

Hezbollah Inspires Sudanese

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Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir said Sudan has taken inspiration from Hizbullah and would battle a proposed international peacekeeping force in the strife-ridden Darfur region, the state news agency reported Tuesday. The statements by Bashir appeared to strengthen Sudan's resolve to resist a possible UN-backed force to end the bloodshed and ongoing refugee crisis. More than 200,000 people have been killed in the western region since 2003, when ethnic African tribes revolted against the Khartoum government.

Sudanese leader vows to replicate Hizbullah's success against Israel if UN sends peacekeepers Wednesday, August 16, 2006

Compiled by Daily Star staff

Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir said Sudan has taken inspiration from Hizbullah and would battle a proposed international peacekeeping force in the strife-ridden Darfur region, the state news agency reported Tuesday. The statements by Bashir appeared to strengthen Sudan's resolve to resist a possible UN-backed force to end the bloodshed and ongoing refugee crisis. More than 200,000 people have been killed in the western region since 2003, when ethnic African tribes revolted against the Khartoum government. "We are determined to defeat any forces entering the country just as Hizbullah has defeated the Israeli forces," the official Sudanese News Agency quoted Bashir as telling an armed forces gathering Monday. Last week, the United States repeated its demand for deployment of a strong and mobile UN peacekeeping force in Darfur by October 1. The top UN humanitarian official, Jan Egeland, said the situation is "going from real bad to catastrophic" after attempts to enforce a peace deal unleashed more fighting. "We are opposed to the deployment [in Darfur] of American, British or other forces imposed by the Security Council," Bashir said. Late Monday, Human Rights Watch said that the UN Security Council should impose sanctions on Bashir and other top officials for blocking the UN bid for peace in Darfur. In a letter to the council, the New York-based group also called for an expansion of an arms embargo to cover all of Sudan, not just Darfur, and authorization of more than 20,000 UN troops. "Civilians in Darfur are in urgent need of protection and the Sudanese government admits it can't save them from the violence," Human Rights Watch Africa director Peter Takirambudde said in a separate statement. "The council should impose personal, targeted sanctions on top Sudanese officials responsible for preventing UN troops from being sent to Darfur," he said. A Human Rights Watch spokeswoman said this included Bashir. The UN Security Council approved a resolution in 2005 calling for a freeze on assets overseas and a travel ban on individuals who defy peace efforts, violate rights or conduct military flights over Darfur. But it has only been used once - in April - to impose sanctions on a Sudanese Air Force commander, a pro-government militia leader and two rebel commanders. A longer list of people have been recommended for UN sanctions by Britain and other nations, but other council members - including the United States - have opposed sanctions on other high-ranking Sudanese officials. - Agencies

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