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UNITED NATIONS ADVANCE MISSION IN THE SUDAN

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Office of the Spokesperson**PRESS BRIEFING**

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,

First, I have a couple on announcements to make:

- The 3 WFP local staff and the 3 Sudanese Red Crescent staff with whom radio contact was lost last Saturday were located yesterday. The 3 WFP workers are in their way to Khartoum and the 3 workers of the SRC were flown last night to Al Fasher. Since Saturday, they were detained by the SLA who apprehended them when they were operating in the vicinity of Shangel Tubai, approx 30 km south of El Fashir (North Darfur), where clashes between the Government forces and the SLA were taking place.

We welcome the release of the humanitarian workers and we are happy to announce that they are in good condition and that they were not harmed or injured during their detention.

We take due note of the extent of the cooperation of the SLA in insuring the release of the WFP and the SRC aid workers.

We would like, however, to stress that the United Nations, in keeping with the principles of International humanitarian law, considers such actions as completely unacceptable and we demand that all parties, including the rebel groups, to insure the safety and security of all humanitarian workers, as well as their free and unhindered access to their areas of operation.

- The 22 staff members of the Sudanese Ministry of Health who were detained by the JEM on Sunday were released a couple of days ago. Their abduction occurred 80 kilometers (50 miles) south of the North Darfur state capital of El Fasher, when they were conducting registration of IDPs for the vaccination campaign in the SLA/JEM controlled areas.

Turning to the latest on Darfur**On the political side,**

- The Joint Implementation Mechanism (JIM) verification mission concluded its visit to the 3 States of Darfur conducted from 26 to 28 August. The findings of the mission are included in the report of the Secretary-General submitted to the Security Council in compliance with its resolution 1556. The Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General SRSG, Jan Pronk, will present the report to the Council on 2 September 2004. The report will be issued later today (in the morning NY time). We will make the report available to you as soon as we receive it.

- The Abuja Talks are continuing today and the discussions are focused on the humanitarian cluster. The African Union mediation, with the support of the UN and other partners, presented the parties with a consolidated draft paper on humanitarian assessment. The parties came back with proposals which are being discussed and the mediation is working on the final version of the protocol on humanitarian issues. The parties are expected to start discussions on the security issues once an agreement is finalized on the humanitarian cluster. Human rights monitors with the Office for the High Commissioner for Human Rights have arrived to set up operations in all three states.

Turning to security and humanitarian issues,

- Insecurity and violent clashes continue to be reported in the three states and a general feeling of fear remains among IDPs who are reluctant to return to their villages at this time.

- Major gaps in humanitarian relief remain, despite an increase in many types of assistance that has been delivered over the past few weeks. The UN agencies are still facing large funding shortfalls as you can see on the tables we have handed out. For the relief effort in Darfur and Chad together, the UN still requires \$255 million in additional funding for 2004. The tables also show that here are three sectors that have received less than 20 percent funding so far: shelter and non-food items; agriculture; and human rights. Statistics will be distributed to you at the end of the briefing

- Despite these funding shortfalls, relief efforts by UN agencies and NGOs are continuing in all parts of Darfur. WFP and World Vision are planning to distribute food in the Otash and Mossai IDP gatherings in Nyala town today. The registration of IDPs in these locations had been completed last week and food has been pre-positioned. MSF-Holland started a blanket feeding for children under five in several locations in South Darfur yesterday (Muhajaria, Labado, Marla and Sheriya). There are an estimated 25,000 IDPs in these villages, but this figure is expected to increase when a full registration is completed. In West Darfur, WFP and CARE completed food registration in Zallingei putting the IDP population at over 59,000. They are planning to start distributions shortly.

- WFP and German Agro Action completed food distribution in two SLA areas north of Kutum (Disa and Anka) on 30 August. The UN Joint Logistics Center has also distributed non-food items (NFIs) to IDPs in SLA areas. On 22 August, NFIs were distributed to 110 households in Kulkul and to 641 households in Hashaba centre.

Finally on the Naivasha talks, the Government of the Sudan and the SPLM renewed yesterday the agreement on cessation of hostilities for another three months, until 31 November 2004.

That's what I have for you today. Are there any questions?

Associated Press

Q. You said there is a report that will be out today. But you didn't say what time?

A. Well, Morning New York Time. I would say around 10 in the morning. And you add to it seven hours to have Khartoum time.

Q. You mentioned security incidents, but there was no detail of who did it? SLA, the government, the rebels or Janjweed?

A. Well, the incidents that we have received reports on they involved a lot of actors. But particularly the ones that we received lately are mainly on tribal clashes and on SLA/ govt. clashes in the three states of Darfur and mainly in the areas that are not selected by the govt. as to be made safe and secure. So outside those areas we had recurrent reports on clashes between SLA forces and the govt. forces in those areas but also we received reports on tribal clashes that are not particularly identified as militias, or govt. forces or the rebel groups.

Q. Are there any fresh reports on the movement of the IDP's, people crossing to Chad?

A. Well we have lots of reports on the movement of the IDP's. I have to check for you exactly what's happening in the front of Chad, but we continuously receive reports from the UNHCR about the movement of the IDP's to Chad. The Latest I have from the UNHCR are basically alerting us that if things are going to continue this way. Many IDP's are planning to go and to move to the other side of the border to the Chad territory. I don't have further at this point to say. I can't confirm at stage if there is an actual movement of those IDP's to Chad or not, because the reports I receive talk about the intention of the number of the IDP's to cross. But that's provided that the rainy season is over. Any updates on that I will be happy to provide them to you later.

Q. You mentioned that there are Human Rights monitors that are going to arrive in Darfur. But you did not mention specifically from which countries or from which agency.

A. Well they are UN human rights officials. We don't refer to them by nationality. We refer to them by their capacity. They are Human Rights officials from the UN. As for nationality, I'm not aware of it and we are not even supposed to refer to them that way because is not particularly relevant to what they are supposed to do in the area. Thank you.

Are they any other questions? If there is no other questions I just remind that u can pick up the statistics on the latest updates in terms of humanitarian assistance and needs and shortfalls. As for my briefing points they will be made available to you. Be aware that the copies that you are going to read, there are a couple of points. So rely on whatever you heard from me today to check on what I put in there.

Other than that, thank you for coming.

See you next Wednesday, same time same place