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UNMIS Media Monitoring Report, 21st February, 2006**(By Public Information Office)**

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HIGHLIGHTS:

AMIS-UN transition

MFA summons Pronk - protests

(*AlAyaam* – 21st Feb. **Khartoum**) The Ministry of Foreign Affairs summoned yesterday SRSG Jan Pronk to protest over what it described as the path the SRSG and the UNMIS have taken in handling the issues of Sudan.

In a statement issued yesterday, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs says Acting Foreign Minister Ali Ahmed Kourti presented a strongly-phrased protest to the SRSG and pointed out that his statements and reports and those of his aides violate state sovereignty, its fateful issues and soils the country's image in the international community.

The statement further says that these actions of the SRSG have started to generate the impression within public opinion that the UN is responsible for charting a course for Sudan's future and regulating the will of its people.

The Acting Minister said this is categorically rejected by the government. Sudan, he says, shall not allow SRSG Pronk to become a Paul Bremer in Sudan. He said that the UN and its mission in Sudan were brought in to assist and with the consent of the Sudanese and that the Sudan does not reject a positive cooperation with the organisation but has the right, based on her sovereign rights and the right to chose its orientation, to reject any act that it deems is to the detriment of its national interest.

The ministry cited some examples of what it saw as evidence that the SRSG and UNMIS are deviating from the agreed cooperation and giving the impression that it can overtake the government and determine the outlines of solutions to any problems in Sudan. Among these were cited what the UN stated on the issue of those affected by the Meroe Dam project and UNMIS' negative statements on the implementation of the CPA which were seen as incitement against the state. The acting minister also mentioned Pronk's statements before the Security Council on the situation in Darfur and the AMIS-UN transition.

These statements, he said, implied that the shortcomings in the security situation in Darfur were from the government side and also tried to hint that the government was not willing to resolve the situation.

Kourti also criticised SRSG Pronk on his statement before the Security Council last January over the issue of petroleum revenue and development in the south. This, he said, was a hint that the government intentionally hides the truth and deprives the southerners of the share in the revenue.

Sources in Abuja say AMIS-UN transition most likely

(*AlAyaam, AlSahafa* – 21st Feb. **Khartoum**) Informed sources in Abuja say the AU has agreed on the transition of AMIS into a UN operation through a 3-phase programme that will span six

to nine months starting from next March but said the UN deployment will be with the consent of the people of Sudan or else under a Chapter VII mandate should the Sudanese government refuse.

The sources say the first phase will be political talks, then the Darfuri conference and finally a UN peacekeeping role in the region.

The spokesperson for the JEM delegation to Abuja says the AMIS chief briefed them in Abuja yesterday on a possible transition while the AU representative in Darfur briefed the SLM on the same issue. Sources meanwhile report that the AU entered into closed talks with the government delegation to Abuja to finalise consultations over the evaluation of the performance of AU forces in Darfur and its efficiency.

The spokesperson said they were told that phase one of this transition plan is on AU lead political talks although the UN will assist in lobbying for the required funds but will not be handling the political talks. Phase two will centre on the Darfuri conference and tribal reconciliation. Phase three which will see UN take over peacekeeping in the region will be in preparation for the DDR programme and may take place after six months, i.e. around September.

An AU official who opted for anonymity said that the AMIS is willing to hand over its civilian protection duties to the UN due to the financial difficulties it has encountered and that hamper efficiency.

Sources close to the AU report that the AU has sent a number of its military officers to Nairobi and Accra for training on UN peacekeeping pending the assumption of a new role as peacekeepers in Darfur instead of their current role in monitoring the ceasefire.

Sources say government to lobby for funds from Arab states for AMIS

(*AlRai AlAam* – 21st Feb. **Khartoum**) Informed sources say the Sudan government is in the process of lobbying for funds from Arab states to support AMIS operations in Darfur.

The sources point out that AMIS operations require 17 million dollars each month and added it is possible to find such funding for AMIS. This, eh sources add, will bar out possibilities for a transition to a UN operation.

The sources further point out that there is no legal base in the AU Statute that allows it to hand over its operations to another force.

The sources further point out that this push by the US for a transition targets the National Congress party and northern Sudan and exempts the SPLM and the south. No wonder, they add, the SPLM has remained mum on the issue of rejecting foreign troops and has chosen to instead maintain its good relations with the US.

REACTIONS: to possibilities of a transition of AMIS to a UN operation

(*AlAyaam, AlRai AlAam, AlSahafa* – 21st Feb. **Khartoum**)

The Popular Council for the Defence of Religion and the State has called members of its Board of Trustees for an emergency meeting next Wednesday to take a decision over the issue of

foreign intervention in the country and the push by the UN for international troops to replace AU forces in Darfur.

The SPLM has on the other hand says it does not support the presence of introducing UN troops to replace the AU in Darfur but does not support the options for confrontation against the international community.

The head of the SPLM parliamentary bloc Yassir Erman said that there is a third way to deal with this issue and the right alternatives have to be taken. He dispelled reports that the SPLM had presented the issue before parliament for deliberation.

He said there has been no agreement with their NCP partners to present the issue before parliament but the SPLM shall continue consultations with the NCP to reach a common understanding on the issue.

On his part, the **Speaker of the National Assembly** says the introduction of UN troops to Darfur will constitute a threat to security in Sudan and further complicates the Darfur question.

Speaker Ahmed Ibrahim el-Tahir pointed out that this will exacerbate the situation and will flare up conflicts in the region to unprecedented proportions. He underlined the need to inform the public opinion on what is happening.

The Speaker also warned that the international forces may become targeted by the people in Darfur.

He said that the Sudan has not been consulted over the issue (of the possible transition) but the government is consulting with the other political forces in the country.

The chief of National Security and Intelligence has reiterated government commitments to the realisation of a just peace in Darfur and all parts of the country.

Addressing yesterday the graduation ceremony of a new batch of intelligence officers at the War College – an event also attended by the Army Chief of Staff Abas Arabi – Mjr. Gen. Salah Goush pointed out that state commitments to peace in Darfur shall not be at the expense of security and sending the country the abyss. He pointed out that the war in Darfur is against those conspiring against the country and her security.

He criticised those who describe the situation in Darfur as genocide and pointed out that these allegations are just to lay the grounds for a foreign intervention in the region.

“Sudan will never be a grazing ground for those who target its identity and Islam”, he warned.

NATO mulls more help for African peacekeepers in Sudan’s Darfur

(AP/ST – 21st Feb. **Brussels**) The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is considering increased help to African peacekeepers in Darfur in response to mounting U.S. pressure for an intensified international effort to halt ethnic violence ravaging the Sudanese region.

However, officials say there are no plans for a major deployment of allied troops.

Diplomats at allied headquarters Monday confirmed discussions are underway for NATO to boost training, transport and planning assistance to the AU peacekeeping force of 7,000 which has failed to halt violence blamed for a humanitarian disaster which has killed an estimated 180,000 people.

U.S. President George W. Bush called NATO's Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer Friday to discuss the issue.

On the same day, Bush told an audience in Tampa, Florida, the peacekeeping mission should be doubled in size and given more help from the Western alliance. "It's going to require a - I think - a NATO stewardship, planning, facilitating, organizing, probably double the number of peacekeepers that are there now, in order to start bringing some sense of security," Bush said.

Sudan tells US delegation it opposes UN troops in Darfur

(AP/ST – 20th Feb. **Khartoum**) Sudan told a visiting U.S. delegation that it opposed a proposal to deploy international peacekeepers to the troubled Darfur region and that it was committed to negotiations to end the tensions there.

Vice President Ali Osman Mohamed Taha spoke to the 11-member congressional delegation Sunday night after they returned from a daylong visit to Darfur.

"Sudan rejects replacement of the African Union forces with United Nations forces," Taha told them, according to a Monday report by the state-run Sudan News Agency.

The United Nations has suggested a peacekeeping force of up to 20,000 troops to disarm militias and provide security so over 2 million displaced people can return home. Sudan opposes non-African peacekeepers.

The African Union, which has 7,000 troops in Darfur, has accepted in principle the need to transform into a U.N. peacekeeping force. Its current mandate in Darfur expires March 31.

According to the Sudan Media Center, a tribal delegation in Darfur gave the U.S. delegation a memorandum in which they rejected any foreign international forces in their region.

"Talking about dispatching Atlantic troops to the region means sending a wrong signal to the rebels that troops would be sent to remove the current government and impose a new political reality therein," Amin Hassan Omar, government delegation spokesman in Abuja, told SMC.

SUNA said Taha told the delegates that Sudan was committed to resolving the Darfur problem through peaceful negotiations, and blamed the rebels for procrastinating in the ongoing peace talks in Abuja, Nigeria.

Samani Al-Wasilla, state minister of Foreign Affairs, said Taha briefed the visitors on the nature of the conflict in Darfur, explaining it was "a situation of security violations and intertribal fighting over water and grazing areas and could not under any circumstance be described as a genocide."

He said Sudan stressed its commitment to reach a peaceful settlement in Darfur but criticized the rebels for their "lack of will" to reach a peaceful settlement, according to SUNA.

The 11-person delegation, led by House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, left Sudan Sunday night. It also plans to visit Cape Verde, Ghana, Liberia and South Africa.

Bolton wants UN resolution on Darfur this month

(Reuters/ST – 20th Feb. **United Nations**) U.S. Ambassador John Bolton said on Monday he wanted a Security Council resolution on a future U.N. force in Sudan's Darfur region by the end of the month to give the operation "political impetus."

Bolton also chided the United Nations for not planning quickly enough for a U.N. force to take over from the African Union in Darfur in an effort to stop the killings, rape, plunder and homelessness in Sudan's western region.

And he suggested to reporters that Secretary-General Kofi Annan, who has pushed for U.S. and NATO contributions, also lobby Arab and African countries.

"It would be helpful, I think, if the secretary-general, in addition to prodding the U.S. could also be out there talking to the African Union and the Arab League, and in fact, even talking to his own peacekeepers about the importance of moving ahead here," Bolton said.

But Annan told reporters, "I'm not going to answer that," when asked about Bolton's comments. But his spokesman Stephane Dujarric said the U.N. "planning process was moving full speed ahead."

Bolton has distributed what he called "elements of a resolution" to Security Council members outlining the duties of future peacekeepers in Darfur, rather than awaiting the result of U.N. planning to take over from the 7,000-strong, underfinanced African Union force.

Bolton said that while the United Nations had begun contingency planning "a lot more could be done."

"And that is one reason why we felt that having a resolution by the end of the month would also provide additional political impetus" before the council formally authorized the U.N. mission, Bolton said.

One provision of the text, obtained by Reuters, calls for stopping "any act of violence or other abuse on civilian populations." Another calls for halting "the acquisition and supply of arms and ammunition."

But Bolton acknowledged the council might have difficulty adopting a resolution by the time his presidency of the 15-member body ended on Feb. 28 because the African Union would not formally agree to hand over the mission before March 3.

"But I said we thought it was important to proceed in any event," he said.

Annan has lobbied President George W. Bush and NATO nations in an effort to get sophisticated air support and a robust mobile force so troops on the ground, expected to come from Africa and Asia, could be ferried to trouble spots in time.

After maintaining a silence on what the United States might do, Bush on Friday signaled a new commitment. He said he supported an expanded NATO role to help the African Union and favored doubling the number of peacekeepers in that region under U.N. control.

The United States has sent four military planners to help the U.N. peacekeeping department.

"And that is why we have been pressing the secretariat hard," Bolton said. "We want to make sure there is not a disjunction between what the secretary-general says publicly and what the secretariat itself is doing."

In response, Dujarric, the chief U.N. spokesman said, "The secretary-general and the secretariat are well aware of the situation in Darfur."

"Once we know what this force will look like, we will be presenting options to the Security Council," Dujarric said. "We will then go back to those countries that have the capacity and the resources to help put that force together."

Sudan attacks UN envoy on Darfur

(*BBC* – 21st Feb. **Khartoum**) Sudan's government has summoned the UN envoy, Jan Pronk, over comments about the troubled region of Darfur which it said infringed on state sovereignty. Acting Foreign Minister Ali Ahmad Karti criticised Mr Pronk and the UN's "conduct and attitudes".

In January, the UN said an expanded peacekeeping force was needed to cope with continuing violence in the region.

UK Minister for International Development Hilary Benn is to visit peacekeepers in Darfur on Tuesday.

Sudan opposed the UN's plan for more peacekeepers, saying funds should go to the African force already there.

Mr Karti said statements made by Mr Pronk and his aides tarnished Sudan's image and infringed on its sovereignty, state news agency Suna reported. He told the UN envoy that Sudan "totally rejected" this attitude.

He said that while Sudan did not oppose cooperation with the UN, it had the right to reject the organization's "conduct" if it felt that the UN had "other agendas".

In January, the UN said it was drawing up plans to deploy a quick reaction force in the Darfur region after the African Union said that it might be forced to hand over its peacekeeping mission because of a lack of funds.

There are currently 7,000 African Union peacekeepers in Darfur.

Sudan has opposed a UN peace force in Darfur, saying the extra money would be better spent on helping the African force already there.

UK Minister Hilary Benn has arrived in Sudan for a visit to the Darfur region. On Tuesday, he will visit refugee camps and meet members of the African Union peacekeeping force.

The BBC's Jonah Fisher says he is sure to discuss the likely replacement of the African Union force with a larger and better-funded United Nations mission.

Fighting between rebel groups and pro-government Janjaweed militias has forced some 2m people to flee their homes in the region.

GoNU

Kiir says Sudan army supports LRA

(*Khartoum Monitor* – 21st Feb. **Khartoum**) Sudanese first-vice-president and president of southern Sudan government Lt. Gen Salva Kiir Mayardit said, for the first time, he believes that Sudanese army support Ugandan rebel Lord's resistance Army.

In an interview with the BBC Arabic service, Kiir reiterated an accusation already advanced by many southern responsible. He further said that Ugandan rebels receive support in the suburb of the Southern Sudan capital Juba.

Last December, the responsible of the SPLM intelligence service, Edward Lino, had accused in an interview with the Sudanese al-Sahafa the Sudanese army of supporting the Ugandan rebel LRA.

"There is nowhere else they get their ammunition. There is nowhere they can get support because they are not attacking Ugandan garrisons. So where do they get the ammunition?" Kiir wondered.

But, he added he has no prove on the implication of the Sudanese army.

Sudanese Defence Minister Lt-Gen Abdelrahim Mohamed Hussein denied last year receiving any official complaint from the SPLM regarding the involvement of elements of the Sudanese army in supporting the Ugandan Lord's Resistance Army militias.

Sudan's Salva Kiir, had said Saturday on 4 October 2005 that he would hand Kony over to the International Criminal Court. But Kiir said he did not know Kony's whereabouts.

The Sudanese government had provided bases for the LRA south of Juba, but after it began to withdraw its support the LRA began raiding and looting Sudanese villages for food, and killing Sudanese civilians.

On 13 October 2005, the ICC unsealed arrest warrants it issued three months earlier for five LRA commanders, including the leader, Joseph Kony.

While Sudan and the International Criminal Court (ICC) differ over Darfur, Khartoum is cooperating in the case of Joseph Kony, one of five top Lord's Resistance Army members named in a sealed indictment compiled by prosecutors of the permanent war crimes court. Warrants for their arrests have been distributed to Uganda, Congo and Sudan.

Sudan once backed the LRA, even as Uganda supported the southern-based Sudan People's Liberation Army in its civil war with the Sudanese government. But Sudan and Uganda normalized relations in 2001, Sudan's southern civil war ended in January 2005 and the SPLM joined a national unity government. Ugandan troops have since been allowed to operate in some parts of southern Sudan against the LRA.

Human rights groups say the Lord's Resistance Army has over the years abducted more than 30,000 children, forcing them to become fighters, porters or concubines. The rebels have

killed thousands of civilians and forced more than a million to flee their homes, but appears to have no clear political agenda and little contact with the outside world.