



UNITED NATIONS MISSION IN SUDAN

UNMIS

UNMIS Media Monitoring Report
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(By Public Information Office)

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HIGHLIGHTS:**United Nations****Further reactions to Mr. Pronk's article (weblog Nr. 35)**

SAF: One day after the newspapers came out with a story on criticism by the SAF of SRSB Pronk's statement over his weblog No. 35 (www.janpronk.nl), most major dailies had as its lead headliner on Friday 20th October an article sourced from SUNA and quoting a statement by the Office of the Spokesman of the SAF in which the SAF describes Mr. Pronk's activities,

contacts with the rebels and movements without the approval of the government as a “military danger that has negatively affected the army’s work” and a “war against the army”.

The SAF statement also accused Mr. Pronk of launching a psychological war on the Sudanese army by spreading false information bringing to doubt the army’s ability to maintain security and stability in the country therefore declaring him *persona non grata*.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs: On the same day, according to the *AP*, state television broadcast a statement from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs demanding an apology from the SRSG over his comments on the fighting in Darfur which the foreign ministry described as “unacceptable”.

Unlike the earlier statement by the SAF that was also run in the broadcast, the Ministry did not ask Mr. Pronk to leave.

Pronk apologises: Most major dailies of Saturday 21st October carry an article on a statement sourced from *SUNA* quoting foreign ministry spokesperson, Ambassador Ali el-Sadiq, as saying that Mr. Pronk has expressed regret and apologised over his statement on the SAF and the situation in Darfur and the reactions it spurred from the authorities.

According to the reports, Mr. Pronk said he was prepared in principle to initiate efforts to bring the holdout groups on board the Darfur Peace Agreement.

Ambassador Ali described the SAF reaction to Mr. Pronk’s statement as natural.

What the United Nations says: UNMIS says it has not received any formal communication from the authorities in Khartoum to the effect that the SRSG should leave nor of their objection to the visits he made recently to the Darfur region.

Spokesperson Radhia Achouri told *AlIntibaha* that Pronk is mandated to tour Darfur within the framework of his duties and that there is nothing strange to this. She pointed out that the authorities and the governor of North Darfur were aware of his recent visit to Darfur.

Stephane Dujjaric*, spokesman of the Office of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, also agrees (*according to the AP*) that the United Nations has no formal communication from Sudan that Pronk has been declared *persona non-grata*.

AlRai AlAam, *AlWatan* and *AlSudani* dailies report on 21st October, that the United Nations says it will discuss with Mr. Pronk on stopping his personal blog but pointed out that the views expressed are Mr. Pronk’s personal views and that the United Nations has no rule governing what its staff should write in their blogs. .

Other reactions: *AlIntibaha* reports the DR. MAJZOUB EL-KHALIFA has strongly criticised the recent article by Mr. Pronk and pointed out that the SRSG had no right to speak out on the SAF.

He said that Mr. Pronk has become unstable in his actions and thoughts and has put himself into a dilemma. He complained that Mr. Pronk draws the country 10 steps back whenever the government takes one step ahead.

Khalifa expects the foreign ministry to summon Mr. Pronk for an explanation.

Also reported by *AlIntibaha* is a statement by prominent NCP figure HASSAN BARGO who is also a member of the High Committee for the Implementation of the DPA who supported the SAF call for Mr. Pronk to leave.

Bargo says Pronk's statement was meant to weaken the SAF ahead of a deployment of international forces to Darfur.

Akhir Lahza (21st October) reports that army commanders have been in continuous meetings since the [Pronk's] statements were made and have also be in lengthy meetings with foreign ministry officials in a bid to exert pressures for the expulsion of Mr. Pronk.

The same paper goes on to say that Mr. Pronk has tried to meet senior officials in the government to explain his position but in vain. It mentions in particular his attempts to meet Vice-President Taha who refused to meet him. The paper says influential people within the government are divided over whether to expel him immediately or first summon him for an explanation.

Miscellaneous:

AlRai AlAam editor Kamal Hassan Bakheit writes saying that Pronk should stick to his mandate and not intervene in issues related to national security. He said this intervention on issues of national sovereignty is unacceptable – even by those opposing the government - and should not be accepted by any self-respecting government.

The writer says Pronk should know that he is the representative of the United Nations and does not represent God's Will nor do his wishes to resolve the issue f Darfur through international troop deployment alone.

The writer draws a contrast between Mr. Pronk and US Special Envoy Natsios of whose mission presidential adviser Dr. Ghazi Salahuldeen said is to cooperate with the Sudan to overcome the crisis and avoid a confrontation.

He says Pronk has apparently come to further complicate, and not solve, the issue of Darfur.

He called upon SRSR Pronk to reconsider his work in Sudan, review his contradictory statements on Sudan, consider possible solution and only then, he adds, would Mr. Pronk realise that he has complicated the problem.

** Excerpts of what the Spokesperson of the Office of the Secretary-General of the United Nations said on the issue is attached separately.*

UNHCR suspends refugees repatriation to South Sudan

(*UN News* – 20th Oct. **Geneva**) The United Nations refugee agency today temporarily suspended return convoys from northern Uganda to southern Sudan following reports yesterday that unknown gunmen killed at least 38 civilians in a string of attacks in the same area.

The UN High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) had been scheduled to run the 16th convoy from Moyo, in northern Uganda, to Kajo Keiji in southern Sudan Friday morning but this was abruptly put on hold.

“We will be monitoring the security situation closely before deciding when to resume the repatriation convoys,” said UNHCR spokesperson Ron Redmond in a press briefing in Geneva.

United Nations and the Transition Debate

Arab League cooperating with AU to resolve Darfur crisis - Musa

(*Xinhua* – 20th Oct. **Cairo**) Arab League (AL) Secretary-General Amr Moussa has said that the Cairo-based League has been in good cooperation with the African Union (AU) to solve the Darfur issue, rebuking attempts to portray the Darfur crisis as an Arab-African conflict.

"Since the very first moment of the Darfur crisis, the Arab League has chosen to coordinate its position with the AU," Moussa said in a recent written interview with *Xinhua*.

The findings of a mission he sent to Darfur from April to May 15th 2005 were discussed at an extraordinary Arab meeting, which was attended by the AU chairman, AU commissioner and the UN special representative for Sudan, Moussa said.

He said the two organizations have in the past few years been working together to solve difficult problems particularly in Sudan and Somalia and Arab-African relations are very profound.

But, there have been times and cases that some people have attempted to draw a dividing line between Arabs and Africans, Moussa said.

GoNU

- ❖ A new movement, the Kush Liberation Movement, has reportedly been formed in northern Sudan. The movement claims it is championing the cause of the marginalised Nubian peoples of northern Sudan. More on the story in later issues of the MMR.
- ❖ Following reports last week that authorities are near concluding the mystery surrounding the assassination of the *AlWifaq* editor, *Rai AlShaab* reports on 21st October that police headquarters have warned newspapers not to hamper the investigations by what they keep on printing on the issue time and again.

GoSS/ Southern Sudan

38 killed in South Sudan by unknown attackers - official

(*Reuters* – 19th Oct. **Juba**) Unknown gunmen killed at least 38 civilians in a string of attacks in southern Sudan, regional government officials said on Thursday.

Uganda's military said it suspected the LRA was behind Wednesday's killings, but the rebels denied it.

Southern Sudan's Interior Minister Paul Mayom Akec told a news conference armed men killed 38 people, including women and children, and burned cars in several attacks on roads between the southern capital Juba and the eastern banks of the Nile.

"It is not my immediate desire to talk about the identity of the attackers ... no matter whoever they can be, in order for us not to jeopardise the ongoing peace talks," Akec said.

South Sudanese Major-General Wilson Deng Kuoirot, who heads the talks' independent monitoring team, said 41 people had been killed in ambushes witnesses told him were carried out by young, dreadlocked men and women in "shabby-looking" fatigues.

"Our forces are doing everything possible to find out who is behind these killings," he told Reuters. The victims were mostly shot in the head and left in their charred vehicles, he said.

A U.N. spokeswoman in Khartoum confirmed ambushes on two roads around Juba on Wednesday, but had no immediate information about casualties. A U.N. bulletin said all road movement was suspended around Juba for the next 48 hours.

In a related development, *IRIN* reports that Uganda has stopped all traffic to southern Sudan due to the attacks the accuse the Lord's Resistance Army of carrying out recently. Meanwhile, and at a meeting of the GoSS Security Committee last Thursday, Vice-President Kiir underlined the need to protect citizens from such attacks.

Darfur

- ❖ A spokesperson for the committee to reunite national ranks told the press on arrival from Asmara where they held talks with the holdout groups that these groups have expressed readiness to hold talks with the government at any time and anywhere, reports *Rai AlShaab*.

Eastern Sudan

- ❖ A committee has been formed to monitor implementation of the eastern accord.

Other Developments

Sudanese activist to receive HRW's highest award

(*HRW* – 19th Oct. **London**) Salih Mahmoud Osman, a lawyer who has defended and given free legal aid to hundreds of victims of human rights abuses in Darfur, Sudan for the past two decades will receive Human Rights Watch's highest award on November 7.

Osman, who is from the Darfur region of Sudan, has provided legal representation to those who have been arbitrarily detained and tortured by the Sudanese government, regardless of which ethnic group they are from.

"Salih Mahmoud Osman continues his work as a human rights defender despite great personal risk, in a country which remains hostile to rights activists," said Georgette Gagnon, deputy director of the Africa division of Human Rights Watch. "He has been an essential resource for Darfurians facing abuse by the military, security and police forces, the judiciary and for the human rights community as we respond to the crisis."