



UNITED NATIONS MISSION IN SUDAN

UNMIS

Media Monitoring Report 26.3.2008

(By Public Information Office)

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Highlights

UN/ Agencies

[UN agency deplores killing of three drivers of food supplies in Sudan](#)

25 March 2008 – The World Food Programme (WFP) has voiced its shock and sadness at learning of the murder of three drivers of trucks contracted by the United Nations agency in Sudan in two separate incidents over the past three days.

Mohamed Ali was shot dead and his assistant was seriously injured by unidentified assailants yesterday while traveling on the main route into Nyala, the capital of South Darfur state, the agency said in a press release issued today in Khartoum.

On Saturday, in Unity state in southern Sudan, Hamed Abdulla Sharif and Hamed Ibrahim Digel – who were transporting food supplies to Abyei – were stabbed to death by six men on a riverbank in the town of Abiemnom.

Calling the situation “completely unacceptable,” WFP’s representative in Sudan, Kenro Oshidari, said the agency’s contracted trucking companies and drivers were facing daily acts of violence.

“Attacks like this must stop,” he said. “All parties must recognize that the drivers of humanitarian vehicles and their cargo are serving a neutral humanitarian purpose. By attacking humanitarian staff, these assailants are also hurting innocent people who need food assistance.”

Already this year, 56 trucks have been involved in hijackings, with 36 trucks still missing and 24 drivers unaccounted for. Another six passenger vehicles belonging to WFP have also been stolen in the Darfur region.

Last October, three WFP-contracted drivers were also killed while transporting food to Darfur, and last week the members of a four-man team with the State Water Corporation were abducted in North Darfur state.

Mr. Oshidari said the recent surge in banditry meant WFP had to curtail its food deliveries to Darfur by half, with the turnaround time for deliveries slowed because of the dangers posed to truckers while driving on roads in the region. Currently the agency provides a monthly food ration to more than two million Darfurians.

WFP also has extensive operations in southern Sudan and the three areas of Abyei, South Kordofan and Blue Nile following the signing in January 2005 of a comprehensive peace agreement (CPA) ending the long-running north-south civil

war. Although attacks on truckers in the south are less frequent than in Darfur, the region remains volatile

[Over 366,000 IDPs returns to their homes – UNMIS RRR](#)

(Khartoum Monitor) Over 366000 IDPs returned to their original homes in Sudan particularly Southern Sudan.

Addressing a press conference at the United Nations Mission in Sudan headquarters yesterday Mr. Sajjad Malik Director of RRR told journalists that one million IDPs have returned to South Sudan. Malik explained that “we must make an effort to increase access to basic services such as water, education and health as provided for by UNICEF, WHO, UNHCR, IOM and NGS. He lamented that refugees and IDPs are returning home with new skills and knowledge in such diverse fields as the contraction industry, health, education, entrepreneurship, agriculture, craftsmanship, food-processing and baking. These represent a potential that could greatly contribute to rebuilding not only the lives and livelihoods of returnees but also to promote the reconstruction of South Sudan and three areas said Malik.

Mr. Chysanto Ache, UNHCR Country Representative said that it is the responsibility of the Government of National Unity and UN including its partners to return refugees and IDPs to their original homes. Ache confirmed that government should protect IDPs and provide them with services. He announced that Southern Blue Nile IDPS will continue repatriation then North Bahr-el-Ghazal State will be repatriated later. According to the Sudan return reintegration operations 2007 annual report, 725000 returnees reached home in 2005, 309000 returned home in 2006, in 2007 360000 displaced people returned home, mostly spontaneously, as has always been the trend. The report summarized that destinations included all the ten Southern States as well as Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile.

[UNMIS refutes SPLA claims over redeployment of SAF north of 1956 Line](#)

(El Sharee El Syasi) UNMIS Force Commander and chairman of CJMC, Lt. Gen. Jasbir Singh Lidar, said SAF has redeployed north of 1956 Line by 97.2% while SPLA redeployed from the Blue Nile and South Kordofan by 11.3%.

Although Lt. Gen. Singh did not elaborate about the reasons for delay of redeployment of SPLM and why the big difference between the two percentages of redeployment, but informed Sudanese sources said the General, being a competent person, his statements refute SPLA repeated allegations that SAF is not redeploying.

GoNU (CPA, DPA, ESPA)

[US Charge d’Affaires: We are prepared to consider any Sudanese initiative to normalize relations between Khartoum and Washington](#)

(Al-Khartoum) The US Charge d'Affaires in Khartoum, Mr. Alberto Fernandez, said the US Administration was prepared to consider any Sudanese initiative to normalize relations between Sudan and America.

Mr. Alberto who was speaking to a limited number of journalists at Canadian Embassy function denied knowledge about the existence of a roadmap for improvement of relations. "I am not in the know about a roadmap, if it exists I do not have a copy of that," he said.

"I believe the US Administration is ready to consider any Sudanese initiative to push relations between the two parties forward," he said.

He pointed out that SPLM could play a bilateral and positive role to improve relations between Sudan and America particularly in the wake of concern shown by the First Vice President.

With regard to Darfur, he said, "we are in need of real negotiations and dialogue involving all effective forces, parties, IDPs, Arab tribes and civil society to achieve a real peace".

[5 killed following UNAMID vehicle collision in South Darfur](#)

(ST) March 25, 2008 (NYALA) — Five people are killed in the capital of South Darfur today following a collision of an armoured vehicle of the UN-AU peacekeeping force with a bus, the UNAMID said.

"A UNAMID armoured vehicle and a passenger bus collided near Nyala at 0930 hours, today. Initial reports suggest that one passenger and four pedestrians were killed, while another seventeen people were injured and taken to Nyala hospital for treatment." A press statement reported.

"UNAMID expresses its deepest condolences to the families of the victims." The hybrid force said.

The accident occurred when the UNAMID vehicle was on official mission, accompanying a humanitarian convoy.

[SDG 275 Million allocated to Eastern Sudan Development](#)

(Sudan Vision) Eastern Sudan Rehabilitation Fund Board meeting approved a number of water, health and education projects to be implemented through 2008 budget so as to restore stability in the war-ravaged region.

The meeting was held under the chairmanship of the Federal Minister of Finance, Dr. Awad Aljaz and memberships of Eastern Sudan Front Representatives and the Governors of the three Eastern States of Kassala, Red Sea and Gedarif.

Aljaz affirmed his Ministry's commitment to implement what has been provided for in Eastern Sudan Peace Agreement (ESPA) noting that the sum of SDG 275 million budgeted for 2008 will be effected.

He added that additional SDG 50 million sum has been earmarked for contingent projects where each State will be funded with SDG 15 million and the balance will be reserved with Eastern Sudan Rehabilitation Fund.

[Canada to contribute 100 soldiers to UNAMID](#)

(Al-Sudani) Ottawa decided to send 50 soldiers to join UNAMID in Darfur besides 25 others to join the civil police in the region.

Canadian Foreign Office Information official told the newspaper that the total contribution of Canada to UNAMID in Darfur would reach 100 soldiers. He pointed out that his country contributed in the area of training, provision of equipment as well as financial support as Canada provided 388 m Canadian dollars to the peace and relief operations since 2006 in addition to its efforts with the international partners to assist in bolstering UNAMID.

[Delegation visits Juba to review preparations for holding sitting of Council of Ministers](#)

Khartoum, Mar. 25 (SUNA) - A delegation of the Cabinet Affairs Ministry, headed by the State Minister at the Council of Ministers, Kamal Abdul-Latif, has visited the capital of South Sudan, Juba, to discuss the preparations for holding a sitting of the federal Council of Ministers, in compliance with an agreement signed by the two partners of the national unity government for holding regular sittings of the Council of Minister in Juba city. The delegation met in Juba with the Presidency Affairs Minister of the Government of South Sudan (GoSS), Luka Katu Mabakana, and reviewed details pertinent to convocation of a regular sitting of the Council of Ministers by the end of next April. The meeting discussed issues that would be tackled by the federal Council of Ministers in its sitting in Juba. Abdul-Latif and the accompanying delegation visited in Juba projects that would be inaugurated during the visit of the Council of Ministers, which include the premises of the Security and National Intelligence Organ and the Sudanese Authority for Standards and Metrology. Abdul-Latif also met in Juba with Vice - President of the Government of South Sudan (GoSS), Dr. Riek Machar, and informed him about the date of the Council of Ministers' sitting and the issues that it will discuss.

[President of the Republic launches an international call for boosting the housing for poor and war affected citizens](#)

Khartoum, March 25 (SUNA) - The President of the Republic Field Marshal Omar Al Bashir has announced the establishment of the Housing and Rehabilitation Fund with an initial launching capital of one billion dollars and which will provide the required guarantees for the project, instructing that the higher commission for the housing and rehabilitation project be converted into a permanent committee. The President on Tuesday addressed the launching session of he Housing and Rehabilitation Projects, saying the Ministries of Environment and Physical Development should draw a directive map to all states in the country and that the Ministry of Finance and the Bank of Sudan should adopt the required financial and economic measures to secure the project implementation while the ministries of science and technology and that of

Physical Development should shoulder the responsibility of conducting applicable scientific studies on the building materials to be used in the project in coordination with the various parties relevant to the project.

The President has also directed the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of International Cooperation as well as the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs to launch an international appeal in collaboration with the United Nations Organizations and the other International organizations to provide assistance for the Poor and War and Natural Disaster Victims' Housing Project. The President has urged all sectors beneficiary of this project to bring together all their efforts to ensure the utmost success for this project. The President said today was the actual beginning of the projects expressing hope that the rural areas would be transformed into urban areas in which all security and other services would be integrated with the good use of the lands and resources all with the urban development for all the state of the country. President Al-Bashir said for this to be achieved coordination between the various parties and Ministries at the Federal and State Levels should be coordinated and that laws organizing physical planning and the general criteria for building should be coordinated along with the laws and policies that would encourage investors in the private local and international sectors to be involved and provide funding for the project. He said that incentives and preferential privileges should be increased for the building partners, consultants and companies involved in manufacturing of the building materials with the view to ensure the required abundance in building materials.

The president stressed that the implementation of this huge developmental project targeting persons with limited income would require long term funding. The President said an economic housing portfolio would be created involving 26 banks with a capital of 210 million Sudanese pounds. He said the sharing percentage between the beneficiary and the providers of the funding should stand at 70% of the cost while the remaining 30% be shouldered by the National Housing Fund. He said the sum should be recovered within ten years with one year grace period. The coordinator of the project, Hajj Atta al Manan, has meanwhile said all relevant laws and regulations should be brought together and revised and streamlined with the projects which targets people with limited income.

[Taha Launches Start for Establishment of Biggest Urban Town Project along White Nile River south of Omdurman](#)

Khartoum, Mar. 25 (SUNA)- Vice - President of the Republic, Ali Osman Mohamed Taha, has appreciated the efforts of brothers from the State of Kuwait to establish the biggest urban building area on the bank of the White Nile River, southern of Omdurman city in Khartoum State. Taha launched Tuesday the start of work for establishment of Al-Nour town by the Kuwait Grand Company at the cost of one billion dollars. He also lauded the role of the planning and administration officials in Khartoum State toward implementation of urban, civilization, cultural and development projects in the state. The Wali (governor) of Khartoum State, on his part, said that Al-Nour town's project is part on new urban areas due to be established in the three cities of Khartoum State, which are Khartoum, Omdurman and Khartoum North. Meanwhile, the Commissioner of Omdurman, Al-Fatih Izz-Eddin, affirmed

that all the people of Omdurman are supporting the establishment of Al-Nour town's project. He pledged to boost all the projects that will be set up by Kuwait in Khartoum State. The occasion was also addressed by Chairman of the Kuwait implementing Grand Company, Sami Al-Badr.

GoSS

[Lakes State Governor threatens to boycott census over omission of ethnicity](#)

(ST) March 25, 2008, (RUMBEEK) – The Governor of Lakes State threatened to boycott the fifth Census to protest against the omission of the ethnicity in the forms containing the questionnaire for the census.

Daniel Awet Akot, said that the State may boycott the current population census if the question of ethnicity is not included in the Census questionnaire.

Awet was speaking during the reception of 264 returnees from Khartoum to Rumbek; Akot said that the data on ethnicity is very important to determine who is a south Sudanese to vote during the referendum in 2011.

Earlier this month, 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.

The government of Lakes state had received 264 returnees' people coming from Khartoum to western Bhar-El-Gazal state and direct to Rumbek last Friday evening in a dusty convoys lead by International Organization of Migration (IOM) and South Sudan relief rehabilitation commission (SSRRC) with some few police accompanied the returnees.

They returnees were received by Lakes state governor Daniel Awet including members of local chiefs in Lakes state on Friday.

However, the returnees are worried about the conditions of their settlement in the state.

Rebecca Yar said " I don't have a house to stay in it here in Rumbek; I will put up with my relatives under the trees because I found my relatives in Akuac been displaced for survey that was carried out by Lakes state authority in last month."

Darfur

[Canada urges Sudan to stop Darfur attacks](#)

(ST) March 25, 2008 (KHARTOUM) — Canadian Foreign Minister Maxime Bernier, paying his first official visit to Khartoum, on Tuesday urged the Sudanese government to stop attacks in the war-torn region of Darfur.

Bernier, who spoke after talks with Sudanese Foreign Minister Deng Alor, is scheduled to visit North Darfur on Wednesday to meet the local governor in the state capital Al-Fasher and international peacekeepers.

"I urged the government to stop the military action in Darfur and stop attacks over civilians and work with the international community to be sure that the humanitarian people would be able to have access to Darfur," he said.

The Sudanese foreign minister denied civilians were ever targeted and called on Canada to mediate with the rebels, which have multiplied and fractured into numerous groups complicating efforts to mediate a peace.

"The government declared a unilateral ceasefire a long time ago. It was not responded to... We asked the Canadians to help talking with the leaders of the movements in Darfur," Alor told AFP.

"They (civilians) are caught in the middle. Sometimes it is inevitable for some of them to fall victims but... nobody targets civilians," he added.

A UN report last week accused Sudanese soldiers of rape and extensive looting during offensives in Darfur carried out with state-backed militias.

The conflict, which the United Nations says has claimed the lives of about 200,000 people and displaced 2.2 million, pits ethnic minority rebels who want a greater share of national resources against the Sudanese government.

Bernier also called on the government to implement fully a fragile peace agreement that ended two decades of a separate civil war between north and south in 2005.

On Thursday, he will travel to the southern capital Juba, where he is set to meet First Vice President and leader of south Sudan, Salva Kiir.

Ottawa has spent 338 million Canadian dollars (333 million US dollars) on peace, humanitarian and early recovery projects in Sudan since January 2006.

Canada's contribution to the international peacekeeping missions in Darfur and the rest of Sudan will include up to 50 army personnel, 25 civilian police and the loan of 100 armoured personnel carriers.

Miscellaneous

[Signing of Uganda's peace deal delayed - Government](#)

(ST) March 25, 2008 (KAMPALA) — Uganda said Tuesday the signing of a final peace agreement between the government and Lord's Resistance Army, or LRA, rebels would be delayed by a week.

Both sides were slated to sign an overall peace deal by March 28. The new signing date is April 3, according to Chris Magezi, the government's peace delegation spokesman.

The Lord's Resistance Army has waged 20 years of war in northern Uganda and is notorious for raping and mutilating civilians, enlisting child soldiers and massacring thousands. A ceasefire was struck in August 2006, paving the way for peace talks in the south Sudanese capital Juba that have lagged for over a year and a half.

Both the LRA and the talks' mediator, south Sudan vice-president Riek Machar, asked for the delay, Magezi told AFP.

"The LRA requested for more time to discuss with leadership in the bush on the final text of the agreement," he said. "The chief mediator requested for more time to make preparations for the final peace agreement signing ceremony."

The government has previously said it had been given assurances by the LRA its veteran leader Joseph Kony would attend the signing in Juba. But the group's chief negotiator has since said the rebel leader won't come out of hiding unless a war crimes arrest warrant issued against him by the International Criminal Court is lifted.

Kony is currently believed to be hiding in the Central African Republic.

[UNMIS RRR press conference receives wide coverage in print media](#)