

**Office of the Spokesperson****UNMIS BRIEFING TO THE PRESS***20 June 2007*

*Below is a near verbatim transcript of the press conference held by United Nations Mission in Sudan Spokesperson, Ms. Radhia Achouri, on 20 June 2007 at the UNMIS Press Briefing Room.*

**UNMIS ACTIVITIES*****CPA related activities***

On 16 June, Acting SRSG Zerihoun met with the State Minister to the Presidency, Idris AbdelGadir. The discussion focused on a proposal to hold high-level consultations between UNMIS and the Government of National Unity to make UNMIS assistance to CPA implementation more focused and effective. The high level meeting will be held in the near future.

UNMIS continues its monitoring and verification activities. Restriction of access continues to be imposed on UNMIS by both SAF and SPLA to the north and south of Abyei respectively.

UNMIS in Juba continued to promote reconciliation between the Mundari and Bari communities. As part of this endeavor, UNMIS arranged a preliminary assessment to Tali and Terekeka areas where some Mundari communities will be resettled.

UNMIS in Malakal facilitated a peace mission to Nassir for the Presbyterian Church of Sudan aimed at promoting peace and reconciliation messages. The mission organized lectures and discussions with local Chiefs, youth and women Groups in Nassir, Kir and Kuetrengka.

On 13 June, UNMIS Pakistani Peacekeepers organized a free medical camp for the community of Regabe village in Gaisan, Blue Nile State.

From 13 to 15 June, the HIV/AIDS Regional Committee in Rumbek held a three-day Peer Education Refresher workshop in Akot Military barracks for 22 military officers. The Committee has been also conducting a HIV/AIDS awareness campaign targeting women, youth and military personnel. The campaign reached so far 16,026 individuals of the targeted population.

In the second week of June, UNMIS HIV/AIDS Unit conducted HIV/AIDS awareness activities benefiting 500 UN peacekeepers in Khartoum, Juba, Wau, and Kadugli. In Wau, HIV/AIDS Unit completed on 14 June a ten-day training programme for 40 new HIV/AIDS Peer Educators from the Wau Club for People Living with HIV/AIDS, the Joint Integrated Units (JIUs), SAF, and UNMIS civilian staff, Military and Civilian Police personnel.

***Darfur related activities***

On 15 June, UNMIS participated in the meeting held in Khartoum by First Vice President Salva Kiir with representatives of the diplomatic community, as well as the UN and AU, to brief them on SPLM efforts to assist the Darfur political process. During the meeting, Mr. Salva Kiir announced that the SPLM conference aimed at bringing the DPA non-signatories together, scheduled to take place on 18 June, has been postponed indefinitely. The postponement was attributed to lack of preparation of some non-signatory groups and the refusal of non signatory SLA leaders Abdulawhid Nur and Ahmed Abdul Shafie as well as Justice and Equality Movement leader Khalil Ibrahim to take part in the conference.

UNMIS Civil Affairs has been assisting in the organization of workshops on the Darfur-Darfur Dialogue and Consultation (DDDC) throughout Darfur for representatives of IDPs, native administration, political parties, civil society organizations, DPA signatory movements, and intellectual, including university professors and lawyers. The DDDC Preparatory-Committee secretariat discussed with the participants their impressions and assessment of the current conditions in Darfur and their implications on the conduct of the DDDC. DDDC Pre-Com explained also to the participants the fundamental principals on the basis on which the DDDC will be conducted. These principles are: inclusiveness, independence, and grassroots involvement in the process. The first workshop took place in Nyala during the third week of May 2007. In Zalingei, a four-day workshop started on 18 June. Preparations are under way to organize a similar workshop in El Geneina.

UNMIS HIV/AIDS Unit finalized preparations for the conduct of a HIV/AIDS Peer Educators workshop in support of AMIS troops in Darfur, as well as UN personnel and the Ministry of Health. The ten-day training workshop will take place in El Fasher from 24 June to 4 July and is targeting 35 participants will take part in the workshop.

## **UN AGENCIES**

### **UNHCR**

UN High Commissioner for Refugees António Guterres arrived in southern Sudan yesterday, as part of a three-day mission to Uganda, Southern Sudan, and Kenya, to commemorate World Refugee Day in Southern Sudan, where tens of thousands of refugees and internally displaced people are returning home after decades of conflict. Since 2005, more than 155,000 Sudanese refugees from at least seven countries in the region have come back to their homes in Southern Sudan and Blue Nile State, including 64,000 through UNHCR's voluntary and assisted repatriation operation. Over 300,000 refugees still remain in camps in neighboring countries. UNHCR plans to bring home a total of 102,000 refugees from countries of asylum in 2007.

The High Commissioner addressed this morning the World Refugee Day events held today at the Juba way station on the Juba-Yei road. He is also scheduled to visit UNHCR operations in the Yei and Juba areas and he will leave today afternoon to Nairobi.

More information on the visit of the High Commissioner and World Refugee Day, , observed worldwide every year on June 20, is available on UNHCR website [www.unhcr.org](http://www.unhcr.org), including UNHCR's report "2006 Global Trends - a statistical overview of refugees, asylum seekers, internally displaced and stateless persons".

We also have for you copies of the UN Secretary-General message on World Refugee Day. "International solidarity is crucial to meeting the urgent humanitarian needs of refugees and others forcibly displaced. Millions depend on the UN for material aid. But people chased from their homes also need refuge and legal protection, which begins with an understanding by Governments and individuals alike that refugees are not exiles by choice", the Secretary-General says in his message.

### **WFP**

In a press release issued on 16 June, WFP welcomed the Government of France offer to airlift humanitarian assistance to a growing number of Sudanese refugees and displaced Chadians living in an increasingly precarious situation. The French offer will help WFP and other agencies avoid critical gaps in their operations through the rainy season.

WFP had needed to pre-position a six-month supply of food to feed 240,000 Sudanese refugees in 12 camps and 150,000 internally displaced people in the East through the rainy season from June to November. So far, WFP has managed to build four months of food stocks at the camps for refugees and Chadian displaced, in the eastern areas that will be hardest hit by the rains.

In a press release issued on 14 June, WFP announced the launching a highly complex operation to airlift emergency food supplies to over 2,600 refugees from Darfur who recently crossed into the

remote north-eastern corner of the Central African Republic, one of the least accessible regions in the world. WFP indicated that the airlift operation was “an expensive last resort”, but the agency did not have any other option to provide emergency assistance to the IDPs and refugees in the area. WFP staff who visited the site recently discovered that people were surviving on little more than mangoes and limited supplies of manioc. Most have no shelter and there is no access to safe drinking water.

A plane loaded with 15 metric tons of high-energy biscuits (HEBs) had left on 14 June WFP’s Humanitarian Response Depot in Accra, Ghana, to CAR capital Bangui, where the supplies were scheduled to be flown east to Bria in two rotations. There the HEBs will be transferred a final time for the flight to Sam Ouandja, which will require a further four rotations.

WFP had dispatched 35 tons of food to north-eastern CAR by road. The 12-truck convoy also carried seeds and agricultural equipment, water purification tablets and other emergency supplies from FAO, UNHCR and UNICEF. A second convoy with 48 tons of food is to follow.

WFP indicated that in addition to the logistical constraints, humanitarian work across the north of CAR continues to be threatened by insecurity. WFP’s operation in CAR remains short of funds, with an additional US\$16 million still required.

More information on WFP activities is available on the web: [www.wfp.org](http://www.wfp.org)

## **IOM**

The Director General of the International Organization for Migration, Brunson McKinley, began yesterday 19 June a six-day visit to Sudan, during which he will visit Khartoum, North and South Darfur, and Juba.

In addition to reviewing IOM operations in Sudan, the Director General will visit Klaimendo Village in Darfur, a Sudanese civil-society project under the auspices of the Klaimendo Development Organization. The project aims at reconciliation and rehabilitation of victims of the Darfur conflict. In Khartoum and Juba, Director General McKinley will meet with high level government officials and representatives of partner organizations.

IOM Director General Brunson McKinley will hold a press conference on 23 June at the Grand Villa Hotel at 5 p.m. All the press is invited to attend.

## **SECURITY DEVELOPMENTS**

Information on security incidents is available in UNMIS news bulletins sent to you regularly. The following incidents were recently reported:

On 16 June, armed men entered an NGO compound in Kabkabiya, North Darfur, and stole one vehicle belonging to a national NGO.

On 17 June, an IDP Sheikh was killed by unknown armed men in Khamsa IDP camp in Zalingei, West Darfur.

## **HUMANITARIAN DEVELOPMENTS**

### ***Southern Sudan and Transitional Areas***

The GoSS Ministry of Animal Resources and Fisheries, in collaboration with the World Bank, launched a \$42 million five-year “Livestock and Fisheries Development Project” on 12 June in Juba, Central Equatoria state.

The number of IDP returnees assisted to return home during the week 12-18 June reached 900 individuals, bringing the cumulative total of IDPs who returned to their areas of origin in the framework of the Joint UN/GNU/GoSS return plan to over 43,000 individuals.

In Kadugli, Southern Kordofan state, clearance has been completed of the three minefields at Shat Shafaya village and the land handed back to the local population, which has already recommenced agricultural activities in the area.

## ***Darfur***

UNHCR conducted a two-week assessment mission for new and/or seasonal settlements in the Habilla/Foro Baranga/Wadi Azoum area along the border with Chad for the 3,200 households (over 16,000 individuals) of Chadian Arab nomads who were reported on May 21-22 to have entered and settled in Sudan.

An INGO distributed food to 4,759 households (25,471 people) in 42 villages around Golo in the Jebel Marra area, in Western Darfur.

As part of their Acute Watery Diarrhea prevention campaign in Jabal Marra, Water and Environment Sanitation and UNICEF have pre-positioned general supplies in Nertiti.

New IDPs have continued to arrive in Al Salam camp, South Darfur, from villages around Katila, including Tireda, Amsar, Tabal Diya, Nurteg, Kulu Muluk, Luka, Tamnabe, Um Kibesh, and Kadat. On 17 June, a truck carrying 90 new IDPs arrived.

An INGO reported that a total of 1,296 new IDPs arrived in Zam Zam, North Darfur, over the past three months. Of these, 969 originate from the Dobo area and 327 from eastern Jebel Marra. Another INGO reported that 454 families have newly arrived in the Shangil Tobayi area over the past three months, with 80% of these originating from the Dobo area. The INGO distributed NFIs and soap to 328 families.

FAO has completed seeds and tools distribution to IDPs and the host community in Zam Zam, North Darfur.

## **Q&A**

**Q:** My First question is on IRC which seems to be having difficulties and including threats of expulsion. Do you have anything on that? My second question is on Gereida and whether the United Nations is aware of news reports of mass graves north of Gereida in South Darfur?

**Spokesperson:** On the IRC, yes there are some problems but please contact me after this briefing so I could liaise you with the colleagues from the humanitarian side. I do understand that this issue is under discussion between the United Nations and the Government of Sudan in the framework of the joint committee that is tasked to follow up on the implementation of the humanitarian Joint Communiqué.

On the Gereida issue, yes, we are aware of the reports but the issue is not new. It is an old case and if you recall, on April 2007, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights issued a report on the Gereida attack and on the details of what happened and called for an investigation. Also the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights also issued a Press Release. These documents are available on the website of the Office of the Human Rights Commissioner. We did also distribute these reports through email to the press corps and if you need them, we can resend them to you .

No more questions? Well then, if there are no more questions then thank you very much for coming and hope to see at our next briefing.

