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UN/ AU-UN Transition

WFP to increase food rations in Sudan's Darfur region

(*ST* – 29th May. **Rome**) The United Nations World Food Programme announced today that food aid rations, recently reduced by half for more than three million people in Sudan, would be increased to 84 percent in energy content from June to September in Darfur, thanks to the latest donations towards WFP's emergency operation.

"We greatly appreciate the donations received so far, which provide an urgent boost to people's daily diet," said James Morris, WFP's Executive Director in a statement issued in Rome. "However, continued contributions, preferably in cash, are still crucial to help address urgent needs in the months ahead."

At the beginning of May, the United States announced it would divert to Sudan food aid shipments valued at US\$46.2 million. Other donors, including Canada, the European Commission, Australia, Germany and Denmark, have also offered funds and pledges which, together with an announced Sudanese contribution of cereal, will enable WFP to raise the number of kilocalories per person per day to 1,770 (the minimum daily requirement is 2,100 kilocalories) in Darfur.

The Sudan Government's donation of 20,000 metric tons of cereals is a welcome contribution that will allow WFP to distribute a full ration of cereals in Darfur for the next three months. For about 370, 000 people in the East and Central areas, rations remain at 64 percent of the required minimum energy content.

"We are now in a race against time to deliver more food both to the people of Sudan and to people in Darfur, as the onset of the rainy season in June makes roads inaccessible," said Morris. "The average time it takes for pledges to arrive as food aid in the country is four to six months. The earliest WFP could hope to restore complete rations across Sudan is October, but this still depends on the flow of contributions."

A critical shortage of donor funds forced WFP to announce in April, and distribute in May, half rations in Darfur and the East of Sudan, a decision which Morris described as one of the hardest he had ever made.

WFP has been warning since November 2005 that it would need significant donations, US\$600 million by May, to guarantee a continued flow of food aid to more than 6.1 million hungry people in Sudan. But five months into 2006, WFP's Emergency Operation in Sudan is only 42.6 percent funded. So the agency needs donors to provide contributions now to cover requirements for the last quarter of the year.

"The world has a deep obligation to do its utmost to assist the people of Sudan, many of whom have already suffered immense trauma as a result of brutal conflict," said Morris.

Sudan gives mixed signals on UN peacekeepers

(VOA/ST – 29th May. **Darfur**) As more than two million refugees from the fighting in Darfur endure triple-digit temperatures under the blazing African sun, the Sudanese government is sending mixed messages about whether it is willing to allow international peacekeepers to take up positions in the strife-torn region.

The Darfur peace agreement notwithstanding, the refugees just keep coming. In the first four months of this year alone, the size of the refugee camp at Gereida in southern Darfur tripled. It is now home to more than 100,000 people and there is nothing here for them. No tents, no plastic sheeting and no shelter from temperatures that top 115 degrees by the mid-afternoon.

The latest arrivals tell of fresh violence, some of it perpetrated by the government-backed Janjaweed militia. But some of it is now the result of infighting between the rebel groups here that are seeking a fairer share from the government in Khartoum.

The only force protecting innocent civilians: 7,000 troops deployed here by the African Union. They patrol an area the size of France, and UN official

Jan Egeland says they are vastly outmanned and outgunned. "These are our hope, these African Union forces. But they are too few. And they have too little ability to move quickly and proactively to crisis areas. They need to be better-resourced and need, I believe, a more proactive mandate."

With the peace agreement signed, the African Union says it wants the United Nations to take over peacekeeping responsibilities in Darfur. And so does the United States - the Bush administration wants an initial force of 14,000 UN peacekeepers to take up positions in Darfur. But in the Sudanese capital, Khartoum, some government officials are saying not so fast. And they include the man who actually signed the peace agreement on the government's behalf.

Mazjoub Al Khalifa Ahmed says the only force bringing peace to Darfur should be an African one. "Let us come up with something workable and practical that will not jeopardize the sovereignty of the country, and will maintain peace on the ground. There is no need to fail the AU and make a transition from the AU to the UN."

It is not only the Sudanese government that is claiming UN peacekeepers might breach Sudan's sovereignty. Al Qaeda's leader, Osama bin Laden, is urging his followers to wage a jihad against any UN force that is deployed in Sudan a country that granted him refuge back in the 1990s.

The man who invited him to Sudan, is now rejecting that threat from the Al Qaeda leader. Dr. Hassan Al Turabi says UN peacekeepers will be safe in Sudan. "For the moment, I, as a matter of need and necessity, I welcome any interference. It doesn't have to come from any particular countries who are suspect of having ulterior motives."

And the UN is indicating some willingness to compromise on the force's composition, to avoid the prospect of an overwhelmingly white force moving in to resolve an African problem.

Egeland says "We believe it is in the interests of Sudan, in the interests of the people, in the interests of all Sudanese and certainly the government that there is such a force in the future. Well funded, with African, Arab, Asian, European and other forces. And that it will have regular budget funding from the UN, and therefore be more securely resourced.

Even if the government in Khartoum laid out the welcome mat immediately, it would take at least 6 months of planning and pre-positioning before the UN operation could get underway. That is at least another six months of fear and uncertainty for the refugees of Darfur.

Sudan ruling parties divided over UN Darfur force

(*ST* – 30th May. **Khartoum**) Sudan's two ruling parties are divided over sending U.N. forces to its violent Darfur region despite three days of direct talks aimed at tackling the thorniest issues facing the war-torn country.

Khartoum's northern-dominated government has rejected a U.N. takeover from struggling African Union (AU) soldiers monitoring a shaky truce in the remote west. The AU said on Monday one soldier was killed and five more wounded in two attacks on its troops in Darfur last week.

Veteran U.N. trouble-shooter Lakhdar Brahimi last week secured a guarantee that a joint U.N.-AU team could begin work within days to plan for a possible takeover, the first step towards transition. But on Monday the government was still divided over U.N. troops in Darfur.

"The United Nations forces were not rejected to come to Darfur, but we agreed that ... they should come with a defined mandate," said First Vice President Salva Kiir, head of the former rebel Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM).

But President Omar Hassan al-Bashir, chief of the northern National Congress Party (NCP), said he had a different opinion.

"We heard the words of Salva Kiir, and his opinion is different to mine," he told reporters late on Monday night. He declined to answer a question on why he opposed U.N. transition in Darfur.

The former foes, now partners in government, began a forum on Saturday to overcome obstacles to the implementation of the southern peace deal, including separate conflicts in the east and Darfur, where the United States says genocide is unfolding.

Differences over key issues like the borders of the oil-rich Abyei region pushed the talks into an extra day and ate away into the night before a rather bland final communiqué was agreed.

CPA

President Bashir, Vice-President Kiir to hold talks with political forces

(*AlAyaam* – 30th May. **Khartoum**) The Speaker of the National Assembly has revealed that the leaders of the National Congress Party and the SPLM are keen on holding talks with their counterparts in the other political forces to give impetus to the peace process in Sudan.

The Speaker said that two parties had a constructive dialogue between them and would like to reach out to the political parties in the country to exchange views.

SPLA blames recent clashes with Lou-Nuer on armed militias

(*Sudan Radio Service* – 29th May. **Juba**) A senior SPLA official has blamed the recent clashes between the SPLA and Lou-Nuer on the armed groups that have refused to either join the SPLA or Sudan Armed Forces.

Brigadier Mach Paul told reporters during a press briefing in Juba that the fighting broke out when the Lou-Nuer killed two SPLA soldiers and the SPLA was forced to retaliate, the Sudan Radio Service (SRS) reported.

Brigadier Mach declared the armed groups as -bandits- and said that SPLA is working to disarm all armed groups in southern Sudan.

He issued a stern warning to the armed groups in southern Sudan to join SPLA or Sudan Armed Forces or be disarmed by force.

Brigadier Mach noted that the withdrawal of Sudan armed forces in the Equatoria region has led to relative peace in the region.

He added that the SPLA will move on with disarmament programme despite opposition from the armed communities in southern Sudan.

He appealed to the communities to look at the disarmament exercise as part of implementing the peace agreement instead of opposing the move.

President Bashir orders the release of all female prisoners in prisons around the country

(*AlRai AlAam* – 30th May. **Khartoum**) The President of the Republic has issued a decree releasing all inmates in the Omdurman prison for women, says state minister for the interior, Alieu Ajiang.

The state minister announced this at a press conference yesterday following the conclusion of a meeting of the leadership offices of the NCP and the SPLM.

Sudan's Misariyah blame Abyei report for instability in the region

(*ST* – 29th May. **Khartoum**) In a petition to the Sudanese presidency Misseriya Arab tribes in the disputed region of Abyei rejected the conclusions of Abyei Boundary Commission (ABC) and blamed it for the administrative deterioration and security instability in the area.

The central oil-rich territory of Abyei continues to be one of the main stumbling blocks in the north-south deal because of a dispute between the Arab Misseriya and African Dinka Ngok tribes over ownership of the region.

In the first petition of its kind since an understanding and reactions were established towards the decision by the ABC, the Misseriya citizens of Abyei yesterday put forward a petition to the presidency.

It further recommended convening a special popular conference on the problem of Abyei to bring together both sides of the dispute and their neighbours and with all the people of Sudan to be represented. It further categorically rejected the ABC's decision and blamed it for the administrative deterioration and security instability in the area. The petition was signed by 74 leaders of the Misseriya tribe in Abyei.

The petition which was delivered by Mahdi Babu Nimir, Hiraykah Izzeldin Humaidah, Mohamed Khatir Jumah, Adam Mohamed Salim and Suleiman al-Dibalu included the views of the Misariyah Arab tribe's leadership regarding the ABC's decision.

The tribe said in the petition that the ABC experts had based their decision on information from youths in the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) who did not have the expertise or historical knowledge of the land's boundaries or the relationship between tribes.

According to the petition, the experts should have relied on leaders of neighbouring tribes who had knowledge of the boundaries and the relationships between the tribes for their information.

These leaders included the Nazir (tribal leader) Bashir Raihan who had lived with Nazir al-Rawb Biong south of the river and Nazir Latjok and Nazir Abdelbagi Akol of Abyei and Bahr-al-Ghazal.

The petition further said the experts had failed when they admitted they did not know the area's 1905 boundaries. They said this was intentional because they had then based their findings on the 1956 boundaries. They said this in itself was a breach of the Abyei protocol and agreement and meant the protocol and constitution needed to be amended from 1905 to 1956.

The petition warned that the commission's report inflamed disputes between the citizens of the area. In order to contain the disputes the petition said it was necessary to set up a new commission whose final decision would be taken by the people of Sudan.

The International Crisis Group think-tank said in a recent report that "the NCP's actions regarding Abyei are a blatant violation of the CPA, creating perhaps the most volatile element of the entire agreement right now."

About 50 Dinkas staged a demonstration outside the opening ceremony of the NCP-SPLM meeting shouting their support for the peace deal and calling for a swift resolution of the Abyei issue.

DPA/ Darfur

Armed group attacks governor and entourage in South Darfur

(*AlAyaam* – 30th May. **Khartoum, Nyala**) One IDP was killed and tens injured and others arrested yesterday in anti-DPA demonstrations in the northern part of Nyala town.

The protestors carried along their dead and injured and among those arrested by police was an IDP with 25 molotovs.

Tens of other men and women coming in from Kalma and Bileil camps with placards protesting the DPA and posters with the pictures of later Dr. Garang and AbdulWahid were also arrested on their way to join the other protestors in Nyala town.

Sources say that the demonstrators have handed a letter to the United Nations requesting a just peace that meets the demands of the people of Darfur. They demanded fair compensations to the IDPs and reiterated demands for the position of the Vice-President to be granted Darfur.

Governor attacked by armed group in South Darfur

(*AlAyaam* – 30th May. **Nyala**) Sources in Nyala say the governor of South Darfur and his entourage came under fire from an armed group of SLM supporters as they were on their way from Gireida to Nyala.

The governor's escorts exchanged fire with the attackers and the attackers eventually fled.

No casualties have been reported as a result of this incidence that took place last Sunday.

SLM's Minawi arrives in Darfur

(*ST, AlRai AlAam* – 30th May. **el-Fasher**) Minni Minnawi, arrived in the capital el-Fasher yesterday under heavy security guard. He was received by the governor of North Darfur State and members of the state government, the state-run SUNA reported.

Minnawi however ignored the protocol arrangements the state government had arranged and chose instead to head straight to the AU headquarters in an AU vehicle. At a press conference later, the SLM leader gave an apology to the people of Darfur for not being able to address the public and explained that he was in el-Fasher not on a visit but en route to SLM held territory in the area. He promised a visit later.

In a press conference he held at the headquarters of the African Union mission upon his arrival, Minawi said that the peace agreement, which was recently signed in Abuja, will be implemented due to seriousness of the signatory parties.

He said that the differences that occur between the movement's field commanders were something normal, and usually occur at most political organizations in the world.

Minnawi also reiterated accusations to the government side on violations of the ceasefire agreement and called for the disarmament of the Janjaweed.

AU soldier killed in Darfur ambush - UN

(*Reuters/ST* – 29th May. **Khartoum**) One African Union soldier was killed and another critically wounded when heavily armed men ambushed a patrol not far from their base in West Darfur, the United Nations said.

"The number of attackers is unconfirmed and is reported as between six to 12 and they were reportedly armed with RPGs (rocket-propelled grenades) and AK-47 rifles," the U.N. statement sent late on Sunday said.

The AU on Monday confirmed the ambush but could not give details. The identity of the men behind the attack was unknown.

A U.N. report on Monday said the AU base in Masteri itself was also attacked on May 27 during the night. Around 50 or 60 armed men demanded to see the sector commander, but refused to lay down their weapons.

"After leaving, the armed men fired several RPG rounds into the camp from a short distance," the report said. Five soldiers were injured, it added.

The area has come under attack many times by armed Arab militia, known locally as Janjaweed. They have been amassing since the peace deal and become bolder in engaging AU troops.

The AU has also come under attack in West Darfur in the past by a third rebel group demanding a seat at the Darfur talks.

AbdulWahid to travel to southern Sudan for talks with Kiir

(*AlAyaam* – 30th May. **Khartoum**) AbdulWahid Mohamed Nur who leads the other SLM faction that did not join in signing the Darfur Peace Agreement says he has been invited by the President of the Government of South Sudan, Vice-President Salva Kiir, for talks on the DPA in southern Sudan.

He confirmed he will travel there for the talks.

Rebel JEM rejects Darfur deal, seeks Slovenian mediation

(*Reuters/ST* – 29th May. **Cairo**) A Darfur rebel faction which faces a May 31 deadline to sign a deal to end fighting in western Sudan said on Monday it would not join the agreement without major changes. Further the rebel group leader said he seeks Slovenian mediation.

JEM President Khalil Ibrahim said he would travel for talks on Tuesday to Slovenia, which he said was trying to find common ground between the AU and the rebel groups refusing to sign the AU-sponsored deal.

"We are going to meet tomorrow on the 30th in Ljubljana, this is to find a way. Slovenia is trying to find a solution," Ibrahim told Reuters in Cairo by telephone.

"We are going to present our position. If they can make amendments in this agreement. If not I don't think there is a solution," he said.

Ibrahim said the SLA faction which had rejected the May 5 agreement would also attend the Ljubljana meeting.

"We are not going to sign this agreement unless there is a radical change including real regional government for Darfur, and reconstruction of Darfur, compensation for our people and a fair share of power," he said.

There was no immediate word from Slovenia on their role in Sudan's peace process.

African Union regretted the Slovenian president launched a peace initiative on Darfur without any consultations with the AU mediation; Ambassador Sam Ibok said on February 26 when he received the personal envoy of the Slovenian president.

The Head of the AU Mediation Team, Sam Ibok, said that any political initiative outside the ongoing Abuja Process would, "at this point in time, only serve the purpose of distracting the Parties and diverting their attention away from the critical issues that are the subject of substantive negotiations in this final phase of the Peace Talks, when the AU is striving to build bridges and forge consensus between the Parties".