

**UNITED NATIONS MISSION IN SUDAN
UNMIS**

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(By Public Information Office)

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IN THE NEWS TODAY:

UN:

UN's Ki-Moon focuses on Darfur crisis; expected to meet with Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir end of January

(AFP) (SudanTribune; AlSudani) New UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon acknowledged today that he faced daunting challenges in many crises worldwide, from the Middle East to North Korea, and put troubled Darfur at the top of his list of priorities.

"I start my duties at a daunting time in international affairs, starting from Darfur to the Middle East, Lebanon, Iran, Iraq, North Korea, many other crises that trouble our world," Ban said on his first day at the helm of the world body at UN headquarters in New York.

"These challenges and issues need to be addressed collectively, with collective wisdom and collective efforts. Not a single person, including the Secretary-General of the United Nations; not a single country, however strong, powerful, resourceful it may be," can address this alone, he said.

Ban, 62, who took over from Kofi Annan and began a five year term today, still voiced hope that a peaceful solution to the almost four-year civil war and humanitarian tragedy in Sudan could be found.

He said he would meet, beginning tomorrow, with the UN special envoy for Sudan, Jan Eliasson, before attending an African Union summit later in the month, where he was expected to meet with Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir.

"During my entire tenure, I will try my best to help member states, the international community, to strengthen the rule of law," he added.

UN troops in south Sudan raping children - Daily Telegraph

(The Daily Telegraph/Reuters) Jan 3, 2007 **(UNITED NATIONS)** The Daily Telegraph reported on Tuesday that U.N. peacekeepers and civilian staff were raping and abusing children as young as 12 in southern Sudan.

The newspaper, in a story posted on its Web site, said it had gathered accounts from more than 20 young victims in the town of Juba of U.N. civilian and peacekeeping staff forcing them to have sex.

The abuse allegedly began two years ago when the UN mission in southern Sudan (UNMIS) moved in to help rebuild the region after a 23-year civil war.

The UN has up to 10,000 military personnel in the region, of all nationalities and the allegations involve peacekeepers, military police and civilian staff.

The first indications of sexual exploitation emerged within months of the UN force's arrival and The Daily Telegraph has seen a draft of an internal report compiled by the UN children's agency Unicef in July 2005 detailing the problem.

But the UN has not publicly acknowledged that there is a problem and when contacted repeatedly by this newspaper UN headquarters refused to comment.

The allegations will be deeply embarrassing to the new UN Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon, as the UN is pushing to be allowed to launch a new peacekeeping mission to help end the humanitarian crisis in Sudan's north-western region, Darfur.

The Telegraph understands that the Sudanese government, which is deeply opposed to the deployment of UN troops to Darfur, has also gathered evidence, including video footage of Bangladeshi UN workers having sex with three young girls.

Many of the children who claim to have had sex with UN personnel in Juba belong to southern Sudan's "lost generation", separated from their families by the recent civil war, who now sleep rough on the streets of Juba, the regional capital.

This paper has gathered more than 20 victims' accounts claiming that peacekeeping and civilian staff based in the town are regularly picking up young children in their UN vehicles and forcing them to have sex.

It is thought that hundreds of children may have been abused.

"I was sitting by the river the first time it happened," said Jonas, 14, one of more than 20 children who told the Telegraph they had been abused this way.

"A man in a white car drove past and asked me if I wanted to get into the car with him. I saw that the car was a UN car because it was white with the black letters on it. The man had a badge on his clothes. When he stopped the car, we got out, he put a blindfold on me and started to abuse me. It was painful and went on for a long time. When it was over we went back to the place we had been, and he pushed me out of the car and left."

Jonas now returns to the same place regularly in the hope of being picked up and paid something for his services.

"I know it is a terrible thing to do but I see the UN cars around late at night by the drinking places and I sit there in the hope of being picked up. If I get 1000 SD (\$3) a day then that is a good day."

The other children interviewed describe the same scenario. One boy, 13 years old, reported being enticed into a UN car with the offer of cash and then abused before being dumped without any payment. Similar verbal testimonies have been gathered by non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and rights groups in the region. But there are no medical reports confirming that the children have been abused. The limited local medical services and the children's poverty and fear are thought to explain why doctors have not been involved.

The British regional co-ordinator for UNMIS, James Ellery, has refuted the claims, arguing that there is no substantiating evidence.

"I will refute all claims made on this issue," he said in an interview last May. "We investigated all allegations made and no evidence was forthcoming. None of these claims can be substantiated. This is the most backward country in Africa and there are lots of misunderstandings as to the UN's role. Over 90 per cent of people here are illiterate and rumours therefore spread very quickly."

Mr Ellery insisted that his organisation was following correct codes of conduct.

"We provide regular briefings on the UN code of conduct. Nobody employed by the UN is meant to have sexual contact at all with any local person," he said. He did, however, appear to acknowledge that the organisation might not be able to ensure that all its staff behave according to standards.

"We are applying a standard of morality that is very, very high but we cannot expect that soldiers when they go abroad are going to behave themselves as we think they should.

"There are a wide range of countries being represented in the UN forces and among these there is always going to be a bad apple."

The Daily Telegraph has learned that a number of complaints have been made about the behaviour of UN personnel stationed in Juba. Yet those accused have not been tracked down nor has there been any attempt by the UN or local officials to interview those making the accusations.

The fledging government of southern Sudan is believed to be too concerned to maintain good relations with the UN to challenge the organisation. An unfinished copy of the internal Unicef report, seen by The Daily Telegraph, shows that the UN has been aware of the problem for more than a year.

"Evidence suggests that UNMIS staff may already be involved in sexual exploitation," the report says. "UN cars have been staying into the early hours of the morning, as late as 6am, at a restaurant/disco called Kololo in Juba ... adult informants reported seeing a UNMIS car stop along a main road in Juba to pick up three young girls."

A preliminary report for a leading NGO in the region backed up these allegations, although the NGO was unwilling to be named for political reasons.

The report stated: "According to Kennedy Tombe, 23, a shoe shiner in Konyo Konyo Market, the issue of young girls being picked up by UNMIS cars during late hours in Juba is common. One time, he stated, he was chatting with friends of his own in Kosti area near Konyo Konyo Market – they saw a UNMIS vehicle drop three girls off.

"One girl, Jackline Keji, was 18, the other two were 13 and 16. Keji, who was obviously frightened, said that they had spent the night with an UNMIS official. She said that they had sex with that UNMIS official."

Juba's county court judge, Ali Said, said that the region had seen an increase in child prostitution since the UN arrived.

"The majority of people working for the UN and NGOs are men and need to be entertained. But no cases have come to court," he said.

GoNU:

Police fires tear gas at Sudan cathedral, six hurt

(AFP) *SudanTribune.com* Police fired tear gas into the Anglican cathedral in Khartoum during New Year's Eve mass, injuring six people including the secretary of Sudan's first vice president, the parish priest has said.

Canon Sylvester Thomas, of the Episcopal Church of the Sudan, said Tuesday he did not know the reason for the attack on All Saint's Cathedral at midnight (2100 GMT) on Sunday, and police officials were unavailable for comment.

However, a local newspaper reported that police had been pursuing a man who had attacked someone with a knife.

Thomas said that 20 minutes after he began the service "explosions rang out inside the building. Nine tear gas bombs landed among the more than 500 worshippers, which included such eminent people as former Vice President Abel Alair."

Among those hurt were Alair's wife and the secretary of Sudan's current first vice president, he said. He added that six people had to be hospitalised, including someone burnt by a plastic chair that had caught fire.

Thomas said he did not know the reason for the assault, in which he claimed police also beat people with batons as they tried to flee the church.

He said he had filed a complaint with the authorities, adding that "such incidents as this do not help peaceful coexistence among religions in Sudan."

A report in the Al-Sudani daily quoted security sources as saying police were pursuing a man who had carried out an assault with a knife and had tried to hide among the worshippers gathered outside the main door.

However, it quoted Thomas as saying no one but worshippers was at the door.

A majority of Sudan's population is Muslim, but there is a sizeable Christian minority, particularly in the south and in the capital.

7 killed in Khartoum during last two days.

AlSudani Medical sources report that seven people have been killed in Khartoum State during last two days. They were killed as result of different criminal, traffic and fire accidents which took place in Khartoum, the sources said.

Sudanese opposition leader warns of broader regional conflict

BBC Monitoring Service-- Excerpt from report by Sudanese independent Al-Mashahir (Almshaheer) website on 1 January

The leader of the [opposition] National Umma Party, Al-Sadiq al-Mahdi, has warned of a broad conflict in eastern Africa, if tensions in Sudan, Somalia and Uganda are not eased.

In a speech to thousands of his supporters in the city of Omdurman, Al-Mahdi said: "If the conflict in Sudan is not solved, it will spread to the region from its crisis centre of Darfur."

Al-Mahdi said the government of President [Omar] Al-Bashir took a lot of time before accepting the deployment of few international troops to the war-torn western region of Darfur, which borders neighboring Chad and Central African Republic [CAR].

He further said Sudan's [conflict] and the war waged by Ethiopia and Eritrea in Somalia threaten to plunge the region into a broader war. [Passage omitted]

Source: Al-Mashahir (Almshaheer) website, Khartoum, in Arabic 1 Jan 07

Darfur:

Militiaman kills two women in South Darfur

(ST) Jan 2, 2007 (KHARTOUM) A militiaman killed two women near a refugee camp in South Darfur because they were grazing animal in what he qualified a reserved land, a UN news bulletin said today.

On 27 December three IDP women from Dar Es Salam camp near Gereida (100kms south of Nyala, South Darfur) were approached by a single armed man, believed to be a militiaman, on a camel. The man questioned one of the women as to why she was grazing her animals on reserved land. He then opened fire on two of the women, killing them.

AMIS military observers later removed the bodies and are investigating the incident.

At Labadao (60 kms East of Nyala) on 28 December armed militiamen opened fire and killed two men, stealing 400 head of cattle belonging to them.

AMIS police visited the scene, verified that two people had died and handed the case over to SLA/MM police for investigation.

In spite of these isolated incidents of killing and robbery, the security situation remains generally calm during the period of Eid al-Adha.

Communist Party leader Nugud calls for comprehensive political dialogue including Janjaweed militias in Darfur.

AlSudani reported the Secretary General of Communist Party, Mohammed Ibrahim Nugud, has called for a comprehensive political dialogue including the Janjaweed Militias to stop violence in Darfur.

Nugud also called for the formation of widely represented popular committee to prepare for the Darfur-Darfur dialogue.

SLM- Imam makes contacts to include the DPA non- signatories. AlSudani

AlSudani reports the SLM- Imam has revealed continuous contacts with the DPA non-signatories. In a meeting with the presidential advisor Dr. Majzoub el Khalifa, the SLM- Abu Algasim Imam said, a group of the DPA non-signatories had expressed readiness to join the DPA and positive news are expected within coming days regarding the peace process.

Sudan government, Darfur rebels form body to monitor peace pact implementation

BBC Monitoring Service-- Text of report in English by Sudanese news agency Suna website

Khartoum, 2 January: A joint committee has been formed between the Government of National Unity and the Sudan Liberation Army/Movement (SLA/M), led by Abd-al-Qasim Imam, to consult on the immediate implementation of the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA), and effect a qualitative shift under the new atmosphere after the movement joined the peace agreement and the government's agreement with the international community.

This came in a meeting of Darfur peace agreement implementation committee with the SLA/M at the premises of the Federal Government Bureau Tuesday [2 January], whereas the Presidential Advisor Dr Majzoub al-Khalifa chaired the side of the Government of National Unity, and Abd-al-Qasim Imam chaired the side of the movement.

Dr Al-Khalifa affirmed that Tripoli agreement enhances the DPA and other issues stipulated by the agreement.

He added that Tripoli agreement focused on the issue of merging in the security arrangements and formation of the merged forces.

He further affirmed that work is ongoing to contain the issues and problems hampering the implementation of the DPA, calling on the parties that did not sign to join the peace march.

Leader of the SLA/M Abd-al-Qasim Imam, on his part, explained that the agreement is signed for the sake of the displaced, the refugees, the widows, the Sudanese people and the citizens of Darfur.

He added that Tripoli agreement addressed the important issues concerning the security arrangements, affirming his solidarity with the government of national unity to disseminate the culture of peace, security and stability in Darfur.

He further explained that the movement is making intensive contacts with the parties that did not sign the DPA to convince them to join the peace march.

Minister of Culture, Youth and Sports and Chairman of the Power and Wealth Sharing Committee at the Higher Committee for Darfur issues Muhammad Yusuf said that the joint committee is concerned with the implementation of the DPA in all its courses, particularly the aspects included in Tripoli agreement such as compensations and enhancement of peace at the camps and the return areas, the future of the SLA/M army, and participation of the movement in power.

He added that the two sides understand the support of the African Union in Darfur. He said the meeting heard a briefing on progress of the implementation of the DPA within the framework of the power and wealth sharing, the security arrangements and the Darfur-Darfur dialogue conference, adding that the meeting also reviewed the requirements of the coming period.

Suna notes that the Minister of Culture, Youth and Sports Muhammad Yusuf chairs the side of the government of national unity in the joint committee, while Dr Al-Sansui Muhammad al-Sanusi chairs the movement's side.

Source: Suna news agency website, Khartoum, in English 2 Jan 07

GoSS:

Conflict may affect food availability in South Sudan

(IRIN) Dec 29, 2006 (NAIROBI) *SudanTribune.com* Conflicts between communities and the large-scale movement of people could affect food supplies in 2007 despite recent harvests, a food early warning agency has warned.

According to the Food Early Warning System (FEWS Net), food security has improved in the northern parts of southern Sudan, but insecurity and population resettlement threaten the recent gains in Aweil East, West, North and South counties; in Northern Bahr El Gazal state; parts of Warrap state; and Wuror, Diror, Pulchol and Nyirol counties in Jonglei state.

In its 28 December update, the agency cautioned that structural food deficits will begin to affect poor and recently resettled households (returning IDPs) from April 2007.

"An increase in population returns will overload the already limited capacities that exist to accommodate returnees, and competition for scarce labour opportunities and off-farm food sources such as fish and wild foods will increase," it noted.

The most densely populated regions will be worst hit; in Northern Bahr El Gazal and Warrap states. There, an estimated 545,000 people will probably not have enough to eat in 2007, particularly in Gogrial and Twic counties.

According to the update, food security improvements are unlikely to last beyond February in Gogrial due to reduced cultivation caused by inter-ethnic conflict which limited access to land during the June-September season.

The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) estimates that about 72,000 tonnes of food aid will be needed to address food deficits, with an additional 36,000 tonnes required as a contingency reserve for an expected 500,000 returnees.

The disarmament process by the south Sudanese government in 2006 in Diror, Pulchol and Nyirol counties also left households more vulnerable to cattle raiding by their armed neighbors in Pibor County.

Tensions are also reported in Malakal, in Shilluk county, where fighting between two security forces erupted towards the end of November; and in Juba county, where civil insecurity caused by armed groups continues to limit the movement of people and trade.

There are also 250,000 Sudanese refugees in northern Uganda, and if a significant proportion return to Central Equatoria [Juba, Magwi, Torit and Kajokeji - where up to 150,000 people are already expected to be food insecure in 2007], then food aid will be needed for them.

Large-scale population returns, which are being encouraged due to the population census scheduled to take place in November 2007, could also have a negative affect on food security in destination areas. The census is the first since 1993.

"Up to four million southern Sudanese are estimated to still be in northern Sudan, and an estimated 500,000 of them could return south," said FEWS Net, adding that about 350,000 people returned to southern Sudan in 2006.

However, the security situation had improved in the Greenbelt, Hills and Mountain zones, following the resumption of the Ugandan peace talks in mid-December. The rebel Lord's Resistance Army had been active in the area since the early 1990s.

Other developments:

Police cases against new houses trespassers in Amri (Merawi Dam), compensation and appeal committee to resume after Eid.

Al Khartoum reports that the compensation and appeal committee for Amri (Merawi Dam) is to resume work after Adha Eid. The committee is headed by deputy Minister of Justice and legal advisors.

Informed sources explained that legal measures have been taken against those individuals who occupied the new houses without official permission before authorities considers the issue of their compensations. According to authorities the situation might require the use of force to free the occupied houses.