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(By Public Information Office)

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UN/ Agencies

Surge of bandit attacks jeopardizes food rations to Darfur – UN agency (UN)

23 January 2008 – Food rations to more than 2 million people in Darfur may have to be cut within weeks after a surge of bandit attacks this month against trucks carrying relief supplies to the war-wracked Sudanese region, the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) warned today.

Bandits have stolen 23 WFP-contracted trucks and abducted their drivers since the start of the month, the agency said in a statement issued in Khartoum, the Sudanese capital. Nineteen drivers remain missing.

The latest attack occurred late yesterday, in a rural area of North Darfur near the Chadian border. The driver of the empty truck was attacked as he returned to El Fasher, the state capital, after making the day's deliveries.

Even before the spike in attacks this year, bandits have been targeting trucks carrying aid, with 13 such incidents – including three in which the drivers were killed – between September and December last year.

WFP's representative in Sudan, Kenro Oshidari, said there were grave concerns about both the impact of the rash of attacks on the civilian population of Darfur, already suffering from years of conflict, and the fate of the missing drivers.

“Our main trucking companies now refuse to send in more vehicles because of this upsurge in banditry and therefore we have no one to deliver about half our monthly food relief requirement,” Mr. Oshidari said.

“If the situation continues, we'll be forced to cut rations in parts of Darfur by mid-February.”

The contracted trucks normally deliver between 15,000 and 20,000 tons of food aid every month, about half of the total needed to support Darfur's most vulnerable inhabitants. The monthly food ration includes cereals, high-nutrition corn-soya blend,

pulses, vegetable oil, sugar and salt and provides a person with 2,100 kilocalories per day.

Mr. Oshidari urged Sudanese authorities to ensure the safety of the major routes in Darfur, a vast, arid region in the far west of the country.

“Without these deliveries, WFP faces a rapid depletion of stocks and the inability to pre-position food ahead of the rainy season, which is due to start in May.”

In a related development, a UN-Sudanese Government committee agreed today to extend the moratorium on restrictions on humanitarian operations until January 2009.

“The Government gave assurances that the NGO [non-governmental organizations] community would be able to continue their work without interruption and would facilitate resources at state level for the extension of visas,” the High Level Committee of Sudanese Government and UN officials established by the Joint Communiqué on the facilitation of humanitarian activities in Darfur said in a statement.

The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) also welcomed the news, noting that the NGOs implement numerous UN projects in Darfur, where rebels have clashed with Government forces and allied militia groups since 2003.

More than 200,000 people have been killed and at least 2.2 million others displaced because of the violence, and a joint UN-African Union mission known as UNAMID is being deployed to quell the fighting and instability.

Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Jean-Marie Guéhenno, who is currently visiting Sudan, today met with UNAMID staff in Nyala, the capital of South Darfur state. He also conferred with the state’s deputy governor and with representatives of civil society.

Yesterday Mr. Guéhenno was in El Fasher for a meeting with the deputy governor of North Darfur. He also visited the nearby Zam Zam camp for internally displaced persons (IDPs).

Sudan outbreak of Rift Valley Fever abates - WHO (ST)

January 23, 2008 (GENEVA) — Sudan’s outbreak of deadly Rift Valley Fever has abated, with only one state reporting new human infections in 2008, the World Health Organisation (WHO) said.

The virus has killed a total of 222 people of the nearly 700 that have been stricken in the past months, according to a WHO statement released late on Tuesday.

Most have been herders and farmers who catch the disease from handling the tissue of infected animals during slaughtering or butchering, while helping with animal births, and in veterinary procedures.

Humans can also become infected with Rift Valley Fever from mosquito bites or after consuming unpasteurised or uncooked milk or meat from animals carrying the virus. In its most severe form, it can cause blindness, coma, or haemorrhage.

The WHO said Sudan's incidence of the disease has "decreased continuously" in recent weeks and only the Gazeera state has had new cases so far this year.

It said it would continue to assist health authorities in Sudan prepare for seasonal outbreaks of Rift Valley Fever through enhanced surveillance and training.

(Reuters)

Sudan, UN agree on continuation of joint assessment work (Sudan Vision)

By: Zulikha Abdel Razig, The joint assessment conducted by the government and the UN has revealed the government's commitment to providing the required facilities to humanitarian organizations working in Darfur and eliminating obstacles that impede humanitarian work in Darfur.

The two sides were also reported to have agreed on a package of measures related to continuation of joint assessment of all the organizations operating in Darfur and carrying out field visits to be made by the higher committee before its convention in the coming February.

The General Commissioner of Humanitarian Aid, Hasabu Mohammed Abdelrahman, revealed in press statements he made yesterday following the meeting of the Higher Joint Committee that the joint assessment will pinpoint shortcomings and violations of organizations working in Darfur.

He pointed out the recent decision of the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs decision to extend the term of the fast aid route for organizations in Darfur up to the 31st of the current January, noting that his Ministry will sit with the 210 organizations working in Darfur to inform them on these measures.

Abdelrahman further stated that the meeting had discussed the report of the Joint Technical Committee, indicating that it was attended by the representative of the British Embassy on behalf of the donor countries, the Ambassador of the United Arab Emirates on behalf of Arab donors and Amira Haq, the UN Resident Representative and Coordinator for Humanitarian Aid.

Minister of Humanitarian Affairs has issued Resolution No. (1) extending the duration of the fast aid route in Darfur till 31 January 2008 based on the UN-Sudan communiqué calling for smooth flow of humanitarian aid in Darfur .

UNAMID commander says force is for defensive purposes (Khartoum Monitor)

UNAMID's Commander General Martin Luther Agwai said their force is planned to reach 20,000 in addition to 6000 police force. He added that the force will be self financed and will also benefit from the integrated support services that will be provided by the UN including communications means and air backing. That came in a

meeting between UNAMID, the SAF and the police yesterday. UNAMID force will be used only for defensive purposes. On his part, the Commissioner of UNAMID's police discussed the structure, mandate and duties of the UNMID civil police. He announced the establishment of a new police centre and the rehabilitation of the existing ones. He said there is need for cooperation between UNAMID's police, Sudan police and the police of Darfur movements.

GoNU (CPA, DPA, ESPA)

Political forces agree on strict measures for elections (AlAyam), political parties to present certificates committing themselves to implement the CPA (AlSahafa)

(Alahafa, Al-Ayaam, Alsudani)-The Constitutional Review Commission (CRC) has disclosed that the new electoral draft act embodied a package of restrictions to guarantee its fairness and transparency among the candidates.

The CRC stressed it would submit the draft act next Saturday to the Council of Ministers for approval in case the two partners failed to overcome the disputed issues in the act between them, indicating that 26 parties agreed to what has been agreed among them as regards quota ional, geographic and women representation.

However, the draft act specified resources of financing the electoral campaigns, prohibited the foreign support to the political parties and ratified the fair and just contribution to all political parties.

According to the Chairperson of the Justice and Legislation Committee at the National Assembly Badria Sulieman the act stipulated that 15,000 voters should back the nominee for the presidency from 18 states and that the nominee should deposit 10,000 SDG as an insurance repayable in case the nominee obtains 10% out of the total votes or withdraws his nomination 45 days before the beginning of the ballots.

She said that the act confirmed to deal with all political parties by equality and neutrality, noting that freedom of expression would be provided for all parties and prohibition of hostile propaganda would be applied to every party.

Meanwhile, the CRC Legal Advisor Joseph Salim the national mass media would be subjected to questioning if they fail to fairly distribute opportunities among the candidates of the various parties.

NCP establishes committee for dialogue with Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) (AlRai Aam)

The NCP Secretary for Political Contacts, Dr. Mohamed Mandoor, said that the NCP has set up a committee, chaired by al Haj Atta al Manan, to lead dialogue with the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP).

Amum declares opening of al Meram-Aweil road (Khartoum Monitor)

Chairman of the Joint Ministerial Committee, Pagan Amum, declared the opening of al Meram-Aweil road which had been closed following violent incidents in al Meram.

He added that the problem at the border between al Meram and Aweil and the other areas will be settled.

Sudanese-EU dialogue resumed (Akhbar AIYom)

The dialogue between the Government of the Sudan (GoS) and the European Union (EU) which has stopped two years ago was resumed yesterday at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The dialogue will discuss the deployment of the hybrid force in Darfur, political solution for the Darfur issue, the CPA, national reconciliation and human rights.

Polices seizes arms, ammunition in Ombada, Omdurman (AlAyam)

Police authorities have yesterday seized many arms and ammunition in Ombada neighborhood in Omdurman. The police arrested suspects are believed be involved in arms trade.

Government holds talks with UN and movements over Darfur (Khartoum Monitor)

Sources close to the Government disclosed to Khartoum Monitor that intensive consultations are being carried out between the Government and the UN over the resumption of talks with the Darfur's non-signatory movements while Khartoum is holding unannounced talks with a number of these movements

Sudanese rights group condemns murder and tortures of Gezira University students (ST)

January 23, 2008 (KHARTOUM) — The Sudan Human Rights Organization Cairo Office condemns in the strongest terms possible the brutal attacks, murders, and tortures by the Medani police and security forces on students of the Gezira University in Medani and the Nishayshiba area. Last week.

The police and security forces in the city of Medani, the Gezira State, arrested 40 students of the Gezira University.

Students Khadija al-Dowaihi (agriculture), Hiba al-Rasheed (medicine), Julia alSir (engineering), Suha Ahmed (economics), Amel Faisal (engineering), Sarya Murad and Aisha (pharmacy) were beaten up by both police and security officers.

Students Mutawakil Mohamed Osman (engineering), Ali Mohamed Ali (education), Omer Osman (economics) were brutalized. The Medani security officers tortured, in particular, student Ali Mohamed Ali who witnessed the tortures of several colleagues, including the immediate death of student Mutasim Hamid AbulGasim (computer science) as a result of brutal tortures by police and security officers.

The authorities' assault on the students occurred at the College of Education during scheduled discussions by the Students Democratic Front as a part of students' campus activities.

Following the police brutality on the college of education, the police launched another intimidating attack on the Students Club at al-Nishayshiba, which ended with serious destruction of the club's property, as well as the enforcement of further arrests and tortures of students.

(ST)

GoSS

SPLM members at 5 million as convention nears (The Citizen)

The SPLM membership has jumped to five million ahead of an historical national convention in April, the SPLM Secretary General said yesterday. Pagan Amum said on Wednesday that the party's membership had exceeded 5 million, adding that this was an encouraging development ahead of the national convention due in April.

South Sudan's Machar confirms death of Uganda LRA deputy commander (ST)

January 23, 2008 (JUBA, Sudan) — Vincent Otti, the deputy commander of Uganda's Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) rebels, is dead, the vice president of south Sudan said on Wednesday.

"I was officially informed by Joseph Kony that Vincent Otti is dead," south Sudan Vice President Riek Machar told reporters in Juba, south Sudan's capital. Machar is mediating talks in Juba between the rebels and the Ugandan government.

Numerous LRA deserters have said that Kony, whose 20-year rebellion killed tens of thousands of people and uprooted 2 million before a ceasefire last year, shot dead his number two, accusing him of spying.

No official source had so far commented on his fate.

Otti, regarded as the brains behind the group in contrast to the volatile Kony, was a prime mover behind the LRA joining peace talks that began last year in Juba.

LRA spokesman Godfrey Ayoo said he would make a statement shortly.

(Reuters)

Ugandan rebels confirm Otti's death, say ready for peace talks (ST)

January 22, 2008 (JUBA) — A senior commander of the Ugandan rebel Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) has confirmed the death of the Movement's Deputy Chairman, Vincent Otti who was the driving force behind the LRA joining peace talks.

In a joint press statement on Tuesday with the Vice President of the Government of Southern Sudan and Chief Mediator for the Ugandan peace talks, Riek Machar Teny,

LRA's Major General Achalam Caesar, in his confirmation of Otti's death, assured that "the absence of a single person should not be an obstacle to peace".

He continued to exemplify that if the Government of Southern Sudan could function despite the loss of great hero, Dr. John Garang de Mabior, the LRA in a similar manner would continue to pursue peace with the Ugandan government in the absence of Vincent Otti.

The LRA Commander was responding to the demand by Dr. Machar from the LRA leadership to be transparent about Otti's fate. "I want to know if Vincent Otti is dead and the story of his death so that I can tell to the world as Chief Mediator what had happened," he inquired from the LRA commander delegated to him by Joseph Kony. "I want Kony to avail himself so that I talk to him face to face on these issues," Machar continued in a disappointing tone.

Machar had in the past tried to get the truth about Otti's fate from the LRA leadership itself. Achalam told Machar that his Chairman, Kony, was committed to some other duties and could not come to meet him face to face.

General Achalam, who was himself rumored to have died with Vincent Otti, did not explain how Otti died or how many others died with him. However, there have been speculations that Otti was first arrested in early October last year by Joseph Kony after suspecting him of plotting against his leadership and then got killed a few weeks later in a fierce fighting when his supporters tried to release him from jail by force.

Achalam, who was speaking on behalf of the LRM/A Chairman, Joseph Kony, reiterated his Movement's commitment to peaceful resolution of the conflict and its readiness to resume the Juba peace talks as soon as possible.

When asked by Dr. Machar to tell who has now become the deputy to Joseph Kony, Achalam replied that "the position is still vacant". He assured that Joseph Kony maintains the full control of the Movement and committed to peace.

The LRA delegation also announced that there have been changes in the membership of the delegation effected by the Chairman, Kony, with the former head of the team, Martin Ojul, replaced by Dr. David Kasanga, as the new head of the delegation.

Ojul, announced to the press in the same joint statement that the delegation was ready to resume the talks with the Ugandan government delegation next Monday, Jan. 28, in Juba.

The Ugandan peace negotiations were adjourned at the end of June last year to give both delegations time to consult with stakeholders in Uganda on modalities for implementation of the agreements already reached between the two parties.

If the talks resume next week the two delegations will work to finalize these modalities for implementation on Resolutions to the Root Causes of the Conflict as well as Accountability and Reconciliation before they move to the two last protocols on Demobilization, Disarmament and Re-integration (DDR) and the Formal Ceasefire.

(ST)

Darfur

Higher Committee for Coordinating Humanitarian Aid in Darfur Approves Fast Track Procedures (SUNA)

Khartoum, Jan. 23 (SUNA)- The Higher Committee for Coordinating Humanitarian Aid in Darfur met Wednesday under chairmanship of the Minister of Humanitarian Affairs, Dr. Haroun Lual Ron Deng, and the United Nations Resident Coordinator in Sudan, Ms. Ameerah Haq, and approved a number of procedures in the fast track to facilitate and enhance the delivery of humanitarian aid for Darfur. In a press statement after the meeting, the Commissioner General for Humanitarian Aid, Hassabu Mohamed Abdul-Rahman, said that the committee will hold a meeting with the international organizations operating in Darfur which number 200-210 to acquaint them with the new work procedures and the decision of the renewing the fast track which was issued Tuesday by the Minister of Humanitarian Affairs for a period of one year that ends on January 31st, 2009. Hassabu said that the meeting discussed a report of the joint technical committee which includes representatives of the Unified Procedures Complex, the UN agencies and national and international organizations. He indicated that the report covered the period from last October till January 31st, adding that the committee got acquainted on the new developments in the procedures. The meeting appreciated the unified complex role and the facilities being provided by it to the organizations with regard to the customs, work, passports and exemptions. The Commissioner General for Humanitarian Aid said that agreement was reached on the continuity of the joint assessment of the organizations operating in Darfur through the annual and technical reports and the field teams. Hassabu indicated that the coming meeting of the higher committee will be in the third week of next February, explaining that the committee will pay visits to the three states of Darfur. He said that the meeting was attended by a representative of the Sudanese Red Crescent on behalf of the national organizations, the British Ambassador as representative of the Western donors and the Ambassador of the United Arab Emirates as representative of the Arab donors. Meanwhile, the United Nations Resident Coordinator in Sudan, Ms. Ameerah Haq, appreciated renewing of the fast track, saying that the UN welcomes the extension. It is to be recalled that the Higher Committee for Coordination of Humanitarian Aid in Darfur was established in the year 2004 following issuance of the joint communiqué which was signed by Sudan government and the United Nations. MO/MO

Sudan extends permission for NGOs to continue activities in Darfur (ST)

January 23, 2008 (KHARTOUM) — Sudan has extended the authorization for the humanitarian organisations working in Darfur for one more year. This extension aims at enabling aid workers to continue to carry their activities in the troubled region.

The Higher Committee for Coordinating Humanitarian Aid in Darfur met Wednesday under chairmanship of the Minister of Humanitarian Affairs, Haroun Lual Ron Deng, and the United Nations Resident Coordinator in Sudan, Ms. Ameerah Haq. It

approved a number of procedures in the fast track to facilitate and enhance the delivery of humanitarian aid for Darfur.

Sudanese government has renewed the moratorium of the International humanitarian organisations in Darfur until January 2009. The government gave assurance that NGOs community would be able to continue their work without interruption and would facilitate resources at state level for the extension of visa.

In a press statement after the meeting, the Commissioner General for Humanitarian Aid, Hassabu Mohamed Abdel-Rahman, said that the committee will hold a meeting with the international organizations operating in Darfur which number 200-210 to acquaint them with the new work procedures and the decision of the renewing the fast track.

Meanwhile, the United Nations Resident Coordinator in Sudan, Ms. Ameerah Haq, appreciated renewing of the fast track, saying that the UN welcomes the extension.

The Commissioner General for Humanitarian Aid said that agreement was reached on the continuity of the joint assessment of the organizations operating in Darfur through the annual and technical reports and the field teams.

The meeting was attended by a representative of the Sudanese Red Crescent on behalf of the national organizations, the British Ambassador as representative of the Western donors and the Ambassador of the United Arab Emirates as representative of the Arab donors.

The Higher Committee for Coordination of Humanitarian Aid in Darfur was established in the year 2004 following issuance of the joint communiqué which was signed by Sudan government and the United Nations.

(ST)

[Sudan: Darfuri women meet in Ethiopia to voice living conditions, violence \(BBC\)](#)

Text of report in English by state-owned Ethiopian news agency ENA website

Addis Ababa, 23 January: Nearly 60 women drawn from civil society organizations and different clans in Darfur, the Sudan are in Addis Ababa to express concerns about their living conditions and violence they face in Darfur since the beginning of the conflict.

Supported by other African women and international experts, the Darfur Women Consultation Meeting was initiated by Femmes Africa Solidarite, in collaboration with the African Centre for Gender and Social Development of the UN Economic Commission for Africa and the AU African Women Gender and Development Directorate.

The meeting between Darfuri women and their sisters in Addis Ababa, to be held at the margins of the 10th AU Summit, is believed to let the victims of conflicts from other regions of Africa share their experiences and place a special focus on the gender aspect of the plan of action for peace.

The two-day consultation is also believed to allow African women's lobbies to harmonize their strategies in order to integrate gender into the peace process in Sudan.

According to international reports, tens of thousands of women in Darfur have been displaced and separated from their children, husbands, families, houses, and driven far away from their region.

Since the beginning of the conflict, women in Darfur have been raped and killed, a statement of UNECA sent to ENA [Ethiopian News Agency] said.