

**Office of the Spokesperson****UNMIS BRIEFING TO THE PRESS****18 July 2007**

Below is a near verbatim transcript of the press conference held by United Nations Mission in Sudan Spokesperson, Ms. Radhia Achouri, on 18 July 2007 at the UNMIS Press Briefing Room.

DARFUR POLITICAL PROCESS

UNSG Special Envoy Jan Eliasson arrived in Khartoum on 16 July from Tripoli where, together with AU Special Envoy Dr. Salim Ahmed Salim, he co-chaired the two-day second International Meeting on Darfur. Special Envoy Eliasson's three-day visit to Sudan aims at speeding up implementation of the second phase of the Roadmap, including finalization of arrangements for the meeting to be convened by the two Special Envoys in Arusha, Tanzania, from 3 to 5 August, with leading personalities of the non signatory movements to facilitate the preparations for negotiations. He had a series of meetings on 17 July in Khartoum, including with the AU-UN Joint Mediation Support Team, Presidential Advisor Mustafa Osman Ismail and other senior Government officials. He left today to Nyala where he will be meeting with representatives of IDPs and civil society groups, UN Agencies and INGOs, as well as the local authorities. On 19 July, Mr. Eliasson is scheduled to meet in Khartoum with the diplomatic community and UN agencies operating in Sudan.

Special Envoy Jan Eliasson will hold a press conference in this room on Thursday 19 July at noon.

CPA RELATED ACTIVITIES**UNMIS ACTIVITIES**

The Ceasefire Joint Military Committee (CJMC) met yesterday 17 July in Juba and considered a number of items on its agenda, including SAF and SPLA redeployment. The CJMC noted with concern that SAF has not fully redeployed by 9 July 2007 and continues to maintain approximately 3,600 troops in Upper Nile State, in violation of the CPA. The SPLA contested the argument promoted by the SAF that since the Joint Integrated Units (JIUs) have not yet deployed to protect oilfields areas, there is a requirement to maintain troops there to guarantee security. The SAF also stated that the SPLA is still maintaining a large presence in the areas of oil installations and has not redeployed to the designated Assembly areas. The SPLA considered non-completion of SAF redeployment a significant violation of the CPA and requested immediate redeployment of remaining SAF troops. The SPLA in turn observed that the security of oil installations has not been handed over to the JIUs despite the fact that JIUs are located in these Areas. They also noted that the status of SAF voluntarily demobilized soldiers remains contested and that the CPC is yet to take a decision on this matter. In light of the parties diverging stances on redeployment, the CJMC decided to refer the matter to the CPC for immediate resolution, given the gravity of the potential consequences on the timetable of the peace process. The CPC, which was to meet on 17 or 18 July, has again rescheduled its meeting which will now take place next week.

The SPLA has informed UNMIS that they have started re-deploying from the Nuba Mountains and the Bule Nile but UNMIS has yet to verify these movements.

UNMIS attended the first SPLM Chapters Conference in Juba on current affairs on the agenda of the party, including CPA implementation status and the role of the SPLM in addressing post-conflict challenges in southern Sudan. Concerns were raised that too much emphasis was placed on the concerns of SPLM members from the Diaspora and not enough to the Southern Sudanese members' concerns (lack of services, poor governance and the need for major development).

UNMIS attended the Anti-Corruption Commission meeting in Juba held last week. The Commission plans to send staff to promote anti-corruption to all 10 states of Southern Sudan by 1 August 2007. However, the enactment of a legislation that would give the Commission legal prosecutorial powers is still pending.

UNMIS Civilian Police continues its training and capacity-building activities for Sudanese police which have included during the last week the following activities: conduct of a five-day training programme on Traffic Management for 20 local traffic officers in Wau, organization, together with GoS Police, of a five-day Community Police training course for 30 police officer at the GoS High Police Academy in Khartoum. UNMIS Civpol is carrying out 22 Quick Impact Projects in a number of locations to construct and upgrade security facilities and provide some of the needed equipment to Sudanese police stations.

The HIV/AIDS Unit participated in a Capacity Building Workshop organized in Kadugli by the Sudan Women Union from 8 to 12 July. The workshop targeted 35 women leaders from the nine localities in Southern Kordofan and women leaders from other five states (North Kordofan, Gezira, White Nile, Blue Nile and Sinnar States).

UNMIS-UN AGENCIES

The air operation to return IDPs to their areas of origin carried out by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in implementation of the GNU/GoSS/UN Joint Plan for Return, has been running smoothly to date, with strong demand amongst IDPs for the seats. Since the air operation began last Tuesday, five flights have returned 485 IDPs from Khartoum to Yambio and Tambura, Western Equatoria State. A further 11 flights will depart from Khartoum for Western and Central Equatoria in the next three weeks.

On 14 July, the UN participated in the third meeting of the High Committee for the Implementation of the National Policy for Women Empowerment (NPWE) formed by the Federal Minister of Social Welfare, Women and Child Affairs. UN attended the meeting in its capacity of deputy chair of the Human Rights and Legislative Sub-committee. The participants reviewed the matrix of Action Plans of three thematic areas: Health & Environment, Education, Economic Empowerment and Women Human Rights and Legislations. Reviewing of the rest of thematic areas of the (NPWE) which are Political Participation, Peace and Conflict Resolution, Institutional Mechanisms will be discussed at a later date. The NPWE was already incorporated in the Five Year Government Strategy ratified by the Council of Ministers.

Last week, the UNDDR delivered 15 computers to the SPLA in Juba to support the establishment of a database for the pre-registration of DDR candidates. This followed agreements made with the SSDDRC on plans for a more effective registration program in South Sudan. A draft MoU outlining respective responsibilities of all partners was drafted by UN and submitted to SSDDRC and SPLA for review and approval.

UN in Rumbek, Lakes State, attended a workshop that convened last week to discuss the results of the states consultations on the National Strategic framework (NSF) for an HIV/AIDS Policy for

GOSS. The workshop was attended by several stakeholders from the GOSS AIDS Commission, Religious bodies, Ministries of Health, Information and Education, UNCHR, UNIFEM, UNAIDS and some Community Based NGOs. UN participation aimed at ensuring the inclusion of the following points in the final draft of the NSF: the creation of an enabling environment through the formulation of a legal framework to address GBV; and, the development of police, health and social workers capacities to handle cases of GBV victims. The policy also strongly advocated for prevention of infections and spread of HIV/AIDS through awareness campaigns encouraging behavioral changes.

On 13 July, UN in Ed Damazin, Blue Nile State, conducted a joint field mission to assess flood conditions in Bout and Wadabouk villages, Tadamoun Locality. A majority of huts were washed away, affecting almost 1500 families. Four elementary schools were partially damaged and the water and sanitation level is poor and requires immediate attention.

DARFUR

Militia harassment continues to cause large new displacements throughout Darfur. The number of IDPs in Al Salam camp (Nyala, South Darfur) is now 35,214. There are however reasons to believe that not all newcomers are newly displaced, as many people may have taken advantage of the situation to obtain food ration cards. An inter-agency assessment mission identified 285 newly displaced families in Buba, Jughuma and Batikha villages in Edd El Fursan from areas around Sesseiban, Um Bereida and Kaddad (South Darfur). Recent independent humanitarian assessments in Jebel Marra found 3,350 newly displaced families near Kutrum and 3,200 IDP households near Golol. The number of IDPs from Dafaq (South Darfur) who arrived in Um Dukhum (West Darfur) via Um Dafag has now reached over 7,500 people. IDPs continue to flow into Zam Zam camp (south of El Fasher) from the Dobo area (eastern Jebel Marra).

A UNICEF-led study in different locations of Darfur showed a significant reduction of groundwater also in the Abu Shouk camp (North Darfur). Increasing malnutrition rates continue to pose a further serious challenge to the humanitarian aid efforts. The Therapeutic Feeding Centre (TFC) in Um Dukhum is currently admitting an average of 30 children per week. In June, the TFC admitted an additional 126 children bringing the total number of patients to 188 children, of which 15 died. In Garsila, West Darfur, the local TFC reported 77 children with severe malnutrition in June, of which 18 died. This mortality rate is alarming. A full nutritional survey with secondary data collection to identify the root causes is being planned.

An interagency UN mission to Shangil Tobayi was conducted on 11 July to meet with the latest group of new arrivals from Beli Serif (Dobo area, North Darfur) following reports that they were attacked by militia. Some one hundred families arrived from the Dobo area during the last month. A group of six women accompanied by an unconfirmed number of children were stopped by Arab militias in Dabaneira (North Darfur, S of El Fasher) while fleeing. Reports confirmed that the women, including a twelve-year old girl and another girl of unknown age, were raped by the Arab militias and robbed of their personal possessions.

Q & A

Q: My question may not be from the briefing you have just given but I will ask from the last briefing in which you said that the Tripoli meeting was assigned to figure out the date and time of the negotiations. But it seems, from the recommendations of the meeting, that there was no timeframe or place mentioned for the negotiations. What are your comments?

Spokesperson: Thank you Ezzeldeen, I don't recall having said that the meeting in Tripoli was about defining a venue and a timetable for the negotiations. It has never been the subject of the Tripoli meeting.

The Tripoli meeting was held to take stock from what has been done so far by the joint United Nations-African Union mediation, in cooperation with other partners who have initiatives also aimed at pushing the political forward, and also to indicate what would be the steps ahead to expedite the political process and speed up the pace towards actual negotiations. That was the point of the Tripoli meeting.

The Tripoli meeting actually considered these issues and the communiqué that was issued in Tripoli on the 16th brings an answer to all what had been put on its agenda. The first three paragraphs of the Tripoli Communiqué that I circulated to you by email both in English and Arabic, contain the three major outcomes. One: An official announcement that the first phase of the Road Map – that is the Convergence of Initiatives – and the beginning of the second phase -that is the Pre-Negotiations Phase- was announced. Two: In Tripoli, they endorsed the proposals by Dr. Salim Ahmed Salim and Mr. Jan Eliasson to convene a meeting with leading personalities from the non-signatory of the DPA in Arusha, as I reported today, from 3 to 5 August. That is also another concrete step. And, on the actual Negotiations Phase, when you look at the third paragraph of the Communiqué, it says that the meeting concluded that invitations for the new round of negotiations should be issued by the Chairperson of the African Union Commission and the Secretary-General of the United Nations before the end of August 2007 and the participants requested the Special Envoys to consult widely with all relevant stakeholders on the most appropriate date and venue for the talks.

This is what was the outcome of Tripoli and these are the most concrete and tangible outcomes.

Again, I reiterate, that at no time has anybody from the United Nations or the African Union who conveyed this meeting said that the meeting was about fixing a date or venue for the negotiations. If you followed – and I am sure most of you did follow – the interviews of Mr. Eliasson and the interviews of Dr. Salim, they never stated such a thing and actually they never spoke about a date because this is an issue to be addressed after certain steps are taken.

Q: Yesterday the press quoted the Secretary-General of the United Nations as announcing the arrival of an advance United Nations team for the hybrid operations. Could you elaborate ... has the team arrived, how about contributing states?

Spokesperson: I will start with the second part of your question. I don't have a listing of who from the potential Troop Contributing Countries has made an actual offer to contribute but I will check again with my colleagues from the Department of Peacekeeping Operations.

What the Secretary-General was referring to is the reconnaissance team from China that has arrived. This reconnaissance team was what the Secretary-General was referring to and their trip to el-Fasher is part of the groundwork to be done by potential Troop Contributing Countries in preparation for the Heavy Support Package. He was referring to the Heavy Support Package when he spoke about this particular item.

The Secretary-General also said that he was informed by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations that as far as the Heavy Support Package was concerned, most needs in terms of military personnel and police have been identified. I understand that confusion can easily be created between the Heavy Support Package and the Hybrid Operation. But the Secretary-General was basically talking about three things in his press conference: One; he spoke about the political process and he said that he would do everything possible to speed it up and he referred to the Tripoli meeting. Two; he spoke about the peacekeeping track and, on that particular item he spoke about the two issues: the Heavy Support Package and the hybrid operation. On the hybrid operation, he said that he would press the Security Council to expedite their action on the draft resolution that they are considering that would authorize the deployment of the Hybrid Operation. On the Heavy Support Package, he referred to the Chinese reconnaissance team and he referred to what that the

Department of Peacekeeping Operations said that most military and police needs have been identified and that the timetable for the deployment would be October, but that he would do his best to make sure that this deployment takes place in September . This is what Secretary-General was referring to. But on your question on who from the Troop Contributing Countries made offers, I would have to follow up with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations.

Q: Has the agreement signed recently between the government and a faction of the Justice and Equality Movement come at the right time in light of efforts by the United Nations and the African Union to unify the armed groups?

To what extent can such agreement contribute to solutions to this crisis?

Spokesperson: First of all, we have not seen the actual agreement. Yes, we did read about it in the press, but we have not seen it. So obviously we can not comment on something we have not seen in its official version. In general, what I can say is that the government has stated numerous times and keeps on saying that they are strongly backing the African Union-United Nations led mediation efforts. That is one. Most of the non-signatory groups also made the same commitment and the same statements. In general terms, when somebody chooses to join the political process, we believe that such development could be helpful. Also, there is nothing that prevents the government or any other party to enter into agreement regarding their divergences and differences. This is up to them.

But again, the Mission is in no position to comment on this when we have not seen the document and what is in it. May be you could address this question to Mr. Eliasson tomorrow.

Q: What steps will the United Nations be taking in the coming days to *[indiscernable]* and reduce militia attacks on the people of Darfur ... or will it be reporting these issues only?

Spokesperson: We have been explaining our mandate and its limits since we came here. The United Nations has no capacity or mandate for that matter to intervene directly to confront militia or hijackers or any one in Darfur. The responsibility, again, to protect United Nations and humanitarian personnel and assets, is the responsibility of the Government of Sudan. In areas controlled by the rebel groups, the responsibility to ensure safety and security of the United Nations and humanitarian personnel and their assets is the responsibility of those rebel groups.

We report, yes that is what we do; that is our job, and we talk to the government authorities, we talk to rebel groups whenever we can identify who is in control of what, and we try to sensitize them that it is their responsibility to contain and to address this phenomena in a way that ensures that the United Nations personnel and humanitarian personnel and their assets are safe. That is what we can do. We are in a Sovereign country; it has its security apparatuses and they are in charge of security. In Darfur, there are rebel groups that control certain areas. It is incumbent on them to take their responsibilities.

Q: We read in the press today that there is a new movement that goes by the name Warriors of Truth operating in the el-Deiein areas of South Darfur and its environs. The movement is said to be composed of about 16,000 fighters and are basically disgruntled members of the Border Intelligence Forces with demands. Does the emergence of such movements at such a time affect the peace process? Will the United Nations consider these as parts of the non-signatory factions or what?

Spokesperson: I would rather have you ask these questions to Mr. Eliasson who will be having a press conference with you tomorrow. I hope that you will attend and you will ask him these questions.

But, reiterating some basics that Mr. Eliasson, Dr. Salim, Mr. Alpha Oumar Konaré, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, the Security Council, the African Union Peace & Security Council, the Tripoli meeting and everybody involved in this process have been consistently saying: that the proliferation of rebel groups is definitely not a helpful happening – not for the political process, not for the security situation, not for the people of Darfur, not for Sudan, not for the neighboring countries and the situation in the region as a whole. That is one.

Two; I said that the Tripoli meeting endorsed the proposal of the two Special Envoys to meet with significant leaders of rebel groups that are not signatories of the DPA. And Mr. Eliasson and Mr. Salim Ahmed Salim made it very clear that though in an ideal world, one should have everybody concerned around the negotiations table, however, this is not – practically speaking – an a way of proceeding that would be helpful. This means basically that not everybody who takes up arms is going to be invited to the negotiations. I am not sure about this particular group because I just read about it in the press today so I would rather have you ask the question to Mr. Eliasson, but I am just reiterating some principle basic parameters for the political process. Those who use certain contexts – for instance the momentum gathered for the political process- and take up arms so they could claim a seat around the negotiations table that is definitely not helpful for the political process. Because by the end of the day, what the negotiations will be about is to have people who are representative of the people of Darfur who have genuine issues relating to the interests of the people of Darfur and not any other issues. Those are to meet, sit together and settle what is there to be settled for the good of the people of Darfur, not because of personal claims; not because of issues that have no impact or represent the claims of the people themselves. That would be the approach that we do hope that everybody will abide by. All those who took up arms since 2003 said that they did so because they were defending the people and the cause of the people of Darfur – this is what they said. These have to live up to their and prove it by around the negotiations and commit to a peaceful political negotiated solution, and that solution has to focus on the expectations of the people of Darfur of individuals or groups of individuals.

Q: The Spokesperson of the SAF announced yesterday that the SAF has redeployed north of line 1.1.'56 save from the oil regions. You said that the SAF has not completed it redeployment. The SPLA is yet to redeploy south from the Nuba Mountains and the Blue Nile region. The United Nations is here to keep that peace. Is that not to be considered a shortcoming in the United Nations' peacekeeping mandate in Sudan?

Spokesperson: It is a good question and thank you for it. It gives me another opportunity to clarify what is our responsibility and what is the responsibility of the Parties.

First of all what you mentioned is not what I said but what the Parties themselves said and what the CJMC said. They said it at the CJMC and they said it to the press.

The United Nations came here to assist. We are, again, a Chapter VI mission and not a Chapter VII. We cannot force the parties to do what they are supposed to do; we cannot do things on their behalf and we cannot replace them. The United Nations has been, since Day 1, reminding the parties of all the important timetables that were indicated in the CPA including the 9th of July redeployment by the SAF. We kept repeating that in every meeting in the CJMC, in the CPC and in all other institutions. We kept repeating in all our reports and statements that the issue of the redeployment of the SAF is interlinked to other steps that had to be undertaken either by the SPLA, as the other party, or by both of them since they are partners within the Government of National Unity. That is our job; and our job to tell them what is missing, what they have to do, what they are supposed to do but we cannot force them to do it.

Now, on the issue of redeployment in particular, we keep saying and repeating that the CPC has certain responsibilities to undertake to address the current situation reported by the CJMC on the status of redeployment of SAF troops and also the issues raised by the parties including what the SPLA raised regarding the status of the voluntarily de-mobilized SAF soldiers which they contest. These are not for the CJMC to resolve. These have to be resolved by the Ceasefire Political Committee that has responsibilities, according to the CPA, to resolve such issues which are not of a pure military nature, which are of political nature. On the issue of the Joint Integrated Units for instance, this issue has to be addressed by the Joint Defense Board. The Other Armed Groups issue has to be addressed by the Other Armed Groups Collaborative Committee. These institutions have to take their responsibilities. By no means should this situation be considered as a failure by the United Nations to do its job. This situation has to be addressed by the appropriate mechanisms and

bodies that need urgent action. We told this to the parties time and time again. If you look at my briefing today, you will find “urgent” cited at least a couple of times when we referred to the CPC needed decision on the issues raised by the two Parties in the CJMC.

Q: You mentioned that the SAF has some reservations over the statistics of the SAF while you did not mention any reservations from the SAF side. My question is what are the percentages of redeployment of the two forces? I hope you will not say you do not know because I am aware that the United Nations is an integral part of the CJMC that is tasked with verifying these percentages.

Spokesperson: Thank you very much. First of all, the briefing that I gave you is, again, is not “what I said”. What I told you is the Ceasefire Joint Military Committee deliberations, and there are members from the SAF, the SPLA and the United Nations Mission in Sudan who the chair for this particular committee. That’s one.

Two; what I said, and I think that you did not hear all that I said when I was reading out my points on the CJMC meeting, I did refer, sir, to some issues raised by the SAF regarding the SPLA redeployment in certain areas. Moreover, when you look at the translated version in Arabic that you have after this meeting, you will see that we reflected what the two parties exchanged during the CJMC meeting – the reservations of the SAF and the reservations of the SPLA and both of them are represented.

On your question, we sent you the Press Release issued by the CJMC on its meeting of 8 July on the Status of Redeployment and in that Press Release you have the figures that you asked about. I actually did distribute hard copies of this document during the last briefing so please go back to that and you will find an answer to your question.

With this, I thank you very much for attending this press briefing and we will hopefully see you tomorrow.