



UNITED NATIONS MISSION IN SUDAN
UNMIS

UNMIS Media Monitoring Report, 29th March, 2006
(By Public Information Office)

NOTE: Reproduction here does not mean that the UNMIS PIO can vouch for the accuracy or veracity of the contents, nor does this report reflect the views of the United Nations Mission in Sudan. Furthermore, international copyright exists on some materials and this summary should not be disseminated beyond the intended list of recipients.

IN THE NEWS TODAY:

- **Arab Summit Meeting/ AMIS-UN Transition**
 - Sudanese president says will not accept UN force in Darfur
 - Rifts emerge over Darfur at Arab summit
 - Arab summit opens in Khartoum with sharp divisions over final communique
 - Eight African Arab nations to send troops to Darfur
 - AU looks to Arab summit to push peace efforts in Darfur
 - Arab League and the AU confirm cooperation on Darfur
 - Washington urges Sudan to accept international troops into Darfur
- **UN**
 - UN envoy to visit southern Sudan, Nigeria
- **CPA**
 - Misseriya tribe leader urges resolution of Sudan's Abyei dispute
 - SAF calls on the SPLA to redeploy Paulino's SSDF from Khartoum to southern Sudan
 - SPLA to present timeline for withdrawal from Hamesh Khoreib
- **Darfur**
 - North Darfur governor rejects visit by Swedish minister for international cooperation
 - President Bashir's advisor says monitors to deploy to the Sudan-Chad border area next week
- **Southern Sudan**
 - Sudanese refugees urged to return home from Uganda
 - South Sudan Yambio fears famine this year

HIGHLIGHTS:

Arab Summit Meeting/ AMIS-UN Transition

Sudanese president says will not accept UN force in Darfur

(*ST* – 28th Mar. **Khartoum**) Sudanese president, Omar Hassan al-Bashir, in a speech at the 18th Arab summit Tuesday that Khartoum would not accept the deployment of foreign troops in the country's war-torn Darfur region.

Al-Bashir has said that AU troops are capable of playing a peacekeeping role in Darfur and there is thus no need for international troops.

"The AU troops, after their experience and real practice in resolving conflict in Africa, are completely capable of playing their role without international intervention", he said.

We renew our call to the international community, as well as our Arab and African brothers, to provide the necessary financial support to these troops and to increase the participation of Arab and African troops in the mission by the the required numbers, so that the AU can continue playing its role" Bashir further said.

However, First Vice President Salva Kiir told Reuters that U.N. forces could enter Darfur even before such an agreement was signed, provided they had a clear mandate so that they did not become entangled in the conflict.

This divergence illustrates the dissidences within the Sudanese government about the UN takeover in Darfur. The Second Vice President Ali Osman Taha was also been denigrated by his National Congress Party over statement favourable to the UN presence in Darfur after the conclusion of a peace deal with the rebels.

Sudanese President praised the Arab League for its support in the reconstruction of southern Sudan.

Addressing the 18th Arab League summit, which opened 28 March in the Sudanese capital Khartoum, the president said Sudan's first priority was the restoration of peace and security all over the country.

However, President Bashir added that Sudan will not attain comprehensive peace as long as conflict continues in the western Darfur region.

Peace in Sudan "will not be complete until war ends in another beloved part of our country, that is Darfur", he said.

In this regard, the president expressed the country's determination to solve the Darfur issue peacefully through peace talks with the Darfur rebels.

Rifts emerge over Darfur at Arab summit

(*AFP/ST* – 28th Mar. **Khartoum**) Arab leaders gathered at a summit focused on mounting chaos in Iraq and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, while rifts emerged over host Sudan's rejection of UN troops for war-torn Darfur.

The annual meeting was marred by the absence of a number of key regional heavyweights, including Egyptian President Husni Mubarak and Saudi King Abdullah.

Addressing the summit amid tensions, its host, Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir, warned that Khartoum would not accept the deployment of foreign troops in its troubled western Darfur region.

"The African Union forces are capable of accomplishing their mission in Darfur without any foreign intervention," Bashir told the one-day gathering in Khartoum.

Instead, Bashir called on "Arab countries and the international community to support financially the AU forces," which are cash strapped and undermanned.

The UN Security Council voted on Friday to speed up plans to deploy peacekeepers to replace the African Union mission in Darfur.

While Arab foreign ministers agreed to a raft of draft resolutions over the weekend, the members remained divided over Darfur and wrote a text that stopped short of Khartoum's demand for outright support.

An Arab League official said that the resolution, which stipulates Khartoum must approve any deployment of UN peacekeepers to replace the African Union force in Darfur, still lacks full support and is not assured approval.

Only Egypt and Arab League Secretary General Amr Mussa are backing full implementation of the UN Security Council resolution on Darfur, the source said, while other members are lining up behind Sudan.

Sudan's Foreign Minister Lam Akol demanded Arab funding for the AU mission Saturday in order to "abort attempts to handover its tasks to international forces", but other members deferred the issue until Tuesday's summit, the Arab League official said.

Arab summit opens in Khartoum with sharp divisions over final communique

(*AP/ST* – 28th Mar. **Khartoum**) The annual Arab League summit was sharply divided even before it began Tuesday, with late-night wrangling over the wording of the final declaration and the absence of a number of key leaders at a meeting meant to tackle the region's tricky problems.

Although regional heavyweights Egypt and Saudi Arabia did not send their heads of state, Jordan's King Abdullah II arrived shortly before the meeting began, countering earlier reports that he would also not attend.

The gathering opened with a recitation from the Quran, Islam's holy book, and an address by Algerian President Abdelaziz Bouteflika, host of last year's summit.

Some of the absent leaders cited security concerns, others have political differences with the Sudanese government. The United States government had also asked friendly Arab leaders to stay away to prevent a show of support for the Sudanese government, under international pressure to allow U.N. peacekeepers in the wartorn western region of Darfur, said several Arab diplomats from countries whose heads of state were absent.

In light of the many no-shows, the summit was likely to be shortened to one day instead of two, diplomats said.

Another blow to the annual meeting could come early on the agenda.

Arab League Secretary-General Amr Musa, whose term expires in May, was expected to be nominated for a second term. But the leading Sudanese daily Al-Sahafa reported that Yemen was putting forward its own candidate at the last minute, a move that would highlight the lack of consensus among Arab leaders.

The annual meeting of the 22-member league is contending with complex issues involving Iraq's future, Iran's dispute with the West over its nuclear program and how to deal with a Hamas-led government in the Palestinian territories.

Hours before leaders arrived at the summit's venue, a conference center at the convergence of the White and Blue Nile rivers, armed Sudanese soldiers in blue camouflage sealed off the streets and set up checkpoints.

Dogs sniffed bags and metal detectors and scanners were used to screen delegates, journalists and organizers coming into the complex.

Sudan is hoping to garner the support of other Arab countries in its position on the Darfur conflict, where it is resisting Western pressure — and a U.N. resolution — for the African Union peacekeeping force to be replaced later this year by a much bigger U.N. force.

While Egypt has been very supportive of Khartoum, and the final resolution expresses support, there is a view that Sudan is seeking to exploit its standoff with the West for its own ends.

Late Monday, ministers worked for four hours to agree on the wording of the Darfur section in the final resolution. Sudan had come up with a version that was unacceptable to Moussa, diplomats said, and it was altered to offer only vague support for Sudan. The resolution also does not commit Arabs to any financing of African Union forces, as the United States had hoped for.

Some Sudanese have complained that the impoverished country should not spend its money on the summit. Popular columnist Jaafar Abbas criticized the summit in Al-Sahafa newspaper on Tuesday.

"What is the volume of Arab investment in Sudan in comparison with the Chinese or Indian? I don't believe it is hospitality when a Bedouin slaughters his only goat for his guest. Rather, it is stupidity."

However, Arab diplomats have said Libyan leader Muammar Gadhafi paid the entire US\$15 million cost of the summit.

Eight African Arab nations to send troops to Darfur

(*Xinhua/ST* – 28th Mar. **Khartoum**) Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh said on Tuesday that eight African Arab nations have agreed to send troops to Sudan's Darfur region to enforce an African Union(AU) peacekeeping mission there.

Saleh told reporters after a closed-door session of the ongoing 18th Arab League (AL) summit that the decision of sending Arab troops to Darfur was made under Sudan's request, which indicated the league's support to Sudan's position against a deployment of international forces in Darfur.

"We rejected sending international forces to Darfur without Sudanese government's approval, but decided to send Arab forces into AU forces as an assistance to the AU peacekeeping mission in the region," said a final declaration of the summit, a copy of which was obtained by Xinhua.

AU looks to Arab summit to push peace efforts in Darfur

(*ST* – 28th Mar. **Abuja**) The AU looks to the Arab Summit currently being held in Khartoum, to contribute to moving forward the Abuja negotiations aimed at restoring peace in Darfur.

The AU Spokesman called upon Arab States to come forward and participate in the post-conflict building, development, rehabilitation and reconstruction of Darfur, the Khartoum based *Akhbar Alyaum*.

He underscored the fact that Darfur is in dire need for Arab initiatives and that the Khartoum Summit resolutions should take this into consideration, adding that such initiatives would help fulfill the legitimate aspirations of the citizens of Darfur.

Noureddine Mezni, the AU Mediation Spokesman, said that the Region of Darfur clearly represents a typical example to be emulated in future Afro-Arab Co-operation. The Sudan, he added, is seen as the connecting bridge, bringing the Arabs and Africans together.

He said that Darfur, in fact would remain the most glaring example of the embodiment of Afro-Arab solidarity, whom he said have a common destiny. In this regard, he said that Afro-Arab Co-operation had a wide spectrum which the Arab Summit could cover. The League of Arab States, he said, has continued to associate itself with the Abuja negotiations right from the onset.

The League of Arab States is one of the active International Partners helping to push the peace process forward.

He pointed out that there was constant co-ordination and cooperation between Amr Mussa, the Arab League Secretary General and Alpha Oumar Konaré, Chairperson of the AU Commission. Similarly, communication has also been maintained between the Arab League representative in Abuja and Salim Ahmed Salim, Special Envoy of the African Union (AU) and the Chief Mediator, in the search for a just and comprehensive peace in Darfur.

Arab League and the AU confirm cooperation on Darfur

(*AlAyaam* – 29th Mar. **Khartoum**) The Arab League has announced it is cooperating with the AU in efforts to resolve the Darfur crisis.

The AU has meanwhile requested the Sudan government to disarm the *Janjaweed* and other armed groups and specify their positions without delay and pointed out that the armed conflicts in the area can not be resolved through military means.

The UN has on the other hand called upon participants to the Khartoum summit to exert pressures on the parties to the Abuja talks to reach a peace deal.

UN's Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs and representative of the Secretary-General to the Arab summit meeting, Ibrahim Gambari, called for the strengthening of the of the AU force in Darfur. He pointed out that the humanitarian situation in the Darfur region is worsening and can not bear a delay until a transition is complete.

Washington urges Sudan to accept international troops into Darfur

(*AlSahafal Agencies* – 29th Mar. **Khartoum, Washington**) The United States has yesterday urged the Sudanese government not to waste time and to accept the deployment of UN peacekeeping troops in order to realise stability in Darfur.

The Sudan government has on the other hand condemned these statements saying that such statements may hamper the peace process in Abuja.

UN

UN envoy to visit southern Sudan, Nigeria

(*Xinhua/ST* – 28th Mar. **Nairobi**) A senior United Nations envoy to Sudan is set to visit southern Sudan after separate attacks earlier this month on United Nations offices in the region, the UN announced on Tuesday.

"Pronk will visit on March 30-31 to meet various officials, including those from the UN Mission in Sudan (UNMIS), and he will also go to Yei, the site of a deadly attack on a UN refugee agency compound, and to Yambio, where two Bangladeshi peacekeepers were wounded on March 19 when 100 armed men attacked their base," it said.

A local guard was killed and a staff member and another local guard seriously wounded when two gunmen attacked UNHCR's compound in Yei mid this month, forcing the suspension of the planned repatriation of some of the hundreds of thousands of Sudanese who had fled the bloody civil war.

UNHCR set up a presence in Yei in 2004 to prepare for the return of southern Sudanese refugees from the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Uganda to the West Equatorial region.

A planned repatriation movement from the DRC to the Yei region due to start this week has been suspended while UNHCR reviews the situation.

After visiting southern Sudan, Pronk will then travel to Abuja in Nigeria on April 1-2, to meet the parties involved in the peacetalks on Darfur, the UN news reported.

Last week, Pronk told the UN Security Council that killings, rapes and other abuse of human rights in Darfur continued to threaten the peace in Sudan as a whole, and he called for a swift

peace agreement and a peacekeeping force large enough to cover theregion and deter any attack.

Sudanese officials have expressed optimism about striking a peace deal with rebels in Nigeria within weeks to end the three-year conflict in Darfur.

Sudan's Foreign Minister Lam Akol said the peace talks underway in Abuja between rebels from Sudan's western Darfur region and the Sudanese government, may result in a peace deal by the end of April.

CPA

Misseriya tribe leader urges resolution of Sudan's Abyei dispute

(SRS/ST – 29th Mar. **Khartoum**) The leader of the Arab Misseriya tribe has called upon the Government of National Unity to resolve the Abyei border dispute between the Dinka Ngok and the Misseriya communities.

In an interview with Sudan Radio Service (SRS) in Khartoum on Friday, Misseriya leader Umda Erika Mohamed Osman called the dispute over the Abyei border “a manufactured conflict”, saying that it is aimed at continuing war between southerners and the Arab Misseriya in Abyei. Osman described the Misseriya community as people of peace and unity.

He appealed to President Omar al-Bashir and his two vice presidents to resolve the Abyei dispute, adding that the Misseriya and the Dinka Ngok will try to make peace among themselves if the Government of National Unity fails to resolve the dispute.

He said the Dinka Ngok, the Misseriya and the Rizigat communities were supposed to hold a reconciliation and peaceful co-existence conference in Aweil this month but the conference was delayed by the Arab Summit taking place in Khartoum.

The Misseriya leader also appealed to those Arab leaders meeting in Khartoum this week not to interfere with Sudanese affairs, but to help the government speed up the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement.

SAF calls on the SPLA to redeploy Paulino's SSDF from Khartoum to southern Sudan

(AlAyaam – 29th Mar. **Khartoum**) The SPLA has formally been requested by the SAF to redeploy Paulino's forces that joined the SPLA lately and are still in Khartoum back to southern Sudan.

SPLA Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Wayai Deng wondered why the SAF would request the SPLA to transfer the SSDF from Khartoum to Juba while they (the SAF) were the ones responsible for bringing the SSDF to Khartoum.

He said that GoSS president Salva Kiir has instructed that a part of the budget for the GoSS be allocated for the return of the SSDF from Khartoum.

SPLA to present timeline for withdrawal from Hamesh Khoreib

(AlRai AlAam – 29th Mar. **Khartoum**) The SPLA has promised to hand over to the SAF and the JDB today its timetable for withdrawal from Hamesh Khoreib.

The head of the JDB held talks yesterday with the SPLA Chief of Staff on a number of issues pertaining to the work of the JDB.

The SPLA chief of staff said that he told the SAF representative of the SPLA's rejection of the continued harassments it has been subjected to at the hands of militias aligned to the SAF the latest of which is the recent incident in the Abyei region "especially since the perpetrators of the incident in Abyei are still at large".

He said that the head of the JDB promised to make contacts with the relevant parties in Abyei to resolve the issue.

The SPLA commander further pointed out that the SPLA is drafting a timetable which is almost complete to be presented to the JDB on the withdrawal of the SPLA from the east. He said the second batch of between 1,500 – 2,000 soldiers of the SPLA will start withdrawing from the east before 10th April.

Darfur

North Darfur governor rejects visit by Swedish minister for international cooperation

(*AlAyaam/SUNA* – 29th Mar. **el-Fasher**) The government of North Darfur State has rejected a visit by the Swedish Minister for International Cooperation and its acting foreign minister to el-Fasher that was expected to take place today.

The governor who presided over the meeting said that the people of Darfur do not welcome anybody who insults Prophet Mohamed.

The governor sent a message to the Swedish diplomatic mission in Khartoum saying the officials were not welcome and adding that the state government would not guarantee the safety of neither the minister nor the delegation accompanying the minister.

President Bashir's advisor says monitors to deploy to the Sudan-Chad border area next week

(*AlSahafa* – 29th Mar. **Khartoum**) President Bashir's advisor Dr. Mustafa Osman Ismail has announced that next week shall witness the deployment of monitors on the border stretches between Sudan and Chad.

He said this is in line with the Tripoli Agreement that called for such action.

Southern Sudan

Sudanese refugees urged to return home from Uganda

(*IRIN/ST* – 28th Mar. **Kampala**) Despite recent attacks targeting United Nations compounds in southern Sudan, the Sudanese minister of state for the interior has said the region is peaceful enough for refugees in neighbouring countries to return home.

"I am here to convey a message that there is peace in Sudan," Brig Aleu Avieny Aleu told Sudanese refugees in Uganda on Monday, adding that the authorities would guarantee the security of the returnees. "I am the biblical dove from the Noah's ark that went to Khartoum and returned to tell you that the floods are over. Let us go home."

He admitted, however, that it was not yet a time of "milk and honey" in southern Sudan. "But we need all of you to participate in building the Sudan we have been fighting for," he said. "The LRA [the Ugandan rebel Lord's Resistance Army] still exists, but not as before. They will not affect you when you go home. We shall protect you."

Aleu was in the Ugandan capital, Kampala, to sign an agreement with the Uganda government and the UN refugee agency (UNHCR) that sets up a legal framework for the first voluntary repatriations of Sudanese refugees in Uganda. "There is a commitment from both the government of Sudan and the government of southern Sudan that southern Sudan is no longer a place for the LRA; that Southern Sudan will not be an area to launch hostile attacks on the people of Uganda," he said.

Thousands of Sudanese refugees who have been living in settlements in Uganda are scheduled to start repatriation in April. Moses Ali, Uganda's deputy premier and minister in charge of refugees, said during the signing ceremony that he was worried by the security situation, citing new arrivals of more than 500 Sudanese refugees in north-western Uganda since January. "The recent incidents in southern Sudan indicate that all is not well, especially the recent attacks on UN offices and staff in the region. There is need to make clear assessments of areas of return, to avoid repatriating refugees to unsafe areas only to come back the following day," he said.

Ali signed for Uganda while Jean-Marie Fakhouri, UNHCR operations director for Sudan and Chad, signed for the refugee agency. Fakhouri warned that the security situation was still uncertain. "Of course there is change in the Sudan since the signing of the comprehensive agreement last year," he said. "A government of national unity has been formed. There is a constitution. Things are moving in the right direction.

"What concerns me is the security situation in Sudan," he said. "Where you have humanitarian workers themselves facing security problems, it is going to be very difficult for us to consider the return of refugees." On 22 March, one person was killed and two others injured during an attack on the UNHCR camp in Yei. Three days later, the UN office in Yambio was attacked, forcing the withdrawal of staff members from the area.

"I am very hopeful that things are going to improve," Fakhouri said. "We have given ourselves two weeks to look very seriously at the situation and to do whatever is possible together with the government of southern Sudan to see that security is on the ground and our staff can go back to their offices and refugees can come back."

Some 60,000 refugees in neighbouring countries had agreed to go back to their homes, while 1,900 have come back from Central African Republic, he said. Some 30,000 have registered to return from Uganda, which hosts about 168,000 Sudanese refugees. However, funds for the repatriation operation were still short, as only US \$10 million out of the anticipated \$63 million had been secured, the UNHCR official said.

South Sudan Yambio fears famine this year

(SRS/ST – 28th Mar. **Nairobi**) Farmers in Yambio say they expect famine this year, as insecurity in the county and Western Equatoria at large is preventing them from working on the farms.

Farmers in this area normally plant ground nuts, maize and other crops in March. But the chairperson of Yambio Farmers' Association, Bernard Kpasira, says that due to recent

attacks by suspected Lord's Resistance Army rebels, people have been avoiding their farms for fear of being attacked.

Kpasira told Sudan Radio Service (SRS) that most farmers are spending a lot of time hiding in the bushes to avoid attacks and possible abduction by the suspected LRA.

He also said many refugees and IDP's are expected to return to the state, increasing the chances of food shortages in the area.

Kpasira urged the Government of Southern Sudan to improve security in the state and to provide seeds to the farmers to help prevent the feared famine.