



UNITED NATIONS MISSION IN SUDAN

UNMIS

Media Monitoring Report, 11 April 2007

(By Public Information Office)

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HIGHLIGHTS :

UN/ Agencies

One African peacekeeper killed in Darfur - AU

(*SudanTribune.com*) Unidentified gunmen attacked an African Union peacekeeper patrol in the Darfur region of western Sudan on Tuesday, killing one and injuring two, the African Union said.

The attack occurred at Kube Water Point near Sortony in North Darfur and one of the peacekeepers' vehicles was taken by the attackers.

"In this new barbaric attack, three African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS) protection force soldiers were seriously wounded... one of the injured soldiers later died as a result of injuries suffered during the attack," the AU said in a statement.

The AMIS statement added that investigations would be carried out to identify the attackers and to determine the circumstances of the attack.

** Please find attached separately the UNMIS and AMIS press releases on the attack on the AU Peacekeepers.*

UN Asks for Help to Reintegrate Returnees

(*SRS - Malualkon*) A United Nations Humanitarian Affairs official in Sudan has called on donors and international organizations to help returnees and internally displaced persons reintegrate into their community by providing them with food and other essential services.

Speaking during a civil society exchange conference in Malualkon last week, Mr. Gayeson Adegoba said large number of IDP's from northern Sudan have returned to Northern Bahr El Ghazal state and other places in southern Sudan, but said that the returns will only be successful if civil society organizations help monitor the government's commitment to providing basic services to the returnees.

The Civil Society Exchange Conference was organized by Mercy Corps and the International Rescue Committee with funding from the United States Agency for International Development

The Transition Debate

UN says deal reached to strengthen African force in Darfur

The United Nations, the African Union and the Sudanese government have reached an agreement to beef up the 7,000-strong African force in Darfur with U.N. troops, police and equipment, except for attack helicopters, the U.N. said Tuesday.

U.N. deputy spokesperson Marie Okabe said a high-level technical meeting in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on Monday set the stage for deployment of the heavy support package for the A.U. force, including more than 3,000 U.N. troops, police, and other personnel as well as substantial aviation and logistics equipment.

Acting U.S. ambassador Alejandro Wolff said the United States is trying to clarify "whether this is an unconditional agreement of acceptance of the deployment of the heavy package, or if there were conditions or clarifications that in the past have been used by the government of Sudan to slow this down."

The U.N. is hoping for "a positive and expeditious response" from the Sudanese government on the outstanding issue of tactical attack helicopters, hopefully before high-level consultations on Darfur at U.N. headquarters on April 16-17 hosted by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.

A.U. chief executive Alpha Oumar Konare and the two envoys trying to promote a political settlement of the four-year conflict in the western Sudanese region, the U.N.'s Jan Eliasson and the A.U.'s Salim Ahmed Salim, will be attending the meetings.

Helicopters not an issue for Darfur force - Sudan FM

(*SudanTribune.com*) ***South African President Thabo Mbeki arrived in Khartoum*** on Tuesday to join the global push for UN peacekeepers in Darfur, amid fears of a regional spillover after clashes between Sudan and Chad.

He was expected to hold talks Tuesday evening with President Basher to press the latter to accept United Nations peacekeepers in Darfur to boost the AMIS force but Sudan's ***Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Sammani al-Wassila***, told reporters there will be no pressure over Darfur.

The visiting Head of State will later travel to Juba for talks with VP Kiir.

On the other hand, and in a separate story, *Reuters* [*as cited by SudanTribune.com*] reports that ***Sudan's Foreign Minister indicated on Tuesday*** that the remaining obstacle to a deal to bolster an African Union peacekeeping force in Darfur had been overcome.

Speaking after the Bashir-Mbeki talks yesterday evening, Minister Lam Akol said the issue of whether helicopter gunships should be used was no longer an issue.

"Both sides were saying that there was not enough explanation as to the need of those attack helicopters," he said at a news conference.

Meanwhile, China and the US had earlier discussed promoting the continued use of political and diplomatic efforts to resolve the Darfur crisis.

Chinese Deputy Foreign Minister Dai Bingguo and U.S. Deputy Secretary of State John Negroponte discussed Darfur in a late-night phone call, ministry spokesman Qin Gang told a news conference.

"In their talks, the two sides discussed issues concerning the implementation of the Annan plan," Qin said, referring to a peace plan put forward by former U.N chief Kofi Annan to deploy a hybrid African Union-U.N. peacekeeping force in the region.

"But it requires consultations between the Sudan government, African Union and the United Nations to decide the timing of the deployment and implementation of the plan," he said.

CPA

50,000 Sudanese refugees repatriated to South Sudan

(*UNHCR* – Wed. 11 April '07) On Monday, the UNHCR-assisted voluntary repatriation operation bringing South Sudanese refugees back to their homeland surpassed the 50,000 mark.

The day's returnees included a convoy from Fugnido camp in Ethiopia bringing home 543 Sudanese refugees to Upper Nile State, and two flights organized in cooperation with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) with 84 returnees from Mboki camp in Central African Republic (CAR) to Yambio, Western Equatoria State.

Over the past weeks the repatriation movement peaked at nearly 4,000 returnees per week. As of today, 50,533 Sudanese have been assisted to return home since the repatriation exercise started in March 2005.

Since the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in January 2005 over 120,000 Sudanese refugees came back, 70,000 of them spontaneously, even though living conditions and the lack of infrastructure in South Sudan are challenging.

The humanitarian community has focused its efforts in return areas, to provide returning refugees, IDPs and the receiving communities with basic services and with shelter. Returnees however, are not discouraged by prevailing conditions. They claim that they want to be back in time for the planting season to witness their next harvest in their villages of origin and that they want to help rebuild their country.

UNHCR is engaged in reintegration projects in major areas of return in South Sudan, including health, educational, water and sanitation, agricultural and livelihood projects.

As of today, out of an estimated 418,000 Sudanese refugees, approximately 300,000 are left in countries of asylum. Repatriation movements are organized out of the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Uganda, Kenya, Ethiopia, Egypt and Libya. In 2007, UNHCR expects to repatriate 102,000 Sudanese refugees and help them restart their lives.

GoNU

Chinese special envoy in Sudan discusses Darfur issue at press interview

(*Xinhua* – 9 Apr. '07) During a joint interview with Chinese and foreign journalists in Khartoum on 9 April, Zhai Jun, special envoy of Chinese government and assistant minister of foreign affairs, comprehensively explained China's position on the Darfur issue and answered the journalists' questions on the situation of the Darfur region, the prospects of the political process there, the role being played by China, and other issues.

The envoy said that judging by his on-the-spot investigation, the situation in the Darfur region is basically stable, but there still exist many problems. The Darfur issue should be resolved in three aspects. The concerned parties should press ahead with the political process in order to achieve a comprehensive peace as soon as possible, offer humanitarian aid to the Darfur region to alleviate and eventually terminate the humanitarian crisis there, and provide aid to the development of the region and help the people there get rid of poverty and uproot the fundamental causes of the conflict. Zhai Jun expressed optimism about the prospects of finally solving the Darfur issue.

Zhai Jun pointed out: At present, the focal question is how to implement the three-phase proposal put forward by former UN Secretary-General Annan on the Darfur issue during his tenure of office. The Chinese side supports his proposal and regards it as a realistic and feasible one that satisfies the concerns of all parties and is the closest to the thinking of the Sudanese side. We hope that the Sudanese side and other concerned parties will hold consultations as equals on its details and reach a consensus as soon as possible. The Chinese side holds that any steps taken by the parties concerned should help in solving the problem rather than escalating the problem or even creating new problems. The Chinese side is in favour of holding consultations and dialogue on the basis of equality, and not in favour of such measures as exerting pressure or imposing sanctions as they are not helpful for solving the problem.

Zhai Jun also pointed out: China is a friend of Sudan and a permanent member of the UN Security Council. In any case, China has an obligation to play a constructive role in achieving an appropriate solution for the Darfur issue.

Please also refer to separate attachment for more on the China envoy's visit.

Government admits there are tensions along Sudan's border with Ethiopia

(*AlWihda*) The Sudan government has admitted for the first time that there are tensions along its borders with neighboring Ethiopia as a result of the activities of the Ethiopian armed opposition.

The Governor of el-Gedharef State, eastern Sudan, says Ethiopian rebel forces are being trained in Eritrea and pass through Sudanese territory to launch attacks on targets inside Ethiopia.

* The Minister of Defense appears before parliament today to brief the House on the recent Ammunitions explosion in Khartoum

Southern Sudan/ GoSS/SPLM

SPLA operations will not harm LRA-Uganda talks

(*Khartoum Monitor*) The SPLA combing of Magui area in pursuit of LRA insurgents will not impact negatively on the peace talks between the LRA and the Uganda government, says SPLA spokesperson Mjr. Gen. Kuol Deim.

He pointed out that the SPLA supports the efforts for peace in northern Uganda and welcomes the peace negotiators but will at the same time fight those causing instability and insecurity and terrorizing the people. He branded these as “bandits” and said the SPLA will deal with them as such.

He said that the combing operations in Magui have in fact contributed to the splitting of the LRA into three groups and said the operations will continue in a bid to stem LRA activities in the area.

Foreign trade minister slams VP Machar’s vision for a new capital at Gondokoro

(*Khartoum Monitor*) The Federal Minister of Foreign Trade says he absolutely rejects the proposal of GoSS Vice-President Riek Machar to establish a new capital for the GoSS at Gondokoro Island.

Minister George Bureng pointed out that the inhabitants of the island have not been consulted. He also said that he does not see the rationale of transferring the capital to Gondokoro Island while Juba city is yet to witness proper development.

Upper Nile Minister Calls Assembly's Move to Dismiss Him "Unconstitutional"

(*Sudan Radio Service*) The Minister of Finance for Upper Nile state calls the push by the Upper Nile Legislative Assembly to dismiss him on corruption charges a “witch-hunt.”

Last month the Upper Nile Legislative Assembly voted to remove the Minister of Finance, Mr. Luke Bidong, from office on allegations of corruption. In what he calls “a political conspiracy” by some legislators in Upper Nile to have him sacked, Mr. Bidong

told Sudan Radio Service in Juba on Friday that he does not recognize the dismissal because it was unconstitutional.

Mr. Bidong called for politicians in Upper Nile to work together to overcome the challenges of development in Upper Nile and not engage in what he called “political conspiracies.”

Water Shortage Leads to Violence in Malualkon

(Sudan Radio Service) An acute shortage of water in Malualkon in Northern Bahr El Ghazal state sparked violence when civilians armed with spears began fighting each other at an area bore hole on Wednesday night.

Reports from the area indicate that heavy shooting by SPLA soldiers continued throughout the night in an attempt to disperse those fighting over water but the SPLA says no injuries occurred.

Some residents of Malualkon told Sudan Radio Service that they must walk for more than ten kilometers in search of water and say the water crisis has been heightened by the recent influx of returnees

Road Link Between NBEG and Warrap States Nearly Complete

(Sudan Radio Service) The construction of a road linking Northern Bahr El Ghazal state to Warrap state is nearing completion.

The governor of Northern Bahr El Ghazal, Madut Rial Biar, told Sudan Radio Service by phone from Akot that the contractors have told him they are almost finished, but that he will inspect it to ensure it is completed before the rains come.

In another development in the area, the governor said a group of more than 900 returnees from Khartoum are expected to arrive in the state this week with thousands more expected over the coming months.

Biar said the return of IDP's is organized by the state while Hayat Bridge and Road Company provides vehicles to transport them from Khartoum. The governor appealed to the Government of Southern Sudan and international NGO's to assist the returnees with non food and food items

Peace council working to get Nuer ethnic group home

(Gurtong.org) A meeting of members of both the Jikany and Lou Nuer ethnic groups together with governmental authorities, members of traditional authorities and civil society is being planned for the first week of May, the head of the Nuer Peace Council (NPC) told Gurtong over the Easter weekend.

The meeting will be part of ongoing efforts to assist the return of the estimated 40-50,000 members of the Jikany Nuer displaced from their areas close to the Ethiopian borders with the South during the years of civil war in Sudan, said Both Reath Luang.

But areas the Jikany lay claim to, including Wading, are currently occupied by the Lou Nuer; careful negotiations will have to take place before the Jikany return to avoid further conflict explained Luang, who remembers seeing the 2002 fighting between the Jikany and Lou.

The head of the NPC thinks that there is some chance that the two groups will be able to live together, as they once did, before war bred conflict between them. Luang himself is the child of a Jikany-Lou marriage [*follow the link for the full text of this story* [Peace council working to get Nuer ethnic group home](#)].

Darfur/ Darfur Peace Agreement

Sudan-Chad relations

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs summoned the Chadian Charge d'Affaires and conveyed to him Sudan's strong protest over his country's violation to Sudanese territory, Chadian military incursion into Sudan and their aggression on the SAF in which a number of officers and soldiers were killed, reports *AlAyaam*.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs demanded a written explanation from N'Djamena over the incident and told the Chadian Cd'A that Sudan reserves the right to respond appropriately.

On his part, state minister at the Foreign Affairs Ministry, Ali Karti, said that Chad was not serious in implementing what had been agreed upon earlier with Sudan as this recent and earlier incidents prove.

Speaking to the media, Karti described the attack as a clear violation, and that these incidents would affect Chad and its credibility in implementing the agreements that it had signed with Sudan. He said that Sudan was waiting for the outcome of the ongoing consultations being made in this regard, and that they had informed all concerned parties to the agreements Chad signed with Sudan

SUNA also reports that state minister for foreign affairs, Al-Samani al-Wasilah, has expressed regret on the clashes that occurred on the Sudanese, Chadian border.

In a press conference at Khartoum Airport, he affirmed that Sudan does not allow the presence of Chadian opposition inside the country to use Sudanese territory to destabilize security in a neighboring country and said that the matter was saddening and had to be contained as soon as possible.

Sudan will respond firmly to what it said was an attack by Chadian army forces that killed 17 of its soldiers and military action is an option, an army spokesman said on Tuesday.

"Sudan's response will be strong. We will consider all responses, political, diplomatic and military," said the Sudanese army spokesperson, who asked not to be named.

Libyan news agency, JANA [*sourced from BBC Monitoring*] has meanwhile learnt that ***President Gadhaffi has tasked the country's foreign affairs minister as personal envoy to Sudan and Chad*** to help calm the situation and stop the bloodshed. He will also be tasked with following up Sudan and Chad's commitment to the Tripoli peace agreement, which was signed between the two countries in May 2006.

On the Chadian side, officials have acknowledged the Fo Baroga clash but the government insists that this was an accident which resulted from its use of its right to pursue the rebels of the Chadian National Concord, reports the *RFI* [*sourced through BBC Monitoring*].

As for the rebels, they said they did not go into Sudanese territory and accuse the Chadian army of willfully making an incursion into Sudan. And as you have heard, the Chadian government says that the commission charged with overseeing the implementation of the Tripoli agreements between Chad and Sudan traveled to the zone of the fighting to evaluate the situation.

Commissioner for Sheiriyia seeks assistance from federal government over security concerns

(*Akhbar Alyaum*) The Commissioner for Sheiriyia in Nyala has called for help from the federal government and the Darfur interim authority to avert what he described as a looming security threat to the citizens of Sheiriyia following a build-up of SLA-MM forces in the area.

He said that about 1,500 SLA soldiers have based themselves east of Sheiriyia in Muhajariya, Labado and Mutawarit and there are other forces gathering near the African Union Mission in Sudan camp. He warned that the security situation may run out of control if these movements are not checked by the federal and regional authorities.

SLA spokesperson demands release of 17

(*Alwan*) Following decisions to disarm armed factions in the capital, SLA-MM says it has no military presence in the capital save for the presence of bodyguards.

In a statement issued yesterday, a spokesperson for the SLA also demanded that 17 of their member arrested by authorities alleged links to the Omdurman clashes be released.

Google Earth, Holocaust Museum focus in on Sudan's Darfur

(*SudanTribune.com*) Google Inc. (GOOG) is using its popular online mapping service to call attention to atrocities in the Darfur region of Sudan.

In a project with the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, inaugurated Tuesday, the Internet search company has updated its Google Earth service with high resolution satellite images of the region to document destroyed villages, displaced people and refugee camps.

Google Earth allows those who have downloaded its free software to focus on satellite images and maps of most of the world. When users scan over the Darfur region, where the United Nations estimates that more than 200,000 people have been killed and 2.5 million displaced in four years of carnage, Google hopes to attract their gaze with icons that represent destroyed villages with flames and refugee camps with tents.

The online maps of the region also include an icon that links to a presentation by the Holocaust museum on the crisis in the region with photos, video, historical background and testimony on atrocities.

Sara Bloomfield, the museum's director, said museum staff members had approached Google about the project as they sought ways to highlight what they believe is genocide to many people who remain unaware. In Google Earth, which the company says has been downloaded by 200 million people worldwide, they found an ideal medium.