



UNITED NATIONS MISSION IN SUDAN

UNMIS

UNMIS Media Monitoring Report, 19th February, 2006**(By Public Information Office)**

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HIGHLIGHTS:

UN

Too early to deploy UN forces in western Sudan, says envoy

(*Khartoum Monitor/BBC* – 16th Feb. **Khartoum**) Outgoing UNMIS spokeswoman Radhia Achouri told the press on Wednesday [15 February] that the UN is lobbying to strengthen the AU on the ground in Darfur.

She stated that the UN is not in place to take over from the AU, but plans urgently for contingency transition, and that AU needs more support in terms of logistics and equipment.

"It is too early for the UN to call for troops to take over [from AU] in Darfur, rather we are calling for logistics and transitional facilities", she stated.

"The biggest priority for UN is that the transition is done slowly and in a smooth way", she said, adding that donors will be requested to provide necessary facilities to the AU.

"We are not in the stage of calling troops from the troops contributing countries [sentence as published], but we are planning for contingency transition (from the AU to the UN), as requested," she remarked.

Achouri pointed out that the transition will be decided at the AU's ministerial meeting scheduled for March.

The UNMIS spokeswoman quoted the special representative of the secretary-general to Sudan, Jan Pronk, that the UN will not force itself to take over from the AU troops in Darfur.

She explained that the initial decision came from the AU Peace and Security Council (AUPSC) in its communique dated 10 January 2006 to support in principle such a transition.

"APPSC is yet to state its final stand on this issue in its upcoming meeting at the ministerial level," Pronk said.

Pronk went on to explain that the statement made by UN secretary-general was meant to prepare for a possible transition to a UN operation in order to avoid any vacuum in Darfur.

Cambodia ships gear to Sudan ahead of peacekeeping team

(AP/ST – 18th **Phnom Penh, Cambodia**) Cambodia on Saturday shipped mine detectors and other equipment to the war-torn African nation of Sudan, where Cambodian soldiers will join a U.N. peacekeeping mission, an official said.

A ship carrying 25 trucks and vehicles, 70 mine detectors and other equipment left Cambodia's Sihanoukville port Saturday morning and was expected to arrive in Sudan in three weeks, said Maj. Gen. Sem Sovanny, deputy commander of Cambodian army's engineering corps.

A team of 135 Cambodian soldiers is expected to be in Sudan by mid-April, marking the first time the Southeast Asian nation will join an international U.N. peacekeeping mission.

An advance team of 10 officers was expected to leave for Sudan later this month, said Sem Sovanny.

In Sudan, the Cambodian troops will focus on mine-clearing missions.

"Our soldiers are very pleased to accept this prestigious mission," Sem Sovanny said by telephone from Sihanoukville.

CPA

UN says obstacles hinder setup of commission for human rights

(AlAyaam – 19th Feb. **Khartoum**) The CPA Monitor, a monthly publication of the UNMIS, has disclosed a big gap in the drafting of the National Commission for Human Rights Act. The monthly points out that the national advisor to the preparatory committee for the commission who also represents the SPLM had tabled drafts while a high rank official of the National Congress party forwarded directly to the Presidency of the Republic a separate draft based on the Human Rights Act (2004) which, the report says, does not guarantee fairness and independence of the rights body to be set up. The monitor further points out that the NCP delegation has never participated in the meetings.

The report further points out that the two sides do not have a common ground on the basic principles for the proposed commission and the constitution review commission did not participate in the drafting and, as such, the draft is in violation of the National Interim Constitution.

The report goes on to point out that there have been delays in the formation of the national commissions and institutions dictated by the CPA and cited the Assessment and Evaluation Commission, the National Petroleum Commission, the Ceasefire Political Commission, the Budget and Financial Resources Monitoring Commission, the Technical Commission for Border Demarcation and the Judicial Services Commission.

Sudan sets up body for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration

(SUNA/ST – 18th Feb. **Khartoum**) President Omer Al-Bashir Saturday issued a republican decree forming the National Council for Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Coordination (NCDDRC) to be chaired by Minister of Presidency Maj. Gen. Bakri Hassan Salih.

The Council comprises Ministers of Federal Government Chamber, National Defence, Finance and National Economy, Humanitarian Affairs, Labour and Public Service, and Social Welfare and Women and Children Affairs as well as the State Ministers for Interior and International Cooperation, Minister of Finance at the Government of Southern Sudan, Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces, Chief Staff of Sudan People's Liberation Army, General Commissioner for Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration for the Northern states, General Commissioner for Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration for the Southern States and other dignitaries to be appointed by the Presidency.

The republican decree specified the tasks of the Council including approving the disarmament and demobilization policies, formulating reintegration policies and supervising their implementation in collaboration with other concerned organs, reviewing and evaluating progress achieved by the commissions and submitting regular reports to the Presidency.

Salva Kiir says partnership with NCP growing every day

(*ST* – 18th Feb. **Khartoum**) The first vice-president and president of the southern Sudan government, Lt Gen. Salva Kiir Mayardit, has said that the partnership between the ruling National Congress Party (NCP) and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) was growing every day.

According to the Sudanese Media Center (SMC) news service, He affirmed that SPLM will not delay in appointing its representatives to joint committees and commissions so that the peace agreement is fully implemented.

Salva Kiir hailed President Omar al-Bashir's visit to Juba and Rumbek last Tuesday 14 February. He added that the detailed explanation offered by the president on the issue of oil revenues had satisfied the regional government.

The first Vice-President observed that southerners had waited for the visit for long as it kept on being postponed due to sudden changes to the president's programme.

He added that southerners expressed their happiness with the visit by turning in large numbers to attend the rallies in Juba and Rumbek.

They also expressed their desire that the president makes the visits more regular. He added that the visit was a success since it achieved its aims.

GoNU

Only Sudanese judiciary can try Darfur war crimes - al-Bashir

(*ST, AlRai AlAam* – 19th Feb. **Khartoum**) President Omer al-Bashir, has stressed that the Sudanese Judiciary has the sole jurisdiction of ruling in cases in Sudan, especially that in Darfur, the official SUNA reported.

In his address at the celebration marking the Golden Jubilee of the Judiciary Saturday, al-Bashir affirmed government's full confidence in the Judiciary and judges for realizing justice and the rule of law.

He pointed out that the Judiciary is capable of providing fair and public trials and the right of defence for any defendant, safeguard the human rights and to simplify the legal procedures

for all people and vowed to forcibly challenge any attempt from whichever quarter at intervening in the work of the Sudanese judiciary.

He referred to the role of the Judiciary for quelling "the fire of the sedition" in Darfur.

The International Criminal Court investigates war crimes in Darfur, as the U.N. Security Council had mandated it to do.

The Sudanese government opposes the International Criminal Court, insisting it can prosecute any war criminals in its own courts. The ICC investigation is the first to be carried out against the will of the country where the alleged crimes occurred.

The ICC, which is based in the Netherlands, has a list of 51 suspects — including Sudanese government officials, pro-government militiamen and rebels — that was compiled by a U.N. panel which reported on the Darfur conflict last year.

Among the 51 names listed are "military and civilians about whom there is much convincing evidence", said Antonio Cassese, an Italian law professor, who led the United Nations commission of inquiry on Darfur crimes.

That evidence includes accounts from senior military officers that the Sudanese government "openly uses militia gangs, gives them weapons and salaries and tells them to kill and burn and it backs them up with planes and helicopters," Mr. Cassese said. "There is no restraint. More than 2,000 villages have been burnt. The scale of looting, raping and torture is horrible."

Sudan denies alleged statement over southern rebel widow's visit to USA

(*Khartoum Monitor/BBC* – 18th Feb. **Khartoum**) The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has denied a press statement attributed to his minister, Dr Lam Akol, on the accountability of Mrs Rebecca de Mabior over statements she made in Washington .

Rebecca Nyandeng de Mabior, minister of transport and roads in the government of southern Sudan, was invited by the US Administration to attend the State of the Union Address.

During her visit she voiced concern over "some critical delays in the CPA [Comprehensive Peace Agreement] implementation process".

"I would like to state that the reported version is not accurate", said the statement. "The truth is that in the conference the minister held in Doha, Qatar, on 13 February 2006, he was asked by a journalist on the possibility of questioning Minister Rebecca Nyandeng de Mabior regarding her statements in Washington, which, in the journalist's view, contradicted the general policy of the Government of National Unity.

The answer of the foreign minister was as follows:" Up to now we have not received any official version of these reports so as to conclude whether they contradict the general policy of the government or the SPLM. Even if the statements were to be true, the relevant authority is the one to decide [whether] to question her or not, therefore, I will not want to comment on the issue."

The Sudanese Arabic press reported that Akol had disapproved Rebecca's statements and had to explain her behaviour.

Minister for Cabinet Affairs says Mrs. Garang was not representing the GoSS during her Washington visit

(*AlAyaam* – 19th Feb. **Khartoum**) Following the recent visit to the US by Mrs. Rebecca Garang and the uproar over her statements accusing the NCP of slowing the peace process, cabinet affairs minister Deng Alor explained that Rebecca did not travel to the US as a representative of the GoSS but an invitation was sent to her as a national symbol by the White House to attend the Annual Breakfast and she was sent another invitation to visit Laura Bush.

Alor defended Mrs. Garang for not dealing directly with the Sudanese Embassy in Washington saying, “We have seen how the embassy sent negative reports on the First Vice-president’s activities during his visit to the US in the company of foreign minister Lam Akol. Khidir Haroun (Cd’A to the Embassy in Washington) did all this despite the fact that the foreign minister was travelling with the First Vice-president. Rebecca definitely did not want a repeat of this.”

He blasted reporters on their press reports which he said only confirms their ignorance of the CPA.

“They do not read the CPA that allows southern Sudan to establish relations with the states in the region – and not embassies. This is why we established the Ministry of International Cooperation,” he adds.

Congressional delegation to tour Darfur

(*AlSahafa* – 19th Feb. **Khartoum**) A ten-man delegation of the US Congress holds official talks today with government officials in Khartoum.

During its two-day visit, the delegation led by Nancy Palucci will travel to Darfur for talks with the governors of the three states of Darfur and AMIS officials and will tour some IDP camps before returning to Khartoum for talks with First Vice-president Kiir and foreign minister Akol.

Speaking for the foreign ministry, Jamal Mohamed Ibrahim said the Sudan welcomes the visit of the Congressional delegation which he said is to acquaint them with the humanitarian situation on the ground.

This, he said, will also help them get a clearer picture of the nature of the situation in Darfur in order to dispel the negative reports circulating in the Congress and its calls for sanctions and more pressures in Abuja.

Sudan-US relations

Sudan rejects US claim of ongoing Darfur genocide

(*Reuters/ST* – 18th Feb. **Khartoum**) Sudan’s government on Saturday rejected U.S. accusations that genocide was ongoing in its Darfur region and said it was discussing allowing a robust U.N. force to take over from African peace monitors there.

U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice on Thursday said genocide was continuing in Darfur through a widespread campaign of rape, looting and killing and urged the African Union to accept the help of U.N. peacekeepers to stop the atrocities.

Underfinanced African Union troops form the only bulwark in Sudan against marauding militia and rebels.

"She (Rice) is biased because any authentic parties who are concerned with what's going on in Darfur have confirmed that this is not genocide," said Sudanese Foreign Ministry spokesman Jamal Ibrahim.

"This is a systematic policy of the U.S. administration ... of pressuring the Khartoum government," Ibrahim said, saying the United States was responding to internal pressures from Congress and the African American lobby.

Foreign Minister Lam Akol said he had not heard Rice's comments, but, he told Reuters: "of course there is no genocide in Darfur."

Bush: double peacekeeping troops needed in Darfur

(Reuters/ST – 17th Feb. Tampa, Florida) President George W. Bush said on Friday that stemming bloodshed in Sudan's Darfur region may require double the number of international peacekeepers there and a NATO organizational role.

Underfinanced African Union troops are the only bulwark in Sudan against marauding militia and rebels, with some 7,000 monitors and soldiers on the ground.

Bush held talks on Monday with U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan on Sudan, where a conflict between the Sudanese government and two rebel movements has killed tens of thousands of people and left more than 2 million homeless.

"I'm in the process now of working with a variety of folks to encourage there to be more troops, probably under the United Nations," Bush said.

"But it's going to require, I think, a NATO stewardship, planning, facilitating, organizing — probably double the number of peacekeepers that are there now," he said during a question-and-answer session with a friendly audience in Florida.

Bush spoke after a visit to the U.S. military Central Command, where he held talks with commanders about Iraq. He shed no new light on when U.S. troops might be reduced in Iraq, repeating it would be up to commanders on the ground.

Bush was not specific on what NATO role he envisioned in Darfur, but he spoke earlier in the day to NATO Secretary-General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer. White House spokesman Trent Duffy said they discussed "what additional actions NATO might take in the future" for Darfur.

Tens of thousands of people have been killed in Darfur since mostly non-Arab rebels took up arms in early 2003, accusing the central government of neglect. Khartoum denies U.S. charges of genocide but the International Criminal Court is investigating suspected war crimes there.

In Washington, Kansas Republican Sen. Sam Brownback and Delaware Democratic Sen. Joe Biden said they had introduced a resolution in the U.S. Congress calling for NATO troops to help the African Union "stop the genocide" in the Darfur region.

They said the resolution urged Bush to advocate sending NATO troops — including Americans if need be — to work in support of the African Union, and that NATO should enforce a no-fly zone in Darfur.

"The world has known for far too long of the atrocities in Darfur. We must do more than declare genocide: we must do all we can to stop the killings, and we must do it now," said Brownback.

NATO diplomats said in Brussels this week the allies would look kindly on new appeals for help for African troops in Sudan but ruled out for now a major deployment of their own.

The U.N. Security Council has authorized Annan to draw up contingency plans for U.N. peacekeepers to go into Darfur.

Annan has indicated that U.S. help in planning was not enough and emphasized he needed sophisticated logistics, such as air support and intelligence so that soldiers could get to a trouble spots in time.

Washington has been noncommittal on troops for such a mission. If there were to be any significant deployment of U.S. troops in Darfur, it would be Washington's first major foray into African peacekeeping since it quit Somalia in 1994.

Darfur/ Abuja talks

Sudan says repulsed attack from Chadian territories

(ST – 18th Feb. **Khartoum**) For the first time since the signing of the Tripoli accord between Sudan and Chad, the Sudanese army said yesterday it had repulsed an attack from Chadian territories by unidentified elements in its western border state of West Darfur.

The official spokesman of the Armed Forces, Gen. Al-Abass Abdul-Rahman Khalifa, announced that the village of Kango Haraza, south-eastern to Al-Genaina in West Darfur State, Friday was subjected to a heavy artillery shelling coming from the Chadian territories.

Khalifa explained in a statement to SUNA that the shelling was followed by an infantry attack.

He affirmed that the Armed Forces have repulsed the attack and seized two vehicles, adding that counting losses is underway.

Chadian army has not been mentioned in the communiqué but the terms of the official statement are similar to a communiqué issued by the Sudanese army at the end of January accusing Chadian army of shelling army position in northwest of western Darfur state.

On Feb. 8, both Sudanese president and his Chadian counterpart signed in the Libyan capital, Tripoli, an accord on steps to reduce border tensions. At the Tripoli meeting, both countries agreed to have troops patrol the 1,000-kilometer (625-mile) Chad-Sudan border as a measure to reduce tensions.

The Chadian Foreign Minister said to AP that the details of the border patrol force — whether operated jointly by Sudan and Chad or troops from the African Union supplemented

by Libyan troops — will be discussed at follow-up meetings such as one between intelligence officials from both countries within a week's time in Tripoli.

Issue of UN forces for Darfur has become the most heated topic for debate, governor says

(SMC/BBC – 18th Feb. **Khartoum**) The Governor of North Darfur Osman Yousif Kibir said the hasty movement by the UN to replace AU forces by international peacekeepers is the most heated debate currently taking place at government and public level. He said "people in the state are worried about this."

Regarding the security situation, the governor said things are calm despite rebel violations and attacks from Chadian territories. He said the food and health situation within IDPS camps are also well and good but complained that rebels keep on infiltrating into camps and disturbing IDPS.

Most of the people in Darfur hope the Abuja talks would rescue the whole situation in favor of peace, concludes the governor.

Some 116 Rwandan troops depart for peace mission in Darfur; replace comrades

(Radio Rwanda/BBC – 16th Feb. **Kigali**) A contingent of 107 Rwandan Defence Force troops led by Col Jean-Bosco Rutikanga [phonetic], have returned from Sudan's region of Darfur, where they have been on a UN peacekeeping mission and [maintaining] security in troubled Darfur. Their arrival coincided with the departure of some other 116 Rwandan troops, who left to promote peace in the same region. The head of the [returning] battalion, Col Rutikanga said that their mission was fulfilled as planned, adding that his battalion was the last batch of 650 peacekeeping mission to arrive in order for the replacing programme to take form.

Polio campaign fails to vaccinate 120,000 children in rebel-held areas of Darfur

(SMC/BBC – 18th Feb. **Khartoum**) Health Care Administration held a meeting in North Darfur to discuss and assess the security situation and obstacles that might hinder the 14th national campaign against Polio. HCA manger Dr. Mohammed Al Hassan said the Polio campaign failed to vaccinate 120,000 children in rebel-controlled areas out a target group of 335,000 due to security reasons.

He said the campaign should assume activities in the area controlled by the government. It was noted that a number of cars and personnel working in the campaign were exposed to abductions by Darfur rebels.

"Unknown disease" kills 35 in Northern Darfur State of Sudan

(SMC/BBC – 17th Feb. **Khartoum**) An unknown disease has spread in the camps of the Sudan Liberation Movement [SLM], loyal to Manni Arkoi Minawi in Kabkabiya, Mt Si and parts of Haskanit in Northern Darfur State.

Residents who fled from the affected regions told SMC [Sudanese Media Centre] that the disease had killed 35 SLM troops and dozens were seriously ill.

The residents went on to say that SLM leaders in the affected regions had asked some organizations working in the state to intervene and to help treat the affected victims, as well as identify the disease which one of its features is serious diarrhoea.

Abyei

NCP, SPLM clash over leadership of legislature in South Kordofan

(*AlRai Alaam* – 19th Feb. **Khartoum**) The deputy governor of South Kordofan has confirmed reports of conflict between National Congress Party and SPLM representatives over the leadership of the state's Legislative Assembly.

This, he said, has caused a delay in the ratification of the state's constitution and in formation of its government.

He further revealed that there are moves to establish a caretaker government pending resolution of these conflicts.

Speaking to the press, deputy governor Eisa Bushra also pointed out that the Abyei region still falls under the administration of the Government of South Kordofan pending a decision from the Presidency of the Republic over the issue.

Abyei to have interim authority

(*AlSahafa* – 19th Feb. **Khartoum**) The head of the government team to the Abyei Boundary Commission Mr. Dirdeir Mohamed Ahmed says the Presidency of the Republic is preparing to form an interim administration to discharge the affairs of the Abyei area pending a final decision on the issue.

He said that the NCP and the SPLM have both agreed that the decision by the Presidency will be accepted by both parties.

Another member of the GoS team to the commission said that the ABC report by the experts is not binding because the panel had transcended its mandate while James Arjang, an MP for Abyei, reiterated adherence to the report and does not rule out that the issue may be tabled before parliament for debate. He called upon the Presidency of the Republic to hasten up with a solution to the problem.

The MP also accused the deputy governor Eisa Bushra of South Kordofan of transcending his authority by sending police forces to Abyei.

The deputy governor however defended his actions and pointed out that Abyei is still under the administrative jurisdiction of South Kordofan pending the decision by the Presidency of the Republic.

Eastern Sudan

Eastern Front meets to set up agenda for coming talks

(*SMC/BBC* – 18th Feb. **Khartoum**) Eastern Front has led intensified efforts in preparation for the up coming negotiation with the government.

Secretary General of the front Dr. Amna Dirar said her organization is conducting meeting at Hamesh Koreib area to agree on the agenda for the talks. She did not mention however when the talks are due.

Southern Sudan / Uganda-Sudan

Cholera death toll rises to 52 in south Sudan

(*Reuters/ST* – 18th Feb. **Khartoum**) A cholera outbreak in south Sudan has claimed 52 lives with more than 2,000 cases of the deadly disease which spreads rapidly through brimming urban centres, the World Health Organisation said on Saturday.

The disease, identified this week as cholera, has infected 2,029 people in the towns of Yei and the regional capital Juba, and aid agencies are rushing to prevent the outbreak spreading to neighbouring towns.

"Chlorination of public water supplies have begun and emergency stocks of rehydration supplies ... have been pre-positioned at all high-risk points," WHO said in a statement sent to Reuters on Saturday.

Cholera causes rapid dehydration which can cause death and is spread through unclean water. Two-thirds of south Sudan's population drinks unsafe water. The death toll has almost doubled in the past week.

After a 2005 peace deal which ended Africa's longest civil war in Sudan's south, hundreds of thousands of people have been returning home. They have flocked to urban centres whose already creaking infra-structures are unable to cope with the extra burden.

Acholi king, South Sudan V-p Machar discuss LRA eradication

(*Juba Post/ST* – 17th Feb. **Juba**) Acholi king David Oniek Achana has held consultations with southern Sudan vice President Riek Machar to find a resolution to the ongoing Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) crisis.

Acholi people living in a region known as Acholiland in northern Uganda and in Magwe County, Eastern Equatoria in southern Sudan.

According to Oniek "The problem of the LRA will not be resolved unless the Sudanese Acholi and Ugandan Acholi tribes unite themselves and work hand in hand to eradicate the LRA from Acholi land."

The king, who is a Ugandan, continued by saying that with the government support the people can eradicate the LRA from the area: "The Sudanese and Ugandan governments will eradicate the LRA from their land".

"I met with the Ugandan president to try to resolve this problem before coming here to meet the vice president of southern Sudan.", the king added.

Sudanese People's Liberation Army said harassing voters in northern Uganda

(*New Vision/BBC* – 16th Feb. **Kampala**) UPC [Uganda People's Congress] has petitioned the Electoral Commission (EC) over the presence of the Sudanese People's Liberation Army (SPLA) in Adjumani, Moyo and Koboko districts [northern Uganda], whom they accuse of intimidating and harassing voters.

Addressing the press at UPC headquarters in Kampala yesterday, UPC national chairman Prof Patrick Rubaihayo said armed SPLA were hunting for UPC parliamentary candidate for West Moyo, Dr Moses Abiliga.

Ugandan army reportedly kills rebel leader's escorts in southern Sudan

(*New Vision/BBC* – 16th Feb. **Kampala**) The UPDF [Uganda People's Defence Forces] on Tuesday [14 February] attacked the hideout of the LRA [Lord's Resistance Army] rebel leader, Joseph Kony, southwest of Juba in the Western Equatorial Province and killed four of his escorts, reports Chris Ocowun.

Northern army spokesman, Lt Chris Magezi, in a statement, said the UPDF 81st battalion clashed with LRA fighters commanded by Kony in southern Sudan on Tuesday [14 February]. One UPDF soldier was injured and several arms seized from the rebels.

"The UPDF 81st battalion pursued and caught up with rebels commanded by Kony southwest of Juba and killed four of his bodyguards on the spot. Kony and his defeated remnants are on their way to the DR Congo fleeing the UPDF offensive," Magezi said.

One UPDF soldier was injured.

The equipment seized from the rebels included one PK machine-gun with 260 bullets, one RPG launcher with 14 shells and their fuses, three bombs of 60mm mortar, six full magazines of a G3 machine-gun and two pieces of poncho. Kony and his fighters fled in disarray and abandoned looted food and non-food items," Magezi added.

Magezi said the army was determined to destroy all rebel remnants that do not want to surrender under the amnesty. At the Tarehe Sita celebration in Gulu, the chief of defence forces, Gen Aronda Nyakairima, said Kony was heading to the Central African Republic.