

UNITED NATIONS



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UNITED NATIONS ADVANCE MISSION IN THE SUDAN

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Office of the Spokesperson

PRESS BRIEFING

Good afternoon,

- The Joint Implementation Mechanism will hold its next meeting on Friday 17 September. It's the first meeting to be held by the JIM after the submission of the UN Secretary-General to the Security Council in the first week of August. The JIM will focus on the way to move forward with the implementation of the Sudanese government commitments under the Joint Communiqué.
- The Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General, Jan Pronk will visit Addis and Asmara next week, where he will meet with the high officials of the two countries and the African Union. Discussions will focus on the Darfur crisis and the Abuja peace talks as well as the UN/AU cooperation in Darfur.

Abuja talks

- The parties to the Abuja Talks met yesterday with President Obasanjo who called on them to commit to a negotiated peaceful political solution to the Darfur crisis and to act with good faith. He requested the parties to abide by the Ceasefire agreement and urged them to sign the humanitarian protocol which they agreed upon recently. He cautioned against what could be perceived by the international community, which is keen to see a political solution to the Darfur crisis, as a negative message if the parties leave the current round of talks without signing the Protocol that constitutes a positive and constructive step towards a comprehensive peace settlement.

On humanitarian and other issues, and before giving the floor first to my colleague Ms. Jennifer Abrahamson, Spokesperson of OCHA, I would like to state the following:

- UNAMIS has continued lately to receive reports from humanitarian agencies and NGOs citing mainly IDPs, on clashes and violence in different areas in Darfur, particularly North Darfur, which led to a number of casualties. These reports include fighting between the Government forces and SLA outside the areas designated by the Government to be made safe and secure; tribal clashes and militia activities. Reacting to these reports, SRSR Pronk has expressed his concern about the increased tensions and violence and called on all parties to the Abuja Talks to resume negotiations on the remaining key issues on the Agenda, in particular the security cluster. He has stressed that a negotiated political solution was the only sustainable way to settle the Darfur crisis and ensure the safety and security for the people of Darfur.

- In North Darfur, agencies reported that fighting between GoS and SLA forces took place in the Medo area, approximately 30km North of Mellit on 12 September. Six police officers were reportedly killed and an unknown number injured. No information was provided on SLA casualties. Subsequently, the Mellit-Malha road was closed for UN movement although it had just recently been cleared for UN agencies.
- In South Darfur, ICRC on Monday completed registration of some 40,000 new IDPs in Gereida, who have recently fled their villages due to violence. About 5,000 people arrived during the last week alone. Delivery of humanitarian services to the area seems to be going smoothly. ICRC plans to distribute food and other relief to the entire IDP population in the area. ICRC further reports progress on the completion of the water supply to Gereida. Oxfam hopes to complete 1,000 latrines in the next three weeks in addition to the 300 latrines it had already previously installed in the area. WFP reported that registration of new IDPs in Mujujarija area would commence on 22 September to be immediately followed with food distributions by Solidarites.
- In other news in South Darfur, assessments in the region planned to begin later this week will include an interagency visit to SLA/M-held villages in Jebel Marra to assess food security and to conduct a nutritional survey. OCHA and WFP, among other agencies, will participate.
- The assessment team in North Darfur is awaiting clearance to proceed to areas around Tawilla where insecurity had been reported in the past two weeks. At a water and sanitation coordination meeting held in El Fasher on 13 September, agencies agreed that service delivery to the five major IDP camps has improved over recent months, however, agencies agreed that delivery to more remote areas in the state was very limited. Participants cited continuing insecurity and limited coordination and monitoring abilities as the main obstacles. Despite improvements in water and sanitation in major camps, there has been an increase in cases of blood diarrhoea and Hepatitis E in Abu Shouk and Zam Zam camps.
- An interagency medical needs assessment team visited the SLA-held Dar e-salaam area, approximately 85km south of El Fasher, on 10 September. The team found the hospital, which came under the control of the SLA at the end of August, empty and non-functional. The SLA, according to the residents, had looted all the equipment and medical supplies in the hospital which provided health care for 25,000 people

For more information on the above points, or other humanitarian developments throughout Darfur, please contact Jennifer Abrahamson, +249 912 16 7599