



# Media Monitoring Report

United Nations Mission in Sudan/ Public Information Office

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# Highlights

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## Local Arabic and English Language Press

### Census results on Saturday

**Al-Rai Al-Aam** reports the Census Monitoring Committee Chairman Abdul Bagi Al-Jailani as saying census results would be made public at a press conference on Saturday. Al-Jailani said enumeration in Darfur and Southern Sudan was carried out by 90% and that claims of 10% of population in Southern Sudan not covered by the exercise were "incorrect".

**Al-Intibaha** cites an unnamed Presidency source that census leaks indicate that Darfur States' population exceeded 8 million compared to just 7 million for the Southern Sudan population.

### President Al-Bashir addresses rally in West Darfur

**Local dailies** and **websites** report President Al-Bashir addressed a mass rally in West Darfur State yesterday. According to **Al-Rai Al-Aam**, the President gave the crowd a strong hope for an additional state in Darfur, with Zalingei as its capital. Al-Bashir's speech focused on the need for peace and development in the region. He said the INGO ouster decision was final and that "if peace is achieved and IDPs and refugees have returned there would be no need for NGOs in Darfur". Darfur native administration leaders said they would support Al-Bashir's candidacy in the upcoming elections.

**Akhir Lahza** reports the President promised to link Darfur with the centre by a highway, to boost agriculture and to increase the number of universities in Darfur provided the people of Darfur desist from fighting each other and exert efforts to convince Darfur rebels of the futility of insurgency. **Akhbar Al-Youm** reports President Al-Bashir said the current year "would be the year of peace and IDP and refugee voluntary return" and promised to pay compensations and blood money.

**Reuters website** 7/4/09 reported Sudan's embattled president told a rally of thousands in Zalingei, one of the most politically charged towns in Darfur on Tuesday that his own officials would track down war criminals in Darfur, dismissing Western attempts to bring justice to the region. "We know about justice between us and we know how to solve our problems. We have a committee for tribal reconciliation," he told the crowd. "After the reconciliation we will investigate those who are criminals and those who committed crimes and those who were killed and those who were killers. This is all guaranteed. Compensation will be paid. Everyone will get their right. This is justice."

The president also accused Darfur rebels of sabotaging efforts to develop the region and appealed to members of the crowd with links to insurgents to persuade them to lay down their arms.

Bashir praised Arab and African efforts to bring peace to Darfur, including the recent visit of the African Union's own panel on Darfur, headed by former South African president Thabo Mbeki. "We thank the AU and the former presidents headed by Mbeki who came here ... But we don't want those Khawajas (foreigners)," he told the crowd. "Judgment, it's not here. It's not with Ocampo or others. Our judgment is before God," the president said.

**According** to **ST website**, President Al-Bashir promised to investigate and prosecute those suspected of committing war crimes in the conflict ridden region of Darfur but warned that any trials can only be commenced after reconciliation is achieved. "After the reconciliation we will investigate those who are criminals and those who committed crimes and those who were killed and those who were killers.

Meanwhile, a Zalingi's residents told **Sudan tribune** by phone that the crowds were rallied from outside town. "We [Zalingi people] agreed to boycott the visit specially when we were planning to stage a demonstration against Bashir but UNAMID [peacekeepers] urged us to stand down and prevent loss of life in the event of clashes with police" the resident said asking not to be identified." We reject any talk of reconciliation by Bashir. Reconciliations are possible between tribes and not when the state directs its armed forces and militias against unarmed civilians. We want justice and trial of Bashir" he added.

On the INGO ouster he said, "We kicked them out and those we expelled will not be allowed to return.... we will give an immediate red card to those who want to stir and create confusion among us, those who want to become spies or distribute Bibles in Darfur"

### **NCP is committed to Abyei arbitration results**

In a lengthy interview to **Akhir Lahza**, NCP official and Doha talks negotiator Amin Hassan Omer said Sudan government is "committed to Abyei arbitration results". "Some SPLM leaders are apprehensive and skeptical but we can not say they will reject the arbitration results. There are some responsible SPLM leaders who know that rejecting the arbitration results will lead to serious consequences" he said. Amin Lambasted JEM claims to assist in arresting President Al-Bashir for trial by the ICC. "JEM is in Chad. If it has the capacity to arrest the President, it would have done during Al-Bashir's visits to Darfur," he said.

According to **Al-Sahafa**, Gration who visited Abyei yesterday, promised to assist the area. GoSS Presidency Affairs Minister Luka Biong told the paper Gration met with the IDPs in Agok and the speakers focused on the implementation of the Abyei Protocol, the Abyei roadmap, the INGO ouster and compensations. According to Biong, civil society groups told Gration they fear trouble if the Abyei arbitration panel rules in favour of the Dinka.

Meanwhile, **Al-Ahdath** reports Abyei Administration officials and the IDPs have complained to the US Envoy Scott Gration about the deteriorating situation, lack of services in the area and neglect by the centre. They said funds have yet to be released by Khartoum for rendering services to the community.

### **AEC satisfied with Blue Nile CPA implementation**

**Al-Quwat Al-Mussalaha** reports the AEC has expressed satisfaction with the progress of the CPA implementation in the Blue Nile State. Following a meeting with Governor Malik Agaar, AEC representatives called on the GoNU to provide the necessary support for the issues pertaining to power and wealth sharing.

### **Press and Publications Council reserved over Press Act**

**Al-Watan** reports that the Press and Publication Council Chairman Ali Shumo has described as "unacceptable" the penalties cited in the draft Press Law. He told a meeting yesterday with the Sudan Journalists' Union and the Parliamentary Committee on Information and Communications that those articles on penalties have to be reviewed before parliament passes the draft.

## **SPLM seeks return of expelled INGOs**

Quoting agencies, **Al-Watan** reports that the SPLM and the US Administration have agreed on the need for the return of the INGOs expelled from Sudan. The head of the SPLM office in Washington Ezekiel Gatkuoth told **Miraya FM** that the American administration and the delegation did not tackle the ICC issue since America is non-signatory to the court. Gatkuoth said the American congress promised to provide GoSS with more than one hundred million dollars to assist in overcoming the effects of the current financial crisis. He said the delegation was currently on its way to Juba to give President Salva Kiir Mayardiit an update on the visit.

Meanwhile, **Al-Rai Al-Aam** reports SPLM Deputy Chairman and Blue Nile State Governor Malik Aqaras saying that the INGO ouster was “a right decision which represents an important step to bolster national work”. Aqar made the remarks while addressing Gedaref State legislative Assembly’s session yesterday.

## **“Time not right” for Samar’s visit - Khartoum**

**Al-Rai Al-Aam** reports Sudan Government has rejected the UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Sudan Sima Samar’s request to visit the country. Human Rights Parliamentary Committee Chairman Hamadto Mukhtar said Samar is expected here next Friday but the government has asked for a postponement on the grounds that the conditions are not favorable. He said that government preferred that she comes here before June ahead of her report to the UNCHR in June.

## **“Free Africans” claim responsibility of Darfur aid workers abduction**

**Al-Watan** reports the Khartoum-based **BBC** correspondent as saying that he received a phone call from someone claiming to be one of the commanders of the “Free Africans” which is responsible for the recent abduction of two foreign aid workers in Darfur. Sudan’s Foreign Ministry spokesperson said tribal leaders in Darfur had contacted the abductors and efforts were continuing to free them.

Meanwhile, **SMC** 7/4/09 cited an informed government source that a direct contact with the abductors of two aid workers had been established. Director of Protocol Ali Yousuf said the captives were in good health and that no efforts would be spared for their peaceful release. Director of Organizations at the Foreign Ministry Ahmed Mohamed Adam said efforts underway to locate the abducted aid workers.

## **Sudan unaware of any Egyptian initiative on Darfur – Ismail**

The **Sudan Vision** reports Sudan has announced its unawareness of any Egyptian initiative urging Darfur armed movements to negotiate peace with Khartoum. Presidential Adviser Mustafa Osman Ismail dismissed any information in that respect, noting that the government had already turned down an Egyptian proposal calling for an international conference on Darfur.

# **Websites/International News Coverage**

## **South Sudan takes measures in abide to avert financial crisis**

**Sudan Tribune website**, 7/4/09 (JUBA) – Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS) has taken drastic measures to try to avert the looming economic crisis in the region by introducing new mechanisms of collecting non-oil revenues while cutting down on expenditures.

In an extra-ordinary cabinet meeting on Tuesday chaired by President Salva Kiir Mayardit, the

meeting discussed a report presented by Dr. Luka Tombekana Monoja, Chairperson of the Ministerial Committee which was formed earlier to manage the financial crisis in Southern Sudan.

In the last joint Council of Ministers session which included Presidential Advisors, Governor of the Bank of Southern Sudan (BoSS), representatives of the World Bank and Joint Donor Team, it became clear that the region was in serious financial crisis due to the combined global fall in oil prices, lack of inflow of GoSS share of oil revenue from the Government of National Unity (GoNU), improper collection system of non-oil revenues and mismanagement of GoSS money by government officials.

According to the Government's Spokesperson, Gabriel Changson Chang, the meeting resolved to conduct significant engagement with the Khartoum-based Presidency in the Government of National Unity, to ensure that it repays existing arrears of GoSS shares of oil revenues since 2008 and should not accumulate new ones in 2009.

Chang added that GoSS would also engage with GoNU at the highest level to reverse the unilateral decision by GoNU to deduct money from GoSS' share of oil revenues to finance the upcoming national elections.

GoSS argues that national elections are the responsibility of GoNU.

He said the Task Force headed by the Minister of Cabinet Affairs, Dr. Luka Tombekana Monoja, which composes of several ministers works to find a way out of the financial crisis.

Chang further added that taxes on luxury items should be raised and tax revenue collection should be reviewed so that new mechanisms are devised.

He further said the Council resolved to strengthen agricultural and animal productions in the South to reduce dependency on imports from neighboring countries which would also reduce current high prices of food commodities in the region.

New Tax ID cards will be introduced and imposed on all business owners to avoid evading payment of taxes to the Government. Minister Chang added that the Council resolved to cut salaries of constitutional post holders in Southern Sudan by five per cent (5%) but should not temper with the salaries of civil service employees.

He further explained that clean up of payrolls by weeding out ghost names, and to review formation of ministries and independent Commissions in order to save some money, was among the measures taken by the Government.

Several additional pending measures have been assigned to the Task Force to study and devise mechanisms to recommend for action by the Government and other relevant organizations.

These include placing an immediate freeze on GoSS Spending Agency not to sign new contracts and to create a central register of all the existing contracts with the view to renegotiate, amend or cancel some of them as necessary.

The meeting also resolved to cut GoSS operating expenditures by 50%, but to protect capital expenditures.

It resolved to review the use of luxury vehicles by government officials and to limit the expensive movement of senior government officials abroad.

The cabinet resolved to avoid non-payment of salaries and to avail petty cash for some minor daily running costs such as vehicles maintenance and fuel, etc.

The meeting also recommended that GoSS should request Donors to frontload their 2009 Multi-Donors Trust Fund (MDTF) contributions.

GoSS also requests Donors to increase funding to the Capacity Building Trust Fund (CBTF) to enable GoSS to develop a comprehensive payroll, including for the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) and other organized forces.

It also requests Donors to provide rapid funding to support immediate implementation for the first 35,000 candidates of the forces to be demobilized, disarmed and re-integrated into the civil society.

GoSS also aims at boosting its foreign currency reserves by trying to receive its share of oil revenue in hard currency.

The cabinet expressed optimism that Southern Sudan has abundant sources of revenues, and if managed properly, would avert the economic crisis it now faces.

The Government declared to communicate the fiscal crisis and its response to the wider public and directed the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting to come up with communication strategy for dissemination.

### **Report: Naval commando forces involved in Sudan strike**

**Ynet website**, 8/4/09 American sources tells Yedioth Ahronoth daily special unit's fighters took part in January operation, which included attack on Iranian arms ship docking in northeast African country

NewsFurther details revealed on IDF operation in Sudan: Naval commando forces of the Navy's Shayetet 13 unit were involved in the January operation, which included an attack on an Iranian arms ship docking in Sudan, the Yedioth Ahronoth daily reported Wednesday, quoting an American source.

American television network CBS reported in late March that Israel Air Force planes had attacked in Sudan 17 trucks carrying weapons from Iran to the Gaza, leaving 39 people killed.

Two days later, the ABC network reported that Israel had struck three times in the northeast African country in an attempt to thwart the smuggling of weapons to the Hamas organization in Gaza.

Sudanese officials said in response that the convoy of trucks attacked was transferring goods, not weapons, and that there was no proof that Israel was the one to strike on its territory.

Senior Hamas member Salah al-Bardawil said that the allegations that the convoy was transferring weapons to Gaza were "false claims aimed at permitting the strike in Sudan."

Israel refused to comment on the publications, but former Prime Minister Ehud Olmert said after



the first reports about the strike emerged that "we are operating in any place where the terror infrastructures can be hit. In close places, in distant places, we're hitting them in a way which strengthens and reinforces the deterrence."

The London-based Arabic-language **al-Sharq al-Awsat** newspaper reported about a week ago that an American source had telephoned a high-ranking Sudanese official before the strike and warned him that a third party was monitoring the smuggling of weapons from Sudan to Gaza and that the smuggling must stop immediately.

The paper reported that the strikes took place shortly after the warning, causing Sudanese officials to believe that the United States was behind them, although this was denied by Washington.

### **Armed men carjack peacekeeper's vehicle in North Darfur, UN reports**

**UN News Centre**, 7/4/09— Two unidentified gunmen carjacked a vehicle last night from UNAMID in Darfur, the mission in the violence-torn region of Sudan reported today.

The driver of the vehicle, an international UN staff member, was unhurt by the two armed men who stole the car in El Fasher, the capital of North Darfur.

Over the past month, UNAMID has reported a rise in attacks on peacekeeping staff, carjacking, other banditry, and harassment of civilians in Darfur.

Speaking to reporters in New York today, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon reiterated that the situation in Sudan has been one of his top priorities, particularly humanitarian issues in the wake of the ouster of the aid groups.

"I have made a sincere appeal and also urged many African and Arab leaders to influence President Bashir to reverse the decision to expel humanitarian workers," he said, following a briefing to the General Assembly on his recent travels, which included a stop in Doha for the Arab League Summit.

### **Student UPF political leader escapes assassination in Juba**

**Sudan Tribune website**, 7/4/09 (JUBA) – Armed men allegedly affiliated with the National Congress Party broke the arm of a student political leader in an assassination attempt on the eve of a rally in Juba, said a spokesman of the United People's Front (UPF).

UPF is the student organization of the Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM) led by exiled Darfur rebel Abdel-Wahid Al-Nur.

"The Islamic Fundamentalist regime in Khartoum continues on its helpless efforts to cow and silence the Sudanese oppressed masses and students in particular, on a daily basis," said a statement from the student organization.

The attack in Juba follows a number of arrests April 2 against a UPF cadre inside the campus of the University of Khartoum. Though security forces are prohibited from entering the grounds of the university, they did so anyway, arresting science student Abdel Maula Suliman, among others.

On Sunday, a spokesman told **Sudan Tribune**, the Secretary General of the group escaped assassination by South Sudanese militia forces affiliated with the country's northern ruling party.

UPF had planned a rally for Monday, expecting “thousands” to turn out in support of the SLM Chairman, Abdel Wahid Al-Nur.

“We strongly believe that the daily harassments and assassination attempt are designed against UPF because of its full support to the vision of Sudan Liberation Movement/Army,” said a UDF official.

UPF cadres have recently been attacked in Khartoum and Deling University and Kordofan University. Last month, NCP students backed by security service attacked a UDF meeting in Khartoum using steel bars, reportedly injuring many and detaining two others, Mustafa Sidq Yahia and Taha Mohamed Zakaria.

According to a statement received Tuesday, UDF is calling for a secular, liberal, democratic, united Sudan. It also supports justice at the International Criminal Court for those who committed atrocities in Darfur.

It also indicated that the Government of National Unity and Government of South Sudan “will bear full responsibilities toward what is happening to UPF students at the universities” during their civic efforts.

## Commentaries/editorials

### Editorial & commentary on the abduction of aid workers

In his opinion article on *Al-Ayaam*, columnist Rashid AbdelRaheem wonders whether the recent spate of abduction of aid workers in Darfur is not a concoction from some of the aid agencies themselves! He blames the ICC for aggravating the situation. Citing the two recent cases of abduction, he notes that all the victims of these abductions were traveling without protection despite their knowledge of secure and dangerous routes; the abductors were said to have used 4x4 vehicles; the victims were released without ransom after some form of negotiations; the abductors went by bizarre names such as “Bashir’s Hawks” (to give the impression that the act was carried in a show of rejection to the ICC warrant for President Al-Bashir).

He wonders whether the abductions are “as a result of major fallbacks in the performance and movement of personnel of these NGOs.” The article ends with the final question, “***Where were the peacekeepers when the abductions were happening?***”

**The Citizen** editorial article highlights the recent acts of abduction carried out by different groups in Darfur and wonders why those groups that claimed to have carried out the abductions (Al-Bashir’s Hawks and the Free Africans) remain at large. The article calls on the government to take measures to bring these groups to the book. Apart from the negative effects of such abduction, the paper argues, such activities may spread to other regions and the targets themselves may change from foreigners to local political leaders if left unabated.

### Commentary: *The Times*, (UK). By Anthony Loyd, 7/4/09.

Sitting in the sands of Northern Darfur last month, there seemed little to suggest that the UN ban on offensive military flights over Darfur was being taken too seriously by the Khartoum Government.

Flying at high altitude above us two Antonov aircraft took it in turns to roll barrel bombs off their cargo ramps on to the sub-Saharan desert.

I suppose they were targeting the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) rebels with whom we shared the only cover — a thorn bush in a dried wadi. A few bombs fell quite close, a few hundred metres away, sending chunks of the wilderness skyward in grey, rolling banks of



smoke. But a lot more exploded miles from the rebel position, suggesting that they were being used more as weapons of indiscriminate terror than specifically to target insurgents who are fighting attempts to force out ethnic black Africans in the region in favour of government-backed Arabs.

If the UN is taken as rather a joke by Sudan it only has itself to blame.

Sudan has flouted just about every UN resolution on Darfur with total impunity. Little surprise then that President al-Bashir is not taking the International Criminal Court (ICC) very seriously either. Since it issued an arrest warrant against him last month for crimes against humanity and war crimes, the Sudanese leader has been on a regional cock-a-snook tour, sticking two fingers at international justice at every opportunity.

In this endeavour, his neighbours have served him well. Five Arab and African countries have greeted the indicted head of state in the past four weeks. The Arab League, which invited Mr al-Bashir to its summit in Qatar ten days ago, issued a statement of support for "his Excellency" the Sudanese President.

Ban Ki Moon, the UN Secretary-General, attended and was in the same room as Mr al-Bashir.

He did not speak to him, but did not mention Darfur either..

With blood from Rwanda and Srebrenica indelibly staining UN hands you might think the Secretary-General would have bothered to say something while at a summit with a head of state indicted for crimes against humanity; a man who only four weeks ago, reacting to the arrest warrant with a fit of vindictive spite, closed 16 aid groups in Sudan; the man whose forces have displaced 2.7 million civilians during their operations in Darfur and caused the deaths of 300,000 more.

The past four weeks appear to have vindicated the ICC's critics. Not only is Mr al-Bashir still free to travel abroad (albeit only to nations that are not signatories to the ICC), but his standing at home appears to have been consolidated among those who like to see a regional strongman standing up to the West.

Furthermore, by issuing its arrest warrant the ICC appears to have set off a negative chain reaction. The UN estimates that 40 per cent of Darfur's humanitarian needs, including food, healthcare and drinking water will be affected by Mr al-Bashir's expulsion of 16 aid organisations. The JEM, in turn, realising that it could not be seen to participate in a new round of talks with a government that was punishing its people in such a way, has refused to return to the negotiating table. Darfur seems in freefall — again. Peace is as elusive as ever and the plight of displaced civilians worse than a month ago.

Mr al-Bashir has achieved what he wanted, undermining the ICC's authority. Yet while he crows and postures, he may have overplayed his hand and galvanised the opposition.

The past two years have marked a dramatic shift in the fortunes of the JEM rebels, drawn traditionally from the black African Zaghawa tribe. Last May the JEM sent 3,500 fighters in mobile columns 1,200km across the desert to Omdurman, a suburb of Khartoum, in an operation designed to topple the al-Bashir regime. They might have succeeded, had not the assault column sent to take the presidential palace become embroiled in rush-hour traffic en route. (Point to note, next time — do it at night.) Riding the wave of prestige that followed, the JEM has attracted volunteers from other tribes including Arabs, as well as weapons, money and matériel. It has defeated government forces in several engagements and is unequivocal in its desire to overthrow Mr al-Bashir.

Considerable international pressure was put on it to attend peace talks in Qatar in February. Now that those talks have been killed by the NGOs' expulsion, the rebels have turned their attention to war once more..

"If there is no help from the international community then this [war] is the only avenue for us," the JEM leader, Dr Khalil Ibrahim, told The Times last month. "If we succeed then we can deliver to our people. If we fail, a massive crisis will happen." His words require careful scrutiny. The sum of Sudan's problems is far bigger than Darfur alone. More than two million Sudanese died in the 21-year civil war in southern Sudan, fought by Khartoum against the largely Christian

south. That war was ended in 2005 by a peace agreement now under severe strain. The oppressive nature of the al-Bashir regime has given southerners little faith in the reform process that was part of the agreement and every wish support independence in a referendum due in 2011. The JEM has made significant overtures to the south, even offering it the presidency in the interests of national unity.

If the war in Darfur spreads without clear advantage to the Government or rebels, there is every chance that Dr Khalil's "massive crisis" could occur as Sudan breaks apart in a new conflict involving the south as well as Darfur. "We could end up with three Sudans, all at war," one diplomat warned.

The ICC indictment was never going to fix Sudan's problems. It was a judicial response to criminal action and should be seen, and respected, as this, rather than as a cure-all for the political diseases afflicting Africa's largest nation. To suggest that it should never have been issued for fear of upsetting Mr al-Bashir is as ridiculous as to suggest that his arrest would end Sudan's crisis.

But the Arab League and African Union should hesitate in trumpeting their support for Mr al-Bashir and their denouncement of the ICC, and instead recognize the severity of Sudan's problems.

History may not be kind in remembering their gratuitous display of loyalty for the Sudanese President, which may be contributing to a meltdown that will involve dismemberment of the country. The impact of a widescale civil war in Sudan would be felt by all. Its neighbours would feel it worst of all.

JEM rebels led by Khalil Ibrahim, above right, have had an influx of weapons