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(By Public Information Office)

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Highlights

UN/ Agencies

[Fresh round of aerial bombing in West Darfur forces UN staff to relocate \(UN\)](#)

19 February 2008 – The United Nations refugee agency has had to withdraw its staff from the volatile Sudanese-Chadian border area after a series of aerial bombardments over the past two days in West Darfur that have also sparked deep concern from Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and the world body’s top humanitarian official.

Nine staff with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) had been caring for newly arrived Sudanese refugees in the Birak area of eastern Chad before the sudden relocation, the agency reported.

“It is extremely frustrating to have to withdraw staff from the border,” said Jorge Holly, head of the UNHCR field office in the eastern Chadian town of Guereda. “It is not only sad, but frustrating, because we cannot provide the protection assistance we wish to give to these newly arrived refugees.”

Mr. Holly said the team would return immediately to the Birak area – currently home to as many as 10,000 Darfurians – as soon as the security situation calmed down. Those refugees arrived in the area only a week or so ago after militia attacks, reportedly backed by Government forces, against three other towns in West Darfur.

The UNHCR staff left for Guereda a few hours after a group of refugees arrived from West Darfur carrying a 55-year-old whom they said had lost both her legs during an air raid yesterday by Sudanese Antonov planes on the Aro Sharow camp for internally displaced persons (IDPs). The woman later died.

One of the relocated **UNHCR** staff said they heard the sounds of bombs and explosions coming from just across the border in Sudan and felt the battle on the ground as well.

Aro Sharow is normally home to about 4,000 to 5,000 IDPs seeking safety from the conflict between rebels, Government forces and allied militias that has engulfed the arid Darfur region since 2003.

Describing the bombing of Aro Sharow as unacceptable, Mr. Ban said in a statement released by his spokesperson that all parties to the Darfur conflict must immediately end hostilities and commit to the political process being led by the Special Envoys of the UN and African Union.

“A negotiated settlement to the Darfur conflict cannot take place amid continuing violence and the massive displacement of civilians,” he said.

John Holmes, the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and the Emergency Relief Coordinator, also urged maximum restraint from all sides amid reports that further violence is imminent.

“I am very concerned for the civilian population caught in the middle of this violence,” he said yesterday. “Should further attacks occur, the consequences for 20,000 civilians in this area could be disastrous.”

In his **statement** Mr. Ban voiced alarm about fresh reports indicating that Government forces and allied militia groups were massing in the Jebel Moon area of West Darfur, calling it “a worrying sign that there will be continued hostilities in the area.

“In addition to putting the lives of innocent civilians at risk, the ongoing violence significantly reduces the humanitarian community’s access to those in need of life-saving assistance.”

Mr. Holmes noted that UN humanitarian agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have been working to assess and deliver assistance to the beleaguered civilian inhabitants of West Darfur after the Sudanese Government lifted a blockade of almost two months of the state’s northern corridor.

But, “as the Government has reportedly now banned all flights to areas north of El Geneina [the state capital] for the next three days, further efforts to assess the humanitarian situation on the ground are limited,” he warned.

More than 200,000 people have been killed in the Darfur conflict and at least 2.2 million others displaced, and the hybrid UN-AU peacekeeping force deployed to the region (**UNAMID**) is working to try to quell the violence and suffering.

[Peace accord between north and south Sudan still on track, says UN envoy \(UN\)](#)

19 February 2008 – The top United Nations envoy to Sudan told the Security Council today that the implementation of the January 2005 comprehensive peace agreement ending the long-running north-south civil war remains on track, despite being behind schedule.

Ashraf Qazi, the Secretary-General’s Special Representative to Sudan, said the overall security in the ceasefire zone remains relatively stable, but tensions between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Sudan People’s Liberation Army (SPLA) actually increased along the current boundary between northern and southern Sudan.

Mr. Qazi warned that while the working relationship between the two parties – which fought the 21-year civil war until 2005 – was relatively cordial, it suffered from a significant lack of trust and confidence.

But the envoy pointed to several important upcoming milestones for the accord (CPA) ending the war, including the conduct of a national census and then the holding of national elections next year.

The most recent UN report on the implementation of the CPA found that major challenges lie ahead, but praised the leaders of both sides for demonstrating a willingness to resolve their differences through dialogue.

As many as two million people were killed and 4.5 million others displaced during Sudan’s north-south civil war, which is separate from the conflict in the country’s western region of Darfur.

[Ugandan agreement with rebels brings progress to long conflict, says UN envoy \(UN\)](#)

19 February 2008 – The United Nations envoy for the peace process between the Ugandan Government and the rebel Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) says a deal signed by the two sides early this morning represents real progress in the continuing negotiations towards ending the conflict.

Joaquim Chissano, the Secretary-General's Special Envoy for the LRA-Affected Areas, informed senior officials at UN Headquarters of the breakthrough, UN spokesperson Marie Okabe told reporters today.

The agreement signed this morning deals with mechanisms to implement the principles for accountability and reconciliation that both the Government and the LRA – which signed a ceasefire in 2006 to end two decades of fighting in northern Uganda – agreed to in June last year.

The accord was reached after Mr. Chissano, a former president of Mozambique, arrived in the region on Friday to help with efforts to find a comprehensive agreement to end the conflict. After arriving in Uganda on Friday, he then continued on to Juba, southern Sudan, for further consultations.

Juba is the site of peace talks between the two sides, which are taking place under the mediation of the Government of Southern Sudan.

[Sudan's Abyei remains a potential source of conflict - UN envoy](#)

February 19, 2008 (UNITED NATIONS) — Abyei, an oil-rich region straddling northern and southern Sudan, remains a potential trouble spot three years after the signing of a peace deal that ended decades of civil war, a U.N. envoy said on Tuesday.

The 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement was a historic north-south pact that ended two decades of civil war and promised southerners a referendum in 2011 on whether to split from Sudan and form their own country.

Tensions have worsened recently in the north-south border region due to the failure of Khartoum and the former rebel Sudan People's Liberation Movement, or SPLM, party that now leads the south to reach an agreement on the demarcation of the boundary of Abyei, the source of much of Sudan's energy reserves.

"The situation in the Abyei area has not changed materially ... and the area remains a potential flash point for the resumption of conflict," U.N. special envoy to Sudan, Ashraf Qazi, said in the written text of a speech he delivered at a closed-door session of the U.N. Security Council.

The status of Abyei was left unresolved in the 2005 peace deal.

There were clashes around Abyei in December and January between southern troops and Misseriya tribesmen. South Sudan's president, Salva Kiir, said the Misseriya were being supported by elements from the northern Sudanese army.

A report by U.S. human rights group Enough described Abyei in January as "Sudan's Kashmir" that could spark another civil war if left unresolved.

"The people of Abyei have been denied the dividends of peace since the signing of the CPA," Qazi said. "They have been deprived of ... basic service related to the provision of security, education, health and employment."

He said the issue of Abyei was the "biggest stumbling block between the two partners" — the SPLM and the National Congress Party, or NCP, of Sudanese President Omar Hassan al-Bashir.

The NCP and the SPLM were the two main partners in the power-sharing deal that came out of the 2005 peace deal.

Sudan's north-south war claimed 2 million lives and drove more than 4 million from their homes. But difficulties implementing the agreement to end the war and continued tensions have been overshadowed by international attention on a newer conflict in Sudan's western Darfur region.

DISPUTE OVER OIL REVENUES

An important dispute concerns the so-called Abyei Boundaries Commission's report on the demarcation of Abyei's border, he said. The NCP has rejected it, while the SPLM has accepted it.

That is a crucial issue, Qazi said, because demarcation of the border "will impact on ... the national census, elections, sharing of oil revenues and redeployment of forces."

The issue of Abyei's oil wealth is especially divisive.

But Qazi said a new ad hoc border commission was expected to begin mapping out suggested frontiers soon and should present its recommendations in the first quarter of 2008.

There are other problem areas.

"Little progress has been made on the issue of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration ... largely owing to the atmosphere of political mistrust which provides few incentives for the parties to downsize their armed forces," Qazi said.

[FAO forestry expert: FAO ready to support national forests programme of Sudan \(SUNA\)](#)

Khartoum, Feb. 19 (SUNA) - The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has affirmed its readiness to support the national forests programme of Sudan. Forestry expert, FAO Subregional Office for Eastern Africa, Michel Laverdiere said in a statement to SUNA that FAO would direct support for capacity building in the field of development of forests in northern and southern Sudan. He lauded the good preparation for the joint meeting of the African and Near East forests commissions, currently in session in Khartoum, pointing out that FAO would support

Sudan in the field of protection and development of forests for the huge resources and experiences it has in this connection. Meanwhile, Director-General of the Egyptian Afforestation Department Ms. Hoda Rashed has called for more support especially to Sudan and Egypt in the field of conservation of environment. Speaking to SUNA, she said special consideration should be given to development of forests in Sudan in the peace era. BT/BT

[UN Appeals for US\\$ 2.29 billion for Sudan](#)

(Sudan Vision) The UN and Partners Work Plan for Sudan was launched jointly yesterday in Khartoum by the Minister of International Cooperation, Dr. El Tijani Salih Fidail and the Deputy Special Representative to the Secretary-General, Ameerah Haq.

The plan calls for US\$2.29 billion for humanitarian, early recovery and development projects in 2008. The requested amount will be used to alleviate suffering for the most vulnerable and enable early recovery and development efforts to take root through the implementation of over 950 projects across twelve sectors. With over 20 percent already secured the total net requested is US\$1.84 billion.

"We must have a sustained commitment to enable Sudan to progress towards peace. Three years after the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) Sudan is facing important milestones with the upcoming census and elections. There are unique opportunities for tangible peace benefits for all of Sudan," said Ameerah Haq.

Dr. Fidail said in the launching ceremony that the 2008 UN and Partners Work Plan marks the fourth year of an intensive annual planning process that incorporates the humanitarian, recovery and development interventions for Sudan. As such, the UN and Partners Work Plan for Sudan has been an effective fundraising tool for international assistance. Since the first Work Plan was elaborated, there has been a gradual transition of the strategies and approaches of the UN and Partners, reflecting the evolving context in Sudan. Accordingly, the 2008 Work Plan reflects an increased focus on early recovery as well as recovery and development strategies in many areas of Sudan, while also capturing the interventions required for meeting any remaining potential humanitarian needs.

UN and partners have committed to have an equal focus between humanitarian and development requirements. "Our challenge is to work together with the Government of National Unity to mobilize and ensure resources for early recovery and developmental activities in the whole of Sudan while continuing to assist Darfur," said Ameerah Haq.

"Over the past four years, and specifically in the 2008 Work Plan, UN and Partners have consulted with government counterparts to ensure operational coherence. During this final year of implementation under the UN and Partners' Work Plan, it is essential that specific efforts be made to ensure that National Partners and government counterparts have the capacity to lead recovery and development in Sudan.

Furthermore specific attention must be focused to support key milestones in the implementation of peace, such as the census and elections, as articulated in the CPA", concluded Dr. Fidail.

[SRSG calls on UN to cooperate with Sudan](#)

(Al-Rai Al-Aam) The Special Representative of the Secretary General to the Sudan Mr. Ashraf Qazi has called upon the International Organization to pursue a policy of cooperation with the Sudan instead of a strategy of punishment. Mr. Qazi who presented a report yesterday to the UNGA said the CPA was on track.

According to Sudan's Ambassador to UN Abdul Haleem Mahmood, SRSG Qazi told the UNGA of the need to cooperate with the Sudan, adding that the two parties were working steadily to implement the remaining provisions of the CPA.

In a statement to the newspaper, Mahmood said Qazi had highlighted the need for development in the Sudan to pave the way for implementation of the CPA, to resolve all the problems including the issue of Darfur. He said Qazi has called upon the partners to honour their pledges towards development projects in the Sudan.

GoNU (CPA, DPA, ESPA)

[Senior Sudanese official lashes out at US Secretary Rice; warns UN](#)

(ST) February 19, 2008 (KHARTOUM) — Sudan's Presidential adviser and the official in charge of Darfur peace process, Nafi Ali Nafi launched an unprecedented personal attack against US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice.

“She [Condoleezza Rice] can lick her elbow” if she thinks that Khartoum will kneel down to her conditions and accept pressure from her or the international community” Nafi told a crowd in the border area between Kordofan and Darfur called Adeed Raha in remarks reported by the pro-government Akhir-Lahaza.

It is not clear why the Sudanese official chose Rice as a target for fierce criticism using this slang language. The Sudanese foreign minister Deng Alor and the presidential Adviser Mustafa Ismail met with Rice last week in a bid to normalize relations between the two countries.

However the US State Department spokesman Sean McCormack said that Rice told Sudan that it must “do everything it can to end the violence in Darfur, to cooperate fully with the AU and the UN in deployment of forces into Darfur, to do everything they can to facilitate the access of humanitarian groups so that they can deliver humanitarian aid, bring an end to any attacks that are ongoing now”.

“And also, looking south, to fully implement the Comprehensive Peace Agreement and the various sub-agreements that are part of the overall agreement” he added.

Sudanese officials have grown increasingly frustrated with what they consider a ‘hostile’ US administration towards Khartoum. In recent weeks they have made public remarks about the need for lifting of US sanctions imposed and complete overhaul of relations between the two countries.

Nafi said that Sudan “will not back on our values of Islamic Shari’a and our sovereignty”.

The presidential adviser in charge of Darfur also issued a subtle warning to the hybrid force.

“The hybrid force or the ‘Dough’** force will not be allowed to work beyond what have been agreed on”.

Nafi also slammed the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) rebel group in Darfur and described them as “bandits and murderers”.

“Their only justice and quality is in looting and killing innocent people” he added.

The Sudanese army has recently launched an offensive against JEM fighters and managed to take back three major towns near West Darfur’s state capital el-Geneina on February 8 and following reports of bombing on Monday.

Today clashes were reported between the two sides in the mountainous Jabel Moun area. JEM released a communiqué claiming to have inflicted heavy losses on “three moving battalions belonging to Sudanese Government armed forces along with their proxy Janjaweds” in the area.

International experts estimate 200,000 people have died in the conflict, which Washington calls genocide, a term European governments are reluctant to use. The Sudan government says 9,000 people have been killed.

[Sudanese journalists released after protest , Journalists protest arrest of editors](#)

(ST) February 19, 2008 (KHARTOUM) – Sudanese authorities released journalists detained today morning following a protest organized by the journalists in Khartoum asking government to respect press freedom.

Security services freed editors in chief of five newspapers because they published on Monday articles which quoted unnamed sources about changes in the upper levels of the Sudanese police.

The security services released Sid Ahmed Khalifah of al-Watan; Adil al-Baz of al-Ahdath; Kamal Hassan Bakhiet of al-Rai al-Aam; Mustafa Abu al-Azaim of Akhir Lahzah and Mohamed Sid Ahmed of al-Wifaq.

Sudanese journalists took to the streets of Khartoum on Tuesday, saying security officers had detained two newspaper editors and summoned three others over articles they published about the country’s police.

Reporters chanted "free press or no press" as they marched to the offices of Sudan’s media regulator, the National Press Council, to hand in a protest petition.

The editors-in-chief of the dailies al-Watan and al-Ahdath were called in for questioning late on Monday and held overnight, journalists told Reuters.

The editors of three other papers were summoned to national security offices in Khartoum on Tuesday morning and were still being questioned in the afternoon, they added.

A source in state security said the editors had not been arrested. "There is no question of release because they are not arrested, just summoned," he told Reuters.

Deputy editor of al-Watan newspaper Adil Sid Ahmed told Reuters all five papers had printed articles on Monday which quoted unnamed sources about changes in the upper levels of the Sudanese police.

Al-Watan's front page story gave details about planned promotions and retirements and a new appointment to head the police customs authority.

Ahmed said the response of authorities was "against the law and against human rights".

"They say the editors are guilty of false reporting, but actually the story was right," said Rehab Taha Mohammed, owner of the al-Wifaq daily. "If there are problems with a story, we can print corrections."

As news of the detentions spread, journalists from Khartoum's private press gathered at al-Watan's office in a room plastered with photocopied portraits of the editors.

More than 50 then marched to the National Press Council.

Freedom of the press was guaranteed in Sudan's 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement, the deal that ended more than two decades of north-south civil war.

But journalists say they are still often put under pressure over sensitive stories and print-runs of papers have been seized.

[Tension around Abyei may harm CPA: Telar Deng](#)

(Khartoum Monitor) Former State Minister, Telar Deng, said the developments in areas around Abyei may lead to tension that may in turn be harmful to the Comprehensive Peace Agreement.

The responsibility for settling the dispute over Abyei rests with the Presidency not the tribes of Dinka and Misseriya. The dispute highlights absence of a clear vision for a solution to the dispute. The dispute was basically over the boundaries of the area and the two parties could have sat together at the Presidency to settle the dispute he added. He went on to say that the issue of transitional administration of Abyei should have been carried out by means of presidential decree not by each party nominating its own administrators.

The Sudan People's Liberation Movement previously faced the problem of being incapable of handling corruption in South Sudan and also failing to realize development. These two failures will compromise the upcoming referendum, he added.

Telar disclosed that Northerners in the SPLM seek their own interests, not those of the South. The self-determination referendum should be the core of the CPA while the issue of the attractive unity should be viewed through the extent of commitment to the implementation of the CPA items, which encourages unity, he added. He warned that some parties are using the SPLM as a ladder to power. The alliance between these parties and the SPLM is never going to be in the interest of the implementation of the CPA as they have reservations about the CPA, he said. Even SPLM coordination with opposition parties over the elections act in support of proportional representation will not be accepted in South Sudan as people there vote for persons rather than parties. The SPLM once rejected the proposal of proportional representation, said Telar.

[JDB fails to take decision on issue of boundaries](#)

(Khartoum Monitor) The Joint Defence Board (JDB) failed to take decisions on issues of boundaries, redeployment of the two armies and the joint forces training and budget, in a meeting yesterday. The Spokesperson of the Board, Major Gen. Bior Ajang, said a 4-member committee was formed, one representative for SAF and one for the SPLA and the third representative for JIUs.

The committee is entrusted with touring borders and establishing reasons for cutting off roads, in Meriam, Abyei, Bentiu and border areas, he added. He went on to say that the Board addressed the Presidency asking for increase of budget which is insufficient.

The Board has come along way with respect to security arrangement with the exception of border issues on which the redeployment of the two armies and the joint forces depend, he said.

It is worth noting that the Chairman of the technical committee and the post of the Spokesperson were transferred to the SPLA whereas the Chairman of the Joint Defence Board went to the SAF.

[President Bashir: Humanitarian work in Sudan is not free of hidden agenda](#)

(Al-Sahafa) The President of the Republic, Omer Bashir, has accused some organizations operating in the humanitarian field of using humanitarian work as a cover to carry out their own agenda in Darfur. "Humanitarian and voluntary work is not free of hidden agenda", he said. "But we are keeping an eye on them" he added.

He said dialogue was the only way to resolve problems and conflicts.

President Bashir made the statement yesterday in his address to celebrations organized by Al-Zubair Charity Foundation marking 10th anniversary of the death of martyr Al-Zubair Mohamed Saleh (ex-vice President).

[In defense, Abyei threatens oil lines](#)

(The Citizen) Abyei chiefs have said they would disrupt the flow of oil if a Misseriya militia continues to harass the population.

Speaking to The Citizen from Abyei, chiefs said they would take the law into their hands if the Presidency does not remove a self-appointed militia Governor Mohamed Omer Al Nasri.

“We, through the media, want to inform the authorities in Juba and Khartoum that Omer Al Nasari should not play with fire” said a Dinka Chief in Alor.

The Citizen also received calls from Bentiu, Leer and Biemnon community leaders who declared Friday as the deadline for the Presidency to resolve the issue of Abyei or wait for the communities to take up arms, too, and disrupt the oil flow.

“The appointment of Al Nasari as governor of Abyei is a provocation that should not continue, by Friday, the world will receive our message, we have arms like Misseriya and we can kill and destroy,” said one chief from Pariang, north of Unity State.

Our correspondent in Unity State said the mood of the people is furious.

The stringer said there are signs that the communities are mobilizing themselves for confrontation with Misseriya, on one hand, and with the authorities, on the other.

According to the stringer, there are reports that the communities in Northern western Upper Nile acquired some weapons from SAF soldiers as their troops withdrew from the south in January. The Citizen stringer said the communities who are threatening oil workers have arms.

[NCP SPLM difference over elections Act may be referred to the Presidency for decision](#)

(Al-Sahafa) Differences persisted between NCP and SPLM over the elections Act. The NCRC will hold a decisive meeting on Saturday to arrive at a compromise to pave the way for movement of the bill to the Cabinet and then to the Parliament.

The newspaper has learned that there was a strong move favouring referral of the matter to the Presidency in case differences continue until the date set for forthcoming meeting is due.

GoSS

[GoSS assigns Northern experts to audit accounts](#)

(Sudan Vision) Minister of Finance in the Government of South Sudan, Athian Mawien, revealed that GoSS has employed a number of British Financial experts and 10 northern auditors for conducting a comprehensive audit of GoSS accounts for the period 2005-2007.

Mawien, told Sudan Vision that the auditors started their assignments on 10 Feb 2008, indicating that GoSS will carry out auditing of its accounts for controlling and maintaining public funds, adding that the harsh measures will be imposed on all those found involved in embezzlements in accordance with a law drawn up for combating corruption.

Darfur

Rebels claim downing Sudanese helicopters in Darfur attacks

(ST) February 19, 2008 (PARIS) — Darfur rebel movements said they had shot down Sudanese army helicopters during aerial bombing for the second day against rebel positions in Jebel Moun, West Darfur State.

The Official Spokesman of the Armed Forces Brig. Osman Mohamed Al-Aghbash confirmed the attack saying The Sudanese army cleared the Jebel Moun from the rebel presence and it controls the totality of the area.

The Sudan Liberation Movement led by Abdel Wahid Al-Nur and Justice and Equality Movement led by Khalil Ibrahim said today they downed military helicopters during clashes with the Sudanese army today.

The Sudan Liberation Army SLA commander for Jebel Moun area, Abbas Mohamed Offail, told Sudan Tribune by telephone satellite that they downed a military helicopter Tuesday afternoon in the west of Jebel Moun adding that the military engine crashed near El-Jeneina the capital of the state.

While the JEM said in a press statement, it "shot down two of the helicopters." The rebel group it used ground to air missiles.

Offail said the Sudanese army resumed the bombardment today at 08:00 am and the raids continued up to 06:00 pm (local time). He further said that six planes participated in the bombing: two antonov, two Mig, and two helicopters equipped with machinegun.

Ahmed Adam Bakheit, JEM Chief Commander also mentioned in his communiqué the three categories of airplanes.

According to the rebel commander, the aerial strike was accompanied by a ground attack carried out by Sudanese army troops and the Janjaweed militia. The assailing troops killed ten civilians, destructed and burned five villages in Jebel Moun.

"Troops transported by 150 vehicles, camels and horses attacked and burned fives villages: Kossi, Arti, Nouranya, Swani and Treteta, the SLA commander said.

The SLA rebel official reaffirmed that they repelled the assailants claiming killing 30 government troops and militia. He also added that they army had 50 wounded soldiers. Offail pledged to release further details later.

JEM said the inflicted heavy loses on the Sudanese army.

"A major battle resulted in an outright defeat of the perpetrators with heavy losses in human and military equipments by the GoS." JEM stated.

JEM said the Sudanese army attacked the area "for the retreating Chadian rebels fleeing N'Djamena."

UNHCR spokesperson in Geneva, Jennifer Pagonis, said today that Aerial bombing overnight and this morning in West Darfur, Sudan, close to the border with Chad, has forced UNHCR to withdraw its team caring for newly arrived refugees in the Birak area away from the insecure border.

"We now estimate there are at least 10,000 new arrivals since 8 February. Most of the refugees are in Figuera, with smaller numbers in Birak, Djange and Korok. But more arrivals are still expected and with the fresh bombing we can expect more displacement in West Darfur. We have no further details at the moment."

Yesterday the SLM/A leader Abdel-Wahid Al-Nur condemned the army attacks urging the international community to put pressure on Khartoum to stop "these criminal and barbaric attacks against the innocent civilians."

He further reiterated his rejection to negotiate with Khartoum unless an effective protection for Darfur civilians is provided by the international community.

ARMY STATEMENT

The Sudanese army said in a statement issued this evening that it conducted a military operation to disenclave Kulbus area that the rebel Justice and equality Movement with the Chadian support had cut the road between it and El Geneina.

The army statement said this situation "deprived citizens of the most basic necessities of life, forcing the government often delivering food by air."

The military statement added that JEM had received recently anti-aircraft weapons that made impossible to supply the civilians via airplanes.

The army didn't mention attacks against the positions of the SLM positions and civilians.

The SLM leader had spoke yesterday about the military build-up by the Sudanese army saying his troops were ready to fight.

The majority of the new arrivals had already been internally displaced in West Darfur, the HCR said today.

The UNHCR confirmed a story reported by the Sudan Tribune yesterday about a woman that lost her two legs during the Monday aerial attack against Aru Sharow IDPs camp in West Darfur.

"Last night, seven refugees from West Darfur crossed the border into Chad carrying a 55-year-old woman who they said had lost both her legs during an alleged overnight bombing of Aro Sharow camp for internally displaced people (IDPs), north of Jebel Moon in West Darfur. The woman later died at Birak's health centre."

BAN KI-MOON SAYS UNACCEPTABLE ATTACKS AGAINST CIVILIANS

The UN Secretary General expressed concern over the renewal of violence in West Darfur. He described as "unacceptable attacks against civilians in Aru Sharow.

"In addition to putting the lives of innocent civilians at risk, the ongoing violence significantly reduces the humanitarian community's access to those in need of life-saving assistance."

Ban urged all parties to cease hostilities and to commit to the political process warning that "a negotiated settlement to the Darfur conflict cannot take place amid continuing violence and the massive displacement of civilians."

China's special envoy for Darfur to visit Sudan

(ST) February 19, 2008 (BEIJING) — China's special envoy on Darfur will visit Sudan next week, the foreign ministry said Tuesday, amid international pressure on Beijing to do more to end the years of violence there

Liu Guijin will visit Sudan from February 24 to 27, following a three-day trip to Britain that begins on Thursday, foreign ministry spokesman Liu Jianchao said.

"He has made great efforts for the solution of the Darfur issue," Liu Jianchao said, adding that the envoy had been in the western Sudanese region three times.

Liu Jianchao reiterated China's long-standing policy of negotiation and encouragement to end the conflict in Sudan.

"Relevant countries should maintain patience and carry out dialogue and consultation to resolve the issue properly. We should not use unbridled pressure," Liu Jianchao said.

China, Sudan's main overseas supporter and arms supplier, has come under growing pressure to use its influence on the East African regime to end the bloodshed in Darfur.

Activists have sought to pile the pressure on Chinese authorities this year as the world's spotlight has increasingly turned on China ahead of the Beijing Olympics in August.

Hollywood film-maker Steven Spielberg said last week that his conscience would no longer allow him to work on the Olympics as an artistic consultant while Sudan's government carried out genocide in its western Darfur province.

On the same day, a group of Nobel Prize winners and Olympic athletes wrote an open letter to Chinese President Hu Jintao, asking him to push Sudan to end the atrocities in Darfur.

US actress and UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador Mia Farrow has branded the Beijing Olympics the "Genocide Games" in a reference to Darfur.

According to the UN, about 200,000 people have died in Darfur from the combined effects of war, famine and disease since 2003, when a civil conflict erupted pitting government-backed Arab militias against non-Arab ethnic groups.

World must end Darfur conflict - US Bush

(ST) February 19, 2008 (KIGALI) — President George W. Bush paid somber homage Tuesday to the estimated 800,000 killed in Rwanda's 1994 genocide and urged global action to end the bloodshed in Sudan's Darfur region "once and for all."

"Evil must be confronted," he said after touring a Kigali memorial to the 100-day, systematic massacre of minority Tutsis and moderate Hutus by Hutu extremist militias and government troops.

Bush, mid-way through a five-country Africa tour, announced he was freeing up 100 million dollars (68 million euros) for African peacekeeping efforts in the restive Sudanese province of Darfur but firmly defended his decision not to send US troops there.

"I made a decision and I stand by it," he said with Rwandan President Paul Kagame at his side. "I'm comfortable with the decision I made, I'm not comfortable with how quickly the (international) response has been."

Bush underlined Kagame's decision to contribute peacekeepers for Darfur and declared: "My message to other nations is: 'Join with the president and help us get this problem solved once and for all.'"

"And we will help. We will help through sanctions. We'll help through pressure. We'll help provide money to get these forces in, in an effective manner," he promised.

Bush said the UN response to Darfur "seems very bureaucratic to me, particularly with people suffering," and warned countries reluctant to impose sanctions on Sudanese leaders "human suffering ought to preempt commercial interests" — an apparent reference to China, a key Sudan partner.

According to the UN, about 200,000 people have died in Darfur from the combined effects of war, famine and disease since 2003, when a civil conflict erupted pitting government-backed Arab militias against non-Arab ethnic groups.

The US president, who has called the conflict "genocide," later referred to the memorial in Kigali as a "holocaust museum."

"It's a moving place that can't help but shake your emotions to their very foundation," he declared after laying a wreath near a set of mass graves that memorial officials say hold remains from 258,000 people.

"It reminds me that we must not let these kinds of actions take place, and that the people of Rwanda need help to reconcile and move forward after a brutal period," he said, with US First Lady Laura Bush at his side.

Museum officials walked reporters past the displays that Bush was to see during his visit, including a darkened room with skulls and femurs in lighted glass cases and a devastating display on children killed in the violence.

Patrick Gashugli Shimirwa, a five-year-old with a striped t-shirt, smiles broadly from one of the large black and white photos of some of the genocide's youngest victims, above a plaque that describes the life taken from him.

Favorite sport: Riding his bicycle. Favorite food: Meat with fries and eggs. Best Friend: His sister, Alliane. Personality: Very calm, a well-behaved boy. Cause of death: Hacked apart with a machete, says the plaque.

Down the hall sit cases of rifles and machetes, a room filled with victims' photographs dangling from wires, and tributes to other large-scale massacres, including the Holocaust and Cambodia's Killing Fields.

Bush and Kagame later signed a bilateral investment treaty before the US president was to travel onward to Ghana and Liberia. He has already been to Benin and Tanzania.

Bush's visit to Rwanda came 10 years after predecessor Bill Clinton, US president at the time of the genocide, travelled here to apologise for not doing enough to halt the violence.

Armed Forces clears Jabal Moun area in West Darfur and imposes full control on it

(SUNA)Khartoum, Feb. 19 (SUNA)- The Official Spokesman of the Armed Forces Brig. Osman Mohamed Al-Aghbash announced that the Armed Forces conducted a combing operation for Jabal Moun area, northwest of Genaina town in West Darfur State. Brig. Al-Aghbash pointed out in a statement he issued Tuesday that the Armed Forces carried out the combing operation based on a number of facts including that the Justice and Equality Movement supported by Chadian troops and equipment had cut the road between Genaina and Kulbous towns a matter that led to the isolation of Kulbous besides Tina town and also leading to depriving the citizens from the basic needs of life and consequently obliged the government to convey food materials by planes in most times. The spokesman of the Armed Forces went on to explain that the rebel movements received recently a Chadian support of anti-aircraft, a matter that made supplying the citizens with food impossible, especially that the rebel movements began targeting the civilian planes. He also referred to increase of looting acts by the rebel movements in Western Darfur State. The Spokesman announced that the Armed Forces was able to clear Jabal Moun area and imposing its full control on the area, inflicting great losses in the enemy.

Miscellaneous