

**UNITED NATIONS MISSION IN SUDAN****UNMIS**Media Monitoring Report, 21 February 08

(By Public Information Office)

NOTE: Reproduction here does not mean that the UNMIS PIO can vouch for the accuracy or veracity of the contents, nor does this report reflect the views of the United Nations Mission in Sudan. Furthermore, international copyright exists on some materials and this summary should not be disseminated beyond the intended list of recipients.

IN THE NEWS TODAY:**➤ UN/ Agencies**

- UN chief paints grim picture for Darfur crisis and troops deployment (ST)
- Worsening situation in West Darfur jeopardizes aid efforts – UN report
- UNMIS PIO Chief visits Al-Khartoum office, meets with chief editor (Al-Khartoum)

GoNU (CPA, DPA, ESPA)

- Foreign Minister Returns Home after Visit to the United States(SUNA)
- President of the Republic stressed keenness to cement peace pillars and unity in the country (SUNA)
- National Council for Population Census reviews final preparations for start of the census mid April (SUNA)
- Northern Sudan DDR Commission: 250 demobilized fighters given production means (Khartoum Monitor)
- Governor of Central Equatoria State asks UN to expedite repatriation of IDPs (The Citizen)
- NCP: Darfur will be excluded from elections if the crisis persists (Al-Sahafa)
- China supplies modern tanks for SAF (Juba Post)
- CPA Partners send committee to Abyei to convince SPLA to withdraw (Al-Rai Al-Aam)
- The Presidency will discuss new proposals today in connection with Abyei (Al-Sudani)
- Musa Hilal lashes out against the International Community (Akhir Lahza)

➤ GoSS

- South Sudan president dismisses Upper Nile Governor (ST)
- Salva Kiir sacks South Sudan auditor (ST)
- Fire breaks out at Juba Commercial residential area (ST)

➤ **Darfur**

- Darfur refugees in crossfire - rebels, aid workers (ST)
- Chinese newspaper rebukes Spielberg over Darfur(ST)
- Sudan Ambassador to UN calls for revival of Darfur Peace Joint Mediation(Sudan Vision)
- UN Envoy Eliasson met with Abdel Wahid, discuss participation in negotiations (Al-Ayyam)
- Darfur rebels say 15 die in army offensive (Reuters)
- Darfur authority welcomes SPLM proposal to review Sudan's CPA (ST)

➤ **Miscellaneous**

- Ban Ki-moon welcomes 'breakthrough' Ugandan agreement with northern rebels

Highlights

UN/ Agencies

UN chief paints grim picture for Darfur crisis and troops deployment (ST)

February 20, 2008 (UNITED NATIONS) — Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon urged the Sudanese government and all rebel groups on Wednesday to agree to a cease-fire in Darfur, saying deteriorating security is undermining efforts to help thousands of civilians caught in an upsurge in fighting.

In his monthly report to the Security Council, Ban singled out attacks in West Darfur, which borders Chad. He also noted heightened tensions in camps for the displaced across Darfur, and continued banditry and vehicle hijackings — including 23 fully loaded U.N. World Food Program trucks between Jan. 1 and Jan. 24.

The secretary-general painted a grim picture of a worsening conflict seven weeks after a joint African Union-United Nations force took over peacekeeping duties in Darfur from a beleaguered 7,000-strong AU force, and a year after the U.N. and AU launched a new effort to get a political settlement.

Sudan's Arab-dominated government has been accused of unleashing the janjaweed militia of Arab nomads to commit atrocities against Darfur's ethnic African communities in the fight with rebel groups. At least 200,000 people have been killed and 2.2 million displaced since the fighting began five years ago.

The AU-U.N. force is authorized to have 26,000 troops and police, but Ban said only about 7,500 military personnel and 1,500 police officers were in Darfur on Jan. 31. He appealed to all countries that have pledged troops to expedite their deployment.

At Sudan's insistence, the U.N. Security Council agreed that the force would be predominantly African. But the Sudanese government has refused to approve non-African units from Thailand, Nepal and Nordic countries, which withdrew their offer.

Ban said he discussed "the critical issue of the composition of the force" with Sudan's President Omar Al-Bashir on the sidelines of the African Union summit in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on Jan. 31 and "the president's response was not definitive." He said the speed of the AU-U.N. force's deployment "depends critically on this issue being resolved as soon as possible."

Undersecretary-General for Peacekeeping Jean-Marie Guehenno, who visited the region from Jan. 21-29, "confirmed the tremendous challenges that the mission faces in providing even a modest level of protection to civilians in Darfur," Ban said, citing the slow deployment of the force.

Ban said he remains "extremely concerned" by recent hostilities between the government and Justice and Equality Movement rebels led by Khalil Ibrahim in West Darfur, and the build-up of their forces in the area, bordering Chad.

This has "severely undermined" humanitarian conditions and access to civilians, he said.

Ban condemned "in the strongest possible terms" attacks on civilians in three towns in West Darfur on Feb. 8 that caused an estimated 200 casualties and forced over 10,000 civilians to flee across the border to Chad. He also accused Chadian regular forces and JEM rebels of launching several attacks inside Sudanese territory, which raised tensions and led to a significant deterioration in security.

"In the light of the security conditions on the ground, the most urgent priority in Darfur is the establishment of a cessation of hostilities," Ban said.

"To this end, I urge the government and all parties to cooperate fully with the efforts of the special envoys to convene negotiations as soon as possible," he said. "I reiterate my call on all parties to refrain from the use of force and to come to the negotiating table."

The secretary-general also stressed that normalizing the deteriorating relations between Chad and Sudan "is essential to the success of the peace process in Darfur and to the long-term prospect for peace in both countries."

[Worsening situation in West Darfur jeopardizes aid efforts – UN report](#)

20 February 2008 – The security situation in West Darfur has deteriorated so sharply in the past two months that the United Nations' efforts to bring humanitarian relief to those in need is being severely undermined, a new UN report says, calling for an immediate cessation of hostilities and warning that the region needs many more peacekeepers.

The latest report of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon on the hybrid UN-African Union peacekeeping mission to Darfur (UNAMID) says the "slow pace" of deployment is making it difficult for the forces that are in place to provide "even a modest level of protection to civilians."

Just over 9,000 troops and police officers have been deployed so far, even though UNAMID is supposed to have more than 26,000 uniformed personnel in Darfur when it reaches full capacity. Less than a quarter of the mission's authorized number of civilian staff have also been deployed.

“The mission will not be in a position to effectively fulfil its mandate or meet the tremendous expectations of Darfur’s civilians with the meagre human and material resources currently in the mission area,” Mr. Ban writes.

“We need to urgently demonstrate to the conflict-affected population of Darfur that UNAMID will bring a material improvement to their daily lives, or risk losing their confidence at this critical juncture in the life of the mission.”

The Secretary-General calls for all troop and police contributors to UNAMID to expedite the deployment of any units or assets they have pledged, and he appeals to Member States to provide those units that are still outstanding – such as key military helicopters – to ensure the mission is at full operating capability.

A month after the transfer of authority from the previous AU peace force (known as AMIS), UNAMID still lacks one heavy and one medium ground transport unit, three military utility aviation units (18 helicopters in total) and additional attack helicopters.

In the absence of pledges from Member States, one option being explored is the transfer of aviation assets from other UN peacekeeping missions.

In addition, the report notes that the speed of the deployment of UNAMID depends on resolving any remaining issues with the Sudanese Government about its composition, and stresses the need to “ensure the removal of impediments” to the force’s operation.

Mr. Ban stresses the need for a cessation of hostilities in the conflict in Darfur, which has pitted rebels against Government forces and allied militias since 2003. More than 200,000 people have been killed and at least 2.2 million others forced to flee their homes.

He says such an agreement must also include “effective mechanisms for monitoring compliance and violations,” and adds that all sides should cooperate with the UN and AU Special Envoys to convene fully-fledged peace negotiations as soon as possible.

Condemning cross-border attacks, the Secretary-General urges both Sudan and neighbouring Chad to respect each other’s territorial sovereignty and to implement existing non-aggression accords.

The most recent fighting in West Darfur state has led 10,000 Sudanese or more to flee across the volatile border into eastern Chad, but the security situation is so poor that the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) had to withdraw its staff to a safer area earlier this week.

The UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF) is delivering medical supplies, blankets, jerry cans and plastic sheeting to those in need in West Darfur, according to a statement released by the agency. It is also treating and restoring water supplies in those towns and villages attacked by militiamen or hit by aerial bombing.

UNICEF Executive Director Ann M. Veneman said the recent upsurge in fighting was only adding to the hardships and dangers faced by vulnerable children and women in the region.

“Efforts to provide urgent assistance to children and women in dire need are hampered by the violence, and further displacement of civilian populations puts even greater pressure on camps that are already overcrowded,” she said, calling for aid workers to have unrestricted access to those in need.

[UNMIS PIO Chief visits Al-Khartoum office, meets with chief editor](#)

(Al-Khartoum) Chief of UNMIS Public Information Office, Mr. Khaled Mansour, met with the editor-in-chief and Acting Director General of Al-Khartoum newspaper, Mr. Fadul-allah Mohamed and Ms Ibtism Affan, respectively, during the visit he paid yesterday to the office of the newspaper accompanied by Mr. Gadallah El Radi, UNMIS Public Information Officer.

Mr. Mansour who took over the charge of UNMIS PIO recently said his mission would focus on providing information to media as part of UNMIS role to support the CPA and make unity attractive.

The editor-in-chief has welcomed the cooperation between UNMIS PIO and Sudanese media and their integrative efforts to make information available for the public. The meeting also touched on relevant issues that make possible for all parties to perform the roles assigned to them.

GoNU (CPA, DPA, ESPA)

[Foreign Minister Returns Home after Visit to the United States](#)

(SUNA) Khartoum, Feb. 20 (SUNA)- The Foreign Minister, Deng Alor, Wednesday evening returned to Khartoum after a several-day official visit to the United States. The minister has held talks with American officials which included the Sudanese - American relations and the dialogue between them to surpass the impediments facing the bilateral relations.

[President of the Republic stressed keenness to cement peace pillars and unity in the country](#)

(SUNA) Khartoum, Feb 20 (SUNA)- The President of the Republic, President of the National Congress, Field Marshal Omar Al Bashir, on Wednesday reaffirmed his keenness to boost the pillars of peace and unity in the country. The President of the National Congress, who received the visiting Austrian People's party delegation headed by the chairman of the Austrian People's Party Political Academy, explained the current developments in the country and instructed the External Relations Department in the party to intensify cooperation between Sudan and Austria. The President pointed out to the memorandum of understanding which was signed recently between the Austrian People's party and the National Congress. The visiting Austrian delegation has meanwhile called on the international community to provide positive contribution for the resolution of the question of Darfur and all other problems facing the Sudan. He said the President of the Republic has briefed the Austrian delegation on the situation in the Sudan. He commended the achievement realized by the government in the country saying they have helped in the stability of the situation in a clear way. MA/MA

National Council for Population Census reviews final preparations for start of the census mid April

(SUNA)Khartoum, Feb. 20 (SUNA) - The National Council for the 5th Population Census, chaired by Minister of Presidency of the Republic Gen. Bakri Hassan Salih, Wednesday got acquainted with the final preparations for implementing the Republican decree setting 15 April as date for the 5th population census. The 7th meeting of the Council, held at the Republican Palace, reviewed the finalized preparations for the count which continue for two weeks and stressed importance of receiving the necessary tools and equipments - forms, etc - by mid March 2005 at the maximum. In this regard, General Director of the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS), Dr. Yasin Al-Haj Abedin, said in a statement to SUNA following the meeting that training of counters - 40,000 in the north and 11,000 in the south- began last week to last till April 9. He explained that next week will witness beginning of the media campaign as well as briefings to the Cabinet's sovereignty sector, Council of Ministers as well as the governors and senior officials in the states. He affirmed that field work is completed in Darfur states except in some camps and areas, revealing that contacts are underway with the arms holders to allow the counters do their national missions likewise the recent immunization campaigns. Meanwhile, Deputy Chairman of the Population Census Commission in South Sudan, John Magik, affirmed that most preparations have been completed to carry out the census operation in the south, saying that many of the equipments were sent to the South already. MF/BT

Northern Sudan DDR Commission: 250 demobilized fighters given production means

(Khartoum Monitor) Northern Sudan's Commission for Disarmament Demobilization and Reintegration yesterday distributed production means to 250 veteran fighters. The Chairman of the Commission, Sulaf Eddin said the reintegration of women fighters reflects the true image of the DDR project as women were involved in the war and chose to be reintegrated in Khartoum.

He said the government provided a budget and 500 disabled and demobilized fighters will be reintegrated in the coming days.

Governor of Central Equatoria State asks UN to expedite repatriation of IDPs

(The Citizen) The Governor of Central Equatoria State yesterday asked the United Nations Mission in Sudan to expedite the repatriation process of the internal displaced persons from Khartoum.

Maj. Gen. Clement Wani Konga, during a meeting with UNMIS delegation Tuesday said over 700 IDPs were still living in Khartoum. The governor's call came a week after Meseriya blocked the way for IDPs to get into the interior of southern Sudan. He said the forthcoming population census may not be a reality if displaced person were not brought back now as time for the count draws nearer.

He said over 22000 refugees were still living in Uganda and urged the UN mission to quickly repatriate them to Sudan if they work for progress of the census and the 2009 general elections.

[NCP: Darfur will be excluded from elections if the crisis persists](#)

(Al-Sahafa) The National Congress Party announced that general elections might take place according to the schedule – next year – if the current crisis in Darfur continues.

Whereas SPLM warned that exclusion of Darfur from census and elections could be the cause of major complications.

On the other hand the National Alliance said both options – exclusion of Darfur from elections or postponement – were harmful.

State Minister for Information and Secretary of NCP's Information Secretariat, Dr. Kamal Obeid, told journalists yesterday that the issue of Darfur has no connection with elections. He said, "there were precedents where elections were not held all over the country but still responsible parliaments were formed". "There are no reasons for delaying elections," he added.

[China supplies modern tanks for SAF](#)

(Juba Post) The Chinese Government has supplied more modern and advanced weapons systems to SAF while Kenya has seized weapons bound to SPLA, routed through the Port of Mombassa saying that it constitutes a clear violation of the CPA, according to a recent press report.

According to the CPA, there are three recognized army groups: JIUs, SAF and SPLA. The CPA recognizes each of these armies as legitimate independent entities.

United Press International reported on Feb 15, 2008 in Terra Daily website in its analysis that the Chinese type 96 (also known as type 88C) tanks were spotted in Sudan last year, indicating that China has exported one of its most modern tanks to Africa.

[CPA Partners send committee to Abyei to convince SPLA to withdraw](#)

(Al-Rai Al-Aam) citizens in Abyei gripped by panic as military buildup continues on the part of SPLA and Messeriya around the town of Abyei at a time when NCP and SPLM engaged in intensive meetings with Messeriya leaders in Khartoum in a bid to defuse the crisis.

Informed sources told the newspaper that the security committee between NCP and SPLM sent a joint team to the town of Abyei in a bid to convince SPLA to withdraw to the south of Line 1.1.1956 in the areas of Abyei, Kharsana and Meiram.

[The Presidency will discuss new proposals today in connection with Abyei](#)

(Al-Sudani) Sources said the FVP Salva Kiir would arrive in Khartoum today from Juba to take part in the Presidency meeting postponed since early this week. Today's meeting will discuss proposals worked out by NCP and SPLM joint committee, which conducted its discussion in total secrecy.

[Musa Hilal lashes out against the International Community](#)

(Akhir Lahza) The Advisor to the Minister of Federal Government, Musa Hilal, has strongly criticized the International Community and the human rights organizations, which oppose the participation in the GoNU. “We will not bother about the political pressure being put on the Government. Rather, we will focus on resolving Darfur crisis in coordination with those participating in the National Unity Government”, he declared. “Darfur crisis will be resolved internally, not by the International Community,” he added.

He has defended SAF, saying, “Had it not been for the SAF the rebels would have overrun the region”

GoSS

South Sudan president dismisses Upper Nile Governor

(ST) February 20, 2008 (KHARTOUM) — The president of Southern Sudan government relieved the governor of Upper Nile State, Dak Duop Bichiok from his post as of February 18, 2008.

The Sudanese First Vice President, Salva Kiir mayadrit, also issued another presidential decree appointing Gatluak Deng governor of the Upper Nile State as of February 18, 2008.

Salva Kiir sacks South Sudan auditor

(ST) February 20, 2008 (KHARTOUM) – Salva Kiir Mayadrit the President of Southern Sudan government removed Southern Sudan Auditor General as well as other members of the Audit chamber.

The Southern Sudan Legislative Assembly (SSLA) on Wednesday December 12, 2007 passed a vote of no confidence in Auditor General of southern Sudan government, Barnabas Majok Barnabas, accused of embezzling public funds and failure to deliver service in auditing government accounts.

Slava Kiir founded his decree to relieve the head and members of the audit chamber on the SSLA vote. He also appointed GoSS Secretary General as a caretaker of the Audit Chamber until the appointment of a new auditor.

The southern Sudan parliament had accused the former auditor general Barnabas of eleven charges including:

- ▶ Undermining power of GoSS president by removing and suspending presidential appointees without approval of the president, replacing three presidential appointees without the knowledge of the president, promoting William Labi to the position of Deputy Auditor General without presidential decree.
- ▶ Unprocedural purchased a house for the Audit Chamber at US dollars 395,000 and at the same time needed additional money for renovation of the same house.
- ▶ Receiving double payments for international trips accounted for by UN and GoSS Chamber of Audit, suspended without pay four presidential appointees on false accusation of misappropriation of US dollars 85,000, - Involved in withdrawal of documents from ministry of finance by using his appointees Mr. William Labi and replaced it with forged documents signed by William Labi, Handling appointments and recruitments into the chamber by himself without involving human resource personnel. -

Involved in signing cheques that should have not been done by an auditor for the sake of promoting good accounting system, spending US dollar 160 per day for accommodation and feeding at Nile Comfort Hotel in Juba since the time he was appointed to head GoSS Audit Chamber and awarding unnecessary privileges for members of Audit Chamber amounting to 2000 US dollars per month on accommodations.

[Fire breaks out at Juba Commercial residential area](#)

(ST) February 20, 2008 (JUBA) — thirteen houses were burnt to ashes last night in the Juba Commercial residential area by unknown arson, leaving more than twenty families without food or shelter.

Some of the victims include John Wani has four houses, Ruben Kenyi has three houses, Emaleda David has two houses while Erkolano Jadahas, Lemi Dengu, Eliaba Jacob and Paul Gore each has one house.

The police said that a woman by the name of Sunday Gore has been arrested and charged under section 375 of Sudan penal court 2003 and that she will soon be arranged before the court.

According to the husband of the suspect, Paul Gore said that his wife attempted suicide by hanging herself with a curtain rope and when he confiscated the rope, she decided to set the house ablaze that spread to other houses as heavy wind were blowing.

The affected area is one of the congested areas in Juba where most of the displaced have taken refuge during the peak of the North-South civil war.

The Fire Bridgade Unit was unable to spare the houses because the officer on duty said there was no fuel in the vehicles. The impacted families appealed for emergency support from any well-wishers.

Officials at the Sudanese Red Crescent Society of Southern Sudan Office in Juba speaking to Sudan Tribune pledged to carry out an assessment tomorrow to figure out the exact assistance requirements.

Darfur

[Darfur refugees in crossfire - rebels, aid workers](#)

(ST) February 20, 2008 (CAIRO) — Thousands of refugees were caught in crossfire Wednesday as Darfur rebels battled a large Sudanese government offensive near Sudan's border with Chad, rebels and humanitarian workers said.

Local rebel commander Abbas Mohamed said a dozen civilians were killed and 20 arrested during the latest government attack, which targeted the Jebel Moon area of West Darfur on Tuesday.

"Fighting is still going on," Mohamed told The Associated Press by satellite phone from Jebel Moon. Three rebels were also killed, repelling government troops, he said Wednesday.

At least 12,000 refugees have fled to Chad this month to escape the escalating combat, and U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-moon "is extremely concerned by the renewed violence in West Darfur," spokeswoman Marie Okabe said in New York, citing in particular the bombing of the Aro Sharow refugee camp on Monday and Tuesday.

Meanwhile, the Sudanese Foreign Ministry spokesman said he didn't have "any details" about thousands of stranded refugees. "I'm sure the number is an exaggeration" Ali Sadiq said on the phone from Khartoum.

Rebels say some 10,000 more civilians are now trying to flee, but are being blocked on the border by the Sudanese military and allied janjaweed militia. "They want to cross to Chad but the government is barring the way," said Mohamed, the local rebel commander.

The U.N. could not immediately confirm who was blocking these civilians on the border.

"We have 8,000 people (stuck) in that stretch," Orla Clinton, a U.N. spokeswoman in Sudan, said on the phone. She said the situation remains unclear because humanitarian workers have had to evacuate the zone. "Obviously, we can't go in if there is a bombing going on."

Abdulwahid Elnur, the main leader of the Sudan Liberation Movement rebels, accused the U.N. and aid workers of abandoning Darfur's civilians.

"The army and the janjaweed are killing in broad daylight and the international community is doing nothing," he said on the telephone from Paris, where he lives in exile.

The Sudanese military said eight soldiers were killed and 15 injured in Tuesday's fighting, which it described as a victory. "The armed forces have been able to clear up the Jebel Moon area and to spread its full control over the area," army spokesman Gen. Mohamed al-Aghbash was quoted as saying by state television early Wednesday.

Despite a U.N. Security Council ban on military operations in Darfur, al-Aghbash said Jebel Moon is "a legitimate target" for the army as long as rebels hold the zone.

The Justice and Equality Movement rebel group also claimed victory, saying it repelled three army battalions and several janjaweed units Tuesday in Jebel Moon. The government attack included "extensive aerial bombardment" by Antonov cargo planes and MiG-29 fighter jets backed by helicopters, JEM said.

"Our long ground-to-air missiles shot down two of the helicopters," JEM field commander Adam Bakheit claimed in the statement.

JEM said the goal of the government offensive was "apparently to clear the area for the retreating Chadian rebels," who are trying to return to their Darfur bases after their failed attack on N'djamena.

The Sudanese army did not comment the rebel claims to have shot down helicopters, but al-Aghbash accused the Chadian government of providing JEM with anti-aircraft missiles and said the rebels were "backed by Chadian troops and armored vehicles."

Chad's government denies it supports Darfur fighters, and in turn accuses Sudan of harboring the Chadian rebels who raided the neighboring capital, N'djamena, earlier this month.

More than 200,000 have died in Darfur and 2.5 million fled to refugee camps, including over 250,000 to Chad, since 2003, when local ethnic African rebels took arms against the Arab-dominated central government, accusing it of discrimination.

Sudan denies backing the janjaweed militia of Arab nomads accused of the worst atrocities in the conflict.

[Chinese newspaper rebukes Spielberg over Darfur](#)

(ST) February 20, 2008 (BEIJING) — A top Chinese state newspaper has lambasted Hollywood director Steven Spielberg for quitting the Beijing Olympic Games over Darfur, saying "childish" vanity politics lies behind Western criticism of Beijing policy.

China's role in Sudan came under a harsh international spotlight last week when Spielberg quit as an artistic adviser to the 2008 Games, claiming China had failed to use enough of its sway with Khartoum to press for peace in Darfur.

At the time, Chinese officials expressed muted disappointment with the Oscar-winning director.

But the overseas edition of the People's Daily, the ruling Communist Party's official paper, came out swinging on Wednesday.

"A certain Western director is very naive and has come out with an over-the-top act that defies common sense. Perhaps that's just the special temperament of Hollywood figures", the commentary said in an unmistakable reference to Spielberg.

"The Darfur problem was not created by China and is not in any way related to China's policies in Africa ... Linking the Darfur problem to the Beijing Olympics is unfair".

The rhetorical blast came as Beijing also lifted its diplomatic profile on Darfur, seeking to douse criticism and protests that could mar the Olympics, which begin in August.

The government wants to use the Games as a showcase for its economic successes.

Premier Wen Jiabao said on Tuesday that his country was striving for peace in the troubled Sudanese region, and China also announced its envoy to Darfur, Liu Guijin, would travel to Britain and Sudan in coming days.

"We're willing with Britain to continue making ceaseless efforts to appropriately resolve the Darfur issue," Wen told British Prime Minister Gordon Brown.

The state newspaper was less polite.

It said Western activists and media have distorted China's role in Sudan for their own ends.

"They say they are working for the people of Darfur, but in fact they are acting out of self-interest. Pressuring China can win them political capital," said the commentary. It called Western reporting on the controversy "infantile and laughable".

China is a leading oil customer and supplier of weapons to Sudan, and critics accuse Beijing of providing diplomatic cover for Khartoum as it stonewalls international efforts to send peacekeepers into Darfur.

But Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Liu said on Tuesday that patient negotiation was the way to defuse the conflict, which international experts estimate has killed 200,000 people and driven 2.5 million from their homes. Khartoum says 9,000 people have died there.

The newspaper said "holding a good Olympics would be the most powerful counter-attack" to China's critics.

[Sudan Ambassador to UN calls for revival of Darfur Peace Joint Mediation](#)

(Sudan Vision) Sudan's permanent envoy to the UN, Ambassador Abdelmahmoud Abdelhalim, called on UNAMID to expedite revival of political mediation and expressed his hope that arrangements for convention of the Arusha conference for unifying the Darfur armed factions will shortly be finalized, particularly after completing all the hybrid operation steps.

Abdelhalim stressed that the UN-AU brokerage should give priority to the political process in accordance with Resolution 1769 and the subsequent meetings held between the Sudanese government and the UN Secretary General in Addis Ababa.

At the meeting he held with Dr. Mustafa Osman Ismail last Tuesday, Sudan's UN envoy noted that the signing of the Status of Forces Agreement between the government and the hybrid force command reflects that Sudan-UN relations are developing positively.

"These positive developments indicate that peace talks may res-start soon," he added, disclosing that contacts are being made for boosting these positive developments as well as for sharing ideas on regional issues that concern Sudan and the regional countries it is teaming up with in the UN. He further stated that no definite date has been set for resuming Sirte talks in Libya, which were suspended because of the rebel factions' failure to unify.

[UN Envoy Eliasson met with Abdel Wahid, discuss participation in negotiations](#)

(Al-Ayyam) Diplomatic sources confirmed that SG Envoy for Darfur, Jan Eliasson, met over the past days, with SLM chairman Abdul Wahid Mohamed Nour in Paris. He discussed with Abdul Wahid the possibility of participating in the peace process.

[Darfur authority welcomes SPLM proposal to review Sudan's CPA](#)

(ST) February 20, 2008 (KHARTOUM) — Darfur former rebels hailed Sudan People's Liberation Movement proposal to review the 2005 peace agreement in order to contribute to political settlement in the war-torn Darfur region.

doc3529 | right> Secretary General of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement, Cabinet affairs minister, Pagan Amum said on Monday February 18 that the SPLM would not mind the reviewing the Comprehensive Peace Agreement including the power and wealth sharing, to facilitate a political solution for the five year crisis in Darfur.

Mohamed Suleiman Adam, the Secretary General of the Transitional Darfur Regional Authority (TDRA) welcomed Pagan proposition saying that wealth and power sharing should be reviewed in the three agreements in order to make the CPA a comprehensive deal satisfying all the people of Sudan.

Adam urged the National Congress Party to respond positively to the SPLM offer. He pointed out that the National Congress Party would not lose anything, and the opening of the Naivasha will be of great help for the non signatory rebel movements to join the peace process.

The CPA gives the National Congress 52 percent of executive positions, the SPLM 28 percent, other southern groups six percent and northern parties 16 percent.

[Darfur rebels say 15 die in army offensive](#)

(The Reuters) EL-GENEINA, Sudan, Feb 20 (Reuters) - Darfur rebels said on Wednesday that 15 civilians had been killed in bombing by government planes near the Chad border, part of an offensive to rid the area of insurgents.

U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-moon called on all sides to show restraint and humanitarian officials warned some 160,000 civilians dependent on aid in the area north of West Darfur's capital el-Geneina would be severely affected by the fighting.

"There were about 15 civilians killed by the aerial bombardment in Jabel Moun," Sheikh el-Din Mahin, humanitarian coordinator for the Darfur rebel Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), told Reuters by telephone from the area.

"The mountain is very big so we have not been able to gather all the injured or dead yet," he added.

Aid officials estimate some 20,000 Darfuris fled to Jabel Moun following a Feb. 8 army attack on three nearby towns.

The Sudanese army said it had launched a "cleansing" operation in the rebel-held mountainous region to open the way for humanitarian access and to rid it of Darfur and Chadian insurgents, saying they were attacking civilians.

"We are in the east and the west of the mountain. The situation is stable and completely under our control," an army spokesman said.

He said they did not yet have figures for any civilian or rebel losses during the fighting, but that nine army soldiers had been killed and 15 injured.

The rebel JEM and Sudan Liberation Army (SLA) in Jabel Moun said they still controlled the area and had pushed back three government offensives.

Mostly non-Arab rebels took up arms in early 2003 accusing the central government of neglect. But rebel divisions and the government's mobilisation of mostly Arab tribal militia has created a chaotic mix of armed groups and a breakdown of law and order in Sudan's remote west.

Darfur's revolt promoted a resurgence of neighboring Chad's civil war, with both capitals accusing each other of fanning the flames of the conflicts.

Rebels said Jabel Moun was quiet Wednesday, but remained out of bounds for humanitarian workers and the U.N.-African Union peacekeeping mission.

DETERIORATING SITUATION

U.N. chief Ban called for an end to the fighting and a return to peace talks. "A negotiated settlement to the Darfur conflict cannot take place amid continuing violence and the massive displacement of civilians," he said.

He called the bombing of a largely empty refugee camp near Jabel Moun "unacceptable." Rebels said four were injured in that bombing Monday and U.N. officials said at least one woman died after losing both her legs in the attack.

Separately, Ban said in his latest monthly report to the U.N. Security Council that the security situation in Western Darfur had deteriorated over the last two months.

He condemned attacks on civilians like those on Feb. 8 as "grave violations of international humanitarian law".

Ban's report also called on Sudanese President Omar Hassan al-Bashir to urgently confirm acceptance of the proposed composition of the joint U.N.-African Union peacekeeping force, known as UNAMID, as soon as possible.

Western countries have accused Bashir of dragging his feet to try to block the full deployment of peacekeepers.

Among the restrictions Khartoum has placed on UNAMID is that as much of the force as possible should be African. Sudan has already rejected the offer of a Nordic engineering unit.

Only 9,000 of the expected full deployment of up to around 26,000 UNAMID peacekeepers have been deployed in Darfur.

International experts estimate some 200,000 have died and 2.5 million driven from their homes in Darfur. Khartoum blames Western media for exaggerating the fighting and puts the death toll at 9,000.

Miscellaneous