



UNITED NATIONS MISSION IN SUDAN

UNMIS

Media Monitoring Report, 14 February 08

(By Public Information Office)

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Highlights

UN/ Agencies

UNMIS (Chris Johnson) denies evacuating staff from Abyei (AlAyam, AlSudani)

The Head of UNMIS Office in Abyei, Chris Johnson, refuted reports on evacuation of the UN and INGOs personnel from the Abyei area due to clashes between the SPLA and the Miseriya tribe militias in which five SPLA soldiers have been killed.

UN mission provides water pipes for Khartoum IDPs (ST)

February 13, 2008 (KHARTOUM) — About 30,000 people in a Khartoum suburb are enjoying clean, drinking water piped to their homes, rather than hauling the precious liquid in jerry cans from distant towers.

The new water pipes flowing into Haj Yousif area were laid down in three projects funded by UNMIS through its Civil Military Cooperation (CIMIC) unit, and carried out in coordination with the international non-governmental organization CARE.

Not only have the pipes greatly improved the lives of people in the district, who are mainly internally displaced persons (IDPs) from Southern Sudan and Darfur, they have benefited 17 schools, eight mosques and seven churches.

According to CIMIC Deputy Chief Major Bruce Clayton, the projects aimed to promote health and hygiene, improve public infrastructure and educate local people about UNMIS' mandate.

As an added bonus, the pipes have freed women and children from time spent fetching water. "No longer do women and children have to spend much of their day toting water from the towers in jerrycans.

They can now spend their time more constructively working, attending school or, in the case of children, playing," said Clayton.

The water projects began in September 2006 and were completed 29 January 2008, at a total cost of about \$75,000. Local block committees organized labour for the work and contributed some additional financing.

(ST)

Armed attacks by unidentified group in southern Sudan concern UN officials (UN)

13 February 2008 – Members of an unidentified armed group have launched a series of violent attacks against locals in southern Sudan's Central Equatoria state over the past month, prompting United Nations officials to organize the distribution of basic relief supplies to the affected population in the already impoverished region.

The UN Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) reports that the attacks have taken place across three counties in Central Equatoria, which borders Uganda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), since mid-January.

All the attacks have been characterized by violence, looting and abductions, although some of the people abducted were released subsequently. So far there is no confirmed toll of deaths or injuries.

UNMIS says locals claim the attacks are being carried out by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), the notorious rebel group that has been fighting Government forces across northern Uganda for the past two decades.

UN spokesperson Michele Montas told reporters today that several UN humanitarian agencies, including the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), have committed to distributing basic supplies to the affected populations.

The World Food Programme (WFP) has also undertaken to deliver supplies as soon as the agency, which is undertaking an assessment, has a clearer picture of the security situation in Central Equatoria.

Time to punish parties who use or abuse children in armed conflicts – UN envoy (UN)

12 February 2008 – The Security Council must "take concrete and targeted measures" against those parties that persistently use or abuse children during armed conflicts around the world, the United Nations envoy on the issue said today, urging that well-meaning words be transformed into effective actions.

Addressing the Council during a day-long **open debate**, the Secretary-General's Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict Radhika Coomaraswamy noted the ongoing impunity for those persistent violators that use or abuse children during wars.

From the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) to Myanmar and from Sri Lanka to Uganda, parties to armed conflicts kill, maim, abduct or sexually assault children; deny humanitarian access to children in need; and recruit and use child soldiers. In total, at least 58 parties are known to be offenders.

Ms. Coomaraswamy called for the establishment of a mechanism by the 15-member Council to review and oversee targeted measures against violators to end their impunity.

“It is most important that the Council make good on its promise in order to ensure the credibility of this exercise,” she said. “The targeted measures could include the imposition of travel restrictions on leaders and their exclusion from any governance structures and amnesty provisions, the imposition of arms embargoes, a ban on military assistance, and restriction on the flow of financial resources to the parties concerned.”

While acknowledging that some parties have made important commitments in peace accords and action plans to stop recruiting child soldiers, the Special Representative warned that in some regional conflicts – such as those in the Great Lakes and Horn regions of Africa – cross-border recruitment from refugee camps is surging.

The detention of children for alleged association with armed groups is also worrying and a violation of international standards, she said, noting that many detained children face ill-treatment, torture, interrogations and food deprivation.

In addition, systematic and deliberate attacks against schoolchildren are escalating in numerous conflicts, particularly Afghanistan, while in the DRC and Burundi “appalling levels of sexual and gender-based violence” are occurring.

UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF) Executive Director Ann M. Veneman told the Council debate that it was possible to reintegrate children used by armed forces and groups, especially once they are given the necessary skills and assistance to become productive members of their communities.

“Yet reintegration is a difficult and long-term process requiring patience and long-term commitment,” Ms. Veneman said, adding that UNICEF is already working in several countries – notably the Central African Republic (CAR), Côte d’Ivoire and Sudan – to reintegrate children.

She also highlighted the particular vulnerability of girls and women during armed conflicts because of sexual violence.

“Allow me to share with you one story as told by a 14-year-old girl in Liberia. She said: ‘The attackers tied me up and raped me because I was fighting. About five of them did the same thing to me until one of their commanders who knew my father came and stopped them, but also took me to make me his wife. I just accepted him because of fear.’ We need to put an end to the abuse, the rapes and the sexual violence.”

Representatives of dozens of countries then addressed the Council during today's debate, which follows the recent release of a UN report stating that children are still recruited and used in armed conflicts in at least 13 nations worldwide. They are Afghanistan, Burundi, Chad, the CAR, Colombia, the DRC, Myanmar, Nepal, the Philippines, Somalia, Sudan, Sri Lanka and Uganda.

After the debate concluded, Ambassador Ricardo Alberto Arias of Panama, which holds the rotating Council presidency, read out a **statement** in which the Council called for the full implementation of its monitoring and reporting mechanism on children and armed conflict.

The Council also invited its Working Group which deals with the subject to continue proposing effective recommendations for its consideration, according to the presidential statement.

The text also noted the need for a broad strategy of conflict prevention that tackles the root causes of armed conflicts in a comprehensive manner, such as promoting sustainable development, poverty eradication, national reconciliation, good governance, democracy and the rule of law.

GoNU (CPA, DPA, ESPA)

Sudan First Vice President says Abyei report 'binding' to ruling party (ST)

February 13, 2008 (CAIRO) — Sudan's First Vice President and president of South Sudan Salva Kiir complained to the Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak about the lack of implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) by the ruling National Congress Party (NCP).

Kiir told reporters that he briefed Mubarak on the progress of the CPA implementation and the outstanding issues particularly the disputed Abyei region.

Sudan's First Vice President was on a two day visit to Cairo that focused on the Egyptian role in the reconstruction projects.

The Southern leader told the semi-governmental Al-Ahram daily that the NCP is the party blocking the implementation of the Abyei protocol which is part of the Naivasha agreement that ended two decades of the civil war between the North and the South.

"The ABC report should be binding to all parties but the NCP rejected it and is looking for an alternative. This is not acceptable to us and we will stick the report" Kiir said.

The remarks by Kiir could signal further tensions between the peace partners over the oil rich region. Both sides in the past have laid down proposals to break the deadlock on the issue including international arbitration.

However Kiir closed the door in front of any attempts for third party intervention on the matter.

“Everything that we agreed on within the CPA should be implemented because if we agree to a renegotiation this will open the door for a more revisions to the peace accord which will send us back to square one” he added.

Sudan First Vice President accused the NCP of arming the Misseriya tribesmen to fight the SPLA.

“Where did the Misseriya’s get all these trucks loaded with heavy weapons? This is not basic tribal arms. They are in possession of heavy artillery. Where did they get this from? Some of those who died in the December and January fighting were Sudanese army officers and we even have their military ID’s” Kiir said.

“We hold the NCP responsible for all this escalation that may lead to the renewal of war’ he added.

Kiir accused certain figures within the NCP of orchestrating the clashes in Abyei but declined to name them.

“This is a Dinka region and the Misseriya’s had the right to use the area for cattle grazing. Our ancestors did not revoke that right and they lived peacefully with them. What is happening now from the Misseriya such as blocking the road to Abyei is not their own position; there are senior politicians pushing them to fight the Dinka’s who were the main supporters of SPLA during the civil war” he added.

(ST)

Kiir: Miseriya movements are incited by NCP (AlSahafa), Aldo Ajo suspects government of backing tribal clashes in Abyei (Sudan Tribune)

A prominent SPLM leader responsible for Dinka and Miseriya Affairs has suspected Khartoum government of instigating and fueling inter-tribal clashes in North Bahr al Ghazal and Abyei.

Aldo, in a press conference at the SPLM Headquarters in Khartoum, said the clashes between Dinka and Miserya is a historical feud dating back to the Ottman Turks and Mahdiah eras and warned the Miseriya tribesmen of starting threatening the Dinka tribe and the SPLA for they will both defend their region.

Miseriya Amir: we will not open road between south Sudan and Abyei (AlWattan)

The Amir of the Miseriya Mukhtar Babo Nimir said they will not compromise on the issue of Abyei. In a special state to AlWattan, Nimir said the Miseriya will not accept to allow the Dinka to control administrative institutions. He said they will not open the roads to the south before the Presidency reaches a lasting solution for Abyei.

Abyei security committee (SAF battalion 31, JIU, National Security) bans movement to and out of town (AlKhartoum)

The Abyei area security committee, which is formed of the Commander of the SAF Battalion 31; JIU Commander and Head of National Security, has issued a decree banning movement to and out of Abyei town. The committee told the people of Abyei that the town is secure and, hence, no reason for leaving (displacement).

Committee to investigate disappearance of northern Sudanese diplomat in Juba (AlRai AlAam)

Minister of State at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, al Samani al Wasila, said that a fact-finding committee has been set up to investigate into the disappearance of the MoFA Third Secretary, Husni Mustafi, in Juba. The diplomat was accompanying the delegation of the AU which visited Juba on 31st January.

Swedish Lundin Petroleum starts work in Sudan Block 5B (ST)

February 13, 2008 (LODON) — Swedish Lundin Petroleum AB has started drilling operations in Block 5B, the oil firm announced today.

The exploration well Nyal-1, located on the western flank of the basin was spudded on Thursday, 7 February 2008. The well is located in the "dry land" area of the block where several prospects have been identified as a result of the recently acquired 2D seismic program.

The exploration well Nyal-1, with a planned depth of 2,100 metres, will target the Upper to Lower Cretaceous sandstone reservoirs that have proved highly productive in other producing fields in the Muglad Basin. The gross unrisks recoverable prospective resource for the Nyal prospect is estimated at 176 million barrels of oil (mmbo).

In parallel, preparations for the start of the "swamp" area drilling campaign with the first exploration well Wan Machar-1 (previously Umm Dandalo) are ongoing.

Following accusations by HRW of fueling fighting in southern Sudan, at the end of November 2003, the Swedish oil company sold most of its oil interests in Sudan to a Malaysian state-owned company in June 2003.

Rights to the concession of Block 5B were awarded under an Exploration & Production Sharing Agreement signed on 2 May 2001, to a consortium composed of Petronas Carigali White Nile (5B) Ltd (39%), Lundin Petroleum AB (Lundin Block 5B BV) (24,5%), ONGC Videsh Ltd (23,5%) and Sudapet Ltd (13%).

Furthermore, the partnership has accepted the recommendation of the National Petroleum Commission to assign a 10% share to the Southern Sudan Oil Company to be allocated on a "pro rata" basis from each of the partners' shares.

The Block is operated by WNPOC, a joint operating company between PETRONAS and Sudapet on behalf of the consortium members.

Block 5B is located in the Muglad Basin and covers an area of 20,119 square kilometers. Muglad is the main oil-producing basin in Sudan and has seen the development of several large oilfields over the past few years. So far the consortium has been active in reprocessing and reinterpreting existing seismic data.

(ST)

Sudan parties close to election bill deal (ST)

February 13, 2008 (JUBA) — Sudan's two main parties are close to agreeing on a draft bill paving the way to historic national elections, but remain split over how votes will be counted, a southern minister said on Wednesday.

Khartoum's National Congress Party (NCP) and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), which leads southern Sudan, had made strong progress in finalising draft legislation on how the election would run, said the south's Minister for Public Service, Awut Deng.

She said they were hoping to reach a final compromise by Sunday, and that Sudan's National Constitutional Review Commission, dominated by the two parties, had already "passed a large part of the bill".

But they were still divided on how many of the votes should be counted through proportional representation and how many through a first-past-the-post constituency system.

There were also disagreements over how many seats should be reserved for women, and how many votes smaller parties would have to gain before winning a seat.

Both sides had agreed to let international observers into all polling stations, she added.

They had also decided that while the president would appoint the Electoral Commission, it would still have to be approved by two-thirds of the standing parliament.

(Reuters)

Finance Ministry denies receiving south customs revenues since 2005 (Sudan Vision)

By: Alsamani Awadallah, Federal Ministry of Finance and National Economy has denied receiving any amounts from the Customs Department of the Government of the South during the period January 2005 - 31 December 2007 at a time when the Finance Ministry in the Government of South Sudan has affirmed that it has remitted all customs revenues up to July 2007 and demanded its share of those revenues stipulated under the Comprehensive Peace Agreement.

In that respect, Minister of State for Finance, Dr. Lual Lual Deng, said the committee entrusted with collection of non-oil revenues in the South has concurred on assigning the concerned committee to investigate on those revenues and submit its report within 30 days.

Lual disclosed in press statements he made yesterday that a meeting will be held today in the Finance Ministry building and later in Juba to look into the question of the revenues. He further stated that the two parties have agreed on merging the customs departments in the North and the South after the committee has appointed competent customs officers in the South, adding that SPLA will meanwhile undertake the task of providing protection for customs personnel along the southern borders and assist the Customs Department in collection of non-oil revenues. The two parties, he said, have also agreed that the Federal Finance Ministry will be the sole organ responsible for exemptions.

The Minister of Finance in the Government of the South, Koul Athian Mawien, affirmed that the Government of the South has no knowledge of the whereabouts of those revenues nor has it received its share in them. He added that the committee has discussed the issue of appointing customs officers in the South and raised questions on who will be in charge of those

appointments.

For his part, the General Secretary of the Tax Chamber, Lt. Gen. Abdallah Hassan Eisa, said the Chamber should be empowered to collect revenues accrued from profit of works tax, personal income and federal stamp as well as to be present in outposts of towns and to calculate job vacancies to train cadres in the South and employ them in the Federal Chamber.

The Deputy Chief of Customs Police, Maj. Gen. Fred Riek Lokuku, said there are still seven pending points related to the Customs Department of the South which are expected to be decided at the coming meeting. He indicated that certain political and security parties in the South intervene in customs affairs, citing the illegal appointment of 318 officers and failure to remit the revenues for the months of November and December 2007 and January 2008 to the Central Bank of Sudan/ Juba Branch. He further revealed that subcommittees have been formed for deciding the question of customs revenues.

The Special Committee for Organizing Collection of Non-oil Revenues in the South has convened in response to a directive issued by the Executive Joint Political Committee co-chaired by GoS Vice President Ali Osman Mohammed Taha and GoSS Vice President Dr. Riek Machar for the purpose of overseeing collection of non-oil revenues to be distributed to the North and South in accordance with the provisions of the Wealth-sharing Protocol.

GoSS

Arab league to hold investment conference in South Sudan (ST)

February 13, 2008 (CAIRO) — Arab League chief, and the President of southern Sudan government have agreed to hold an investment conference in southern Sudan to attract Arab funds into the region.

Arab League (AL) Secretary General Amr Musa said Wednesday his talks with the visiting Sudanese First Vice-President Salva Kiir Mayadrit focused on preparations for an investment conference in southern Sudan to be organized by the Cairo-based pan-Arab bloc later this year.

Musa said the Arab world had a wealth of cash and could invest in southern Sudan which was rich in natural.

The conference is aimed at attracting Arab investments and encouraging the private sector to invest in southern Sudan, added the AL chief.

Musa added the unity of Sudan encourages Arabs to invest in the country, particularly in southern Sudan.

Kiir, who left here on Wednesday after a two-day visit to Egypt, also held talks with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak earlier in the day.

During the talks with Mubarak, Kiir believed that peace and development are correlated, saying a united Sudan could survive when its northern and southern regions had equal shares of Arab investments.

Mubarak promised to do what he could to call on Egyptian businessmen to invest in development projects in southern Sudan, Kiir said.

Kiir stressed that national unity should be within a viable and attractive framework, which is basically the job of the national unity government in Khartoum.

(ST)

SPLA and South Sudan police clash in Upper Nile (ST)

February 13, 2008 (KHARTOUM) – Southern Sudan army and southern Sudan police clashed in Khorflus village in Upper Nile State, the UN mission reported on Wednesday.

Fighting between the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) and Southern Sudan Police Service (SSPS) was reported in the village of Khorflus (28 kilometres south of Malakal) on 11 February.

The UN news bulletin didn't give further details on the causes of the incident. However it said that the situation remains tense, and the total number of the people killed still unconfirmed. UNMIS has provided medical treatment to the wounded and is assisting with restoration of peace to the area.

UNMIS Sector Commander Col. Anil Singh Rathore arrived in Khorflus on 12 February to consult with the local Commissioner, political leaders and area villagers. Today, he is meeting with the SPLA and SSPS.

The UN also reported that a SPLM senior member visiting Tonj (96 kilometres south of Wau) on 12 February for a political campaign was arrested by a Tonj police officer (also a senior SPLM member) and severely beaten in detention.

Due to the nature of his injuries, the victim was evacuated from Wau to Khartoum by air.

(ST)

Darfur

Beijing Olympic organizers stunned by Spielberg's pullout over Darfur (ST)

February 13, 2008 (BEIJING) — Beijing Olympic organizers appeared to be caught flat-footed Wednesday by Hollywood director Steven Spielberg's announcement he wouldn't be involved with the Games' opening and closing ceremonies because Beijing isn't doing enough to help end the crisis in Darfur.

The announcement by Spielberg, who was to serve as artistic adviser, follows a months-long campaign by activists to highlight the authoritarian communist regime's curbs on human rights and free speech at home, and its close relationship with the Sudanese government that is accused of permitting widespread abuses in Darfur.

Two spokesmen for the Beijing organizing committee said they were following the issue and preparing a response. The Chinese Foreign Ministry said it was seeking more information.

Spielberg's announcement Tuesday could be a major blow to Beijing's promotion of the Aug. 8-24 Olympics as a symbol of China's integration into mainstream global society.

Beijing has invested billions of dollars and its national prestige into what it hopes will be a glorious showcase of China's rapid development from an impoverished agrarian nation to a rising industrial power.

Already, however, the country has been heavily beset by criticism from rights groups, celebrities and international media that threatens to dampen the mood surrounding the Games.

Spielberg joined actress Mia Farrow and activists worldwide to demand that Beijing exert political leverage on Sudan's government to help end the crisis, in which government-backed militia have battled rebels since 2003, leaving more than 200,000 people dead and an estimated 2.5 million displaced.

"China's economic, military and diplomatic ties to the government of Sudan continue to provide it with the opportunity and obligation to press for change," Spielberg said.

Spielberg, whose 2005 film "Munich" dealt with the killings of 11 Israeli athletes at the 1972 Olympics, said he had left unsigned his contract to serve as an artistic adviser to the Games' opening and closing ceremonies in hopes that dialogue with China would produce results.

He noted China's support for a U.N. resolution calling for a joint United Nations-African Union peacekeeping force in Darfur, but said that hadn't been enough.

"The situation has never been more precarious - and while China's representatives have conveyed to me that they are working to end the terrible tragedy in Darfur, the grim realities of the suffering continue unabated," Spielberg said.

Spielberg was to have worked as a consultant to one of China's best-known directors, Zhang Yimou, along with Australian Ric Birch, director of the Sydney Games' ceremonies in 2000.

A request for comment e-mailed to Zhang's spokesman garnered no immediate response, and Birch couldn't immediately be reached for comment.

China buys two-thirds of Sudan's oil exports, while selling the regime weapons and defending Khartoum in the U.N. Security Council.

Already this week, the British Olympic Association was compelled to acknowledge that an agreement it asked its athletes to sign appeared to go beyond rules laid out by the International Olympic Committee barring any "demonstration or political, religious or racial propaganda" at an Olympic venue or area.

Rights groups had castigated the BOA for attempting to gag its athletes and a number of other national Olympic committees responded by ruling out similar restrictions.

Beijing's response to such criticism has been to angrily lash out at what it calls attempts to "politicize" the Games.

"To link the Darfur issue to the Olympics is a move to politicize the Olympics and this is inconsistent with the Olympics spirit and will bear no fruit," Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Jiang Yu said Jan. 24 - the ministry's most recent comment on the issue.

Beijing has highlighted its own efforts to mitigate the situation in Darfur, including the dispatch of engineering troops to prepare for the arrival of a hybrid peacekeeping force. It says its economic ties are helping to reduce conflict by alleviating poverty.

(AP)

EU force to protect Darfur refugees pledges to Avoid Chad conflict (ST)

February 13, 2008 (NDJAMENA) — The head of an E.U. peacekeeping force deploying to protect Darfur refugees pledged Wednesday that troops wouldn't become embroiled in the conflict between Chad's government and rebels.

The European Union resumed deployment Tuesday of the peacekeeping force to Chad and the Central African Republic, after suspending it at the start of the month when rebels stormed the capital Ndjamena.

"The framework of the operation has not changed, nor have the objectives," said French General Jean-Philippe Ganascia, local head of the European peacekeeping force, which is expected to include 3,700 troops.

He added: "Our mandate is to protect civilians."

But their job may have been made more difficult by alleged support given to Chad's government by French troops deployed in the central African nation as part of a separate mission there.

The French defense ministry has said no French soldiers or special forces were involved in fighting between Chadian rebels and government forces, but rebels dispute the claim.

Rebel spokesman Abderaman Koulamallah has said France had "needlessly put the lives of its own nationals in danger" by allowing its troops to support President Idriss Deby Itno.

Most of the troops in the E.U. force will be provided by France, and peacekeepers will be based in eastern areas in Chad close to Sudan's border, near where rebels have been known to operate. Chad has long claimed the rebels are backed by Sudan.

(AFP)

Miscellaneous

African Union opens liaison office in Sudan (ST)

February 13, 2008 (KHARTOUM) — Following transfer of authority from its mission (AMIS) in Sudan to the hybrid operation UNAMID, the African Union has announced the opening of an AU Liaison Office in Sudan.

The AU Office shall be based in Khartoum and Juba. Temporarily it will be headed by Boitshoko Mokgatlhe, Senior Political Officer and Officer-in-Charge, pending the arrival of Ambassador Mahmoud Kane, former Head of the Darfur Integrated Task Force (DITF), who has been appointed Head of the new AU Liaison Office in Sudan.

The African Union Commission has also appointed Ambassador M.G. Samaki of Nigeria as Senior Political Officer and Officer-in-Charge of the Juba Office.

Also, the African Union has notified the Sudanese government of its intention to appoint Oluyemi Adeniji, former Nigerian Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of the Interior, as AU Special Envoy for the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA).

As one of the guarantors of the CPA, the African Union is mandated to follow-up on the implementation of the peace agreement and review its progress – thus the need for an AU Liaison Office in Khartoum and Juba.

The Officer-in-Charge of the new AU Liaison Office in Sudan, Boitshoko Mokgatlhe, who is originally from Botswana, is an expert on the CPA. He served as Special Assistant to the former AU Special Envoy to the Sudan Peace Process, Ambassador Baba Gana Kingibe in 2003-2005.

During that time, Boitshoko was involved in the Sudan Peace Talks in Kenya that produced the CPA. Since 2005 and until his recent appointment to head the new AU Liaison Office in Sudan, Mr. Mokgatlhe was in charge of the CPA implementation file for the African Union, and based in Khartoum.

The AU Liaison Office in Sudan shall take over most of the assets of the former African Union Mission in the Sudan (AMIS) and shall be located at the former AMIS Headquarters on Street 49, Amarat, Khartoum.

(ST)

The son of President of Jamaat Ansar al Sunah arrested in connection to killing of US diplomat (AlIntibaha)

Security authorities have arrested last week the son of the Jamaat Ansar Al Sunah (Ansar al Sunah Group). According to some reports he has been arrested in connection to the killing of the US diplomat on 31st December 2007.