



UNITED NATIONS MISSION IN SUDAN

UNMIS

Media Monitoring Report, 23 December 07

(By Public Information Office)

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Highlights

UN/ Agencies

Allegations resurface against deputy commander of UN-AU force in Darfur (ST)

December 22, 2007 (NEW YORK) — US based rights watchdog Human Rights Watch (HRW) urged the United Nations and the African Union (AU) to further investigate alleged human right violations believed to be committed by the deputy commander of the Darfur peacekeeping force.

In a letter sent to Jean-Marie Guéhenno, UN Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations and Alpha Oumar Konare, chairperson of AU, HRW accused Major General Karenzi Karake of involvement in killings of civilians in the city of Kisangani in the Democratic Republic of Congo in June 2000.

“Press accounts identify General Karake as the commanding officer of Rwandan troops who fought against Ugandan army forces at Kisangani during that period” HRW letter said.

Karake came under the spotlight last August when the Rwandan United Democratic Forces (UDF) opposition group said that the general is responsible for a number of killings between 1992 and 2000.

The rights watchdog said that Karake should be removed if implicated. "If it is found that he bore responsibility for violations of international law, General Karake should be removed from his position as the Deputy Commander of UNAMID".

(ST)

\$ 1.2 billion (\$ 1.3 billion budget of the hybrid for one year, UN Secretariat to investigate on granting contract of the hybrid to American company: Sudan Ambassador to UN (AIRai AIAam)

(ST, AIRai AIAam), The United Nations General Assembly early Saturday approved 1.28 billion dollars to fund the proposed UN-African Union peacekeeping force for Sudan's war-torn Darfur region until next June 30.

The assembly reaffirmed that the mandate of the Hybrid Operation is to support the implementation of Darfur Peace Agreement, said the Sudanese Ambassador to the UN, Abdalmahmood Abdalhaleem.

He further said the General Assembly condemned the UN general secretariat for awarding the American defense contractor Lockheed Martin for the hybrid force infrastructure without soliciting a formal bid per UN rules, the official SUNA reported.

The assembly requested the Secretary General to observe the administrative and financial rule and demanded to not renew the current contract with the US firm. Further it asked the UN accounting department to probe the contract, Abdalmahmood added.

Last November during the discussion of the UN budget, the Sudanese envoy objected to award the UNAMID infrastructure to the American firm.

Abdel-Mahmood alleged that Lockheed Martin may not even be technically qualified for the contract. He further said that contact between the UN and Lockheed Martin took place before resolution 1769.

But, UN officials said that the contract was awarded to the US company due to "limited window of opportunity to tender a construction package". The UN triggered financial rule 105.16 which allow the UN Secretariat "to waive formal methods of solicitation in the best interest of the UN".

(ST)

UN has only 9, 000 troops at Darfur takeover (ST)

December 19, 2007 (UNITED NATIONS) — There will be only nine thousand peacekeepers in Darfur at the beginning of 2008, along with 140 Chinese engineers whose drills to search for water will still be en route, by ship, from China.

As the takeover of Darfur peacekeeping to the hybrid force approaches, a memo from the UN's Department of Peacekeeping Operations to the Security Council, published

by the New York based Inner City Press, shows that at year's end the peacekeeping force will consist of four battalions each from Nigeria and Rwanda, one from South Africa and one from Senegal.

Some time in the first two months of 2008, battalions from Egypt and Ethiopia are slated to deploy. Gambia will be reducing its force from 200 to 90. Also listed in the memo are police unit from Bangladesh and Nepal, and engineers from Pakistan.

About the listed 140 Chinese engineers, Inner City Press on Wednesday asked China's Deputy Permanent Representative Liu Zhenmin to confirm a source's account that the needed drills to search for water in Darfur will not be sent by air, but rather by boat. Ambassador Liu said that is true, the equipment is headed to Port Sudan and discussions are underway how to get it to Darfur. It is said that the cost of large Antonov cargo planes was deemed too expensive.

The Undersecretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mutrif Siddiq on December 18 said that priority for participation in the hybrid operation is given to Africa and then to Asian countries, adding that there would be resort to other alternatives through the joint framework between Sudan government and the hybrid operation if sufficient forces can not be provided for any reason and in a manner that does not raise suspicion or fears.

He said that the United States is not banned to give assistance to Sudan in the fields of transport, humanitarian and political fields, stating that the priority to provide personnel is not for the United States or the European countries.

(Inner City Press/ST)

GoNU (CPA, DPA, ESPA)

GoS rejects Natsios justification of his resignation (Sudan Vision)

By: Mona Al-Bashir, The Sudanese government has rejected the statement by the American Peace Envoy for Sudan, Andrew Natsios who justified resignation of his post because of his frustration at the slow pace of deploying the hybrid operation in Darfur.

The Sudanese Foreign Ministry spokesman, Ambassador Ali Al-Sadiq dismissed that reason as unacceptable, adding that Nations and others are aware of the parties behind the delay of the hybrid force. "We are also frustrated because we thought the appointment of Nations would serve normalize relations between Khartoum and Washington," said Al-Sadiq, adding that Natsios' eight visits to develop optimistic feeling of his success in his mission not only as an envoy for the Darfur peace, but also for improvement of bilateral relations. However, his mission in this later aspect was also a failure, Ali Al-Sadiq affirmed. Natsios' resignation came amid speculations about differences between himself and

some officials of US Department of State on how to deal with conditions in Sudan. Sudanese sources described Natsios as a hardliner in his dealings with Khartoum. Natsios who assumed his post in 2006 reportedly achieved no success in his mission. He recently posed a controversial idea calling for negotiating with the Darfur tribes instead of the Darfur factions. Meanwhile, the White House announced Friday that North Shore Republican Rich Williamson will serve as the president's next special envoy to war-torn Sudan.

Williamson, 58, served in senior foreign policy positions under Presidents Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush. He ran unsuccessfully for the U.S. Senate in 1992 and is the author of six foreign-policy books. He is a big backer of U.S. Sen. John McCain's campaign for president. He was described as a "hard-nosed negotiator"

Two planes collide at Khartoum International airport

December 23, 2007 (KHARTOUM) — Reports from Khartoum airport indicate that an Egyptian and Saudi aircrafts were involved in a minor collision on the ground on Sunday. There were no reports of injury. The Saudi plane is believed to be carrying Sudanese pilgrims.

(ST)

Clashes between SPLA and Miseriya in Girnty area (60 kms east of al Meram) (Alwan)

Clashes between the SPLA and the Miseriya tribe were reported yesterday in Al-Girnty area (60 kms east of Al-Meram town) in South Kordofan. According to sources the SPLA troops crossed the north-south border heading to the north and clashed with some nomads from the Miseriya tribe. Mohamed Rahama Abdelnabi and al Saad Mohamed Hamid Shibo, both from the Miseriya tribe, were killed. Ali al Shareef al Safi, Haran Nuar Mohamed Omer, Mohamed Rihmitallah Khamis and Tibaig Haran Rahama, all Miseriya, have suffered injuries. The Miseriya Union in Khartoum asked the SPLM/A to respect the 1956 borders between the north and the south.

SPLM makes changes in nominations to GoNU (Sudan Vision)

By: Zuleikha Abdel Raziq, SPLM has announced that it has made changes to its nominations to GoNU, while the Presidency Establishment has set coming Thursday as date for SPLM new Ministers taking of constitutional oath. The move ends a crisis between NCP and SPLM that lasted for almost two months.

In an answer to a question by Sudan Vision Daily, the Minister at the Presidency of GoSS, Dr. Luka Biong declined to disclose the names of those nominated to the Cabinet.

According to previous speculations, SPLM Secretary-General, Pagan Amum and Dr. Mansour Khalid were nominated as Ministers at the Council of Ministers and Foreign Affairs respectively.

Dr. Biong further stated that December 31, has been set as a date for completion of redeployment of the armed forces and SPLM/A from their current locations. The

move comes within the framework of the agreed-on security arrangements, he said, adding that the joint forces will be deployed in the oil regions. Meanwhile, the spokesman for the Joint Defence Council said that the Council will hold its first meeting in January to follow-up the implementation of the decisions issued by it and the Ceasefire Commission.

Undersecretary of Ministry of Foreign Affairs says JEM attacked Sirba area from a base in Chad (AIRai AIAam)

The Undersecretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Dr. Mutrif Sidiq, said that there are some Darfur rebel movements who launch military operations from Chad. He refuted the Chadian allegations on Sudan hosting rebels from Chad. Few days ago, Dr. Sidiq said, the JEM has attacked from a base in Chad the SAF force in Sirba area.

SLM Abdelwahid threatens to attack UN aircraft carrying Darfur rebels from Juba (AIRai AIAam)

The UN has returned back to Juba 14 leaders of the Darfur rebel movements who have finished meetings in Juba at which they agreed to establish one umbrella organization. The UN was planning to take the rebel leaders, headed by Ahmed Abdelshai, to the field in Darfur through Wau. While in Wau, the UN decided to take the rebel leaders back to Juba as it has received a warning from SLM Abdelwahid who threatened to attack the UN aircraft carrying the rebels.

Presidency approves DDR plan (AIRai AIAam)

The GoNU Minister of Presidential Affairs and the Head of the National DDR Council, General Bakri Hassan Salih, has approved the National Strategic Plan on DDR. He instructed the DDR Commissions in the north and the south to implement the strategy. The Executive Secretary of the National DDR Council, Osman Nouri, told SUNA that the strategy covers the period 2007-2011 with a total cost of \$ 2 billion. He said they are targeting 450,000-500,000 individuals in the north and the south.

SPLM Secretary General: SPLM ministers will be sworn in Thursday (Akhbar AIYom)

President al Bashir will receive on Wednesday this week the list of SPLM nominees for Ministerial portfolios in the GoNU. According to the SPLM Secretary General, Pagan Amum, the FVP and GoSS President, Salva Kiir, has completed consultations on the list of nominees. Amum said that there will be only minor changes in the earlier list. Amum informed that the SPLM Ministers will be sworn in on Thursday next week and will attend the meeting of the GoNU Council of Ministers which will be held after the official ceremony on the same day.

US Administration appoints new envoy for Sudan (ST, AIAyam)

The US President Envoy for Sudan, Andrew Natsios, who has resigned from his position, will be succeeded by Richard S. Williamson, a prominent Illinois

Republican and former U.S. ambassador who has held senior posts in three GOP administrations.

Oil rich Abyei fuels Sudan crisis (ST)

By Peter Eichstaedt and Hamid Taban, December 21, 2007 (THE HAGUE/JUBA) — Sudan's disputed Abyei region remains the source of ongoing tensions between the semi-autonomous region of South Sudan and the government of Sudan's President Omar al-Bashir.

Although the south recently agreed to end a boycott of the coalition government created by the 2005 comprehensive peace agreement, saying that most of its issues with al-Bashir had been resolved, the demarcation of the oil-rich Abyei region could sabotage the fragile peace.

Control of the Abyei region, where most of Sudan's estimated 6 billion barrels of oil reserves lie, will mean huge profits for whoever secures the region. Sudan already produces an estimated 500,000 barrels of oil per day, making it one of the largest producers in Africa.

Reaching an agreement over the Abyei region's borders that does not involve war, however, could be difficult as both sides seem reluctant to give up their claims.

In order to break the deadlock, however, some Sudanese officials indicated that they might accept international mediation to break the deadlock over the Abyei region.

In November, the US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, reportedly suggested to Kiir during his visit to Washington that China, Saudi Arabia and the US would propose a

(WPRI)

President Al-Bashir renews Government unilateral commitment to ceasefire in Darfur (SMC)

Khartoum (smc)SUNA, President of the Republic Field Marshal Omer Al- Bashir on Tuesday renewed in address to the Sudanese nation on occasion of Eid-Al-Fitr the Government unilateral commitment to ceasefire in Darfur as genuine desire for realizing peace through dialogue. He called upon the Darfur armed holders to incline to peace and to pursue dialogue as the route for achievement of peace , stability and development in Darfur

Foreign Ministry Describes Termination of Task of Human Rights Committee as Important Step (SMC)

The Director of the Human Rights Administration, Ambassador Abdul-Halim Abidin, has described the decision on termination of the seven-person committee for human rights in Sudan as an important step. In a press statement to SUNA,

Ambassador Abdul-Halim affirmed Sudan concern with the issues of human rights in the country in general and Darfur region especially. He said that the issue of human rights is not free politicization. He said that the reports of the envoy Sima Samar on human rights in Sudan are partly objective, while Sudan has reservations on other reports that were worked out by her. Ambassador Abidin said that dialogue and consultation between the government and Sima Samar is the best means to deal with the issues of human rights. He said that circulation of accusations and criticism through the media does not serve the pending issues in this regard. He referred to Sudan government's cooperation with the envoy human rights Sima Samar and was keen to facilitate her mission in Sudan.

Sudan's NDA leader calls for national reconciliation (ST)

December 21, 2007 (CAIRO — The leader of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) urged here on Friday all Sudanese political forces and groups to sit down for the national reconciliation, Egypt's official MENA news agency reported.

Mohamed Osman al-Mirghani made his appeal at a meeting with the Sudanese community and members of his party living in Egypt, greeting them on the occasion of the Islamic holiday of Eid al-Adha.

He further stressed the need to hold a national conference within the framework of his initiative.

(Xinhua)

Steep rise in Rift Valley Fever cases in Sudan: WHO (ST)

December 21, 2007 (GENEVA) — The World Health Organization (WHO) Friday warned that Rift Valley Fever (RVF) has spread rapidly in Sudan, with 218 fatalities and 631 infections since its outbreak in October.

The current estimates are a steep rise from the November figures provided by Sudan's health ministry which spoke of 362 cases, including 94 deaths, WHO said in a statement.

(AFP)

US President Special Envoy to Sudan resigns post (ST)

December 21, 2007 (WASHINGTON) — The United States' special envoy to Sudan, Andrew Natsios, has resigned from his post so he can spend more time teaching at Georgetown University, a senior U.S. official said on Friday.

While doing the special envoy job, Natsios has also been teaching at Georgetown University in Washington and he told the U.S. president in his resignation letter that he would like to return to that position full-time.

Several U.S. officials said Natsios had been frustrated at the slow pace of getting in a 26,000-strong African Union-U.N. peacekeeping force into Darfur.

(Reuters)

GoSS

Lakes State governor signs 2008 financial bill (ST)

December 21, 2007 (RUMBOK) — The government of Lakes State has celebrated here on Thursday December 20 the signing of financial bill. The bill was officially signed into law by state governor Daniel Awet Akot.

Lakes State Governor, Daniel Awet Akot, said that through the tax bill, Lakes state people would contribute to generate necessary revenue for the development of the state. He also said that this money would serve to provide basic social services. He said that public authorities have the duty to take care of orphans that their fathers scarified their lives during the struggle years.

(ST)

Four killed following cattle-rustling in Sudan's Jonglei (ST)

December 21, 2007 (BOR, Jonglei) — Four people were killed in violence that began with a deadly cattle-rustling raid by Mundari against Dinka on a remote Bor village, last Wednesday.

A group of armed Mundari attacked a Dinka cattle camp in Laguli on Wednesday December 19 in the morning killing one person during the raid. However, the death toll rose to four after the Dinka launched a retaliatory attack.

The new governor of Jonglei today promised to make disarmament his top priority among other things.

"There needs to be disarmament of all civilians in Jonglei state, and other thing will follow" said Kuol Manyang in his speech today to the local radio.

(ST)

South Sudan parliament passes 2008 budget (ST)

December 20, 2007 (JUBA) — The Lawmakers of Southern Sudan Assembly has, today evening, passed the budget for fiscal year 2008, describing it one of the best Christmas gifts to the people of Southern Sudan.

The budget proposes to raise revenues to the tune of Sudanese pounds 3,487,864,076 through collection of revenues from Oil, Personal Income Tax (PIT), customs duties, Value Added Tax (VAT) levies, corporate, airport fee, nationality and immigration fee, and non tax revenues.

It also pledged for provision of general reserve fund for the Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS) at tune of 48,000,000 during the fiscal year 2008.

The 2008 budget chapter one salaries total is Sudanese pounds 1,880,565,077, Operational cost is Sudanese pounds 797,613,876, Capital amount is 737,685,123 and the grand total in Sudanese pounds is 3,415,864,076.

"This has been a marathon debate but we must appreciate finance minister together with his team for a job well done", emphasized Igga.

The overall total approved budget by Legislators was based on total of human resources 112,059 compared to that of last year 84,367. The increased human resource number is 27,692.

(ST)

Darfur

Darfur rebels call for greater US involvement after Natsios resignation

By Wasil Ali, December 22, 2007 (WASHINGTON) — Two major Darfur rebel group called on the US administration to reenergize its role in the Darfur crisis after the Bush's special envoy resigned post on Friday.

"We hope the US role in the Darfur crisis will not be disrupted as a result of Natsios resignation" Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) spokesman Ahmed Hussein told Sudan Tribune. Hussein said that US policy should focus more closely on political and security tracks of the Darfur conflict.

Abdel-Wahid Al-Nur, leader of Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM) said that despite his disagreements with Natsios he "appreciates the effort undertaken by him throughout his tenure in trying to put an end to the misery of our people in Darfur". Al-Nur blasted Natsios last week after the latter accused the rebel leader of allying with Jinjaweed militia. Al-Nur said he is looking forward to working with Williamson.

(ST)

European Union donates 3 mln Euros to Darfur peace mediation (ST)

December 22, 2007 (BRUSSELS) – The European Commission has allocated 3 million Euros to support the African Union-United Nations team which is mediating between the Sudanese government and rebel movements in order to end the four year conflict in Darfur region.

This new EC contribution, combined with bilateral allocations from EU Member States, will make the EU by far the biggest donor to the peace process in Darfur, with an expected total contribution of € 9 million.

This new EC support under the Instrument for Stability will provide a major boost to the newly established and UN administered Trust Fund to support the work of the AU-UN Joint Mediation Support Team (JMST) based in Khartoum.

(ST)

Islamic donors conference for supporting Darfur to be convened beginning of 2008 (SMC)

The High National Committee in charge of preparing projects for the Islamic Donors Conference for supporting Darfur has completed listing projects prior to be submitted them to the donors conference, scheduled to be convened in Khartoum by the beginning of 2008. The projects will cover education, health, water, infrastructure, model villages and producing families at initial cost of two billion dollars. SUNA learnt that some fifty projects will be given priority and are to be implemented in the first phase while strategic projects will be achieved in the second phase. The projects are prepared in coordination with Jeddah-based Islamic Development Bank.

Sudanese acknowledges he misled French charity (ST)

December 22, 2007 (NDJAMENA) — A Sudanese man on Saturday told the trial in Chad of six French charity workers accused of trying to kidnap 103 children that he had misled them into believing some of the children were Darfur war orphans.

Souleimane Ibrahim Adam said he signed certificates that 63 children that were to be flown to France were Sudanese orphans. He said he knew they had Chadian parents who were still alive.

Sources close to the case suggest Paris and Ndjamenia may have already agreed for the charity workers to be transferred back home to serve out their sentence in the event of a conviction.

(AFP)

Darfur rebels blame AU for putting lives of 4 commanders at risk (ST)

December 21, 2007 (JUBA) — Darfur recently unified rebel groups blamed the African Union (AU) for putting lives of four military field commanders at risk as they were carried to unsafe location in Darfur, rebel spokesperson said.

Isam Eddine al-Haj, the spokesperson of the newly formed Sudan Liberation Movement told Sudan Tribune that an AU plane transported four rebel commanders from Juba in southern Sudan to unsafe site in southern Darfur far from the indicated position.

He further said that the four rebel commanders who were regaining their position in Darfur after taking part in the SPLM sponsored reunification meeting were without food or arms.

The rebel spokesperson said the commanders group fled to Darfur on Sunday December 16. He added since that day they were in touch with the AU requesting to send another plane to take them to the right place but in vain.

"The AU has sent the other plane just on Thursday December 20. Fortunately they didn't meet a Sudanese army patrol of the Janjaweed." Isam al-Haj said.

(ST)

Rebel JEM leader threatens to attack Darfur capital (ST)

December 20, 2007 (KHARTOUM) — Darfur rebels on Thursday threatened to attack West Darfur's state capital El-Geneina and told aid workers to stay in their compounds and away from government military bases.

"JEM is surrounding El-Geneina town from all sides," JEM leader Khalil Ibrahim told Reuters from Darfur. "JEM will take the city."

"We are saying to NGO (non-governmental organisations) not to fear but they should take care and stay in their compounds."

(Reuters)

Chad president says Sudan recruiting rebels (ST)

December 20, 2007 (N'DJAMENA) — Chad President Idriss Deby has warned his people they risk civil war unless they unite behind him to combat eastern rebels he said were being recruited and paid by Sudan.

"The entire country should stand behind its government," Deby said, repeating Chadian allegations that his rebel opponents were financed and supported by neighbour Sudan. "Chad's sons are used as mercenaries by a neighbour that is jealous of seeing Chad prosper in peace," he said.

"Sudan's money is circulating. Recruitment by Sudan (of Chadians) is taking place in the sight and knowledge of the whole world, even inside our territory," he added.

(Reuters)