

UNITED NATIONS MISSION IN SUDAN
UNMIS
UNMIS Media Monitoring Report 12th January 2007
(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**

- Coverage of Special Envoy Eliasson press conference
- Coverage of UNSG Press conference, Darfur monthly report and SG meeting with Sudan's Permanent Representative to the UN
- Press reports on handover of equipment to AMIS in El Fashir
- UN envoy hopeful for Darfur peace progress
- Military solution no option in Darfur - UN envoy
- UN hands over first batch of equipment to Darfur AU force
- Strong, well-funded force needed in Darfur - Ban Ki-Moon
- WFP driver killed during ambush in South Sudan

➤ **Darfur**

- A new Darfur rebel movement is created
- Commander in Chief of SLM/A-Minni Minawi rejects anticipated integration in Sudan's Army
- Reactions to Ceasefire announced by Governor Richardson
- Minni Minawi recent statements and activities
- Member of Yemeni Parliament visits Darfur; comments on situation there
- Darfur former rebels reject anticipated integration in Sudan's army
- China, US say negotiation is best solution to Darfur crisis

➤ **GoSS**

- Ottawa cold to idea of South Sudan liaison office in Canada

IN THE NEWS TODAY:

UN

Coverage of Special Envoy Eliasson press conference

Sudanese press dedicated an extensive coverage of the event.

Al Ray Al Aam, Al Sahafa, Al Sudani, Akhbar Al Youm, Al Hayat, Al Khartoum and Al Wifaq reported on the press conference, which is one of the lead items of the Sudanese press. Sudan TV and Radio reported also on the event. Sudanese press headlines include *“The Security Council will revisit Resolution 1706, Eliasson says”*; *“Eliasson meets DPA opponents in Ethiopia by the end of the month”*; *“Eliasson: I’m optimistic about the success of my mission in Darfur”*; *“Eliasson affirms to President Bashir of the UN and the AU readiness to help resolving the Darfur crisis”*; *“Eliasson: I agreed with President Bashir to exclude a military solution, Government and UN agree on foundations of negotiations”*. Akhbar Al Youm published a transcript of the press conference.

In conjunction with its coverage of Mr. Eliasson’s press conference, the Sudanese media also highlighted the statement issued yesterday by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in which it announced the Governments’ acceptance of engaging in peace talks and a ceasefire. Headlines include *“Conditional Government Agreement on negotiations with Darfur Rebels”*; *‘Bashir links acceptance of ceasefire to DPA signing by rebels’*.

Sudanese press coverage of the activities of Mr. Eliasson has been so far accurate and comprehensive. The tone in the press is so far positive.

Reuters and AFP also filed stories on Mr. Eliasson statements during his press conference. *AFP* headlined *“UN Envoy hopeful for Darfur peace progress”* while *Reuters* headlined *“Military solution no option in Darfur-UN Envoy”*.

Coverage of UNSG Press conference, Darfur monthly report and SG meeting with Sudan’s Permanent Representative to the UN

The statements made by the Secretary-General during the press conference he held yesterday in New York received less coverage the Sudanese press. So far, only Al Sudani published a report on the subject with the headline *“Ki-moon: a political solution is our priority in resolving the Darfur crisis”* (Al Sudani).

Associated press filed a story on the press conference under the headline *“Strong, well-funded force needed in Darfur - Ban Ki-Moon”*.

Three Sudanese newspapers (Al Khartoum, Alwan, Al Khartoum, Al Sahafa) made a short reference to the latest Secretary-General monthly report on Darfur under the headline *“Ki-moon: Sudan’s rejection of UN forces has resulted in more violations”*.

Three Sudanese newspapers (Al Ray Al Aam, Al Sahafa, Akhbar Al Youm) reported on the meeting held yesterday between SG Ban Ki-Moon and the Permanent Representative of Sudan to the United Nations. According to their reports, the Sudanese Ambassador informed the Secretary-General on the situation in Darfur including ongoing political and diplomatic efforts to resolve Darfur crisis, including the Government's efforts to this effect; results of the Mr. Senior State officials' meetings with Special Envoy Eliasson and CPA implementation. According to Sudanese press reports, the Ambassador conveyed to the Secretary-General his Governments' concern over sex abuse and exploitation of minors by UN soldiers in Juba. The headlines on the meeting are "Ki-moon vows to sanction all those who would prove to be involved in rape of minors in Juba"; Sudan's Permanent Representative to the UN discloses to Akhbar Al Youm details of his first and important meeting in New York with the new UN Secretary-General).

Note 1: the quotes attributed to Sudan PermRep in reference to his Government's cooperation with the UN and its leadership are all positive.

Press reports on handover of equipment to AMIS in El Fashir

Al-Sahafa, Al-Wattan, Al-Rai Al-Aam, Alwan, Al-Hayat, Alsudani, Akhbar Al-Yom and Khartoum Monitor dailies reported positively on the ceremony of handover of equipment from the UN to AMIS in El Fasher. All newspaper quoted speeches made at the ceremony and UNMIS press release issued on this occasion.

UN envoy hopeful for Darfur peace progress

Friday 12 January 2007.

Jan 11, 2007 (KHARTOUM) — A top United Nations envoy for Sudan was hopeful that progress to end the brutal conflict in the western frontier province of Darfur can be made in the coming months.

"I hope we will not celebrate the next DPA anniversary without making progress," interim UN special representative Jan Eliasson told reporters, referring to the Darfur peace agreement.

Hopes for peace were raised Wednesday when Sudan and rebel groups, prodded by visiting New Mexico Governor Bill Richardson, agreed to a 60-day ceasefire and a peace summit no later than March 15.

The United Nations and the African Union would meanwhile step up their diplomatic efforts to resolve the conflict, according to a joint statement from Richardson and Sudanese President Omar al-Beshir.

Eliasson, speaking on the third day of his visit to Sudan as Ban's interim special representative, seemed intent on working in collaboration with his African Union colleague Salim Ahmed Salim.

He said he had spoken to Salim several times, including Thursday, to discuss coordinating efforts towards "a political process" leading to peace.

"We are here to assist the African Union in its difficult job," said Eliasson, who during his visit met Beshir and Foreign Minister Lam Akol, among others.

"President Beshir and all other officials I met here told me that there will not be a military solution to the Darfur problem and I hope I will hear this from the non-signatories," he said.

He noted that he planned to meet rebel leaders who had not signed the peace agreement when he goes to Darfur on Friday.

"Our task is mainly to explore the road to a political process," he explained.

(AFP)

Military solution no option in Darfur - UN envoy

Friday 12 January 2007.

Jan 11, 2007 (KHARTOUM) — The Sudanese government recognizes there is no military solution to the Darfur crisis, said a top U.N. envoy who called on Thursday for an immediate reduction in hostilities to facilitate the political process.

"I was told by practically everybody that there is no military solution ... that included President (Omar Hassan al-) Bashir," Jan Eliasson, the U.N. special envoy for Darfur, told reporters after meeting senior officials in Khartoum.

He said government officials specifically expressed a need for talks to begin with rebels who had not signed an African Union-mediated peace deal in May and had renewed hostilities with the government.

Fighting has escalated since May and aid agencies and experts say security in Darfur is rapidly deteriorating, putting many more civilians at risk and cutting off large parts of the region to relief workers.

On Wednesday U.S. Governor Bill Richardson of New Mexico, after a visit to Sudan, said he had secured a 60-day ceasefire between the government and the rebels who rejected the deal signed by only one rebel faction.

Sudan's Foreign Ministry issued a statement announcing its agreement to the 60-day ceasefire.

But Eliasson said it was not "completely clear" to what extent the rebels had agreed to the ceasefire.

The Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), a small faction in the larger rebel alliance National Redemption Front (NRF), on Thursday said they had not agreed to such a truce.

"There is no ceasefire between us and the government," JEM spokesman Abu Bakr Hamid el-Nur told Reuters from Darfur.

Eliasson declined to elaborate on the government position on accepting a joint U.N.-African Union force in Darfur. He instead emphasized that successful political negotiations needed to happen first.

"There has to be a peace to keep," he said.

(Reuters)

UN hands over first batch of equipment to Darfur AU force

Friday 12 January 2007.

Jan 11, 2007 (KHARTOUM/AL-FASHER) — The United Nations handed over the first batch of equipment and supplies today to African peacekeeping mission in Darfur.

In the implementation of the UN Light Support Package to the African Union Mission in Sudan, UNMIS handed over today the first batch of equipment and supplies to AMIS. The remainder of the Light Support Package equipment to be handed over to AMIS is expected to be delivered in the coming weeks.

The equipment, including night vision goggles, generators, tents and other supplies, is part of the first phase of UNMIS support to AMIS, known as the Light Support Package, worth a total of US\$ 21 million.

Phase two of UN support to AMIS in Darfur will consist of a Heavy Support Package, including additional staff and equipment. The UN and the AU are in the process of finalizing the Heavy Support Package and will jointly inform the Government of Nation Unity of Sudan on its details in the framework of the Tripartite Mechanism.

In addition to equipment and supplies, the Light Support Package is comprised of personnel fully dedicated to supporting AMIS, namely 105 military staff officers, 33 police advisers and 48 civilians working in the areas of logistics, administration, support to the DPA and mine action. As of today 17 military staff officers and 19 police advisers are already in Darfur.

This support comes in response to the findings of the Joint AU-UN Technical Assessment Mission, which were shared with the Government of Sudan, and pursuant to the Communiqué of the African Union PSC, adopted at its 58th meeting on 27 June 2006. It is also based on a number of specific areas identified by the United Nations and the African Union Commission where the United Nations could provide concrete support to AMIS.

Below the full list of the equipment handed over to the AMIS

List of Equipment to be handed over to AU on Thursday 11 January 2007

- ▶ 172 Night Vision Goggles (NVG)
- ▶ 36 Ground Positioning Systems (GPS)
- ▶ 240 Sleeping bags
- ▶ 240 Mosquito nets

- ▶ 40 x 6 man tents (240 soldiers)
- ▶ 16 assorted generators/ 5 x 20 KVA+ 5 x 7 KVA+ 3 x 15 KVA+ 3 x 5 KVA
- ▶ 10 double ringed cookers

List of Equipment to be handed over to AU as it arrives to Darfur (To be delivered on the coming weeks)

- ▶ 168 NVGs
- ▶ 10 comprehensive medical packs
- ▶ Primary TV/Video Camera Kit
- ▶ Primary TV/Video Camera Kit-Studio System
- ▶ Supplementary TV/Video Camera Kit with option
- ▶ TV/Video Cabling Kit, without cabling
- ▶ TV/Video Cabling Kit, with cabling
- ▶ TV/Video Lightening Kit
- ▶ TV/Video Editing Kit
- ▶ Digital Imaging
- ▶ Website Publishing and Print Publishing Kit
- ▶ Website/Desktop Publishing
- ▶ Public Address Kit
- ▶ Pharmaceuticals, as agreed upon in writing by U

(UNMIS)

Strong, well-funded force needed in Darfur - Ban Ki-Moon

Friday 12 January 2007.

Jan 11, 2007 (UNITED NATIONS) — Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said the United Nations must succeed in putting "a strong, well-resourced force" on the ground in conflict-wracked Darfur, saying his top envoy was assured Thursday by Sudan's president of strong cooperation.

Ban said his envoy, Jan Eliasson, had "very good discussions" with President Omar al-Bashir, but the secretary-general was not sure what was said about the Sudanese leader's rejection of U.N. troops in Darfur.

Al-Bashir said in an interview Wednesday with the Associated Press in Khartoum that U.N. troops were not required in Darfur because the 7,000-strong African Union force on the ground could maintain order. "Our experience with U.N. operations in the world is not encouraging," he said.

Al-Bashir's comment contradicted Sudan's reported agreement on a three-phase U.N. package to help end the escalating violence in Darfur that culminates with the deployment of a 22,000-strong "hybrid" African Union-United Nations force.

Sudanese officials and Ban's predecessor, Kofi Annan, agreed on the package at a Nov. 16 meeting in Addis Ababa, and al-Bashir backed the package at the Nov. 30 summit of the A.U. Peace and Security Council in Abuja, Nigeria.

At his first news conference since taking over as U.N. chief on Jan. 1, Ban was asked whether he planned to press al-Bashir on the deployment of the "hybrid" force when they meet during the upcoming summit of the A.U.'s 53 leaders in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on Jan. 29-30.

"Given the humanitarian situation, and very worrisome situation in Darfur, it is particularly important that we succeed in putting a strong, well-resourced force on the ground," Ban said. "There was an agreement in Addis Ababa and Abuja and we are committed to implementing these agreements which have already been made."

He said the discussions between Eliasson and al-Bashir "should give us some good prospect in implementing this agreement, and I will follow up this matter."

Ban said Eliasson "was assured of very strong cooperation and assistance on the part of the Sudanese government and president, to have a very good cooperation among United Nations, Sudanese government and the African Union."

The U.N. is going ahead with the first phase of the package that will provide the AU with about 140 military officers and U.N. police, 36 armored personnel carriers, night-vision goggles, and Global Positioning System equipment. A second, larger support package for the AU that could include several hundred U.N. military, police and civilian personnel and aircraft is being discussed.

Ban was asked whether he would be willing to consider an ultimatum on a political dialogue, which Eliasson is trying to help revive to bring all parties to the conflict back to the peace table.

"Of course, I would like to see the resolution of the Darfur crisis as soon as possible," he said, reiterating that it was his "highest priority."

But Ban said a solution "involves many difficult political dimensions" and he would not give a timetable.

(AP)

WFP driver killed during ambush in South Sudan

Thursday 11 January 2007.

Jan 11, 2007 (JUBA) — The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) said today that it is deeply saddened and shocked by the killing of one of its employees during an ambush in southern Sudan on Wednesday, January 10.

The WFP employee, Emmanuel Chaku Joseph, was 28 years old. He is the first WFP staff member to have been murdered in Sudan in years.

"WFP deplores the cold-blooded and senseless killing of a man who was working to help his country after many years of war," said WFP Executive Director, James Morris. "The thoughts and prayers of WFP staff are with Mr. Joseph's family at this time," he added.

"Mr. Joseph's death marks a set back to all those who value peace and prosperity in southern Sudan, and is yet another example of daily outbreaks of violence which threaten the future stability of the region," said WFP Sudan representative, Kenro Oshidari.

Darfur

A new Darfur rebel movement is created

Most Sudanese newspapers reported today in their main headlines an announcement attributed to Mahjoub Hussein, former SLM/A-MM spokesman, of the creation of a new rebel group called "the Greater Sudan Liberation Movement". The announcement was made during a press conference held yesterday in London by Mahjoub Hussein, attended by a number of SLM/leaders, including Abu Bakr Sharafuddine. According to the statements attributed to M. Hussein, he indicated that armed struggle is not the solution and that the movement will seek changes in Khartoum through all possible and legitimate means to force the Government to meet the demands of the people of Darfur. He affirmed the failure of the AU and its forces and the international community's impotence in Darfur. He also affirmed the Arab League's bias in its support of the ruling party. He called for an international intervention in Darfur.

Al Ray Al Aam reported that the Government (quoting Majzoub Al Khalifa) intends to take legal actions against M. Hussein for announcing the creation of "a terrorist movement that envisages to carry out explosions and urban war".

Al Watan reported that SLM/A-MM reacted strongly and angrily to the announcement made by Mahjoub Hussein discrediting him as a "looser".

Commander in Chief of SLM/A-Minni Minawi rejects anticipated integration in Sudan's Army

Sudan Tribune website posted an article yesterday evening in which it reported that the Commander in Chief of the SLA-Minni Minawi, Juma Hagar, rejected a plan initially agreed by his group to integrate his forces to the Sudanese army immediately before the implementation of other clauses stipulated in the Darfur Peace Agreement.

In a press release, Hagar demands Sudanese government to fulfill four conditions before the integration. He said that Khartoum has to provide non-military logistical support, to disarm the Janjaweed militias, to supply the necessary means for the implementation of the DDR related to reintegrate combatants into civil society, and to create a favourable environment for return of the displaced persons and refugees to their areas.

The former rebel faction lashed at the government accusing it of deliberately withholding the funds needed to complete the integration process. However, the Sudanese presidential advisor, Majzoub al-khalifa, told Al-Sahafa that the government has fulfilled all its obligations under the Abuja accord and revealed that Minawi's field commanders received seven billion Sudanese pounds (300.000 US dollar) along with tons of

miscellaneous supplies. He added that those commanders have acknowledged the receipt of this package without elaborating.

Khalifa said that the lack of logistical support is not a valid excuse for postponing the integration. He disclosed that this support was supposed to come from the international community that wanted to abort the Abuja accord and pave the way for the deployment of UN peacekeepers. Despite this, Khalifa pointed out that his government has furnished the logistics in recognition of its responsibility for security in Darfur.

Hagar statement which encloses further demands comes as harsh response to the presidential advisor statement. The former rebel commander threatens to stop the peace process if Khartoum did not fulfill the above-mentioned demands. He further accused Khartoum of profiting from the lack of experience of the SLM political leadership and aborting the DPA implementation.

Reactions to Ceasefire announced by Governor Richardson

Akhbar Al Youm headlined today Khalil Ibrahim (JEM/NRF) rejection of the ceasefire announced by Governor Richardson. K. Ibrahim is quoted by the same newspapers saying that “his movement has nothing to do with the statement of the US Governor and that Richardson did not contact the movement. He is also quoted saying that a ceasefire will not be accepted before a peace agreement is reached. He added that his movement will not accept the AU mediation until Salim Ahmed Salim and his aids are ousted.

Foreign Affairs Minister Lam Akol was quoted by Akhbar Al Youm that the Government has not received any document indicating that some rebel groups announced a cessation of hostilities or a cease-fire. He was quoted saying that “we haven’t her an announcement, but they promised” to cease hostilities and we heard from the UN envoy that some movements promised him to observe a cease-fire. **[Note: it seems that there might be a mistake in the reference to the UN Envoy as the article is about the announcement made by Governor Richardson on a 60 day ceasefire between the Government and rebel groups]**

Minni Minawi recent statements and activities

Most Sudanese newspapers reported on the latest activities of Minni Minawi in South and North Darfur before heading to Libya. Some press says that he refused to disclose information on his visit to Tripoli until he returns back to Sudan. Other newspapers reported that he will go to Tripoli for consultations with the Libyan leader and his visit might include meetings with a number of leaders of armed groups that reject the DPA in a bid to join the Agreement.

Member of Yemeni Parliament visits Darfur; comments on situation there

According to Al-Sahafa daily the member of the Yemeni Parliament and member of the Arab parliamentary delegation which visited Darfur recently, Dr. Mansour Alzandani, accused the US and Israel of fueling the crisis in Darfur. In a statement to Aljazeera TV, Alzandani said one of the findings of the Arab parliamentary delegation is that the resolutions of the UN and the Security Council do not help

achieving peace and security in the region. Further, he said the Arab parliamentary delegation has recommended establishing immediately a governmental and non-governmental humanitarian relief fund for Darfur under the supervision of the Arab League. It has also recommended establishing An Arab Islamic court to try those who committed crimes in the region.

Darfur former rebels reject anticipated integration in Sudan's army

Friday 12 January 2007.

By Wasil Ali

Jan 11, 2007 (KHARTOUM) — A former Darfur rebel faction which signed a peace deal with Khartoum on May 2006 has rejected a plan proposed by the Sudanese government for early integration of its troops.

The Commander in Chief of the SLA, Juma Hagar, rejected a plan initially agreed by his group to integrate his forces into the Sudanese army immediately before the implementation of other clauses stipulated in the Darfur Peace Agreement.

In a press release, Hagar urged the Sudanese government to fulfill the four conditions set forth before proceeding with the integration. Hagar said that Khartoum has to provide non-military logistical support, disarm the Janjaweed militias, and supply the tools needed for the implementation of the DPA related to reintegrating combatants into civil society, and to create a favourable environment for return of the displaced persons and refugees to their areas.

Khartoum had proposed during last December the integration of the former rebel forces into the regular army prior to the implementation of the security arrangements in the DPA, particularly the disarmament of Janjaweed militias.

Earlier this month Khartoum abruptly postponed the first phase of the forces integration of all the signatories to DPA. According to Sudanese daily al-Sahafa, the former rebels delayed the integration because they demand logistical support and disarmament of the Khartoum backed militia.

But the adjournment of the precocious integration has drawn an exchange of bitter accusations between the government and Minawi group.

The former rebel faction lashed at the government accusing it of deliberately withholding the funds needed to complete the integration process. However, the Sudanese presidential advisor, Majzoub al-khalifa, told Al-Sahafa that the government has fulfilled all its obligations under the Abuja accord and revealed that Minawi's field commanders received seven billion Sudanese pounds (300.000 US dollar) along with tons of miscellaneous supplies. He added that those commanders have acknowledged the receipt of this package without elaborating.

Khalifa said that the lack of logistical support is not a valid excuse for postponing the integration. He disclosed that this support was supposed to come from the international community that, according to Khalifa, wanted to abort the Abuja accord and pave the way for the deployment of UN peacekeepers. Despite this, Khalifa

pointed out that his government has furnished the logistics in recognition of its responsibility for security in Darfur.

Hagar statement which incorporates further demands comes as harsh response to the presidential advisor statement. The former rebel commander threatens to stop the peace process if Khartoum did not fulfill the above-mentioned demands. He further accused Khartoum of profiting from the lack of experience of the SLM political leadership and aborting the DPA implementation.

The head of the security commission arrangement on the Minawi side, Ali Traio, was skeptical of the of Khalifa's statements regarding the funds received by the SLA, branding it as false, and an attempt to escape the reality and an evidence of the lack of seriousness in dealing with the committees.

Traio called on the government side to produce the receipts and the signatures that Khalifa referred to in his statements". Traio went on further to say that "if there is someone else outside the government committee then we will have to know so we can deal with him "I think that Khalifa does not even recognize the security arrangements committee and very often overlooks it" and that his "constant interference the last few meetings of the committee is another example of that" Traio told al-Sahafa.

According to the DPA, Khartoum had to disarm the Janjaweed militia by the end of 15 October 2006. Sudanese government has done the inverse. But the African Union peacekeeping mission said in a recent report produced in a ceasefire commission meeting in December said Sudanese government has supplied and rearmed the militias. Observers consider the DPA is not going into effect because Khartoum is awaiting the joining of the holdout rebels.

Khartoum also, publicly said that militias could not be disarmed as long as other rebel factions continue to attack the government positions in the troubled region of Darfur.. The first phase in the integration of the former rebel troops meant to put an end of the growing frustration among Minawi ranks and to stop their defection to the holdout factions.

(ST)

China, US say negotiation is best solution to Darfur crisis

Friday 12 January 2007.

Jan 11, 2007 (BEIJING) — China and the United States on Thursday said negotiations remained the best solution to resolving the issue of the war-torn Darfur region of Sudan.

"China agrees to take an all-round and balanced approach to bring about peace and stability in Darfur," Chinese State Councilor Tang Jiaxuan told the visiting U.S. President's special envoy to Sudan Andrew Natsios.

In an hour-long meeting with Natsios in Beijing, Tang said China has always paid close attention to the Darfur issue and does not wish to see any conflict or war there.

"We actively back the international community's efforts to help the people in Darfur restore peace under the framework of the United Nations," Tang said.

Echoing Tang's remarks, Natsios said negotiations were the best way to politically resolve the Darfur issue.

Natsios's China visit came after Sudanese government Antonov aircraft bombed two villages in war-torn Darfur on Dec. 29, 2006.

Calling his four-day China visit "productive," Natsios said the United States would like to work with parties concerned to seek a solution to the Darfur issue.

"Your government is very helpful," Natsios told Tang. "I am very pleased with the consultations."

Natsios said the United States would like to maintain communication and cooperation with China on the Darfur issue.

Several Chinese Foreign Ministry officials also held separate talks with Natsios in Beijing.

(Xinhua)

GoSS

Ottawa cold to idea of South Sudan liaison office in Canada

Friday 12 January 2007.

By Brian Adeba

Jan 11, 2007 (OTTAWA) — An attempt by the autonomous government of south Sudan to open a liaison office in Canada appears to have hit a snag after Canadian officials cooled to the idea, on the premise that two missions cannot represent one country.

The government of Sudan has full diplomatic ties with Canada and maintains an embassy in Ottawa.

But Peter Both, the man chosen by the government of south Sudan to explore the possibility of establishing the liaison office in Canada, says he hopes ongoing dialogue with Canadian officials will eventually clear any doubts about the intended role of the liaison office.

"The response is not a 'yes' or 'no,'" he said.

"Basically, what they wanted to know is how two missions will represent one country, and it is a legitimate question."

The government of south Sudan was established in 2005, a few months after former rebels of the Sudan People's Liberation Army and the Sudanese government signed a peace deal that ended 21 years of fighting.

Both says the peace deal, known as the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), mandates the government of south Sudan establish liaison offices abroad without compromising the roles of embassies or foreign missions of the national government of Sudan.

"This is a function well established in the CPA," he said, elaborating that the agreement also gives the south Sudan government the mandate to initiate, negotiate and conclude international and regional agreements on issues like sports, culture, trade and investment.

"I emphasize the fact that this is not a consulate or embassy, but rather a liaison office which will facilitate communication between the government of south Sudan and the international community," he said.

Rodney Moore, a spokesman for the Department of Foreign Affairs, confirmed that Both had written a letter in early May 2006 asking to meet officials on the department's Sudan desk, but said the letter did not contain a specific request about opening a liaison office in Canada.

"It's not in limbo, unless he's written another letter which we have not received," said Moore.

However, Moore stressed that such requests should come through the normal diplomatic channels.

"Anyone approaching the department will have to come through the embassy or high commission of his or her country," he said.

The embassy of Sudan did not return calls to determine if it had been approached to convey the request to open the liaison office.

Amir Idris, an assistant professor of African studies at Fordham University in New York City and author of the book *Sudan's Civil War: Slavery, Race and Formational Identities*, said the south Sudan government hasn't clearly defined the role of its liaison offices.

"Without an official statement from the government of south Sudan outlining the mandate of these offices, many foreign governments may not allow them to operate in their countries," said Idris in an email to Embassy.

Elsewhere, the government of south Sudan plans to open liaison offices in the United Kingdom and Ethiopia, said Both.

Next week, staff from a newly opened government of south Sudan liaison office in Washington D.C will host a ceremony to mark the launch of the mission. Andrew Natsios, President George Bush's envoy on Darfur, will attend the ceremony together

with Jendayi Frazer, assistant secretary of state for African affairs, Lauren Landis, senior representative on Sudan at the Department of State, and Congressman Donald Payne, chair of the sub-committee of international relations on African affairs.

Both said the intended role of the liaison office in Canada is to attract businesses, coordinate development assistance and encourage skilled Canadians of south Sudanese origin, who number about 40,000, to contribute to the development of the war-ravaged region.

South Sudan has harboured secessionist ambitions dating back more than 50 years. The CPA gives the people of south Sudan the right to decide through a referendum, scheduled for 2011, whether to remain in a united Sudan or become a sovereign state. However, it also stipulates that efforts be made during the six-year interim period, which started in 2005, to make the unity of Sudan attractive to the people of the south.

"If the north fails to make unity attractive during the interim period, and the people of southern Sudan decide to become an independent state, of course, these liaison offices could be transformed into full diplomatic missions," said Idris.

(Embassy Newsweekly)

Tripartite Summit in Sanaa including on Darfur

Al-Sahafa-- Official sources in the Yemeni capital Sanaa announced yesterday that preparations are underway for holding a summit for the Sanaa Coalition States (Sudan, Yemen, Ethiopia and Somalia). The exact date of the summit will be agreed after consultations with concerned parties. There is, an initial agreement, however, that the summit be held on 13 February 2006. The summit will discuss a number of issues including the situation in Somalia and Darfur.

.