



UNITED NATIONS MISSION IN SUDAN  
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**UNMIS Media Monitoring Report, 23<sup>rd</sup> February, 2006**  
**(By Public Information Office)**

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## **HIGHLIGHTS:**

### **AMIS-UN transition**

#### **Sudan opposes UN troops for Darfur**

(Reuters/ ST – 22<sup>nd</sup> Feb. Cairo) Sudan rejects U.S.-backed efforts to have U.N. peacekeeping troops take over from African Union troops in the country's troubled Darfur region, Foreign Minister Lam Akol said on Wednesday.

The United States has said genocide is continuing in Darfur with rape, looting and killing by Arab militias, known as the Janjaweed, and has urged the African Union (AU) to accept a handover to U.N. peacekeepers.

"The government has rejected this ... We did not hear anybody saying they (the AU) are not doing enough to stop the violence. What we are hearing is that they're short of funds," Akol told Reuters.

Sudanese officials had previously shown a softer position towards the deployment of U.N. troops in Darfur, which the AU says it supports "in principle". The United Nations has already begun contingency planning for any takeover.

Sudan has in the past taken a hard public stance, rejecting the deployment of any troops to Darfur. But they eventually reluctantly accepted the AU force.

The AU has said the government has at times not cooperated with it, delaying for months the deployment of heavy equipment and placing troops under a night-time curfew in North Darfur. The government denies any obstruction.

African foreign ministers will make a final decision in early March on any handover. In a statement issued on Wednesday the head of the AU mission in Sudan, Baba Gana Kingibe, said the transition was "inevitable" in the long run.

Britain's minister for international development, Hilary Benn, said during a visit to Sudan that Akol and Sudan's two vice presidents had expressed concern at having U.N. troops in Darfur.

But he said it was "pretty clear" that the AU would ask the United Nations to take over the Darfur mission, and saw no reason why Khartoum should object.

"I think it's very important that if the AU makes that request ... that the government of Sudan support that because it's about trying to ensure ... that people do not continue to be attacked," he told reporters in Khartoum.

#### **Parliament rejects deployment of UN forces to Darfur**

(AlAyaam – 23<sup>rd</sup> Feb. Khartoum) Addressing parliament yesterday, the Minister of Foreign Affairs pointed out that there are a number of reasons for rejecting the issue of deployment of international forces to Darfur.

He said that a transition will be a blow to the AU role and that the presence of foreign troops in Darfur will lead to widespread clashes with the local population. Minister Akol further pointed out that foreign intervention was one of the demands of the rebel movements in the area and such an intervention will only increase the tensions in the area along tribal lines and will cause the rebel movements to raise the ceiling of their demands in the talks thus negatively affecting the talks.

Akol further pointed out that the AU has been put under pressure to succumb to the calls for transition and doing so will make it lose its power and independence of decision.

The foreign minister confirmed government commitments to cooperate with the international community in seeking the funding necessary for a continuation of the AU operations until peace is achieved in Darfur.

Minister Akol further pointed out that the Presidential Statement of the Security Council had asked the UN Secretariat to urgently lay contingency measures for a transition but also pointed out that such a transition should be carried out through consultations with the Government of Sudan and this, i.e. the consultation, has never happened. From the legal perspective, he adds, the Security Council can not take a decision on the transition without receiving a written request from the AU.

On its part, the minister added, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is coordinating with the Presidency to send envoys and ministers for consultations with the AU and member-states of the Peace and Security Council and to marshal financial assistance from states and institutions, including Arab and Islamic states, and to use the forthcoming Arab League summit meeting to be held in Khartoum as an opportunity for that.

Parliament, on the other hand, unanimously rejected the push for transition and has instructed a bill be drafted on the issue in coordination with all the political forces.

A number of MPs have also requested that a delegation of MPs be sent to Darfur to sit down with the different parties to seek their contributions to efforts for a possible solution to the problems.

### **Council for Defence of Religion and State calls for expulsion of SRSJ Pronk**

(*AlRai AlAam* – 23<sup>rd</sup> Feb. **Khartoum**) In an emergency session held yesterday presided over by Professor Hussein Suleiman Abu-Saleh, the Council for the Defence of Religion and the State have called upon the relevant authorities to expel SRSJ Jan Pronk from the Sudan for his “demeaning statements and for outstretching his mandate.

The council also urged that all public squares, fields and villages in the country be transformed into military training grounds and for spiritual readiness to confront challenges.

The council hailed parliament’s decision yesterday not to allow a foreign intervention in Darfur and said this direction must be consolidated by memoranda to the UN and foreign embassies and by public demonstrations against the AMIS-UN transition.

The council has agreed to form an emergency operations room incorporating all patriotic parties which will be in continuous session with effect from this afternoon to set into practice the decisions of the council.

The council has further called *imams* to use this Friday's sermon exclusively to mobilise the people against such an intervention and to spread the message that next Monday will be a day when all will join in a plea to God to chase out those who are against religion and the state in Sudan. It also called for a million signatures to support the move to be presented to the UN offices in Khartoum.

### **In meeting with UK development minister, Kiir stresses on African role in Darfur**

(*AlAyaam* – 23<sup>rd</sup> Feb. **Khartoum**) Vice-president Salva Kiir has expressed reservations over an AMIS-UN transition and says it will lead to more insecurity in Darfur and prolong the negotiations in Abuja.

The Vice-president who was speaking to the visiting UK minister for international development expressed commitments to an AU role in Darfur and to marshal the necessary funds for a continuation of its operations there. He pointed out that AU success in Darfur will give a boost to the fledgling organisation.

Vice-president Taha, also in a meeting with Hillary Benn yesterday, said that the state was committed to finding solutions to the problems in Darfur especially with regards to expanding the scope of movement of the AU forces in Darfur to enable them better carry out their role.

According to state minister for foreign affairs, el-Waseela, the UK minister expressed the belief that the AU is capable of handling the situation in Darfur but said that lack of funding may be a window for introduction of foreign troops to the region.

### **Justice minister says Pronk siding against Sudan**

(*AIRai AlAam* – 23<sup>rd</sup> Feb. **Khartoum**) Justice Minister Mohamed Ali el-Mardi is another entrant to the battle of words against SRSG Jan Pronk whose role in Darfur he describes as detrimental to Sudan's relations with the international community.

The minister said Pronk's activities in Sudan amount to a gross infringement on national sovereignty and the country's internal affairs.

He accused Pronk of not being impartial and pointed out that his 'fluctuating' and contradictory statements has caused a deterioration in the situation in Darfur and will never cause a breakthrough neither in the situation in Darfur not in any other part of the country.

He further noted that the role of the UN is to safeguard international peace and security and that Jan Pronk should have worked towards that end instead of playing his negative role in Sudan which has turned Sudan's relations with the UN sour.

### **Bush presses Chirac on NATO involvement in Darfur**

(*Reuters/ST* – 22<sup>nd</sup> Feb. **Waashington**) President George W. Bush on Wednesday told French President Jacques Chirac that NATO should take a more active role in international efforts to stop the bloodshed in Sudan's Darfur region, the White House said.

In a 30-minute conversation initiated by Chirac, Bush "raised his concern about the deteriorating situation in Darfur and his view that NATO should be more actively involved in

a robust international response to this crisis," Frederick Jones, spokesman for the White House national security council said.

Bush last week said NATO should have an organizational role and there should be double the number of international peacekeepers for Darfur.

Jones said the two leaders also discussed Chirac's recent visit to India and developments in Syria and Lebanon, Jones said. "They stressed their common commitment to ensuring that Syria abide by U.N. resolution pertaining to Lebanon."

Bush will visit India and Pakistan next month.

## **UN**

### **Plans to repatriate 70,000 refugees**

(*Juba Post* – 23<sup>rd</sup> Feb. **Juba**) The UNHCR will repatriate 70,000 refugees from neighbouring countries by the end of May 2006, says David Kapya, the head of UNHCR operations in southern Sudan.

The official was speaking at the closing session of the Southern Sudan States Governors' and UN Agencies conference in Juba.

### **Children survive off UNMIS rubbish heaps**

(*Juba Post* – 23<sup>rd</sup> Feb. **Juba**) A group of children in Juba are surviving on food and water scavenged from UNMIS rubbish dump at the foothills of Jebel Kujur along the Yei road.

These children of different ages and even some adults start looking for edibles as soon as the UNMIS truck dumps the rubbish and collect empty soda and water bottles to sell to reailers of paraffin and cooking oil.

An elderly man collecting an empty carton for his own use said that these children are from families whose parents spend most of their time drinking alcohol and lack parental care. They have become hostile and threaten to stone anyone who attempts to disperse them from the rubbish heap.

He said they start following the UNMIS rubbish truck from the Customs Market until they reach the dumping site. One child was injured after he boarded the UNMIS truck without the driver's notice in an attempt to get first access to the garbage, the man report.

## **GoNU**

### **President Bashir meets US Cd'A**

(*AlAyaam* – 23<sup>rd</sup> Feb. **Khartoum**) President Bashir has renewed government commitments to achieve comprehensive peace and consolidate stability and development in the country.

In a meeting yesterday wit the Charge d'Affaires at the US Embassy in Khartoum, the president outlined the efforts the government is exerting in cooperation with the AU and the international community to end the conflict in Darfur and the achievements made in implementing the CPA.

On his part, the Cd'A said the US was ready to cooperate with the Sudan to resolve the situation in Darfur and realise comprehensive peace.

## **Darfur/ Abuja talks**

### **Prophet drawings led to attacks on aid workers in Sudan - EU Official**

(AP/ST – 22<sup>nd</sup> Feb. **Helsinki**) The European Union's representative to Sudan, Pekka Haavisto, said Wednesday that the prophet drawings controversy had led to attacks on foreign aid workers in Sudan.

"The Danish cartoon scandal did not help the situation (in Darfur) at all," Haavisto told reporters in the Finnish capital. "There were some attacks, that were driven by the cartoon scandal, against foreign aid organizations," Haavisto said, but didn't give details.

He said major problems facing the region were "bandit-like rebel groups that were out of control," and instability in relations between Sudan and neighboring Chad, despite a peace pact signed by the neighboring countries earlier this month.

"The situation on the ground is very difficult," Haavisto said.

Haavisto was named the E.U.'s special representative to Sudan in last year to oversee peace talks in Abuja, Nigeria, and monitor developments in southern Sudan. His appointment was extended until July this year, he said.

Haavisto ruled out sending NATO or E.U. troops to the region where 7,000 African Union peacekeepers have failed to halt the violence, and urged the U.N. Security Council to decide on assistance.

"We need good United Nations logistics and good U.N.-led peacekeeping forces and mainly African peacekeepers in the region," Haavisto said.

## **Southern Sudan**

### **Kiir restructures SPLM**

(AlSahafa – 23<sup>rd</sup> Feb. **Juba**) Vice-president Salva Kiir has issued decrees establishing an interim political office for the SPLM (made up of 23 members) and the SPLM interim executive office (57 members).

Salva Kiir heads both offices while Pagan Amoum holds the post of Secretary-General for both.

5 members have already been named for the interim secretariat, 8 for the southern secretariat and 12 for the interim secretariat for the states of southern Sudan. It is worth noting that South Kordofan and Blue Nile states fall under the interim secretariat for the states of southern Sudan according to the plan.

AbdelAziz el-Hillu who heads the SPLM offices in northern Sudan will be responsible for the nominations for those parts.

Informed sources reveal that the political office will soon start work from the SPLM offices in Khartoum.

It is also worth noting that by virtue of these decrees, SPLM chairman Salva Kiir has revived the Leadership Office of the SPLM which was dissolved by late chairman Garang in July last year. The only difference is that it comes in the new name of the SPLM Political Office and has new members to it.