

**The United Nations Mission In Sudan****Date: 14 December 2005****Office of the Spokesperson****PRESS BRIEFING**

Good afternoon ladies and Gentlemen,

SECURITY COUNCIL ON DARFUR

The Prosecutor for the International Criminal Court (ICC), Luis Moreno Ocampo, gave the Security Council an update on the Court's investigation into the situation in Darfur, Sudan. And the Secretary-General attended that briefing. The full text of his briefing is available as well the report he presented to the Security Council.

SECRETARY-GENERAL ON DARFUR

Speaking to reporters after attending the briefing, the Secretary-General noted that the Prosecutor had stressed the point that those who committed crimes in the Sudan must be brought to account. He also said it was a hopeful sign that the Prosecutor has come this far in his work, and added that Mr. Ocampo would expect the Security Council to stay closely engaged and give him the support he needs. He would also need the support of the African Union.

In response to questions, the Secretary-General drew attention to the ongoing "very serious problems in Darfur", and the need for the Government and rebels to honour the cease-fire agreement they signed. He stressed the vital importance for them to press ahead in Abuja and to get a political agreement on Darfur, which could ensure longer-term stability.

The full text of what the SG said in his encounter with the press is available in the room.

SRSG AND SENIOR LEADERSHIP ACTIVITIES

- As we informed you before, SRSG Jan Pronk left to Abuja on 11 December in a bid to support the Abuja talks. He had to interrupt his visit because of another urgent commitment. Based on discussions he had in Abuja with the AU team and partners, the SRSG's impression on the way the talks are proceeding is the following and I quote "*the talks are proceeding reasonably well: some progress has been achieved on power-sharing issue; the talks on wealth-sharing started in good atmosphere; the various elements forming the SLM/A are working together pragmatically during the talks; the Government's delegation is negotiating constructively and the participation of the SPLM in the Government's delegation has been helpful. I do expect and I hope that talks on security issues start soon. I believe it is still possible to have a framework agreement by the end of the current year*".

- PDSRSG Tayé Zerihoun was in Juba for a two-day visit, the 12th and the 13th of December. This visit is part of regular visits conducted by UNMIS senior leadership to areas of UN deployment and operations as well as regular contacts with GoSS officials. During his visit, the PDSRSG met with Dr. Riek Machar , Vice-President of the Government of Southern Sudan and other GoSS Ministers : Nhial Deng Nhial the Minister of Regional Cooperation; John Luk, Minister of Culture, Youth and Sport; Daniel Awet Akot, Minister of Police and Security Affairs; David Deng, Minister of Labour, Public Service and Human Resources. Discussions focused on GoSS progress in establishing its structures and institutions and support needs of the GoSS, in particular from the UN. The GoSS officials briefed the PDSRSG on their assessment of the political and security situation in Southern Sudan. The PDSRSG attended the CJMC meeting that took place yesterday on which I'll brief you shortly.

UNMIS ACTIVITIES

DDR:

UNMIS DDR delivered a presentation on “Gender & Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration: Police as Key to Security” at a four-day Basic Gender and Child Protection Sensitization Training Workshop for Junior Police Officers of Bahr El Jebel State, Juba from 7th – 10th Dec., covering DDR in Sudan generally, as well as specific gender considerations. The presentation concluded with particular references to the role and linkages between the police service in Sudan and DDR. This was the second such presentation at UN Police trainings in Juba..

Human Rights:

The UNMIS three-day workshop conducted in Juba last week for members of the Southern Sudan Legislative Assembly concluded its work on 10 December. The meeting issued a Declaration calling on the Assembly to enhance the rule of law and justice and to promote and respect all human rights, including economic, social and cultural rights. The workshop further pledged to expedite the establishment of the Southern Sudan Human Rights Commission and the Southern Sudan Anti-Corruption Commission. Over 80 people attended the workshop, including Ministers, Presidential Advisors and Members of Parliament.

CJMC

The fifteenth Ceasefire Joint Military Committee was held on Tuesday, 13 Dec 2005 in Juba, which was chaired by the Force Commander, Maj Gen Fazle Elahi Akbar. The CJMC decisions included the following:

-UNMIS reserves the right to conduct unhindered inspection and verification of all areas within the Ceasefire Zone, as per the CPA, if the parties fail to provide national monitors.

-The SPLA is to provide its proposed troops re-deployment plan from Eastern Sudan to the south of 1/1/56 Boundary Line prior to next AJMC meeting in Kassala.

-The parties are to provide a list of identified/known non-aligned Other Armed Groups (OAGs) to UNMIS prior to next CJMC meeting. The Parties also agreed to form a JMCO Working Committee to establish monitoring and verification modalities for the Incorporation, Integration and Re-integration of OAG members into the SAF and SPLA.

-The Parties are to provide the JMCO JIU Cell with their nominations for JIU nominated personnel to attend an International Mine Action Training Centre course in Nairobi, in April 2006.

MILITARY UPDATE

Deployment of Military Observers and Protection Force Elements is in progress and the total number of troops stands currently at **4292**, including **463** UN Military Observers.

SECURITY

Darfur

The security situation in Darfur remains tense. The main security incidents reported since last week are mainly banditry incidents, particularly in South Darfur. Banditry seems to have increased in intensity.

-On 9 December, armed tribesmen attacked eight civilians, killing two and looting their belongings. Police engaged the armed group and the bandits escaped towards Kundua village, about three km east of Al Salaam camp. Due to the tense situation, women and children began leaving Kumbila and Al Salam IDP camp seeking refuge in Nyala. According to the elders of the village, about 14 citizens have been killed by tribesmen since July. To convince the IDPs to stay, AU Protection Forces, CIVPOL and GoS police will conduct joined patrols around the camp in order to improve the security situation.

-Banditry attacks on commercial and humanitarian trucks continue in West and South Darfur. In West Darfur, 5 WFP contracted trucks were ambushed on 11 December by an unknown number of bandits who fired upon the convoy. The driver of the last vehicle was shot. He was transported to the MSF clinic in Golo where emergency treatment was administered, but he unfortunately died of his wounds. The trucks were empty at the time of the attack.

-Tribal clashes have been reported in West Darfur between two Arab tribes (Baggara and Abbala) on 8 December in Saraf Umra. In South Darfur, on 9 December Falatas attacked the Massalite in Idan. Fighting between the Hotiya/Baggara and Newiba/Aballa tribes was reported to have resumed on Friday 9 December in the Nyangadoula area (Abaata locality, north of Zalingei), eastern West Darfur, despite the start of a reconciliation process. At least 36 people were reportedly killed in the fighting, which forced newly displaced people to IDP settlements in Zalingei. International NGO MSF is providing medicine to Zalinjei Hospital and continues to send their mobile clinic to treat injured people on the spot. An ICRC surgical team arrived in Zalinjei on Saturday 10 December to support the hospital and possibly go into the area of fighting to bring out the wounded. During earlier fighting in Abaata locality in October, between 150 – 200 people were reportedly killed, and thousands of cattle stolen.

-There was renewed shooting in Tawilla, North Darfur, on Sunday 11 December, following an incident the previous evening which resulted in the death of three people and the wounding of six others. Reportedly, a group of armed militia from the village of Um Jelbak entered the town, and shot in the air as they proceeded towards the market, where they looted shops before departing. No casualties were reported. However, all three international NGOs

operating in Tawilla have withdrawn their staff, and the UN has declared the town “no-go” pending a security assessment.

-An OCHA/UNMIS assessment to Mershing, South Darfur, was conducted on Monday 12 December. IDPs in the town stated that the area was surrounded by armed men on camels. The IDPs reported beatings, lootings, rapes and kidnappings by the camel herders. Inhabitants of two nearby villages – Dar El Salam and Erli – fled to Mershing, claiming they escaped from continuous harassment and attacks by camel herders, including animal grazing on cultivated land.

-In a positive development, and following a security assessment of the area east of Geneina, West Darfur, towards Habila Kanary, Sisi and Krenek, the UN decided to reopen the roads from Geneina to Moreni and from Geneina to Krenek. This decision followed a meeting held by the UN with over 45 community leaders in the area of Habila Kanary who have given their assurances that humanitarian vehicles would have safe passage. Additional security assessments are planned for the coming days. This opening of roads east of Geneina for humanitarian access means that UN agencies can travel to areas off the main roads to conduct needs assessments, deliver mobile clinic services and get much-needed supplies to areas that were previously deemed no-go areas. OCHA will take the lead and assess the needs of Arab population, listen to problems and coordinate humanitarian action to the Arab needs. The Geneina-Masteri road remains closed for UN movement. As for UN flights in West Darfur, they are only suspended for the areas located North of El Geneina, mainly the Jebel Moon area, where NMRD activities are reported and due to threats expressed by the leader of the movement to shoot down any helicopter, including those of the UN and the AU.

SOUTHERN SUDAN

LRA activities remain a concern and the incident reported attack involving suspected LRA elements occurred on 9 December at Gumbo, which left one dead and two injured. The attackers looted household properties and food items. The Northern Police Division is investigating the case. Meanwhile, the residents of the Eastern Bank appealed to the GoSS and Government of Central Equatoria to provide security to them from LRA attacks taking place frequently.

Inter-tribal clashes and inter-clan clashes have been reported in a number of areas in Southern Sudan. None of them is politically motivated.

HUMANITARIAN

Gender:

UNICEF issued a statement today calling for Ending Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting, on the occasion of the rally that has started today at 9:00 from Khartoum Hospital mortem (forensic) section to the Ministry of Justice. The rally was prompted by the tragic death of 4-year-old Ena'am Abdel Wahab, another victim of this practice which puts at risk, according to UNICEF, 3 million girls annually around the countries where this practice prevails, including thousands in Sudan. The full text of the press release is available.

The Terms of Reference for the Joint Action Group, a forum to discuss Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV) issues that includes UN, NGO and GoS representation, were

finalized and adopted in a joint meeting on 8 Dec. The group will meet on a bi-weekly basis and will be chaired by the MoH.

UNFPA and partners concluded their 16 days of activism on SGBV with a celebration in Abu Shouk IDP camp. UNFPA considered the effort very successful in having increased awareness around SGBV issues among UN agencies, NGOs, GoS authorities, camp populations and the general public.

Save the Children Sweden, in collaboration with the Sudanese National Committee on Traditional Practices (SNTCP), is due to complete at the end of Dec a three-month training on information dissemination and awareness raising on the impact of harmful traditional practices, for 30 community volunteers from Abu Shouk and Al-Salaam IDP camps.

Update on NGOs activities in North Darfur

On 10 Dec., Spanish Red Cross, German Red Cross, and Sudanese Red Crescent Society (SRCS) resumed normal activities in the IDP camps of North Darfur, including the use of their own vehicles to access the camps, which had been suspended after last week's shooting of an SRCS driver in Abu Shouk. In Abu Shouk, SRCS started distributing over 994 MT of food to 49,842 people for this month. In Al-Salaam camp, distribution will be conducted on 14 Dec. for 22,125 people, totalling 441 MT of food.

Update on Kalma camp

In South Darfur, the road between Nyala and Kalma camp will be opened for commercial traffic as of 15 Dec. This was disclosed on 6 Dec. by the Wali of South Darfur in a meeting with OCHA, AU and NRC. The commercial blockade was imposed after the 20 May riots in the camp. The agreement is that NRC will establish a parking lot for commercial vehicles in an open space in Sector IV near the current AU compound.

The AU Armed Forces patrols around Kalma camp, introduced last week, seem to have a positive impact on the violence around the camp, with no incident of harassment reported over the last days.

Sudan Humanitarian Overview

The fourth issue of the Sudan Humanitarian Overview, produced by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), in collaboration with UN agencies and partner NGOs, the Overview strives to provide a periodic review of humanitarian trends and activities in Sudan, as well as to focus on particular topics of interest.

This and previous issues of the Overview can be found at: <http://www.unsudanig.org/publications/overview/>

Refugees return

UNHCR announced yesterday that its official voluntary repatriation of refugees to South Sudan is to begin this Saturday, 17 December from Kakuma Refugee Camp in northwestern Kenya. Half a million refugees who have been living in refugee camps and settlements in neighboring countries are likely to return in coming years, along with up to four million people displaced within Sudan.

The main asylum countries for refugees from South Sudan are Uganda (204,400), Ethiopia (90,500), Democratic Republic of Congo (69,400), Kenya (74,000), Central African Republic (36,000), Egypt (30,324) and Eritrea (714).

Southern Sudan

In Western Equatoria, Southern Sudan, UNHCR, GTZ (German Technical Cooperation) and OCHA visited Tambura and Yambio on Thursday 8 December. The mission found that although the high state of tension between the Zande and Dinka IDPs had reduced substantially in Tambura, there was an uneasy calm in Yambio.

UN agencies, in partnership with the SRRC and NGOs, were scheduled to start a needs assessment in Yambio and Nzara in the coming days.

Yellow Fever in Southern Kordofan

The World Health Organization (WHO) reported that as of Friday 9 December, the total number of Yellow Fever cases reported was **583** including **144** deaths, representing an Overall Case Fatality Rate of 25 percent. WHO said the number of suspected cases was rapidly decreasing, with only 16 new cases and no deaths reported in the week prior to 9 December. The outbreak now seems to be limited to the locality of Abu Jubaiyah. WHO said the decreased Case Fatality Rate reflected an improvement in case management, and expected that the ongoing mass vaccination campaigns would further reduce Yellow Fever virus circulation. The Expanded Programme of Immunization (EPI) has estimated the target population for Yellow Fever vaccination in Southern Kordofan at 1.7 million. As of 9 December, more than 600,000 people had been vaccinated. WHO said that vaccination had progressed slowly in some localities due to delays in vaccine supply and logistic constraints. The Federal Ministry of Health and WHO are conducting assessments to better understand transmission patterns and to provide appropriate recommendations for outbreak preparedness before the next rainy season.

Finally, I would like to announce that a press release and a Press Kit for **Launch of State of the World's Children 2006** (scheduled for 14 December) and on the **Launch of Child Alert: Darfur** (scheduled for 20 December). The material is provided by UNICEF.

Q & A

Q: I have only one question. It is clear from the briefing that banditry occurs in many parts of Darfur and tribal clashes that may lead to new instances of displacement of population. In addition to that, the road between Nyala and Kalma camp will soon be opened. This means that the road will link the town with the camp and thus increase trade activities. This is against the background of new incidents of displacement. Some say all this is aimed at perpetuating the displacement of the populations in Darfur and the IPD camps.

Spokesperson: Thank you very much. We have answered this question more than once before. You mentioned in your question that the tribal clashes, the incidents of armed banditry, displacements and, add to these considerations the fact that there were clashes between government troops and the SLA and the incidents that occurred last week and the week previous and armed confrontations between the SLA and some tribes, the armed attacks

on civilians by armed militias, all these led to new displacement that was forced upon them. There is no intention at all to perpetuate displacement of the population and if the displacements do occur then all those who are behind the insecurity are the ones to stand accountable should displacements in Darfur continue. If some say that the humanitarian organizations had a role in perpetuating displacement of the population, I reject any such statement. The humanitarian community and the UN alike had all underlined the need to, first that the issue be resolved politically and that work be started on the ground to avail the conditions necessary for IDP returns. Furthermore, we had pointed out that the generosity of those donors who have been funding humanitarian operations in Darfur and the other parts of the Sudan will not be at the same level next year we told all parties that should the situation continue as is, the international community and especially the humanitarian community will not be able to continue meeting the humanitarian requirements of the people in Darfur. We in the UN and especially the humanitarian agencies have a true interest in availing the necessary situations for the return of IDPs back to their original homes or other areas. We also said more than once that such issues do not come about within a day and night; the conditions for return must be guaranteed, areas of return must be secure and the minimum conditions of living that will preserve the dignity of these people must be guaranteed as they return to their homes or resettle elsewhere.

Q: *(two questions – indiscernible)*

Spokesperson: On your first question, in fact, the talks that took place between Taye Zerihoun and high level officials in the Government of South Sudan did not address the issue of Kony that you mentioned and the SPLM request to lift the names of members of the LRA listed by the US as terrorists. First of all, we have no mandate to get into the issue because the issue is, in the first place, an issue of bilateral relations between the US and the GoSS.

On the ICC, this issue should be decided upon by International Law. The UN would not intervene through a request to withdraw a name because the issue is totally out of our jurisdiction. In answer to your second question on whether Mr. Pronk and Ocampo discussed in any of their discussion the possibilities of withdrawing names of some or all the LRA listed in the terror list, Mr. Pronk does not have a mandate to interfere in the issue. There are international institutions that are responsible for the issue of terrorism, list of terrorists, who is to be included and whose name to be lifted if any. This is not in our mandate.

On your question on Resolution 1591, in our reports to the Security Council, the monthly report on Darfur and the ones on the Mission's mandate we submit every three months as stipulated by Resolution 1590, we do not discuss the work of the Panel of Experts (POE) established by the Security Council. This panel was established by the Security Council and reports to the Council through the committee established by the Security Council to follow on the issue and not through the Mission. What I do know is that the Panel of Experts came to the Sudan more than once from Addis Ababa and had intensive activities in the Sudan within the framework of the task mandated to it and this panel will soon present its report to the Security Council. The Security Council will decide then if it will issue a resolution or not based on the report by the Panel of Experts. So even though UNMIS presents its report to the Security Council, it does not include the activities of the Panel of Experts because this is not part of our duties. Yes, we are required to cooperate with the panel but the panel does not report to us but to the Security Council. This is how it operates and we do not have a hand on the issue but let's wait and see how the Security Council will act once the Panel of Experts presents its report.

Q: You said that the recommendations of the CJMC meetings give UNMIS the right to investigate and verify in the even of any violation of the ceasefire. Please elaborate more on what is meant by “to investigate”?

Up until now, the SPLM has not withdrawn its forces to areas south of the 1956 line. What are the reasons for that? Is it a refusal from their part or something else?

Spokesperson: I don't know about 'investigation' it may have been an issue of interpretation because I spoke in English and may be the right word was not used. Our basic duties when it comes to the military side are monitoring and verification (*gives and Arabic interpretation of the words*). If you go back to Resolution 1590 you will find the approved Arabic translation of these technical terms used by the UN. It is not an issue of investigating but an issue of monitoring and verification. What we said is that the UN will carry out monitoring and verification tasks without hindrance from the parties to these operations and that is in the event that these parties do not contribute national observers. You are aware that based on the CPA, these monitoring and verification activities would be carried out through teams made up of three components: UN, Sudan Armed Forces and SPLA observers. Our problem to this date is that neither the SAF nor the SPLA have brought in all their monitoring teams who should be working alongside UN military observers. Based on our mandate, , if national observers are not availed, we should not stop our monitoring task and we have the right to continue monitoring by ourselves without hindrance.

I did not understand your second question, sorry.

Q: On the withdrawal to south of the 1956 lines of SPLA forces from all areas.

Spokesperson: I was only referring to Kassala. In fact I do not have all the areas but will find out. What I mentioned to you last time was in relation to redeployment of SPLA forces on the determined line in the eastern Sudan region only..

Q: The Secretary-General of the United Nations had presented a report to the Security Council in November requesting the government to disarm the militias. But in a question I asked the deputy *wali* of South Darfur on they have disarmed militia groups, he answered “no, our priorities are not to disarm the militias but to end the rebellion.”

The second question is: the deputy *Wali* in South Darfur and the commissioner for humanitarian aid in South Darfur say they have brought 190,000 IDPs back to their original areas and mentioned some of those areas which you now brand as not safe. What is your comment on this?

Third question; with regards the withdrawal of forces from the south to the 1956 line and from eastern Sudan. In eastern Sudan, the SPLA said that the Sudan Armed Forces had pledged transportation from eastern Sudan to south of the 1/1/1956 line. They claim that when the Sudan Armed Forces did not meet those pledges they then requested assistance from the UN but the UN did not respond to their request.

Finally; the Sudan Armed Forces says it has withdrawn some of its forces estimated to about 17.5% of them but it is known according to the CPA that any such move has to be approved by the SAF, the SPLA and the UN. What are your comments on this issue?

Spokesperson: These are four questions not three and I just hope that I remember all of them. Let me start with your first question on the disarmament of the militias. I do not know about your talks with the deputy *Wali* of the area you mentioned. I will only refer to the obligations set forth by the Security Council on the Sudanese government. As you recall right from the beginning from the joint communiqué by Kofi Annan and President Bashir dated July 2004, among the first obligations on the Sudanese government was the disarmament and of the militias. All resolutions without exception issued by the Security Council on the Sudan right from the first resolution up to resolution 1590, 1591 and 1593 and including the resolution adopted by the Security Council when it sat in Nairobi on the CPA highlighted the need to end impunity and the need to disarm the militia and bring to justice those who committed crimes defined by international law. If the Deputy *Wali* has views different from those, then these views are only his. The prevailing international laws and according to the recommendations of the Security Council, ending the rebellion is indeed a priority if it means reaching a peaceful settlement of the conflict through negotiations. Furthermore, you can not have talks with the rebel groups in Abuja while your priorities remain to put to end the rebellion using force. I have not heard the statement personally. And I reiterate that one of the utmost priorities to the UN and the international community as a whole, including the AU, with regards to restoring security in Darfur, is to resolve the issue of the militias through disarming them and through bringing those who perpetrated and still perpetrate crimes to justice and putting an end to their activities in Darfur. If the intention of some is to “physically” end the rebellion, we see that there is a great difference between such a statement and the official position of the Sudanese government including the representatives of the SPLM who are currently in Abuja who all are of the view that the solution to the Darfur crisis can only be political and diplomatic.

On your second question about the return of IDPs, sincerely, I do not have an idea on whether such a thing has occurred. Maybe my colleague Mathew Conway from OCHA, for instance, knows more about it. Personally, I have not heard of the issue. In general terms, the UN policy in addressing such issues is based on the agreement between the government of Sudan, the International Organisation on Migration and also the other humanitarian agencies concerned with returns and humanitarian assistance, which stipulates that return operations are supposed to be carried out in coordination with the relevant humanitarian agencies and that returns can only be carried out on voluntary basis and when the conditions are appropriate. This means that the security situation in the areas of return should be guaranteed and the minimum requirements for a natural life must be guaranteed – that is to say that they must have utilities, they must have water, hospitals and other things that will guarantee for them basic services. This is the first time I am hearing what you said but we will follow up on the issue. My colleague in OCHA himself has no information on the issue but we will follow up.

On the issue of redeployment and the armed forces, I think I did not understand your question. What specifically do you want to know?

Q: On the withdrawal of the Sudan Armed Forces from south of the 1956 line.

Spokesperson: I was asked this question about the 17,500 and so on and I told you and confirmed from our military section who at the moment do not have the capacity to confirm that number but did confirm to me that the Sudanese government has indeed informed them that they have withdrawn their forces from the south as per the CPA. The mission, the Military component- will verify the information on the ground.

Q: In an interview *AlWan* had with you, there was some information that there are Israeli troops in Darfur. Can you put our minds to rest on the issue?

Spokesperson: If you did see or read the interview, although he did not publish my full answer to the question, I declined to answer such an issue because I only comment on issues pertaining to the UN. If he does have such an information, it's not relevant to us anyway it would be up to the State of Sudan to deal with other States based on its policies. The UN has nothing to do with this issue and I personally decline to comment on any issues on relations between States. That's not my job.

Q: The Prosecutor of the ICC said yesterday that an international investigation team will be coming to visit Sudan in February. Meanwhile, the Minister of Justice in Sudan says that the Sudanese government will not allow any international investigation team access to visit Darfur. What are your comments on this government rejection to such a visit?

A joint military team of the UN, the AU, the EU and the US is currently touring Darfur. There are statements and reports from Washington on the need to re-assess AMIS operations in Darfur as a result of (*indiscernible*). What is your assessment of this issue and what are the exact functions of this team?

Spokesperson: First of all and with regards anything concerning the ICC, I am not in any position to comment on these issues because those who are in a position to do so are two: Mr. Louis Moreno and the Security Council. We have no authority and we have nothing to do with this issue of the ICC and, by the way, anyone of you who wishes to see the response from the current President of the Security Council on this issue that you just mentioned can access this through the UN website on the internet. I do not speak on behalf of the Prosecutor of the ICC. In fact in his report, Moreno had pointed out in his statement that there is good cooperation with the government in Sudan. As for the other details, the issue should be addressed by the government of Sudan, the ICC and the Security Council.

On your second question about the the assessment mission, I think I did send you through e-mail all documents pertaining to the issue. First of all, the assessment mission is an African mission and not UN. Yes, the UN did participate in it but the UN was not the only participant - the states that contributed troops to the AU mission and also the states that supported the AU through financial, logistic or technical assistance. This is not the first time we are participating in such a mission. This is, I think, the second time the AU is dispatching an assessment mission and it is the second time we are participating through direct invitation from the AU. You are aware also that among our responsibilities as set forth by the Security Council is to assist the AU in Darfur in logistic and technical issues and deployment plans, etc. this is part of our mandate and the AU has requested our assistance.

As for the functions of the mission, I think that the AU Press Release that you have mentions why the team was dispatched. This assessment mission is based on the resolution issued by the AU Peace and Security Council in follow up to the report of the first mission sent last year and their mandate, I think, is accessible from the AU. The resolution says that a second mission will be sent which will have the duty to assess the implementation of the mandate of AMIS in Darfur and carry out a security and humanitarian assessment of the situation and report to the African Union Peace and Security Council on the way forward.

I do not deny that there is much talk from more than one quarter but these are informal talks and discussions on more than one scenario on addressing the Darfur issue. Among these are the scenarios that some parties have talked about which is that the UN should either work jointly with the AU in Darfur or take over from the AU. These are all informal talks and the issue has not formally been put in the agenda of the UN be it at the Secretariat level or the Security Council. I also do not know what type of recommendations this mission will come up with because they have started work in Darfur, as you mentioned, since 10th December and the mission is supposed to conclude on the 20th of December and then report to the African Peace and Security Council. True, the UN will have a copy of that report but the deliberations and the decisions will be carried out by the African Peace and Security Council and I have no idea what these recommendations will bring up. This is an issue to be determined by the future and I hope you will inquire from the AU once the report is out because it is the AU that is responsible and has dispatched the mission and I don't, in fact, want to interfere in the work of the AU.

Q: Does the UN have any arrangements, a strategy, for a political solution to the issue of the LRA?

The second question is on your flights following the threats by Ahmed Djibril to shoot your aircraft. What is the humanitarian situation in that area and are you making any efforts to have talks with Ahmed Djibril to allow you to fly over those areas?

There was also talk on your offer to monitor the Bar Association elections. What are the developments on this issue in light of the rejection by the Bar Association?

Spokesperson: First of all, I apologise to your colleague from *Al-Wihda* newspaper. I would like first of all to congratulate the establishment of the new newspapers *Al-Wihda* and *Al-Sudani* among them. I think some more will be or have indeed been established. I congratulate all of you and hope you will all make a considerable addition to the scene. I welcome you and hope to see all colleagues representing all Sudanese papers with us here as we continue to interact.

On your first question on the LRA, SRSG Jan Pronk, in his statement in New York about 3 months ago when he went to present his report on the performance of UNMIS for the past three months on the implementation of the CPA, among the points he stressed was the need to lay out a strategy to address the LRA issue because, unfortunately, the international community including at levels of the Security Council, used piecemeal approaches to address the LRA issue. That is to say that the issue was being addressed on a narrow scope and no steps were taken to address the LRA problem through a comprehensive perspective. The Security Council is not working on such a strategy. So the piece-meal approach continues. In the DRC, Uganda and Sudan each handled the issue in its own way. We all know that the LRA has become a regional problem and not the problem of one country and is a threat to the region as a whole. On the side of the UN Secretariat, we proposed; Pronk did propose but it is not we to set the strategies. Such a strategy should come from the Security Council and the other relevant UN bodies. At our levels here in the Sudan, as I said, the problem is that even the CPA does not give the UN a role with regards to addressing the LRA issue. The CPA had set it upon the Parties to the agreement – the SPLM and the GoS before it became the Government of National Unity – the responsibilities of addressing the issue of the LRA and its presence in Sudanese territory. We do know that they are cooperating within a tripartite framework with the authorities in Uganda. The UN attends all these meetings because the

issue of the LRA is of much concern to us as it does have an impact on our operations in southern Sudan and on the security of the citizens in general. Our role remains very limited when it comes to addressing the LRA issue. The UN in the DRC has the mandate because it is a mission basically deployed under a Chapter VII mandate and has a broader scope and the capabilities to pursue and directly take on the LRA issue and had cooperated with Uganda in pursuing the LRA out of the DRC. Our mandate here is different because we have very limited elements of the Chapter VII mandate.

On your other question on the NMRD and its leader Djibril, we have not entered into political talks with this movement. With regards to humanitarian issues and at the working level we do normally contact people try to talk with them. I do not know whether or not there were contacts with Mr. Djibril group, but will follow up with the issue and find out whether anybody has talked with them. As for Mr. Jibril himself, it seems that no one knows exactly where he is. You mentioned in your question the humanitarian situation there. The problem is that we know nothing about the humanitarian situation in Jebel Moun. You are aware that a major clash occurred in that area in the past weeks. The government says it was pursuing Chadians while the JEM said government was fighting them and, at the same time, Djibril's forces said that neither this nor that was correct because they were the targets of this government pursuit and attacks. So there is more than one statement on what occurred in the Jebel Moun area.

We have more than one reason to regard Djibril's threats to us as serious. You do know that Mr. Djibril had contacted the *Reuters* news agency and claimed responsibility for the attack on the Sudanese police post. He has not hidden his intentions and our sources make us believe that his threats to shoot UN and AU flights are serious. We could not take a risk.. If there are any other developments we will let you know.

On the issue of the lawyers, thank you very much for the question. I was the first person to get surprised that something was attributed to us on the Bar Association issue. The UN did not come here to monitor elections of the civil society. If they did request our assistance, then we will welcome that but if they did not do so, we do not interfere in such an issue. If you go back to resolution 1590, it speaks about the rule of law, the conformity of Sudanese laws and legislature with international laws, it talks of assisting you in the forthcoming elections mentioned in the CPA but, my dear sir, we do not have anything to do with that issue. I have left no section in the Mission that I have not inquired from on this issue – the section on rule of law, the section concerned with human rights, the section concerned with civil society – and not a single one of them offered to provide such assistance and we do not have anything to do with the Bar Association. We wish them success in their endeavour. True that among our priorities is to see an active civil society and our mandate allows us to assist them if there is anything we can do to assist but we will not poke our nose into anything that they did not request our assistance in.

Thank you once again for your question and I hope you will publish the answer because there is a misunderstanding as we neither talked nor interfered nor even mentioned such an issue before and I don't where such a misinformation came from..

Thank you. And thank you all of you and have a nice weekend.

Note: Humanitarian information included in UNMIS briefings is provided by OCHA and the UN Agencies, Funds, Programmes operating in Sudan.