

UNITED NATIONS MISSION IN SUDAN UNMIS

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HIGHLIGHTS:

United Nations

UN denounces killing of another aid worker in Darfur

(UN – 31st Oct. **Khrt.**) The United Nations Tuesday condemned the death of a humanitarian worker in Darfur, while unknown groups attacked two separate convoys in recent days.

The death of an ICRC staff member, a driver who disappeared during a hijacking incident in North Darfur, brings the number of aid workers killed in the region this year to twelve, almost all in the last two months.

“We are greatly saddened by the death of another humanitarian worker in Darfur, and our thoughts are with his family and colleagues,” said Manuel da Silva, the UN’s Humanitarian Co-ordinator in Sudan, “We are particularly distressed that aid workers are being attacked while carrying out their duties, bringing relief and help to the suffering in Darfur. This is completely unacceptable” he added.

On the other hand, United Nations convoys bringing humanitarian assistance to war-torn South Darfur have come under attack by armed men in two separate incidents in recent days, a UN spokesperson said today.

A driver and two passengers suffered minor gunshot wounds when their truck was fired on yesterday while travelling in South Darfur, according to information relayed from the UN Mission in the Sudan (UNMIS). The injuries were not life-threatening and they were being treated in El Geneina hospital.

Over the weekend, another convoy of three UN trucks en route to Zalingei from Nyala, was ambushed by a group of armed men but it was not immediately clear what injuries were sustained in the attack.

Meanwhile, in West Darfur, UNMIS said it has received reports that about 500 Arab militia members, riding horses and camels and supported with Land Cruisers mounted with machine-guns, carried out attacks in several areas there. The African Union Mission in Sudan will investigate reports, the spokesman’s office said.

UN aid workers fear worsening access to Darfur civilians

(AP – 31st Oct. **Geneva**) U.N. aid workers fear their precarious access to the suffering people in Darfur could get even worse, officials said Tuesday, despite a top Sudanese official saying most parts of the region were secure.

Pluess told reporters that aid workers and the local population were constantly exposed to security threats, banditry and other criminal acts.

"The biggest victims are the civilians, the displaced, in Darfur who suffer almost on a daily basis from violations and attacks," Pluess added.

But Sudanese Culture Minister Mohammed Youssef Abdullah told a separate news conference the humanitarian situation wasn’t that bad.

He said 14 of Darfur's 23 provinces were peaceful, with the south and west calmer than the north.

He said that a stronger and larger AMIS force would help bring peace in Darfur within a year to allow the over 2.5 million refugees to return to their homes. But a United Nations Darfur force will only exacerbate the situation there [*paragraph from AlAdhwaa*].

Abdullah, who was in Geneva to attend a cultural week organized by the Sudanese community, visited the U.N.'s European headquarters to talk to reporters. He conceded there was a problem if people were driven from their homes, but he said the main indicators of well-being - mortality and malnutrition rates, as well as the amount of clean water provided to the population - show the situation was normal.

"Mortality rates are below the threshold of an emergency situation," he said. The rate of access to clean water was "up to 65% in certain areas, which is the normal level of the capital of Sudan," he added. "And we believe this is a big success for all of us in the humanitarian process."

These indicators don't take into account sexual violence against women and children, the minister said when asked about widespread reported rapes of civilians.

Jennifer Pagonis, of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees, said violence and insecurity were severely hampering the aid workers' job.

"We have reduced access," she said. "Sometimes we just simply can't get out to (displacement) camps because of security constraints."

She added the agency's assessment of the humanitarian situation in Darfur wouldn't "tally with that of the Sudanese minister."

"It's very, very difficult for us," Pagonis said.

UNMAO declares 7 million square miles of land clear of landmines

Khartoum Monitor: The Senior Program Officer at the United Nations Mine Action Office in Sudan said that about 8 million square meters of land have been cleared of mines in Sudan.

Takuto Kubo told the paper that as of July 2006, 2,367 reported victims of landmines and UXOs have been registered in the United Nations database but said he assumes the actual figures are much higher than those registered.

Of the challenges UNMAO faces, Mr. Kubo cited the huge size of the country, logistical constraints and the harsh rainy season. He also said he could not exclude the possibility of possible political and security instability leading to the laying of new mines in cleared areas. He also underlined the importance of funding.

[*Khartoum Monitor produces a full back-page pictorial on demining*]

IOM presents findings of the IDP Survey 2006

Khartoum Monitor: The paper produces the full text of a Press Release by the International Organisation of Migration (IOM) on a survey of the intentions, motivations and concerns regarding voluntary returns from IDP's from some parts of the country.

The *Khartoum Monitor* issues a full text of the PR mentioned.

UNEP applauds southern Sudan's wetlands protection

(*Xinhua* – 31st Oct. **Nairobi**) The United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) chief on Tuesday praised southern Sudan's conservation efforts, which aim at preserving one of Africa's most important wetlands.

UNEP Executive Director Achim Steiner said Sudd region in southern Sudan has been included in the Ramsar Convention List of Wetlands of International Importance. The Convention on Wetlands is an intergovernmental treaty adopted on Feb. 2, 1971 in the Iranian city of Ramsar.

The government of Sudan received the Ramsar certificate at an award and environmental workshop event co-sponsored by the UNEP and held at the regional capital Juba.

"Certification of the Sudd Wetlands as a RAMSAR site is an important symbolic achievement that now hopefully will be followed through with practical measures to assist in the conservation of this unique habitat," said Steiner in a statement issued in Nairobi.

With a total area in excess of 30,000 square kilometers, the Sudd is arguably the largest wetland in Africa and provides immense economic and environmental benefits to the entire region.

** Some commentaries relating to SRSR Pronk's expulsion are attached separately*

United Nations and the Transition Debate

US reviews stalled policy on Darfur crisis

(*AFP* – 31st Oct. **Washington**) President George W. Bush announced a review of US policy on the Darfur crisis as Sudan persists in refusing the deployment of UN peacekeepers to halt catastrophic violence in the region.

Meeting with Natsios at the White House Tuesday, Bush said the diplomat had delivered a "grim report" about the humanitarian situation in Darfur, where government-armed Arab militia have been blamed for much of the violence against civilians.

"The United States is going to work with the international community to come up with a single plan on how to address this issue and save lives," Bush said.

He provided few details, other than to insist that the plan would include deployment of a "credible and effective international force to go into Darfur to save lives".

"The government of Sudan must understand that we're serious," he said.

Egypt says UNSCR 1706 needs improvement

AlSharei AlSiyasi; AlKuwat AlMussalaha: The Egyptian Foreign minister, Ahmed el-Gaiet affirms Egypt's concern over the situation in Darfur and said that Egypt is playing a key role in bringing up proposals to the 5 Permanent Members of the UNSC and to the African Union Peace & Security Council in a bid to bring about a solution to the Darfur problem.

He said that Egyptian proposals for additions to UNSCR 1706 to improve the said resolution has received much support including from key players like the US.

Asked whether the deployment of a United Nations force in Sudan would constitute a threat to Egypt's national security, the foreign minister pointed out that Egypt has contributed troops to the United Nations mission deployed in southern Sudan.

US Bush mulls over new plan to end Darfur violence

(*Reuters* – 31st Oct. **Washington**) President George W. Bush said on Tuesday the United States was looking at new ways to stop the violence in Darfur after getting a "grim" report about the humanitarian crisis from his special envoy.

"The United States is going to work with the international community to come up with a single plan on how to address this issue and save lives," Bush said after meeting envoy Andrew Natsios, who spent 10 days in Sudan this month.

"He came back with a grim report," Bush said. "The people who have suffered there need to know that the United States will work with others to help solve the problem. And the government of Sudan must understand that we're serious."

Meanwhile, foreign policy analysts have called on the United States to take more muscular steps to pressure Khartoum.

John Prendergast of the International Crisis Group urged the Bush administration to pursue "punitive actions." These might include U.N. sanctions against Sudanese businesses linked to the leadership and gathering more intelligence to identify, and ultimately prosecute, those within the government who may be responsible for atrocities.

"The policy has been one of strong rhetoric and no action," Prendergast said, saying Washington has resisted punitive steps for fear of jeopardizing counter-terrorism cooperation.

Susan Rice, a former U.S. assistant secretary of state for African affairs now at the Brookings Institution think tank, proposed U.N.-authorized military action such as airstrikes or a blockade to slow the flow of Sudan's oil.

"We have got to get (rid of) this notion of negotiating with the perpetrators of genocide as to whether we are going to be able to stop it. It is morally bankrupt and it is doomed to fail," Rice said.

Blair warns Sudan close to isolation if Darfur crisis continues

(*AP/Reuters* – 31st Oct. **London**) British Prime Minister Tony Blair warned Sudan on Tuesday it was nearing the "crunch point" for Khartoum to enforce the peace in Darfur or risk isolation and unspecified action by the international community.

Blair met Sudanese First Vice-President Salva Kiir in London and told him "everyone must stop fighting and resume dialogue with the people who did not sign up to the peace agreement," Blair's spokesman told reporters.

"We are reaching the crunch point. It's important that the Sudanese government be in no doubt at all of our seriousness," he said at a briefing about the two leaders' talks.

Blair told Kiir there must be "clear progress" by Nov. 24 when African Union leaders meet to discuss Darfur.

"The Sudanese government know they face isolation if they do not respond to the will of the international community," Blair's spokesman told reporters, but would not be drawn on what that would mean in practice.

"It would be better to let the Sudanese government absorb the message before we talk in public about that," he said, adding "private messages" were better than public threats at this stage.

Foreign Office minister Kim Howells told Parliament Britain was working to bring "unified pressure" from around the world to bear on the Sudanese government.

"The world needs from the United Nations an example of how it can act in very difficult circumstances to rescue huge numbers of people from the most dreadful fate that they're suffering at the moment," Howells said.

CPA

Constitution Review Commission to convene tomorrow

AlAdhwaa: The Constitution Review Commission sits tomorrow to discuss the reactions of the political forces over the draft bills tabled for discussion.

The decisions will be tabled before the Presidency of the Republic which will in turn present to parliament.

GoNU

PARLIAMENT: Arman accuses Presidency of violating the CPA

Speaking before parliament yesterday, Yassir Arman who heads the SPLM caucus criticised some parliamentarians started chanting *Allahu Akbar* just before President Bashir presented his address, reports *AlSahafa*.

Arman says such things give parliament the garb of a particular party.

Speaking to the press following the parliamentary session, Arman said that his party will soon table before parliament a couple of urgent issues accusing the Presidency of the Republic of violating both the CPA and the Interim National Constitution by not forming the Abyei Administration.

Arman has also called on the parties involved in the Darfur crisis to immediately cease fire and welcomed Eritrea's efforts for an end to the Darfur crisis.

The SPLM figure rebuffed recent press reports of infighting within the Northern Sector of the SPLM.

NCP MPs say president's speech before parliament ignored the Cairo agreement

AlIntibaha: National Congress Party parliamentarians' caucus say their party is ready to accept whatever notices over the Cairo agreement signed recently with the DUP.

It also lamented the fact that the president ignored mention of the Cairo Agreement signed with the DUP in his speech before the parliament and point out that the said agreement is as important as the others mentioned in the president's speech.

Sudan says still keep talking to Darfur rebels

(AFP – 31st Oct. Geneva) One of Sudan's top peace negotiators said Tuesday that the government was maintaining talks behind the scenes with dissident rebel groups in Darfur that had not signed up to the Abuja peace agreement.

"We are discussing with them, we never stopped. Since we departed from Abuja, discussions are there with those who have not signed," Sudanese Culture and Tourism Minister Mohamed Yusif Abdallah told reporters.

He said the government was not seeking a military solution to the conflict in Darfur.

- ❖ Following reports that authorities have finished investigating the case of the assassination of the *AlWifaq* newspaper editor, authorities say the case has been taken before the Minister of Justice, report most dailies. [*Also see related commentary in the separate attachment*].
- ❖ The Undersecretary at the Federal Ministry of Finance announced yesterday during a meeting of the joint committee on oil revenues that the GoSS has received this month 86.5 million US dollars in oil revenue, reports *Rai AlShaab* daily.
- ❖ Nationals of some African countries arrested on suspicion of circulating fake dollars are to be tried before a Khartoum court today.
- ❖ Government to scrap the privileges and monopoly of the Sudan Gum Arabic Company over external trade in gum Arabic.

Darfur

SLM brokers a reconciliation between North Darfur tribes

Rai AlShaab: The SLM has succeeded in brokering a reconciliation between the Maalia, Baza`a and Zaghawa tribes in Sanbi Krow, North Darfur, following recent clashes between camel men and other civilians on 25th -26th October.

The SLM managed to defuse the tension in the region because the incidents took place in the areas controlled by the movement.

NRF accuses Government of bombarding villages and killing 63 in the Jebel Moun area

AlAyaam: The National Redemption Front has accused the Government and Janjaweed militias of bombarding villages in the Jebel Moun area in West Darfur and killing 63 civilians - including 31 children – in the process.

The SAF spokesperson denied such raids happened and in the area. He added that what the SAF was doing was carrying out routine security patrols in the area and was not involved in battles.

The JEM hails president's speech before parliament over possible additions to the DPA

AllIntibaha: The Justice and Equality Movement have hailed the president's speech before parliament welcoming possible additions to the DPA.

"The president's speech reassures us of Government's determination to reach an agreement with the DPA non-signatory groups" the JEM leadership affairs secretary, Jamal Jalal el-Din said.

Libya calls for Chad-Sudan meeting to diffuse border tension

(SudanTribune.com – 31st Oct. Khrt.) Following a meeting with the Sudanese president today, Libya's Africa envoy called Tuesday for a high-level meeting between Sudan and Chad to defuse growing tensions between the neighbouring countries.

The head of the General People's Committee for Liaison for Foreign Affairs, Abel Salam Triki, told the reporters "Both parties must have a meeting at foreign ministers' level and of those in charge of security to end the tension."

Triki, who Monday met in N'Djamena the Chadian president, Idriss Deby, expressed hopes that the situation would go back to normal. He called for a direct meeting to be held between the two sides at foreign ministry and security levels to solve the causes of tension, as well as build trust between the two countries.

Central African rebels deny bases in Sudan

(AP – 31st Oct. Bangui) A spokesman for shadowy rebels in Central African Republic denied his fighters have bases in Sudan and vowed to oust the president of this volatile nation in the heart of Africa.

Contacted by telephone from Birao, rebel spokesman Abakar Saboune confirmed his fighters assaulted the town and claimed they now control it and plan to use it as a base to push toward the capital, about 800 kilometers to the southwest.

Saboune said the rebels had been in Central African Republic since April, when they entered from a neighboring country he declined to name. Central African Republic has borders with Sudan, Chad, Congo, Republic of Congo and Cameroon.

Little is known about the rebels. Unidentified armed groups, have launched sporadic attacks on military installations in remote regions of the Central African Republic over the past year, displacing tens of thousands of refugees.

Saboune was once a well-known army captain who served with rebels led by President Francois Bozize, who swept to power in a bush war that culminated with a rebel assault on Bangui in 2003.