



UNITED NATIONS MISSION IN SUDAN
UNMIS

UNMIS Media Monitoring Report, 15th February, 2006
(By Public Information Office)

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.

IN THE NEWS TODAY:

- **UN**
 - Radhia Achouri to embark on new mission
 - OCHA briefing: rejoinder
 - US troops may be sent to Sudan
- **CPA**
 - Excerpts from President Bashir's speeches during his visit to Rumbek and Juba (*please see separate attachment in which the unity-secession issue, the LRA, the implementation of the CPA are highlighted among other issues*).
- **GoNU**
 - Foreign minister says Rebecca Garang to be queried on her recent statements in Washington
 - Parties in GoNU hold forum on national issues
- **Darfur/ Abuja talks**
 - AbdelWahid declares end to cooperation with SLM-Minnawi and JEM
 - Darfur people prevent Norway's minister plane from landing
 - Darfur rebels say shoot down government helicopter
 - Defence minister briefs parliament on developments in Sudan-Chad relations
 - 106 Villages in North Darfur State Confront Vaccination Problem
 - NATO ready to help in Darfur, but not with troops
 - Slovene president presents Darfur humanitarian action
 - EU Welcomes peace deal between Chad, Sudan
- **Southern Sudan**
 - Ugandan troops kill 4 LRA rebels in southern Sudan

HIGHLIGHTS:

UN

Radhia Achouri to embark on new mission

(*AlAyaam* – 15th Feb. **Khartoum**) Informed sources say UNMIS Spokesperson Radhia Achouri will soon be leaving the UN's Sudan mission to take on a new job at the UN mission in Lebanon following a recent promotion.

The source says she will be replaced by an Egyptian but may come back to Sudan sometime later.

Achouri has been the Spokesperson at UNMIS ever since Secretary-General Annan appointed Mr. Jan Pronk as SRSG for Sudan.

Achouri last year received fierce criticism from the government in Sudan and was accused of putting pressure on the Khartoum government. This criticism reached peak levels in the second half of 2005 amidst reports that a high rank government official had ordered her expulsion from the country.

Efforts by SRSG Pronk however prevented her expulsion.

OCHA briefing: rejoinder

Following what appeared in yesterday's press on the last OCHA briefing held at UNMIS offices on 13th February 2006, OCHA has published the following rejoinder:

ADVISORY TO ALL MEDIA

This Media Advisory is in reference to the report which appeared in Rai el-Shab newspaper, under the headline "UN Declares Hamesh Khoreib a Disaster Zone," dated Tuesday 14 February. The report claimed that Mr. Mike McDonagh of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) during the UN-OCHA humanitarian press briefing on 13 February, had "accused the Government of obstructing the flow of humanitarian assistance to the needy in eastern Sudan." The report also erroneously quoted Mr. McDonagh as saying that "the authorities barred UN agencies from entering Kassala to provide humanitarian assistance to the needy and this forced the UN to carry out air drops."

UN-OCHA wishes to state that this information is false and without any foundation in fact.

Mr McDonagh said that a UN humanitarian team had visited Hamesh Khoreib by air. The team noted that there is no emergency in Hamesh Khoreib. However there are needs such as healthcare and the following day, a doctor and nurse from UNMIS visited Hamesh Khoreib. The UN is awaiting permission from the authorities to

conduct an inter agency mission to Hamesh Khoreib by road. There is a delay in getting this permission possibly due to the presence of landmines in the area

US troops may be sent to Sudan

(*Khartoum Monitor/Agencies* – 15th Feb. **Washington**) In a move that ultimately could lead to the deployment of US troops to Africa, President Bush on Monday agreed to work with the UN on the creation of a new international force to stop ethnic killings in Darfur.

Bush made no comments on a possible role for US troops but UN s-g Koffi Annan said he favours a US participation in the peacekeeping mission.

Bush and Annan however sidestepped that issue during a White House meeting that focused on the mechanics of creating a peacekeeping force.

CPA

Excerpts from President Bashir's speeches during his visit to Rumbek and Juba (*please see separate attachment in which the unity-secession issue, the LRA, the implementation of the CPA are highlighted among other issues*).

GoNU

Foreign minister says Rebecca Garang to be queried on her recent statements in Washington

(*AlRai ALAam/Agencies* – 15th Feb. **Doha**) In response to a question by reporters at a press conference in Doha last Monday on Rebecca Garang's recent statements in Washington in which she criticised the situation in the Sudan, foreign minister Dr. Lam Akol said he did not want to comment much on the issue but added that the GoSS' minister for roads and transport will be queried on those statements.

He said that they will study these statements when she comes back and assured that there are mechanisms for accountability be it at party level within the SPLM or at the level of the GoSS and the appropriate decision will be taken. On the debate over the oil revenues, Dr. Akol pointed out that the issue was one of southern Sudan's shares from these funds.

Parties in GoNU hold forum on national issues

(*Khartoum Monitor* – 15th Feb. **Khartoum**) Parties participating in the GoNU have unanimously approved the initiatives raised by the National Congress' officer for political liaison, Dr. Mustafa Osman proposing that the parties hold a consultative forum on current national issues and that its resolutions be binding to all parties.

Among the pressing issues to address by the forum in its monthly meeting are the issues of Darfur, eastern Sudan and the implementation of the CPA.

The parties agreed to form a tripartite chairmanship of the National Congress party, the SPLM and any party that hosts the meeting that will have a quorum of 3 members from each party.

Participants to the meeting urged the national media to play its role in the unification of national ranks while avoiding provocation of anything that shatters the nation's unity. The media, they maintain, should act as a partner in handling these issues.

Darfur/ Abuja talks

AbdelWahid declares end to cooperation with SLM-Minnawi and JEM

(*AlAyaam* – 15th Feb. **Khartoum**) AbdelWahid Mohamed Nour declared in Abuja yesterday that his faction of the SLM was severing their cooperation with the other faction led by Minnawi and with the JEM.

Among the reasons he cited for this decision are that the two other groups combined together to form the Western Sudan Revolutionary Forces and this has obstructed the Abuja talks. He points out also that Minnawi's group launched an attack on his forces on the ground and secret talks had been held between the other two groups on the separation of religion from state.

AbdelWahid says he has notified AU chief mediator Salim Ahmed Salim and confirmed to the international partners his commitments to peace.

A spokesperson for the faction blamed the government called upon the UN to urgently send European and US troops to bring peace to Darfur. He blamed the presence of foreign troops in the country to failure by the government to respect the ceasefire agreement.

On the other hand, the other faction of the SLM says it was surprised by the decision by AbdelWahid to sever links with them on such weak grounds. He pointed out that what is important is that they continue to cooperate with the JEM but they hoped that the AbdelWahid faction would have continued with them in the struggle.

Darfur people prevent Norway's minister plane from landing

(*ST* – 14th Feb. **el-Fasher**) A group of locals from el-Fasher town, capital of Northern Darfur State, staged a sit-in at the runway of el-Fasher International Airport this morning.

The group prevented the aircraft carrying the Norwegian deputy defence minister from landing at the airport as an expression of the state's people's rejection of the recent insults made by the Norwegian papers to the Prophet Muhammad.

The official SUNA learnt that the sit-in staged at the el-Fasher Airport came after news leaked among the citizens that the Norwegian deputy minister of defence was to visit el-Fasher on a mission concerned with the AU working in Darfur.

This led the citizens to head for the airport early where they spread along the main runway as they recited the Koran and made a supplication to Allah to save Islam and Muslims in all corners of the world.

Darfur rebels say shoot down government helicopter

(*Reuters/ST, AlRai AlAam* – 15th Feb. **Khartoum**) Darfur rebels said they had shot down a government helicopter on Tuesday and captured the only surviving crew member, named as Captain Muawiya Jubeir.

"The government helicopters came to protect the Janjaweed (Arab militias) who were attacking civilians in our areas and our troops shot down one of them," said rebel Sudan Liberation Army (SLA) leader Minni Arcua Minnawi.

He said the incident happened six or seven km (four or five miles) east of Shearia town in South Darfur state, where displaced people had fled after recent fighting in the town. The SLA had intervened to protect them, he added.

"All the other crew are dead. Only he (Captain Zubeir) survived," he told Reuters.

A Sudanese army spokesman confirmed the news of the helicopter, which he said was downed by rebels using artillery in the Jabel Reel area near Shearia. He however accused the AbdelWahid faction of the SLM/A.

He said an officer was injured in the crash but could not confirm his name or if he had been captured by the rebels.

A tentative truce was signed between the two main rebel groups and the government in April 2004, but has since been violated many times.

The ceasefire specifies Khartoum can fly helicopters in the vast region the size of France but not on offensive missions.

Defence minister briefs parliament on developments in Sudan-Chad relations

(*AlAAIRai AlAam* – 15th Feb. **Khartoum**) In a closed-door session yesterday, the Minister of Defence briefed the National Assembly on the situation along the Sudan's borders with Chad following the recent tensions in the area.

No reporters were allowed in and the defence minister refused to say anything to the press after the session.

Some MPs who did speak to the press said that it was agreed in the session that the press not be informed of the deliberations. Parliament later issued a press release stating that the Minister of Defence has confirmed that the situation along the border areas has calmed down especially after the Tripoli agreement.

106 Villages in North Darfur State Confront Vaccination Problem

(*SMC* – 14th Feb. **Khartoum**) The government of North Darfur disclosed the obstacles that confront the vaccination project in 106 villages.

In an exclusive, the manager of the vaccination administration Abdalla Bashir said that his administration held meeting with several organizations on launching vaccination campaign in the area under the control of the armed movements while the vaccination administration covers the area that under the control of the government.

He said that the government of north Darfur state has trained 1700 volunteers and technical cadres, pointing out that the targeted number for vaccination is 15.600 children, 11000 out of them have been vaccinated the last year.

NATO ready to help in Darfur, but not with troops

(Reuters/ST – 14th Feb. **Brussels**) NATO allies would look kindly on new appeals for back-up help to African troops in Sudan's violent Darfur region, but rule out for now a major deployment of their own, NATO diplomats said on Tuesday.

Fears that Western soldiers would be unwelcome and even counterproductive in Sudan, along with the strain of existing alliance peacekeeping in Afghanistan, mean there is little appetite for rushing into a new NATO ground mission.

"I don't think anyone wants that," said one senior alliance diplomat of calls from aid groups and politicians for NATO to send thousands of its own soldiers to bolster an over-stretched, 7,000-strong African Union (AU) force there.

"The focus is more about extending our support role in the transition from an AU to a blue helmet (United Nations) force," said the diplomat, who requested anonymity. Last year NATO began help in training and transporting AU troops, insisting back then that it did not seek a major presence on the ground.

The U.N. Security Council assigned Secretary-General Kofi Annan this month to draw up options for a UN force to take over from the AU in a renewed bid to end mass killings and rape in a three-year-old war between the government and rebels.

U.N. officials point to the Western armies of NATO as having the equipment, training and transport to make a real difference in Darfur, echoing aid groups who have long urged a NATO role.

Humanitarian groups Human Rights Watch and the International Crisis Group urged U.S. President George W. Bush in a letter this month to rally NATO allies to offer troops and equipment toward a force numbering as many as 20,000.

Others, including a number of U.S. Democratic senators, have appealed for a NATO contribution of up to a few thousand. But those calls are unlikely to be answered.

While Annan emerged from a meeting with Bush in Washington on Monday confident the United States was committed to helping, he insisted it was too early to discuss any U.S. presence.

One obstacle is that many in the alliance doubt that Sudan would accept Western soldiers on its soil.

U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Robert Zoellick stressed at a conference in Munich this month the need for "African solutions for African problems" and said he hoped many of the AU forces would be retained within a future UN operation.

More fundamentally, some NATO allies such as France have doubted whether the alliance should have any role at all in Africa, insisting it cannot be the "gendarme of the world."

Despite recent visits to NATO headquarters by Jean-Marie Guehenno, the UN's top peacekeeping official, and Jan Pronk, Annan's representative to Sudan, there has been no formal UN or AU request for it even to consider providing more help.

"As a result it is simply too early for any kind of formal discussion," said one NATO official. Others said Darfur had not come up in meetings of NATO envoys in Brussels nor featured much at talks among alliance defense ministers in Sicily last week.

Those talks, days after NATO troops in north Afghanistan were attacked by protesters angered by European cartoons of Islam's Prophet Mohammad, highlighted for some a need to bolster existing missions rather than embark on new ones.

"We had great difficulty mobilizing for south Afghanistan," said one senior diplomat of a plan to extend NATO's presence with a further 6,000 peacekeepers this year. "Those attacks showed the need to consolidate in the north too," he added.

Since the AU made a first request for help last April, NATO planes have transported some 4,000 African soldiers into Darfur, trained AU officers and helped with troop rotations.

Diplomats said there was a willingness to extend that help if requested, and possibly help to better arm the AU troops. "There is no serious discussion of anything else," said one.

Slovene president presents Darfur humanitarian action

(*ST* – 14th Feb. **Ljubljana**) President Janez Drnovsek and several Slovene humanitarian organizations presented on Tuesday a joint humanitarian action, "World for Darfur", which is to help provide supplies for a refugee camp for 10,000 people in this troubled western province of Sudan.

Drnovsek used the opportunity to stress that the rebel groups in the province must first be united in order to solve the Darfur crisis.

According to the Slovene STA, his envoy Tomo Kriznar, who is currently in Darfur, has informed him that it has come to further conflicts between individual rebel groups which have already claimed numerous lives.

Drnovsek therefore does not believe that representatives of the Sudanese government and rebel groups will meet for peace talks in Germany this weekend, as he himself proposed.

The president furthermore expects the world to help ensure safety to the people and humanitarian workers in the province. He hopes he still has the support of the Slovene government.

The president also discussed the Darfur crisis with the head of the Sudan Federal Democratic Party, Ahmed Diraige, who expressed support for his initiative, labelling it as very important.

Diraige moreover said that Drnovsek is the only president who directly called on his citizens to help people in a crisis, which has already left 2.5 million people homeless.

With the humanitarian action for Darfur, launched at Drnovsek's initiative, Red Cross of Slovenia, Slovene Caritas, Unicef Slovenia and the Foundation Together would like to call on the public to act and help other international organization in Darfur.

The organizations plan to provide help for the refugee centre Hamidi in the west of Darfur, where more than 8,000 families from 70 surrounding villages have already found refuge.

EU Welcomes peace deal between Chad, Sudan

(AP/ST – 14th Feb. **Vienna**) The E.U. Tuesday welcomed a recent peace agreement between Sudan and Chad and has urged both countries to honor it.

"After the tensions following the attack on the town of Adre by Chadian rebels on 18 December 2005, the European Union sees this agreement as an important step towards the restoration of a climate of confidence and cooperation between the two countries," Austria said on the E.U.'s behalf in a statement released Monday.

Austria currently holds the E.U.'s six-month rotating presidency.

"The European Union appeals to both parties to honor this agreement, in particular their commitment to refrain from hosting rebel forces of the other party on their respective territory," the statement said.

Sudanese President Omar el-Bashir and Chad's president Idriss Deby pledged Wednesday, after a day of talks hosted by Libyan leader Moammar Gadhafi, "to immediately commit themselves to work to prevent the presence of rebels on each other territory," Libya's Jamhiriya news agency reported.

Southern Sudan

Ugandan troops kill 4 LRA rebels in southern Sudan

(Xinhua/ST – 15th Feb. **Kampala**) The Ugandan troops have killed four rebels in southern Sudan and captured an assortment of ammunitions from the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) fighting the Ugandan government.

The army's 4th division army spokesman, Lt. Chris Magezi told Xinhua by telephone on Wednesday that the Ugandan troops killed the four rebels in western Equatorial province.

He said the group was part of that led by the LRA chief Joseph Kony heading for eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Magezi said during the operation, the Ugandan army captured 1 RPG launcher with 14 shells and their fuses, three bombs, six magazines of G3 guns and 260 rounds of ammunitions.

He described the army's operation against the LRA in southern Sudan as moving on smoothly with successes recorded frequently.

Meanwhile, the army on Tuesday killed one rebel and rescued three civilians who were abducted by the LRA in the northern Ugandan district of Apac.

Magezi said the army's Golf Battalion killed the rebel at Adora Primary School.

He said this rebel was part of the group that battered six civilians to death and abducted several others in Alito sub-county in Apac district on Monday.

On Saturday, the army's 71st Battalion repulsed an attack by the LRA rebels on civilians traveling on Pabbo-Atiak road in the northern district of Gulu.

Magezi said during the operation, two rebels were killed and the army recovered two rusty guns with 68 bullets and one rebel surrendered to the army.