



UNITED NATIONS MISSION IN SUDAN
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UNMIS Media Monitoring Report, 11th April, 2006
(By Public Information Office)

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HIGHLIGHTS:

UN

UN's Egeland unbowed by Khartoum row

(*AFP/ST* – 10th Apr. **Dubai**) Senior UN official Jan Egeland warned Today that he would not hold his punches if the Sudanese government made good on its promise to allow him into the restive western Darfur region after all.

"Maybe I'll go," the UN assistant secretary general for humanitarian affairs told AFP when asked about Khartoum's belated invitation to him to visit Darfur.

"But I will be working on Sudan very actively because the situation is becoming increasingly bad."

Egeland said he hoped the row over his barring from Darfur, which Khartoum insisted was only temporary, was now behind him.

But he added that he remained concerned about the pressures placed on aid groups operating in the region.

"Civilians are attacked; security is decreasing while the number of people needing us is increasing.

"We do not have enough money; we do not have enough resources."

Egeland had warned Friday ahead of his planned visit to Sudan that the world was failing the people of Darfur after more than three years of armed uprising by ethnic minority rebels and repression by government-backed militias.

"The world is not providing sufficient pressure on the political parties to make a peaceful solution to this and the world is not providing security," said Egeland, who has been an outspoken critic of Khartoum's opposition to the replacement of African Union monitors in Darfur by UN peacekeepers.

No decision made on sending NATO advisers to Darfur - US

(*AFP/ST* – 10th Apr. **Washington**) The United States said no decision had been made on sending hundreds of NATO advisers to Sudan's troubled Darfur region, despite a report that Washington was pushing for the move.

State Department spokesman Sean McCormack would not confirm a Washington Post report that the US administration backed dispatching a NATO team to Darfur, including Americans, to advise African Union forces.

"NATO is now considering a variety of different options for how it might assist with headquarters' support and other kinds of support," McCormack told reporters.

But he added, "To my knowledge, there haven't been any final decisions on what kind of assistance NATO might be able to offer the AU mission."

McCormack said he expected the question of expanded NATO help for Darfur to be raised at the alliance's ministerial meeting this month in Bulgaria. But he was unable to say if a major proposal would be presented.

NATO is providing air transport to a 7,000-strong AU contingent in Darfur, where three years of fighting between rebels and Khartoum-backed militias has left up to 300,000 people dead and two million displaced.

The Post said the US proposal to send NATO advisers to Darfur was not sure to win approval within the alliance because of fears it could drain attention from Afghanistan.

More aggressive measures, such as dispatching ground troops or providing air patrols to protect peacekeepers and prevent the bombing of villages, have been ruled out as unnecessary for the moment, the paper said.

But McCormack betrayed only slight impatience with delays in beefing up peacekeeping operations in Darfur.

"We all wish that this were done already. We wish that this all could have moved along more quickly," he said, adding, "we are diligent in working the required diplomacy to move the process forward."

US officials have expressed frustration in the delay by the United Nations in providing a needs assessment report for an eventual deployment in Darfur. McCormack said it should be finished by the end of the month.

Official sources say presence of foreign forces in Atroun is an issue of grave concern

(*Al-Intibaha* – 11th Apr. **Khartoum**) Press reports of the present of foreign forces from western countries stationed in Atroun, North Darfur, has drawn reactions from various quarters especially following government's silence on the issue.

Further reports say the issue is currently being investigated and it is most likely that these forces are part of the French army based in Chad.

Other sources admit it is easy for foreign forces to sneak into those remote areas deep in the Sudanese desert without anybody being aware while official sources do not rule out the presence of a foreign force in the area especially in view of the current situation with the Sudan being targeted by various quarters.

These official sources add, however, that the state in Sudan is capable of dealing with such issues but pointed out that this issue has to be thoroughly investigated. These sources link these reports of a foreign force in Darfur to recent media reports on a possibility of deploying Special Forces to prepare the ground for the arrival of UN forces to the area.

CPA

Rebecca Garang still doubts oil revenue figures

(*AlAyaam* – 11th Apr. **Rumbek**) Rebecca Garang, widow of late Dr. Garang, has asked the National Congress Party to come up with the accurate figures for the revenue realised from Sudan's petroleum industry and state how much of that money was for the GoSS.

Speaking to the Egyptian *Allhram* newspaper, Garang who is also the GoSS Minister for Roads said that she is not convinced with the figures given despite the fact that SPLM officials claim the figures are correct.

GoNU

Parliament summons Minister for the Presidency over Abyei Protocol

(*AlAyaam* – 11th Apr. **Rumbek**) The MP for Abyei would like parliament to summon the Minister for the Presidency to give an explanation why the Abyei Protocol has not been implemented.

Citing the presence of SPLA, the SAF and UN forces in addition to the large numbers of armed Dinka and Misseriya tribesmen in the region, MP James Deng warned that the large number of military personnel in the Abyei area may be a recipe for insecurity and pointed out that the government must move in fast to form an administration for Abyei as prescribed by the CPA.

The MP accused some elements within the NCP of being against the implementation of the Abyei Protocol.

Bashir describes Kiir as a true partner

(*AlSahafa* – 11th Apr. **Khartoum**) President Bashir has described as baseless the reports on the western media accusing the National Congress Party of lack of commitment towards the implementation of the CPA.

He pointed out that the differences between the NCP and the SPLM over the oil revenues, the constitution of the National Capital and Abyei will not pull the country back to the days of war.

President Bashir praised Vice-President Salva Kiir whom he described as a true partner who is very diligent in his work and always consults his many aides and experts on all things.

He said that Salva Kiir is not only the President of the Government of Southern Sudan but also the First Vice-President of the whole of Sudan and the National Congress Party neither seeks to weaken nor marginalise the SPLM.

On recent speculations of a conflict brewing between the President of the Republic and Vice-President Ali Osman Mohamed Taha, the President said this is the talk of those people who want to see the government weak. He said they sometimes talk of differences with Taha, sometimes of differences with Salva Kiir and sometimes claim that the NCP holds a monopoly in the government.

He described these people as enemies of the CPA.

Khartoum State

Juba University shut down

(*AlRai AlAam* – 11th Apr. **Khartoum**) Following recent clashes between the police and students at the main campus of Juba University at Kadaro, Khartoum North, the Minister of Higher Education has ordered the university shut down for a month and exams suspended.

The Minister has also ordered the formation of a commission of enquiry into the violence that was sparked by demands by the students to be allowed to form a student's body.

Darfur/ Abuja talks

Sudan's Taha meets one of Darfur rebel SLA leaders

(*ST* – 10th Apr. **Abuja**) The Second Vice-President, Ali Osman Taha, today met one of the leaders of the rebel Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM), Mani Arkoi Minnawi, at his residence in Hilton Hotel, Abuja.

The Sudanese ambassador to Nigeria, Abdelhamid Abdin, said that the meeting came as a follow-up to a previous one recently held in Tripoli, Libya last March.

He said that Taha had told Minnawi that what they discussed in Tripoli had received full interest from the Sudanese leadership after he informed them about the meeting.

On Sunday 9 April, Taha met AbdulWahid al-Nur the leader of the other faction of the SLM.

The ambassador said that the first vice-president listened to the compressive and general view about the SLM's stance with regard to the Darfur issue and its vision on how to find a comprehensive peace agreement.

He said that during the visit, Taha said he went to Abuja chairing a delegation representing the Government of National Unity which has united views for a comprehensive solution in Darfur, as well as pushing the Abuja talks ahead.

Abdin said that Ali told Minnawi he would continue to hold talks with all the parties that are in Abuja, the official SUNA reported.

He said Minnawi told the vice-president that his movement was committed to the unity of Sudan and to reaching peace, adding that it was a movement of unity. Minnawi denied that it was racist or tribal movement.

The ambassador described the meeting between Taha and Minnawi as positive and amiable. They decided to continue consultations and meetings.

Chad says Sudan-backed rebels attack southern base

(*Reuters/ST* – 9th Apr. **N'Djamena**) Chad's government said insurgents backed by Sudan had attacked an army base in its south-eastern border region on Sunday with the aim of derailing presidential elections set for May.

The Chadian army sent reinforcements to the garrison in the town of Haraze Manguaigne, close to the borders with Sudan and Central African Republic, to try to overcome the attackers, Communication Minister Hourmadji Moussa Doumgor said.

"The attackers in 22 vehicles used Central African territory to outmanoeuvre Chadian army units based in this border region," Doungor said in a statement. He made no mention of casualties.

"Fighting is ongoing around the area but the Chadian armed forces are about to push the attackers back ... This attack was orchestrated by the Sudanese government, which has for several days ... been delivering arms and munitions to various small groups of Chadians aiming to destabilise the country."

There was no immediate independent confirmation of the fighting.

African observers start deployment on Sudan-Chad border

(*ST* – 9th Apr. **Tripoli**) The deployment of military monitors through the Sudan Chad border has started today. African observers departed from Tripoli, Libya, to monitor the common border from Chadian, Sudanese and Central African sides as provided under a peace agreement signed by leaders of the two countries in Tripoli, last February.

Chad-Sudan border monitoring team which is made up of members from Libya, Burkina Faso, Congo and Sudan left Tripoli International Airport this morning for the city of Al-Fasher in Sudan's Darfur to carry out its mission of monitoring the Sudanese side of the border with Chad at points set along the Sudanese side of the border.

Another team of observers from the Libya and the Central African Republic left Tripoli International Airport for the city of Birao in Central African Republic to start its mission of monitoring the Sudan-Chad-Central African Republic border.

A third team of observers from the Libya, Burkina Faso, and Congo is also scheduled to leave tomorrow for the city of Abeché in Chad where Chadian monitors will join them. The team of monitors from these four countries will be in charge of monitoring the Chadian side of the border with Sudan along set monitoring points.

The dispatch of these teams comes in implementation of the decision of the ministerial committee set up under the Tripoli Declaration issued by the African mini summit which was held on 8 February 2006 in Libya to contain the tension between Sudan and Chad.

The ministerial committee set up teams to monitor the Sudan-Chad border and identified arrangements to implement the mechanism agreed by the directors of external security services of Libya, Congo, Burkina Faso, Sudan, Chad and the Central African Republic in their Tripoli meeting held on 28 February 2006.

Under the Tripoli agreement signed on 8 February, the leaders of Sudan and Chad agreed to normalize diplomatic relations and to immediately commit themselves to work to prevent the presence of rebel groups on each other territory. The deal, however, has yet to resolve the chaos on the ground.

Since, Chad accused Sudan more than four times of backing rebels fighting government in N'Djamena.

On Sunday 9 April Chad accused Sudan of orchestrating a rebel attack from Central African Republic.

"Fighting is ongoing around the area but the Chadian armed forces are about to push the attackers back ... This attack was orchestrated by the Sudanese government, which has for several days ... been delivering arms and munitions to various small groups of Chadians aiming to destabilise the country", Communication Minister Hourmadji Moussa Doumgor said.

Southern Sudan/ GoSS/ SPLM

SPLM says serious to promote partnership with the NCP

(*Khartoum Monitor* – 11th Apr. **Juba**) Voce-President Salva Kiir said the SPLM is very much committed to promoting partnership with the NCP and to cooperate with its leaders in order to implement the CPA, provide development and services to southern Sudan and to work together to find solutions to urgent national problems like Darfur.

Speaking before the Legislative Assembly of southern Sudan, the Vice-President who also doubles up as the President of the GoSS said the legislature will work closely with the GoSS to implement the government's policies and programmes.

The Vice-President vowed to combat corruption and promote accountability and the rule of law. He also said the SPLM civil service would be integrated into the existing civil service and there more concern will be granted to training of employees.

He also said that industry will be galvanised as would the agricultural sector.

Kiir then outlined his government's plans to provide infrastructure and advanced services in the areas of communications, information, health and education and added that his government would address the improvement of trade, agriculture and mining to attract investors.

SPLM to hold conference in the Nuba Mountains

(*Khartoum Monitor* – 11th Apr. **Khartoum**) The SPLM would hold a conference at Kauda, Nuba Mountains, on 20th of this month to evaluate its structures and discuss the implementation of the CPA, said the governor of South Kordofan, Mjr. Gen. Ismail Jallab.

The governor said that the conference would discuss the SPLM structures and the course of the implementation of the CPA with emphasis on the economic part of the agreement.

SSDF militia warns of revenge killings between SPLA soldiers

(*ST* – 10th Apr. **Khartoum**) The Southern Sudan Defence Forces (SSDF) has warned of the consequences of any escalation resulting from the clashes, which occurred in the military area in Wau town — capital of west Bahr al-Ghazal, southern Sudan — recently between members of the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) forces which led to the death of five Dinka tribesmen.

The SSDF denied it was involved in the incidents which it described as a tribal matter between the Dinka and Nuer ethnic communities.

Deputy SSDF leader Maj-Gen Al-Nur al-Tom Daldum revealed that the clashes had broken out between Dinka and Nuer, when the latter had complained about low wages.

Daldum, whose forces are based in the area, said that the incidents had led to the death of five people from the Dinka tribe in addition to a number of other deaths on the eastern bank in Wau town.

Daldum warned that the incidents could be the beginning of a tribal conflict because the two tribes would seek to avenge themselves for the deaths.

He pointed out that the final solution to the problem would be to permanently send away Nuer from the area and transfer them to other areas.

Daldum strongly denied that his forces based in the region had anything to do with the incidents. He said the clashes were between SPLA forces and others which had recently joined them because those who had joined complained that their wages were less than those paid to the SPLA soldiers.

Sudan's Kiir to inaugurate pumping of oil from blocks 3, 7

(*ST* – 9th Apr. **Khartoum**) Sudanese first Vice-President Salva Kiir Mayardit, and Minister of Energy and Mining, Awad Ahmed Al-Jazz, are to inaugurate Monday 10 April the pumping of oil (Dar blend) from blocks No. 3 and 7 in the Upper Nile and White Nile States.

The blocks (3) and (7) produce some 200,000 barrels per day (bpd) and would increase the production of oil in Sudan to reach 500,000 (bpd), the state-run SUNA reported.

The cost of developing of Melut Basin project amounted to 1.9 billion dollars.

The project includes installation of all the necessary facilities pertinent to the exploration operations as well as exportation through As-Salaam Port in the Red Sea State through special pipeline.

The pipeline starts from Falouj in Upper Nile State, and passes through White Nile State, Khartoum State and Nile State and terminates to the Red Sea.

The total length of the pipeline is 1500 km and its diameter is 32 inches.

The daily pipeline capacity will be 500,000 barrels of oil, and it will start with 150,000 barrels per day.

The pipeline had been much delayed by faulty foundation work. It was due to come on line in August last year, Sources in the oil business in Khartoum said.

Fears over sectarian violence in south Sudan

(*ST* – 9th Apr. **Juba**) The situation in Mirmir in Unity State south Sudan was still calm despite the burning down of a Mosque and a Church in two separate incidents last week.

Al-Khartoum daily said the widespread deployment of large numbers of policemen and Sudan People's Liberation Army soldiers in a bid to prevent the tense situation between Muslims and Christians from escalating.

However, a source reaffirmed that some factions were being accused of aiming to provoke discord between Muslims and Christians, northerners and southerners, there.

Al-Khartoum points out that the increased security presence in Mirmir is aimed at protecting Sergaz oil production sites from any attacks resulting from clashes in the region.

However, government sides said that the government cared about security and stability in the region and about safeguarding both the citizens and the oil.

Salva Kiir to address South Sudan parliament

(*ST* – 9th Apr. **Juba**) The first vice-president and president of Southern Sudan government, Lt-Gen Salva Kiir Mayardit, will address the opening session of the second round of the transitional Legislative Council for the south in Juba Monday 10 April.

The speaker of the Legislative Council, James Wani Igga, said that Kiir's address will touch on general policies, plans and programmes for the coming period.

He said that the minister of finance for Southern Sudan government Akwin Chuol will read out the government budget plan for the year 2006 besides other economic regulations.

Igga said that ministers will also present plans and programmes of their ministries for the coming period.

The head of the information commission in the regional parliament, Peter Pandi said this the first time that Kiir will present the program of South Sudan government. He added that Kiir in his speech will speak about the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, what is achieved and things still to be done.

Uganda seeks arrests of LRA rebels hiding in Congo

(*IPS/ST* – 9th Apr. **Nairobi**) Uganda has appealed to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) to disarm and arrest rebels hiding in the vast central African country.

The government of President Yoweri Museveni wants the rebels of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), who have been causing havoc in northern Uganda, to be tried for crimes against humanity.

"It means that wherever they (LRA) are, these countries (Uganda and DRC) should cooperate and arrest them so that they can be tried for their crimes. I do not think that their going to the DRC saves them, unless the DRC abdicates this appeal," Onapito Ekolomoit, Uganda's presidential press secretary, told IPS from Kampala, the country's capital.

Efforts by IPS to get a response from the DRC government through its embassy in Nairobi, the capital of Kenya, were unsuccessful.

The bulk of the LRA fighters crossed into the lawless eastern DRC from their hideouts in neighbouring South Sudan last year. Sudan threw its weight behind the LRA in retaliation for Uganda's alleged support for the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A), a rebel group that waged a bush war against successive Khartoum regimes between 1983 and 2005. The conflicts strained relations between the two neighbours. However, the new Sudanese government, formed after last year's watershed north-south peace deal, has pledged to crack down on the LRA.

Salva Kiir, president of the government of South Sudan, has urged the LRA to negotiate with the Uganda government or leave South Sudan before facing military action. "As a fighting force, the LRA has no teeth. We have effectively wiped it out from Uganda. We know there are still a handful of rebels who have not crossed over to the Congo, and are trying to do so, but the army is pursuing them. Since we have no protocol to fight the rebels in the Congo, we are pursuing them here (Uganda)," Ekolomoit added.

In 2004, Uganda asked the International Criminal Court (ICC), based in The Netherlands, to investigate violations in northern Uganda. This followed efforts by the Uganda government to invite the rebels to the negotiating table. But the rebels declined to seize the opportunity.

Not only the rebels but also the army has been accused of committing atrocities against civilians in northern Uganda, something which the government has denied.

Led by former Catholic catechist Joseph Kony, the LRA, which seeks to rule Uganda on laws based on the ten biblical commandments, has been accused of widespread murder, torture and rape, for nearly 20 years of fighting the army. The rebels have kidnapped thousands of children, majority of whom have been recruited as child soldiers.

Thousands of people have died from the conflict while about 1.5 million others have been uprooted from their homes since the war erupted in 1986. The districts most affected are Pader, Kitgum and Gulu in northern Uganda.

The conflict, which has been described by the United Nations as the world's most forgotten war, has seen thousands of people, particularly children, stream in towns at night to seek shelter in hospital and church corridors, fearing abduction.

But the situation seems to have improved now. "In 2003-2004, we had 40,000 people flocking into churches and different centres in Gulu town. Now, there are very few people," Catholic priest Carlos Rodriguez told IPS in a telephone interview from Gulu, without providing any figures. He is the secretary of the Justice and Peace Commission at the Catholic Archdiocese of Gulu.

The killings have also reduced remarkably. "In 2004, we used to have 30 to 40 people killed every month. But in the last six months, only 56 people have been killed," Rodriguez added.

The improvement in human rights abuses has also been noted by Jan Egeland, the UN Under-Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator. "There are less LRA attacks in northern Uganda and in some regions, people are returning to their homes," he told journalists at a news conference in Nairobi on Apr 7. The conference followed his visit to northern Uganda last week.

According to him, between 200,000 and 300,000 people in neighbouring Teso and Lango regions had moved from Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) camps back to their homes.

Egeland, however, expressed concern about the poor conditions at the IDP camps. "There is overcrowding and people live in subhuman conditions in these camps," he remarked.

Ugandan authorities say a plan is underway to decongest the camps by helping in the resettlement of the IDPs. "The government is giving them a resettlement package, which includes iron sheets for construction of houses, seeds for planting and ox-ploughs," Ekolomoit said.

Chiefs register southern Sudanese IDPs in Khartoum

(SRS – 11th Apr. **Khartoum**) The Council of Southern Sudan chiefs in Khartoum is registering internally displaced persons living in the north for voluntary repatriation to their respective home states in southern Sudan.

Chairman of the Equatoria chiefs in Khartoum, Chief Mariano Raphael Mabor, says that the registration is being conducted in all the IDP camps around Khartoum. In an interview with Sudan Radio Service last week, Chief Mabor appealed to the Governments of National Unity and Southern Sudan, as well as civil society organizations, to support the repatriation of IDP's back to southern Sudan.

“We in Khartoum state appeal to the Government of Sudan as a whole to help us in the process of voluntary repatriation of our citizens. It is our duty as chiefs to return our citizens to their ten states in southern Sudan. We go to all the camps in order to get facts about our IDP's so that we can forward it to those ready to support our citizens and children who are present in Khartoum state,” said Chief Mariano and called for coordination between all concerned parties.

Meanwhile, the SPLM in western Bahr el Ghazal state has offered to repatriate hundreds of IDP families living in Khartoum and other towns in northern Sudan.

Paramount Chief Joseph Biajo Joki says that the SPLM in Wau has accepted a request made by the Balanda community living in IDP camps in the north to repatriate 500 families from each tribe of western Bahr el Ghazal state.

Speaking in Khartoum at a meeting on repatriation, Chief Joki urged southern Sudanese chiefs to enlighten their people on the repatriation process. He said the Balanda community is eager to return to their home area, but are unable to because of a lack of transport facilities. He appealed to the Government of Southern Sudan to assist the state government of Western Bahr el Ghazal to offer jobs and schools for the returning internally displaced persons.

The chief also called upon the members of his community to return to Wau, saying development and reconstruction cannot take place there without the full participation of the people.

Sudanese Dinar is introduced for the first time in Yambio

(SRS – 10th Apr. **Yambio**) Authorities in Western Equatoria have introduced the Sudanese Dinar in the state for the first time since it became a legal tender in Sudan more than 15 years ago.

Traders and the population in Western Equatoria —familiar only with other currencies like the old Sudanese pound, Ugandan and Kenyan shillings—are accepting the new currency with mixed reactions. Speaking to the public in Yambio County last Wednesday the state's deputy governor, Joseph Ngere, urged the public to accept Dinar, saying it will be the only legal currency in circulation. He also said workers salaries will be paid only in Dinar.

Ngere explained that the Sudanese Dinar is the legal tender in the country and will remain in use until the government decides to introduce another currency.

Eastern Sudan

Eastern Front welcomes efforts of Eritrea and the SPLM for solutions

(*AlAyaam* – 11th Apr. **Khartoum, Kassala**) The Eastern Front has accused the government of dragging its feet in issuing permits to Beja Congress members to allow them to attend a conference in the ‘liberated areas’.

A high rank member of the Eastern Front called on the government to show more commitment to the efforts to realise a solution to the problems in eastern Sudan.

He also said that the Eastern Front was ready for negotiations with the government and praised the Eritrean government and the SPLM for their efforts to bring about a solution to the problems of eastern Sudan. He described these efforts as “a last-ditch effort to realise peace in eastern Sudan before the situation runs out of hand”.

Eastern Front hands over to the ICC documents on the Port Sudan violence

(*AlSahafa/agencies* – 11th Apr. **Port Sudan, The Hague**) A high ranking source from the Eastern Front said the movement has handed over to the ICC in The Hague all the legal documents related to the Port Sudan incident that left 29 people killed.

He accused the government of delaying the work of the commission of enquiry formed to look into the issue.

On the other hand, a Red Sea State government official described this as a dangerous precedence that opens the door to the internationalisation of the issue of eastern Sudan.