



## UNITED NATIONS MISSION IN SUDAN

### UNMIS

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(By Public Information Office)

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## Highlights

### UN/ Agencies

## Two millions IDPs and refugees return to Southern Sudan - UN

March 5, 2008 (JUBA) — By the end of year 2007, since the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), total of two million individuals southern Sudanese have returned, said the UNMIS Regional Coordinator for Southern Sudan and Deputy Resident Coordinator for Sudan.

David Gressly said that a total of 157, 217 returnees came through organized repatriation while 52,787 were IDPs, 76,955 refugees and 27,475 were organized to returns by other organizations than UN.

Briefing nationwide Journalists connected through the UN sponsored Miraya FM radio station in Juba press hall, Gressly said that a total of 68,000 Internally Displace Persons (IDPs) have returned from Khartoum to Southern Sudan, 40, 000 including 4,000 from transitional areas, 5,000 from Western Bhar el Ghazal state to Warrap state, 15,000 from Eastern Equatoria state to Jonglei, and 8,000 from south Darfur to Northern Bhar el Ghazal meanwhile 80,000 refugees returned from Uganda, Kenya and Ethiopia to several states of Southern Sudan

As from January 2008 to the present day, UN and International Organization for Migration (IOM) have assisted 5,060 IDPs to return to their respective home villages in the ten states of southern Sudan and also assisted the stranded and vulnerable 700 Ambororo to reach Unity state; that the UNHCH also assisted 2,500 refugees to return to Southern Sudan.

He says the returnees would now be able to participate in the forthcoming national population and housing census including 2009 election. The estimated total number of IDPS and refugees is about 4.4 million.

That NUMIS targeted to repatriate a total of 438,000 returnees this year out of which 250,000 would come from spontaneous returns. Another 188,000 would be from the organized returnees, out of which 108,000 would come from the IDPs and 80 from refugee's camps. Hence a total of 310,365 individuals are expected to returns to the ten state of southern Sudan in readiness for national population and housing census exercises scheduled from 14th to 30th April 2008.

David Gressly attributed the success of repatriating both the IDPs and the refugees to tripartite agreements signed with five countries; Central African Republic (CAR), adding that repatriation from CAR and DRC has already been completed.

When asked of what plan UN have for IDPs now occupying Magwi and Nimule corridor and making it difficult for indigenous people to return from Ugandan refugees camps, he say UN together with southern Sudan government (GoSS) will soon repatriate the IDPs who are mainly from Bor of Jonglei states because security situation in Jonglei has improved and its high time for them to go and be counted in their own original villages.

While responding on the fear that Nimule areas has been heavily mined because it was the major frontline, he say Eastern Equatoria state has been cleared of land mines since last year by southern Sudan landmine commission.

Gressly further said the mapping of census has been completed and material are being transported to the ten states of southern Sudan in readiness for census night of 14th April 2008.

Meanwhile regarding roads situation, he said it will not hinder or obstruct census exercise.

Gressly also serves as Deputy Resident Coordinator for Southern Sudan, coordinating operations of all UN aid agencies in the region.

On peace talks in Juba between the LRA and the Ugandan Government, Gressly said he expected a final agreement by the end of the month. "My understanding from what the parties have conveyed is that there are no outstanding substantive issues to work out, only administrative ones."

Gressly said there had been bad and good-days during the negotiations but that of recent the parties are heading to ending the twenty years of conflict after they have signed all the five vital points of agreements. What remains is only a ceremonial endorsement of the peace deal before heads of states and governments as witnesses.

UNMIS press briefing is part of continued effort by the United Nations to provide regularly updates to the press about the work of the UN in southern Sudan to support the implementation of the CPA.

#### [UN urges Sudanese parties to resolve Abyei row peacefully](#)

(ST) March 5, 2008 (JUBA) — Speaking at a press conference in Juba on 5 March, UNMIS Regional Coordinator for Southern Sudan David Gressly urged all parties to recent conflicts in the Abyei area to use non-violent means to advance their goals.

"The UN stands against all forms of violence and deplores the killings that have occurred in the Abyei region in recent days," said Gressly, referring to clashes that had occurred near Abyei over the weekend.

He clarified that no killings had occurred within Abyei town itself, although there had been reports of fighting in the adjacent area. Details on the clashes and death toll could not be confirmed by the UN because its access to the area has been restricted, he said.

He refuted misinformation from the section of media that UNICEF has pulled out from Abyei following the recent tribal fights between Dinka Ngiok and the Arab Misseriya "UNICEF operations there [in Abyei] are continuing as usual." Gressly said.

Gressly also serves as Deputy Resident Coordinator for Southern Sudan, coordinating operations of all UN aid agencies in the region.

#### [Chief of RRR: 1.9 million IDPs return to their areas, insecurity is major concern](#)

(Al-Ayyam) UNMIS' Chief of RRR, S. Malik, said insecurity in some areas in Ayei and Equatoria, landmines, short period of drought and lack of infrastructure represent major challenges for the return of IDPs and refugees to their areas.

Interviewed by Al-Ayyam Newspaper he said 1.9 million IDPs returned to Southern Sudan and the Transitional Areas, 80% to the south and 20% to the three areas.

He added that 500000 have enrolled in Khartoum for return to their areas this year.

### **GoNU (CPA, DPA, ESPA)**

#### **Agreement between GoS and UN police**

(Al-Khartoum) The Ministry of Interior expressed readiness to assist the UN troops in Sudan to perform their mission.

Director General of Police, Lt. Gen. Mahgoub Hassan Saad, has called upon UN police (female) and their counterpart in the Ministry of Interior to work out a basis to enable the two parties to boost cooperation between them.

Maj. Gen. Hamid Manan said a memorandum of understanding was signed between the UN and the police HQs for cooperation. He said yesterday's meeting was a continuation of previous meetings between the two parties.

The meeting held yesterday focused on cooperation in the field of family and child protection, human rights, training, and community police.

The representative of the UN commended the cooperation on the part of the police HQs to implement the recommendations of the previous meeting.

#### **Umma Party leader calls on UNMIS to maintain security in Abyei**

(Al-Rai Al-Aam) The President of the National Umma Party, Mr. Sadiq Al-Mahdi, said the task of maintaining peace in Abyei should be undertaken by UNMIS. He said the situation in Abyei is explosive and requires a neutral body.

Mr. Mahdi has called upon the Government to live up to its responsibilities to contain the crisis in Abyei.

On the other hand, SPLM official Mr. Yassir Arman said NCP submitted proposals for resolving Abyei and they are being studied by SPLM.

#### **Sudan's speaker hails military cooperation with Iran**

(ST) March 5, 2008 (KHARTOUM) — Sudan's National Assembly Speaker on Wednesday in meeting with visiting Iranian Defense Minister welcomed broadening Sudan's defence cooperation with Iran, considering it at the service of greater regional peace and stability.

Ahmed Ibrahim al-Taher told the Iranian Defence Minister Brigadier General Mustafa Mohamed-Najjar, "Crisis making and intriguing disintegration tendencies in sovereign countries by the hegemonic powers is not exclusively observed in the Middle East, since the United States and its notorious allies practice warmongering policies in Africa, too."

He further added, "They disturb regional security here constantly and promote disintegration tendencies, but of course thanks to the alertness of the African governments and nations, their plots and intrigues have yielded no fruits for them thus far." The official IRNA reported.

The Sudanese Parliament Speaker voiced support for Iran's insistence for taking advantage of the nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, condemning the pressure imposed by global arrogance against Iran resorting to that excuse.

The Iranian minister, also, during the meeting reiterated, "The trend of Iran-Sudan defence ties and cooperation is very satisfactory and their dimensions are bilateral, regional and international today."

He added, "Such a broad defence cooperation is the manifestation of the strong political will of the two countries' leaders for the expansion of comprehensive bilateral brotherly ties."

Najjar said, "The Islamic Republic of Iran considers no limits for broadening ties with Sudan."

He further said, "During the course of the past ten years the defence cooperation between Iran and Sudan has served as a trustworthy and dependable ring in the strong chain of the two countries' brotherly ties."

Najjar at the end appreciated the Sudanese Parliament Speaker for Khartoum Government's strong support for Iran's peaceful nuclear program at international societies.

### [Sudan finds body of French soldier](#)

(ST) March 5, 2008 ( KHARTOUM) — Sudan confirmed Wednesday it had found the body of a French EU peacekeeper missing after deadly clashes with Sudanese troops just inside the border from Chad and were flying the corpse to Khartoum.

"We can confirm the missing soldier has been found dead close to the common border between Chad and Sudan," foreign ministry spokesman Ali al-Sadiq said.

"His body should arrive in Khartoum this evening and we will cooperate to the maximum (with arrangements for its repatriation)," the spokesman added, referring all other queries to the French embassy.

The French commando vanished in war-torn Darfur on Monday when at least one vehicle from the European Union's peacekeeping mission in Chad crossed into Sudan.

An exchange of fire followed in which a Sudanese soldier and a civilian were killed and a French soldier wounded, but details on the clash remain sketchy.

The EU mission announced that the Sudanese authorities had informed the local EU representative in Khartoum that remains discovered near the Chadian border are believed to be that of a French member of the peacekeeping force.

"The arrangements for the formal identification and recovery of the remains are currently being organised," said EUFOR from its headquarters near Paris.

A European diplomat in Khartoum confirmed a body had been found and would be repatriated, but could not say whether it was the Frenchman or not, pending the next-of-kin being informed.

"Of course I confirm that we have received information (about the body) and that we are working in liaison with the Sudanese authorities to organise the body's repatriation," the diplomat said, asking not to be named.

Sudan ordered its armed forces to search for the missing soldier after warning EUFOR it had no mandate to cross the border into Sudanese territory.

EUFOR commander, Lieutenant General Patrick Nash of Ireland, had appealed for Sudanese assistance in the search for the missing soldier, while expressing regret for an "inadvertent crossing" of the border.

He said that EUFOR "carries out its mandate in full respect of the sovereignty of the Sudanese border".

The deployment of the force remains unaffected, he stressed.

The 14-nation EUFOR mission of 3,700 troops began deploying to Chad and the Central African Republic last month after a delay caused by a rebel assault on the Chadian capital.

Of that total 2,000 will be French troops. So far some 700 have been deployed as the force builds up its strength.

Last month, Jean-Marie Guehenno, the head of UN peacekeeping operations, warned that violence between Sudan and Chad fought out by rebel groups on each side threatened to destabilise the region and could lead to a regional war.

EUFOR has a UN mandate to protect refugees from western Sudan's strife-wracked Darfur region as well as people internally displaced by rebel insurgency in Chad and the northern Central African Republic.

## **GoSS**

### [GoSS discusses challenges to census process](#)

(ST) March 5, 2008 (JUBA) — The Council of Ministers of the Government of Southern Sudan on Wednesday in Juba, under the chairmanship of the First Vice President of the Sudan and President of the Government of Southern Sudan, General Salva Kiir Mayardit, discussed challenges facing the process of the upcoming 5th population census due to be conducted next month in the country as well as the way forward.

The Chairperson of the Southern Sudan Commission for Census, Statistics and Evaluation Center, Isaiah Chol, in his briefing to the Council of Ministers enumerated a number of technical and political challenges for a possible resolution by the Council. These include, among others, lack of sufficient funds for public mobilization and training

of census enumerators, insecurity issues, and inadequate personnel to carry out the enumeration exercise as well as lack of mobility.

The Council further examined any possible negative impact the population census would have on some other provisions of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) if carried out before resolving the North-South border demarcation, Abyei and Darfur issues and redeployment of the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) from Southern Sudan territories near the border.

The Cabinet also noted with great concern the omission of 'ethnicity and religion' in the forms containing the questionnaire for the census. It also noted lack of some certain uniformity of the format between the English and Arabic versions of the forms.

The Minister of Information and Broadcasting in the Government of Southern Sudan, Gabriel Changson Chang, told the press that the inclusion of ethnicity and religion in the questionnaire is important because it would determine whether Sudan is of African or Arab and Islamic country.

Changson further explained that Khartoum has always claimed to the contrary that Arabs are the majority in the Sudan and that Islam is also the religion of majority in the country.

Honourable Ministers also inquired how the Southern Sudanese Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) currently living in the North would be counted in such a de facto conduct of population census; whether they would be counted to the southern or northern population of the country.

They also carefully analyzed how the results of this population census would relate or affect the upcoming general elections in 2009 and referendum in the South in 2011.

The Council is expected to come up with a resolution on these issues in its next meeting.

## **Darfur**

### [Russia proposing choppers for Darfur force](#)

(ST) March 5, 2008 (UNITED NATIONS) — Russia is proposing to supply some of the helicopters the United Nations has been urgently seeking to back up the U.N./African Union peacekeeping force in Darfur, Moscow's U.N. ambassador said on Wednesday.

"The most likely scenario of the use of Russian helicopters would be Russia supplying the helicopters with crews from other countries," envoy Vitaly Churkin told reporters.

The United Nations has for months been seeking six attack and 18 transport helicopters to support the planned 26,000-strong UNAMID force, which is starting to deploy in the violence-torn Darfur region of western Sudan.

The U.N. peacekeeping department says the helicopters are essential for UNAMID in its efforts to bring peace to an area the size of France.

Countries have been slow to respond. The United Nations has accepted four attack helicopters from Ethiopia and is continuing discussions with Ethiopia and Bangladesh on transport helicopters.

Churkin said he understood the Russian offer was for several helicopters of a type that could be used in desert conditions, but he had no further details.

He also said Russia would be sending helicopters and crews to work with a separate European Union peacekeeping force in neighboring Chad.

The lack of the helicopters has been one of many problems slowing deployment of UNAMID, which is replacing an ineffectual 7,000-strong AU force to try to end five years of violence involving Sudanese forces, allied militias and Darfur rebel groups. International experts say some 200,000 people have been killed and more than 2 million made homeless by the Darfur violence. Khartoum says the actual figures are far lower.

## ON THE GROUND

Richard Williamson, the newly appointed U.S. special envoy to Sudan, met U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon on Wednesday to urge the deployment go ahead as fast as possible.

"I think we're wrong to obsess about the helicopters," he told reporters later. "Our immediate obsession should be to try to get peacekeepers on the ground."

There are currently just over 9,000 peacekeepers in Darfur. Some 3,600 more, from Egypt and Ethiopia, are meant to arrive by the end of May.

Williamson said on a visit to Sudan last week he had urged President Omar Hassan al-Bashir, who wants UNAMID to consist mainly of African troops, to give final authorization for 1,600 Thai and Nepalese troops the United Nations wants to send.

He said that in return the United States was willing to help African contingents to deploy. More discussions would be held with Sudanese authorities on the issue, he added.

Williamson also said a group of countries known as "friends of UNAMID" would be launched on Thursday to help individual countries with training and equipment for deploying.

Diplomats said the group would consist of the United States, Britain, France, Canada, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Belgium, the Netherlands, Tanzania, the European Union and the U.N. peacekeeping department.

## [US special envoy to Sudan tells UN chief "we want results"](#)

(ST) March 05, 2008 (UNITED NATIONS) — President Bush's special envoy to Sudan Richard Williamson told the UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon that Washington wants to see progress on the Darfur peacekeeping force.

"All we want is results on the ground so there can be alleviation of human suffering" Williamson told reporters after his meeting with the UN Chief.



The newly appointed envoy also told Ban that the UN should not be hung on the issue of helicopters needed by the Darfur force.

"I think we're wrong to obsess about the helicopters. Our immediate obsession should be to try to get peacekeepers on the ground" he said.

The United Nations has for months been seeking six attack and 18 transport helicopters to support the planned 26,000-member UNAMID force, which is starting to deploy in the violence-torn Darfur region of western Sudan.

The U.N. peacekeeping department says the helicopters are essential for UNAMID to operate in an area the size of France.

Countries have been slow to respond. The United Nations has accepted four attack helicopters from Ethiopia and is discussing transport helicopters with Ethiopia and Bangladesh.

But today Moscow's U.N. ambassador said that Russia said maybe be able to supply some of the helicopters.

"We can't let form get in the way of substance and the issues on helicopters are not some arbitrary specifications but what's the mission? Are there other ways to solve it? The US government has come up with various ways to try and solve it" Williamson said.

The US envoy said that he told Sudan's President Omar Hassan Al-Bashir during his recent visit to Khartoum that the "current situation is unacceptable". He also asked Al-Bashir to accept 1,600 troops from Nepal and Thailand in return for US assistance to support African troops to be deployed in the coming months.

But Al-Bashir did not accept or reject the US proposal.

"Giving the instability and the violence going on, it is way past time for talks," Williamson said. He also implicitly blamed members of the international community for not contributing enough to the force.

"Are there things other contributors can and should be doing? Yes" the US envoy said.

Williamson's predecessor Andrew Natsios told Sudan Tribune last week that some countries and international organizations are intentionally slowing down the deployment of a peacekeeping force in Darfur but declined to name them.

The US envoy also disclosed that several countries are forming "friends of UNAMID" tomorrow to help with training and equipment.

Diplomats said the group, to be announced on Thursday, includes the United States, Britain, France, Canada, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Belgium, the Netherlands, Tanzania, the European Union and the U.N. peacekeeping department.

UN Security Council adopted resolution 1769 on July 31st which authorized a hybrid UN-AU force (UNAMID) consisting of 26,000 troops and police but so far it only has only 9,000 personnel.

## **Miscellaneous**

### [Sudan's SPLM reportedly opens an office in Israel – statement](#)

(ST) March 5, 2008 (TEL AVIV) – SPLM supporters in Israel announced establishment of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement office in Israel, a press release said today.

"After consultation with the leadership of SPLM in Juba, the supporters of SPLM in Israel have decided to establish the office of SPLM in Israel." Said a statement received by email from Tel Aviv signed by the SLMP secretariat in Israel.

The statement said that SPLM office would promote the policies and the vision of the SPLM in the region. It further added that in accordance with the Comprehensive Peace Agreement the SPLM has the right to open in any country including Israel.

It further indicated that there are around 400 SPLM supporters in Israel.

Darfur rebel leader Abdel Wahid al-Nur said last week he opened an office in Tel Aviv. Khartoum has condemned the move saying it gives "a material proof that Darfur crisis is manipulated by foreign hands and a Jewish lobby."

"The Southern Sudanese in Israel are very grateful to the leadership of President Salva Kiir Mayardit who persuaded Israeli government to resettle Southerners who escaped from Egypt." The statement said.

Egyptian authorities arrest regularly large number of Sudanese, mainly from southern Sudan and Darfur, who try to cross illegally to Israel from Sinai peninsula. But much have succeeded to enter into Israel.

The Sudanese migrants are drawn to Israel by rumours of better living conditions and hopes of gaining asylum there, but are also keen to leave Egypt where activists say they face persistent racism, abuse, and economic marginalisation.

According to a letter sent to the Sudanese First Vice President and president of southern Sudan, the Chairman of Sudanese Refugees Organization in Israel, Majier Anyuat Pap, urged Salva Kiir Mayadrit to help them to return to Southern Sudan.

In the letter that Sudan Tribune received a copy of it on February 24, Pap said "These are a group of over 2000, South Sudanese fled from North Sudan to Egypt to Israel over the last year or so, and we are stranded here. We fled because the authorities in Egypt were dealing with us in a harsh way."

He further said "While nobody mistreats us here, we are not officially recognized as refugees, have no legal way of earning a living, have no education and proper housing. Attempts at having the Israeli government accept us as officially recognized refugees have not, so far, been successful, and our situation is getting worse by day."

Pap blamed Salva Kiir for ignoring their different letters "our question here is, we are not South Sudanese? Or we can not do in future in South Sudan? If all of these are truths you must to reply, Mr. President"