

**UNITED NATIONS MISSION IN SUDAN****UNMIS**Media Monitoring Report, 17 May 2007

(By Public Information Office)

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Highlights

UN/ Agencies/ Partners

Violence still hampering humanitarian action in Darfur – UN

(*United Nations News via SudanTribune.com*) Although many humanitarian activities, including a successful polio vaccination campaign, are currently being carried out in Sudan’s Darfur region, violence continues to threaten the operations, according to the United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS).

“Incidents of road banditry and fighting between the warring factions continue to disrupt long-term planning,” spokesperson Radhia Achouri said today at the weekly UNMIS press conference in Khartoum.

She said that in North Darfur state, a non-governmental organization (NGO) was forced to suspend its food distributions in the Dar Zaghawa area as a result of aerial bombings by the Government and the high risk of carjackings.

“If the situation does not improve, the NGO’s suspension of activities could also affect the populations in Kutum Rural, thus leaving 165,000 people without food assistance at the beginning of the hungry season,” she added.

She also said that the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) reports that the continuous stream of new internally displaced persons (IDPs) is putting a serious strain on several camps, where services and space are running out.

The fact that thousands of Chadian civilians are also streaming into West Darfur is a worrying development, according to OCHA, and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is currently investigating the reasons behind this massive move.

In Southern Sudan, recovering from a separate long-term civil war, UNMIS reports that strong co-operation on returnees continues between the Government of National Unity (GNU), the Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS) and the UN.

During the past week returns have continued, with over 2,300 IDPs assisted in organized convoys, according to the mission.

Over 34,000 Sudanese IDPs have taken advantage of the transport arranged by the three partners to Southern Sudan and its neighboring areas since road convoys commenced in early February, the mission said. [Full transcript of the press conference can be accessed through the United Nations Mission in Sudan website: www.unmis.org. Also see attached Special Media Monitoring Report for a general overview of press coverage on the press briefing].

U.N. Envoy Wary On Peace Prospects

(The Washington Post, 17 May) The regional government of southern Sudan plans to bring together Darfur rebel factions for a meeting in preparation for future peace talks with Sudan's central government, said the U.N. special envoy to Sudan, Jan Eliasson.

Just back from a trip to the southern city of Juba and the capital, Khartoum, Eliasson, a former foreign minister of Sweden, said he found it hard to be upbeat about the prospects.

"There is a beginning of a political process, but I have difficulty using the word optimism. Time is on nobody's side. We cannot give up, though," Eliasson said in an interview in Washington.

Eliasson expressed concern over three developments he has observed in the four trips he has taken to Sudan and its Darfur region in the past five months. He warned of land grabs, infighting among Sudanese tribes, and a radicalization and taking up of arms by refugee camp residents, factors that might scuttle prospects for peace in the troubled western region.

"We see new problems erupting in Darfur among the tribes themselves. They are competing on what scorched land is left after the burnings and killings, and there is more fighting among them than between the rebels and the government," he said.

The U.N. envoy returned last week from Sudan, where he met with ministers in President Omar Hassan al-Bashir's government as well as Vice President Salva Kiir Mayardit, who heads the southern regional government. Eliasson was accompanied by African Union envoy Salim Salim of Tanzania.

Eliasson also expressed concern over the infiltration of weapons into the refugee camps. "There has been a radicalization inside the camps. People are trying to survive in unbearable conditions, and in some cases there are guns showing up inside the camps," he said. "The longer this conflict

drags on, the more problems we face. How do we deal with tribal fighting and radicalization in the camps?"

Sudan has agreed to an expansion of the African Union peacekeeping force of 7,000 with an additional 3,000 U.N. peacekeepers, under the command of Rodolphe Adada from Congo Republic.

In Washington yesterday, House Democrats introduced a measure that would require the Defense Department to study the possible expansion of the Abeche airfield in Chad, near the border with Sudan. The expanded airfield could be used for military or humanitarian purposes.

"General Bashir has been testing the will of the world for too long," said Rep. Steve Israel (D-N.Y.). "This amendment sends him a message that we will explore every option and invest the resources necessary to relieve the genocide."

The Bush administration has not yet officially reacted to the proposal. But "it would be hard for the administration to argue that they oppose genocide in Darfur while at the same time opposing legislation that asks them to explore upgrades in a nearby airfield that would stop it," Israel said. "I spoke with Chad's ambassador Bechir Mahmoud Adam last week, and he said his government would agree."

Under the amendment to the defense authorization bill, the defense secretary would be required to report to Congress within 90 days on the operational status of the airfield and recommendations for upgrades.

UN support Package

UN, African Union differ over the terms of reference of the joint representative to Darfur

(AlRai ALAam; Sudan Vision) The joint UN-African Union Special Representative assumes office today at African Union headquarters in Addis Ababa amidst untalked-about differences between the UN and the African Union over which of the organisations he is ultimately to report to.

Sources say Mr. Rodolphe Adada will be holding talks with Mr. Konare, a number of African Union officials and the Permanent Representative of Sudan to the African Union.

Sudan's representative to the UN meanwhile says that the joint representative will then be travelling to New York for meetings with UN officials there. The Sudanese diplomat intimates that there is a simmering conflict of sorts between the African Union and the UN over which of the two organisations the special representative will ultimately be reporting to with the UN seeing itself as having the ultimate charge because it provides the funds while the African Union believes that Darfur is an African operation and Adada should therefore be answerable to the African Union.

The Sudanese representative points out that Adada may visit Sudan later in case he does not find the time to visit after his meetings in Addis.

Meanwhile the Guardian newspaper reports that Nigerian army Chief of Staff, Gen. Martin Luther Agwai, has been nominated to lead the hybrid force for Darfur.

The Secretary-General of the UN had requested the consent of President Obasanjo who gave the green light for the nomination of the 58 year-old general who will spontaneously leave his position in the Nigerian armed forces – a position he is originally supposed to leave on 29 May this year.

On the other hand, African Union Spokesperson Nourdeem Mezni told the *SUNA* that the African Union and the UN are on the verge of sending a formal note to the Sudan government notifying it of a list of military and civilian personnel to be deployed to Darfur as part of the LSP. Mezni says yesterday's meeting of the Tripartite Mechanism also saw the parties agree that the next meeting of the mechanism will take place at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the 30th of next month.

Sweden considers to send unit to Darfur

(*SudanTribune.com*) The Secretary General of the United Nations has asked the Swedish prime minister to send troops to Darfur as part of a future peace-keeping mission, Radio Sweden reported on Tuesday May 15.

After meeting with Ban Ki-moon in New York on Monday, Fredrik Reinfeldt said neutral Sweden is considering whether it could create a unit with Norway to send to the Sudanese province.

But he said they would need to see what the force would look like, what the security situation would be and who would be leading the mission.

The Swedish prime minister is meeting American President George W. Bush in Washington Tuesday as he continues his brief tour of the United States.

He will try to persuade the president to step up efforts to slow global warming and also plans to detail Sweden's efforts to break its dependence on oil and reduce greenhouse gas emissions, according to the Swedish broadcaster.

U.N. envoy says Chinese pressure on Sudan led to agreement on stronger peacekeeping force

(*SudanTribune.com*) China's economic alliance with Sudan has not prevented Beijing from exerting pressure on the Khartoum government to accept deployment of peacekeepers in violent Darfur, a top United Nations diplomat said Thursday night.

China, said Jan Eliasson, special U.N. envoy for Darfur, "does not want to be seen stopping progress in Darfur."

Eliasson said it was Chinese pressure that helped persuade Sudanese officials to lift their opposition to the deployment of 3,000 U.N. peacekeepers in Darfur. These forces would pave the way for an additional 17,000 peacekeepers, who would protect the 2.5 million Darfurians confined to camps and ensure safe delivery of humanitarian supplies.

Eliasson spoke at the Atlantic Council, a group that promotes close U.S.-European ties.

Eliasson, who returned recently from a visit to Darfur, said it is important for rebel groups in Darfur to coordinate their positions so that they present a united front if serious negotiations with the government and government-backed militias resume.

At present, he said, there is no more important task than to resume negotiations. One positive sign, he said, is there is general agreement among Darfur's multiple rebel groups on the shape of a final settlement: compensation for long years of death and destruction and a sharing of power and wealth.

At times, Eliasson sounded optimistic about Darfur's future but he tempered that impression at one point by saying, "If anything can go wrong in Sudan, it usually does."

Dutch FM pledges additional €10 million for Darfur force

(SudanTribune.com) Dutch foreign minister on Wednesday pledged additional 10-million Euro aid package to the African Union peacekeeping force in the troubled Sudanese province of Darfur, EU officials said.

Foreign minister Maxime Verhagen has pledged a further contribution of €10 million to the African Union mission in Sudan (AMIS). AMIS's mandate includes protecting civilians under threat in Darfur.

This brings the Netherlands' total contribution to €48.8 million.

“Speaking at the monthly meeting of EU foreign ministers last Monday, Verhagen expressed his concern about the situation in Darfur and called for sanctions against the Sudanese government” a statement issued Dutch government said.

He also saw a role for the EU in funding AMIS.

Helping to improve the situation in Sudan and the Horn of Africa is a priority for the Netherlands. Supporting AMIS is an important part of this effort. The African Union itself faces a shortage of funds.

After the signing of the Darfur Peace Agreement in May 2006, the Netherlands was supposed to host the Darfur donors conference, but the dramatic developments and the rejection of the holdout rebel groups

Earlier this month, the Dutch Minister of Development Cooperation Bert Koenders visited Sudan. But after his return to Netherlands, Bert expressed regret for not visiting the rebel controlled Um Rai area in North Darfur. Also, the Dutch media which accompanied the minister published negative reports on the humanitarian situation in Darfur IDPs camps.

JEM categorically rejects international troops for Darfur

(*Sudan Vision*) The JEM has declared rejection of any international intervention through the deployment of international troops to Darfur and says the movements has never supported such a move.

The JEM also warned against the repercussions of such an intervention but say it is keen on achieving peace in Darfur. The movements economic advisor says the movement is ready to pursue peace anywhere, be it in Cairo, Riyadh or elsewhere, in a bid to reach a just settlement of the crisis in Darfur but says they need a serious partner for the process.

CPA

VP Kiir says all militia forces must join either SAF or the SPLA

(*Khartoum Monitor*) In a speech delivered at a mass rally in Malakal to commemorate the 24th Anniversary of the founding of the SPLM, VP Kiir hailed the role the SPLA played towards achieving freedom and the efforts exerted the realisation of peace.

He saluted the martyrs who fell during the war and supporters of the SPLA and called upon the forces that have not yet been reintegrated to join either SPLA or SAF before time runs out.

On progress in implementation of the CPA, he said that it is progressing well but pointed out that there are some suspended issues such as demarcation of the borders, the oil sector and the issue of Other Armed Groups.

Kiir intimated that a government reshuffle will take place as soon as he returns to Juba.

SPLM Blue Nile chapter suspends cooperation with state governor; criticises governor on threats to chase out UN forces

(*AlAyaam*) The Secretary-General of the SPLM Blue Nile State Chapter has strongly criticised recent threats by the governor Blue Nile State to expel UN forces from the state should they interfere in the conflict between the parties to the CPA. He said that monitoring the implementation of the CPA is the natural prerogative of the UN as provided by the CPA.

He also pointed out that the governor is trying a “pole-vault” to gain political capital for the forthcoming elections by establishing the controversial Tadamoun locality.

The SPLM Secretary-General further pointed out that the governor had declared during the inauguration of the locality that he was in a state of war and that he would be the first martyr. The SPLM figure pointed out that the SPLM would adhere to the CPA.

120,000 Sudanese refugees set to return to Eastern Equatoria

(UNHCR via SudanTribune.com) The UN refugee agency has reached an agreement with Sudan and Uganda to begin the repatriation of some 120,000 refugees to south Sudan's Eastern Equatoria state. The programme is set to start in August.

A tripartite commission, gathering representatives of UNHCR and the governments of Sudan and Uganda, also agreed at a May 7-9 meeting in Kampala to take concrete steps to speed up the existing repatriation programme from Uganda, which is currently home to an estimated 170,000 Sudanese refugees.

The measures include boosting logistics capacity with new buses, trucks and ferries. *[Follow the link to the full text [120,000 Sudanese refugees set to return to Eastern Equatoria](#)].*

South Sudan army threatens to stay in disputed Abyei

(Reuters via SudanTribune.com) The army of the south Sudanese government is refusing to withdraw its forces from an area in southern Sudan unless the Khartoum government abides by a ruling saying that the province controls many oil fields.

"The north is refusing to implement the Abyei protocol," said Kuol Diem Kuol, spokesman for the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA). "Why should we be withdrawing our troops?"

The peace deal also stipulated that SPLA forces were to redeploy from Abyei and two other "transitional" areas six months after the formation of integrated north-south military units.

But the integrated units — originally scheduled for deployment in April 2006 — have not been formed, and Kuol said the SPLA would not redeploy from the South Kordofan State transitional area until the units had been set up.

Kuol was also sceptical of Khartoum's ability to redeploy its forces from the south by an agreed July 9 deadline.

"We doubt if they can withdraw all troops within the remaining three months," said Kuol. "If they were committed they would have begun a long time ago."

Pascal Ngoga, senior political affairs officer for the UN Mission in Sudan (UNMIS), said that there had been a gradual movement of Khartoum's forces out of the south, but probably less so in areas closer to the north.

"It is very difficult to predict whether the SAF (northern Sudan Armed Forces) are going to meet their deadline or not," Ngoga said.

GoNU

State minister for foreign affairs says Sudan and Egypt on daily contact over Darfur and the ICC issues

(AlRai AlAam) A state minister for Sudan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs says Egypt and Sudan are in continued daily consultations on the issues of the ICC and Darfur in the context of joint political activities aimed at averting plots by influential powers to mar Sudan's image and use the ICC as a weapon against the country.

State minister el-Waseela denied recent reports of border tensions or shootings with Ethiopia.

SPLM relieves its ministers in the Shimaliya and River Nile States

(AlAyaam) The SPLM has relieved some of its ministers in the regional governments of Shimaliya and River Nile States and has replaced them with caretaker ministers.

A source intimates that this step started with the governments of the southern states and that the next stage will see some reshuffles of SPLM ministers in the federal government.

Population census to kick off in November

(The Citizen) The Minister of Presidential Affairs declared in parliament yestrady that Sudan's fifth general population census will kick off in November this year.

The minister's statement was in response to a query by an MP on the census for the nomads.

The minister further pointed out that the census will be conducted under a budget of \$100 million out of which the government would pay \$40.7, donors \$33 million and the EU will cover the remaining costs.

He pointed out that the cost would be particularly high for the operations in southern Sudan and Darfur due to lack of professionals and security concerns. Asked on census operations in Abyei, the minister said he had no ready answers on the issue because arrangements are yet to be made.

Sudanese official cautions China on oil investments

(Reuters via SudanTribune.com) A Sudanese central bank official told China on Thursday its oil investments could exacerbate conflicts in Sudan unless it pressed the government to engage local populations and share revenues.

China, which buys much of Sudan's oil, has been under fire internationally for doing business with a regime condemned in the West for its actions in Darfur, but the banker's comments were a rare critical voice coming from Khartoum.

"When you exploit oil and resources and nothing goes to the population, then you are financing the war against them with resources and that is negative," deputy central bank governor Elijah Aleng told reporters on the sidelines of the African Development Bank's annual meeting.

Aleng once headed the humanitarian wing of the main southern rebel group and said the south could again become restive if the local population felt it was being shut out of the region's oil wealth.

"You know what is happening today in the Niger Delta in Nigeria?" he asked.

"We don't want that to happen in the south, but that can happen very easily, when the population feel their government is not taking care of them," Aleng said.

Aleng said Chinese investment was welcome, but its companies must be mindful of volatile local politics.

"We have invited the Chinese to invest in our oil industry. But we are advising them to invest with a human face," he said.

"You come and exploit a resource, you are a part of the land, and those who belong to that land must get a part of the resource, a part of the cake. That is the natural logic," said Aleng.

"When that is not done, you are creating a friction between the communities and the oil exploiters, in this case the government of China."

Southern Sudan

All articles in this section today are from the Juba Post daily. Please see separate attachment for all Juba Post articles cited below

- Kiir urges development of non-oil revenue (*Juba Post*)
- Security deteriorating in Eastern Equatoria (*Juba Post*)
- SPLA Special Brigade deployed in Juba (*Juba Post*)
- Major HIV campaign begins in Bor (*Juba Post*)
- SPLA soldiers kidnap militia officer in Torit (*Juba Post*)
- Major budget deficit for southern Sudan census (*Juba Post*)
- Kenya protests to GoSS over brief detention of diplomats in Yei (*Juba Post*)

Darfur

Military command of the SLA "mutinies" against Minnawi

(*Allintibaha*) An armed SLA group has abducted two SLM personnel in protest over overlooking of a military leader in recent appointments by Minnawi to the TDRA.

Local authorities in Nyala have denied knowledge of such an incident but Minnawi has travelled to South Darfur, reportedly to resolve the issue.

US lawmakers pressure China on Darfur violence

(AP) U.S. lawmakers on Wednesday introduced a resolution that would call on China to use its economic leverage with Sudan to stop violence in the Darfur region.

The measure, sponsored by both Democrats and Republicans, calls on China to press Sudan to allow the entry of a U.N. peacekeeping force and to disarm militias operating in Darfur.

The U.S. accuses the African nation of complicity in genocide, and rights activists say isolating the Sudanese leadership is the only way to stop militias blamed for mass killings and rapes.

Chinese officials say their country's robust oil trade and growing economic ties with Sudan will help end the violence.

Other Developments

Sudan daily closed down

(AFP via SudanTribune.com) Sudanese authorities have closed down an independent newspaper, Al-Sudani, after the justice minister complained of defamation, an executive of the daily said on Thursday.

Deputy chief editor Nureddine Medani told AFP the plates for the latest edition were confiscated on Wednesday night.

The paper's directors were told it was being suspended indefinitely pending investigation of a complaint from Justice Minister Mohamed Ali al-Mardhi for defamation, he said.

A column in the newspaper, which has been the subject of several bans, called on Wednesday for the minister to resign over a money-laundering case being examined in the courts.