difficult to

state the figures for now," said Mabuza.

FESBC Mbabane branch chairperson Titus Thwala blamed SME dependency on the small size of the Swaziland economy: "The market is too small. That is why a lot of small businesses are servicing the state." He said it was very "sad" that the government did not consult with businesspeople before suspending procurement. "The government had already put some goods and services out on tender. We were informed of the suspension only after applying for the tenders," said Thwala.

Mabuza added that government knew about the approaching fiscal challenges more than five years ago but did nothing to prepare the business community. IMF reports in the last few years have also continually warned the Swaziland government that SACU receipts will decrease after 2010.

"It would have been easier, had we been made aware of the problem over the years," said Mabuza. "Right now, we are taken by surprise, which is why a lot of our workers will suffer."

The finance minister blamed part of the fiscal crisis on businesspeople that he accused of conniving with public servants in looting state resources through bogus sales. Sithole told the parliament recently that the government loses about 5,7 million dollars a month to corruption.

He told a recent meeting on the fiscal crisis that some companies would supply government with unnecessary furniture just to get money "for the weekend". "If we could stop at least most of the corruption that drains our resources, our recovery would be quicker," said Sithole.

The state currently survives through borrowed funds to pay wages, which has left little money to buy goods and services.

"The government has to minimise the cost of borrowing by only borrowing as and when cash is needed. This requires close monitoring," explained Sithole.

Swaziland would have borrowed 286 million dollars by the end of the financial year in March 2011, increasing the domestic debt to 357 million dollars. The government raised the domestic borrowing ceiling from 143 million dollars to 428 million dollars.

One of the reasons for the Swaziland government's borrowing from domestic sources is that the IMF refused to give it the go-ahead to source funding from the African Development Bank (AfDB) until it puts its house in order. While local banks have agreed to lend money to the government, SMEs are not so lucky. "The risk is lower when you lend to the government, compared to the entrepreneur.

"This puts SMEs at a disadvantage when it comes to access to loans," said Zodwa Mabuza, chief executive officer of the Federation of Swaziland Business Employers and Chamber of Commerce.

SMEs have always struggled to get funding from local banks and they do not stand a chance when competing with government, she added.

## **TEN) – EU PLEDGES TO SUPPORT TUNISIAN DEMOCRACY**

Deutsche Welle reports that the EU has pledged support for the democratic transition of Tunisia amid criticism that Europe has too long supported authoritarianism in the Arab world.

The paper says that EU foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton has also been criticised by parliament for not visiting Tunisia since the upheaval began.

MEPs had yesterday called for an international donor's conference to support Tunisian democracy, with European parliament president Jerzy Buzek comparing the situation to the one in his home country Poland, during the fall of communism.

Elsewhere, the FT reports on comments from EU enlargement commissioner Štefan Füle on prospects for reform across north Africa.

"It would be very important to see how the EU can better support reform processes in these countries and how to make sure that there is no wide gap between economic development on one side and human and social development on the other side," Füle said.

## **ELEVEN) – MEP CALLS FOR REPLACEMENT OF EU EN VOY TO TUNISIA**

L'eurodéputée écologiste Hélène Flautre, spécialiste des droits de l'Homme au Maghreb, a réclamé mercredi le remplacement de l'ambassadeur de l'Union européenne à Tunis, son bilan sous l'ex-président Zine El Abidine Ben Ali ne pouvant faire de lui "l'homme de la transition démocratique". "Je ne vois pas comment il peut être l'homme de la transition démocratique", a déclaré à l'AFP Mme Flautre, de retour d'une visite sur place. "L'UE a besoin d'un représentant en Tunisie qui ait au moins la confiance des acteurs du changement", alors qu'Adrianus Koetsenruijter, du temps du président Ben Ali, "ne s'autorisait même plus les contacts avec les

associations qui n'étaient pas légales" contrairement à ses prédécesseurs, a accusé Mme Flautre. Chef de la délégation de l'UE à Tunis depuis février 2008, le Néerlandais Adrianus Koetsenruijter "est l'homme qui a collaboré avec le régime de Ben Ali, qui n'a pas parlé des violations des droits de l'Homme", a dénoncé Mme Flautre. L'UE a, durant des années, versé au régime de Ben Ali des aides dans le cadre d'un projet de modernisation de la justice, mais M. Koetsenruijter n'a "même pas été jusqu'à reconnaître que cela n'a pas été possible de moderniser la justice, que ce projet était une vaste blague", a déploré l'eurodéputée. Le service diplomatique européen n'était pas immédiatement joignable pour réagir. Parmi les missions de la délégation de l'UE à Tunis, qui emploie une cinquantaine de personnes et a rang d'ambassade, figure le "dialogue permanent avec les autorités, les milieux économiques et la société civile". "Le suivi de la mise en oeuvre de l'Accord d'Association UE-Tunisie constitue une partie importante de son activité", précise-t-elle sur son site internet. Cet accord comprend un volet consacré au respect des droits de l'Homme, et il peut être suspendu en cas de violation grave. Mme Flautre, qui a rencontré M. Koetsenruijter à Tunis, lui reproche également de ne pas avoir de "regard critique" sur le passé, contrairement aux dirigeants européens eux-mêmes. Au dernier sommet européen, ces derniers s'étaient en effet prononcés en faveur d'un "soutien plus efficace à l'avenir pour les pays qui poursuivent des réformes politiques et économiques", notamment dans le cadre de la politique de voisinage de l'UE.

## TWELVE) – INDIA CAPTURES SOMALI PIRATES MOTHER SHIP

La marine et les garde-côtes indiens ont arrêté 28 Somaliens soupçonnés de piraterie, au terme d'échanges de tirs dimanche dans l'océan Indien au large de la côte sud-ouest de l'Inde, a indiqué le ministère indien de la Défense. "Un total de 52 personnes ont été arrêtées, dont 28 pirates somaliens présumés", a déclaré à l'AFP un porte-parole du [ministère de la Défense](#), M. Nambiar, précisant que l'arrestation avait eu lieu dans les eaux indiennes. Une partie des 24 autres personnes aux mains des forces indiennes sont sans doute des marins retenus en otage. Les arrestations ont eu lieu sur un bateau de pêche thaïlandais, capturé il y a six mois au large des côtes somaliennes et qui sert vraisemblablement de base aux pirates pour lancer leurs attaques contre des navires, selon le ministère. La police de Bombay va interroger les personnes arrêtées dès leur arrivée dans cette ville portuaire. La marine et les garde-côtes indiens ont été envoyés à la poursuite de pirates après qu'un bateau battant pavillon grec eut indiqué avoir été attaqué à 100 milles nautiques à l'ouest de Kavaratti, au large de l'Etat indien du Kerala (sud-ouest). Les bateaux indiens ont pris en chasse deux embarcations légères et rapides, qui les ont amenés au navire servant de base aux pirates, selon le communiqué. "Les échanges de coups de feu ont été brefs mais décisifs. Les pirates ont vite perdu l'envie de lutter et hissé le drapeau blanc pour se rendre", a ajouté le ministère. "Un groupe de pirates et de membres d'équipage détenus en otage sur le bateau ont été embarqués", a-t-il précisé. L'accrochage s'est produit près des voies internationales de transport maritime qui passent à proximité des îles indiennes de Lalkshadweep, a indiqué le communiqué, sans autre précision. Cet endroit se situe à quelque 1.700 milles nautiques de la côte somalienne. Quinze personnes suspectées de piraterie -12 Somaliens, deux Ethiopiens et un Kényan- avaient été arrêtées dans cette même zone fin janvier et vont être jugées en Inde. Elles aussi utilisaient un bateau de pêche thaïlandais comme base de leurs activités. La Somalie est connue pour être une base de pirates qui écumant le Golfe d'Aden et l'océan Indien, de plus en plus loin de leurs côtes, s'emparant de navires qu'ils retiennent avec leurs équipages pour exiger des rançons. Face à cette escalade, la communauté internationale a mis en place une flotte internationale pour patrouiller les eaux les plus fréquentées par les pirates. L'utilisation croissante par les pirates de "navires mères" (des bateaux de commerce ou de pêche capables d'embarquer des bateaux rapides mis à la mer au moment de l'assaut) est "préoccupante", soulignait début février à Londres le président de la plus importante organisation maritime privée, BIMCO, Robert Lorenz-Meyer.

## THIRTEEN) – SOMALI PIRATES HIJACK ITALIAN OIL TANKER

Un pétrolier italien de 105.000 tonnes a été capturé mardi à l'aube par des pirates dans l'océan Indien lors d'une attaque qui n'a pas fait de blessés parmi les 22 membres d'équipage, cinq Italiens et 17 Indiens, a indiqué à l'AFP la marine italienne. "Le pétrolier +[Savina Caylyn](#)+ a été attaqué ce matin vers 04H30 GMT par cinq pirates, semble-t-il, qui se trouvaient à bord d'une petite embarcation. L'attaque s'est produite à environ 880 milles nautiques de la Somalie et 500 milles de l'Inde", selon la même source. Les pirates auraient tiré plusieurs rafales de fusils d'assaut et au RPG mais sans faire de blessés, selon les premières informations. L'armateur du pétrolier, la société italienne Fratelli D'Amato, de Naples, dans le sud de l'Italie, a indiqué à l'AFP qu'il était en train de vérifier pour le moment toutes les informations en provenance de cette région du monde,

ne pouvant ni confirmer ni démentir la capture de son navire. A Bruxelles, le porte-parole de la flottille européenne antipiraterie Atalante, le lieutenant-colonel Paddy O'Kennedy, a précisé que le "bateau battant pavillon italien a été capturé tôt ce matin à environ 600 milles nautiques à l'Est de Socotra", une île yéménite, "par cinq pirates à bord d'un canot". "Le pétrolier fait actuellement route vers l'Ouest", c'est-à-dire vers la côte somalienne, a-t-il ajouté. Selon la marine italienne, le fait que l'attaque se soit produite aussi loin de toute terre signifie probablement que le canot avec les pirates avait une base dans les parages, un "navire-mère" plus gros à partir duquel il a lancé l'attaque. Le commandant du pétrolier italien, un navire de 105.000 tonnes, a essayé de s'échapper des pirates avec des manoeuvres de diversion, changeant de route et de vitesse, utilisant des canons à eau, mais face aux fusils d'assaut il a dû renoncer et se rendre, précise la même source. Une frégate militaire italienne, Zeffiro, qui se trouve dans cette région du monde dans le cadre de la lutte contre la piraterie, se dirige vers le lieu de l'attaque mais elle devrait mettre environ deux jours pour faire les 500 milles nautiques qui la séparent de cet endroit, a précisé la marine.

#### FOURTEEN) SENEGAL CLAIMS 'SELF-SUFFICIENCY' IN FOOD

Le président sénégalais Abdoulaye Wade a déconcerté son auditoire, lundi, au cours du Forum social mondial (FSM) à Dakar, en affirmant que le Sénégal est "aujourd'hui autosuffisant" en matière alimentaire et notamment en riz, ce que contestent observateurs et experts. M. Wade, au pouvoir depuis 2000 et candidat à un 3e mandat, a fait cette déclaration devant l'ancien président brésilien Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva et un public de militants altermondialistes étrangers et de journalistes. "Notre pays était dépendant alimentairement, il y a quatre ans. Nous importions 600.000 tonnes de riz (...) Eh bien aujourd'hui, le Sénégal est autosuffisant. Nous produisons, ici même, tout ce que nous mangeons", a déclaré M. Wade, insistant sur le "tout". **SCEPTICISM** Dans les maisons et restaurants de Dakar, les Sénégalais restent cependant de très gros consommateurs de riz brisé importé d'Asie, notamment pour le traditionnel riz au poisson, en dépit de la relance de la production de riz local ces dernières années. "En matière de riz, de lait, d'huile, d'oignons, de pommes de terre, on est loin de produire suffisamment", a commenté l'économiste sénégalais Moubarack Lô, interrogé lundi par l'AFP. "La facture des produits alimentaires importés reste très élevée. Des progrès ont été faits avec la Grande offensive agricole pour la nourriture et l'abondance (Goana) mais le Sénégal est loin d'être autosuffisant", a-t-il dit. Par ailleurs, aucun bilan officiel n'a encore établi concernant une autosuffisance en riz. Le directeur général de la Société d'aménagement et d'exploitation des terres du Delta du fleuve Sénégal (SAED), Mamoudou Dème, avait évoqué en janvier "une baisse notable des importations" de riz, en disant: "au moins la moitié de ce que nous consommons en matière de riz est produit au Sénégal". Ces bilans officiels sont cependant contestés par des organisations de producteurs et spécialistes de l'agriculture, qui estiment généralement que la production de riz n'atteint pas encore 30% des besoins

#### FIFTEEN) – EU URGES SHARING OF MOROCCO'S WEALTH TO AVOID CONTAGION

Le Maroc doit veiller à ce que les bénéfices du développement économique "soient partagés par tout le peuple marocain", a estimé lundi le commissaire européen chargé de l'élargissement Stefan Füle, en évoquant les "leçons" des événements de Tunisie et d'Egypte. Soulignant que sa visite au Maroc intervenait quelques semaines après la révolte tunisienne qui a chassé l'ex-président Ben Ali et tourné l'attention vers la région du Maghreb, M. Füle a souhaité que les autorités marocaines "avancent davantage" sur la voie des réformes qu'elles ont engagées. Il a notamment cité les domaines de "l'éradication de la pauvreté, du développement social (...) des réformes démocratiques, de la liberté d'expression et de la réforme de la justice", lors d'un point de presse commun avec le chef de la diplomatie marocaine Taieb Fassi Firhi. Evoquant les "leçons à tirer" de ce qui vient de se passer en Tunisie, M. Füle a souligné que le "développement ne devrait jamais sous-estimer les aspirations légitimes des jeunes à accéder au travail et à la liberté d'expression". Il a aussi insisté sur l'importance d'éviter un écart trop important entre développement économique et développement humain et social. Le commissaire européen a indiqué avoir souligné lors de ses entretiens à Rabat "l'importance de veiller à ce que les bénéfices du processus de réforme soient partagés par tout le peuple marocain." En réponse à une question, le ministre marocain des Affaires étrangères a souligné, de son côté, que les deux hommes n'avaient pas "parlé de façon spécifique" de ce qui s'est passé en Egypte et en Tunisie. Faisant valoir que le Maroc est déjà engagé sur la voie des réformes, M. Fassi Firhi a lancé: "nous n'avons pas eu à attendre les conseils de l'UE pour nous engager sur cette voie équilibrée, à la fois en termes de multipartisme, de multi-syndicats, de liberté". Füle a alors précisé qu'il n'était pas venu au Maroc avec un "avertissement", mais avec un message sur l'importance de réfléchir ensemble aux enseignements de ce qui se passe en Tunisie et en

Egypte. Fassi Firhi a pour sa part exprimé l'espoir que les "différents acteurs" en Tunisie et en Egypte sauront "choisir pour eux-mêmes leur chemin", dans le cadre d'une "transition pacifique". Le commissaire européen, qui s'est entretenu avec plusieurs responsables marocains, dont le Premier ministre Abbas El Fassi, a également noté que l'UE a augmenté son aide au Maroc, qui s'élève désormais à quelque 200 millions d'euros par an.

#### **SIXTEEN) - DROUGHT ENDANGERS CHINESE WINTER WHEAT HARVEST**

China's winter wheat harvest is at risk because of a drought that has also led to shortages of drinking water for people and livestock, the U.N. food agency said. The [U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization](#) said the North China Plain drought is already putting pressure on wheat prices in China, with average flour prices rising more than 8 percent in January compared to the previous two months. The impact on global wheat production and prices was unclear. FAO said Tuesday that China hadn't exported wheat for the past two years, although there were some exports before 2008 of about 1.5 million tons. The North China Plain region produces most of China's winter wheat, which is harvested in June. Low precipitation has meant there hasn't been enough snowfall to protect dormant plants from frost, and has affected soil moisture needed for the growing season, FAO said. FAO said the situation could become critical if a spring drought follows the winter drought or if temperatures this month plunge. But it also noted that temperatures so far have been moderate, that the government had increased irrigation to the region and allocated \$15 billion to support farmers and subsidize diesel, fertilizer and pesticides. Already, a large part of the harvest area - some 5.16 million hectares of the 14 million hectares planted - may have been affected, FAO said. The main provinces affected are Shandong, Jiangsu, Henan, Hebei and Shanxi. FAO said the drought had also affected some 2.6 million people and 2.8 million livestock "due to the shortages of drinking water."

#### **SEVENTEEN) - CHINA PREPARES FOR 'SEVERE, LONG-LASTING DROUGHT'**

Chinese officials said Wednesday they were preparing for "a severe, long-lasting drought" in the key wheat-producing eastern province of Shandong, with no rain in sight until mid-month and possibly beyond in the parched region. On Tuesday, the U.N. food agency warned that the months long drought was putting pressure on wheat prices in China, the world's largest wheat grower. Average flour prices rose more than 8 percent in January from the previous two months. As the drought continues, the focus will be on whether China, which is largely self-sufficient in wheat, will reach out for imports and how that would affect global prices for the staple, which has already risen about 35 percent since mid-November. China's national weather bureau forecasts little if any rain for the Shandong region through Feb. 17. State television broadcast images Wednesday of withered crops in cracked earth. State media have said Shandong faces its worst drought in 200 years and that the other affected provinces across the country's north and east are facing their worst in 60 years. The director of emergency relief at Shandong's weather bureau said the agency had predicted the future trend of the drought, but he refused to give details. Like many Chinese officials, he would not give his name. "What we are doing now is making full preparations to deal with a severe, long-lasting drought," he said. However, irrigation efforts are on hold because of a cold snap, and "we are advising farmers not to water their crops, because the temperature is too low," he said. The cold snap is expected to end Sunday. Only about half an inch (12 millimeters) of rain has fallen on Shandong since September, the state-run Xinhua News Agency has reported. China has said the drought is mainly affecting the provinces of Shandong, Jiangsu, Henan, Hebei and Shanxi, which grow more than two-thirds of the country's wheat. The government has already announced it was sending relief teams to eight affected provinces, and President Hu Jintao and Premier Wen Jiabao have made high-profile trips to drought-ridden areas.

#### **EIGHTEEN) - NOTHING HAS CHANGED IN EGYPT, SAYS PRIME MINISTER**

Egypt's new prime minister said on Sunday the country was being governed in the same way it was under the ousted president -remarks likely to infuriate protesters keen to dismantle Hosni Mubarak's ruling system. Apparently seeking to reassure Egyptians that everything was under control, Prime Minister Ahmed Shafiq said government affairs were being presented to the Higher Military Council, "as they were presented to the president of the republic". "There is no change in the form, method or process of work. Matters are completely stable," he told a news conference. Shafiq was appointed by Mubarak after he sacked his former cabinet on

Jan. 29 in a vain effort to quell an uprising against his rule. Mubarak stepped down on Friday, handing power to the Higher Military Council, headed by Defence Minister and armed forces commander Mohamed Hussein Tantawi. The council said on Saturday Shafiq's government would stay on until a new one was formed. **PLUS ÇA CHANGE...** "All matters are presented to the higher council, and the president of the higher council, as they were presented to the president of the republic," Shafiq said, signalling no alteration yet to the system of rule protesters want to change. Shafiq said the military would decide the role of Omar Suleiman, who was appointed vice president by Mubarak last month. Suleiman's position has been in doubt since Mubarak resigned on Friday, handing power to the armed forces.

## NINETEEN) - EGYPTIAN ARMY EVEN MORE IN CONTROL THAN BEFORE MUBARAK'S FALL

Egypt's generals are asserting their command over the country following the overthrow of President Hosni Mubarak, preparing on Monday to ban strikes and to warn they will act against "chaos and disorder". Having suspended the constitution and dissolved parliament on Sunday, moves welcomed by those who saw both institutions as perverted to Mubarak's personal ends, the armed forces council was planning, a military source said, to issue orders intended to stifle further disruption and get the country back to work. Disgruntled employees are already pressing for better deals. Free and fair elections will come, the army said, under a revised constitution -- but it gave no timetable beyond saying that the military would be in charge "for a temporary period of six months or until the end of elections to the upper and lower houses of parliament, and presidential elections". Nor did it detail what civilian or other participation there would be in amending basic laws during the transition. The cabinet appointed by Mubarak last month will go on governing, submitting legislation to the army chiefs for approval. **WORKERS WANT NOW HIGHER SALARIES** Inspired by the success of the 18 days of popular protests which, with the blessing of the army, forced Mubarak to end his 30 years in power on Friday, workers across Egypt have begun to agitate for better deals. Bank staff forced officials to make Monday an unscheduled bank holiday -- running into a public holiday already set for Tuesday. And employees elsewhere took to the streets. There have been reports of protests, sit-ins and strikes at, in the main, state-owned institutions. These include the stock exchange, textile firms, media organisations, steel firms, the postal service and railways, the police and the health ministry. The workers cite an array of grievances. What unites them is a new sense of being able to speak out in the post-Mubarak era. "Finally we have been encouraged to come out and speak," said Hala Fawzi, a 34-year-old mother of two protesting on Sunday outside the offices of the state-owned insurance company where she works for \$20 a month. "We want equality," she said. **ARMY TO BAN UNION MEETINGS** The army, however, is keen to get Egypt working again. It will be aware of the turmoil still going on in Tunisia, where an uprising that unseated another ageing Arab autocrat last month provided the inspiration for Egyptians to take to the streets. The army source said military authorities would issue an order on Monday that would ban meetings by labour unions or professional syndicates, effectively forbidding strikes, and would tell all Egyptians to get back to work. There will also be a warning from the military against those who create "chaos and disorder", the source said, adding the army would, however, acknowledge the right to protest. After three weeks of economic dislocation which has seen tourists flee the pyramids and beaches, and trade and factories facing difficulties, millions of Egyptians are anxious to start earning again in order to survive. Soldiers scuffled with protesters on Sunday as the authorities let traffic flow through Cairo's Tahrir Square, the focal point of the "revolution on the Nile". Some of the protesters remain camped out, determined to see through their demands for civilian rule and a free, democratic system. Jihad Laban, an accountant, said much work remained to make sure the revolution did not squander what it had gained. "The goal was never just to get rid of Mubarak. The system is totally corrupt and we won't go until we see some real reforms," said Jihad Laban, an accountant. "I am going to be buried in Tahrir. I am here for my children." **MILITARY MANOEUVRES** After six decades underpinning presidents who have all been drawn from its ranks, the army can still draw on deep reserves of public sympathy. That was enhanced by its refusal to join police in attacking demonstrators during the uprising. However, leaders of the protest movement have warned that they stand ready to demonstrate in force if their demands are not met for a complete change from the old ways. A major "Victory March" is in the planning for this coming Friday. "The two big questions now are who is going to be on the constitutional committee to redraft (the constitution), and are there any guarantees that what they come up with is then going to be deemed the way ahead," said Rosemary Hollis, professor of Middle East Policy Studies at City University London. **TRANSITION TO DEMOCRACY OR TO PLAIN ARMY RULE?** Many opposition figures were pleased with the army's first steps, however. "It is a victory for the revolution," said Ayman Nour, who challenged Mubarak for the presidency in 2005 and was later jailed. "I think this will satisfy the protesters." They have demanded the release of political prisoners, the lifting of a state of emergency, the abolition of military courts, fair elections and a swift handover to civilian rule. The army has said it would lift emergency law, used to stifle

dissent under Mubarak, when "current circumstances end". But it has not specified a timetable. "There are still a lot of grey areas, but it is clear that these decisions are opening the door for an entirely new system to come to order," said Hassan Abu Taleb of Cairo's Al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies. Any transition to democracy will be fraught with difficulty and old ways of doing things may die hard in a country where the ruling party routinely rigged elections and candidates used bribery, hired thugs and dirty tricks to ensure victory. Existing registered parties are mostly small, weak and fragmented. The Islamist Muslim Brotherhood, which under the now suspended constitution could not form a party, may be the best organised group, but its true popularity has yet to be tested. On Saturday, the army said it would uphold Egypt's international obligations. These include a peace treaty with Israel, whose defence minister has been in touch with his Egyptian counterpart, who heads the military council. Prime Minister Ahmed Shafiq said Mubarak was in the Red Sea resort of Sharm el-Sheikh and that the cabinet had not made any request to freeze the deposed president's assets abroad. A British minister said there should be an international approach to dealing with Mubarak's overseas assets. Many believe he and his family may have billions of dollars worth of assets abroad, which Egyptians may in time try to retrieve.

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