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UNMIS Media Monitoring Report, 08 January, 2006
(By Public Information Office)

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UN

Kofi Annan: Very Pleased with the African Union Efforts in Darfur

(SMC, Saturday 7 January 2006) "I am very pleased that the African Union, whose efforts remains commendable, has decided to lead a second assessment mission from 10 to 20 December with the participation of key partners, including a team from the United Nations," UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, said in a report to the Security Council on 23 December 2005.

"The mission's recommendation on the way forward will help inform the African Union, its partners and the Security Council as they consider the next steps on an urgent basis, including the implementation of the Security Council and its resolutions on Darfur. In the meantime, everything possible should be done to sustain and strengthen the AU Mission and to further enhance protection efforts throughout the region. In particular all parties to the conflict must cooperate with AMIS and those individuals who do not must be held to account." Sudan Vision asked the UN Special Representative if the Report calls for an "enhanced international security presence," means replacing AMIS with an international force. "I am pleased with the Security Council resolution in September 2004 requesting the African Union to become involved not only with monitors but also with security presence. And I was very pleased with the answer by the African Union at the time. Now we are

entering a third phase which will come to effect after a peace agreement has been concluded and people have to return to their homes. That means any international force, in my views, should be big enough to guarantee the security, strong enough to resist attacks on people or the force and long enough to inspire confidence on all the returnees to their villages not just for a couple of weeks but as far as I am concerned for years, he stated. "This would require a broad mandate to do all this. So, I am pleased with the fact that the AU went for an assessment for such a third phase and I hope that the decisions on the basis of that assessment will be to have a big and strong force, with a broad mandate in order to do a good job which is different from the previous phases." Mr. Pronk further said that, "I also hope that the international community will do everything to make it possible to have such a force. It has to do more than it did in the past when the African Union had to beg around for money internationally, then they get an assurance that for the next three or four months there will be enough money. But you cannot have such a security for a long period with a strong force on the basis of financial guarantees, quarter by quarter basis. So, the international community needs also to do its job well."

UN to press Egypt to stay Sudan deportations

(AFP, Jan 7 Cairo) - The UN refugee agency said it would again appeal to the Egyptian authorities to abandon plans to deport more than 600 Sudanese as an agreed three-day delay was poised to expire on Sunday morning. "We have no guarantees as to what will happen when the three days expire but we will continue to appeal for nobody to be deported," a spokeswoman for the UN High Commissioner for Refugees told AFP.

"We have had two days of interviews and we have another one today," the spokeswoman, Astrid van Genderen Stort, said Saturday. "After that, we intend to send a recommendation to the Egyptian authorities tonight." The Egyptians insist the Sudanese are illegal immigrants but on Thursday gave the UNHCR 72 hours to interview them and assess whether they were bona fide refugees. Amnesty International said it was worried the delay might not be sufficient for their status to be properly assessed. "There are serious concerns that 72 hours may not be long enough for the UNHCR to identify all those who are refugees or asylum-seekers," London-based rights watchdog said. "No one should be deported except as a result of a decision reached in accordance with law, with access to appeal procedures. "On January 30, thousands of riot police using batons and water canon broke up a three month-old sit-in by some 3,000 Sudanese asylum-seekers and refugees demanding resettlement in a third country.

The raid left 28 people dead, including women and children.

The UNHCR expressed its "deep shock" at the killings, which also drew international condemnation and calls for an investigation. The Egyptian foreign ministry retorted the situation was handled "with wisdom".

Most of the Sudanese who had been protesting outside the UNHCR's office in Cairo are from the south, where a civil war that lasted more than two decades displaced more than four million people.

A peace agreement was signed a year ago but many refugees argue it is still not safe to return.

U.N. reduces staff in volatile Darfur region

(DPA, 7 Jan, New York) - The United Nations said Friday it has reduced its staff in Sudan's western Darfur region because of a build-up of military forces on both sides of the Sudan-Chad border.

The U.N. gave no details on how many of its 500 international staff and about 1,000 national and volunteer workers were pulled out of the area, which neighbours Chad.

The mission will monitor the situation along the border where tensions had risen with the potential of conflict between Sudan and Chad, the U.N. said. U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan had voiced concern over deteriorating security in Darfur with a continuing ethnic conflict between Arab militiamen and two African rebel organizations. Nigerian-mediated peace talks on Darfur went into a seventh round this week in Abuja. The conflict in Darfur, a western region of Sudan, has killed more than 180,000 people since 2003, according to the U.N. But human rights groups put the death toll at over 300,000.

The fighting has left more than 2 million other people homeless.

Government of National Unity

Government demands change in methodology of Abuja Talks

(Al Ray Al-am, 8 Jan, Khartoum) The Nigerian President, Obassanjo, promised to exert his utmost efforts to make Abuja Talks a success.

Meantime, the GoS stressed that the talks' style should be changed to enable them to overcome obstacles ahead.

Government demands US to pressure rebels to negotiate seriously

(Sudan Vision, SUNA, 8 Jan 06, Khartoum) The Sudanese Government has called on the United States to take a position on the Darfur issue similar to what it took on the South Sudan conflict, when it encouraged parties to that conflict to transcend difficulties until a peace settlement was reached.

The Sudanese diplomatic mission in Washington in a statement issued on the occasion of the anniversary of independence demanded the United States to put pressure on the armed movements in Darfur to negotiate seriously in order to stop bloodshed and enable citizens to return to their home villages instead of putting that pressure on the Government and imposing sanctions on it hence complicating the issue.

The statement said the peace agreement realized by the Sudanese, in which the American diplomacy played an appreciated role, should be marked by good and sincere relations between the two countries.

Security situation worsens in Upper Nile; ten killed

(Khartoum Monitor, 8 Jan 06, Khartoum) the security situation in the oil-rich Upper Nile State is Southern Sudan is reported to have deteriorated, following a rampage by some armed

men, reports said. Troops affiliated to the government, blatantly invaded and occupied the northern parts of Fashoda province in Upper Nile State in Southern Sudan, killing ten villagers and displacing thousands more, witnesses revealed.

In an exclusive statement to the Khartoum Monitor yesterday, Sudan People's Liberation Movement's Member of Parliament, Onyoti Adigo, identified the invaders as members of the Sudanese army, but came short of revealing motives for the misdeed. He revealed that ten people were killed, dozens wounded and thousands were displaced as well by the invaders. He said the army on armoured vehicles, tanks and heavily armed, occupied areas of Obodo (Haluf), Thworgwang and Magenis in Fashoda province. Additional troops are also being deployed in the area.

The Authorities in the Upper Nile State are still discussing the case. Also thousands of cows were looted by the invaders, farms destroyed and Gum Arabic acacia trees cut down. The MP described the situation as serious and fragile and urged the United Nations to investigate the matter.

Armed Forces Pledge to Restore Security for Farmers at Al Fashaga

(SMC, 7 Jan, Khartoum) The armed forces have assured that the situation was calm on the borders with Ethiopia at Fashaga agricultural area. An armed forces spokesman office told (smc) that the army is responsible to maintain security and stability in the area and protect farmers.

As to when the international committee should start re-demarcation of joint borders, the decision has become the responsibility of the Gidarif government. The spokesman's office however denied acknowledgment of endeavours to provoke sedition by some parties in the area.

Paulino Matip rejoins SPLM

(Khartoum Monitor, 8 Jan 06, Khartoum) The third round of South-South dialogue initiated by the First Vice President of the Republic and President of the GoSS, Lt. Gen. Salva Kiir, and South Defense Forces (SSDF) Chief of Staff, Maj. Gen. Paulino Matip, is currently in session in Juba. In his inaugural address President Kiir pointed out that this conference is particularly important, as we are about to celebrate the First Anniversary of the Signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA).

This conference is the continuation of the previous meetings between the SPLM/A and other political parties comprising twenty four (24) participants in Nairobi, Kenya, in April 2005. at the end of the conference the leaders of the various delegations who participated signed a covenant that committed them to unity and peaceful co-existence of the people of Southern Sudan.

The second conference was at Moi Institute in collaboration with the SPLM and armed groups on 30 June 2005. this was a follow up meeting as resolved during the April 2005 conference. The SPLA/M leader, the SSDF leader attended the meeting. All these meetings, declared Lt. Gen. Kiir, are aimed at reconciling and uniting the people of Southern Sudan and implementing the CPA, and consequently establishing the rule of law and good governance in Southern Sudan. The SPLM, he said, will never hesitate to press ahead with the process of realizing peace and stability. He shed light on a long list of split that hit the SPLA/M since its inception. We have come to Juba to make this round of South-South dialogue a success, Kiir stressed, and all the armed groups have the same rights with the SPLA/M because they

participated in the liberation struggle at all levels. The same rights and duties should be given to all the armed groups as clearly defined in the GoSS policy of inclusiveness and stipulated in the CPA. He commended the existing cooperation between the SPLA/M and the SSDF, and the merger between the SPLM and the SSDF will be cemented before the celebration of the First Anniversary of the signing of the CPA without preconditions.

SSDF Chief of Staff, Maj. Paulino Matip, told the conference that he has brought his forces home and is prepared to iron out differences between the SSDF and the SPLM/A.

Sudanese army deployed along border with Ethiopia

(ST, Jan 5, 2006 (AL-GADARIF, eastern Sudan) — The armed forces in Al-Gadarif State have taken up position in agricultural areas on the border strip east of Al-Atbarawi River in the areas south of Dagleash Mountain and east of Sundus and Al-Allaw.

Governor of Al-Gadarif State Abdelrahman al-Khedir said the deployment of the armed forces was ensure stability on the border strip during the re-demarcation of the joint border between Sudan and Ethiopia.

Last week, a new Sudanese organization called The Fashaqah Lands Liberation Organization (FLO) has presented a statement to the head of the legislative council in Al-Qadarif State in which it criticized the Al-Fashaqah agricultural lands agreement signed between the Sudanese and Ethiopian governments.

FLO's statement called on the state's youth to come out and volunteer to liberate the occupied Fashaqah lands.

According to the Sudanese Al-Khartoum newspaper, The governor pointed out that the agreement reached in Gondor, Ethiopia, between the two sides with no intervention by any foreign sides, would lead to stability for both Sudanese and Ethiopian farmers equally.

Al-Khedir said the 10m dollars total cost of re-demarcation would be shared equally between the two sides. The process of demarcation is due to be completed within the year.

The governor further stressed that the government would not relinquish any inch of Sudanese agricultural land lying within its borders.

In indication to the Fashaqah agricultural lands which are the centre of a controversy between farmers in both countries, he said some Ethiopian farmers would be allowed to cultivate Sudanese lands as an investment according to clear investment conditions.

The Sudan's Federal Budget 2006

(BBC Monitoring, Jan 8, 2005, Khartoum — Attached a PowerPoint presentation of the Sudan's budget for 2006 prepared by the Federal Ministry of Finance and National Economy.

The budget for the year 2006 is prepared within the framework of the implementation of the comprehensive peace agreement (CPA), and the provisions of the transitional constitution.

The budget estimates for Chapter four for the financial year 2006 amount to 448,1 billion Sudanese Dinner .

The priorities of the development budget estimate are: 1. Integrated rural development and food security projects. 2. Capacity building. 3. Primary health care. 4. Basic education. 5. Water and sanitation. 6. Rural feeder roads. 7. Railway and river transport. 8. Resettlement of IDPs and refugees. 9. DDR (reintegration of combatants into civil society). 10. Small and medium scale enterprises. It is worth mentioning that the above priorities are consistent with the JAM framework.

Darfur:

Major legal breakthrough in Darfur crimes

(Sudan Vision, 8 Jan 06, Khartoum) The Minister of Justice Muhammad Ali Al-Mardhi, said the good offices of the South Darfur State Governor that lasted for more than two months, made with the knowledge and follow up of the Justice Minister himself, resulted in reconciliation between Bargad tribe and families of the accused, who belong to the Arab tribes in Darfur.

The village of Hamada case in which more than 110 members of Bargad tribe were killed at the hands of some individuals from Arab tribes has come to be one of the most known cases in Darfur.

The reconciliation between the two would be signed in the presence of the Justice Minister, the Governor of South Darfur, and all leaders of native administration in Darfur.

Following the reconciliation, the defendants would stand trial before a court that will be attended by the representatives of the African Union, UN, NGOs, relatives of the two parties, and local and international media. The trial would demonstrate Sudan's seriousness and competence as manifested in its judiciary and executive organs to try those who committed crimes in Darfur.

The trial of those implicated in the Darfur crimes has aroused controversy as to whether or not that trial should be handled by the International Criminal Court or by the Sudanese Authorities.

The Sudan Government has rejected the UN Security Council's resolution, which called for the trial of the defendants before ICC.

Eleven AU Elements Killed or Injured in Darfur

(SMC, 6 Jan, Khartoum) AU forces in Darfur were exposed to an attack from Sudan Liberation Movement led by Mani Arkoy. The attack took place this morning at Jarjara area on border with Chad where one AU element was killed ten seriously injured. A reliable source told (**smc**) that rebels have captured an AU car and fled away. A plane working for AU evacuated victims to union hospital in Fashir for treatment. Meanwhile government of northern Darfur state condemned the incident and blamed Darfur rebels for these continuous violations. The state government however urged rebels not to attack AU forces and described the incident as not looks like Darfurian behaviour and attitude.

Senior SLM Member Accuses Arkoy Forces Planning to Attack Abdel Wahid Supporters

(BBC Monitoring, 7 Jan, Khartoum) Senior SLM member loyal to Abdal Wahid Mohammed Nur wing warns that a war might erupt between his wing and the faction of Mani Arkoy who split from the movement.

He said clashes erupted on Sabay and Al Wagia valley "Some ten Kilometer south of Tawila of northern Darfur".

He said Arkoy mobilizes forces and deploys them at Siwasa area southward of Tawila. SLM senior official said these forces were deployed to fight Abdel Wahid supporters in areas such as Martal and AL Kora.

Abdel Wahid wing said that UN and AU should deal with SLM warnings as serious issue regarding violations of Mani Arkoy faction before things get frustrated and out of control.

Sudan, Chad relations

Chad accuses Sudan militias of three attacks

(AFP, 6 Jan, N'djamena) - Chad accused Sudanese militias Friday of carrying out three attacks in the east of the country in which nine civilians were killed, in what the government said was a new act of "aggression".

"Sudanese militias attacked the locations of Borota, Ade and Moudaina in the region of Ouaddai yesterday, Thursday, killing nine and injuring three civilians seriously," the government said in a statement. It said that several head of cattle had been taken away by the attackers. "These new criminal incursions show the obvious wish of the Khartoum government to pursue its aggression against Chad," the statement continued.

The Chadian government "calls on the African Union and the entire international community to accept their responsibilities in the face of this new aggression and the attempt to destabilise Chad conducted by the Sudanese government." It "once again warns the Sudanese government against any unconsidered policy, as the aggressions by Sudanese militias cannot remain unpunished any longer." Relations between the two neighbours have been tense for some weeks, with Chad accusing Sudan of backing rebels and defectors from President Idriss Deby's previous supporters. The Chadian government declared a "state of war" with Sudan last month following a rebel attack on the border town of Adre claimed by the Rally for Democracy and Freedom (RDL), and has called for the African Union and international community to head off further escalation of the conflict.

Late Friday the Sudanese government accused Chad of attacking an African Union military unit, killing one, and of transgressing Sudanese airspace during the last three days.

A statement by General Al-Abbas Abdel Rahman al-Khalifa, the spokesman of the Sudanese armed forces, read on Sudan Television, said a Chadian armed unit made up of six vehicles and horses, at 11:00 local time Friday morning, attacked an African Union unit in an area between Kulbus and Jerjeirah. It had killed an AU soldier, wounded 10 others, seized an AU vehicle and drove back across the border into Chad, it said. General Khalifa said a number of planes separately flew over towns in West and North Darfur states on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. The United Nations reported Thursday a troop buildup along the border between eastern Chad and Sudan's western Darfur province, saying it was reducing its mission in the region "due to the increasing instability in the affected areas."

Darfur rebels attack AU force, one killed, 10 wounded

(BBC Monitoring, Jan 6, DAKAR) — One Senegalese soldier of the African Union (AU) peacekeeping mission was killed and 10 others were wounded in an ambush Friday by armed Sudanese rebels in the Darfur region of western Sudan, said the Senegalese military.

The soldiers came under attack when returning to the camps after they finished an escort mission, said a statement issued by the Senegalese military.

This is the second ambush against the AU peacekeeping forces by armed Sudanese rebels since Nov. 29, 2005, when four Senegalese soldiers were wounded.

Senegal sent 540 soldiers to the war-torn Darfur region in January last year on a peacekeeping mission at the request of the AU.

In February 2003, the Sudanese Liberation Movement and Army, along with the rebel Justice and Equality Movement, launched a large-scale conflict with the Sudanese government with accusations that the government had failed to protect them from being attacked by Arab tribal militias.

Under the mediation of the AU, the Sudanese government reached ceasefire agreements with the two armed rebel groups on April 8, 2004, in N'djamena, the capital city of Chad.

However, there have been continuous violations of the agreements.

The United Nations has estimated that the conflicts in the Darfur region have cost over tens of thousands lives and displaced 1.7 million others.

SLM Allies with Chadian Troops against Opposition

(SMC, 6 Jan, Khartoum) Five commanders from Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM) led by Mani Arkoy wing have claimed breakaway and joined Abdel Wahid Mohammed Nur wing of the same movement. The breakaway members said they quit because Mani Arkoy involved the movement in Chadian struggle currently erupted in Adry region. They said Arkoy ordered some troops (from Muhajeria camps in southern Darfur, Anin Saro and Hashabu of northern Darfur) to fight side by side with Chadian government troops against opposition forces in the country. One of the breakaway commanders Hamed Idris Bahar Jalo told (smc) that Chadian authorities have forced Sudanese refugees at Kalongo kiriyati camp near Bahati province for recruitment and joined SLM to help Chadian government troop against opposition.

Sudan accuses Chad of supporting Darfur rebels

(BBC Monitoring, Jan 5, Khartoum) — Presidential Advisor and Communications Secretary for the ruling National Congress Mustafa Osman Ismail has said that Chad was responsible for the deteriorating security situation in Darfur through its provision of arms to the rebel movements and by opening its borders with Darfur.

He said Col Abdallah Abakar and Col Jibril Abd-al-Karim who had taken part in the rebellion in Darfur, were leaders in the Chadian army who received arms, bought in the name of the Chadian army, from ministers in the Chadian government.

In the first direct accusation made by a government official against President Deby following Chadian escalation, Mustafa said that despite the positive role Chad was playing to end the problem, President Deby knew that some of his ministers and army leaders supported rebels in Darfur.

Mustafa, who is the former Foreign Minister, said that by refusing to implement the three-way agreement between itself, Sudan and the Central African Republic to deploy joint troops to protect the borders, Chad had assisted in inflaming the struggle in the region.

He said that livestock was being looted in Darfur and sold in Chad and that arms and ammunition were being provided from across the border.

Mustafa said Chad had two options, either to negotiate reconciliation or use its military force to end the rebellion in Chad. He said it should not use Sudan as a scapegoat to cover up what was going on inside its territory.

He welcomed the decisions made by the AU committee which investigated the matter and pointed out that Chad's support for the rebels in Darfur was known to the government, other countries in the region and greater countries.

He said if Chad really had a case, it should present it at the AU summit to be held in Khartoum at the end of the month.

World Bank suspends Chad loans

(BBC Monitoring, 8 Jan, Khartoum) The World Bank has suspended all loans to Chad, accusing the government of misappropriating funds from a high-profile oil pipeline as the country lurches towards war with Sudan.

Paul Wolfowitz, head of the bank, took the decision because Chad, by altering an oil revenue law, has breached a 1999 agreement with the bank designed to fight long-term poverty in the country.

He said: "We've been trying for some time to open dialogue with the government of Chad to see if the concerns that they have expressed can be addressed, and regrettably instead of engaging in dialogue, they have proceeded unilaterally." He did, however, say: "We haven't given up on dialogue and hope in fact that perhaps if they stop and appreciate how serious the issue is from our point of view and not only from theirs, we can find some common ground."

Expensive experiment On 29 December Chad's parliament approved legislation to access more of the oil profits from the 1,000-km Chad-Cameroon pipeline, reversing a World Bank-backed law that pledged to save all of the profits for programs for the poor. It also abolished an oil fund whereby 10% of royalties and revenues would be saved in an overseas fund to fight long-term poverty. Wolfowitz's decision to halt the loans, including \$124 million in undisbursed funds, follows a two-hour telephone call on Thursday with Idriss Deby, the president of Chad, who still has to sign the amendments into law.

The suspension is a blow for Deby who is struggling with looming presidential elections and increased tensions with neighbouring Sudan, which he accuses of harbouring rebels trying to overthrow him.

Chad accused Sudanese militia of a new act of aggression on Friday, saying they carried out three attacks in the east of the country in which nine civilians were killed. A government statement said: "Sudanese militias attacked the locations of Borota, Ade and

Moudaina in the region of Ouaddai yesterday, Thursday, killing nine and injuring three civilians seriously."

Chad declared a "state of war" with Sudan last month after a rebel attack on the border town of Adre claimed by the Rally for Democracy and Freedom (RDL). It has called for the African Union and international community to head off further escalation of the conflict. In response the Sudanese government accused Chad of attacking an African Union military unit late on Friday, killing one, and of entering Sudanese airspace illegally during the last three days.

On Thursday the United Nations reported a build-up of troops along the border between eastern Chad and Sudan's western Darfur province, saying it was reducing its mission in the region "due to the increasing instability in the affected areas".

East:

Eastern Front decides today on accepting Libyan mediation or not

(Al Sahafa, 8 Jan, Khartoum) During its meeting today, the Eastern front is to decide on whether it is going to undertake participation in the Libya Talks or not.

In this connection, a meeting is to be held today in Asmara (Eritrea) between the leader of the Free Lions Movement, and the Eastern Front leaders.

Some Beja Congress Members Demand Resignation of Six Leaders from Organization

Saturday 7 January 2006

(SMC, 7 Jan, Khartoum) A number of prominent leaders from Biga congress inside outside the country have blasted the current organization leadership and demanded they be sacked and replaced by new leadership for they have committed a number of violations such as withdrawing from Libya negotiations without further consultation. In a statement issued by the protesting group and obtained by (smc) that congress leadership violates regulation of the organization. The group says formation of delegation to Libya was selected without following up the regulations of the organization.

It was noted that the current leadership composed of Abdallah Kona, Amna Dirar, Abdallah Musa, Ali Al Safi, Salah Barkiwain and Idris Mohammed Nur.

Other Developments

Peace comes to Sudan, but southerners still suffer -- and fear war's return

(BBC Monitoring, January 07, Khartoum) Refugees are coming back; young men are searching for brides and the hum of crickets and chirping birds have replaced the stutter of gunfire a year after a truce ended a 21-year war that killed 2 million people in southern Sudan.

But villagers living in places unnamed on any map -- without roads, electricity, schools or clinics -- say they still feel forgotten, and fear war will return if peace does not also mean prosperity.

Guns are the most modern innovation in sight. A lucky few have wheel-driven pumps to draw water.

"We have been left behind to walk with the cows," says medical worker Francis Gatluak, 48. "People in Sudan are not treated equally ... and peace will not stay until they are."

Centuries of hatred have built up between north and south Sudan since Arab Muslims invaded Africa's Nubian kingdoms in the mid-600s in search of slaves and converts among its Coptic Christians. The Nubians repulsed them, but a gradual Arabization took place and continues today in Africa's largest country, covering an area one-third the size of the United States.

Ancient animosities over land and water were compounded by the discovery of oil in south Sudan, triggering a rebellion in 1983 by mainly Christian and animist southerners.

Guerrillas won control of much of the south but the Arab government in Khartoum, the capital, established garrison towns around the three major oil fields it began exploiting in the 1990s.

Gatluak said the difference between north and south is "like night and day," with the north enjoying electricity, piped water, paved roads, schools and high-rise buildings constructed with new oil wealth estimated to account for 70 percent of the country's income.

"For now, people are prepared to wait and see if the peace agreement can help us sit together and negotiate whether we can share what we have, whether we can live and work together," said Gatluak. "If not, we separate. And I would say the majority is on the side of separation."

He doubted southerners would wait six years for a referendum on independence, provided under a Jan. 9, 2005 peace agreement that produced a national unity government and promises autonomy, religious freedom and an equal share of oil wealth to the south.

Former rebel leaders with an army drawn from their Sudanese People's Liberation Army are preparing to take over this month in Juba, the only town in the deep-south reachable by a paved though badly potholed road. Its streets are full of white U.N. vehicles carrying the first of some 10,000 peacekeepers.

But one year on, southerners accuse the Khartoum government of giving only a fraction of what was promised in oil revenues.

Relative peace has not stopped gun battles between rival clans over cattle, pasture and water.

Brig. David Reayh Malmal charged the Khartoum government was actively arming militias and rival clans even while the new unity government had sent him to Lankien to disarm SPLA soldiers.

"This peace is not going well," he told The Associated Press.

Sudan's government denies it unleashed surrogate militias that continue to terrorize southerners. Militiamen were supposed to decide by Monday whether to join the southern or northern armies but remain independent, armed and "a big problem," according to Malmal.

The government, meanwhile, is accused of unleashing a genocide to put down a separate rebellion in the western Darfur province, where at least 180,000 people have died and 1.5 million are displaced.

Aid agencies in Darfur are anxious to see peace hold in the south, where more than half a million refugees are expected to return this year. There are concerns they will not stay if life in refugee camps proves better.

Stephen Dak Biel, 15, dreamed of becoming a doctor when he started school at a camp in Khartoum. But he had to return to Lankien last year when riots erupted after southern rebel leader John Garang died in a helicopter crash just three weeks after becoming vice president of the unity government.

"Here, there's nothing for me," said Biel. The nearest school is a three-day walk.

The U.N. World Food Program is removing land mines and building 2,000 kilometres (1,200 miles) of roads -- a project that would save millions in airdropping food aid. And the U.N. refugee agency has started building schools, water points, hospitals and vocational training centres.

But none have reached Lankien, where Medecins sans Frontieres chartered a plane last month to deliver a four-wheel-drive vehicle. Days later, doctors used it to reach four men wounded in a spear fight, and said it saved the lives of two.

In Lankien, flags emblazoned with bulls hang atop huts, signalling young men are looking for brides.

"Before, all the men ran away to escape the war," said Nyalowal Lam, for whom peace brought union to the man she was supposed to marry four years ago. "Now, we have weddings every week. Now we can live normally."

Egyptians are urged to leave South Sudan - official

(BBC Monitoring, Jan 5, Khartoum) — The authorities in south Sudan called on Egyptians to leave the region for their own safety Thursday following the killing of 28 Sudanese refugees by Egyptian police in Cairo last week, a spokesman told the official SUNA news agency.

Samson Kwaje, information minister in the autonomous regional government established under a peace agreement signed in January last year, said the call was issued at an emergency cabinet meeting chaired by southern former rebel leader Silva Kiir Mayardit that also condemned the killings.

He said the authorities hoped that Egyptians working in the south's main towns of Juba and Malakal would be able to return once passions raised by the killings had subsided.

He said ministers in the regional government had also decided to send a committee of experts to Cairo to establish how so many southern Sudanese had been killed in a police action to clear protestors from outside the Cairo offices of the UN refugee agency.

The committee would also meet representatives of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees to express the south Sudanese authorities' dismay that the UN agency had sought the help of the Egyptian police in clearing the three-month-old protest.

Kwaje, said that the southern Sudan cabinet charged the committee to meet the refugees and exhort them to come back to Sudan.

Ministers issued a statement condemning the "massacre" after hearing a report from Kiir, who took over as southern leader last year after the death in a helicopter crash of veteran rebel leader John Garang, Kwaje added.

He said the government agreed to cooperate in the voluntary repatriation of Sudanese refugees from Egypt after the authorities in Cairo announced earlier in the day that they had shelved plans to deport some 600 refugees.

They appealed for assistance from the international community to establish a planned programme to bring home some 30,000, Kwaje said.

Speaking in the capital Khartoum later, Egyptian ambassador Mohammed Abdul Monim al-Shezly angrily denied that there had been any massacre by Egyptian police and accused third parties he did not identify of attempting to poison relations between the neighbouring countries.

"What is being said about the Egyptian police using firearms in dispersing the sit-in by the Sudanese refugees at Mustafa Mahmoud Square in Cairo last Friday is sheer lying," he told reporters.

"There are hidden hands that intend to poison the atmosphere of bilateral ties."

Shezly also strongly denied that Cairo had any plans to deport Sudanese, except those who were in Egypt illegally.

He said there were more than four million Sudanese in Egypt who had become "part of the Egyptian social fabric."