



**United Nations Mission In Sudan
UNMIS**

Date: 4 May 2005

Office of the Spokesperson

PRESS BRIEFING

Following is a near-verbatim transcript of today's weekly briefing (12:30PM) by Radhia Achouri, Spokesperson for the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Sudan:

UNSC

-The Security Council will hear a briefing today on UNMIS deployment. Cornel Richard Winchester will brief you on the status of deployment of troops.

-On 12 May, the Secretary-General's report on UN support to the AU mission in Darfur will be presented to the Security Council together with the Secretray-General's report on Darfur for the month of April 2005

SRSG

- SRSG Jan Pronk met yesterday with John Garang, Chairman of the SPLM/A in Nairobi. They discussed the CPA implementation and UNMIS deployment. The SRSG also met yesterday with the Former President of Keya Moi, and they discussed the recent South/South dialogue as well as the follow-up of the dialogue to ensure wider adherence by other parties to the CPA and more inclusiveness of the dialogue.

- The SRSG will undertake a three days visit to Kassala, Juba and Malakal from 5 to 7 May. He will be meeting with the local authorities, the Agencies operating in these areas as well as with NGOs and representatives of the local community. The SRSG will brief his interlocutors on the preparations for the Mission's deployment.

AU/Abuja Talks

-On 28 April, the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC) decided to augment the number of AMIS personnel depolyed in Darfur to 7, 731 by the end of September. Both the SRSG and PDSRSG attended the PSC meeting, and also met with Ethiopian Prime Minister, Meles Zenawi. Efforts to re-start the stalled Abuja process were also stepped-up during the week, with the arrival of an AU delegation in Khartoum. The delegation met with the GoS First Vice-President, Ali Osman Taha, and plan to travel to Asmara to consult the SLM/A and the JEM on the Draft Framework Protocol. Both sides are expected to provide comments on the Protocol before the formal resumption of the talks, now scheduled for late May. A meeting of partners is expected to take place before the resumption of the main process in Abuja to co-ordinate the Chadian, AU, as well as other initiatives to bring peace to Darfur.

CPA related activities:

On 27 April, the GoS DDR Interim Authority commenced 5 day orientation training course on DDR programme for 50 GoS Senior Army Officers. The training course will address the importance and orientation of the DDR programme in Sudan, as well as train some trainers for further information dissemination to large number of the military units of the GoS.

The UN DDR Unit gave an overview of the DDR programme being planned for the Sudan, the expected target groups and need for Government to continue to be fully involved in the process of the development and subsequently in the implementation.

Security

The security situation in Darfur continues to be fluid. In North Darfur banditry activity was prominent with two incidents where commercially hired UN trucks were looted and staff detained. The obstruction of humanitarian activities by SLA is ongoing. In South Darfur armed attacks and banditry activity was prominent. In West Darfur the control of Jebel Moon was fluid after clashes between the Maseria Jebel Tribe and the NMRD. The control of Masterei is also fluid with reports of attacks on police patrols by SLA.

Refugees

UNHCR Director of Operations for Sudan Situation (DOSS), Jean-Marie Fakhouri is currently on a four-day tour of south Sudan which will take him to the towns of Yei, and Kajo Keji and other smaller towns, in Western Equatoria region. During his tour of the region Mr Jean-Marie Fakhouri will be visiting communities that are hosting or will host returning refugees. He will in addition listen to briefings on UNHCR operations in Equatoria, and meet with Emergency Response (ERT) staff to discuss field operations and concerns about land mines in the area.

UNHCR reports that thousands of south Sudanese are fleeing their homes to escape brutal raids on their villages by the Ugandan rebel group, the Lord Resistance Army (LRA). LRA attacks have spread in recent months along the eastern shores of the Nile River from the northern Ugandan town of Adjumani across the border into south Sudan where rebel activity appears to be on the increase in a triangle bounded by Nimule, Juba and Torit.

Health

In West Darfur, WHO reported that they are monitoring meningitis following three confirmed cases in the state (Riyad, Adamata and Abusourug camps). WHO and the Ministry of Health are carrying out a collaborative active case assessment in these camps. The interagency assessment to Um Kedada in North Darfur was completed on 27 April. The team is expected to finalize the report early by next week. Preliminary findings include an acute shortage of water especially in the SLA controlled areas. General recommendations include interventions on water, food aid, seeds/tools, shelter/NFIs, market interventions and protection. For further details, we have for you the weekly report of WHO.

General/ Update from UNICEF

- The pre-testing of health and peace-building messages for IDPs in Khartoum state who may return to the south will begin on Wednesday, 4 May. UNICEF, IOM and the Information Network Committees supported by IOM in the four official IDP camps will pre-test message sheets on guinea worm, re-building communities and

HIV/AIDS. Once completed, these and other information sheets will be disseminated by NGOs and other groups working in the areas to IDPs to help them make informed decisions about returning to the south.

- SNAP (the National AIDS Programme), the Ministry of Higher Education, and UNICEF finalized on Tuesday plans to orient 70,000 young men who will participate in this year's National Service Training on HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention. The short daily sessions include HIV/AIDS globally and in Sudan, Sexually Transmitted Infections, and communication skills training to help the trainees encourage their peers to adopt safer lifestyles.

Spokesperson

Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen. For those of us who are from Sudan, happy *Sham el-Naseem* holidays and welcome back. I am happy to see you again here.

I am going to start but before starting the gentleman that is sitting next to me is going to provide you with an update on the military side of our activities and deployment. He is Colonel Richard Winchester and is with us here in Khartoum, the main headquarters for UNMIS altogether and also for the military activities. I will give him the floor once I am finished with my briefing to you.

Colonel Winchester, welcome amongst us and I hope to see you and to see our military people coming as often as possible to keep the media abreast with the developments on the military part.

Col. Winchester

Good afternoon everybody, *salaam alaikum*. This about exhausts my Arabic so I am going to proceed in English.

What I aim to do is just to give you an update of deployment of UNMIS into Sudan. You will all be aware that we've began our deployment with the arrival of the Nepalese in el-Obeid. The initial contingent of 24 has now moved to their base which is in Kassala. They will be followed very shortly by their main body of troops which is 201 infantry who will be arriving on the 12th of May. In addition to that, on the 13th of May, 4 military observers will also deploy into Kassala and that will make up approximately 80% of the total number of troops going into Kassala. And they will begin their monitoring and verification tasks immediately they have settled down and built their camp.

We move on to the other sectors. First of all in Juba, which we call Sector I, the first people to arrive down there will be the Bangladesh Engineer Platoon of 75-strong. And they will begin arriving in about a week's time between the 12th and 16th of May. Those 75 engineers are supporting troops who will prepare the camp for the remainder of the contingent who will be based in Juba. Also on the 13th of May we will deploy 13 to 20 military observers again, to begin monitoring and verification of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement.

If we move on then to Sector III which is Malakal, towards the end of the month, 25th of May, the Indian contingent will begin to arrive and again it will be an engineer contingent of 75 men. They will, again, begin to prepare the camp for the arrival of the rest of the Indian contingent. They will also be joined by ten military observers to begin monitoring and verification tasks.

In the Nuba Mountains, in Kadugli, you will be aware that the JMC is currently running their peace support operation there which is under operational control of UNMIS. We will deploy the first troops into there which will be five military observers who will arrive, again, on about 15th of May. So those five international military observers will arrive in Kadugli and they will begin the process of handing over from the JMC to the UNMIS contingent.

Apart from those four sectors, you will be aware that we already have a presence in Khartoum and that is where the main headquarters will be. We have approximately 45 staff officers currently deployed in Khartoum and they are co-located here with the political headquarters of UNMIS and, of course, the humanitarian headquarters. The reason why they are in Khartoum is, quite obviously, because that is where the seat of government is; that is where the interaction with the Government of Sudan and the SPLM will take place.

Eventually in Khartoum there will be approximately 150 military staff officers and a contingent of 200 Italians for protection purposes.

Apart from those deployments, that is all we can give you at the moment without complicating the matter further but I can promise you that each week we will give you a full update of the progress in the deployment and where all these troops are going to be deployed. We will also, in the next couple of weeks, give you a handout which will make it rather simpler if you have a handout of where all our sectors are and where the troops are going. I appreciate that that will be a lot simpler for all of you to follow what I am saying.

That is about all I have for you. Thank you.

Spokesperson

Thank you very much.

I know that your time is very precious so I would invite the colleagues from the media if they have questions on military issues, they should start asking those questions so you can answer them then we can proceed with other issues. So if you don't mind, we will be taking first any question relating to the military activities so the colonel could proceed with these activities.

Q: The first troops to arrive in the south will be

Col. Winchester

Will be approximately between the 12th and the 16th

Q: Into Juba?

Col. Winchester

Yes, into Juba.

Q: SPLM spokesperson Samson Kwaje told the Sudan Vision that if the militias try to be big-headed, i.e. if they would try to cause problems, the UN troops are mandated to attack to stop such kind of inconveniences. Is that true?

Col. Winchester

Our mandate related to that issue is freedom of movement. We are deploying some Force Protection. Some 4,000 of that 10,000 troops are related to Force Protection. We are mandated to protect freedom of movement for humanitarian and the other UN activities. We will therefore protect our UN personnel and humanitarian personnel in cooperation with the GoS and the SPLM. However, we are not mandated to go out and attack SPLM. We are mandated to protect and defend UN personnel and humanitarian personnel. However, if militias do interfere, then we have the mandate to defend ourselves against that attack.

Q: What if they try to cause problems? Because they are saying that they are not going to disband.

Col. Winchester

With disbandment, we are concerned at the moment with the DDR, concerned with the whole country obviously but mainly, initially with the GoS and the SPLM. The other armed groups, the militias are another problem. We are not mandated to disarm them but we will, as I said, protect freedom of movement for our activities while we are doing the other disarmament and demobilization.

Spokesperson

Actually, on the same issue, I answered this question before. DDR programs are mainly the responsibility of the parties that are signatories of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. United Nations role, including the military component, is to assist in the implementation of the program.

All DDR programs are not mandatory. They are of a voluntary nature. That is the idea and that is the responsibility of the two parties to promote this program within the country, within the whole population and the militia that you are talking about eventually will have to make one of the three choices: either join the SPLA army or the government army or demobilize, and they have to do that on a voluntary basis. The primary responsibility rests in the hands of the two parties to proceed with these aspects.

On the issue of our mandate, we are not mandated to enforce the DDR program or any of these activities as Colonel reiterated, our mandate in terms of possible use of force is limited to three areas: the self-defense position – basically defending United

Nations personnel and premises, defending the freedom of movement of humanitarian workers and the humanitarian routes that they take and, thirdly, defend civilian populations under imminent threat without prejudice to the responsibility of the government – whichever government it is. We are talking of the government of South Sudan or whatever authority is ruling over the area where we deploy.

These are our limitations. We do not have a mandate of enforcing peace. That is how our mandate is established.

Q: Ms. Radhia has stated that there were LRA attacks. How does the UN intend to deal with such attacks?

Col. Winchester

The way we deal with the LRA is related to the last question. The LRA do pose a threat to the south, obviously. That threat is recognized by the GoS, the SPLM and the United Nations. They will not be allowed to interfere with the work that UNMIS is going to execute in the UNMIS mandate. If they do, then again, we are mandated to enforce the three issues of self-defense, the civilians under imminent threat and the freedom of movement and we will do so if confronted by the LRA.

However, the LRA is not directly part of our mandate, only if they interfere with our operations. We will hopefully coordinate our activities with the GoS because the LRA is a threat to the future of the south and not only to UNMIS and we all recognize that and we hope to coordinate with the GoS on that issue.

Spokesperson

I will add to this only one element: by the mere fact of our deployment there and by being visible in these areas, we are hoping to achieve a kind of a deterrent result on the LRA so they will not be active in the areas where we will be deployed. Hopefully, it will work out that way but if not, you have the response from the Colonel.

Q: The Colonel talked about the protection of United Nations personnel. What will be your position on the protection of the civilian population?

Col. Winchester

The third element that we've been discussing under our mandate is protection of civilian personnel. However, there is caveat there which says 'under imminent threat'. If they are under imminent threat then we must intervene. And also without prejudice to the ruling authorities or, the exact wording is, 'if there is no other protection available'. In other words, if the GoS is unable to protect those civilian personnel and there is no other protection available, we will intervene, obviously, as quickly as possible.

As I said, the key message is, 'under imminent threat'. We will not go out into the area and directly provide protection for civilian personnel unless they are under imminent threat. The main objective is to assist the GoS and the SPLM in the

implementation of the CPA. If, on doing that, we come under persons under imminent threat and there is no other protection available, we will intervene.

Q: Is the deployment of the forces going according to the timetable of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement?

Col. Winchester

In the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, everything is slightly behind schedule. Everyone understands that there was an intention that as soon as after the ninth of January, everything will fall into place very quickly. That hasn't happened on both sides. The Government of National Unity will, I understand, will be formed soon. We expected it to be formed sooner. All the mechanism for implementing the CPA are not in place.

This Sunday, one of the most important ones which is the Ceasefire Joint Military Committee which will take place in Juba Hotel, Juba, on Sunday the 8th. That is one of the key military committees and that was mandated to take place on M + 45 – which is from the Mandate day which is March 24th until 8th of May – so we are hitting that target.

Back to your main point on the deployment of the troops, we are slightly behind schedule. That is due to a number of factors, the delay in the mandate being signed. And we are going as fast as possible, because of that delay, to bring forward the timetable of the troops.

However, we all recognize that Sudan is an enormous country and, specifically where we are going to, has very little infrastructure and therefore you have to prepare the grounds before you deploy the troops.

Having said that, we are not hoping to deploy to luxury hotels in the south. We are actually going as fast and as soon as possible commencing with getting some basic needs. The aim of the deployment though is not to become a burden on the local infrastructure. It is vital that we don't do that. Which is why we have to be very careful with the numbers and the speed and the location of where we deploy.

Spokesperson

Any other questions on military issues?

If there are none, then Colonel thank you very much for valuable insights and I thank you for what you promised in terms of first having updates through providing handouts in a written kind of format so everybody will know exactly what we are talking about and, hopefully, we will put it in the wording that will be accessible to civilian people.

Thank you very much and hopefully we will see you with us as often as your duties permit. Thank you.

Now I am all yours.

Q: Concerning the proposal proposed by the United Nations Secretary-General that a UN force be included in the AU troops .

Spokesperson

There is no such a proposal from the Secretary-General actually.

Q: He did propose something about the AU and the UN combining in Darfur.

Spokesperson

Definitely not. There is no such a proposal. I understand that you are referring to a report that some media wrote about and that is the report that the Security Council is going to be considering on the twelfth of this month and that report has been requested by the Security Council by virtue of paragraph 5 of Resolution 1590. And actually the paragraph requested the following:

They requested the Secretary-General to report to the Security Council within 30 days of options on how the UNMIS can reinforce the efforts to foster peace in Darfur through appropriate assistance to the AMIS including logistic support and technical assistance and to identify ways in liaison with the African Union to utilize UNMIS' resources particularly logistical and operations support elements, as well as reserve capacities towards this end.

So, what you are talking about, from the United Nations perspective, and you will see the report when it is out because unfortunately it is not out yet, it is not available yet – the report that you are talking about – the report is based on the report of the AU-led assessment mission to Darfur which actually had, as a result of the decision by the Peace & Security Council of the AU, to increase the number of its personnel in Darfur. So we are not talking at all about the United Nations employing personnel together with the African Union personnel in Darfur.

The only thing we are talking about when it comes to personnel would be from UNMIS lending to the African Union a couple of experts in certain areas to help, for instance, planning their deployment – logistical planning and so on. But nobody will be deployed from the United Nations into Darfur. Why? Because the understanding between the international community plus there is a legal agreement between the African Union and the GoS to have the African Union deploying troops but nobody else. The operation of the African Union so far was based on the consent of the parties. So the United Nations is not ...

Q: Why did UNMIS chose this particular time to provide this appropriate assistance?

Spokesperson

We have been always providing this assistance since the African Union has been having its mission here till today. United Nations as a whole but also the UNMIS within our capabilities. But now that UNMIS is growing as a bigger mission, so we have more capabilities in Khartoum or in Sudan. So instead of getting our experts coming from say New York to assist the African Union, now we have them on the

ground and why do we have to spend money on tickets for travel bringing experts from abroad when we have the capacity in-house – in the same country where we are deployed. There is nothing behind it except that for a very realistic reason, now we are on the ground in sufficient numbers, we have sufficient experts who can give a hand to the African Union. And that is why we are doing it.

As for why we are supporting the African Union to this extent, you would remember that there have been many talks and commands and appeals from different quarters to the extent that the African Union should be strengthened further in terms of numbers and also its mandate should be kind of focused on the priorities to handle the situation in Darfur. So, well, it is just that the debate has culminated and reached its conclusion and now every effort is being kind of complimentary to the other and we are in a joint endeavor.

Q: Do you have any information relating to the Sudanese Red Crescent employees who were attacked recently?

Spokesperson

Actually, the information that we have is exactly the one that has been reported in the media. However, for the time being, we are trying to get a clearer picture on the issue and you will be hearing from us in a public statement on the issue. We are just trying to get our facts right before going on and expect something from us either by the end of this day or tomorrow morning at the latest.

Q: Could you give us more details on the latest clashes involving the Misseriya tribe.

Spokesperson

I do not have details at the moment on this specific issue but I can get back to you later on once we gather information on the issue. But due to the sensitivity of the issue, give us some time and we will come back to you with the details if we do get them.

Q: There was talk lately about new regulations for the humanitarian organizations working in Darfur. Can you tell us what is the situation now? Have these measures been implemented.

Spokesperson

Actually, I think you should ask the authorities themselves who issued this new regulation. As far as I am concerned, when we heard about it, we got in touch with the authorities trying to get more clarity on what is the purpose of all of that because the major principle of our work – it is not only a principle but is embodied in our agreements with the authorities in Sudan – would be to grant freedom of movement, unhindered access and also they have a commitment to facilitate the work of the humanitarian community in general.

We are following the situation very carefully because we do not want to face a situation whereby bureaucratic considerations would be adding to the already difficult environment we are operating in.

So far, our operations are going, I would say, fine. Our major problem still remains the security situation relating particularly to banditry issues but as far as bureaucratic issues are concerned, they are not really a major issue but it is an issue of principle. It is not something that really will affect us in a big way in terms of operations but it is an issue of principles for us and we would try to avoid any situation whereby we will be adding layers that would lead eventually to slowing down the operations of the humanitarian community.

Q: In your previous briefings there were reports about harassment of humanitarian workers in Darfur. Now you don't speak of these. Have these stopped or not?

Spokesperson

No, it didn't stop for sure. But it still is the case in many parts of Darfur depending on the area where we are operating. But I would say that we are experiencing this kind of harassment from not necessarily high-level officials and we have been voicing our concern to the central government and also to the local governments of the states. In many cases, actually, we found out that it was just the initiative of one person who did not understand the way we work or the agreements that we have or just because they did not feel like it, because they were not in the mood or whatever.

We could resolve many of these issues however harassment remains one of our big concerns in the Darfurs.

Q: According to your knowledge, did the Secretary-General present any report on Resolution 1591.

Spokesperson

No, not yet. There is nothing yet there.

I have been asked this question actually particularly on the panel of four by the many journalists. My information on this is the following: there are contacts taking place for the time being with member-states to identify these four experts. They are looking for information so there is no nomination as yet. So the Secretary-General does not have as yet the four names to propose to the Security Council.

Two; as for the actual preparation for the panel, we as United Nations, are in the process – not UNMIS but United Nations Headquarters – sent somebody to Addis (because these people are going to sit in Addis) to prepare the logistical aspects, their offices and where they are going to be sitting and so on and so forth. We will be coming back to you whenever we have the information but there is nothing as yet.

Q: We heard two days ago that the list of 51 names has a 52nd name added. And that 52nd person is a Nassir el-Tijani. According to resolution 1591, adding names to this

list of suspects falls within the jurisdiction of the panel of four experts but you have now added a 52nd name to the list. Isn't this a contradiction?

Spokesperson

No there is no contradiction. First of all this 52nd name has not been given to the Security Committee which was established by virtue of Resolution 1591. This name was mentioned in a press release and has been brought before the attention of the Chief Prosecutor of the ICC which has the jurisdiction also based on Resolution 1591. The name of this person has not been brought up in order that he face a travel ban or asset freeze but in order that he be added, and this issue is left of course to the discretion of the Chief Prosecutor. We and the African Union, following reports from the African Union, have been brought to believe that there is much suspicion that he was involved in the incidents of Khor Abeche. Consequently, and in light of what happened in Khor Abeche, the issue is considered as under the jurisdiction of the ICC. This name was thus mentioned and the press release I mentioned stated that the name will be forwarded to the Chief Prosecutor of the ICC. This issue therefore has no connection whatsoever with Resolution 1591 which talks of a travel ban, an assets freeze and arms embargo but this issue has nothing to do with that.

You also are aware that Resolution 1593 states that there are a number of parties which may propose names of suspects or information to the Chief Prosecutor of the ICC on issues that fall within its jurisdiction. The United Nations is one of those parties that may be a source for such information. The African Union too is one of these sources and is indeed the source for this particular information.

Q: What were the procedures followed?

Spokesperson

As for the procedures, the GoS had known through the press release I mentioned that we will be handing this name to the Chief Prosecutor of the ICC. Jan Pronk also held talks on the issue with Sudanese government officials and we had explained to the GoS why we took these steps which, in fact, has nothing to do with the Sudanese government because the person named is not an Armed Forces member and has no official link tying him with the government. We explained the issue to the government and this is where the issue ended.

Q: What is it that happened?

Spokesperson

If you want, we will hand to you copies of the joint press release of Mr. Kingibe, the African Union Special Representative to Sudan and SRSG Pronk. The press release expressed the joint African Union-United Nations reaction to the Khor Abeche incident which saw an attack by militias on the village resulting to major damages and to the killing of a number of people. This is what happened in Khor Abeche. The suspect named is the leader of the force that executed and organized the attack.

Q: Just some brief clarification. You mentioned that the suspect has no official status. But how can the Sudan government not be responsible for him? He is still a citizen of the Sudan.

Spokesperson

Yes, you are absolutely right he is still a Sudanese citizen. However, he committed an action that falls under the competence of the ICC that was decided by the Security Council to be the body that would eventually prosecute these people for the crimes if the judicial system in Sudan does not take appropriate action.

Q: But the government can prosecute him?

Spokesperson

Definitely. If the government wishes to do and they are aware of the name of the person, definitely they could do so and proceed so and then the ICC might not consider the case altogether.

Q: We did notice in the past few days determined speeches by the President of the Republic and the Minister of Foreign Affairs that the Sudanese suspects will not be handed over to a foreign court. How does the United Nations see this position of the GoS?

How determined is the Security Council to continue pushing for a foreign trial?

What if the Sudanese government refuses to hand over these suspects? What dimensions can this problem take?

Spokesperson

I will start with an answer to your last question. We do not like questions that start with “if” because it is very difficult to foresee what will happen and we prefer to answer on issues that can be seen and felt.

Secondly; you have been following and we have followed the debate in Sudanese official and popular circles. What is noteworthy in the government position, you can correct me if I am wrong, in none of the statements issued by the GoS has the GoS declared it will not cooperate on the implementation of Resolution 1593. And this is a very important issue.

That the Sudan as a government, or even a people, should reject handing over any Sudanese national to a foreign trial and in the hands of a non-Sudanese authority is an issue that we do understand to a large extent. But the issue requires some study and, in our view, the government’s reaction was, to a large extent, a constructive reaction which we believe will lead to a constructive position which will put to rest the issue. What I refer to is the initiative by the GoS to issue committees to study these resolutions before taking a final official position. To the best of my knowledge, deliberations on this issue still continue and we expect the GoS to adopt wise and appropriate decisions that would be to the best interests of these people and this state.

This is our position and the coming days may prove the optimism we have expressed as the United Nations on this issue.

Q: What happens should the GoS cooperate?

Spokesperson

This scenario could not be ruled out at all. Assuming that the GoS cooperates, in the list of suspects are some people whom the GoS can hand over with ease. It may not be the case with others especially when it comes to militias and elements that may not easily be reached. But, most important, and regrettably so, is that the argument has now focused on the arrest of specific people. The primary aim behind the resolution itself is not merely to arrest people just for the sake of arresting these people. The issue has a lot more to it than just that. The issue comes as part of comprehensive effort to assure the victims first of all and to be a deterrent to any other person who may have the interest to or intentions to continue such practices. What is important is that these proceedings start and we have noticed that the Sudan has set it on its shoulders and is moving towards starting internal proceedings. These will build confidence in the community, the Darfuri community at least, which has suffered much. It will also eventually serve the process of reconciliation and development in general.

This is the general philosophy. We do not of course rule out that in some incidents the Yugoslavia or the Rwanda scenarios may be revisited but this issue is not a priority. What is important is that the victims feel that there is justice, that no criminal will escape punishment and that those who commit or those who may think of committing such crimes should feel that there is a deterrent. This is the priority that is oriented towards serving a wider understanding of the concepts of peace.

What I said is that there is no official position on the issue. The official position in Sudan has not issued any clear rejection to cooperate with the United Nations. What has been said is that Sudanese citizens will not be handed over to a foreign party for trial. This is what has been issued and does not mean that there will be no cooperation in one way or another.

Of the very positive signals that I mentioned is that the Sudanese government has formed a committee to discuss the resolution itself. This, in our view, is a very constructive orientation because the GoS, the government and the Parliament, will discuss this resolution in order to chart a practical way of dealing with the issue.

This is what I said. It does not mean that there is completely no official GoS position. There is one but this position does not include a practical rejection to cooperate. And if you have heard something that I have not then feel free to correct me. But all the information we have, be it from our direct talks with the GoS or through the statements issued to the public, have not issued any signal that the government totally rejects cooperation with the United Nations on this issue.

The second proof that the GoS has taken a position which, to a large extent, heralds good tidings, is that the GoS has taken it up to itself to initiate arrests and trials and so on. We consider this as very positive signals.

Anybody else has a question?

If you don't, then I will be happy to see you next week and thank you very much.

—*End*—