

**Office of the Spokesperson****UNMIS BRIEFING TO THE PRESS****12 September 2007**

*Below is a near verbatim transcript of the press conference held by United Nations Mission in Sudan Spokesperson, Ms. Radhia Achouri, on 12 September 2007 at the UNMIS Press Briefing Room.*

Good morning everybody and Ramadan Karim for those of you who will be fasting during this holy month. I will start my press briefing with giving you some information on the latest activities of UNMIS in implementation of its mandate as per Resolution 1590 of 2005, and I will start with some activities undertaken the human rights unit of UNMIS.

**UNMIS ACTIVITIES*****CPA related activities*****Human Rights**

In the last two weeks, UNMIS Human Rights has conducted several capacity building and technical assistance activities in Khartoum to assist the Government of National Unity in the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement and the recommendations of the UN Experts Group on Darfur.

On 3 and 8 September, two workshops were organized to expedite the process of the ratification of two major international human rights treaties, namely the Convention against Torture and Cruel, Inhumane and Degrading Treatment and Punishment (CAT) and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). Sudan signed CAT in 1986, but is yet to ratify it. Government representatives, members of the National Assembly, the Judiciary, human rights and women groups, and civil society representatives participated in these workshops, which were organized in collaboration with the Advisory Council for Human Rights.

On 4 September, UNMIS Human Rights organized a one day workshop on the reform of national legal provisions related to rape and sexual offenses. Various provisions of the Criminal Act 1991, Criminal Procedure Act 1991 and Evidence Act 1994 related to rape and sexual violence were discussed and reviewed. Recommendations for necessary legal reform were developed to harmonize related legal provisions with the Interim National Constitution and international human rights standards. The workshop was attended by 70 lawyers, legal professionals, members of the Judiciary and representatives from women organizations. It was organized in collaboration with the Sudan Bar Union.

Two workshops were organized for law enforcement officials and members of legal professions to enhance their knowledge and understanding of international human rights standards. On 28 and 29 August, a workshop on Human Rights and Policing was organized in which 39 senior female police officers of the Federal Ministry of Interior participated. On 5 and 6 September, a workshop on Principles and Safeguards regarding Fair Trial was organized, attended by 32 representatives of different organs of the administration of justice- including judiciary, prosecutor office and police. Both workshops were organized in collaboration with the Advisory Council for Human Rights.

## **UNMIS Civilian Police**

UNMIS Civilian Police has conducted several training activities during the last 2 weeks in support of Sudan police.

On 9 September, the 1<sup>st</sup> community policing course ever conducted at the Al Salam IDP Camp at Umbadeh locality in Umdurman, Khartoum, took place. The 5 day-course will include community policing concepts, duties, establishment of community committees and safety monitors, human rights, gender and child protection, return, rehabilitation and reintegration, and HIV/AIDS.

On 7 and 8 September, a “Train the Trainers” workshop for police officers in Ed Damazin was concluded. Twenty participants attended the workshop.

From 2 to 6 September, a community policing course was conducted at the GoS Popular Police HQ in Khartoum. The training course, which is part of a training Package funded by UNMIS, was attended by twenty participants. UNMIS Police Commissioner Kai Vittrup handed over certificates to the participants who graduated from the course.

On 4 September, a community policing course for GoS Police, funded by Norway, was conducted in Khartoum. It was attended by 40 GoS Police Officers. The objective of the course was to train GoS Police on international concepts and practices of community policing and the role of various international agencies.

The third integrated airport security course for GoS Police and airport security officers is being conducted at Khartoum International Airport. A total of 30 GoS police/airport security officers are participating in the course which is supported by Norwegian Funds. This specialized course covers all aspects of aviation security including immigration, hostage negotiation, contingency planning, explosive detection and disposal techniques, and VIP security at airports.

On 4 September, an On-the-job Training to police officers at Damazin police station on arrest techniques was conducted, with a special focus on rights of suspects. 20 local police officers were in attendance.

## **UNMIS Military (assistance to local communities- capacity-building)**

The Indian Force Reserve Battalion of UNMIS, together with UN Agencies and NGOs, renovated Kalimo basic school for girls, the only girls’ middle school in Kadugli town. The Force Reserve Battalion, acting as coordinator, pooled in resources from various UN Agencies and local NGOs, UNICEF, IFAD, WFP, Norwegian Relief Council, CARE and Save the Child (USA) for the renovation work.

Several facilities have been added to the School, including a high boundary wall with two gates, blackboards in all classes, additional blackboards on the boundary wall of the school, a see-saw, a volleyball ground. Roofs of three classrooms, which were not used before, were built. A toilet has been constructed in the school premises by UNICEF.

The renovated school was inaugurated on 30 August in an official ceremony presided by Mr Ahmed Tajir, Minister of Youth and Sports of South Kordofan State, and attended by local Government officials and a large number of community leaders and community members. The school children were presented with school bags containing complete stationary sets.

The Pakistani engineering company repaired the road connecting Damazin to Kurmuk and Bau Counties in Blue Nile State. This is the only road connecting these areas and through which all the relief work towards Southern Blue Nile State goes and was stopped for a while due to the damage in road, worsened by the rains.

UN Military Observers in El Damazin are organizing a five-week basic computer training for National monitors of SPLA and SAF.

## **SOUTHERN SUDAN AND TRANSITIONAL AREAS**

### **Security Developments**

Inter-communal conflicts have continued in the areas of Eastern Equatoria, Central Equatoria and Lakes State. Fighting between the Logir and Dongotono in Chorokol, Eastern Equatoria State, killing 43 including seven children, was reported. A local reconciliation committee was dispatched by the local authorities.

Other reports received on 4 September indicated that the Mundaris from Central Equatoria State crossed into Awerial County, Lakes State, in August 2007 and stole 13 cattle from Dinka Aliab. UNMIS in Rumbek visited Akot with the Acting Governor of Lakes State on 6 September to calm tension between Dinka Nyuei and Dinka Panyar, following their intense conflict during the month of August. The Acting Governor announced to the community that the case would not be handled by local courts, but he would form a reconciliation committee with members of both tribes. On the same day, UN Police reported that a fight erupted among the Pakam Tribesmen in Maper, Lakes State.

### **Humanitarian Developments**

Heavy rain and flood continued to affect humanitarian activities in large areas of Bahr El-Ghazal and Upper Nile Regions. In Northern Bahr El-Ghazal State, floods affected counties of Aweil Center, Aweil East and Aweil West, where over 30,000 individuals had been displaced and temporarily sheltered at Aweil town's airstrip. In Twic County, Warrap State, the flood affected 11,747 households, a large number of agricultural fields presently under water and 668 animals lost, according to the SSRRC. WFP was unable to distribute food there due to inaccessibility. In Unity State, more roads were rendered inaccessible including the route to Leer County.

For more on floods in Southern Sudan, we have for you the latest situation report issued by OCHA.

## **DARFUR**

### **Security**

Criminal activities targeting UN and other humanitarian workers, including hijacking, temporary detention of staff, and looting of humanitarian goods, have continued. Since the beginning of the year and as of 10 September, a total of 118 vehicles of the humanitarian organizations have been hijacked.

Insecurity in some IDP camps continues to be reported.

To cite few incidents: On 8 September, fifteen armed men, suspected to be the Kinin tribesmen, attacked and looted shops of Zaghawa tribesmen in Abu Shouk Camp, North Darfur. On 6 September, four armed men attempted to hijack a UN vehicle in Sector 4 of Kalma IDP Camp, but failed. On 8 September, three IDPs, reportedly of Fur origin, were abducted and killed in the same camp. On 5 September, a group of unknown armed men attacked two IDPs of Bilel Camp near Kalma IDPs Camp. One of them was killed. On 5 September, a group of armed Arab nomads detained and raped four female IDPs from Otash Camp at Wadi Gimez, about 7 km NE of Nyala. In West Darfur, twenty women of Al-Hamidya IDP Camp in Zalingei were detained by some Arab

militiamen on 9 September while they were fetching firewood from the nearby area but were later released. On 5 September, a 19 year-old IDP girl from Hassa Hissa IDP Camp in Zalingei, who went to fetch firewood with other IDPs on 5 September, went missing.

## **Humanitarian**

On Humanitarian Developments in Darfur, we have for you the 5<sup>th</sup> issue of the weekly "Humanitarian Action in Darfur" bulletin issued by OCHA.

We also have for you in the room a number of documents that we sent out electronically, for those of you who don't have internet access or email addresses:

These are:

The SG report on Sudan, the SG report on the deployment of the AU-UN Hybrid operation, the progress report on the implementation of the CPA transmitted by the Sudan Permanent Representative to the Secretary-General, and newsletters from IOM, UNFPA and WHO. We also have a press release issued from NY on the appointment by the UN Secretary-General of Mr. Ashraf Jehangir Qazi of Pakistan as his Special Representative for Sudan.

Thank you for your attention and the floor is now open for your questions.

## **Q&A**

**Q:** *inaudible [questions about whether the security situation was worsening, impact of security incidents on humanitarian access and humanitarian access status, indiscernible question about the Darfur political process]*

**A:** Well, we are in the process of assessing the situation. The typical characteristic of Darfur is that you have different waves of incidents happening in one State for a while, then it gets quite in the same State and another wave of incidents erupts in another State and so on. Obviously we are concerned about these incidents I am not in a position to tell you right now whether violence has increased or it is still at the same level. But obviously the carjacking incidents, incidents targeting humanitarian community have not decreased, that is for sure, and they continue in an alarming pace,.

The incidents in some IDP camps, you take for instance the Kalma camp, are a matter of concern for the humanitarian community.

In terms of access it keeps changing. I am not in a position to certify whether access has decreased for humanitarian community or it is still at the same level, generally speaking. Limitations in terms of access keep changing as I said depending on the security situation in the different locations. I will follow up with the colleagues from OCHA. I am sure they are keeping close eye on this and they might have an indication of the exact status of access as compared to prior periods. Also, regarding security, there are reports that all of you heard about, regarding fighting between government forces and rebel groups. These also are a matter of concern not only in terms of humanitarian operation but also of our concern as far as the creation of an environment favorable to the political process, a security environment that will help the political process, the negotiations take off with solid chances of success. The UN stand on these issues has been expressed very clearly by Mr. Ban Ki-moon when he came and he kept reiterating throughout his visit that we want a total and complete cessation of hostilities, creation of an environment conducive to political negotiations, that is what we have to say at this stage.

**Q:** inaudible *[questions about conflicting versions of the Government and the rebels on what happened in Haskanita, whether the UN could clarify what happened, the UN position on the issue and impact of the incident on the political talks]*

**A:** You saw the statement issued by the African Union Mission in Sudan, and to the best of my knowledge, the Ceasefire Commission is to investigate what happened exactly. As you know, UNMIS is not mandated to investigate these issues and we go with the findings of the African Union. The CFC is still at the stage of investigating. The only thing that everybody is sure of is that heavy fighting took place in Haskanita but the details of the incident are yet to be investigated.

On the second part of your question, again I recall what the United Nations and also the African have been saying all along. You have seen all the press conferences of the secretary general and you attended them personally or at least one of your colleagues from your newspaper did and we sent those out to you.

There also was a statement issued in Tripoli by the secretary general on the political process in which he again restated what he has been saying throughout his visit which is that there must be an end to violence and insecurity and strengthened ceasefire supported by UNMID hybrid operation as well as an improvement of the humanitarian situation and better prospects for development in Sudan.

Mr. Alpha Omer Konare also issued statement on the political process and in that statement again he called for an immediate end of violence and insecurity in Darfur , and again he stressed the importance of a strengthened ceasefire. So our stand and that of the AU is clear when it comes to violence and the need for violence to cease in order to help the political process proceed successfully, so that is what I have to say again at this stage.

If there are further questions, I thank you and I will see you next week.