

29 July 2010

www.unmissions.unmis.org



Media Monitoring Report

United Nations Mission in Sudan/ Public Information Office

Headlines

- Russian chopper not high-jacked, pilot was in the wrong – says SAF spokesperson (*Akhir Lahza*)
- Ban Ki-moon lauds role of Sudan Mission to UN (*SUNA*)
- Humanitarian Ministry set up committee to ensure security and safety of aid workers (*Al-Sudani*)
- Sudan's Bashir says Gration positively impacting views within U.S. administration (*ST*)
- African Union moves aggressively to shield Bashir from prosecution (*ST*)
- Court acquits AFP photographer accused of picturing a military zone (*Al-Sudani*)
- Darfur rebels say Khartoum raids camp, two killed (*Reuters*)
- Floods in Sudan's Jonglei at "alarming level" – officials (*ST*)

Pre-referendum Monitor

- NCP says demarcation of the border a prerequisite for referendum (*Dailies*)
- Kiir calls JDB to work for the country's stability and security (*Al-Ayyam*)
- Interior Minister meets SRSG, says preparations in place for referendum (*Al-Sudani*)
- VP Taha directs facilitation of OIC mission to consolidate Sudan's unity and stability (*Al-Sudani*)
- Referendum may lead to fresh conflict if not conducted in free and transparent atmosphere – Lam Akol (*Al-Khartoum*)
- Political parties' forum postponed due to differences over agenda – Presidency source (*Al-Akhbar*)
- Libyan leader advises Southerners to remain part of united Sudan (*ST*)

NOTE: Reproduction here does not mean that the UNMIS PIO can vouch for the accuracy or veracity of the contents, nor does this report reflect the views of the United Nations Mission in Sudan. Furthermore, international copyright exists on some materials and this summary should not be disseminated beyond the intended list of recipients.

Address: UNMIS Headquarters, P.O. Box 69, Ibeid Khatim St, Khartoum 11111, SUDAN
Phone: (+249-1) 8708 6000 - Fax: (+249-1) 8708 6200

Highlights

Russian chopper was not high-jacked, pilot was in the wrong – says SAF spokesperson

Akhir Lahza (Khartoum) 29/7/10 – In a new development of the Russian chopper issue, Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) spokesperson Lt. Col. Al-Sawarmi Khaled said the aircraft was not high-jacked, saying the Russian pilot was “100% in the wrong”, adding he was not supposed to land in the area.

Sudan Tribune website 28/7/10 reported that a senior official in Moscow revealed that a crew member of a Russian helicopter operating under a UN contract in Darfur region who has gone missing on Monday was being held by the notorious Janjaweed militias.

The head of the joint African Union - United Nations mission in Darfur (UNAMID) Ibrahim Gambari told the UN Security Council (UNSC) yesterday that the helicopter was transporting members of the Security Arrangements Committee of the Liberation and Justice Movement to locations in South Darfur.

“Yesterday we were receiving rather contradictory information as to who had seized our pilots and why. It has become clear today that our helicopter pilots are in the hands of regular armed formations that theoretically must obey Khartoum the so-called Janjaweed,” the Russian special envoy to Sudan Mikhail Margelov told Russia 24 television according to the Russian news agency Itar-Tass.

Margelov said that the militia “has for a long time received no money from the central government,” tried “to express discontent with the attitude of the official Khartoum to them”.

A U.N. spokesman said that the missing Russian pilot and the three rebel commanders who were on-board the helicopter were beaten “at the scene”.

“Subsequently the crew and passengers, with the exception of the pilot, were taken to a government military camp” U.N. spokesman Martin Nesirky said. He expressed concern about fate of the Russian pilot.

However, Margelov expressed optimism that the pilot will soon be released.

“The commander of the crew is being held. Very active consultations with the Janjaweed continue. Influential representatives of different Darfur tribes and groups of influence have joined the talks. I have a feeling that the crisis may be settled in the foreseeable future,” he said.

The Russian official defended the Sudanese government saying they have nothing to do with the militia that carried out the kidnapping saying that at some point the Janjaweed supposed to obey Khartoum stopped doing that.

“And instead began putting sand in the wheels, standing in the way of Khartoum which is very interested in negotiations with different armed groups and in achieving political settlement in Darfur,” Margelov said.

He also noted that incidents involving Russian helicopter crews are rare in the region. "Russia is the only country which has had no hostages in Sudan till the latest incident," Margelov stressed. "I am absolutely confident that no discontent with Russian politics or Russia's stance on the Darfur settlement is expressed by that incident," the Russian parliamentarian said.

He also said that the conflict in Darfur "is at the stage of an active settlement". "Mediatory efforts of the United Nations and the African Union, Qatar, the work of special representatives for Sudan of all five countries that are permanent members of the U.N. Security Council bears fruit and the situation there is much better than in the autumn of 2006, when I first visited Darfur," Margelov added.

According to *Reuters* 28/7/10, Sudan's army grounded the helicopter after it missed its destination because of bad weather, U.N. officials said on Tuesday. They denied earlier reports that it had been seized by rebels.

"Three Liberty and Justice Movement commanders who were on board ... and the pilot, were beaten at the scene," U.N. spokesman Martin Nesirky said. "Subsequently the crew and passengers, with the exception of the pilot, were taken to a government military camp."

It was not immediately clear who was responsible for the beating. Nesirky said the United Nations was investigating.

"The crew and the Liberty and Justice Movement commanders returned to Nyala yesterday," Nesirky said, adding that "the pilot is still unaccounted for."

"The United Nations remains deeply concerned about his welfare," he said about the pilot. "UNAMID is working with the government of Sudan to locate him."

Sudan's U.N. Ambassador Abdalmahmoud Abdalhaleem was not immediately available for comment.

Ban Ki-moon lauds role of Sudan Mission to UN

SUNA (Khartoum) 28/7/10 - United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon has lauded the important role being played by the Sudan's Permanent Mission to the United Nations and the distinguished role of the outgoing Permanent Representative Ambassador Abdul Mahmoud Abdul-Halim.

The UN Secretary General made the remark at a meeting with Ambassador Abdul-Halim on the occasion of the expiry of his tenure.

Humanitarian Ministry set up committee to ensure security and safety of aid workers

Al-Sudani (Khartoum) 29/7/10 – Humanitarian Affairs Minister Joseph Lual has issued a ministerial decree forming a sub-committee on security and safety of aid workers. The decisions of the formation of the subcommittee is taken based on recommendations of the Higher Committee on Darfur whose first meeting was attended by representatives of police, defence, security, foreign affairs, humanitarian affairs, UNAMID, UN, FAO, OCHA and NGOs. The meeting discussed the issue of security of aid workers in Darfur and the need for a plan to ensure

their security. The Higher Committee meeting also agreed on a visit to Nyala next Monday to follow up on the formation of subcommittees on security and safety of aid workers.

Sudan's Bashir says Gration positively impacting views within U.S. administration

Sudan Tribune website 28/7/10 - The U.S. special envoy to Sudan Scott Gration has succeeded in changing the views of senior figures within the administration including president Obama, Sudanese president Omer Al-Bashir was reportedly quoted as saying.

The editor in chief of the independent *Al-Akhbar* newspaper published in Khartoum Mohamed Latif disclosed Bashir's remarks made to him personally in his column published on Wednesday.

"The U.S. position is seesawed. Gration is able to see the realities on the ground and started influencing key people within the U.S. administration" Latif quoted the Sudanese president as telling him.

"Even Biden started changing his position and [U.S. president Barack] Obama but the problem of the U.S. administration are lobby groups with interests and we will suffer from this for a long period of time".

The remarks attributed to Bashir come as media in Sudan is reporting growing debate within the government in Khartoum to take extreme measures of unspecified nature against U.S. interests...

African Union moves aggressively to shield Bashir from prosecution

Sudan Tribune website 28/7/10 — The heads of states who attended the African Union (AU) summit in Kampala this week decided to take a more radical approach towards the International Criminal Court (ICC) indictment of Sudanese president Omer Hassan Al-Bashir and adopted a final resolution that stresses non-cooperation with the Hague tribunal and also condemned the conduct of its prosecutor.

Over the weekend, delegates from the AU countries reportedly fought a fierce battle that led to removing language that reiterates previous positions on granting immunity to Bashir in Africa and criticizing the ICC prosecutor Luis Moreno-Ocampo.

The Sudanese leader himself has skipped this summit in retaliation to Museveni's absence from his inauguration, according to Sudanese government sources who spoke to *Reuters*.

Some ICC states including South Africa along with Botswana and Uganda fought for the watered down resolution on ICC, while non-ICC countries such as Libya, Eritrea and Egypt wanted to maintain the hard-line approach.

However, the resolution on the ICC was changed on Tuesday to a harsher version to the surprise of many observers who followed the summit closely and it remained unclear what happened behind the scenes at the final hours of the summit.

The text said that the summit "reiterates its decision that AU member states shall not cooperate with the ICC in the arrest and surrender of President al-Bashir of the Sudan.

Furthermore, it urged member states to balance their obligations to the ICC and those to the AU.

The summit also expressed "concern over the conduct" of the ICC prosecutor and accused him "making egregiously unacceptable, rude and condescending statements on the case of President Omar al-Bashir of the Sudan and other situations in Africa."

The ambiguous reference to "other situations in Africa" in the AU criticism of Ocampo would likely surprise observers given that out of the five cases handled by the ICC, three were referred by the African states themselves to the court for investigation.

The Kenya investigation which commenced this year was initiated by the ICC prosecutor after the government in Nairobi at its highest levels gave the court a green light to do so yet declining to refer it for political reasons.

The summit also decided "to reject for now the request by ICC to open a liaison office to the AU in Addis Ababa". Earlier this month, Judge Sang-Hyun Song, President of the ICC met with the AU Commission Chairperson Jean Ping who reiterated the body's commitment to end impunity. But last week, Ping expressed disapproval to the idea of opening the office in Addis Ababa.

"The ICC has no office outside of its headquarters. The issue is why are they only interested in opening an office in Africa, why not in Europe or Asia," Ping told journalists.

The Panafrican News Agency (PANA) reported that AU leaders deliberated behind closed doors on whether Bashir could stand trial before an African court but said that the proposal was defeated.

A source told PANA that the African leaders advised the Arusha-based African Court of Justice to explore its ability to undertake a war crimes trial or crimes against humanity in Africa.

Some leaders warned their compatriots, who would be indicted in future for rights abuses, including war crimes and genocide, that they would face justice.

"They explored the process of instituting an African trial of President Bashir, but again, we have no mechanism to do that. They had wanted to go the [former Chadian president] Hissene Habre way, but it has taken 10 years to try him (Habre). This line of discussion was discouraged because it does not deliver justice," the source said.

The AU resolution made no mention of the panel, headed by former South African president Thabo Mbeki, it formed last year to examine among other things the ways of achieving justice in Darfur.

The commission called for a hybrid court with participation of foreign judges to try war crimes suspects and changes to Sudanese laws. It took no position on the ICC warrant except to say that the Hague-based tribunal cannot try all the suspects, effectively supporting its work.

However, since the endorsement of Mbeki's findings by the AU, no progress has been made on the justice track and it is not clear when implementing the hybrid court proposal would commence. Khartoum gave a cool reception to the proposed court with some officials suggesting it is an infringement on the country's sovereignty.

Court acquits AFP photographer accused of picturing a military zone

Al-Sudani (Khartoum) 29/7/10 – Khartoum Criminal Court yesterday acquitted Khartoum-based AFP photographer Mohamed Al-Sheikh Al-Badawi who was charged under section (57) of the Criminal Court for taking photographs of military zones. Reportedly, the Court ruled that the police stations which were photographed by the Mr. Al-Badawi were not under the category of military zones because the pictures of similar police stations were being shown on Sudan and Arab satellite TVs.

Darfur rebels say Khartoum raids camp, two killed

Reuters (Khartoum) 28/7/10 - Darfur rebels accused Sudan's army of killing at least two civilians during a raid on a refugee camp on Wednesday, the latest violence to hit the camps during a suspension of a faltering peace process for Ramadan.

An army spokesman said the force did not immediately have any information about the report.

However, one resident in Zalingei in the western region confirmed there had been clashes in the camps surrounding the town and that two people had been killed, although she could not say whether government forces were involved.

Ibrahim el-Helwu, a commander in the rebel Sudan Liberation Army (SLA), blamed the Khartoum government. "The government sent in armed troops to the IDP (Internally Displaced Persons) camp in Zalingei and they killed some civilians," he told *Reuters*.

"Some of the camps were burned too," he said. "We are asking the joint U.N.-African Union (UNAMID) peacekeeping force to stop this - no armed men should be allowed to enter IDP camps." UNAMID was not immediately available for comment.

Zalingei is the home town of rebel SLA leader Abdel Wahed Mohamed el-Nur who has refused to attend the peace talks in Qatar. Zalingei's camps have traditionally supported Nur and rejected the peace process.

The other main rebel group, the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), pulled out of the negotiations earlier this year, citing continued government attacks on their troops.

The talks have been suspended for Ramadan, the Muslim fasting month, which begins in mid-August.

Zalingei town borders Jabel Marra, a mountainous area which is the main rebel stronghold in Darfur.

"There was some fighting in the camps and some houses burned but I'm not sure who was involved," resident Hajja el-Senoussi told *Reuters* by telephone from Zalingei town, adding she had reports of two people killed.

The SLA's Helwu said that up to six people were reported dead.

Floods in Sudan's Jonglei at "alarming level" – officials

Sudan Tribune website 28/7/10 - At least seven (7) of eleven (11) counties in Sudan's Jonglei state experienced severe floods, an assessment by Southern Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (SSRRC) released on Wednesday and obtained by the Sudan Tribune revealed. At least five villages are demolished in one County. Shelters, schools and dykes and other flood related damages were reported.

Gabriel Deng, the Jonglei State Director for SSRRC described the flooding in Ayod, Bor, Duk, Akobo, Nyiror, Pibor and Twic East Counties as "alarming".

"The heavy rains have caused alarming rising water level...in Jonglei Counties," Deng said in a press statement.

"The situation is expected to worsen in August as the rains [are due] to intensify," he added...

Pre-referendum Monitor

NCP says demarcation of the border a prerequisite for referendum

Local dailies (Khartoum) 29/7/10 – NCP leading figure Al-Zubair Ahmed Hassan told reporters yesterday that full demarcation of the North-South border is a pre-requisite for the conduct of the referendum, saying the absence of a border between the two sides might lead to a renewed conflict and war. "The SPLM is now showing lack of seriousness and concern with the issue of demarcation of the border," he said. He added that his party would stick to the issue of full demarcation of the border ahead of the referendum and would show no flexibility on this issue. "The UN and regional bodies also affirm that the demarcation of the border is a pre-requisite for referendum," he said.

However, *Ajras Al-Hurriya* reports Cabinet Affairs Minister Luka Biong has said that demarcation of the border and the referendum should not be linked, adding that demarcation of the border between the South and the North is not a condition for the conduct of the referendum. "We have a commitment to demarcate the border and if we could not do that we will look for an alternative mechanism," he said. Biong has warned against delay of the exercise saying "referendum will be conducted on schedule and the President has agreed to that and that any delay will be a dangerous indication". He called on the UN to assist the referendum commission to carry out its mission. Biong also expressed concern over delay of formation of the Abyei referendum commission.

In another development, *Al-Rai Al-Aam* reports Foreign Minister Ali Karti as saying that his Ministry and other influential bodies would exert efforts to make unity attractive. Reportedly, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the National Assembly Foreign Relations Committee yesterday agreed to undertake foreign visits as part of efforts to consolidate Sudan's unity.

Kiir calls JDB to work for the country's stability and security

Al-Ayyam (Khartoum) 29/7/10 – FVP and SPLA C-in-C Salva Kiir Mayardit has urged the Joint Defence Board (JDB) to work for the stability and security of the country during the forthcoming stage.

JDB spokesperson Maj. Gen. Ahmed Abdullah told reporters after a meeting between Kiir and Joint Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Esmat Abdul Rahman yesterday that the delegation came to Juba to congratulate Kiir on his election victory and to attend the JDB meeting in Juba which discussed a range of issues including JIUs in Malakal and pre-referendum arrangement.

Interior Minister meets SRSG, says preparations in place for referendum

Al-Sudani (Khartoum) 29/7/10 – Interior Minister Ibrahim Mahmoud Hamid said all preparations were finalized to make the upcoming referendum process a success, adding his Ministry is ready to train GoSS police so that the process is conducted in a stable and secure atmosphere.

Mr. Hamid, who met yesterday with Special Representative of the Secretary-General to Sudan, Mr. Haile Menkerios, stressed the need for the establishment of an effective communication system to connect referendum stations so that the exercise is successful.

The SRSG, for his part, said UNMIS stands ready to coordinate and cooperate with the Interior Ministry and the GoSS for a successful conduct of the referendum, stressing the need to promote cooperation between UN police and Sudan's police in the areas of training and capacity building.

VP Taha directs facilitation of OIC mission to consolidate Sudan's unity and stability

Al-Sudani (Khartoum) 29/7/10 – VP Ali Osman Taha has praised the efforts being exerted by the joint mission of the Organization of Islamic Countries (OIC) and the Islamic Development Bank to support Sudan's unity and stability.

VP Taha, at meeting with the mission yesterday in Khartoum, directed all state institutions to cooperate with the mission to implement development projects to promote unity of the country.

Referendum may lead to fresh conflict if not conducted in free and transparent atmosphere – Lam Akol

Al-Khartoum (Khartoum) 29/7/10 – leader of the SPLM-DC Lam Akol has criticized the two CPA partners' negotiations, saying the issues on the table have been wrongly described as pre-referendum arrangement which is not the case. "We are concerned that we are not party to the negotiations between the NCP and the SPLM," he said. Akol also criticized the exclusion of other political parties from the negotiations.

"If referendum is not conducted in a transparent and free atmosphere it may lead to a conflict," he warned.

Political parties' forum postponed due to differences over agenda – Presidency source

Al-Akhbar (Khartoum) 29/7/10 – an informed Presidency source has ruled out the convening of the political parties forum called by the Presidency recently for debate on referendum and unity. The source said the meeting was postponed indefinitely because the opposition (Juba Alliance) insists on an agenda different from that of the Presidency. According to the source, issues such as freedoms, Darfur and democratic transformation raised by the opposition could be discussed later in a different meeting.

Libyan leader advises Southerners to remain part of united Sudan

Sudan Tribune website 28/7/10 - The Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi said that Southern Sudanese would be better off picking unity over independence in the upcoming self-determination referendum.

Gaddafi, who was one of the main backers of the Sudan People Liberation Movement (SPLM) since its creation in the early eighties, appealed to Southerners to remain united with the North.

"As for southern Sudan, the matter depends on referendum, even though I advice brothers in the south to stay with the great Sudan instead of a dwarf country in the south" Gaddafi was quoted as saying by the Libyan state run news agency (JANA) during a special hosting at "Peace Studio" of the African Peace & Security Council in Kampala...