

**Office of the Spokesperson****UNMIS BRIEFING TO THE PRESS****27 June 2007**

Below is a near verbatim transcript of the press conference held by United Nations Mission in Sudan Spokesperson, Ms. Radhia Achouri, on 27 June 2007 at the UNMIS Press Briefing Room.

Good morning ladies and gentleman.

I will start this briefing by reading to you the press statement issued by UNMIS of the passing on Dr. Majzoub Al Khalifa/

The United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) learned with shock and sadness of the passing early this morning of Presidential Advisor Dr. Majzoub Al Khalifa.

UNMIS expresses its heartfelt condolences to the family and friends of Dr. Majzoub Al Khalifa and to the Government of National Unity.

UNMIS pays tribute to Dr. Al Khalifa who has served with dedication his country in various senior positions for many years.

Dr. Majzoub Al Khalifa was one of the key interlocutors of UNMIS since the inception of the Mission. He will be remembered as a tenacious negotiator and a high caliber statesman, and for his contribution to the peaceful resolution of the Darfur conflict through the Abuja peace process and subsequent negotiations in the context of the Addis Ababa conclusions of November last year.

UN SECRETARY-GENERAL

The Spokesperson of the UN Secretary-General said yesterday that the Secretary-General was satisfied with the high-level meeting of the expanded contact group on Darfur held in Paris on 25 June, which he believes was a constructive conference that will contribute to the efforts towards a solution of the Darfur crisis. The participants at the Paris conference reconfirmed the central role of the United Nations in the political, security and humanitarian domains in Darfur, as well as its role in the future development of the Sudanese province. The Secretary-General called for support to the African Union-United Nations hybrid force, both financially and politically.

The leaders of the Sudan leg of the Security Council mission to Africa briefed yesterday 26 June on their talks with the Sudanese Government on Darfur and the hybrid operation. We have a summary of that briefing in the room.

We also have for the roadmap of the Darfur political process that was prepared by Special Envoys Jan Eliasson and Salim Ahmed Salim.

DARFUR POLITICAL PROCESS

Senior Adviser to the UN Secretary-General Special Envoy for Darfur, Pekka Haavisto, visited Sudan from 20 to 24 June. During his visit, he held extensive consultations with various stakeholders on the status of implementation of the roadmap jointly presented by AU and UN Special Envoys. He met with Foreign Minister Lam Akol and late Presidential Adviser Majzoub Al

Khalifa and visited Darfur where he met with field commanders of the Justice and Equality Movement and Sudan Liberation Army.

UN AGENCIES/UNMIS

Demining efforts continue and UNMAO reports that as of the end of May 2007, out of the 2,080 dangerous areas identified since 2003, 814 areas have been cleared. This includes the following achievements against the targets established in Sudan 2007 Work Plan:

- 5,921,000 sqm have been cleared, exceeding the target of 2,186, 000 sqm initially established. This is due to the use of mine clearance techniques that allow faster results compared to manual clearance.
- 1, 068 km of roads have been cleared, which represents 68% of the target of 1,567 km set in the Work Plan. This figure is lower than expected because the condition of the roads has been worse than anticipated – i.e. many roads to be cleared are obstructed by bush and vegetation- which slowed down the clearance process.
- For Route Assessment, the target was 6,972 km, with 13, 345 km cleared. This figure is higher than anticipated due to priority changes which have led to more teams working on route assessment than originally planned.

UNHCR-IOM-UNMIS: UPDATE ON RETURNS

According to UNHCR, as of 23 June 2007, the total number of Sudanese refugees who returned home in the framework of organized and assisted self-repatriation since 2005 has reached 65,243 individuals. The cumulative number of returnees, including spontaneous repatriation, reached 155,759 individuals.

According to IOM, the number of Sudanese IDPs assisted to return home under the GoNU/GoSS/UN Plan for Returns has reached a total of 42, 000 individuals.

UNMIS ACTIVITIES

CPA related activities

The Ceasefire Joint Military Committee (CJMC) finalized its report to the Ceasefire Political Committee (CPC), in which it highlights a number of areas of concern.

UNMIS took part in the meeting of the Other Armed Group Collaborative Committee (OAGCC) held in Khartoum on 23 June 2007. UNMIS highlighted the key points from the last CJMC meetings. The CJMC Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) senior member re-confirmed SAF commitment in meeting the 09 July 07 deadline for the redeployment of its troops to the North of line 1-1-1956. The SPLA raised the issue of lack of provisions for proper reporting and funding of the Committee's activities and proposed that this issue be jointly raised at the next meeting of the Ceasefire Political Committee (CPC) . The next meeting of the OAGCC will be held in Khartoum on 23 July 2007.

UNMIS Egyptian medical contingent has continued to assist the local communities of the villages neighboring Kadugli, where the only government hospital is too far for villagers to reach. In 2007, the Egyptian medical team has so far organized five medical convoys to the remote villages of Al Hala, Om Sardeba, Eldamyk, and Eltoba and Al Maskeen. The last camp, on 11 June, was organized in Kadugli town. The UNMIS Egyptian hospital also has an open department for the local communities. Besides medicines, free laboratory and radiology facilities are provided. Surgeries or more serious cases are referred to the government hospital in Kadugli. To date, the Egyptian medical team has treated over 3,000 Sudanese villagers.

On 19 June 2007, UNMIS in Malakal organized a two-day Peace Building Workshop at the Bentiu Technical College in Unity State. State Governor Taban Deng made the opening remarks to the 34 participants who heard presentations and discussions focused on a number of topics, including CPA and the role of UNMIS, Census, and Human Rights, in particular women and children's rights.

The efforts initiated by UNMIS in Juba to resolve the Bari-Mundari-Nyangwara conflict continue to attract the interest of the UN and NGOs. Meetings held during the week with the German Development organization (DED) and the representatives of the UN Coordination office focused on immediate capacity building for the inter-tribal taskforce and the Peace Commission of Central Equatoria State which are expected to drive the process forward. A preliminary peace conference is therefore being planned to target the taskforce which is comprised of key members from all the three conflicting tribes.

On 24 June, UNMIS in El Damazin took part in a meeting at the Ministry of Finance of Blue Nile State which was also attended by representatives of the ministries of Health, Education and Social Affairs. Discussions concentrated on the establishment of a Capacity Building Unit (CBU) within the State Ministry of Finance to identify the level of education and specialization of government employees, and the type of training they require. UNMIS will assist the efforts by providing advice and liaising with potential donors in an attempt to provide funding for its implementation.

Darfur related activities

Acting Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Sudan Tayé-Brook Zerihoun conducted last week a two-day visit to the capital of the three Darfur States, Nyala, El Geneina, and El Fasher. During the visit, ASRSG Zerihoun met with UN staff to brief them on the recent agreement on the deployment of a hybrid operation in Darfur as well as the need to streamline existing UNMIS activities in Darfur and the coordination of UN support to AMIS in preparation for the hybrid operation. He also met with the local Government officials of the three Darfur States and discussed with them the security and humanitarian situation in Darfur and recent developments regarding the political process, UN support to AMIS in the context of the Light and Heavy Support Packages as well as the agreement on the hybrid operation. The ASRSG also met AMIS Senior officials and discussed with them the AU-UN partnership in reviving the Darfur political process and in implementing the UN Support Packages and the hybrid operation.

UNMIS Human Rights visited this week Kutum, Kabkabiya, and Al Kuma. In Kutum, the team documented increased attacks on civilians by Arab militia and continued gender-based violence incidents at Fataborno IDP camp. UNMIS also documented an attack by Janjaweed on Mutu village on 8 June, resulting in two deaths and abuses by non-signatory rebel faction against those who had signed the DPA in the Neni area.

Together with OCHA, UNMIS visited Jafaloo area of Zamzam IDP Camp where IDPs from Abu Shok IDP Camp have relocated. Visits were also conducted in the area of Jafaloo/Zamzam where IDPs, originally from several different villages of North Darfur, have relocated spontaneously from Abu Shok and As Salaam Camp. Jafaloo area of Zamzam also cares for new arrivals from areas like Tawilla, Rockero, Eastern Jebel Marra and Birmaza.

SECURITY DEVELOPMENTS

Southern Sudan and Transitional Areas

Sporadic and isolated incidents continue to be reported.

Former SPLA soldiers put a blockade on the Bor-Juba road in Pariak (25km from Bor towards Juba). The former soldiers demand payment of their 5 months salary they say the Jonglei State authority owes them. The road blockade, which is still place, has disrupted traffic and also UNMIS movement.

On 25 June, elements of a JIU patrol shot and critically wounded a man from Torit village. The shooting occurred following a heated argument between the victim and the JIUs over authorization by competent authorities for a party the victim was having in his place. Also in Torit, three people were killed on 25 June by unknown armed men and one critically injured in the vicinity of Torit secondary School.

On 24 June, armed men suspected to be from Kamda tribe killed a resident from Lagawa town (approx. 80 northwest of Kadugli) who was on his way home with another Lagawa resident with their cattle. The attackers looted the cattle.

Darfur

Incidents of car-jacking, particularly in West Darfur and South Darfur, and temporary detention of INGO staff, as well as forced entry into INGO compounds, continue to be reported.

Of particular concern is the recent upsurge in car-jacking, killings, abductions, and rape in the area of Zalingei. Moreover, the illegal detentions and harassment of IDPs continue to be reported. Last week, a prominent Deputy Sheikh in Khamsa Daqaa'iq was gunned down by 3 masked men, one of whom was wearing a military uniform. Furthermore, 5 people from the Fur tribe working with an INGO in Nertiti were arbitrarily detained, transferred to Zalingei, and remain in the custody of Military Intelligence without any apparent reason.

Also in West Darfur, a group of approximately 200 Arab militiamen on horse back attacked an area southeast of Jebel Moon on 24 June. The GoS Popular Defense Force reportedly managed to repel the attack.

HUMANITARIAN DEVELOPMENTS

On Southern Sudan and Transitional Areas, Mr David Gressly, the United Nations Deputy Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Southern Sudan, is holding today a press briefing in Juba and we are hoping to get you later in the day a summary of his briefing.

Darfur

In South Darfur, insecurity continues to cause the displacement of thousands of IDPs to Al Salam camp and to Um Dukhum. Al Salam camp, which had a population of 13,300 in March, now houses 28,000 IDPs, with reports of 5,000 IDPs still on their way. In Um Dukhum (West Darfur), 935 new IDP households have arrived in June from Um Dafog (South Darfur) as a result of militia harassment. Large numbers of refugees are also streaming in from Chad and the Central African Republic, causing a rapid deterioration of the nutrition situation in the town and putting further strain on the capacity of the humanitarian community to deliver assistance. Emergency measures have been taken to keep the situation under control. In North Darfur, as a result of build-up of non-signatory forces in the Birmaza area, reported GoS aerial bombings, and four recent hijackings of a NGO vehicles, no food distributions have taken place in northern Dar Zaghawa and Kutum rural in June, leaving 165,000 conflict-affected people without food aid at the beginning of the hunger season. The NGO hopes to resume distributions in July.

Continuous efforts are being made to maintain the minimum humanitarian standards and to access conflict-affected people previously cut off. Humanitarian activities are expanding to some areas in the Jebel Marra which have been cut off from aid for a long time. An INGO distributed food to 4,759 households (25,471 people) in 42 villages around Golo, and UNICEF/WES have pre-positioned general supplies in Nertiti to cover the Jebel Marra for their Acute Watery Diarrhoea prevention campaign. In North Darfur, an INGO has completed a food and NFI distribution to approximately 35,000 persons in southern Dar Zaghawa for the first time since 2005. Planning is

underway to guarantee long-term humanitarian presence in Tawilla. An NFI distribution has taken place in Sisi (West Darfur) for the first time since the conflict began.

Overall, insecurity, including attacks on humanitarian workers, continues to seriously affect humanitarian access, and has a significant impact on the quality of humanitarian interventions by reducing the number of visits, affecting continuity of programmes and presence of humanitarian personnel in outlying areas.

Announcement:

On Saturday 30 June, Miraya FM, the UN radio station in Sudan, is celebrating one year of broadcasting in South Sudan. On this occasion, Miraya FM has produced a CD with peace songs in cooperation with 20 Sudanese artists and bands from all over the country.

In Juba, Miraya Radio will celebrate the event at the French Cultural center in Juba, located at the Juba University. The ceremony will be chaired by UNMIS Chief of Radio Leon Willems. Senior members of the Government of Sudan, including the Minister of Information, H.E. Dr Samson Kwaje, will be in attendance. Four of Sudan's most prominent artists, Paul Jami, Jimmy Bob, Abbas and Paulino, representing Northern, Southern, and Western parts of Sudan will perform for the audience public and live on radio Miraya.

In Khartoum, several live bands will be giving a free concert, sponsored by Miraya FM in the French Cultural Center.

Miraya FM can now be heard on FM frequency 101 Megahertz in Juba, Malakal, Wau and Rumbek. Miraya can also be reached live on the web with streaming audio on www.mirayafm.org. New FM stations will open in the coming two months in Torit, Yambio and Maridi. Before the end of the year, Miraya will cover all major population centers of South Sudan.

Q & A

Q: [*Question indiscernible on the possible reasons for the displacement in Darfur*]

Spokesperson: In my briefing, the response is there. The displacement is caused by several factors; fighting and harassment for instance and as I mentioned, there is an influx of large numbers of refugees coming from the Central African Republic and Chad part of the region. There are several reasons but as far as displacements within Sudan are concerned, it is caused primarily by fighting and also by harassment, ill-treatment and so on. So, yes, these are the reasons.

Q: Do you know who is fighting who in South Darfur?

Spokesperson: There are many reports of fighting but, primarily, the fighting we are talking about are of, I would say, a tribal nature, and militia activities. Yes, we did hear of some bombings that reportedly took place but we are in no position, as UNMIS, to confirm them. But many people left their places because of reports of bombing but you can still get in touch with the African Union to see what their take is on the reports of bombing.

Nevertheless, whether these bombings took place or not, there is a movement of the population because of these reports. As I said, there are many considerations. Also, the amassing of militias and armed groups in certain areas create fear within populations and they flee even if the fighting is not taking place but just opt for safety .

So there are many factors that lead to displacement but please feel free to contact particularly our humanitarian colleagues for further elaboration on actual displacements, and possible documented reasons or specific reasons for these displacements area by area.

Q: Has the implementation of the Heavy Support Package started? What can you tell us about the situation Gereida? Thirdly, According to the SOFA, UNMIS radio is supposed to broadcast in Khartoum and northern part of Suda and you only mentioned areas in the south. Why is that and is the government refusing to have the radio broadcast in the north?

Spokesperson: Thank you. On the Heavy Support Package, we are still in the process of trying to put in place the requirements for the actual hosting of the people that are supposed to be deployed. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations is working on having the Troop Contributing Countries to finalize their offers of contributions of military personnel and police for this hybrid operation. On the civilian side, the UN is working on the identification of candidates to fill the almost 1,000 civilian posts for the Heavy Support Package. So far, what I know is that we don't have an actual deployment on the ground of personnel of the Heavy Support Package. We are working on it and we explained the reasons why there is such a delay because of the environment itself in Darfur, more particularly the lack of water that would be used by these people to be deployed in there. The security environment is also another consideration. You know that the African Union is supposed to deploy two battalions - in the context of the Heavy Support Package - for protection purposes. These battalions are not yet there. So, we are working day and night, I would say, to expedite this Heavy Support Package. However, the environment in Darfur itself is not really that easy. We have difficulties of a logistics nature there but we are trying our best to make sure that this deployment takes place in the timeline that was scheduled for it.

On Gereida, I don't understand the question exactly. Can you explain exactly what it is you are asking about in your question on Gereida?

Q: What is happening in Gereida?

Spokesperson: I don't know what exactly what you mean

Q: There are reports in the press about killing and banditry in that area by the SLA Mnni faction ?

Spokesperson: I think that what you read in the press about Gereida is not a recent issue and has to do with that incident that took place some time ago about an attack that was launched by the SLM-Minnawi people and the discovery of a mass grave including eight people. As far as the United Nations is concerned, you know that the High Commissioner for Human Rights issued a report on that particular incident and a press release and called for an investigation. So what we read in the press now is that there are exchanges of words between Government of National Unity officials including the Minister of the Interior and Mini Minnawi in his capacity as the head of the interim authority for Darfur. That is an issue for them and not for us to comment on. As far as the United Nations is concerned, we called for an investigation and we called for accountability. I don't know how far the investigation from the Sudanese side has reached but I could still check with my colleagues from the human rights section to see if there are any updates on Gereida from our side.

On Miraya Radio, we tried to get the Government of Sudan to authorize Miraya FM to broadcast from Khartoum but they had their reservations. Their understanding of the provisions regarding the radio is that it says it is restricted to the areas of deployment of the United Nations in southern Sudan and the Transitional Areas. Hopefully, at some point we will be able to broadcast from Khartoum. Nevertheless, I told you that the people who are fortunate to have internet facilities could hear the radio programs via its website. You are therefore more than welcome to have a try

and to listen in and we – and I am sure my colleague Leon Willems – will be more than happy to have the feedback of the audience in northern Sudan, particularly the press, on the broadcast and content quality of Miraya Radio .

Q: there is not much information of the UN role in the political process, talks about rebels and so, can you tell us about this?

Spokesperson: I am surprised at your question that the role of the United Nations is not clear. You know that there is a Special Envoy, Mr. Jan Eliasson – he is the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Darfur. He has been working jointly with the Special Envoy of the African Union, Dr. Salim Ahmed Salim since the beginning of the year. They came to Sudan three times and will still be visiting Sudan. The two Envoys have a joint mediation support team composed of members of the African Union here in Khartoum and the United Nations also here in Khartoum. The joint mediation support team has been in contact with all concerned inside and outside Sudan not only with parties to the conflict – signatories or non-signatories – but also the parties and the countries that have initiatives to push forwards the peace talks and the peace process in Sudan. The Envoys themselves met with Eritrean authorities, the Libyans, the Egyptians, the Chadians, and they met with the Arab League, and they met with First Vice-President Salva Kiir. They met, basically, all stakeholders and those who have initiatives.

I just briefed you on the visit of Mr. Pekka Haavisto - the Senior Political Advisor to Mr. Jan Eliasson, the Special Envoy for Darfur – and he had meetings with the Government of Sudan authorities and also met in Darfur with representatives of the Justice and Equality Movement and the Sudan Liberation Army.

I also told you many times that there has been a road map for the political process that was prepared and endorsed jointly by Dr. Salim Ahmed Salim and Mr. Jan Eliasson and that road map is there in the room for you to take. So, yes, the contacts continue and the road map – as you would yourself read and as I briefed you earlier – has three steps and the two envoys are making all efforts possible to start the pre-negotiations phase of the road map. The road map, as I said, has three steps which are: to get a convergence of views through discussions and consultations, then the pre-negotiations and then the negotiations phases. Now they are about to wrap up the first phase and are preparing to engage in the second phase.

I hope that clarifies the picture for you. We brief regularly on the political process which is a high priority for the United Nations and the African Union and the two organizations are working jointly on this file – the United Nations has no individual role; we are working in partnership and jointly with the African Union on this.

Q: Is the absence of an SRSG for this mission affecting the work of the mission, say in decision-making, in any way? When the SRSG will be appointed ?

Spokesperson: I will start with the last part of your question. I don't know when the new Special Representative will be appointed. That is for the Secretary-General to decide. I can pass on your question to my colleagues in New York but you could still ask the question directly to them as the decision is to come from the Secretary-General. You know that the Security Council, in its latest Presidential Statement on Sudan, requested the Secretary-General to appoint a Secretary-General for Sudan.

My response to the other part of your question will be short and simple: no it is not affecting our work. The United Nations Mission in Sudan continues its work under the leadership of the Acting Special Representative Mr. Tayé-Brook Zerihoun who has the full mandate and authority to take

decisions. Being the Acting Special Representative means that he is the Special Representation and is entitled and authorized and mandated to take all decisions required. So no, our work has not been affected.

Q: I know the information you told us about the political process, but I am asking for the details of what the rebels told the UN.

Spokesperson: I don't have an answer for your question. Yes, there have been discussions and the aim of these discussions is to listen first to what they have to say and also to emphasize the following message to them: that the peace process is the only way out and that a negotiated peaceful solution is the only solution to the Darfur problem; two, they have to engage in good faith in this process without conditions; three, as far as the DPA is concerned, nobody, not the parties to the DPA, not the non-signatories, are to engage in this process with a take-it-or-leave-it attitude regarding the DPA meaning that the position of those who say they do not want to hear about the DPA will not be accepted and the position of those who say they can only accept the DPA only will also not be accepted.

I am sure that Mr. Eliasson and Mr. Salim will brief you on further developments when they come here.

On the way forward, as I said, there is a road map. And the road map is the result of discussions they had so far with everybody – the Sudanese stakeholders and also countries which have initiatives regarding the peace process in Sudan. When you read that road map, you will see what is expected of all parties, including that the African Union and the United Nations both – through the African Union Peace & Security Council and the Security Council – will hold accountable any person who will not respect the obligations cited and listed in that road map. I think that the road map will answer most of your questions when you read it. It is quite detailed and that is what the two envoys think and that is the result of the discussions they had so far.

Thanks you very much and we will see next week.