



UNITED NATIONS MISSION IN SUDAN

UNMIS

Media Monitoring Report, 09 October 07

(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**

- Following increase in Carjacking incidents in Darfur: UN to replace its cars by those used by public
- UN officials say they lack helicopters and ground transport for Darfur peacekeeping force
- Darfur flare-up highlights need for robust force: UN official

➤ **GoNU (CPA, DPA, ESPA)**

- Future of NCP-SPLM Partnership reassuring, Akol
- NCP partnership falling apart, SPLM Politbureau agrees
- SLM Minawi threatens to withdraw from Government following attack on Muhajriya
- Sudan slams US envoy statements on North-South relations

➤ **GoSS**

- Kiir accuses western Bahr al-Ghazal's tax officials of revenue misappropriation
- Don't harass northern traders, Kiir tells southerners
- Pagan: decisive resolutions agreed by SPLM Politbureau
- Salva Kiir to visit floods affected Lakes States on Wednesday
- 39 prison officers from Southern Sudan graduate in Kenya
- Sudanese ex-rebels want national census to show ethnicities, religions
- Sudan ex-rebel movement summons ministers to politburo meeting

➤ **Darfur**

- U.S. embassy says government offensive in southern Darfur appears to be spreading
- U.N. tells workers to leave Darfur
- Darfur hybrid peacekeeping operation still needs key gears
- Nigerian crowd attack Sudan soccer team over AU troops death
- Egypt's foreign minister meets Darfur's rebel leaders ahead of peace talks in Libya
- ICC prosecutor to inform UNSC of Sudan's non-cooperation
- Sudanese army attacks partners in Darfur peace
- Egypt urges rebel factions to join Darfur talks in Libya
- Sudanese cabinet urges mobilization for Arab conference on Darfur
- Sudanese army on Darfur offensive
- Sudan offensive spreads to key Darfur rebel town
- UK warns Darfur rebels on boycott
- More Nigerian troops to leave on peacekeeping mission in Darfur Sudan
- Darfur governor assesses damage in Haskanita following recent attack

Highlights

➤ **UN/ Agencies**

Following increase in carjacking incidents in Darfur: UN to replace its cars by those used by public

(AlAyam The UN announced that it is going to replace its vehicles which carry the UN logo with ordinary ones (those used by the public) in all Darfur states in order to avoid carjacking. The Spokesperson of the Special Envoy of the UN Secretary General Radhia Achouri told AlAyam the decision on replacing the UN cars was made in an effort to avoid carjacking. It has been noted that the groups that carjack don't take any car but choose the 4-Wheels Drive cars to sell or use them in other parts of Darfur, she said. She refuted reports on evacuation of the UN staff from Nyala saying that may be the UN officials are coming to Khartoum during the Eid holiday.

UN officials say they lack helicopters and ground transport for Darfur peacekeeping force

JUSTIN BERGMAN, Associated Press Writer, Date: October 08, 2007

(*AP*), UNITED NATIONS_U.N. officials said Monday they still lack military helicopters and ground transport vehicles considered critical to the success of the joint U.N.-African Union peacekeeping force expected to begin deploying to Darfur later this month.

Officials said the force has not yet received pledges from contributing countries for 24 transport and light tactical helicopters, as well as about 60 long-haul ground transportation vehicles.

Jane Holl Lute, assistant secretary-general for peacekeeping, said the lack of specialized transport units would not delay or halt the deployment, but she said it could "significantly impair" the ability of the force to operate once it reaches Darfur.

"If you want to ensure the protection of civilians, you need that mobility, you need the capacity to transport troops quickly to a place you hear there is some trouble developing and you need to have the firepower and the strength to immediately dominate the situation," said Jean-Marie Guehenno, the U.N. undersecretary-general for peacekeeping.

He said a recent rebel attack on an AU base near the northern Darfur town of Haskanita and the subsequent burning of the town showed why having a highly mobile peacekeeping force is critical to quelling the violence.

"We basically need all the countries that see the importance of addressing the tragedy of Darfur to see what they can do to help," he added. "These capacities are vital."

Lute said U.N. officials were still negotiating with a few select countries that have such units and indicated they may reconsider taking part in the mission. She did not identify the countries, nor say whether they would be acceptable to the Sudanese government.

Sudan's U.N. ambassador, Abdalmahmood Abdalhaleem Mohamad, said his country was not opposed to contributions of equipment from non-African countries, but the nationalities of the helicopter pilots would have to be decided "in consultation with the Sudanese government."

Abdalhaleem said Sudan would not accept U.S. pilots. When asked whether the country would allow European pilots, he said "we will consider it."

"We will cross that bridge when we come to it," he told The Associated Press.

Guehenno said a headquarters for the force is expected to be set up by the end of this month, and the first two battalions of peacekeepers will deploy to support the AU troops currently on the ground. It will take months for the entire force to deploy — possibly going well into 2008.

Darfur flare-up highlights need for robust force: UN official

(*AFP*), by Gerard Aziakou, UNITED NATIONS, Oct 8, 2007 (AFP) - A senior UN official on Monday said raging violence in Darfur illustrated the need to provide a planned UN-African Union peacekeeping force with sufficient mobility and firepower.

Jean-Marie Guehenno, head of UN peacekeeping operations, said he was "very concerned" with the escalating violence in the western Sudanese region less than three weeks before scheduled peace talks in Libya. He was commenting on charges by a key rebel leader that the Sudanese army had razed the south Darfur town of Haskanita and killed up to 100 people in retaliation for a September 29 attack on African Union troops.

And the sole Darfur rebel movement to have signed a peace agreement with the Khartoum government accused the military of launching an assault on a nearby town that had been under its control.

"At this stage we cannot formally confirm any particular responsibility but it's very troubling that the city which was under the control of the government of Sudan could be burnt down," Guehenno said. The French diplomat added that the incident "shows the importance of having troops that are very mobile, with the capacity to dominate any situation."

Guehenno said the UN-AU force expected to take over peacekeeping from ill-equipped African troops in Darfur urgently needed at least 24 transport and light tactical helicopters. Mobility and firepower are "some of (the) vital capacities" which the force still lack and which are "critical for the success of the mission," he said.

Guehenno welcomed the European Union's plan to deploy up to 4,000 troops in Chad and Central African Republic, most likely in November, but stressed that the bloc should also pitch in for the Darfur operation. "It's the whole world that we are calling upon for helicopters. Any country that has those capacities should consider whether it can commit (them) for Darfur," he added.

Guehenno meanwhile indicated that UN and AU negotiators were in the region to lay the ground for a successful negotiating round starting on October 27 in the Libyan capital Tripoli. Guehenno warned that the fragmented rebel movement would not be allowed to derail the peace process. "It's going to be a tough process," he said. "There's a lot at stake. A ceasefire, which will be the first outcome of the negotiation, is critical to the successful peace operation in Darfur."

GoNU (CPA, DPA, ESPA)

Future of NCP-SPLM Partnership reassuring, Akol

By: Mona Al Bashir

(Sudan Vision), CPA will never collapse because the Southern Sudan people militated and sacrificed a lot to achieve peace, Sudan's Foreign Minister, Dr. Lam Akol told Sudan Vision in an exclusive interview yesterday. He expressed reassurance of the future of partnership between the National Congress Party NCP and SPLM. "This partnership has been dictated by the necessity to implement CPA," said the Minister adding that the Sudanese citizens will monitor the commitment of the two parties to the Agreement implementation.

The Minister referred to the several achievements brought about since the signing of the Peace Agreement such as the security and stability which constitutes the core of development and reconstruction. He pointed to the establishment of the organs assigned the implementation of the CPA, affirming that these organs are operating effectively.

Dr. Akol admitted that there was delay in the implementation of some protocols. He however ascribed that to some objective reasons, adding that joint committees have been set up by the two partners to examine difficulties facing implementation. According to him that move indicates that efforts are being made to overcome these difficulties and that it has not been decided that these committees have failed.

Meanwhile, the Minister refuted the American Envoy, Andrew Natsios' statement that the relations between the two partners are poisoned, describing this statement as the view of Natsios which does not represent those of the international community and US Administration."Akol said he was wondering how Natsios came to that impression.

He said that the situation currently prevailing is not telling of that exaggerated picture as portrayed by the US Envoy to Sudan. Akol described the leak about his sacking from the Ministry as fabricated press news and that SPLM concerns are bigger than sacking of individuals.

NCP partnership falling apart, SPLM Politbureau agrees

(**The Citizen**), The partnership between the SPLM and the NCP is in jeopardy, officials said yesterday after the SPLM Politbureau meeting in Juba. SPLM Secretary General Pagan Amum described the partnership as “deteriorating”. “We have national crisis, because the NCP is violating the CPA”, said Amum.

SLM Minawi threatens to withdraw from Government following attack on Muhajriya

(**AlRai AlAam**), The SLM Minawi, which held yesterday a meeting for its leaderships, described the attack by SAF on its troops in Muhajria as amounting to aborting the DPA and threatened to withdraw from the Government of National Unity (GoNU). At this stage, SLM Minawi member of the DPA Political Committee, Ali Trayo, said the government justified the attack by claiming that it was made on request from the AU so as to protect its troops in the town. Trayo condemned the attack on Muhajria and asked for an emergency meeting for the ceasefire committee in El Fasher so as to investigate on the incident.

Sudan slams US envoy statements on North-South relations

(**ST**), October 8, 2007 (KHARTOUM) — Sudan’s Foreign Ministry has condemned statements by a U.S. envoy who warned of a "poisonous" political atmosphere between National Congress Party in the north and former rebel SPLM in the south. Monday, the

Sudanese Foreign Ministry responded, saying the statements are inaccurate, and will not help narrow the differences between the two sides, the Voice of America reported.

The U.S. special envoy to Sudan, Andrew Natsios, said last Saturday that the U.S. is deeply concerned about the health of the peace deal that ended Sudan's north-south civil war in 2005. "The current political atmosphere is poisonous ... this war of words has to stop," Natsios said. He was referring to southern and northern officials using the media to accuse each other of failing to implement key clauses.

Sudan invited the US envoy to be more accurate and objective in his statement. Further Khartoum urged him to refrain from sending wrong and troubling signals. The foreign ministry reiterated the commitment of the Sudan's peace partners to honor the CPA, underlining that 90% of the peace deal are implemented. It also reminded that efforts are still underway to find a solution for contentious issues.

(ST)

GoSS

Kiir accuses western Bahr al-Ghazal's tax officials of revenue misappropriation

(*Khartoum Monitor*), The President of the GOSS Salva Kiir Mayardit has accused tax officials in Western Bahr al-Ghazal state of misappropriating the revenue collection from the border tax based in the State. He said that such excesses will prevent the realization of development.

Don't harass northern traders, Kiir tells southerners

(*The Citizen*), The FVP has said southerners should not harass traders from the north. FVP and GOSS President said the northerners are Sudan nationals, and they are entitled to live anywhere in the country.

Pagan: decisive resolutions agreed by SPLM Politbureau

(*AlRai AlAam*), The SPLM has yesterday concluded the meeting of its Politbureau in Juba. The resolutions and recommendations of the meeting will be made public on Wednesday by FVP and GOSS President Salva Kiir who is currently visiting Bahr al-Ghazal. SPLM Secretary General Pagan Amum said the outcome of the meeting is decisive as far as the partnership with the NCP is concerned. *AlAyam* reported that 60% of the members of the Politbureau have supported the resolutions and recommendations of the meeting.

Salva Kiir to visit floods affected Lakes States on Wednesday

(*ST*), By Manyang Mayom, October 8, 2007 (RUMBEK) — The President of the Government of Southern Sudan is expected to visit, the capital of Lakes State, Rumbek, on Wednesday 10 Oct 2007. The Sudanese First-Vice President will be meeting with both Executive and Members of Lakes State Legislative Assembly. Also

he will tour the affected floods areas. The president will held rally at Rumbek Freedom Square with public in Lakes. This visit comes in the framework of a tour to the floods affected states in southern Sudan before to begin à tour in the northern Sudan states.

Today, Salva Kiir visited Raja town in West Baharal-Gazal State where he addressed Monday a mass rally, pledging to work for solution of the issues of the citizens in Raja area. He got acquainted with the situation of the people who were affected by the floods and heavy rainfall. Kiir gave directive for rehabilitation of Wau - Raja road and all the bridges along the road, besides building a number of schools and health centres in the area. He also gave directives for rehabilitation of Raja Hospital and resolving water and agricultural problems.

39 prison officers from Southern Sudan graduate in Kenya (ST)

(ST), October 8, 2007 (NAIROBI) — 39 prison officers from southern Sudan finished their training on Monday in Kenya as part of the efforts to build-up a viable administration in southern Sudan after the signing of a peace agreement ending the 21-year civil war between the north and the south.

Kenyan Vice-President, Moody Awori, on Monday presided over the first pass out parade of 39 prisons officers from Southern Sudan who underwent their training in Kenya, The Kenyan radio reported today.

The colourful exercise at the Prisons Staff Training College, Ruiru, was in fulfillment of a part of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed between Kenyan government and the government of semi-autonomous government of Southern Sudan in June this year.

Under the MOU, which was facilitated by the United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS), Kenya is expected to assist in training and building the necessary manpower for the reconstruction of Southern Sudan.

The Director General of Prisons Service of Southern Sudan, Major General Agasio Akol Tong thanked the government of Kenya for financing the training g of the officers who will fill a gap caused by the drafting of prison staff into the military during the Sudanese civil war.

He said the government of Southern Sudan was committed to creating a professional, ethical and responsive prisons service that upholds public safety and security through modern practices.

The General appealed to the countries in the region and the international community to support the reform process, which he noted was in its early stages.

(ST)

Sudanese ex-rebels want national census to show ethnicities, religions

Excerpt from report by private Sudanese newspaper Al-Ra'y al-Amm on 8 October

(BBC Monitoring), The [former rebel] Sudan People's Liberation Movement [SPLM] yesterday reached decisive and important decisions regarding the future of its partnership with the [ruling] National Congress Party on the third day of its political bureau meetings. [Passage omitted]

Meanwhile, the SPLM's secretary-general, Pagan Amum, announced that the SPLM had demanded that the population census is conducted and had insisted that the census operations should include information on percentages of ethnic and religious groups in the country in order to determine the extent of diversity in the population makeup. "The ethnicities of all Sudanese must be clarified and specified because we need to know all the information related to population to help us plan in a scientific way," he said.

Amum further called for determining the percentage of the non-Muslims resident in the national capital in order to protect their rights.

Source: Al-Ra'y al-Amm, Khartoum, in Arabic 8 Oct 07

Sudan ex-rebel movement summons ministers to politburo meeting

Text of report by liberal Sudanese newspaper Al-Ayyam on 8 October

(BBC Monitoring), The political bureau of the [former rebel] Sudan People's Liberation Movement [SPLM] has summoned all the SPLM ministers in the federal government to join the bureau's meetings in Juba.

Sources told Al-Ayyam that a decision was taken yesterday for ministers who had not attended the political bureau meetings to present reports on the performance of their ministries and the relationship with the [ruling] National Congress Party at the executive level.

The sources affirmed that the political bureau meetings which were due to end yesterday would continue today after discrepancies appeared in the positions of SPLM leadership regarding issues under discussion. By the end of yesterday's evening session, no agreement had been reached on decisions to be issued by the meeting.

The first vice-president and SPLM leader, Lt-Gen Salva Kiir Mayardit, who was visiting people affected by floods and rains in Western Bahr al-Ghazal State, is expected to join the meeting today.

Source: Al-Ayyam, Khartoum, in Arabic 8 Oct 07

Darfur

U.S. embassy says government offensive in southern Darfur appears to be spreading

PRESS RELEASE

Statement by the U.S. Embassy in Khartoum

October 8, 2007, The U.S. Embassy strongly condemns the destruction of the Darfur town of Haskanita. The violence seems to be spreading to neighboring Muhajeria. While all the details are not clear, the town, which was under the control of the Government of Sudan, was burned down, except for a few buildings. We call on all parties to immediately end the cycle of violence in Darfur, and adhere to a ceasefire in advance of the upcoming UN-led peace talks in Libya. The people of Darfur have suffered enough. Darfur needs to be built up, not destroyed.

For further information, please contact the Public Affairs Office at the U.S. Embassy Khartoum, Tel: 00 2491 83 774 701

U.N. tells workers to leave Darfur

ALFRED de MONTESQUIOU, Associated Press Writer, Date: October 08, 2007

(AP) KHARTOUM, Sudan Government allied troops launched a new attack on a key rebel-held zone in southern Darfur, as the U.N. and aid groups on Monday advised some workers to temporarily leave the regional capital because of insecurity.

Rebels said the Sudanese army and its allied janjaweed militia unleashed a large offensive on the South Darfur town of Muhajeria.

The town was considered neutral because it is a base for fighters from the Sudan Liberation Army faction belonging to Minni Minawi, the sole Darfur rebel chief who signed a peace agreement with the government last year.

Minawi's leadership was not immediately available for comment, but other splinter SLA chiefs said a large clash was taking place.

"There are heavy aerial bombings happening right now," said Suleiman Jamous, a leader of the faction known as SLA-Unity.

The attack in Muhajeria comes about a week after a separate rebel attack at an African Union base near the town of Haskanita that left 10 AU **peacekeepers** dead.

With violence in the war-torn region continuing, humanitarian groups and U.N. aid agencies advised nonessential staff to temporarily leave the South Darfur capital of Nyala.

"The situation isn't good," said Michael Arunga, the spokesman in Nyala for the U.S.-based Christian aid group World Vision, which was the largest humanitarian group operating around the town.

Arunga said nonessential staff were leaving, but five of the group's international aid workers would stay to maintain "lifesaving activities" including food distribution and medical help in the sprawling refugee camps that surround Nyala.

Orla Clinton, the spokeswoman for the U.N.'s Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, insisted the departures of aid workers were a temporary measure until the situation cooled off.

"There's no evacuation. There's an advisory for nonessential staff to go on leave," Clinton said. It was not immediately clear how many people the U.N. had advised to leave.

Though long-considered Darfur's safest town, Nyala has witnessed a spree of attacks on aid workers and other violence in recent weeks. At least six people were killed inside the town last week when a brawl between government soldiers and ex-rebels belonging to Minawi spiraled into a gunbattle.

Darfur hybrid peacekeeping operation still needs key gears

(ST), October 8, 2007 (UNITED NATIONS) — The hybrid United Nations-African Union peacekeeping operation that will be deployed in the war-torn Darfur region has shortfalls in several key aviation and ground transport capacities, senior UN officials today, warning that the mission's ability to carry out its basic work will be in jeopardy.

The mission is on track to reach its benchmarks for the deployment of initial essential personnel before January, when it is scheduled to take over from the existing AU mission, Assistant Secretary-General Jane Holl Lute told reporters in New York.

Holl Lute, who is the acting head of the Department of Field Support, said most key posts in the leadership of the mission (to be known as UNAMID) have been identified and filled, with only a few such appointments remaining.

Two battalions are also being readied to be deployed to strengthen the AU mission ahead of UNAMID taking over, she said, while progress has also been made on major contracts in the areas of civilian aviation, fuel and rations.

But Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Affairs Jean-Marie Guéhenno said that UNAMID is still lacking ground transport, light tactical helicopters and transport helicopters.

Jane Holl Lute said the deployment wouldn't be delayed or halted after a certain point because of the lack of transport units. But she said it could "significantly impair" the ability of the force to operate once it reaches Darfur.

So far the UN and the AU have agreed that Burkina Faso, Egypt, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Mali, Nigeria and Senegal are providing either an infantry battalion or a logistics, reconnaissance, transport, military police or sector reserve company to UNAMID, which is to have a predominantly African composition.

Bangladesh, Jordan, Nepal, the Netherlands, Thailand and the Nordic countries in Europe are also providing similar resources, as well as a field hospital.

Ms. Holl Lute noted that the Sudanese Government has given assurance that Darfur's airstrips will be made available for the use of UNAMID so that it can be deployed.

But the mission does not yet have agreement for the land needed to facilitate the deployment of the heavy support package, a transition phase between the current AU mission and UNAMID.

“We have an engineering unit that is due by the end of this month that will depend on land being secured,” Ms. Holl Lute said. “So we have a team on the ground in Nyala [the state capital of South Darfur] right now negotiating with the local government to ensure that we have a place for them to go.”

(ST/UN/AP)

Nigerian crowd attack Sudan soccer team over AU troops death

(ST), October 8, 2007 (LAGOS) — A crowd of hostile Nigerian soccer fans attacked a bus carrying members of Sudanese soccer club over the weekend for what appeared to be a response to an attack on African Union (AU) forces in Darfur. Last Sunday visiting Al-Merreikh of Sudan lost to Dolphins FC of Nigeria 3-0 in their final group B match in the CAF Confederation Cup. Seven Nigerian soldiers were among 10 AU soldiers killed last Saturday in the troubled region of western Sudan. Nigerian crowd threw stones at the bus driving on its way to the stadium and blocked its passage. The soccer fans were holding pictures of the Nigerian soldiers killed. None of the Al-Merreikh players or members were hurt following the incident.

Egypt's foreign minister meets Darfur's rebel leaders ahead of peace talks in Libya (AP)

OMAR SINAN, Associated Press Writer, Date: October 08, 2007

(AP), CAIRO, _Egypt's foreign minister met with several Darfur rebel factions on Monday, urging them to join upcoming peace negotiations set for later this month in Libya that are aimed at ending four years of conflict in the western Sudanese region. Foreign Minister Ahmed Aboul Gheit met with representatives from the Sudan Liberation Army, the Justice and Equality Movement and splinter factions from the two larger rebel groups and stressed the necessity for the "participation of all Darfurian factions" in the Oct. 27 talks. Aboul Gheit called on the rebels to "halt military operations and seize the chance to prepare for the proper environment to make the negotiations successful," according to a statement issued by the Foreign Ministry.

The rebel groups' envoys who met with Aboul Gheit expressed their enthusiasm for the meeting and said they wanted to reach a peace deal quickly, the statement said.

ICC prosecutor to inform UNSC of Sudan's non-cooperation

(ST), October 8, 2007 (THE HAGUE) — The Chief prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC), Luis Moreno-Ocampo will formally tell the UN Security Council (UNSC) that Sudan is not cooperating with his office in his next report due in December. Prosecutor Luis Moreno-Ocampo who was speaking to reporters at the ICC headquarters in the Hague, said that Sudan has officially refused to hand over the two suspects accused of war crimes in the troubled western region of Darfur.

Sudan's foreign minister Lam Akol has announced last week in New York the release of Kushayb from jail due to "lack of evidence" against him.

Last month Sudan appointed the second war crime suspect, Ahmed Haroun, as head of a committee investigating human rights complaints in Darfur.

Whether the ICC can secure UNSC support given the cool mood towards the issue of justice in Darfur, Ocampo said that the "law must be respected". The prosecutor said that at this point the UNSC has no authority to withdraw the case from the ICC.

Sudan has not ratified the Rome Statue, but the UN Security Council triggered the provisions under the Statue that enables it to refer situations in non-State parties to the world court if it deems that it is a threat to international peace and security.

(ST)

Sudanese army attacks partners in Darfur peace

(ST, Reuters), October 8, 2007 (KHARTOUM) — Sudanese government troops and allied militia on Monday attacked a town belonging to the only Darfur rebel faction to sign a 2006 peace deal, the faction said.

"Government planes have attacked Muhajiriya, which belongs to us, and government forces and Janjaweed militia are fighting our forces," said Khalid Abakar, a senior representative from the Sudan Liberation Army (SLA).

Abakar is from the SLA faction led by Minni Arcua Minnawi, the only one of three rebel negotiating factions to sign a May 2006 peace deal with Khartoum. The movement then became part of the government and controls Muhajiriya town in South Darfur.

"We consider this a very serious development," the head of Minnawi's office, Mohamed Bashir, told Reuters.

"Half of Muhajiriya is burnt down," he said, adding Minnawi would return to Khartoum from Darfur following the attack.

Rival rebel factions who did not sign the May 2006 deal confirmed the attack on Muhajiriya, adding government troops were also amassing near Tine town, on the Chadian border, preparing to attack rebel-controlled areas in North Darfur.

Neither AU nor Sudanese government officials were immediately available to comment.

SLA Minnawi spokesman al-Tayyib Khamis said the assault did not bode well ahead of talks aimed to bring other factions into the peace process in Libya on October 27. "If they really wanted peace and negotiations they would not be attacking our areas," he said.

SLA Minnawi's military spokesman Mohamed Hamid Dirbeen called it a "stab in the back of the Darfur peace agreement". "There are many victims in the town, but we do not have exact numbers of wounded and killed," he added.

Bashir said the assault was a continuation of a Sudanese army offensive on the former rebel town of Haskanita in southeast Darfur, which was burnt to the ground and emptied of civilians in an attack eerily reminiscent of town clearances reported at the start of the Darfur conflict in 2003.

According to a report published by *AlSahafa*, The Wali of South Darfur Ali Mahmoud denied SAF attack on Muhajria and accused nomadic Arabs and rebel elements of launching the attack.

In a related development, *AlSahafa* reported that the UNMIS Spokesperson Radhia Achouri is disappointed with manner in which the western media has reported on the UN report that followed the rebel attack on Haskanita. She said she did not accuse or indicated that the Government was involved in the burning of the area. Achouri emphasized that the UN has no any information on the events that followed the attack on the AU troops.

Sudanese cabinet urges mobilization for Arab conference on Darfur

(ST), October 7, 2007 (KHARTOUM) — The Council of Ministers directed Sunday in its regular sitting all the ministries and concerned bodies to do their best to make a success the Arab Conference for Enhancement of the Humanitarian Situation in Darfur, scheduled on October 30 in Khartoum.

The two-day conference will witness intensive participation of Arab countries, civil society organizations and Arab personalities. The Council of Ministers called on all categories in the society and public and private institutions to contribute to the national campaign for support to the humanitarian situation in Darfur.

The cabinet decided to form a committee for mobilization of the national support, to be headed by the Minister of Energy and Mining, and including as members the Ministers of Industry, Federal Government, Finance, Information and Humanitarian Affairs, Deputy Governor of the Bank of Sudan and Chairmen of the Businessmen Union and Sudan Workers Trade Unions Federation (SWTUF).

On the other hand, the Preparatory Committee of Arab Conference on Humanitarian Situations in Darfur held Saturday a meeting at the premises of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Khartoum. In this meeting Adviser of the Arab League Secretary General Salah Halima affirmed keenness of Amr Musa on the success of the conference as well as boosting the political settlement to Darfur issue.

Director of Arab Administration at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Omer Heydar said that Amr Musa had directed invitations to the Arab ambassadors and to a number of concerned parties to participate in the conference, emphasizing importance of the role of the Arab non- governmental organizations and businessmen in boosting infrastructures in Darfur and supporting political settlement there.

Sudanese army on Darfur offensive

(BBC), Khalid Abakar, of the Sudan Liberation Army (SLA) faction led by Minni Minnawi, said the town of Muhajiriya, which they control, was half-burned. The SLA told the BBC the assault was a continuation of a Sudanese army offensive on Haskanita. That town was burned down and looted while under government control.

The BBC's Amber Henshaw in Khartoum says it appears fighting in Muhajiriya is ongoing. The SLA rebels told our correspondent that they came under fire from government planes, after which mixed government forces and militias engaged their men. Most rebel groups and the government have committed themselves to take part in new peace talks in Tripoli expected to begin later this month.

Sudan offensive spreads to key Darfur rebel town, The fighting may imperil peace talks.

By A. de MONTESQUIOU, THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

KHARTOUM, Sudan - In a widening offensive, Sudanese forces on Monday attacked a southern Darfur town controlled by the only rebel group that has signed a peace deal with the government.

The fighting could be a blow to peace talks due this month in Libya aimed at finding peace for Darfur. Organizers were already struggling to ensure the fragmented rebel factions would attend, and the new attack could deepen rebel mistrust of the government.

It also appeared to be an expansion of an offensive the government military has been waging for the past month in northern Darfur, despite promises by President Omar al-Bashir for a cease-fire ahead of the peace talks.

Battles took place throughout the day in Muhajeria, a town controlled by the Sudan Liberation Movement, led by Minni Minawi, rebels and observers said.

“We can’t even count how many army, janjaweed and planes attacked us,” said Saif Haroun, the spokesman for Minawi in Khartoum.

It was unclear why the government would attack Minawi’s group. Haroun accused Khartoum of trying to undermine the group ahead of the peace talks and boost the government’s position.

The assault may also be linked to a rebel attack on a base of African Union peacekeepers farther north in Haskanita that killed 10 peacekeepers a week ago. Some members of the rebel factions involved in the attack are believed to have moved into Muhajeria.

Details of the fighting at Muhajeria were unclear. The area has largely been a no-go zone for U.N. and humanitarian workers in recent months.

A U.N. official in Darfur said fighting began at 1 p.m. with an attack by an Arab tribal militia, but he could not comment on whether they were acting on government orders or of their own accord.

Sudan Liberation Movement fighters appeared to have repelled the militia from the town before sunset, said the official, who spoke under condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the issue.

The Sudanese military spokesman did not answer calls for comment.

UK warns Darfur rebels on boycott

(BBC), The UK has warned rebel groups in Darfur they could be excluded from the peace process if they boycott talks due to be held in Libya later this month. The UK Minister for Africa, Lord Malloch Brown, said those who opted out "should understand the consequences".

But the Justice and Equality Movement, one of Darfur's main rebel factions, said such threats were not helpful.

More Nigerian troops to leave on peacekeeping mission in Darfur

Text of report by Radio Nigeria from Abuja on 8 October

(BBC Monitoring), Two hundred Nigerian soldiers will today leave for Darfur in Sudan. The troops are already camped at the Air Force base at Lagos Airport. In a brief chat with our aviation correspondent, the General Officer Commanding [GOC] 81 Division, Maj-Gen Azubuike Ihejirika, said the troops were going to replace the ones on the ground. He said they were not devastated by the death of those killed last week as their mission was to restore peace in Darfur. Correspondent Nosa Osulakon [phonetic] reports that the troops would have left today but [were delayed] for a technical problem with the aircraft.

Sudan: Darfur governor assesses damage in Haskanita following recent attack

Text of report by state-owned Sudanese TV on 8 October

(BBC Monitoring), The governor of Northern Darfur State, Uthman Muhammad Yusuf Kibir, has assessed the damages made in Haskanita town [southern Darfur] following recent attack on AU troops in the area. The governor also assessed the damages on surrounding village which made residents to flee to other areas.