

**Office of the Spokesperson****UNMIS BRIEFING TO THE PRESS****11 July 2007**

*Below is a near verbatim transcript of the press conference held by United Nations Mission in Sudan Spokesperson, Ms. Radhia Achouri, on 11 June 2007 at the UNMIS Press Briefing Room.*

Good morning and thank you for coming.  
I will start my briefing with the latest on UNMIS activities.

**UNMIS ACTIVITIES*****CPA related activities***

Acting Special Representative of the Secretary-General Tayé-Brook Zerihoun will participate in the meeting of the Ceasefire Political Committee (CPC) to be held on 12 July, which will consider the Ceasefire Joint Military Committee report on redeployment of forces North of line 1-1-56 on 9 July 2007, the deadline stipulated in the CPA for SAF redeployment from the south. We sent you the CJMC press statement on 8 July and there are copies of it available in the room. We will share with you information on the outcome of the CPC meeting.

**The CPA Monitor for the month of June**, issued monthly by UNMIS, is now available online at [www.unmis.org](http://www.unmis.org). The June CPA Monitor highlights include the following: the NCP/SPLM consultations on CPA implementation continued throughout the month; the Fourth Session of the National Assembly ended on 27 June and passed 4 bills, including on legislation to establish the National Audit Chamber Bill; most of the Commissions mandated in the CPA have now been formed at the national level, but three critical Commissions - the National Human Rights Commission, Electoral Commission, and Land Commission - have yet to be created and draft bills on these bodies will not be discussed formally until the National Assembly reconvenes in October; at the Southern Sudan level, members have been appointed to a number of CPA Commissions by Presidential decree, and draft bills on the Civil Service, Population and Census, and DDR Commissions are expected to reach the Southern Sudan Legislative Assembly in its current session; the National Reconciliation and Healing Process mandated in the CPA has yet to be inaugurated; on 12 June, President Bashir announced that the parties have agreed to a six-month temporary interim administration for Abyei, however the boundaries of the interim administration have yet to be agreed; movement restrictions on UNMIS in Abyei continued.

**UNMIS Returns, Reintegration and Recovery and Protection Units** headed an interagency mission conducted last week in Mundri and Maridi (**Western Equatoria**) to discuss the envisaged move of over 200 cattle camps of the nomadic Ambororo tribe from Western Equatoria to Blue Nile. The movement of this group and its cattle through cultivated land is a source of deep concern for local population and had led to violence in the past. The mission met with Ambororo chiefs, local authorities, the SRRC and SPLA, to develop a movement plan that would address the need of both the nomad and the local populations.

**UNMIS Gender Unit** participated in a workshop held in **Juba** from 5 to 7 July on the impact of customary practices and laws on women. The workshop was organized by the GoSS Ministry of

Gender, Social Welfare and Religious Affairs. The workshop was attended by members of the Legislative Assembly, GoSS and Central Equatoria Government officials, tribal chiefs, members of civil society organizations, United Nations agencies and church representatives. Participants also identified customary rules and laws which undermined women's rights. Some of the practices identified included widow inheritance, lack of property rights for women, early and forced marriage, and violence against women, polygamy, elopement, dowry, and exclusion of women from participating in community activities and decision-making. The workshop also recommended that judicial and arrest powers of chiefs be clearly defined and controlled and serious crimes affecting women such as rape be removed from their jurisdiction.

**UNMIS Civilian Police** continues its training and capacity-building activities for Sudanese police which include: launching of a traffic management course on 3 July at **Ed Damazin** Traffic Police Office for 21 police officers; conduct of computer-training course to six local police officers in **Maridi** Police Station, including the Chief of the local police other senior officers, and for 16 local police officers in **Wau**, as well as 20 police officers from the Government Police in **Khartoum**; conduct of basic English courses for 12 **Malakal** traffic police officers and 15 police officers in **Kadugli**.

On 7 July, UNMIS Police participated in a campaign to clean up **Albaraka IDP Camp in Khartoum**. The activity was attended by representatives from UNMIS Police, including the Police Commissioner, Government police, and residents of the IDP Camp. About 80 persons participated in the event, including school children. This week, a joint UNMIS Police and local police Community Policing Team conducted a community awareness campaign at the Bor Primary School in **Juba** on the topics of the CPA, rights of a child, role of the police for 15 teachers and about 800 students. UNMIS police in the different Sectors and Team Sites continues to conduct visits to detention facilities to monitor the conditions of the inmates and provide advice to local police on proper disposition of cases.

The **HIV/AIDS** Regional Committee in **Wau** conducted last week a two-day training for peer educators to 34 participants.

### *Darfur related activities*

In the context of the UN support to AMIS, **UNMIS HIV/AIDS** Unit conducted a peer educators training in El Fasher from 24 June to 4 July. The course graduated 39 peer educators including 18 AMIS Military Observers, 15 AMIS Civilian Police and 6 UN staff deployed under the Light Support Package. Plans of Action were developed for each of the three groups for continuation of HIV/AIDS sensitization activities at sector level while an Advisory Committee for overseeing implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the plan of actions was established. Each of the eight Sectors of AMIS including Sectors HQs was represented in this training.

UNMIS **Human Rights** conducted last week a day-trip mission to Kafod and Abu Sakin, where a recent attack on SLA/MM in Kafod was reported. The mission reports that harassment of civilians by armed Arabs is still ongoing in both Kabkabiya and Saraf Umra, and some of these cases were followed up with judicial authorities.

## **SECURITY DEVELOPMENTS**

### *Southern Sudan and Transitional Areas*

In Torit, Eastern Equatoria, three unidentified armed persons attacked the Iyodo IDP camp on 2 July, killing three IDPs and wounding four others. The Iyodo IDP camp is made up mostly of Imotong people that fled LRA attacks in 2003. Another shooting incident took place on 3 July in

Angauro village, also in the Torit area. Three unidentified armed persons shot a local man and stole 40 cows. The local police is investigating the case.

According to the Governor of Warrap State, intra-sectoral strife erupted on 30 June in Marial Lou, Tonj North County. The Dinka Lou Paher people reportedly stole 2,000 guns, which had been previously collected through the voluntary civilian disarmament campaign. The situation at the moment remains calm and some guns have been retrieved. On 4 July, the Luacjang, another Dinka clan, also stole 1,000 guns in Romic (30 km southeast of Marial Lou), capital of Tonj North County, purportedly to protect themselves from the Dinka Agar from Lakes State, who have occupied the area of Ador and Bac in Tonj East County. The local police confronted the looters. As a result, one police officer died and another three were wounded. The local government has withdrawn from the area, and the SPLA has been sent in to contain the situation.

## ***Darfur***

Attacks on INGOs continue to affect all three States of Darfur. Incidents remain predominant in Western Darfur with two of them having occurred in IDPs camp last week. On 2 July, an INGO compound was attacked in the Al Salaam IDP camp (Northern Darfur) and money was stolen from security guards. A total of four carjacking incidents were reported during the week. In Southern Darfur, one vehicle was carjacked in Dereige Camp (7km NE Nyala, 3 July) and another one in Ed Deain (160 km SE of Nyala on 5 July). In Western Darfur, two vehicles were carjacked on 2 July (20km NW of El Geneina) and another one on 4 July (Kulbus, 120 km N of El Geneina). In addition, an INGO warehouse was robbed in Zalengie on 7 July.

UNMIS Protection conducted a mission to Kutum area, North Darfur, on 2 to 4 July and reports that the security in Kutum town has improved as a result of recent measures undertaken by AMIS together with the local authorities and DPA signatories to reduce threats, including additional day and night patrols, additional checkpoints in town and some neighboring villages. In Fato Borno camp, a deterioration of the situation in comparison to previous weeks was observed. Four incidents of attacks by Arab militia were reported on IDPs in gardens and farms within the first four days of July.

## **HUMANITARIAN DEVELOPMENTS**

### ***Southern Sudan and Transitional Areas***

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) announced in a press release issued on 9 July the launching of air operations to return IDPs to their home areas will commence for the first time. The first flight since return operations began under the Government of National Unity, Government of Southern Sudan and United Nations Joint Plan for Returns, departed Khartoum on 10 July to Yambio via Juba, with around 100 IDPs on board. The press release is available in the room.

Since operations under the Joint Plan commenced in early February, **43,000 IDPs** have been assisted to return home in different areas in Southern Sudan and Southern Kordofan from a number of locations in Sudan. In addition, **36,000** refugees have been assisted to return home by UNHCR and IOM this year.

## ***Darfur***

Ongoing insecurity is provoking further new displacements. IDPs continue to stream into Al Salam camp near Nyala (Southern Darfur), which has grown from 13,000 in March to almost 35,000 now. Hundreds of new IDP households arrived in Um Dukhum (Western Darfur) from Um Dafog (Southern Darfur) this week, bringing the total of new displacements there to 7,500 since the beginning of June. Overall, more than 160,000 new IDPs have been verified in Darfur since the

beginning of the year, creating ever-increasing logistic problems both in space and humanitarian assistance.

## **Q & A**

**Q:** [*Indiscernible question on statements by Government officials referring to US pressure on the UN and stalling establishment of the hybrid operation*] The Secretary-General of the SPLM said yesterday that they will hand over Abyei to the US. What are your comments on this?

**Spokesperson:** On your first question, you have heard the United Nations Secretary-General referring many times to the Hybrid Operation. You heard also Chairperson Alpha Oumar Konare; you have heard all United Nations officials making their views clear on how much of a priority it is for them that the implementation of the Hybrid Operation is expedited. I will just reiterate what Mr. Ban Ki-moon has been saying all along, and his latest statements on this particular issue was a couple of days ago, that Darfur is a top-priority for him as the United Nations Secretary-General. He reiterated his full commitment to expedite work to ensure that this operation is deployed as soon as possible and he appealed to everybody concerned that this operation has to be supported financially and with troops with troops and so on.

When it comes to the United Nations Security Council, we are not in position to comment on what they are doing. Honestly, I have no knowledge of what is taking place within the Security Council regarding their consideration of the draft resolution to authorize the establishment of this Hybrid Operation. But I will just recall that the Security Council mission that came here to Sudan and the two leaders who led this particular mission to Sudan committed, at the press conference held with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Mr. Lam Akol which some of you attended, that the Security Council would be doing what it has to do to expedite the establishment of this Hybrid Operation. .

On your second question, the position of the United Nations has been always clear and we always put it to the Parties that they have to expedite the solution of the issue of Abyei in a way it would put a closure to this particular issue. I am in no position, either, to comment on what has been attributed to Mr. Pagan Amoum in the press and I haven't heard him comments. And, with all due respect to the press, as the press sometimes takes the full transcript and sometimes selects some issues raised by a speaker to report on, is it our a matter of policy of UNMIS not to comment on statements attributed to an official that we have not seen officially.

In any case, our position has been always the same: the two partners have to resolve this issue and, according to the CPA, it is their responsibility to resolve this issue. In all our reporting and in all our interaction and discussions with the parties, we told them that this is an issue that has to be dealt with as a matter of priority and we warned against possible implications of a delayed solution or delayed deliberations on this particular issue. By the end of the day, it is up to the parties themselves to resolve it. UNMIS is committed to the provisions of the CPA on all matters between the two partners of the CPA.

**Q:** What does the United Nations Mission in Sudan think about the restrictions on its movements in Abyei? Did you report back to the Security Council and what measures have they taken concerning the issue?

**Spokesperson:** Thank you very much for your question and, yes, as a matter of fact, the restriction on the movement of United Nations Mission in Sudan has been in effect for quite a while now. We are talking about months of restrictions. And the restriction is imposed by both the SAF and the SPLA north and south of Abyei. What we did about it is that we kept raising it in the CJMC – the the tripartite body chaired by UNMIS' Force Commander in which the SAF and the SPLA are members and represented by senior officers. The CJMC reported on it to the CPC [Ceasefire Political Committee] since the CPC is the body that, in terms of hierarchy, takes decisions on issues that have political dimensions that the CJMC can not resolve. To date I don't have information on a decision taken by the CPC on this issue. We also kept reporting regularly on this in all our reports to the Security Council – the reports that the Secretary-General submits every three months to the Security Council on the implementation of the CPA and UNMIS mandate as stipulated in Resolution 1590. We also keep talking to the parties in our regular discussions with them but, obviously, this is an issue that has to be resolved by the CPC. I will update you should I have any information on the forthcoming CPC meeting if they are going to be considering this particular issue.

**Q:** The National Congress Party says the CPA has been implemented by 90% while the SPLM says 60%. What is the United Nations assessment of the issue?

**Spokesperson:** Thank you. UNMIS is not issuing statistics. The United Nations has been reporting on the implementation on the CPA, as I said, in these quarterly reports that we submit and also in the CPA Monitor that I just mentioned -and I really do recommend that you colleagues look at it because it is the one document that gives everything that has been done since the CPA was signed. It is a large document and growing in terms of size as the CPA implementation progresses, and documents what has been done, what has not been implemented, what is in the process of being implemented. We are actually trying our best to have this document translated into Arabic to make it accessible to Arabic speaking public. To come back to your question, the United Nations has been always saying that we do believe that the process of implementation of the CPA has been going well, in terms of the general picture. We recognize that there have been and still are some delays in terms of implementation of important provisions such as the ones I referred to today, including the three important commissions that have to be established, the issue of Abyei, expedition of JIUs formation, integration and deployment, and other issues. So it is not a matter of how many provisions have you implemented or not. The important thing, as far as we as the United Nations is concerned, is that do believe – and we have no reason to believe the contrary – that the two parties are fully committed to the implementation of the CPA. Yes, there are delays and some of them are understandable. Some other issues have to be expedited by the parties, such as the elections institutions and laws, the human Rights Commission, the Land Commission, the Abyei issue. These are priority issues. We are trying our best to highlight to the parties the areas that they have to act on expeditiously given not only their importance as such but because of the implications of the implementation of these commitments on: first, the overall confidence of the Sudanese people that the CPA is real and is something that would actually improve their future within one united country; and also because some of these institutions and legislations impact on other steps to be made as some of the CPA provisions are interconnected and the implementation of one provision or its delaying impacts on the implementation on other commitments impacts the other, and so on.

That is what we do believe and I hope that I responded satisfactorily to your question. [*In Arabic*] By the way, I would like to welcome our colleague from the *AlWafd* newspaper – I believe it is the first time someone from that newspaper comes here.

**Q:** What is the UN doing to protect and ensure the safety of humanitarian workers in Darfur?

**Spokesperson:** It is question that has been asked of us many times. In principle – and again I go back to some general basics – the security of humanitarian worker, United Nations, African Union and others, is the responsibility of the authorities of the Government of Sudan. Given the complexity of the situation in Darfur in particular and since there are rebel groups who control certain areas, the security, safety and protection of humanitarian workers in the areas where rebel groups are in control, the responsibility of these groups. The problem in that particular side is that we have been having for a while now a proliferation of rebel groups due to fragmentation within the groups. Before, we had a lesser number of rebel groups and at the time we had identified interlocutors from those different rebel groups in given areas that we could interact with to ensure safety and security of aid workers and access. Today, we are in a very difficult position because we don't know who is controlling what area. With the government, the situation is much better because we know where the government is. The government, since the Joint Communiqué, has been doing a lot to help and to assist. They also helped in locating and bringing back many of the cars that have been looted or hijacked. But we still have huge problems in lawless areas where highway robbers and hijackers we can not identify are reigning and are targeting humanitarian convoys. The only thing we can do as the United Nations is just preventive measures. We keep telling you for instance that we had to relocate people or we had to stop going through certain routes for a while and that is the only thing that we can do. We don't have weapons; the humanitarian communities are just civilians; we don't have force protection, although the African Union is helping in certain areas where they can assist. But the community has no means of its own to protect itself. The United Nations, as an organization, has no means to protect humanitarian workers except by putting some preventive and mitigating measures to prevent these incidents from happening but we can not physically protect somebody if he is attacked or if somebody comes and puts a gun to his or her head.

**Q:** NCP officials say the DPA will be the principle terms of reference for future talks but some armed movements that maybe are opposed to the agreement as a reference. What are your comments? My second question is on the forthcoming meetings, notably the Tripoli and Addis Ababa meetings. The picture is not particularly clear.

**Spokesperson:** On your first question, I would just reiterate what Mr. Jan Eliasson and Dr. Salim Ahmed Salim have been repeating all along, and what is in the Joint African Union-United Nations Road Map that we distributed, and also refer you to all Security Council resolutions of relevance to this particular issue and the African Union Peace & Security Council decisions on this issue.

The position that has been explained by the two Envoys to all parties – signatories and non-signatories – is that: in talking about negotiations regarding Darfur, two positions will not be accepted and will be excluded immediately. The position that says, “either the DPA or nothing else” – that would be rejected - and those who would say, “no DPA; it has to be excluded completely and we have to start from scratch” that also is not accepted and could not be the basis for negotiations. That is the position.

My understanding from the contacts that have been made by the mediation is the majority of non - signatories to the DPA have not rejected the DPA as a basis for negotiations because that has always been the idea, to start from the DPA. There have been quite extensive contacts will all concern. Dr. Salim Ahmed Salim and Mr. Jan Eliasson have been working day and night and have been traveling all over the world everywhere where initiatives are presented and non-signatory movements' leaders are. The Joint Mediation Support Team (the Joint United Nations-African Union Support Team) that is located here in Khartoum has been traveling almost on daily basis for these contacts, besides their phone contacts will all concerned, and the Teams is regularly reporting to the two Envoys, who are reporting to the UNSG and AU Commission Chairperson.

Going back to the DPA, I would like to recall how the re-energization of the peace process came to life as a process. The DPA, all who signed it as witnesses, including the United Nations and the African Union, said that the DPA is a good document. We all hoped at the time that all parties sign and accept. However, it doesn't matter how good the DPA is or was. The fact of the matter is and still remains that movements some are not happy with it. Hence, came the idea that since there are some stakeholders that are important enough to try to bring them on board, the peace process should be re-launched from the DPA onwards. This means that the DPA will be the basis of negotiations and the renewed negotiations will focus on what we can be added to the DPA to ensure that a peace deal supported by all is achieved. So far, most of the non-signatories contacted, including the leader of the Justice and Equality Movement, Dr. Khalil Ibrahim, who met Dr. Salim Ahmed Salim a couple of days ago, did not say they do not want the DPA as a basis for talks. He said that his movement has some demands, some issues that they need to be tackled in the negotiations. Yes, there are some people who said, "No, we don't want to hear about the DPA", however contacts with them continue and Dr. Salim and Mr. Eliasson have appealed to everybody and also called for the mobilization of the international community, and every actor in the international community, to convince or help convince those who still hesitate that they should join this process, which is urgent. They also stated that if anybody claims to stand for the cause of the people and is acting of behalf of the people of Darfur, then they have to show it by joining the peace process. The two Envoys made it clear that putting preconditions to the peace process before even getting into negotiations and excluding the DPA as a basis for negotiations was not acceptable, as it was made clear the United Nations resolutions and the African Union Peace & Security Council resolutions.

On your other question, you know that Mr. Eliasson was here; you know that Dr. Salim was here, and I understand that he left today. We explained the visit and myself and my colleague Nouredine Mezni from AMIS kept you abreast of what has been done, what has been said and so on. This visit is part of the joint efforts of the two Envoys who are stepping up efforts to complete the first phase of the road map to move the political process forward. The next step would be the meeting of Tripoli and I do trust that you have details on the meeting of Tripoli because in, I think the last UNMIS News Bulletin, we indicated the objective of the Tripoli meeting and also the list of participants. Basically, the Tripoli meeting is a meeting to take stock from what has been done so far on the basis of the Tripoli Consensus of the first Tripoli Meeting if you recall, and also to see what the steps ahead are. The word of day for that particular meeting is to, "Expedite the process". Following the Tripoli meeting, the two Envoys Salim and Eliasson will engage in shuttle diplomacy and here we are talking about the second phase of the road map which is the Pre-negotiations Phase. We do understand it is a bit confusing for people to follow up on those things but please refer to the road map that I sent you. If anybody doesn't have it, please let me know so that I can give it to you. In that second phase, and using the actual language on the road map, "the two Envoys are to continue and finalize consultations with the Government of Sudan, signatories and non-signatories, civil society, tribal leaders and representatives of IDPs, refugees and women's groups and this process will further refine the negotiating strategy including the development of a mechanism to channel views and positions into the final talks." So this step is quite important because it will prepare for the negotiations phase. So please look up the AU-UNRoadmap.

Again, the meeting of Tripoli is not a negotiations forum as I saw some articles thus saying. It is a meeting of the international stakeholders involved in Darfur, including the five Permanent Members of the Security Council and, of course primarily, the Government of Sudan, the African Union, the United Nations, key donor countries, the Arab League and neighboring countries including, Egypt, Libya and Eritrea (those countries with initiatives). It is a meeting to evaluate what has been done from their side so far, what has so far been done by the two Envoys and their Joint Mediation

Support Team, decide what are the next steps ahead and will take it from there. So that is what lies ahead for us.

**Q:** Recent events have affected and caused a backtracking in freedoms and human rights. The Kajbar incidents and the detention of reporters that followed the incident [are but examples] and a reporter is still being detained. What is the United Nations position on such issues?

**Spokesperson:** To my knowledge, so far, the United Nations Mission in Sudan has not made a public statement on these issues but I will check with the different offices in this mission and see if UNMIS is in any way looking into these issues that you just mentioned. Nevertheless, what you just said is something for the Government of National Unity to handle. You have the Interim Constitution and its references to human rights, freedom of the press and so on. It is primarily for them and for the oversight mechanisms that they have to ensure that everything is going well according to the Interim National Constitution for Sudan and the legislations that emanated from this constitution.

Thank you very much and I will see you during my next briefing.