



UNITED NATIONS MISSION IN SUDAN

UNMIS

Media Monitoring Report, 05 May 2007

(By Public Information Office)

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Highlights

UN/ Agencies/ Partners

UN plan for ceasefire and a political solution to the Darfur issue

(*AlSudani*) A high-ranking UN official who opted for anonymity has revealed that the UN has proposed that the initiatives proposed by states in the region for solutions to the crisis in Darfur be streamlined into one initiative under the brokerage of the UN and the African Union.

He said that the roadmap proposed seeks to coordinate between the non-signatory movements and to bring in the SPLM, Libya, Eritrea, Chad and Egypt to participate in the quest for solutions to Darfur. He pointed out that the JEM had, during consultative talks held earlier, requested that these states facilitate the negotiations process.

On the other hand, the spokesperson for the JEM says that the movement had expressed to the UN envoy to Darfur, Haavisto, and the African Union's Sam Ibok, their willingness to talk towards a just and comprehensive peace.

Spokesperson Ahmed Husein said that preparations are underway for a meeting between African Union envoy Salim Ahmed Salim and JEM leader Khalil Ibrahim and that the JEM had requested that talks be conducted at a neutral venue, preferably "a neighbouring state." He also called on the movements in Darfur to unite.

Referring to an ultimatum by the JEM that it would take the path to talks alone with government if the movements do not unite within 45 days, the spokesperson pointed out that the JEM does not seek to ignore the need for coordination between the movements but does not want to see the government use the lack of coordination between the movements as an excuse to delay talks.

Investigations point to SLM involvement in the killing of Egyptian peacekeeper

(*AlSudani*) Preliminary investigations point to the involvement of elements of SLA-MM Special Forces in the recent killing of the Egyptian peacekeeper of the UN LSP to the AMIS.

A spokesperson for the movement has denied any involvement of SLA elements in the crime. He says results of ongoing investigations are yet to be revealed but the law should take its course should it be proved that SLA elements are involved.

The UN support package to the AMIS

Security Council to deliberate today over amendments to the plan to deploy hybrid forces

(*AlRai AlAam*) The newspaper quotes Secretary-General Spokesperson Marie Okabe as having noted that the Secretary-General will present before the Security Council later today a final report on the joint UN-AU plan to deploy a hybrid force in Darfur.

The paper says the step follows some amendments to the plan as result of disagreement between the UN and the African Union over some details in the original plan.

Below is what UN News has posted on the issue[<http://www.un.org/News/ossg/hilites.shtml>]

REPORT ON HYBRID DARFUR PEACEKEEPING FORCE TO GO TO SECURITY COUNCIL TOMORROW

- Asked if the Secretary-General was having any success responding to changes proposed by the African Union (AU) to a report on the planned UN/AU hybrid peacekeeping force for Darfur, the Spokeswoman said that Ban Ki-moon, through the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), has been in close consultations with the AU over the weekend to discuss the changes and that the report was now expected to go to the Security Council possibly as early as tomorrow.
- "Once the report is endorsed by both the Security Council and the AU," Okabe explained, "it will go to the Sudanese government officially and then the three sides will begin talks on its implementation."
- In response to another question, Okabe said that although Ban Ki-moon had been invited by the Sudanese leader to visit Sudan, she was not aware of any plans as of now for an official visit by the Secretary-General.

CPA

Parliamentarians warn the situation in South Kordofan is near explosion; Parliament calls for proper implementation of the CPA

(AlAyaam; Rai AlShaab) Yesterday's session of the National Assembly saw parliamentarians lash out at the Minister of Justice whom they blame for the delay in delaying enactment of legislature compliant to the CPA.

The lawmakers also called for a proper implementation of the CPA citing concerns over shortfalls such as the issue of the OAGs, the formation of the JIUs in Abyei and South Kordofan, the conflict in Abyei and the ongoing developments in South Kordofan which they describe as a threat to the implementation of the CPA resulting from non-implementation of the Protocol on Security Arrangements. They called for more will and trust between the parties.

Armed group from the Nuba Mountains blocks operations of the demarcation team

(AlKhartoum) An armed group loyal to the SPLA has blocked the technical team sent to demarcate the North-South boundaries.

This happened between the Kadugli and Kailak municipalities of South Kordofan and Fariang municipality of Upper Nile.

Sources refusing to be named said that it was only through the wisdom of the head of the team and the leader of the group of SPLA soldiers accompanying them that the issue was overcome but the Kailak team refused to go one wit the work because of the direct security threat to them.

SPLM accuses Khartoum governor of violating the CPA

(Rai AlShaab) Citing Article 119 (c) of the Interim Constitution of Khartoum State, the Deputy Speaker of the Khartoum State Legislative Assembly says the post of Deputy Governor of Khartoum State that is currently being held by el-Sadig el-Hadi who also doubles up as the Minister of Education is the constitutional preserve of the SPLM.

Deputy Speaker Abdalla Tiya pointed out that the article pursuant to which the governor based his appointment of the current Deputy Governor is weak grounds for the appointment. He did not say what steps the SPLM caucus at the legislative body will take to reverse the appointment.

SPLM says events in the Faw area are politically fabricated

(Rai AlShaab) The SPLM caucus at the legislative assembly of el-Faw municipality, Gedharef State, are opposed to a demand by their NCP counterparts to move a no-confidence vote against the commissioner.

The head of the SPLM caucus says the demand is a political fabrication on the part of the National Congress Party.

GoNU

Foreign minister to brief parliament today on the US sanctions

(AlWattan) Foreign minister Lam Akol briefs parliament today on the implications of the US unilateral sanctions on the country and Sudan's position on the issue.

The Speaker of the National Assembly said that parliament will today take a decision on the issue in the interest of the country.

Sudan's central bank restricts foreign currency transactions

(Reuters via SudanTribune.com) Sudan's central bank said on Monday it had imposed restrictions on foreign currency transactions, a move money traders said would harm their businesses and create a black market.

The new regulations, from which foreigners and foreign organizations are exempt, prevent Sudanese from buying foreign currencies from money exchanges for imports or to credit personal accounts in Sudan. They also limit Sudanese usage of foreign currency unless those monies have been transferred from outside the country.

The decree, which came into effect on May 29, aims to end capital flight and bring foreign currency flows back within the banking system.

"We decided to come to these policies because according to the statistics that we have now from the exchange bureaux and from the banks shows that most of the resources of the foreign currency goes into channels which are not clearly defined," said Badr Eddin Abbas, deputy central bank governor.

He said the central bank needed to monitor foreign exchange flows in the country.

Abbas said the policy was not related to the sanctions. However the embargo hinders foreign exchange transfers, especially of U.S. dollars, to Sudan.

"The new policy is more regulation, more discipline for the market," the deputy governor said.

Foreign exchange bureaux will still be able to sell small amounts of cash to traders and people traveling abroad for purposes such as medical treatment, pilgrimage and tourism, Abbas said.

Foreign exchange bureaux described it as an attempt to undermine their business, arguing that they served a useful purpose supplying cash to importers and travelers going to destinations that are not serviced by Sudanese banks.

Abdul Hamid Abdul Bagi, chairman of the union of Sudanese foreign exchange bureaux, said the new policy would create a black market for foreign currencies and strengthen the dollar against the Sudanese pound.

"We fear that demand will move from the foreign exchange bureaux to the black market and this will lead to an increase in exchange rates," Abdul Bagi told Reuters, referring to a strengthening of all foreign currencies against the Sudanese pound.

Southern Sudan

10 killed in clashes between SPLA, cattle raiders in South Sudan

(SudanTribune.com) At least ten died in a clashes between Murle cattle raiders and the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) in Liria, Central Equatoria State last week, SPLA Spokesman Maj. Gen. Kuol Deim Kuol reported on Monday.

According to the SPLA spokesman Maj. Gen. Kuol, in the morning of the 2nd June 2007, it was reported to the SPLA forces based in Liria that two children were abducted in a village 15 minutes walk from Liria by a force of about 100 armed men. The SPLA 1st Company of the Battalion 141 was rushed to rescue the situation.

The Company clashed with the raiders with followings results: the two children were rescued and returned to their village; three SPLA soldiers were killed in action; seven Raiders were killed. The dead bodies of the raiders were identified as that of the Murle Cattle Raiders; and three AK-47 rifles were captured by the SPLA.

The current peaceful disarmament of the local population in Pibor County is not achieving the designed objectives; instead the Murle Cattle Raiders have intensified the cattle raiding and abduction of children in Central Equatoria State, Ethiopia and the disarmed communities in Jongeli and Northern Upper Nile States.

GoSS threatens Islamic banks with closure

(*Alwan*) A high-rank official at the GoSS has called on all banks operating the Islamic Banking system to go secular.

The official cited provisions in the CPA that allows banks in southern Sudan to operate secular banking systems.

Mobile phone gateway for South

(*Gurtong.com*) A new gateway for mobile phone calls is to be established in Southern Sudan, possibly within four months, said officials from the Government of Southern Sudan (GOSS) Ministry of Telecommunications and Postal Services on Monday.

Telecommunications regulation lies with the central government's National Telecommunication Corporation (NTC), based in Khartoum, but under a new understanding some power will be devolved South.

In a memorandum of understanding signed between the central and southern ministries on 29 May, the National Telecommunication Corporation (NTC) will now have members from the Government of Southern Sudan in it and a branch in the South.

"It (NTC) will be restructured again so it can accommodate part of this government," explained Gier Chunag Aluong GOSS minister for telecommunications and postal services.

"(But) the new NTC in the south will not license any operator, the role they will be playing is regulation," said Aluong who also said that the NTC branch would control the new gateway planned for Southern Sudan.

Two mobile phone operators, of which only Gemtel is operating, signed by the rebel movement during the years of conflict have now been fully recognized by the GONU ministry and given frequencies to operate in Southern Sudan.

Gemtel is currently using Uganda's gateway for US \$ 50,000 a month according to ministry officials as well as Uganda's international dialing code 246.

"249 will now be for the whole of Sudan ... including for Gemtel" said Aluong, "but there will be a signaling point for the north and for the south".

The GOSS ministry fought hard for two days during negotiations to enforce the use of a southern gateway (when constructed) for any mobile phone operator wanting to provide services to the south said Aluong.

Internet providers in the south would also have to use the government's gateway, said Aluong, who added that increased security for the south was one of the reasons for the move.

"There are some people who could use the system to dismantle it," he said, "the gateway has to be controlled by the government ... it is for the security of the country".

Darfur

Greater SLM unveils “new roadmap for solutions to Darfur

(*AlKhabar*) The opposition Greater SLM is circulating a “roadmap” for solutions to the crisis in Darfur and that would fill the gaps in the Darfur Peace Agreement.

Proposed is an international all-inclusive peace conference on Darfur in which all political and military groups of Darfur.

French president determined to resolve Darfur crisis - AU chief

(*AP via SudanTribune.com*) African Union leader John Kufuor praised French President Nicolas Sarkozy as having the will to help find a solution to the Darfur crisis, after meeting the France’s newly elected leader on Monday in Paris.

Sarkozy has said he wants aid to Africa and the Darfur crisis to be among the top priorities of the G-8 summit meeting starting Wednesday in Germany.

"I got the feeling that this president will definitely try to help find a solution in Darfur," said Kufuor, president of Ghana, after his 30-minute meeting with Sarkozy.

"The impression I got is that this president will help to bring relief to the suffering people of Darfur," Kufuor said. "He’s concerned that at least humanitarian support is given."

The AU currently has a 7,000-strong force on the ground in Darfur, but it has been unable to stop fighting between ethnic African rebels and pro-government janjaweed militia in Sudan’s vast western Darfur region. The four-year conflict has killed more than 200,000 people and displaced 2.5 million Darfurians.

Kufuor said the "goodwill and the understanding" he established with Sarkozy during their half-hour of talks "may help move the solution forward."

He did not provide specifics.

US says not supporting boycott of Beijing Olympics over Darfur

(*AP via SudanTribune.com*) The United States is not supporting the suggestion of a boycott of the 2008 Olympic games in Beijing to protest China’s support of the Sudanese government, the State Department said Monday.

China has rejected growing criticism that it is not wielding its influence with Sudan to stop bloodshed in the Darfur region, but activists have been stepping up pressure.

French politicians floated the idea of an Olympic boycott during their country's recent presidential race, and actress Mia Farrow and others are pushing corporate sponsors of the Games to pressure Beijing to do more.

"That's a private effort that is under way," State Department spokesman Sean McCormack said Monday. "Their perception of the ability of the Chinese government to influence the behavior of the Sudanese government is not a U.S. government effort; is not something that we have supported."

China wouldn't block UN sanctions on Sudan - UK

(Bloomberg via SudanTribune.com) China, the largest buyer of Sudanese oil exports, probably would not block new United Nations sanctions on Sudan over the violence in Darfur, said Britain's minister for African affairs.

"They're arguing with much greater force than they have in the past for Sudan to live up to its international obligations," Lord David Triesman told foreign journalists at a news briefing at the U.K. Foreign Office in London today. "I think the Chinese are now working very hard to resolve this problem."

Discussions with Chinese officials have "led me to believe that China would not block" new resolutions by the UN Security Council, Triesman said. He declined to discuss details, saying "I don't want to interfere with those discussions."

Darfur governor says US sanctions would be punishment on region's people

(AlWatan via BBC Monitoring, 4 June) The governor of Northern Darfur State, Uthman Muhammad Yusuf Kibir, has said that the sanctions imposed recently by the US on Sudan with regard to the situation in Darfur would be a punishment to the people of Darfur in the first place because it would worsen the situation and the sufferings of the people of Darfur.

During a celebration held at Al-Fashir University, on the occasion of the inauguration of Al-Riyan hostel and the renovation of Al-Firdows hostel for female students, which was attended by Kibir and the leaders of the National Fund for Students Welfare, Kibir demanded both, the US and the international community to help in settling the crisis in accordance with the stipulations of the Abuja agreement and not to create another crisis. He asserted that the government would not for give up its principles regarding the Darfur crisis.