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Following is a near-verbatim transcript of the press conference of 25 January 2006.

**Spokesperson:** Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen and welcome to this press briefing featuring the Special Representative Mr. Jan Pronk and also the Force Commander of UNMIS Mjr. Gen. Fazle Akbar. It is his last appearance before he leaves the mission to his home country. I'll give the floor to Mr. Pronk and he will be followed by a brief by the Force Commander.

Mr. Pronk ...

**SRSR Pronk:** Thank you. No statements from my part today. Substantive points are going to be raised by General Akbar but I just wanted to confirm your introduction.

You have been here before. You know that General Akbar has been here since August 2004 – we more or less came at the same moment. He is leaving and today in his press conference he will not only say something about the present situation but he also will look back to his whole tenure over here. If there is anybody who really is in the ideal position to judge to which extent the CPA from a military point of view has been respected, that is Gen. Akbar. We are very grateful for his contribution which he made during his one and a half years. He is leaving too soon, in our view, but that is the way it is with military – the rotation is always quicker than amongst civilians.

General Akbar ...

**FC Gen. Akbar.** Thank you Jan, journalists and the people from the media. It is my great pleasure that today I am here to speak to you on my experience, my feelings about the whole mission and how it is going on. Before starting, we all are quite concerned as to what is the deployment state. So I will first give you a short brief on the present deployment state and then take on specific questions that you might have.

Right now we have a total of 5,871 which represents about 62% of our total deployment. As you all know that we have a ceiling of 10,000 troops and out of that, we have a structured approved manpower of 9,535. That is the whole number that is to be deployed in the mission. Today, I said, that there about 62% have been deployed. The build up in the last few months has taken speed and I am sure that at least in about a month's time ... or I at best early March, we would be fully deployed in this mission.

Of this 5,871 we have three categories as you all know: the Troop Contributing Countries which sends soldiers mainly as protection and enabling units, the Staff Officers and the UNMOs. We have as of today out of this 5,871, 5,113 coming from the different countries - key contributors to this mission, we have 162 as Staff Officers working in offices in Juba and also in this headquarters and with the Mission Support Division. We have a total of 596 UNMOs. The last batch of the UNMOs training is still going on – I was there in Nairobi – 58. When they join in here in about by the end of this week, they will be about 596 of the authorized 715.

This is the major deployment that we already have. I can confidently say that the mission is now firmly in position in various locations on the ground and we are now in a position to take on the Monitoring and Verification tasks in all aspects towards the length and breadth of our Ceasefire Zone.

But there are certain concerns. Like there are still certain units which are yet to arrive and that impacts our ability to a certain extent. Like, for example, certain aviation units. You know for instance that both Pakistan and Russia were supposed to provide the aviation units. That means the military helicopters for this mission and they definitely will impede our operation because, as you know, in southern Sudan certain areas are limited because of lack of infrastructure and presence of landmines. And hence the arrival of these aviation units is critical to our optimum performance of the troops that are to be deployed on the ground. But we have a visibility that two aviation units from Pakistan will come in – one for Sector II at Wau and the other for the Pakistan Contingent at el-Damazeen itself. By February they will be already there. But the Russian aviation unit, which is for the Juba Sector, we haven't any indication as to when they are coming.

The Kenyan contingent is pouring in – that is in Wau. Although being the nearest, but for some logistic reason they were a little delayed. But even when I was in Nairobi yesterday, I saw they were loading in their aircraft. Hopefully, by the end of February the Kenyans will be fully deployed in the mission.

The other key concern is the de-mining because wherever I have gone, one of the major concerns is the progress and the state of the de-mining. As of now it has been mainly the contracted elements of the UNMAS that was employed. The military de-miners were delayed in deploying because they had to attend certain certification and this certification is based on the standard of the de-mining: the military de-mining is not always as thorough as the civilian de-mining standards are and international mine action standards. We had to actually inspect all these countries who are providing these de-mining companies, see their standard, if they have a shortfall we have to train them and recommend them. Now all the de-miners are in the pipeline and by they time they come – because they have to come with some heavy equipment also by ship – it will be probably end March or early April that the de-miners will be in the mission but on sad part is that when they come in, the rainy season sets in and obviously the pace of de-mining will be a little slow even after the first year of the mission.

But these are the key answers I am sure. Once they are in the mission, we will be fully operational. We will have a greater degree of flexibility and, as you know that we have the initial plan of deploying in the 18 team sites. We have, happily, a presence in all the places except Dinder and Kurmuk and in both these two places we couldn't get in because of the scarcity of water. In Dinder, with a lot of search, we have not been able to find any water within 30 or 40 kms. But we are still looking for a site and Dinder is a very important place insofar as the positioning of the Joint Integrated and division two brigades so that is very important that we have to go in.

At Kurmuk, we have got the area cleared. Limited water we are building on and I think by the end of February we will be able to establish. Otherwise, in all the locations, as of now, we are physically present minus these two places I mentioned to you and we can operate considerably and reasonably well to take on all the Monitoring and Verification tasks that we have in hand.

We also have in our plans 7 temporary team sites. What are these temporary team sites? These are the places where the UN will not permanently be located. The opening of these team sites will directly depend on the situation on the ground and these are to be for flexibility of our operations. They will be for a shorter duration ranging from one month to a year but we will not build anything permanent; everything will be containerized on tents as so we can quickly wind it up and put it elsewhere.

Besides this and just to bring in a greater degree of flexibility, we have also plans to deploy UNMOs in any critical areas when the situation demands. And they will deploy long-reach patrols which should be able to sustain and we can rotate. As you can see, right now we have a patrol of 6 UNMOs in a critical situation like Hamishkoreib. These are the long-reach patrols pending our more permanent presence in these places.

So I think this is all I will have to say and I will take on questions – thank you.

**Spokesperson:** Thank you very much, General. So the floor is open for questions if you have any.

## **Q & A**

**Q:** You said you have now about 60% and the Kenyans are coming back. When do you expect exactly or approximately that you will fully be deployed – this 9,935?

**Gen. Akbar:** I said that by the end of March we will be fully deployed on the ground, *in-sha-Allah*.

**Q:** The complete number including the logistics and all that?

**Gen. Akbar:** Yes. In about two months, I think, most of the things are in the pipeline with the exception of the Russian Aviation because we haven't yet signed a Memorandum of Understanding between the DPKO and the Russian government. Negotiations are still on. With that, we are quite firm that we should be able to deploy 100%. But should, between now and the Russians sign the agreement, there is still time that we can meet the timeline of end March.

**Q:** On de-mining, we came to learn that you have started some de-mining operations in some of the main roads. Can you tell us that some of the main roads are now safe for traffic?

**Gen. Akbar:** Since we have limited resources, we have put our priorities in de-mining of major lines of communications which are major supply routes like for example we have already de-mined from the Ugandan border right up to Juba through Yei. This has been a principal artery for us because we have to shift by road, having the ships arriving in Mombasa, we have to transport all these heavy equipment to Juba and then to Wau. We are also building the road through the Kapoeta area, Torit, Juba and then to Rumbek reaching Wau and then up to Aweil and then, ultimately, to link up with the Abyei road. So this entire road is already a priority. A significant portion between Juba and Wau has already been opened and, I think, by this month we expect Juba to be fully connected.

We also have a team site in Aweil and you know that Aweil is quite a mined area all around. We are positioning our air access mainly for the availability of UNMOs. Beyond five miles of Aweil there is an extensive mine-field. That is also another priority area because we want to open land routes because sustaining by air is always very costly and we don't always have enough resources to continue to sustain by air.

**Q:** Can you elaborate more on the situation in Hamishkoreib at the moment?

**Gen. Akbar:** As you all know that we have right from the beginning been insisting that UNMIS should be given access to the east. And I must say that we have consistently been denied on that. And I have very clearly told that unless we have a visibility of what is happening on the eastern front, we the UNMIS can not certify whether the redeployment has already taken place. And it is on this count that I insisted that UNMIS have access to these places so that we see what is on the ground and whether redeployment has taken place or not. We were getting alarmed because of the slow pace of redeployment in the east. As you know, initially 1500 troops from the east marched into Kassala and part of it has then moved into Khartoum, which is about 900 plus to be a part of the JIU component of the SPLM Khartoum Brigade. The rest are still in Kassala with their heavy equipment, a lot of tanks, howitzers and APCs which are not to form part of the JIUs Khartoum Brigade. These are to be back-loaded to the south. But the remaining numbers of which they had initially given us a statement of something like 8,000 plus in the eastern front and of which 1500 has already moved in, but later on when we insisted on the correct figures, they came with something a little less than 5,000 that is still on the ground.

The point is that when we start calculating and seeing the time length – the 9<sup>th</sup> January 2006 which has just past by and we saw that they are critically behind the time length – so we insisted that this is very seriously causing us a little embarrassment in the implementation of the CPA and we found that as of in December, that only 17.17% had been redeployed. They were supposed to complete by 9<sup>th</sup> January 100%. Anticipating a failure, we declared in the CJMC a violation from the SPLA for not living up to the percentage that is supposed to redeploy. That was the situation in December.

We had still been consistently insisting that we must have an access and, to have that, I said at the CJMC itself to both the members that we will go into Hamishkoreib before the 9<sup>th</sup>. However, for some reason it was not possible but then the situation of 11<sup>th</sup> of January whereas you know that the PDF soldiers led by Sheikh Suleiman Mohamed Tahir of Bitai wanted to move into the town with an understanding that 9<sup>th</sup> January was the cutoff date and therefore the SPLA must have vacated and therefore and they wanted to say their prayers in there but happily the SPLA troops which was just a company plus and it's major who was there played a very important role and he avoided a bloodshed. In doing so, he prevented the PDF people from entering the town itself and also negotiated the Beja to move out of the town. We then insisted to the SAF that PDF is known to be a part of your militia so you have a responsibility for pushing in this and improving security and as such their troops have to be moved out of the town. I also proposed that we must be given access to see what is the reality on the ground. So we moved in our UNMOs on 12<sup>th</sup> - we couldn't reach and stayed overnight at Odi because of the insecurity situation. We stayed overnight and then next day we were taken in. the SAF escorted our UNMOs and the SPLA came out of the town 5 kilometers and took us in.

Once we went in we found the situation that something of around a platoon + of the PDF- the rest have actually moved out of that place. They were on the western side of Hamishkoreib. The Beja Congress moved out of the town and were on the east and our UNMOs went in and were physically present on the situation.

And as far as our decision that we wanted to visit the CJMC, so I took this opportunity to take the CJMC right into Hamishkoreib although there were threats from the Beja Congress that “look we will not accept a UN presence if they are to come through SAF and SPLA assurances. We are to reckon with and we are a force here on the ground and we are a very old movement and, as such, the UN has to give us due regard”.

We contacted the Beja Congress and of course initially from the ground there were threats that they would shoot our helicopter but we talked it out as it would not be in their good interests and we ultimately landed in Hamishkoreib, I myself was there, on the 15<sup>th</sup> of January. So we saw the situation on the ground, talked to the people and also met the Beja Congress front commanders - is *Sheikh* Musa Osman. Understandably, they have quite a rational concern. My understanding is that the people of the Beja Congress right now have a feeling that they are being abandoned – they are being orphaned. And they argue that, “we from the east are the longest and the oldest movement in Sudan. From here, the Eritreans have got their independence; the SPLA has got a CPA – what have we got?” And they clearer said, “We don't want secession. We want our share in

development; we want our share of participation in the national government”. And I think they are pretty reasonable. But pending that, I secured their assurances that non are going to enter the town – neither the PDF, SAF nor the Beja Congress and the SPLA who are in control of the town will remain in the town. I also secured the concession that they will take care of the protection and security of our UNMOs and we are rotating our UNMOs who are physically present there.

Hopefully, the last CJMC that was on the 17th of this month was a long CJMC meeting and, of course, Hamishkoreib was at the forefront of the discussion. There we came to certain decisions. The first decision was that a timeline has been missed and that the 2 chiefs of staff, Gen. Abas Arabi and Lt. Gen. Deng of the SAF and the SPLA respectively, should work out a new schedule for redeployment. That was the first point we agreed on. The second; we also said that as per the CPA, once the SPLA withdraws – and I think the SAF has a legitimate right as a sovereign state to occupy that position, we as UNMIS can not – but, at the same time, we are also concerned that there is a third party. So we recommended that the GoNU should take it as a priority issue to settle the political issues between the Beja Congress so that this transition is smooth and there isn’t unnecessary bloodshed. We also agreed that this transition will take place under the UNMIS Monitoring and Verification. That means that wherever there is a handover between the SPLA and SAF, we will be physically present. Lastly, we also said that we do not accept any militia to preempt such occupation and such preemption by the militias will be considered as a violation. And the SAF move of the PDF have declared it a violation. Finally, we also proposed that there is a provision in the CPA that they can consider positioning of a JIU in the eastern front. So we have proposed to the parties and it is now for the parties to agree or disagree whether that will help the situation. My understanding is that positioning of the JIU, pending a political solution with the Beja, will be a good way forward in keeping the situation calm there and under control.

**Q:** In general, do you think that there is a major violation of the CPA during the period of your command?

**Gen. Akbar:** There were small tidbits of violations and I have a list of violations. But these were mainly on the lack of information given to us – movements taking place arbitrarily without keeping us informed. And I have clearly told the parties that look, a movement taking place without a monitoring and verification means we can not certify this movement. The question of redeployment hinges on our certification. We don’t want to land up in a situation where the parties will doubt the figures that is being given by each of the parties. To ensure there is a clear transparency, we said that all the movements must take place in the presence of our UNMOs and it will be signed out by both the parties – we have a standard format for that. So this acts as a clear, clean and transparent document which will state how much troops have moved.

Now you know that in the first one year the SAF was supposed to 31% and we, the UNMIS because of the rainy season and the logistics challenges, were not really in a position to carry out all the monitoring and verification. Of the 31% we have actually physically been able to verify 14% - not the entire 31%. So what about the 17%? So we

neither certify nor deny. We have a statistic given by the SAF. We are trying to carry out a 'reverse verification' that is the Parties have declared – like the SAF has declared what are the *n* troops they have south of line 1/1/'56. We are now carrying out a reverse verification and that will be complete in a month's time to find out what is the present force now and then we can certify and say how much of that unverified 17% is actually authentic. Hopefully by that we will be able to come to a certain understanding as to how much of the 17% has taken place.

But of the major violations, of course, I would say lack of SPLA being able to redeploy from the eastern front. But, understandably, we know that they have certain logistics handicaps. They have requested certain logistic help and I have gone and met the SAF chief Gen. Abas Arabi and requested "it is to your interest that SPLA move out from the east and you should extend some helping hand with logistic support". He agreed and said if the SPLA provides them with the extent of the support that they want, they will study it and see how much they can extend of that.

Otherwise there have been no major failures, I would say. As you know, the CPA is very tight in the time length. I do not think this slight slip should be a cause of concern. Even the CPC and the JGB were all supposed to be formed in the first three months. If they did not raise the eye-brows of the political leadership, I do not think that a little delay in the deployment should cause any concern and I think the CPA is very much on course.

**Q:** Last week we heard a statement that the Juba-Yei road and Gogrial were said to be a no-go area for UN because of the discovery of landmines. What is the latest about it?

What do you say about the deployment of UNMIS troops to Jonglei or Bor state?

**Gen. Akbar:** The issue of de-mining is between bridges 1 and 3 on the Juba-Yei road. And you know that both bridges have been laid by the UNMIS engineers and de-mining was done by UNMAS. But somehow, two mines ever since have been detected. One was immediately after opening the bridge. I don't know the exact month but I think it was around October or November. And the other one was very recently. Both were Anti-tank Mines.

We are quite confused about the real situation because the whole thing was de-mined and yet we found the presence of two Anti-tank Mines and not very much under the surface. Luckily both the trigger mechanisms didn't work because it was filled with sand so that prevented it from many accidents. Whether these are planted to undermine the UNMAS effort or these are genuine mines left over because the metal detectors probably did not identify them, that is a question. But since as you know these roads are being extensively used by commercial traffic but UN has its standards. If UNMAS thinks there is a certain extent of risk, they have the professional right to lay an embargo and that embargo only applies to the UN. If others are using it, they are using it at their own risk. So it is an embargo laid to everybody but if anybody wants to take the risk, they can use that road. But we, the UNMIS, will not take that risk.

So we are putting all our resources into that and they have said it will take between two to three weeks and then open the road. We didn't insist on still using the road – we would have if the risk was worth taking – because we have now most of the Bangladesh contingent fully deployed except one contingent of heavy equipment which is already at Kaya and is to move forward. Except that, the rest are already in so we are in a comfortable position insofar as (*indiscernible*) movement is concerned, but we still have other backlogs awaiting for movement and that is the Kenyans and the Indian Reserve Company located at Juba.

It is not, I would say, a very serious issue insofar as the delay in deployment. UNMAS is putting all the resources to quickly see through again and go through that process of demining between these two bridges and in about the next two weeks, once it is open, we will fully be utilizing this road.

On your second question of Bor, Bor we have identified as one of the permanent locations of the team sites. This wasn't there in our original plan. We have revisited the issue and we decided that we open a permanent team site in Bor. And you know that recently there has been some conflict and there has been some killing of the SPLA. We have sent in our UNMOs and they have very well been received. It is not only in Bor but you can see in areas like Yambio, Maridi – wherever there was some tribal conflicts or some irritation, UNMOs did a very excellent job and they took the risk without any logistics support. They moved in, lived on their own and, of course, with the support of the parties on the ground, they were very welcome.

The good thing that I feel proud of is that the presence of our UNMOs is as though putting water on a fire. It has had a tremendous positive effect and our UNMOs also feel more confident in resolving many issues. We will continue to show our flags wherever we see that there are tensions although many of these issues are actually not military issues. If there was a problem between the tribes in Yambio, it is a GoSS issue. But still when we feel that this is a life-threatening case where we feel that unarmed civilians are going to be victims, we will reach out to them. And we feel happy that our presence does make a significant change and that is a very positive note. And the observers who come from many far lands also feel encouraged of being able to do something good for the people of this region.

**Q:** I would like to ask the SRSG on his assessment (*indiscernible*) and withdrawal of the armed movements (*indiscernible*)?

**SRSG Pronk:** (*in answer to a question on the AU and threats of withdrawal by the rebels from the Abuja talks*) We have only a comment on one of the statements made from the African Union and that is a statement concerning Sudan. Actually they made many decisions and many statements but they are not for us to comment about. The one statement for us is the statement whereby the summit took note of the report of the African Union Peace and Security Council meeting which took place on the 12th of January. We took note of it without any comment – without any new answers. You know that in that specific meeting on the 12<sup>th</sup> of January the African Union Peace and Security

Council decided to support the transition of the AU to the UN. So I come to the conclusion that the African Union Summit took note of the decision of the African Union to support the transition towards the UN. And that is in itself something which I have to take note of.

I can add to this the following: today the decision has been made that on the 20<sup>th</sup> of February there will be a pledging meeting for AMIS – a pledging meeting organized by the African Union and Secretary-General Koffi Annan, in Brussels - to help financing the continuation of the AU after the 1st of April until a specific timeframe to be decided later against the background of the decision of the AU Peace and Security Council which was taken note of by the summit that there will be a transition to UNMIS.

May I add to this the following: I am pleased with the fact that at the moment the talks in Abuja continue. I am also pleased that I am hearing rather positive news from the talks in Abuja. Everybody is there; they talk. The news which I got this morning is that yesterday progress was made. Parties seem to be more willing to negotiate and that means you make a new proposal after listening to the proposal by your partner. So it is not stuck. There was a threat – you were referring to that – but that is gone; it is not stuck

Thirdly: I am very concerned about what is going on at the moment in the Jebel Marra. There is heavy fighting. There were attacks by SLA on the government in Golo. I am very pleased that the African Union has helped us to take 60 NGO staff including many Sudanese staff members of NGOs out of Golo. It was a difficult operation for the African Union because they were shot at while evacuating. It is of course very negative that we had to be evacuated – the NGOs on their request because they did not feel safe – they were in the middle of crossfire. At the moment, we still have in the Jebel Mara 37 NGO (36 actually) international and national staff members. We hope to get them out today but there is a threat to the AU and it is not certain that it will be possible to get them out and I have informed AbdulWahid – because he seems to control that specific part of the Jebel Marra - that I will not take it lightly, given the fact that there was an agreement on humanitarian access which always was said to be adhered to by all parties-, if his troops keep the people over there and will not make it possible to have an evacuation. At the moment there is heavy fighting east of Sheiriya between SLA and the GoS. Heavy weapons are being used and as soon as I know more we will inform you.

In Abuja they seem to get nearer to each other while talking but on the ground in the Jebel Marra, the fighting has increased. Now if I add to this the incident of last Monday whereby 20 to 23 GoS police were killed by an attack by SLA; if I add to this also the very uncertain situation in Geneina whereby we may have to take further measures to increase the security of our staff that is still there in order to help the people, then you will understand that that situation is my major concern of today and I call on all parties – at the moment in particular on the rebel movements to exercise restraint – do not attack and then you will see no retaliation and the humanitarian workers should be given free passage either to help the people or to withdraw for their sake of their own safety.

**Q:** Do you think, Mr. Pronk, that the alliance between the SLM and the JEM will lead have positive results including on the Abuja talks?

**SRSB Pronk:** I don't know. There are so many splits and new alliances that I do not know what effect it may have. The split between the two wings of SLM did have a negative consequence. The split within the JEM which created also the NMRD a year ago also did have a negative consequence. If movements come together it is always better. If two movements come together and leave a third out that may be good or bad, I don't know. It depends on the reason why they come together and on the attitude of the third one. They have said – SLM-Minawi and JEM – that they only work together to continue their past cooperation which already was discernible in Abuja. If that is true, it is good because then that it means that they are not ganging up against the third group which is the AbdulWahid wing of SLM.

However, if they work together in order to strengthen their position with Chadian support against the government of Sudan – and there are some people who think that that is the case – it would be bad. And if it would bring the other party in the negotiations – the GoS – to the conclusion that if you can't talk anymore with SLM-Minnawi and with JEM and that you only should have a peace agreement with the other group, the AbdulWahid wing of the SLM, it will also be bad.

My advise is 4-fold: firstly; the movements should not fight each other on the ground – and that is happening.

Secondly; the movements should not attack the government on the ground – and that is happening.

Thirdly; the movements should work together as much as possible in the talks in Abuja.

Fourthly; the government should try to talk in the Abuja negotiations with all wings and all movements and not only with one of them.

Thank you.

**Q:** Mr. Pronk, you said last time that one of the movements is receiving weapons and finance from outside. As we know, there are many decisions by the United Nations forbidding the support by arms or finance to rebel movements.

My second question is on the funding side. How the situation of funding for the UN Work plan 2006?

**SRSB Pronk:** On your first question: the expert panel of the Security Council has written a report on this. I know the report but I can not disclose it because it is still not a public report. It goes into detail with regard to arms delivery to parties in the Sudan and I have said in New York and I can repeat it here that it is highly necessary that that report be made public and discussed by the Security Council in order to make it possible by the

Security Council to sanction and help stop arms deliveries by other countries to parties in Sudan.

Secondly; with regard to the humanitarian elements of the Work Plan, for the first couple of months, we are assured of assistance. In particular, that is due to the willingness of a number of donors to work together in a so-called Common Humanitarian Fund – the UK, Holland, Norway and some others are part of it. For the second half of the year there is still a great uncertainty.

Q: Regarding the latest about the fighting between the GoS and the SLA in the Jebel Marra, what report did you get about the casualties?

**SRSB Pronk:** I am trying to assess the information because the information is a bit complicated. Sometimes the information is that the attacks are coming from the Minni Minnawi faction but sometimes the information refers to the AbdulWahid faction. I have no definitive judgment.

It is certain, anyway that both are carrying out attacks. It is also known that the attacks are being defended with the argument that it is retaliation for a previous attack by the government or by militia. But any previous attack is always being argued for as an argument for a previous attack by the other party – so you can always go back for a full year.

One of the problems which I highlighted in my previous press conference is that there is no mechanism to address such violations and attacks because the joint committee on the basis of the ceasefire of 2003 is not meeting against my advice. I advised the AU and the parties to regularly meet so that they can address the violations but there are no meetings. If institutions which have the task to address violations don't work, violations continue. That is a difference with the north-south CPA. As you did hear from Gen. Akbar, that mechanism, the CJMC, does function. And that means that if there is a violation, and there were some slight violations as General Akbar said, it can be discussed and addressed and stopped right away so that there is never a counter-violation which make things get out of control.

Finally, that the CJMC did function so well is due to the good peace agreement - CPA - but also due to the excellent quality of the Chairman of the CJMC, General Akbar.

**Spokesperson:** this was the last question. Thank you Mr. Pronk and thank you Gen. Akbar and we wish him all the best. If you have any final word ...

**Gen. Akbar:** I have a final question to ask the media because I remember the first time I have been here – that was, I think on the 26<sup>th</sup> of March following the mandate - there was a lot of apprehension with regards to the troops that is coming in and whether these troops coming in to the mission is going to spread HIV or whether there is going to be sexual exploitation and abuse. I would like to ask the media: how many such reports do you have in your hands? Because there was a big apprehension.

**SRSB Pronk:** The press conference was over but I just got news which, because it is a press conference, I have to give to you. I said something about the need to get the NGOs staff out of the area where there is still fighting. We have sent a helicopter. I have just got information that the helicopter has crashed. I don't know whether it was shot at, I do not know more than this. You will get more information in the course of the day as soon as we know more. I just got the information.

**Gen. Akbar:** Just to assure you, be assured that there isn't going to be what has happened in other missions. We have had tight control on the whole thing and I am very happy that my soldiers – and I have give them honor on my last day to say – we will behave as per the Code of Conduct and respect the customs of this region. Be assured about that.

Thank you.