



UNITED NATIONS MISSION IN SUDAN
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UNMIS Media Monitoring Report, 6th September 2006
(By Public Information Office)

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HIGHLIGHTS:

United Nations

Annan warns of security void should AMIS leave

U.N. secretary-general warned Tuesday that Sudan would bear full responsibility for the worsening humanitarian crisis in Darfur if African Union peacekeepers pull out by month's end because of the government's refusal to allow a U.N.-led force to take over [*source: SudanTribune.com, quoting the AFP, and reported by most local dailies*].

Annan has also criticised Sudan's calls for the departure of the AMIS and expressed concern at its refusal to a transition to a United Nations force with a stronger mandate. He warned Sudan will be unable to address the humanitarian crisis and will have lots of questions to answer before the rest of the world should it fail to do so.

"The international community has been feeding about 3 million people in camps, and if we have to leave because of lack of security, lack of access to the people, then what happens? The government will have to assume responsibility for doing this, and if it doesn't succeed, it will have lots of questions to answer before the rest of the world," Annan said in the Egyptian port city of Alexandria after talks with President Hosni Mubarak.

UNMIS spokesperson, Radhia Achouri, declined when asked to comment on the current developments, adds *AlWihda*.

Gen. Collins Ihekire, who heads the African Union force, speaking from Darfur said that the latest offensive would cripple the civilian population as government openly plans to flush out the remnants of the rebels.

Rebel commander Abubakar Hamid Elnur told the AP by satellite telephone from northern Darfur that there had been no armed clashes with government forces and the Janjaweed for three days but that bombing raids on rebel-held areas were continuing north of the provincial capital, El Fasher, and government is bringing in more troops to block off the roads possibly in preparation for another major assault.

AlAyaam meanwhile reports that despite the AU confirmation to withdraw its troops by 30th September, analysts say that this may not be possible because the African Union does not have the resources to ferry out those troops.

An analyst with the International Crisis Group says the build-down may take a couple of weeks and, with the government persistence and the United Nations hesitation to deploy without securing government consent, there is a high possibility for a last-minute extension of the African Union mandate in Darfur. The analyst describes the African Union as the sole hope at the moment and as long as the transition does not take place. He also expressed confidence that the African Union will not voluntarily withdraw knowing that it would leave behind a security void.

Meanwhile a high ranking African Union official who chose not to be named says they may remain in Darfur until the end of the war but, he adds, "this is not the way to run a peacekeeping mission".

US State Department spokesman Sean McCormack says the US has voiced concern over the situation in Darfur in the wake of Khartoum's vow to ask the African Union force in Darfur to leave while massing its own troops in the region [AFP].

"But as the resolution makes clear, it (Sudan government consent for a United Nations deployment to Darfur) is invited, but not necessary," he noted.

But on Tuesday Sudan's Minister of State for Foreign Affairs El-Wasilla Al Samani questioned whether there was suffering in Darfur and said that the future of the African Union mission beyond the end of the month was up to the African Union.

V-P Taha says rejection to a transition was not an emotional decision

Addressing the Students' Resistance Council yesterday, Vice-President Taha said that the state's rejection for a transition of the AMIS to a United Nations operation was not based on a spur of the moment decision by President Bashir or the National Congress Party but is the say of the people of Sudan. "When President Bashir speaks, the people have spoken," the Vice-President said.

The V-P who was addressing yesterday a rally of about 10,000 students who gathered at the National Congress Party head offices in Khartoum said that the state has started preparations to lobby support against UNSCR 1706.

"Your Armed Forces and security apparatus are now on the field to reinstate state control and sovereignty and to cut off the hands of any renegade", he said.

This story has been widely covered by major papers with the Akhbar Alyaum doing a full text of his speech before the students yesterday.

Government says it has not asked AMIS to leave

Justice Minister Mohamed Ali el-Mardi told the SMC [*also covered in widely in the local press*] that only the Sudan government can decide on whether the African Union should go through a transition to a United Nations operation or renew or end its mandate based on its assessment of the situation in the interest of security for its territory and citizens.

On the other hand, SMC also reports **Dr. Majzoub el-Khalifa** as saying that the African Union is legally bound to remain in Sudan and not to withdraw its forces or political mission. He said the government hopes the African Union will extend its mandate as per its agreement with the government and pointed out that government has never asked the African Union to leave.

He said however that there will be no security void should the African Union decide to leave as government is capable of handling the issue and will not allow a transition to a United Nations operation.

Khalifa further said that the government will cooperate with the African Union political mission in Khartoum should it wish to continue here and that the SAF is currently on the ground in Darfur and carrying out its duties towards the parties that did not sign the Darfur Peace Agreement.

On the other hand, the political officer for SLM-Minnawi described the requests for an African Union pullout from Darfur as a mistake.

Salah Mana'a points out that AMIS' presence in Darfur is stipulated in the Darfur Peace Agreement and that it is a major mechanism for the implementation of the agreement. Its withdrawal without an appropriate alternative in place would usher in a new situation that will be open to all possibilities.

The leader of SLM-Freewill faction has declined to comment on the issue of a possible African Union withdrawal from Darfur and says they will declare their position after a meeting they will be holding with African Union chief negotiator Sam Ibok.

Jewish organisations plotting a transition before 30th September

This is the major headline in *Sudan Vision* of today and has also been covered in major Arabic language newspapers.

The paper Quotes "high level sources" as having accused US Jewish organisation and some opposition groups of planning to hand over the AMIS to the United Nations before the 30th September date.

The papers say that the change of helmets may take place on 17th September, i.e. a day before the meeting of the African Union Peace & Security Council at the ministerial level in New York.

African Union Peace & Security Council to meet in Khartoum next week

The African Union Peace & Security Council travels to Khartoum next week for talks with President Bashir, Vice-President Kiir and Senior Presidential Aide Minnawi on the issues pertaining to the future of the African Union mission in Sudan, report *AlSahafa*.

AlWihda also reports that African Union spokesperson Noureldeen el-Mezni says preliminary discussions are ongoing ahead of the meeting of African Union foreign ministers on the fringes of the United Nations General Assembly meeting on 18th September. He said Darfur will be the main focus of these talks.

On the transition, he said that nothing can happen without the consent of the Sudan government.

Other reactions to UNSCR 1706

The SAF says it is ready to protect the people in Darfur and notes that the African Union Mission in Sudan forces themselves had no effective role to protect curb the rebel violations [*Alwihda*].

SLM leader AbdulWahid has warned against an AMIS withdrawal on the grounds it will cause a security void [*Alwihda*]. He commended the African Union Mission in Sudan for a job well done despite the limited resources and called for a "neutral" United Nations force. He added that security is not the problem in Darfur but rather the DPA that does not address the demands of the people on the ground.

The leaders of France and Chad who met in Paris recently agree that resolution 1706 has to be implemented [*Alwihda*]. The Chadian president pointed out that African leaders have agreed that the transition is necessary.

Alwihda also reports that ***Egypt's Peoples' Assembly*** has condemned the UK-US backed resolution on Darfur and confirms Egypt's support for state sovereignty in Sudan and the protection of its land and people. The Egyptian parliament calls upon Arab, Muslim and African organizations and parliaments to support the Sudan's position. Egypt's parliament says it holds US concerns over Darfur suspect.

Sudan may suspend or stop cooperating in war against terror

Quoting sources, *AlRai AlAam* says that the political leadership in Sudan may be headed towards suspending Sudan's cooperation with the international community on the war against terror and in intelligence activities that the two sides have been cooperating in since 9/11.

Officials in Khartoum say no decision has been taken so far for such a suspension of cooperation and say such

Nigeria continues to rotate peacekeepers in Sudan's Darfur

(*Xinhua/ST* – 6th Sep. **Abuja**) The Nigerian Army Headquarters said on Tuesday that it would continue to rotate its troops serving in Sudan's Darfur.

Col. Ayo Olaniyi, director of the Army Public Relations of the Nigerian Army Headquarters in the capital Abuja, told reporters that the headquarters would "continue to rotate its troops at the appropriate time in the region."

He said that the Nigerian Army would continue the operation in Darfur until a counter directive was issued by the appropriate authorities.

Over the last weekend, more than 700 officers and men of the Nigerian Army were airlifted to participate in the AU peacekeeping mission in Sudan.

CPA

Governor of eastern Equatoria State accuses SAF of creating instability in Equatoria

Khartoum Monitor reports that the Governor of Eastern Equatoria State has refuted the report published by Khartoum Monitor English daily newspaper on Sunday on the killing of the three people in Torit.

According to the Governor, what had happened in Torit was an incident where the police office in Torit was raided by relatives of one of the culprits who had committed a criminal act in Hiyala .When the commander of the Joint Integrated Unit was informed about it last June, he ordered of the arrest of Josef Manut and was taken to Juba to be tried. Private Manut was supposed to be taken back to the military custody but he found himself in the police cell in Torit. On the night of the 28th August, 2006 Manut broke the door of the cell and attacked the police on guards. The policemen overpowered Manut and shot him and he was taken to the hospital where he later died His other colleagues came seven of them and attacked the police station .There was heavy shooting at the police station but nobody was killed. Ojetuk told the paper

GoNU

Sadiq el-Mahdi is summoned by security

Umma leader Sadiq el-Mahdi is still making news with reports that he was summoned by the deputy security chief over today's demonstration [*most major Arabic language newspapers*].

The deputy head of the security requested Sadiq el-Mahdi head of Umma party to cancel the demonstration and said they had no objection to arrange for a public meeting between government officials and a delegation from the opposition parties to convey a memorandum of their claims, *AlAyaam* reports.

Today more than 20 political parties and civil organization are defying a government by staging demonstrations against the increase in prices of sugar and combustibles.

Authorities yesterday stormed into a public square in Omdurman where the opposition was organising a rally to shore up support for today's demonstrations. The opposition quickly agreed to a change of venue and the rally was held at Umma House where Sadiq el-Mahdi called upon the authorities not to hinder the demonstrations.

Authorities have however branded as illegal today's demonstrations and have threatened to deal decisively with the demonstration should it take place.

Southern Sudan

S. Sudan's Machar absence of Juba delays Ugandan talks

(*New Vision/ST* – 5th Sept. **Juba**) The absence of the Sudanese mediator in Ugandan peace talks outside Juba delayed the resumption of the third session of the negotiations scheduled to start Monday.

The chief mediator at the Juba peace talks between government and LRA, Riek Machar, has for the fourth day camped at Owiny Ki-bul, one of the assembly points for the rebels.

His absence has delayed the resumption of the talks intended to end close to two decades of war that has devastated northern Uganda and southern Sudan.

Officials at the talk's secretariat were cagey on when the third round of talks shall commence, the Ugandan *New Vision* reported.

Salva Kiir fires governors of Warrap and W. Equatoria

The President of the Government of Southern Sudan Lt. Gen. Salva Kiir has issued a presidential decree firing the governor of Warrap and Western Equatoria State, the *Citizen*.

Kiir also issued a decree accepting the resignation of Nhial, who has been replaced as Minister of Regional cooperation by Dr Baradaba Benjamin Marial.

Salva Kiir to address GoSS parliament today

(*AlSahafa* 6th Sep. **Khrt.**) President of the Government of Southern Sudan Lt. Gen. Salva Kiir, is to address the GoSS parliament today, *AlSahafa* daily has learnt.

The paper said that this session of the GoSS parliament is to discuss the performance of the ministries and the governmental institutions, and the plans for the 2006 budget .

Darfur

Another aid worker killed in Darfur

Sept 5, 2006 (NAIROBI) — Another aid worker has been killed in the volatile western Darfur region, bringing to 12 the number killed since May, the International Rescue Committee (IRC) said.

The latest victim, a 37-year-old IRC nurse, was killed during fighting in Hashaba, North Darfur, on Friday. The nurse was managing a health centre in the area, about 100 km north of El Fasher, which was looted during the clashes.

"We do not know who did it; all we know is that there was fighting going on in area," Rebecca Dale, adviser to IRC in Khartoum, said on Tuesday. "The IRC is very concerned about the increased targeting of health workers. We are doing everything we can to continue to offer services."

The IRC, the sole healthcare provider in the Hashaba area, had not been able to fully access a population of about 85,000 for more than three months due to instability. To provide services, the IRC uses 'incentive nurses' - local Sudanese community staff who are paid a small stipend.

The nurse who died on Friday was one such staff member. "The IRC calls upon all parties to the conflict in Darfur to cease targeting civilians and humanitarian workers," the NGO said.

On 16 August, a staff member of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) was killed after being abducted east of the Jebel Marra mountains in North Darfur. The 31-year-old Sudanese national was part of an ICRC team stopped by an unidentified group of armed men after distributing food in the area.

According to the United Nations, the number of attacks on NGOs has risen to 75 percent higher than this time last year.

Other Developments

Kidnapped Sudanese journalist found dead

(*Reuters/ST* – 6th Sept. **Khrt.**) A Sudanese newspaper editor who was kidnapped by unknown armed men has been found dead, an Interior Ministry source said on Wednesday.

Mohamed Taha was arrested last year and his al-Wifaq paper closed for three months after it published a series of articles questioning the roots of the Prophet Mohammed, which were condemned by Sudan's powerful Islamists.

"His family filed a report saying he was kidnapped last night by unknown armed men," an Interior Ministry official said.

Local papers quoted his family as saying a group of men bundled Taha into a car outside his home in Khartoum north and sped off towards central Khartoum.

Kidnapping of civilians is common in Sudan's war-torn western region Darfur and was a feature in the south during large-scale conflict there, but is very rare in the capital Khartoum.

Taha is an ally of the government, which took power in a military coup in 1989. The government in northern Sudan follows strict Sharia law but has been opposed by some Islamist organisations.

One source in the Islamic community in Khartoum told Reuters that while Taha was in jail last year, he was protected by government soldiers who feared for his life.

Commentaries:

Fleeing from Darfur

Kamal Al-Sadig of *AlAyaam*, chooses the above as his title for today's column.

He refers to the speech of the UN Secretary-General on the reaction towards the government of Sudan decision on the expulsion of the African Union troops from Darfur and in which he wondered what would become of the 3 million people in Darfur who are receiving assistance from the agencies should the African Union leave.

Anan said that was a negative decision and warned the GoS that it will be held responsible over the deterioration of the humanitarian situation in the Darfur region.

This statement, he adds, comes during tension-filled week as some African Union sources reported that the GoS has launched a military offensive against the JEM.

The GoS has charged the Police and the SAF to intervene in the Darfur region, and by this it violates the Abuja talks. He argues that the government has failed to realise secure conditions of life for the citizens in Darfur who themselves distrust the government.

The writer wonders what will be the fate of the Darfur Peace Agreement and the two senior aides to the President of the Republic as the situation unfolds.

Sudan and facing the international community

Columnist Mahjoub Mohamed Saleh says it was no surprise to him or the other participants when a colleague sent him a chit of paper as they were attending a conference for media persons in Bali, informing him that the Security Council has issued a resolution allowing the United Nations to send in peacekeepers to Darfur. Nor was it a surprise that the Sudan government insisted on its rejection to a United Nations force deployment.

The Security Council resolution was voted on with only 3 abstentions and this only shows that there was no rejection in principle to a transition but that the abstainers only thought it worth more consultation. Parallel efforts also began to muster regional support to encourage the Sudan government to change its position and accept a United Nations troop deployment and indications are that the government may reach a compromise solution with the United Nations at one point or the other.

The writer goes on to say that the ball was then thrown to the government court but then the way the government acted only makes the world sympathise more with the international community and support a transition. He criticised the way the government acted with the

African Union, the rebel movements of Darfur and the civil society in Sudan and said this only tends to escalate the situation.

He says that the government has offered to take over the role of the African Union in Darfur but points out that the African Union would not have come to Darfur if there was some level of trust between Darfur and the central government. He says this will also depict the Sudanese government as violating the Darfur Peace Agreement of its own free will especially as it had signed the agreement that grants the African Union the key authority in monitoring the implementation of the agreement.

By giving the African Union an ultimatum, the government also wants to send a signal to the neighbouring states and the region at large that it does not trust them – despite the fact that it is a founder-member of the OAU.

With regards the Sudanese community at large, the recent violence the government employed in stopping the opposition from demonstrating in protest of the rise in fuel price portrays the government as a government in confrontation with the international community, the regional community and even with its citizens instead of winning support from some quarters.

He winds up saying that the government has started its confrontation on a wrong footing.

Government supports opposition

Mohammed Latif of *AlSudani* daily writes in his column today saying that a number of observers believe that the opposition parties have paved the way for the government and have deserted their responsibilities, split into smaller groups and have made thus making the National Congress Party rise in stature above all others.

Today and after several years in powers, it seems that the NCP is now assisting the opposition parties. The writer says that the recent clampdown of the demonstrations in Khartoum only serves to further strengthen the opposition parties and weaken the government's position.

He argues that the government would have gained a lot if it had left the demonstrations to proceed unhindered to the Republican Palace.