



UNITED NATIONS MISSION IN SUDAN

UNMIS

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(By Public Information Office)

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IN THE NEWS TODAY:**➤ UN/ Agencies/ Partners**

- United Nations cites three requirements for restoring trust between the parties to the CPA
- UN calls for ceasefire before deployment of Darfur peacekeepers
- Sudan holding up Darfur-bound food aid – UN
- UNMIS renovates traditional Bari court (*Juba Post*)
- WFP Bentiu says no more free food (*Juba Post*)
- Repatriation to Eastern Equatoria on the rise (*Juba Post*)
- Juba-Bor traffic disrupted for demining (*Juba Post*)

➤ The Transition Debate

- UK says the international community does not seek a regime change in Khartoum
- Presidential Advisor says United Nations would kill Darfur civilians

➤ CPA

- 26,000 people to be incorporated into DDR
- Southern militias to be disarmed next week
- Murle hand over 1,300 illicit arms
- More PDF from Pibor expected to disarm in Juba (*Juba Post*)
- New air-bridge for Khartoum to Juba returnees, says OCHA (*Juba Post*)
- Returnee teachers to W. Equatoria stranded in Juba (*Juba Post*)
- Police Director of S. Kordofan wants PDF away (*Juba Post*)

➤ Southern Sudan

- Southern Sudan to have news agency
- Uganda: Juba peace talks resume 26 April
- Kenya to train prison warders from Southern Sudan
- New currency still breeds confusion in southern states (*Juba Post*)
- Child prostitutes in Bahr-el-Ghazal State (*Juba Post*)

- Juba “criminals” to be disarmed (*Juba Post*)
- Warrap, Lakes and Unity States agree to improve security along common border (*Juba Post*)

➤ **Darfur/ Darfur Peace Agreement**

- Key SLM/A figures threaten walkout
- African Union says Darfur militias acting with impunity
- Rebel faction says Darfur needs 50.000 peacekeepers
- France’s Royal does not rule out Olympic boycott over Darfur

❖ *Stories citing the Juba Post as the source have been scanned and appear separately*

HIGHLIGHTS :

UN/ Agencies/ Partners

United Nations cites three requirements for restoring trust between the parties to the CPA

(*AlRai AlAam*) In his report to members of the Security Council, Acting SRSG Taye-Brook Zerihoun expressed concerns that the security situation in Darfur may negatively affect the elections process. He called upon members of the Security Council, the government and the warring factions in Darfur to expedite conclusion of the political process before the forthcoming elections.

He pointed out that implementation of the DDR program, completion of the formation of the JIUs and the establishment of the interim administration for Abyei are measures required to build confidence between the parties to the CPA.

UN calls for ceasefire before deployment of Darfur peacekeepers

(*SudanTribune.com*) The United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) on Wednesday called for a cessation of hostilities before a heavy support package could be delivered from the UN to the African Union (AU) force in Darfur.

"For this operation on the Heavy Support Package to be effectively implemented...Violence and military action in Darfur must cease," UNMIS spokesperson Radhia Achouri stressed at a press conference.

She said that Janjaweed, the most famous militia in Darfur, as well as other spoilers must be disarmed, and attacks on humanitarian workers and peacekeepers must stop.

Besides that, all bureaucratic impediments faced in the past must be removed, the UNMIS spokesperson added.

Other preconditions for the delivery of the heavy support package includes a unequivocal and clear consent of the Sudanese government and eventual authorization from the UN Security Council and the AU Peace and Security Council, according to the spokesperson.

"Progress is being made in implementation of the Light Support Package," Achouri said, adding that the Sudanese National Customs Department had facilitated prompt clearance of pharmaceuticals needed for UN medical support to the African force.

Most major newspapers did cover the press conference with most focusing on that a hybrid force is the ultimate goal of the United Nations support package to the African Union Mission in Sudan. The reporting has been factual in the most but AlRai AlAam daily quotes Spokesperson Achouri saying, in part, ... *that the forthcoming meeting in Tripoli may result in a road map to unify the warring factions of Darfur.*

SudanTribune.com has produced a full copy of the official near-verbatim transcript, the Sudan Tribune daily has reproduced the first parts of the transcript while Akhbar Alyaum went on to print a full text of the transcript that it took the initiative to translate. Khartoum Monitor and the Sudan Vision dailies have made no mention of the press conference.

[Full text of the transcript of the press conference is attached separately]

Sudan holding up Darfur-bound food aid - UN

(SudanTribune.com; AlIntibaha) Sudanese authorities are holding up 100,000 tonnes of sorghum meant for Darfur, alleging that it is genetically modified, the United Nations food agency said on Wednesday.

The sorghum, which comes from the United States, is being held up at Port Sudan, a World Food Programme spokeswoman in Rome said, adding that laboratory tests had shown it was not genetically modified.

"We had it tested by a French laboratory along with Canadian split peas which the Sudanese are also objecting to, and neither food consignment is GM. In any case, there is no GM sorghum on the market, it doesn't exist," said the WFP's Caroline Hurford.

"It's a huge amount of food to be held up and our sub-offices in Darfur must be getting quite worried. We hope that we can find a solution quickly and have it released so it can reach the people who need it," she said.

"We do intend to buy some amount of food from Sudan as they had a bumper harvest but there are limits to how much we can purchase because of funding. Most food aid is given to us in kind, as is the case with the U.S. sorghum," Hurford said.

The sources said Khartoum may be also using the food aid as a political weapon as international pressure intensifies on the government to stop the violence in Darfur.

The WFP's new head, Josette Sheeran, began a visit to Sudan on Wednesday, her first field trip as executive director of the agency. Sheeran is a former under-secretary for economic affairs at the U.S. State Department.

AllIntibaha daily reports in a separate story that the WFP head held a meeting yesterday with the Federal Minister for Humanitarian Affairs who requested that the WFP cut down on direct relief assistance and turn instead to recovery and reconstruction assistance.

The Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid who was present at the meeting said that the two discussed, among other issues, WFP operations and the minister briefed the United Nations official on government policies to promote local purchases.

The WFP official pointed out that the WFP also promotes the policy of local purchasing of relief items. She pledged United Nations support to Sudan on early warning, emergency information and crisis management.

* *“Roadblocks in Darfur only ensure more suffering”* an op-ed by Undersecretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, John Holmes, appears the USAToday website and is attached separately.

The Transition Debate

UK says the international community does not seek a regime change in Khartoum

(*Alwan*) A high rank UK diplomat on Sudanese affairs says the international community does not seek to change the regime in Khartoum or engage in a military clash with Sudan but seeks to see a peace agreement signed in Sudan that guarantees peace and coexistence in Darfur.

The British government official said that the international community would welcome it if agreement was reached on the deployment of an international force for Darfur and that China is welcome to deploy its forces in there should the Sudan government consent to that.

Presidential Advisor says United Nations would kill Darfur civilians

(*The Citizen*) Speaking at a symposium at Sharjah Hall in Khartoum, Presidential Advisor Mustafa Osman Ismail said the government’s recent acceptance of the Heavy Support Package does not mean that the government has changed its position on the deployment of an international force in the Darfurs. He pointed out that the United Nations plan was accepted only to support the African Union and not in relation to any military operation.

The advisor reminded the attendance of President Bashir’s statement on the issue when he vowed not to allow international forces into Darfur.

“The United Nations troops, should they come, would ruin Darfur and kill the civilians”, the advisor pointed out.

CPA

26,000 people to be incorporated into DDR

(*Khartoum Monitor*) The Commission on DDR for northern Sudan expects 26,000 people to be incorporated into the DDR programme this year.

DDR Commissioner Salfeldeen Salih says surveys are being conducted to identify the total number of persons to be covered by the program.

He said that the PDF in South Kordofan has accepted being incorporated into the DDR Program.

Of challenges, the commissioner cited poor funding, large number of forces and regional and international problems.

Southern militias to be disarmed next week

(*Khartoum Monitor*) Commanders of three militia forces in the Bahr-el-Jebel area have announced that their forces have opted integration into the SAF and will hand over their arms to the authorities in Juba next week. They voiced commitment to the implementation of the CPA.

An official source within the SAF says disarmament of militias from Equatoria will start next week in Juba. He affirmed that the Popular Defence Forces in southern Sudan have been disarmed and demobilised and that the militias of the SSDF will become a thing of the past.

Murle hand over 1,300 illicit arms

(*Khartoum Monitor*) Ismail Kony, a member of the GoSS legislative assembly, says authorities have collected about 1,300 pieces of illicit arms from civilians in the Pibor area.

He says the exercise was carried out peacefully as opposed to rumours to the opposite.

He also added that the exercise still continues in the Pibor area.

Southern Sudan

Southern Sudan to have news agency

(*The Citizen*) The GoSS cabinet convened yesterday and discussed, among other things, a memorandum submitted by the Ministry of Communications and by the Ministry of Information concerning a telecommunication code for southern Sudan.

The Minister of Communications told the cabinet that the Federal Ministry of Information had previously rejected a proposal for a separate code for the south.

The session also saw the endorsement of a proposal submitted by Dr. Samson Kwaje to establish a news agency for southern Sudan and a report by the GoSS health minister on a \$1,600 donation from the US to help clean Juba.

Uganda: Juba peace talks resume 26 April

(*New Vision, via BBC Monitoring*) As peace talks between the government and the LRA [Lord's Resistance Army] are expected to resume today, the American organization Human Rights Watch has warned against impunity for crimes committed in northern Uganda.

"Ensuring justice for the most serious crimes is critical to achieve the durable peace sought by the people of northern Uganda," said Richard Dicker, director of the International Justice Programme, in a press statement yesterday.

He emphasized that the charges against the LRA leaders are of the utmost gravity. "National prosecutions would need to involve both fair trials and penalties that reflect the gravity of the crimes committed. Anything less would be justice denied," he said.

Every effort must also be made to investigate and prosecute alleged human rights violations committed by the Ugandan military, the organization stated.

Kenya to train prison warders from Southern Sudan

(*Kenya TV, via BBC Monitoring*) The government of Kenya is to give training to prison warders from Southern Sudan soon. This is according to the vice-president, Moody Awori. He said this during a ceremony to mark the passing out of 1,499 prison warders from the Ruiru training college [southwest of Nairobi].

Darfur/ Darfur Peace Agreement

Key SLM/A figures threaten walkout

(*Alwan*) High rank SLM/A political and military officials say they will only back their leader Mini Minnawi if he repeals all appointments made on the basis of the DPA.

Reports say that some of them have even threatened to walk back to AbdulWahid.

Their protests are because of what they say that Minnawi has based these appointments on ethnic lines.

African Union says Darfur militias acting with impunity

(*SudanTribune.com*) The African Union (AU) peacekeeping force in West Darfur told the United Nations on Wednesday that Arab militias were killing and pillaging in the region without arrests by the Sudanese authorities.

Major Harry Soko, a Malawian officer who briefed the head of the U.N. refugee agency, said the presence of Sudanese rebel groups in his area had also led to conflict and hundreds of deaths in the past months.

He said the militias were believed to be behind many crimes, ranging from banditry to rape. An African Union police commander later told the same briefing Sudanese police were not arresting the perpetrators.

The government denies any connection with the militias, known locally as Janjaweed and blamed for many of the attacks on villages inhabited by non-Arab farming communities. It says they are outlaws and that it takes action against them when it can.

Soko said one area where the rebel presence had added to the violence in recent months was around Sirba, about 45 km (30 miles) north of El-Geneina, the capital of West Darfur state.

"(This has) resulted in the loss of hundreds of lives of Sudanese government personnel, rebels and civilians," he said.

"These areas are no-go areas to AU personnel due to threats by the NRF (the rebel National Redemption Front)," he said.

Soko listed a number of obstacles facing the AU troops, including the lack of good roads, attack helicopters, night-vision devices and adequate funding.

The commander of the AU police in West Darfur said displaced Darfuris were also accusing his forces of not protecting them in the face of Janjaweed attacks.

Guterres, speaking to Reuters on board a U.N. flight back to Khartoum, said the briefing did not surprise him.

"To overcome these difficulties and limitations is crucial, even to establish the confidence with the displaced communities (which) for the moment is lacking to a large extent," he said.

Rebel faction says Darfur needs 50.000 peacekeepers

(SudanTribune.com) A Darfur rebel faction said that the United Nations needs to deploy 50.000 troops in Darfur in order to establish peace in the war-torn province, a press statement said today

A rebel faction dissident from Minni Minawi SLM group, demanded, in a letter sent to the UN Secretary General, to increase the number of the international forces to be deployed in Darfur to 50 thousand instead of 20.000 soldiers.

The leader of the Greater Sudan Liberation Movement (GSLM), Mahgoub Hussein, said "the size of the Region as well as its geographical and environmental setting" require such number of peacekeepers.

France's Royal does not rule out Olympic boycott over Darfur

(*SudanTribune.com*) French presidential candidate Segolene Royal said on Wednesday she did not rule out a boycott of the 2008 Beijing Olympics because of China's stance on the Darfur turmoil in Sudan.

The Socialist reiterated her criticism of China's opposition to UN sanctions against Sudan over Khartoum's role in the humanitarian crisis in Darfur.

China, a veto-wielding member of the UN Security Council, has huge oil investments in Sudan and rights groups say its involvement is frustrating international efforts to stop the war and atrocities in Khartoum's western region.

"It's not because there is oil in the ground that we must let this abominable genocide happen," Royal told France 2 television.

Asked if France should boycott the Olympic Games to add more pressure on China, Royal said: "I don't exclude it. If there is such inaction, such passivity, all means must be used so that things move."

The United States in particular has pressed China to use its economic muscle to persuade Khartoum to end violence in Darfur, where about 200,000 people have been killed in the past few years and about 2.5 million driven from their homes.

Royal faces right-wing presidential candidate Nicolas Sarkozy in a run-off election on May 6. Most surveys put him ahead of the Socialist.

Sarkozy has ruled out a boycott of the Games over China's position on Sudan.

"The Olympic Games are a space of freedom. It will contribute to opening up China, and naturally, it's pacification," Sarkozy said earlier this month.