

**UNITED NATIONS MISSION IN SUDAN
UNMIS**

Media Monitoring Report, 25 March 2007
(By Public Information Office)

NOTE: Reproduction here does not mean that the UNMIS PIO can vouch for the accuracy or veracity of the contents, nor does this report reflect the views of the United Nations Mission in Sudan. Furthermore, international copyright exists on some materials and this summary should not be disseminated beyond the intended list of recipients.

IN THE NEWS TODAY:**➤ UN/ Agencies**

- Sudanese troops bar UN relief chief from Darfur refugee camp
- On the joint mission of the AU-UN special envoys
- Plight of Darfur's rural communities worsening: ICRC

➤ The Transition Debate

- Egypt dismisses UN request to press Sudan
- EU intellectuals condemn Europe on Darfur dithering

➤ CPA

- NCP and SPLM say border demarcation exercise to be concluded by end of hot season

➤ GoNU

- Justice ministry orders muzzle on the press over Darfur crime cases
- National Congress Party relinquishes parliamentary seats

➤ Southern Sudan/ GoSS/SPLM

- South Sudan Lakes state opens Rumbek FM radio
- Uganda says Sudan backing LRA talks, for now

➤ Darfur/ Darfur Peace Agreement

- Sudanese police shootout with Minawi troops kills 10 [major headliner in most local dailies]
- SLM's Abdelshafi to attend the Field Commanders' Conference
- Sudan denies bombing Chadian villages

HIGHLIGHTS :

UN/ Agencies

Sudanese troops bar UN relief chief from Darfur refugee camp

(*SudanTribune.com, AlRai AlAam*) Sudanese troops barred the U.N. humanitarian chief on Saturday from visiting one of Darfur's most violence-plagued refugee camp during his first trip to this war-torn region in Sudan.

The convoy carrying John Holmes was halted at a checkpoint about 1.2 kilometres (0.8 miles) outside the Kassab refugee camp, and he was told he did not have the proper papers to visit the site.

Mr. Holmes expressed frustration and annoyance but pointed out that this only illustrates the difficulties humanitarian workers face in that region.

Holmes and his convoy of ranking U.N. officials attempted to negotiate their passage at the small military check point before being turned back.

The soldiers at the checkpoint briefly prevented a car carrying journalists from leaving after Holmes turned back from the site. The journalists were only allowed to leave after the troops confiscated a videotape from a U.N. television cameraman.

The Sudanese army spokesman, Sawarmy Khaled Taat, initially said he believed there had been a confusion and that the U.N. had not obtained the proper permissions for Holmes' visit.

But later Saturday, Sudanese authorities in el-Fasher fully apologized to Holmes, saying the incident was an individual mistake by Sudanese military intelligence personnel manning the Kessab checkpoint.

Holmes, who had formally complained to the Sudanese government, accepted the apology, the U.N. said. He did not plan to return to Kessab but was to visit other camps in another part of Darfur before returning to Khartoum on Sunday [[click on the link for the full text of the story Sudanese troops bar UN relief chief from Darfur refugee camp](#)].

Dawn Blalock, a spokesperson for the UN humanitarian arm, later confirmed the incident and said Sudanese authorities had apologized, reports *AlRai AlAam*.

On the joint mission of the AU-UN special envoys

(*AlAyaam et al*) Envoys Eliasson and Salim say deployment of a peacekeeping force; stopping the violence and allowing access to humanitarian assistance are 3 conditions the government should meet for a political negotiation on Darfur.

Envoy Eliasson told the press yesterday following a meeting with foreign minister Akol that the UN Secretary-General and the Permanent Members of the Security Council have granted him full mandate to engage the government in discussions on the issue of a peace force for Darfur on the grounds that this is a basic requirement for the political process in Darfur. He said priority should be given the deployment of such a force.

Envoy Eliasson further revealed that he held a meeting recently with the Eritrean leader who showed commitment to combine efforts with the UN and African Union in the bid to resolve the issue of Darfur.

On its part, the government called upon the international community to come up with clear views that will make real progress in the negotiations process for a peaceful settlement to the Darfur crisis.

Plight of Darfur's rural communities worsening: ICRC

(SudanTribune.com) The International Committee of the Red Cross said Thursday that the plight of the most needy rural communities in Sudan's strife-torn region of Darfur is worsening.

The ICRC said in a regular report on its activities in Darfur that it was "extremely concerned" about the "precarious" humanitarian situation as rural communities were largely cut off from aid deliveries by violence.

"Continued fighting and generally poor security conditions in many areas are making people even more vulnerable than before and hampering aid workers' access to those in need," the Geneva-based agency said [*click on the link for the full text* [Plight of Darfur's rural communities worsening: ICRC](#)].

The Transition Debate

Egypt dismisses UN request to press Sudan

(SudanTribune.com) U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-moon failed on Saturday to persuade the Egyptian president to push neighbouring Sudan's leader to accept a U.N. peacekeeping mission in his war-torn Darfur region.

Ban, who is on a Mideast tour, said after an early morning meeting with President Hosni Mubarak that he had asked the Egyptian leader to exercise influence on Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir to accept the deployment of U.N. peacekeepers in Darfur.

According to comments by Egyptian Foreign Minister Ahmed Aboul Gheit, Mubarak did not comply with the request to pressure his neighbour.

In Cairo, Ban also asked Arab League's Secretary-General Amr Moussa to push for a solutions for the Darfur crisis [*click on the link for the full text* [Egypt dismisses UN request to press Sudan](#)].

EU intellectuals condemn Europe on Darfur dithering

(*SudanTribune.com*) A group of prominent European intellectuals condemned European Union leaders on Saturday for dithering over the humanitarian crisis in Sudan's war-torn Darfur region.

In an open letter to several European newspapers, the 10 authors and playwrights accused the 27 EU leaders, meeting in Berlin to celebrate the bloc's 50th birthday, of cowardice and called for tough sanctions against Khartoum [*click on the link for the full text of the story and the letter mentioned* [EU intellectuals condemn Europe on Darfur dithering](#)].

CPA

NCP and SPLM say border demarcation exercise to be concluded by end of hot season

(*AlAyaam*) A meeting yesterday between the National Congress Party and the SPLM saw the major parties in the GoNU agree to resolve the issue of the Other Armed Groups and have cited the end of this year's hot season as deadline to complete the north-south border demarcation exercise – ahead of the population census.

The Parties to the CPA also agreed yesterday to the formation of a s-x-member committee to draft a joint work plan on the issues of Darfur, the ICC, foreign policy and the partnership between the two.

The committee is to table its report on these issues in a meeting tomorrow between Bashir and Kiir.

GoNU

Justice ministry orders muzzle on the press over Darfur crime cases

(*AlAyaam*) The justice minister has ordered a halt on press reports on the trials of suspects to Darfur crimes.

The Press Prosecutor circulated a statement released yesterday to all newspapers to that effect citing the need for justice as cause of that action and called on the papers to abide.

National Congress Party relinquishes parliamentary seats

(*Sudan Vision*) Presidential Advisor Dr. Magzoub el-Khalifa announced that the National Congress Party has waived some parliamentary seats for the Darfur Peace Agreement and EPSA signatories.

El-Khalifa says the SPLM and the other political parties represented in parliament have refused to relinquish seats to these new partners in the GoNU.

Southern Sudan/ GoSS/SPLM

South Sudan Lakes state opens Rumbek FM radio

(*SudanTribune.com*) Lakes State officially opened last week Radio Rumbek FM 98 in what is the first major achievement in the media domain by the local state authorities.

The governor and the ministers of the Lakes state attended the inauguration of Radio Rumbek FM 98 on Tuesday March 20.

Despite the lack of means the state managed to train twenty news report writers, and to recruit some staff for each directorate of information, culture, radio, telecommunication and youth –sport and intends to develop the information directorate but faces several challenges, mainly material but also lack of qualified staff. The state plans to promote local press and media with the support of Juba and international institutions.

Uganda says Sudan backing LRA talks, for now

(*SudanTribune.com*) Speaking after returning from meetings in Khartoum, Uganda's Internal Affairs Minister Ruhakana Rugunda said Bashir still backed the talks, but wanted them to have a clear time limit.

Rugunda who is also the Uganda government's chief negotiator with the Lord's Resistance Army said that both sides would meet again in Juba on April 13.

"We will meet to sort out the administrative issues and then the full peace talks resume thereafter," he said in Kampala.

Darfur/ Darfur Peace Agreement

Sudanese police shootout with Minawi troops kills 10 [*major headliner in most local dailies*]

(*SudanTribune.com, the local press, BBC Monitoring*) Two policemen and eight members of Darfur's former rebel Sudanese Liberation Movement (SLM) were killed on Saturday in a shootout near the capital, officials and ex-rebels said.

Interior Minister Zubeir Bashir Taha said in a televised press conference that police had reported losing two men in the battle, including a lieutenant colonel, while the SLM said it had eight dead and seven wounded.

According to the minister the clashes began when a civilian opened fire on a group of SLM members in a residential neighbourhood of Khartoum's twin city of Omdurman. Taha said the situation was now under control.

But SLM spokesman Tayeb Khamis told AFP that police had sparked the shootout while trying to get the former rebels to hand over two of their number regarding "a traffic problem" earlier in the week.

"SLM members tried to convince the police that the problem could be resolved peacefully but, instead, the commander of the police group gave orders to open fire and raid the residence," Khamis said.

He said police killed four men inside the house and four others in a car. He said the ex-rebels then returned fire, killing two police.

BBC Monitoring quotes Khartoum deputy police chief Lt. Gen Myhamed Najib el-Tayeb as saying over Radio Omdurman yesterday that the break-in came due to non-cooperation of the occupants in the previous two days and this has compelled the police to burst into the house. Al-Tayyib said the incident was the eighth of its kind in the recent past.

Al-Tayyib assured the citizens that the police are in control of the situation, adding that the necessary investigations have begun to establish the truth of the matter and ensure that similar incidents do not recur in future.

During the police operation on the house, a car carrying supporters of the SLM members rushed towards the house and those in the car opened fire indiscriminately on the police officers in the house and its surrounding. In return the police force also responded with fire which led to the burning of the car after hitting the entrance of the house and all those in the car, who were five in number, got burnt and were yet to be identified.

*Click on the link below for the SLM statement on the issue as sourced from SudanTribune.com
SLM Minawi says Sudan police attacked Khartoum headquarters*

SLM's Abdelshafi to attend the Field Commanders' Conference

(SudanTribune.com) A leader of a faction of the rebel Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM) has arrived to Darfur to attend a conference to reunite the field commanders on the ground, Sudan Tribune has learned.

According to Nouri Abdalla, Abdelshafi's Assistant for International Cooperation, Ahmed Abdelshafi has reached the bases of the group in Darfur to attend a unity conference organized by the group.

"Abdelshafi has arrived to SLM's held territories in Darfur this morning to attend the SLM Field Commanders Conference, marking the kick-off of the much anticipated SLM's plan to reunite all SLM factions". Nouri said.

"The field commanders' meeting has been delayed numerous times the past few weeks, as the commanders are waiting for Abdelshafi and other commanders to arrive to the conference venue". He added.

Abdelshafi, who is from the Fur ethnic group, announced in August last year that 32 leaders of the SLM/A Military Council and the Field Command, in a meeting held on July 25, 2006, had sacked the SLM chairman Abdelwahid al-Nur from the leadership of the movement. But, leading field commanders from the SLM had dismissed this statement.

Abdelshafi rejected any negotiation with Khartoum before the hold of this conference.

"At the SLM, we are resolved to reunite all factions, prior to engaging in any peace talks with Sudanese Government".

The question of the reunification of the SLM is on of the top agendas of the rebel SLM factions. It is also supported by the international community to facilitate talks with Khartoum for a lasting peace conference.

Observers say there is more than one initiative to reunite the group. Suleiman Jamous who is confined in a UN military hospital in southern Korfodan had attempted in the past to re-federate the different SLA factions but because of his confinement he wasn't able to play an important role.

Another faction of the SLM led by Ibrahim Ahmed Ibrahim and Eisam al-Haj, who were members of Minnawi faction but rejected the deal, seem marginalized in this process.

But Nouri affirmed that invitations were addressed to all the SLA factions without.

Sudan denies bombing Chadian villages

(SudanTribune.com) Sudan has denied accusations of bombing two Chadian villages on the Chadian side of their shared border for two days, causing an unspecified number of deaths.

The spokesman for the Foreign Ministry, Ali al-Sadiq, said there was no truth in these accusations. He pointed out that Sudanese aircraft had not carried out any military activity in the area and had not attacked the Sudanese and Chadian border.

He further reaffirmed that Sudan is adhering to the latest agreements signed with Chad.