



UNITED NATIONS MISSION IN SUDAN
UNMIS

UNMIS Media Monitoring Report, 24th May 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:

- **UN/ AU-UN Transition**
 - Sudan violating international humanitarian law - UN's Annan
 - Government denies UN Secretary-General's accusations that Sudan is violating humanitarian law

- **GoNU**
 - Ruling NCP, SPLM finalize preparations of leaderships joint meeting
 - Sudan's Taha attends Eritrea independence celebrations

- **CPA**
 - JDB forms joint committee to address the Lord's Resistance Army issue
 - SPLM threatens to withdraw its ministers from the cabinet in Blue Nile State

- **Southern Sudan**
 - South Sudan government gives Ugandan LRA rebels 20,000 dollars
 - Violence in S. Sudan's Jonglei forces MSF withdrawal

HIGHLIGHTS:

UN/ AU-UN Transition

Sudan violating international humanitarian law - UN's Annan

(AP/ST – 23rd May. **United Nations**) Sudan's government is violating international humanitarian law by barring fuel, food and relief aid to civilians in Darfur, U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan said in a report released Monday.

The report to the U.N. Security Council described in frank terms how the people of Darfur have been exposed to more violence in recent months, even as aid groups are cutting the programs because of insufficient funding.

"Civilians in Darfur continued to suffer the consequences of persistent violence and insecurity," Annan said in the report, which was sent to the Security Council and was to be made public in the coming days.

Government embargoes on goods entering areas of Darfur held by the rebel Sudanese Liberation Army "have prevented the access of civilians to vital goods and constitute a violation of international humanitarian law," Annan wrote.

The report covered March and April but made clear that a May 5 peace deal signed between Sudan's government and a main rebel faction has done little to bring solace to civilians in Darfur, where fighting has killed nearly 200,000 people and displaced 2.5 million since 2003.

Annan accused all parties in the conflict of also violating humanitarian law with "totally unacceptable levels of violence and despicable attacks against civilians," even as final negotiations for the peace deal took place.

He demanded splinter rebel factions which have refused to sign the peace deal be urged to join in efforts toward peace.

Annan's assessment came just days after the top U.N humanitarian official, Jan Egeland, warned that relief efforts in Darfur could collapse within weeks unless the government makes good on the peace deal and donors fund aid work there.

Despite the peace deal, Annan said women still faced rape and other abuses as they went to collect firewood. Local government officials have denied the U.N. access to detention facilities, and humanitarian workers have come under increased attack.

Annan also accused Sudan of failing to punish top state officials and armed leaders for attacks against civilians. That reinforces "a widely shared sense of impunity," he said.

Sudan has opposed an investigation by the U.N. war crimes tribunal into atrocities in Darfur, and instead set up its own investigation and a Special Court for Darfur. Annan said the Sudanese body has only heard one case so far, dating from October, 2005.

When he spoke before the council last week, Egeland warned there was a shortfall of hundreds of millions of dollars in aid.

Annan took up the call, warning that every day mattered for Darfur's civilians.

"I therefore repeat my urgent appeal for the international community to continue supporting the humanitarian effort for Darfur in this critical phase," he said.

Government denies UN Secretary-General's accusations that Sudan is violating humanitarian law

(*AlSahafa* – 24th May. **Khartoum**) Following criticism by the UN Secretary-General that Sudan is violating international humanitarian law, a state ministry for Sudan's Ministry for Humanitarian Affairs expressed surprise over the Secretary-General's statement and pointed out that there are no restrictions imposed by the government to the work of humanitarian organisations or activities.

State minister Ahmed Mohamed Haroun accused the UN of basing its views on past information.

He added that the government has in fact carried out enough positive measures to facilitate the flow of relief and movement of humanitarian workers.

He further pointed out that USG Jan Egeland's last visit to Sudan even helped set comprehensive mechanisms for cooperation in the humanitarian field.

GoNU

Ruling NCP, SPLM finalize preparations of leaderships joint meeting

(*ST* – 23rd May. **Khartoum**) The ruling National Congress Party (NCP) and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) have affirmed completion of preparations for holding their joint meeting on 27- 28 of current May.

The meeting will bring together the members of NCP Leadership Office and the SPLM Politburo.

In a joint meeting at the NC Headquarters in Khartoum Tuesday co-chaired by the NCP Deputy Chairman for Political and Organizational Affairs, Nafie Ali Nafie and SPLM Secretary General Pagan Amoum, the two sides agreed upon the meeting agenda, which will focus on assessment of the progress of the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) and the relations of the two parties to the agreement with the other political forces.

Nafie said in press statement that the meeting comes within the context of the efforts to activate the two parties, exchange of information about their structures and to discuss possibility of benefiting from the practical experiences of each of them.

He pointed out that the joint meeting of the NCP and SPLM leaderships comes within the framework of endeavours to bolster the joint relations and cooperation and to remove impediments in this connection.

Meanwhile, SPLM Secretary General said that his meeting with the NCP leadership, which represents the beginning of his political activity in Khartoum since the assumption of his post following the SPLM restructuring, came with the aim to discuss arrangements for the joint meeting.

Pagan expressed hopes that the meeting would contribute to removal of all obstacles that impede implementation of the CPA and solution of all issues of the country as well as strengthening of the relations between the two parties to consolidate peace and realize democratic transformation in the country.

He added that he would meet with the leaders of all political forces for formulation of common vision on peace and sustainable democratic transformation.

Sudan's Taha attends Eritrea independence celebrations

(*ST* – 24th May. **Khartoum**) Sudanese Second Vice-President Ali Osman Taha headed Wednesday to Eritrea to attend independence celebrations and hold consultations on efforts to rekindle a peace process between Khartoum and Asmara-backed eastern rebels.

Taha was accompanied by Foreign Minister Lam Akol, Minister of Federal government Abdelbasit Sabdarat, Chief of Sudan National Security Salah Gosh, and the leading member of the ruling National Congress Ibrahim Ahmed Omar.

Eritrea was holding celebrations Wednesday marking its independence, which it acquired from Ethiopia on May 24, 1993.

Sudanese-Eritrean relations have been strained since then, amid mutual accusations of supporting the other's armed opposition groups.

Eastern Sudanese rebels who have bases in Eritrea control an area on the border called Hamesh Khoreib and have been involved in low-intensity guerrilla activity against the Khartoum government for years.

Much like the rebel groups in the western region of Darfur, with whom they have links, the eastern rebels complain of economic marginalisation and want a bigger share of the country's resources.

The release earlier this week of three members of the eastern opposition Beja Congress movement was seen as a conciliatory move that could pave the way for a resumption of peace talks.

The talks could resume on May 30 but there was no official confirmation.

Eritrea has said that it was ready to host such talks.

Libyan-hosted negotiations between Khartoum and the Eastern Front — comprised of the two main minority groups in east Sudan — have been scheduled and postponed several times since last year.

CPA

JDB forms joint committee to address the Lord's Resistance Army issue

(*AlRai AlAam* – 24th May. **Khartoum**) The JDB has announced the formation of a joint committee of the SAF and the SPLA to stop Lord's Resistance Army activities in southern Sudan.

Mjr. Gen. Majzoub Hameida, Spokesperson for the JDB, told the Sudan News Agency yesterday that the committee has set out to gather information in the context of cooperation between the two armies in a joint effort to flush out the Lord's Resistance Army.

Among the key functions of the committee, he adds, are to resolve issues that jeopardise the Protocol on Security Arrangements, to supervise the relocation of their forces and to complete the formation of the Joint Integrated Units (JIUs) in the specified sectors of Khartoum, Abyei, Wau, Malakal, el-Damazeen, the Juba Mountains and Juba.

SPLM threatens to withdraw its ministers from the cabinet in Blue Nile State

(*AlAyaam* – 24th May. **El-Damazeen**) The SPLM has threatened to withdraw ministers and commissioners appointed through the SPLM ticket for the Blue Nile State government should the government continue in what they called “disregard for the CPA”.

The Minister for Federal Government has called upon the two parties to resolve the problems in Blue Nile State.

Southern Sudan

South Sudan government gives Ugandan LRA rebels 20,000 dollars

(*Monitor/ST* – 23rd May. **Kampala**) The southern Sudanese government, gave twenty thousand US dollar to the leaders of Ugandan rebel group to buy food, the Kampala based the Monitor reported Tuesday 23 May.

The Vice-President of Southern Sudan government Riek Marchar has given rebel Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) leader Joseph Kony at least 20,000 dollars (36m shillings). The move has been variously interpreted among Ugandan security circles with some claiming it is a bail out for Kony.

In a video-taped meeting on 2 May, South Sudan's Vice-President Riek Machar handed Kony the package that also included several tons of food rations which, according to highly placed security sources in Uganda, is understood to be facilitation towards "a new lease of life" for a much weakened rebel group.

Riek, who was dressed in a white Kaunda suit, reached for his bag and pulled out bundles of 100 dollars bills, stuffed them in a brown envelope and handed them to Kony. "Here is

20,000 dollars to help you buy food not arms not ammunition," Riek said. The money was received by Kony's number II Vincent Otti and handed over to another LRA rebel officer.

In the video, Kony, in a green military uniform with red pips, looked healthy and talked in a low tone. "I have no problem with Museveni if it is really possible we can end this war," Kony said.

Kony appears with over 20 heavily armed guards. Otti, appeared in similar green military uniform and wore old-fashioned spectacles. "They gave the hefty sum of money to Kony in the pretext of buying food but are they sure what Kony is going to use that money for?" a Ugandan security source wondered yesterday.

Sudan's First Vice-President and leader of southern Sudan Salva Kiir delivered the videotape of the Riek-Kony meeting to President Yoweri Museveni on 12 May. Other sources that watched the DVD that features the meeting said Kony was excited when he received the money. "He got excited and quickly asked where he could change the currency," a source said.

"We were fully aware of the meeting between Riek Machar and Kony but we are not aware whether money changed hands," said UPDF spokesman Maj Felix Kulayigye yesterday.

Following the delivery of the message, the president is expected to guarantee the safety of the internationally wanted rebel leader if he gives up his 20-year insurgency before the end of July. The International Criminal Court last November issued arrest warrants to Kony and four of his top lieutenants.

The ICC, in a swift rejoinder, reacted angrily saying the new peace offer was undermining the case against Kony, Otti and three other commanders. The court argued that President Museveni must remain committed to his November 2003 referral he made to the court.

ICC accuses Kony and the four commanders of murders, abductions, mass burning of houses, looting of entire villages, massive destruction, enslavement and inducement of rape. Past attempts to negotiate an end to the war have failed, with both the Ugandan government and the rebels being accused of lacking commitment to peace talks.

For years, the LRA have used bases in the lawless mountains of southern Sudan to raid northern Uganda, where the war has uprooted up to two million people and triggered one of the world's worst humanitarian disasters.

Violence in S. Sudan's Jonglei forces MSF withdrawal

(*IRIN/ST* – 23rd May. **Nairobi**) Escalating violence in the states of Upper Nile and Jonglei in southern Sudan has forced the international humanitarian organisation Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) to temporarily withdraw its international staff from a number of clinics, the charity said.

Clashes between armed groups and direct attacks on villages have occurred in the region north and south of the River Sobat since the beginning of April, the medical charity said in a statement on Tuesday. On 10 April, armed militia attacked the village of Ulang, forcing most

of the patients and villagers, along with MSF's staff, to flee. Thirty-one people were reported killed and dozens injured.

Interethnic fighting is not uncommon at this time of year, when local water sources dry up and various Sudanese ethnic groups, including the Nuer-Lou and the Nuer-Jikany, drive their cattle towards the Sobat River. The seasonal concentration of cattle and armed groups in a small area often results in increased tensions and interethnic clashes.

According to a regional observer, it seemed that the Lou - possibly with the support of the South Sudan Defense Force militia - attacked the Jikany in Ulang. A week later, armed Jikany men descended upon the small Lou village of Dini at the confluence of the Sobat and the White Nile rivers, in apparent retaliation for the previous attack, killing approximately 15 people and stealing 400 heads of cattle.

The attacks, however, are taking place within the context of a controversial disarmament programme by the southern Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) in the volatile southeastern state of Jonglei. "The SPLA is trying to disarm all the groups of armed civilians in Jonglei," the regional observer said.

Initially, the observer added, the armed civilians - the so-called White Army - had no problem with the disarmament exercise, which started in January. Since giving up some of their weapons, however, they have been attacked by armed civilians of other ethnic groups and livestock has been looted. Various groups of the White Army now accuse the SPLA of carrying out the disarmament programme without providing subsequent protection against cattle raiding. Scores of people were killed and wounded in the village of Poktap when fighting between SPLA forces and armed civilians of the Lou community escalated on 2 May.

According to United Nations sources, interethnic clashes have continued for the last seven days in Jonglei State, also drawing in members of the Dinka and Muerle communities. A large number of civilians have reportedly been killed.

The escalating fighting between White Army groups and threats of further violence forced MSF to evacuate its international staff from Nasir and from clinics in Lankien and Pieri in mid-May. In Pieri, most of the patients in the MSF clinic, among them 120 patients being treated for tuberculosis, were forced to flee. Medical equipment, drugs and food for the patients were looted, leaving the clinic effectively destroyed. "Our Pieri compound has been completely looted. Everything is gone," said Kate Done, assistant head of mission for MSF Holland in southern Sudan, on Tuesday.

"The patients were scattered in mid-treatment," Done said. "They have runaway packages of medicines for one month. The issue is to locate them so that they can complete their [TB] programme in a supervised manner."

"We are concerned about the growing number of violent incidents," said MSF coordinator Cristoph Hippchen. "This means humanitarian assistance to the people of Upper Nile and Jonglei, already far below what is needed, will be even less now."