

**The United Nations Mission In Sudan****Date: 1 December 2005****Office of the Spokesperson****PRESS BRIEFING**

Good afternoon ladies and Gentlemen,

UN Secretary-General

In a statement issued the day of the opening of the 7th round of Abuja Talks, the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, welcomed the commencement of the talks and urged the parties to immediately stop all violence and atrocities on the ground. He called on the parties to negotiate a just and comprehensive peace agreement, indicating that individual leaders will be judged on their immediate action to stop the bloodshed in Darfur. He urged all the parties to the conflict and all other armed groups in Darfur to cooperate fully with the African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS) and with the UN Mission in Sudan (UNMIS). The full text of the statements is available in the shelf as well as on the UN website: www.un.org

SRSG

-SRSG Jan Pronk attended the opening of the Abuja Talks on 29 November 2005. In his address, the SRSG stressed the need for the round of talks to be the final and decisive one. He highlighted the progress achieved in the current year as compared to 2004 in terms of the humanitarian situation, ceasefire violations and progress on substance of the talks. He also highlighted the setbacks that the current year has witnessed on the humanitarian, security and political fronts. He urged the parties to reach agreement on a governance structure in Darfur which has the confidence of all Darfurians and which will provide the people with the required framework to settle other disputes that would arise after a peace agreement is signed. He also urged that all parties should guarantee that once they reach agreement on security arrangement, no other parties, group or faction would be in position to claim that they are not bound by such an agreement either because they did not sign it themselves or because they do not feel represented by those who did sign. The full text of the SRSG speech is available. The Secretary-General's press statement on the 7th round of Abuja talks is also available

-During his visit to Abuja, SRSG Jan Pronk met with Dr. Salim Ahmed Salim and discussed preparations for the 7th round of talks. He met also with the international partners who attend the talks as observers. These meetings aimed at coordinating the efforts of the international community' actors –AU, UN, and other international partners, including the League of Arab States, Chad, Libya and the European Union, the US, Norway and other individual donor countries- in order to scale up pressure on the parties, particularly the SLM/A, to engage in substantive talks in order for this round of talks to be decisive and final.

The SRSG met also prior to the opening of the talks, on 28 November, with Abdulwahid Nur, from the SLM/A. His message to him was the one he delivered a week ago to Minni Minawi:

the UN and the international community will not get involved in the movement's internal affairs about its leadership; the UN is only interested in having a signature from the SLM that will be effective on the ground; all SLM/A leaders should focus on substance rather than procedural issues; all SLM leaders should uphold the commitment they made in the N'Djamena meeting of last week to work together in the framework of a common position on substantive issues.

The SRSG met also with the representative of the Justice and Equality Movement, Mr. Ahmad Lissan Agol, and urged that the movements to coordinate their positions during the negotiations, as agreed in the last N'Djamena meeting and to focus on the substance of the issues on the agenda.

-The SRSG left last night to Geneva to take part in the launch of the 2006 UN Work Plan for Sudan that will take place, tomorrow, Friday, 2 December. The plan – which includes recovery and development needs, as well as humanitarian – lays out programming for Sudan in 2006.

We will organize a press briefing upon the return of the SRSG on the Work Plan, to be held possibly by Mr. Pronk. I encourage you all to attend. It will be an opportunity to ask the detailed questions on the priorities and plans for humanitarian assistance, recovery and development. You will get an announcement from my colleague at OCHA, Dawn Blalock, once the date is set.

MILITARY UPDATE

Strength

Deployment of Military Observers and Protection Force Elements is in progress and as of now, the total strength is of 4002 troops, including 362 Military Observers.

Activities

UN Trucks Movement on Juba – Yei Road. The First batch of Bangladeshi Contingent Owned Equipment arrived in Juba on 26 Nov 05 via Juba – Yei Rd. It was a land mark trip, in which no untoward incident happened and convoy of six vehicles reached Juba safe and sound. UN troops provided protection en-route.

CJMC Meeting. The 14th CJMC meeting was held on 29 Nov 05 in Juba, which was chaired by the Force Commander, Maj Gen Fazle Elahi Akbar. The following are the major decisions of the meeting:

- Night movements by military aircraft into and out of the area covered by the Ceasefire Zone will only be permitted if 7 days notification is given to the Sector HQs, who will task monitors to oversee the movement of all military flights at Point of Embarkation and Point of Disembarkation.
- UNMOs will remain present at all major airports in Southern Sudan 24/7 and be permitted full access to airport facilities/buildings during the working day/hours of the Civil Aviation Authority; thereafter the UNMOs will remain in the vicinity of the airport and will report any unauthorized/uninformed landings as a violation.

- The CJMC agreed to refer the interpretation of the United Nations Sector 5 Boundary to the CPC. Confusion has arisen due to the definition of the area within the Ceasefire Zone as defined in Chapters V and VI of the CPA.

The Parties agreed that local commanders can exercise their own discretion in dealing with deserters who have moved between the Parties over the period 9 Jan 05 to 15 Nov 05. After this date the CJMC 13/05 Decision on deserters shall be implemented in full, with a recruitment violation awarded to the Party that accepts the deserter.

During the meeting, the CJMC Chairman, representing the United Nations, informed the SPLA that it was necessary to award a CPA violation against the SPLA due to their failure to withdraw 70% of their forces from Eastern Sudan Area by D+8 months (CJMC Violation 1/05).

The SAF has stated that it does not have any child soldiers within their rank and file, but UNMIS reserves the right to conduct unhindered inspection and verification of all areas within the Ceasefire Zone, as per the CPA

Darfur

The pattern of insecurity in Darfur remains extremely complex throughout the region. Intertribal tensions are running high in both West and South Darfur and ambushes on UN, INGO and commercial humanitarian convoys continue unabated. All roads leading outside Geneina remain UN no-go for more than a month.

The roads are still no go for the UN given the incidents that took place yesterday, the attack on the Police station in Sirba and the ambush of an AU convoy near Kulbus.

The worrisome trend of deliberate destruction of farmland and crops continues to cast a shadow over the optimistic agricultural output expected for this season. Re-displacements of large groups of civilians to IDP settlements or to the outskirts of towns continue throughout Darfur. Up to 15,000 people have arrived in Gereida following the mid-November fighting west of the town.

Now turning back to the update that we circulated to you in a separately, there are several things that I would like to highlight to you. The Darfur Humanitarian Profile covering the situation as it prevailed in the month of September 2005 has been issued and we have a summary for you. If you want to full access to the whole document, the website page is indicated and accessible to you.

On refugees' return, there are some developments there but I would like to highlight for you particular issues related to south-south movement and that has to do with reports on quite a significant movement of cattle in the Bor region and there is a press release issued by the FAO, issuing an alert and drawing attention to the impact of late coordinated movements of livestock – we are talking of approximately 250 thousand heads of cattle to be moved around. There is a press release so please look it up and take it with you on your way out.

On Khartoum squatter camps and IDPs, we have some developments there. It is in the Humanitarian Update and the update is about between the UN and the authorities in

Khartoum on re-planning relocations and criteria to be adopted based on standards recognized internationally.

You have also an update on yellow fever and I am going to just cite to you some of its highlights which is that as of to date, which is the 1st of December, the total cases reported reached 556 cases including 142 yellow fever related deaths. We have other details in the update and we have a couple of other issues on health such as the measles campaign in southern Sudan.

We have also some updates on what we are doing for the two international days; i.e. one the World Aids Day that is today – and, by the way, I would like to inform you that there is an event taking place right now at the Friendship Hall and it started, to my knowledge, at 10 in the morning. We are taking part in that event. From UNMIS' side, the Principal Deputy Special Representative Mr. Taye Zerihoun is going to be addressing that gathering today on behalf of Mr. Jan Pronk. We have available for you on that event two document. One is a press release issued by UNICEF and the other is an Open Letter to the Editor by Jan Pronk on AIDS Day that was sent, to my understanding, to some newspapers in its English version and we will be copying you the Arabic version as soon as the translation is finalized.

The other event that we are celebrating is the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women and in the brief that we have for you, we have quite substantial information about what is being done within the campaign that will last 16 days to commemorate this event. There are many activities taking place including by UNMIS and also by other agencies so please bear that in mind. Quite a wealth of detail is available on this particular issue in this separate humanitarian update.

I am done and if you have any question for me, please go ahead.

Q & A

Q: Last week some news agencies reported that UNMIS has circulated questionnaires in all areas of Darfur in order to differential who is an indigenous Sudanese and who is not. Why is this being done? Why does UNMIS want to do this? Are preparing for a referendum?

Spokesperson: I do not know how to answer such a question because every single day something crops up and is put on the shoulders of UNMIS – UNMIS said this; UNMIS did that; UNMIS intends to do this. I do not know the sources of your information.

Dear Sir, UNMIS does not intend and has no plans or intentions to carry out a census of the people of Darfur. All that we re doing there – and I am speaking of the UN and not UNMIS – is that as for the delivery of assistance to the camps, the WFP carries out registration of the people in these camps only for the sake of knowing their numbers and this is only to organize the flow of humanitarian assistance. I do not know from where people come with such news about UNMIS. The only source of information on UNMIS, and I repeat, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, his deputies here or the colleagues from the UN agencies operating in the Sudan who have the mandate to address the press on particular issues and the official Spokesperson. I hope we will get the cooperation of our brothers and sisters in the Sudanese press when they hear such distortions. I also hope that all will take into consideration all that we said since starting operations here on our mandate and our role. If you go back to these issues, you will find that carrying out a census of the population in

Darfur is not part of our mandate at the current moment and we do not intend to carry out a referendum in Darfur.

Q: I understand discussions have taken place concerning the possibilities of the UN taking over the AU mandate next year. Could you give us some more details about this?

In southern Sudan there were lots of reports of Antonovs flying overhead over LRA areas. Is this something that the UN is also part of or what do you think it is?

Spokesperson: I am not aware of details of such discussion but, however, I will keep my answer generic. There have been from our side discussions to prepare for a post-peace agreement in Darfur and we told you about it and that that was in the framework of the meeting of the Special Envoys to prepare for that stage. I am not aware of discussions that focused on this particular scenario that you evoked, i.e. the UN taking over. And I would add to it that assuming that such a possibility exists, the UN would not take over the AU mandate unless there is a decision firstly from the AU saying that they will no longer continue their mission in Darfur, which to our knowledge hasn't happen. Such a decision has to be taken by the Peace and Security Council of the AU and that hasn't happen. Two; there were many scenarios put forward sometime ago about how best the situation in Darfur can be addressed in terms of strength of the mandate and also the troops. There have been many scenarios proposed at the time including to the Secretary-General. The consensus has been that AMIS should continue its operation in Darfur. So far, there has been no decision to move ahead and change the current arrangement whereby the AU is in charge of the situation on the ground and the political file as well. So far there is nothing. Maybe there are talks here and there but I don't know of any talks taking place and in which the UN is participating to prepare for such a scenario. I hope that you understand what I said.

On the Antonov flights over southern Sudan, we are aware of activities in southern Sudan in relation to LRA activities. We are aware of the fact, and I read that mainly in the news, that the Ugandan government armed forces were allowed to chase the LRA in Sudanese territory. I don't know which aircraft were flying be it Ugandan or Sudanese. However, the UNMIS military and political components are following all movements and all actions being undertaken as far as LRA is concerned. So I will check with my military colleagues in particular to see if they are monitoring the aircrafts or not.

Q: Do you think that it is possible there are elements within the Sudanese military supporting the LRA?

Spokesperson: I would not speculate. We don't have a tangible proof to assert such a thing. This question has been asked to us before. Yes, we are aware of speculations all over the place but we, as UN, do not have any solid proof linking the LRA to any particular group in Sudan – be it Sudan Armed Forces or somebody else. We don't have a tangible proof.

Q: You talked about the humanitarian appeal being made ...

Spokesperson: Are you talking about the overall appeal made by the UN recently?

Q: Yes, I am talking about how much is the appeal.

Spokesperson: By the way, I printed out for you what the Secretary-General said on that appeal and I think it contains some figures so please look it up as well – we have some documentation on the overall appeal by the UN. But Dawn will answer your specific question.

Dawn Blalock (UNOCHA): The global appeal for the entire world is 4.7 billion dollars. Of that, Sudan is 1.5 billion dollars. So almost a third is for Sudan's humanitarian needs. That was launched yesterday by the Secretary-General.

What is happening tomorrow is that the SRSG and the Humanitarian Coordinator are launching in Geneva the entire Work Plan for Sudan which includes the humanitarian element which is 1.5 billion, and the first additional recovery and development. So that will be done tomorrow. What we can tell you is that Sudan is the largest humanitarian appeal in the world right now. Only DRC comes close with 1.2 billion dollars in needs.

The Work Plan was prepared in broad consultation with the government, NGOs and the SPLM. The whole process took about four months. Inter-sectoral, we are looking at water, food security aid and also a regional part so that certain regions, the east and the transitional areas, where there may not be a large presence of NGOs and the UN were not neglected.

The humanitarian segment of that appeal will cover about 5.5 million people including 2.5 million in Darfur. It focuses on immediate life-saving needs, protection needs and assistance to more than 680,000 potential returnees next year as well as communities they are returning to.

So that is pretty much a summary of it.

Spokesperson: If there are no other questions, thank you very much and we will see you again next week. I will keep you informed whether we are going to be holding a press conference that will focus on the Work Plan or if we are going to hold also the regular press briefing.

Thank you very much and have a nice weekend.