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PRESS BRIEFING

The following is the near verbatim transcript of the Press Conference of Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Sudan, Jan Pronk, held in Khartoum on 23 September 2004.

Good afternoon. I wanted to speak to you earlier and update you on our activities. It is only possible this week, because I've been traveling. Next week I will be again in New York for the preparation of the new report for the Security Council. Let me introduce just the discussion of today with a couple of comments.

Firstly, the new Security Council Resolution has been announced and has been adopted. It is important to know that there were eleven votes in favor and four abstentions, which means that the Security Council Resolution has been adopted. No country voted against, neither member of the so-called P-5 members, nor any other member. That means that the Government of Sudan has now to implement whatever requirements in the Security Council Resolution. It is the highest political organ in the international community. That means that, I will have to report to the Council on the implementation of its resolution and focus on my report that I'm still drafting on the specific requirements in the Security Council.

You are aware of the fact that these reports are monthly so my next report will be presented on the 30th of September, next Thursday and it will be discussed by the Security Council on the 5th of October, Tuesday thereafter. Which means that members of the Security Council will have the possibility to read the report and then to listen and ask questions. Then, based on that, they will again define their own position. I will focus my report on a number of major issues and I think it is necessary, to be transparent, to mention them. I will focus my report on issues related to the situation of the people on the ground. Why are we having the Security Council discussion? Because the international community wants people to be protected against violence and against attacks. The International Community has the obligation to monitor actions of governments— whatever action the Security Council would consider. The main problem why people are in danger is the fighting, the violence, pushing people out of their villages and out of their homes to other areas. It is important that the first criterion will be: are there breaches of the ceasefire, because there is a civil war going on in Darfur, or are there no breaches? That is the first major question. I am going to say now whether there are breaches or not. It is for my report. Moreover, today it's the 23rd of September, and the report will have to be finalized on the 30th of September, but it is extremely important that there are no breaches of the cease fire, because any breach of the cease fire is a loop in security incidence is creating the possibility of retaliation by the other party and the revenge and further escalation of violence, more fear, more moving out of the places where people are insecure. So, it's a major issue.

Both parties have to comply with their agreements. That is an issue I have raised with the government last Friday, during the meeting of the Joint Implementation Mechanism. The GoS has promised not to breach the ceasefire; it is up to us to see whether that promise is going to be kept. Of course, in the civil war you have to ask the questions to the other party. I was in Asmara, two days ago, and I asked the SLA/SLM and also the JEM, please keep the ceasefire, for the same reason I am asking the question to the GoS and I put pressure on the SLA/SLM and on the JEM to keep the ceasefire because also breaches coming from the rebel movements lead to violence, retaliation, fear and more refugees. Both say that they want to respect the ceasefire. Again it has to be seen in practice whether that intention or promise will be implemented and there will be an independent judgment on our part with regard to the question whether there are breaches of the ceasefire and who is responsible for it. I'll do that basing myself of course on the views of the AU ceasefire commission and I have established such contacts with the AU and with the ceasefire commission and I asked that the findings of the ceasefire commission to be made available in shorter periods of time so I could report whether there are ceasefire violations and who are to be blamed for that. That is one important thing, because of the consequences for people.

Second, ceasefire violations are being discussed in political circles between the government and the parties, UN and AU. That is a political process. With regard to other attacks, it is more difficult, and that is the attacks by militias. We did discuss that (with GoS). Whether the militia is under the government influence and whether they act on their own initiative, an internal issue for discussion. Anyway, militia attacking people in villages are a major threat. Whether they are being under the influence of the Government or not, they have to stop. And that is the second major criterion. And the government has the responsibility to stop militia. How? Up to the Government to do so, you're the Government, it's your militia, in your country. Up to you. If you can not do it, you don't have the capacity, for instance, or not enough capacity, you have to ask international support. It's an obligation you can not shy away from requesting international support to carry out your obligations. So that's the third criterion. Are you serious, are you sincere in requesting adequate international support – not only a little bit of support accepted grudgingly; not with delays and bureaucratic procedures; but royally: come in; help us to protect our own people.

That's the third criterion --- criterion stipulated in the text of the Security Council resolution to judge whether or not the Council would have to take action in the form of, for instance, sanctions Do you work together with the African Union? Royally. Whole-heartedly. So the second and the third criteria are clear: to protect against attacks, if you can't do it, get others then to give quick answers.

Fourthly, and then I stop, the prosecution of those who are responsible for mass violations of human rights. There is very clear language, it the resolution of the Security Council. Groups and individuals who are responsible for atrocities, for mass violations of human rights, should not be cherished in a climate of impunity. They should be brought to court. Don't underestimate that specific paragraph. It's a very important paragraph. I know it's difficult. Because who are they? And, if you know them, it is possible to catch them? Difficult. But the difficulty can not be any reason not to start taking action. There may be possibilities to carry out, to establish justice on the ground with the help of other mechanisms? But the other mechanisms, involving traditional justice, involving traditional leaders, whatever, are good but not a substitute for prosecution of those people who are responsible for atrocities, that has to take place. That' not my message. It's the message of the international community.

The four criteria are important. All the other issues are also important, but these are key and are being discussed in New York. I discussed them in Asmara, I discussed them in Addis and

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we want to make clear, of course, that this is not one-sided. I discussed them with the JEM and also the SLA. That's also the language I used also in my presentation to the Security Council early in September.

Two other comments, finally, or three. It's very important with regard to the last question, that indeed an enquiry can take place. It's the decision of the Security Council. Very important let me say, on behalf of the Secretary General of the United Nations, that such an enquiry, now that a decision has been taken, will be an independent enquiry, an independent investigation a fair investigation, to be carried out by a commission which is balanced in its composition, which does not have preconceived ideas. An independent investigation, like what you always get when the Secretary General of the United Nations is carrying out an investigation. It's the most independent possibility to get to know what has happened and what is happening these days and I am saying that to the Government of Sudan: Take the chance, welcome, the investigation, welcome this investigation on behalf of the international and community of which you are part. The report of that investigation has not yet been written, has not yet been drafted, it's going to be drafted by that commission. Welcome that investigation because it will enable all groups in Sudan to feed in and to give information about the process. It will be an important possibility also to clear the ground for the future.

I have been here about two and a half months. I intend to organize and to have intense contacts with the civil society in Sudan, with members of the opposition in Sudan. For the first couple of weeks, I did have my contacts of course, in particular with parties and with the Government and with the embassies and with the international organizations. My staff members had many contacts already with representatives of civil society, NGOs, etc. Starting mid-October I want to have contacts not only with representatives of rebel movement but civil society, intellectuals, journalists, representatives of non-governmental organizations of Sudanese origin active in the Country, in order to make it possible for me to have a balanced input of information, views and intentions from the whole of the Sudanese society.

Finally, we have to continue to give humanitarian assistance to those who are the victims. And we have just published our humanitarian survey "state of the Affairs", early September. It is not so good. We have an increase in the number of affected population: about 1.4 million IDPs, and another 400 thousands local people who are affected by the war and by the insecurity, who are not IDPs, or are not yet IDPs but are in a very vulnerable situation and also require humanitarian assistance – which makes a total of 12.8. million people in need of assistance. It is not yet the two million mentioned as the maximum number or people to be affected by the war, which was expected somewhere during June-July towards the end of the year. But we are going into that direction.

It's a huge number. Two million people, of victims needing assistance and we are not able to help all of them. I am as transparent as possible. At the moment, with regard to food, it is somewhat more than half of them, which are being reached to certain extent. Why? It is resources, to a certain extent. It is the rain to a certain extent. It is logistics, to a certain extent. It is also lack of accessibility to a number of areas which are not yet secure. That's why we need the implementation of the humanitarian protocol which was agreed upon in Abuja. There are also people in the rebel held areas and that's why we put pressure on the SLA and JEM to improve the access. The talks with them are quite intensive not only in Asmara but also on the ground. We are telling them, there are people belonging to groups which you do claim to represent, so we want to get in.

So, it's a mix of reasons, I said, money, resources, logistics, the rain, and accessibility. Also, the availability of persons to do the job. We now have more, many more international staff on the ground, over 700, and many local staff, over 5000 Sudanese staff members working together with UN agencies and with non-governmental organizations to carry out their, job. It

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is extremely important also to mention internationals because it shows that there are people who are willing to, within one framework or another, to work to the benefit of victims in this country. The number still has to increase, but they are increasing and our aim is two-fold: to reach all people in need, not only some or more than half of them, with food and non-food items, but all or them. We need to decrease the number of people in need. And that can only be decreased if we have a political solution and if we have agreements to implement more security on the ground.

I have mentioned my four main criteria which will be prominent in the report to the Security Council. The substance of these criteria I can not yet mention but these are the four main issues for my report for the month of September.

Thank you.

Q: the reaction of Sudan to Security Council resolution. They said they were resentful and disappointed. Has it made the relations more difficult between the United Nations and the Government?

A: We always read in newspapers statements by members of Sudanese Society, higher circles or in other circles, I always give the advice: only listen to the official reaction. And the official reaction is positive. We are going to implement it. We don't like it but we are going to implement it. And that is what is important. The Government of Sudan has said we understand this is a Security Council's resolution and we are going to live up to it. They said that in the meeting of the Joint Implementation Mechanism last Friday. Then, the resolution has not been adopted, that was on Saturday, but it was generally expected that it would be adopted in the Security Council. They said they would and that is what is important. They will live up to requirements in the Security Council resolution and that means that the relations between Sudan and the United Nations are the same as they were. It is cooperation, with pressure, because it is a Security Council resolution and that is a very important instrument of pressure in order to get what is required. And that is the answer to the question.

Q: How would rate the cooperation of the Government at the moment with the UN?

A: Well... I should like to say that it's at the end of the month that I'll do that. Otherwise, I would have to make an ad hoc judgment. At the end of last month, I did say there are ten points positive and key issues not positive. You remember, and it is not a numbers game. Some thought that ten is more than two but "key" is more important than "non-key". And now I mentioned my key issues for this month in advance. That is important. Whether the Government is cooperative or not on the key issues, remains to be seen on the 30th of September. But I am as transparent as possible. These are the four major issues. The other issues are interesting; are relevant; but these are the four major issues and I request, I demand I ask and in my diplomatic and political capacity, cooperation in particular with regard to these four key issues for September.

Q: I ask Mr. Pronk how he sees the issue of removal of immunity from the staff members, 10 of the regular forces, which happened yesterday, and the start of their trial procedures. The other question is, any development or another resolution of the Security Council expected as a result of your report at the end of the month?

A: OK. The first question I didn't understand because I didn't know anything about ten military officers being removed so you have to enlighten me. The second question was on the

Security Council resolution, but you didn't ask the question. You said I would like to ask a question on the Security Council resolution.

A: I asked whether Mr. Pronk's report on the 30th of the month, is expected to result in another resolution or developments.

A: I will deliver my report on the 30th then there will be a meeting on the 5th of October. Possibly again an oral presentation by me and a question and answer session in formal setting of the Security Council on the same day and then they will take decisions themselves. They decide how to do it. You have many possibilities. They may say there is progress and we don't have to sit together in order to draft a new resolution. They may also say not good enough and we want to make a statement or draft a new resolution. It is totally up to the members of the Security Council. I do not know how they'll react to a report which I have not yet written.

Q: I wanted to know from Mr. Jan about the situation of the IDPs in the camps. In your last report, you mentioned that the IDPs were scared of the people in uniform. They were scared of the UN people, because they thought that the UN people take them back to their villages. Now, what's the situation from that time till today, are they still scared or some bit of improvement?

OK. That was a month ago, isn't it? Yeah, all right. That's a fact. That is related to what they always claim: they have been attacked by people in uniform, whatever uniform, but by people in uniform. I tried to make clear that there are different uniforms and that, in particular, the members of the police have the obligation, like all police in the whole world, in any country, to protect people against violations of the law. I understand that many IDPs are also afraid of police. What we are doing at the moment is to help the Government to improve the quality of the police, human-rights training, for instance, the United Nations agencies are involved in it. I must say that they we get rather good reports back from United Nations agencies that police is interested in those training – actively interested. This is good news. I can't say that for each and every individual policeman, of course, but on the whole the reactions are positive. This is good of course. You have also to monitor the actions of the police. That is the reason why I have asked the African Union to accept a broader mandate, not only to oversee the ceasefire but to oversee each and every question which is related to security and insecurity or feelings of security and insecurity. That means also to monitor activities of the police, in order to institutionalize confidence building. But I am aware of the fact that it is a long-term process. I think the situation it is still the same. Within the camps people are full of resentment with regard to what has happened in the past. They constantly talk about it and they are afraid it will happen again. IDPs do not have confidence in authorities from outside. Things happened in camps when people say you have not helped us adequately.

For instance with food distribution. They turn against those who are helping them. That is understandable because these people are in extremely difficult situation. That is why we have to step up the international community assistance to make resources available, not only to help them but to create a greater climate of confidence.

These people want to go back, but only when there is security in the places where they come from. That means that these places have to be secured. The villages which were burned down, they will have to be rehabilitated and will have to be made secure. It cannot be that other people make use of the fact these villages are empty, by going in, stealing property, stealing land, stealing resources. These places have to be made secure. The Government has an obligation: to reserve these areas again for the people who did live there, and the international community has also in my view, the mandate to look into this. And I've asked also the

African Union to make available large numbers of monitors and observers so they could also make sure that the villages of origin of IDPs and refugees are made safe. Otherwise the conflict can not be solved and you need also international monitors to help carrying out that job.

Q: Has a date been set for the international fact finding committee to arrive to Darfur? Another question, during your meetings with rebels in Asmara, did you feel they're keen and serious on reaching a solution? Because in the aftermath of the last round that was a failure, in Abuja.

A: The commission has not yet been established so there is not yet a date. The Secretary-General will now have consultations with members of the Security Council on the mandate and on the composition but he will take the decision and it will take some time. You can not expect a commission to come here tomorrow, it will take some time. Secondly, the rebel leaders are very sincere in their claims, they are representing a people which is not only the victim of war but has been the victim of neglect, in economic terms, development etc.

Development in Sudan has resulted in a very unequal situation. There are many people here leading a good life and high progress, mainly in Khartoum, but there are extremely poor people in Sudan. I think I said a couple of years ago, let me repeat it now, a couple of decades ago Sudan was better off than most of the other African countries in terms of, for instance, poverty and education in the countryside, access to health and education Now it's worse off. That is not the result of international climate or whatsoever, it is policy-made. The policies here; the development and economic policies in the country have indeed led to the marginalization of many people and the rebels are quite sincere in making that a priority. That's a political issue, a political objective. I would say that those political objectives have to be brought on the table because then you can find a solution. By changing the policies in the country and by a government which is representative for all the people and, in economic terms that has not been the case, so far during a long period.

Q: You mentioned earlier about people ... Are you actually seeing people repopulating lands which people have been chased away from? Are you actually seeing this on the ground? Are you hearing reports of this happening?

A: Hearing reports? Yes. Not in all villages, definitely not but in a number of villages, I'm not going to mention names, but in a number of villages, there are other people living there than those who did live there. And it can not be. It has to change. May I , at the same time, say that have discussed it with the Government and the Government always has said the people ought to be able to go to their villages, and I have said please continue saying that because if you do, you prove that you are not aiming at ethnic cleansing. It's extremely important. And they have consistently said indeed the people ought to be able to go back to their villages. I will keep them on their word, you know. Very important. But so far I have no reason to doubt that the Government does not want that. So there are groups, militia, tribes, whatever, who are moving to places where other people have the right to live.

Q: I'd like to know something that was a little bit been spoken about. We have been hearing that some of the humanitarian agencies that were delivering food to IDPs in Darfur had been taken by the rebels. Now, what are the steps or the measures taken by the UN in order to make the rebels not to detain the humanitarian workers?

A: You are right, sometimes convoys, food convoys, are instance targeted. My daily reports point in particular to increase in banditry. There are a lot of banditries going on at the moment. Soldiers, who are just acting on their own, you never know from which party they are coming but there is increased banditry. Shooting on buses, in order to rob people, shooting on food convoys. Staff members of WFP, for instance, have been robbed of all their

personal belonging, and cars have been stolen, that is an increasing phenomenon. As a matter of fact, I do not blame the Government or the SLA, I think it is banditry. Robbers. It may also be soldiers who get hungry and start their own fight. Possible. So I do not think that it is a policy on one of the two sides but we are very concerned about increased banditries. That is, of course, unsafe and sometimes it may mean that we have to close road for us and that we can't deliver the food. Very irresponsible but it is an increased phenomenon particularly in the last couple of weeks.

Q: Are there any steps taken so far to increase and expand the mission of African troops in Darfur as demanded in Resolution 1564?

A: Discussions are taking place that's why I was yesterday in Addis. There are other experts in Addis from the UN to discuss this. There's a plan which was presented to the UN and to the AU, drafted the Chief Military Advisory the SG. He, in his plan finally comes to about somewhat less than 5000 military observers of some specific functions. The discussions with the AU are based, at the moment, on that plan.

Q: My question to Mr. Pronk on the tendency by Government and rebels to politicize the situation within IDP camps, don't you see it harming UN efforts to achieve peace in Darfur?

A: You know, I've been to IDP camps all over Africa and Asia in the last 50 years. In terms of politicization, the situation is not bad in the camps as compared to other camps. So this is not my main concern. In Somalia and in Cambodia and in Congo, Rwanda, in Liberia the questions of politicization were of greater concern than here.

Q: Reuters: Just a question again on the camps. There is a lot of un-uniformed internal security and all the IDPs are saying that they are being attacked by the security.

What's your policy on having so many internal security inside the camps? And also is this something that's inherent only to Sudan or something you've seen in camps all around the world?

A: My security people, and I have security people on the ground, say that the number of security incidents within the camps is going down, so it's improving. No. 1, No. 2, of course there are incidents and in order to bring them back to a minimum, you need better – trained police, were working on that, and secondly we need, as I said, monitoring from outside, and we're working on that as well.

No.3, I'm glad you tried to make that comparison. A camp of 50.000 people in an extremely difficult situation, of course it is a source of unrest. It's a city, and there are always in all cities of 50.000 persons many security problems. In particular, in such situations where people are extremely vulnerable and traumatized, that is the reason why I mentioned earlier that I don't call that politicization. I call it a source of unrest, which may lead to violent explosions. I'm quite concerned about it. I'm very concerned about it. But I'm more concerned about the trauma and the grudges and the distrust and at the moment, I'm concerned about the number of incidents which are taking place already within the camps. It was much worse, for instance, in Gomma, much worse. We have to create a perspective to people that they have a reasonable life over there and they can go back –to their villages of origin- when they feel safe. When they lose the faith that they will ever be able to go back, then it may explode. And that again is a great responsibility for the Government of Sudan to work towards it, to show that there is serious, security in the places where these people have come from.

When these people understand that this is going to happen, then there will be less disappointment, less violence to come. Last question.

Q: Actually I would like to have a comment from Mr. Pronk about a statement by the US Secretary of State that there. Is there genocide in Sudan? Your people are on the ground, what's your comment?

A: The Secretary of State the United States also has proposed a Security Council draft resolution which has been adopted by the Security Council asking for an enquiry, an investigation. That investigation is to take place. And before the investigation has been carried out, I think we should not make statements, so the investigation has to be independent. We are now working towards that investigation, on the basis of only one decision of Security Council there should be this investigation. I welcome the investigation. I welcome it, because it may help us to know better what has happened and what is happening and what has to be done in order to avoid its repetition. May I repeat what I've said before, what has happened is awful. Atrocities have taken place. Many people have been killed. Many people starved because of the war, many people have been driven out of their villages. Villages had been bombed by planes.

Whether or not it is genocide, it is awful. And that has to stop. And I'm not waiting until an investigation will produce a result, until I take action. And I think that all countries, all members of the United Nations Security Council, all countries did know what was going on last year and in 2004. And I'm still asking myself a question: why no action was taken earlier by these countries? For instance, by putting the issue on the agenda of the Security Council. If the issue would have been on the agenda of the Security Council at 2004, much human tragedy might have been avoided. This is the last answer, to the last question.

No more questions,

Thank you very much.