



UNAMIS

UNITED NATIONS ADVANCE MISSION IN THE SUDAN

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Following is a near-verbatim transcript of today's weekly briefing (12:30PM) by Radhia Achouri, Spokesperson for the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Sudan

Good afternoon.

Nairobi talks

- The SRSG was in Nairobi on the 7th and 11th of October, where the talks between the Government of Sudan and the SPLM/A are being held. The parties are meeting to resolve the pending issues from the last round of talks, namely: the redeployment of troops; the financing of the SPLA troops and more generally, the permanent ceasefire arrangements.

- During both visits to Nairobi, the SRSG met twice separately with the First Vice-President Ali Osman Taha and the Chairman of the SPLM/A John Garang. His message to both of them was to seize the last chance this round of talks represented so finalize agreement on a comprehensive peace settlement. He cautioned against reopening signed protocols and temptations of postponing or of bidding time in hope of making more gains. He stressed to the two leaders to ensure high level and sustained involvement in the talks in order to ensure speedy agreement and quick move towards implementation. (Copies of the remarks made by the SRSG to the meeting held on 7 October are available)

- The SRSG attended on the 11th of October in Nairobi a workshop on DDR organized by the UNDP's DDR-Unit together with the IGAD for the benefit of members from the GoS and the SPLM/A. The workshop which started on 1 October concluded its work on 12 October.

Darfur/Political

- The SRSG met in Nairobi on 11 October with an SLA delegation headed by its Chairman Abdel Wahid Nour. Discussions focused on the forthcoming Abuja talks and the recent developments of the situation in Darfur. The SRSG stressed the importance of pursuing during the forthcoming talks a negotiated political settlement of the Darfur conflict - settlement that addresses the root causes of the conflict in a sustainable way.

- The next round of Abuja Talks will start on 21 October 2004. In his discussions with the GoS and the rebel groups, the SRSG recommended that they focus during this round of talks on the political issues and to tackle the root causes of the conflict. He also called on all

parties to engage in the negotiations with good faith and with a firm commitment to achieve a sustainable peace settlement. The UN will participate in the Abuja meeting.

- The AU Peace and Security Commission will meet in Addis Ababa on 19 October and will consider the expansion of the size and the mandate of the AU mission in Darfur.

On humanitarian and other issues

North Darfur:

- The area North West of the state has been declared a no-go area for UN agencies following the tragic incident of 10 October when two humanitarian staff were killed and one was injured after their vehicle hit a landmine, 10 km north of Um Baru.
- Prior to the SCF security incident, access to SLA areas continued to be difficult. On 9 October, a UNICEF team traveling to Sayah by helicopter to undertake a polio vaccination campaign was reportedly confronted by the SLA, who claimed that the area was under their control and that the team should have notified them.
- The IDP survey, which aims to determine the preparedness of IDPs to return to their villages of origin, and was halted by GoS on 4 October, is still at a standstill. The exercise had originally started with the approval of GoS authorities on 2 October and had successfully interviewed approximately 50% of a sample target group. The interviewers have been recalled to El Fasher until discussions with the HAC led to the resumption of the exercise.
- AUCFC monitors intervened to calm down a crowd in Kebkabiya following the return of two women to the camp after having escaped their abductors. Upon their arrival to the camp, the women reportedly recognized two persons as belonging to the group of perpetrators, sparking an attack by the IDPs on the alleged abductors. Following this incident, the two alleged abductors were reportedly taken to custody on charges of sexual assault.

South Darfur:

- On 8 October, bandits ambushed and looted some personal items from two vehicles belonging to an INGO, 15 km from Kass on the road to Zaleingi.
- An INGO reported the existence of about 2-3,000 IDPs in Qussat Ingammat, a village 60km north west of Nyala, south of Bulbul on the Nyala-Kass route. The IDPs stated that they had fled the nearby villages of Awin Rado and Abu Jazy after their villages were attacked in April 2004. The IDPs further reported that Arab militias had looted their livestock in August.
- South Darfur: The Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) has informed that reportedly, due to attacks on Adwa, located 95 km north of Nyala and other areas as close as 15 km northeast of the town, approximately 200 new IDP families arrived in Kalma camp on 8 Oct. The new IDPs informed NRC that their villages, including Kouja, Dolad, Kerenik, Almadou, Erenga, Baba, Abu Oudam, Talata and Tabaja were attacked by armed men on horseback, camels and some with vehicles. According to the IDPs, three men and one woman were killed, three men were injured and four women were abducted. The AU monitors were informed and plan to investigate these alleged attacks.

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West Darfur:

- The protection situation in Um Kher is reported as being critical by the OCHA team that visited Garsilla, Um Kher and Delieg on 8 Oct. IDPs have been restricted in their movements by the militias surrounding the areas and the police guarding the settlements are reportedly not able to prevent harassment and threats from the militias. IDPs in Garsila and Delieg also reported protection concerns and did not show confidence in the local police.
- The OCHA team also notes that there have been arrests of national staff members of INGOs. Recently, in Zaleingi, two staff members from two different INGOs were arrested by GoS authorities on 6 October, accusing them of subversion and supporting the SLA. An INGO volunteer was also arrested on 7 October in Deleig.

West Darfur:

- A joint OHCHR/ UNHCR field visit to Nertiti confirmed previous reports of the precarious protection situation of the IDPs in the area. The team recommended that more agencies move into the area to ensure better protection and provision of humanitarian assistance for the IDPs.
- An OCHA team visited the two major camps in Zaleingi, Hamedia and Hessa Hissa and reports that Arab militias carried out various attacks on IDPs who leave the camps to cut grass and collect wood between 7 and 10 October.

Food and Non-Food Items (NFI)

North Darfur:

- WFP and German Agro Action (GAA) have completed the registration and food distribution to the conflict affected population in Dissa and Um Shidig areas. They found approximately 27,180 beneficiaries, an increase from August of approximately 9,500 people. WFP and the Sudanese Red Crescent (SRC) have completed the registration and distribution of food to approximately 50,000 IDPs in Abu Shouk.

South Darfur:

- Due to logistical difficulties, agencies report that food dispatched to Nyala continues to experience substantial delays. As a result, the planned distribution to the SLA-held Muhujariya, planned for last week, has once again been postponed.
- Samaritan's Purse will commence registration of IDPs in Marla and Sania Afandu, east Jebel Marra, on 12 October in order to follow up with food and NFI distributions.
- Agencies are concerned about the steady stream of new arrivals in Kalma camp, increasingly overstressing the camps capacity and the services provided in the camp. WFP started a new round of distributions in the camp on 10 October to cover the 93,000 people that WFP has registered for this distribution. MSF-H distributed food rations and tarpaulins to new IDPs that had arrived to the camp from nine surrounding villages on 8 October.

- West Darfur: Norwegian Church Aid has commenced distribution of plastic sheeting to IDPs in the Zalengi camps, Hessa Hissa and Hemada. In response to the increase of Hepatitis E cases in the two camps over the past week, IRC plans to install 55 hand washing facilities and 100 latrines. MSF-F distributed 10,000 pieces of soap on 10 October at the water points in the camps.

Health

- Action Contre le Faim (ACF) released the preliminary results of its nutritional survey carried out in Nyala town on 9 October. The survey, which included the resident populations as well as the IDPs, found that children aged 6 to 29 months showed Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) rates of 31.36% (Z-score). Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) results for the same age group indicated a 5.2%. The MSF survey conducted in August in Kalma camp found similar results with almost a quarter (23.6%) of the children under five were malnourished, 3.3% of them severely malnourished. Agencies are planning to respond with specific targeted interventions. Among the interventions, for Kalma camp, agencies agreed last week to register IDPs on arrival, to reserve a stock of food in the camp to facilitate the immediate distribution of food to the new arrivals, to require new arrivals to check into the health facilities on arrival and to regularly conduct home visits in order to identify malnourished children that failed to check into the health facilities.
- A WHO report on the general health status of IDPs in Abu Shouk camp over the past month indicates a stable situation, where only three cases of acute Jaundice/Hepatitis E, out of which two were people aged 90 years and above, were reported.
- The polio National Immunization campaign is progressing well with high level participation, in its launch in West Darfur, by representatives of WHO from Chad and Sudan, UNICEF representatives as well as the Sudanese Ministry of Health. Vaccination is being conducted in previously inaccessible areas; it started on 10 October and ends today (13 October). Some 293,000 children 0-5 are expected to be vaccinated, by 340-strong vaccination teams. Preliminary reports from South Darfur indicate that 69,434 were vaccinated on Day 1 and 45,664 children on Day 2, though this is based on reports from very few of the over 200 teams deployed on the ground. So this is not the final tally of children benefiting from the campaign. The previously inaccessible area of Donkey Dressa (in Nyala locality) was covered yesterday 12 October using a car provided by the American Refugee Committee; the target in this location is 921 children.
- General: UNICEF/OLS is now planning for the 2005 - 2006 Measles Campaign. The pilot phase is scheduled to take place in Tonj in November 2004 and the planning meetings will take place in Loki and Rumbek.

That's what I have for you today and I would like now to give the floor to my colleague from WFP, Greg Barrow, to brief you on the *World Food Day*.

Greg Barrow (Senior PI Officer, WFP). I will be as brief as possible. Two issues I would like to alert you to. The first is the operational update which I distributed to some people out here if anybody else wants this, this is an up-to-date summary of issues that we are addressing in the field and it was completed just an hour or so ago; so it has got some new information in it the other issue is this coming weekend which is the United Nations *World Food Day*. We will be putting out a press release, which is embargoed until the 15th of October, and for further information, please contact UNAMIS Spokesperson, Ms. Radhia Achouri. Phone: (249) 392 270 e-mail: achouri@un.org

accompanying that, for any newspapers that are interested here in Khartoum, there is an opinion piece written out by our executive director, James Morris about the issue of *World Food Day* and what it means to the world food program this year and without wanting to give you too much information on what it says because it is embargoed; I will summarize it briefly. It recognizes the incredible attention being focused on Darfur and the huge humanitarian effort that has been made to address the needs of the people in Darfur. It also raises this issue that we are all grappling with in the humanitarian community, that while the world's attention is on Darfur there are also many other parts of the world where people are still hungry and perhaps not receiving the attention they may need even within Sudan: the south what is going on in the south has been overshadowed by what has been going on in the western region of Sudan. So the press release and the opinion piece make this point rather eloquently. If anyone here is interested now in getting hold of that information, please come and see me afterwards and I will make sure that it is delivered to you in good time so if you need to publish it on Saturday morning, for example, you will have all the information there and it will be available to you. So please come and see me afterwards. Radhia, that is really all I have to say at this stage. Thank you.

Radhia Achouri: Thank you very much. Actually, once we are going to receive the press release, we will distribute it to you all those on my list will have it to you via e-mail will have it available for you on time. So, this is what we have for you today.
Any questions?

Q-Khalid Tijani, *UPI*: the international community keeps talking about the deteriorating security situation in Darfur yet there is nothing done, so about the expansion and increasing the number of African troops in Darfur although Sudan government has accepted the expansion of mission. What is delaying this? Why these delays? What is the reason for (intelligible)...

A- We put a recommendation in our report to the Security Council that we wanted an expanded mission of the African Union, expanded in number but also expanded in mandate. Now, as I announced, the Peace & Security Commission of the African Union will be meeting in Addis on the 19th. One of the items on its agenda is to consider the mandate for this expanded mission and to come up with the final size of this mission. So, on our part, we made sure to sensitize all parties: the African Union, the government of Sudan and also the other countries who would be assisting the African Union in its speedy deployment with the provision of what is required for this mission to deploy on time – mainly logistical support, technical support and what have you; to make sure that the mission is deployed as soon as possible preferably before the end of the year. So basically the decision on the mandate and the number or the size of the mission is the competence of the African Union and they decided to consider on the October the 19th. Meanwhile, the United Nations is working very closely with a number of different countries and nations to mobilize support for making sure that as soon as there is a decision from the African Union then the deployment can be done in a speedy manner and all the logistics required are available for that African Union once it is decided upon by the competent authority in this matter – which is the African Union.

Q: I wanted to know more about security in Darfur. The last two months, August and September, you noted that the security situation has improved but now in October we are having reports that problems have already popped up again. What measures have you taken, or are you taking to protect the international staff that are working the international and the IDPs so that the situation will not go back as in the beginning of the conflict in Darfur?

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A- Well, the security situation, as we reported it in September, we said that the gains of the month of August were not reversed but we said that the overall security situation did not improve ever the security situation did not improve. And after we submitted the report we can say that the security situation is actually deteriorating in some areas. Breaches of the ceasefire, clashes, tribal clashes, the militia, particularly the Janjaweed are still roaming around, intimidating, attacking, kidnapping and threatening the security of the IDPs. Our own personnel have experienced some incidents. I am referring particularly to banditry incidents and I just cited a couple of them today so the security situation has not improved. The whole situation culminated to what has happened on 10 October that led to the tragic loss of lives of some humanitarian workers belonging to an international NGO. Now, what measures we have taken. Actually, we are in constant contact with the government of the Sudan, to remind it of its obligations which are clearly stipulated by the Security Council. Security and protection of the population and the humanitarian workers are the responsibility of the Government of Sudan. As for the UN, our role is to report on the security situation to the Security Council and the Security Council, which the competent body to decide on what kind of action should be made to address this situation and progress or lack of it or made by the government of Sudan in terms of security. For our staff, we assess regularly the security situation, we issue instructions to our UN personnel as to which area is a go-area, and which area is not. The important thing is the security situation has to be improved – dramatically. The government has obligations; the rebels movements have obligations under the international humanitarian law and more specifically, under the N'djamena humanitarian ceasefire agreement. They are under a clear obligation to make sure that the civilian population and humanitarian workers are not harmed and that their safety is not threatened in any way. We are following up on the situation and we will report on it to the Security Council by the end of this month.

Q- is the coming report by Mr. Pronk the last chance for the government to avoid the Security Council sanctions (as the Security Council resolution gives a 3-month ultimatum)? My second question is when do you expect the peace-keeping mission to Darfur to actually start? The third question is will Mr. Pronk take part in the Sert (Libya) African summit?

A- I am going to answer your questions in Arabic and then summarize the answers later for the English speakers. On your first question: whether the upcoming report by Mr. Pronk is the last chance for the Sudanese government. Our assessment, now, is not complete. We are still in the middle of the month and have 17 days to go. What I can say is that we will present a report on to the Security Council and it is for the Security Council to decide if this is going to be the last chance as you put it or not. On your second question, I don't have the answer. We urged the relevant parties, including the African Union, donor states and, to make this deployment take place before the end of this year. But all depends on the African Union decision on the mandate and the size and more importantly, the timely provision of the required assistance from the donors. As to the mini-summit; we have not received an invitation and so will not attend the summit.

Q- : first question: according to the report, security hampers the World Food Program operations in Darfur. It is stated here that the WFP aims to be feeding 2 million people (intelligible) my question is how much expenses is it going to spend feeding this large number of people (intelligible) displaced in the region and up to when is it going to continue feeding these people, if the situation does not improve. My other question is as the Security Council is going to (intelligible) the report you are going to (intelligible) the Council. What is your advice as a UN representative in the country to the Security Council ?

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A- I will start with your last question first and then I will give the floor to my colleague from the WFP to answer the first question. Our role here, the role of the Special Representative to the Secretary General, as far as Darfur is concerned, is to follow up on the implementation of the joint communiqué signed by the Secretary General of the UN with the government of the Sudan and the relevant Security Council resolutions on the progress or lack thereof made by the government of the Sudan in fulfilling its obligations under the Security Council resolutions. So, we base our reports on what we see, what we hear, what is verified what is investigated by the African Union and we report actually facts, mainly, or trends, based on reports from the field. This is what we do, we report those to the Security Council and the Security Council is the one that makes its conclusions, based on the Secretary-General's report, its findings and conclusions. The Security Council makes its own decisions.

Now, on your first question, I would just say a couple of things. What is happening on the ground is not hampering only WFP activities. It is hampering all UN humanitarian activities the large community of international NGOs that are very active on the ground. So, this is the situation and we are very much concerned about it. First because if we do not deliver humanitarian assistance on time, the impact on the population is going to be terrible. The situation is going to worsen and basically we feel it as something that should not happen and could be even a setback in those operations if the trend is not reversed – in security, that is. And secondly we are very worried for the safety and security of our humanitarian workers. The incident on the 10th of October is the ultimate proof that somebody who came to help becomes the victim. These people who died were there to help victims and they became victims themselves. A tragic situation that has to stop, that has to end – immediately. And all parties, be it the government, be it the rebels they have to invest more than what they are doing right now to make sure that this situation is going to happen again and none of those security incidents that we keep hearing about and keep reporting about are to happen anymore. All of them have a duty towards their own people. This is what I have to say. Now I am going to give the floor to my colleague from the WFP to give you more details on your question.

WFP: I think you pointed out they we aimed to be feeding 2 million people a month by the end of the year. That is correct. That is our aim. I think it is fair to say that, as Radhia has pointed out, if this problem of insecurity grows, then that aim is going to be difficult to reach. But that is still our aim at the moment. We drew up a budget earlier this year for an operation which stretches from the first of April through to the end of this year – 9 months. And that budget is US\$252m. What we have received so far from donor nations, and I should point out here that the World Food Program received almost all of its funds from donor nations around the world and it is US\$211m. So we are facing a shortage of US\$41m. You also asked what happens next. Well we need more money beyond that. Yes, we are just in the process of drawing up a proposed budget for 2005, and it looks certain that that budget will be higher than the budget for this year. Ordinarily because it covers 12 months and not the 9 months the budget for this year did. Yes, we are making those plans. I can not give you a figure but that figure will be available in a matter of weeks.

Q- My question now is directed to the peace effort made in Kenya, for the south of Sudan. We have heard that Jan Pronk, representative of Kofi Annan is there. What do you think that the UN expect that can make both parties who are negotiating to reach an agreement... The fact that so many people tried... So many tried to put pressure on parties to reach an agreement – but nothing. What special expectations the UN have that the special representative will get an impact on the negotiations?

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A- First of all, Mr. Jan Pronk is not any longer in Nairobi. I just announced that he went there only on the 7th of October that is the day of the opening of the resumption of the talks and on the 11th of October. He is not currently in Nairobi; he is in Geneva for an internal meeting of the United Nations. What we have to add? First, let me say that the process is completely owned by the Sudanese: the government and the SPLM...it is their responsibility to live up to the expectations of their own people and we were clear in our message to them: the United Nations can not force people to make peace, if they are not willing to. But the United Nations can not let the suffering of the people go on. However, we are very optimistic and for a good reason: "we do believe that the parties are committed to finalize an agreement, since they already signed 6 protocols. We are aware of the difficulty of the process, as the SRSG put it to the two parties: the process is a difficult one, this phase is particularly difficult but you you have to make it. You are making history, making real change that would impact on the future of the country, the future of the people, cease the opportunity". The international community made it very clear to both parties that it is their last chance. If they miss it; the repercussions for the country, for the people of Sudan, for the whole region are going to be disastrous. What Mr. Pronk is trying to achieve, is to convince the parties to preserve the momentum, to sensitize them as to the consequences of failure, and he is putting as much pressure as he can to convince the parties that there no alternative to peace.

Any other questions?

Well, if there are none, thank you very much. But before you leave, I would like to remind you that we've started the accreditation process. Some of you got it. But I need from those who submitted incomplete files to please complete them and come to my office so we can give you cards. Thank you very much and have a good afternoon.