



UNITED NATIONS MISSION IN SUDAN

UNMIS

Media Monitoring Report, 07 May 2007

(By Public Information Office)

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Highlights

UN/ Agencies/ Partners

Coverage on the press briefing* of 6th May at UNMIS Headquarters

The press conference has received some coverage on a number of newspapers. Most of the reporting has been factual and below are some of the stories:

(Reuters via SudanTribune.com; local agencies) Many camps for those who have fled violence in Darfur are full as thousands more civilians are driven from their homes in the western Sudanese region, the United Nations said on Wednesday.

U.N. spokesman George Somerwill also told reporters that 67 vehicles belonging to the world's largest aid operation in Darfur had been hijacked or attacked so far this year and voiced concern at the increasingly violent nature of those attacks.

"Nearly 140,000 people have been identified as newly displaced since the beginning of the year, with at least 10,000 on the move in May," he told a news conference in Khartoum.

"A very visible consequence of the continued displacement is the swelling population of ... camps — many of which can no longer absorb any new arrivals," he added.

Somerwill said there continued to be a high rate of attacks against aid workers.

"The increasing use of physical and mental violence used during the hijackings is of serious concern."

"Abductions, though temporary, are also more and more common," he added. It is not always clear who is responsible for the attacks but rebels often loot aid convoys.

On Wednesday, Robert Turner, head of the U.N. department for the return of southerners displaced by the north-south war, said 100,000 had returned home to the south with help from the world body since January 2006.

But those returns may stop in July if donors did not give funds quickly.

"(We) have received only \$16.5 million against a total requirement ... of \$68 million," he said. [Follow the link to the full text [UN says many Darfur camps full as thousands flee](#)].

Referring to returns, *Allintibaha* reports that the UN says voluntary returns operations may be brought to a halt as a result of lack of sufficient funding. This, the organisation says, has resulted into returnees going back to areas they returned home from.

On Darfur, the UN says forceful displacement continues as a result of the security situation.

AlSahafa notes that UNMIS Chief of Public Information George Somerwill told the press in answer to a question at a press briefing yesterday that envoys Salim Ahmed Salim and Jan Eliasson have received invitations to attend the forthcoming talks in Juba between the non-signatory DPA factions under the auspices of VP Salva Kiir.

He also said efforts are underway to unify the various efforts for peace in Darfur.

* A full text of the transcript of the press briefing could be accessed through our website: www.unmis.org

Maternal mortality highest in South Sudan - UN

(Reuters via *SudanTribune.com*) Rates of pregnancy-related deaths in south Sudan are the highest in the world, a United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) official said.

"Rates are actually at 2,030 per 100,000 births, the worst in the world," UNFPA's South Sudan head Dragudi Buwa said.

In north Sudan, rates of maternal mortality are 509 deaths per 100,000 births, according to the United Nations.

"Skilled care attendance at birth is under five per cent," Buwa added.

A lack of trained midwives, coupled with high rates of early marriage and pregnancy and a lack of health facilities and medical advice was responsible for the large number of pregnancy-related deaths, Buwa said.

UNFPA, which is about to release a report on the findings, estimates the teen birth rate to be at 200 per 1,000 births.

Buwa said researchers found many mothers as young as 13 and many 19-year-olds who had already had up to four children.

According to information gleaned from south Sudanese health facilities, haemorrhaging accounted for 25 percent of all maternal deaths.

"A normal blood banking system would mean at any time blood of different types would be available. What happens here is that there's nothing in the stores," said Buwa.

Buwa said between 7 and 9 percent of blood donations screened at facilities was found to be HIV positive. [*Follow the link to the full text [Maternal mortality highest in South Sudan - UN](#)*].

African envoy urges SLM-Minnawi to release AU vehicles

(*SudanTribune.com*) The African Union envoy to Sudan has urged the Darfur former rebel group to release AU peacekeepers vehicles seized by its troops after clashes last month in South Darfur.

In a meeting held on Monday 4 June with the senior presidential assistant, the Acting special representative of the chairperson of the AU commission, Mrs. Monique Mukaruliza, urged Minni Minawi "to prevail on his field commanders" to release the vehicles, and other AMIS properties."

"They should also allow the instituted official investigation to take its course, including by making available those who shot at and wounded three of AMIS troops at the scene of the accident." Mrs Mularuliza said.

She told "Minawi that the seizure of the vehicles and their continued detention not only constitute a serious violation and a manifestation of bad faith to the DPA, but has also paralysed AMIS activities in the area."

The African Union mission said one of its patrols had a "road accident" with a convoy of former rebels from the SLM-Minawi near Labado in South Darfur. The road accident led to the death of one former rebel and the wounding of nine, four of whom were in critical condition, the A.U. said.

Former rebels who clashed with African Union peacekeepers in Darfur, captured 13 A.U. vehicles and wounding three soldiers. [*Follow the link to the full text [African envoy urges SLM-Minawi to release AU vehicles](#)*].

The UN Support Package to the AMIS

Eliasson consults on hybrid operation in UN Headquarters, New York

(*Sudan Vision*) Sudan permanent Envoy to the UN, AbdelMahmoud AbdelHalim, has revealed that Envoy of the UNSG with responsible officials regarding the hybrid operation in Darfur.

While expecting the government and the international parties to reach a joint formula, on the hybrid operation at the coming sessions to be held this month in Addis Ababa, Abdel Halim

launched severe attacks on the moves made by the ICC Prosecutor, Louis Moreno Ocampo, which he described as political exertions that are in no way associated with law.

Informed sources have indicated that the Security Council on Tuesday announced that it would dispatch a legation to Khartoum on the seventeenth of the current month.

UN and African Union close to deal on Darfur troops

(Reuters via SudanTribune.com) The United Nations and the African Union reached tentative agreement on Wednesday on a 23,000-strong peacekeeping force for Darfur by glossing over a dispute on who controls the operation.

The deal, contained in a report to the U.N. Security Council, still has to be endorsed by the African Union's Peace and Security Committee as well as the council and has been forwarded to Sudan for its approval.

Full deployment of the force is not expected until next year, U.N. officials said.

While the United Nations has agreed to African commanders, its proposal said more clarity was needed on command and control, as demanded by U.N. troop contributors and U.N. financial bodies. Another document is expected in this regard.

The new paper added language from a document agreed by all sides in November, saying "backstopping and control structures" would be provided by the United Nations. But it softened language referring to U.N. command and control. [*Follow the link to the full text [UN and African Union close to deal on Darfur troops](#)*].

Sudan under pressure to accept hybrid force next week

(AFP via SudanTribune.com) Sudan will come under pressure at a tripartite meeting in Addis Ababa next week to allow the deployment of a joint African Union-UN force in Darfur, a senior UN official said Wednesday.

The official, who asked not to be named, said the United Nations and the AU would meet in the Ethiopian capital with Sudanese representatives next Monday and Tuesday to weigh a revised deal they reached to send a "hybrid," 23,000-strong peacekeeping force to Darfur.

The agreement, which was sealed Wednesday and forwarded to the UN Security Council, the AU Peace and Security Council and Khartoum for endorsement, featured minor changes to a deal first unveiled late last month.

The new compromise text reaffirmed that "unity of command and control is a basic principle of peacekeeping," and recalled that a November agreement on the so-called "hybrid" AU-UN force stipulated that "backstopping and command and control structures for the hybrid operation will be provided by the UN."

"We have to convince the government of Sudan that this is the way to go," the UN official said, stressing that the accord was "a sound basis for a way out of the crisis."

He said the Security Council would be briefed next Wednesday on the outcome of the Addis Ababa meeting, a day before a council team is due to depart on a week-long African tour, including stops in the Ethiopian capital and Khartoum, for crucial talks on Darfur peacekeeping.

The UN official here, meanwhile, said the world body hoped to send the vanguard of a 3,000-strong contingent to Darfur in August to provide logistical support to the struggling AU force.

That contingent, whose dispatch has been approved by Khartoum, is to provide the "backbone" of the joint UN-AU force, which under the best circumstances will not be able to deploy until next year, he said.

"Our hope is we would begin deploying (the first elements of the so-called 3,000-strong heavy support package) some time in August or maybe September," the UN official said.

"Hopefully the bulk of the heavy support package will be in place by the end of the year," he added.

The UN official said member states offered to contribute troops for most of the specialized units required for the heavy support package "except for the air assets."

He added that two African and two non-African unidentified countries offered to provide six of the 11 units needed for the logistical support operation.

He underscored the urgency of continued international financing for the cash-strapped AU force, whose Darfur mandate expires at the end of this month but will have to be extended. [*Follow the link to the full text [Sudan under pressure to accept hybrid force next week](#)*].

Governor of North Darfur State calls for UN to Support AU forces

(*SMC – el-Fasher*) Governor of North Darfur State Osman Mohammed Yousif Kibir called upon the UN to monitor the activities of foreign organizations in Darfur.

Briefing the visiting CISSA delegation Kibir said that foreign organizations negatively affect voluntary returns. He pointed out that humanitarian work in Darfur has turned into a business whereby many organizations collect more money in the name of Darfur. He called upon the United Nations to monitor the flow of the money to the needy.

He confirmed stability of security and humanitarian situations in the state, explaining that situations are in regular improvement, in the meantime he called for UN to support AU forces so as to spread security and stability in the area, stating that they appreciate the role of AU which realized success, however he ruled out UN support AU, pointing out to the importance of the visit of CISSA delegation affirming that it has value particularly in this time.

French organizations warn against consequences of international military intervention in Darfur.

(*Sudan Vision*) A number of the French humanitarian organizations top of which is the Medicines Sans Frontiers have warned against the consequences of the military intervention in Darfur region in western Sudan, saying that such intervention would complicate the issue.

The organizations have announced their support to the Sudanese government attitude toward reaching a solution to Darfur issue through political and diplomatic means. The organizations have attributed the complications in the security and humanitarian situations in Darfur region since the year 2006 to the rebels' splits, the inter-faction wars along with the increase in amount of armed robbery in Darfur.

CPA

Tang: calls on demobilized soldiers to play great role in development

(*Khartoum Monitor*) Major General Gabriel Tanginya Third Commander of South Sudan Defense Forces (SSDF) in a press statement said the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) is making progress despite problems besetting it.

The major problem the CPA is facing is the multiplicity of opinion, said Gabriel. He added that he sees the solution in giving more freedom to Northerners in the South and speeding up elections.

He described the disarmament operations carried out by the Other Armed Groups Coordinating Committee (OAGCC) and the Sudanese Armed Forces as successful and serious. He commended demobilized soldiers for handing over their arms saying that they can play a great role in the development and reconstruction of South Sudan.

The disarmament was carried out in accordance with the CPA so that no one can breach it in the name of the SSDF.

OIL: GoSS Vice-President rebuffs report of suspension of White Nile Oil Company

(*AlSahafa*) The Vice-President of the GoSS has rebuffed recent reports that the GoSS has ordered the suspension of UK's White Nile Oil company from the oil concessions in Block Ba, Jonglei State and that French company Total take over.

Dr. Riek Machar explained that the last meeting between the parties to the CPA reached an agreement that the concession be run through a consortium of oil companies comprising of Total, White Nile, Kufpek (of Kuwait), Greater Nile Petroleum and SudaPet with 35%, 25%, 20%, 10% and 10% stakes respectively.

GoNU

Human rights committee highlights disparities between international standards and national laws

(*Rai AlShaab*) The committee on human rights has identified disparities between local and international human rights laws.

This came about at a 4-day workshop organised jointly by the Parliamentary Committee on Human Rights and UNMIS on conformity of national laws to international human rights standards. The organisers sought to strength national capacities to adherence to international obligations on human rights as per the dictates of the CPA.

Workers' Unions Federation rejects new monetary policies describing it as a “disaster”

(*AlSahafa*) The National Federation of Sudan Workers' Unions has formally declared its rejection to recent regulations set out by the central bank governing foreign currency transactions.

The federation described the new regulations as a “true disaster” and called for a reversal in order to “save the country’s economy.”

The Governor of the Bank of Sudan came in defence of those regulations and pointed out that the regulations are aimed towards realising public good and in are in a bid to conform to the international policies. He cited as an example the international pressures to combat money laundering.

Parliamentary group of Darfur DPA signatory parties welcome JEM willingness for peace talks

(*Rai AlShaab*) The parliamentary group representing DPA signatory factions has hailed the goodwill on the part of JEM leader Khalil Ibrahim and his movement’s willingness to talk peace with the government.

A member of the caucus spoke to the press yesterday and said government should open its arms wide and negotiate with Dr. Khalil whom they described as most competent to lead negotiations with government. “Government should not look at him as Dr. Turabi [*of the Popular Congress Party*],” he said.

He urged government to seriously consider talks with the JEM leader.

Other Headlines:

- Civil servants in South Kordofan enter strike over delayed pay (*AlWatan*)
- Authorities arrest robbers who recently seized the Bank of Nilein, Babanousa Branch, truck (*AlIntibaha*)
- Delegation of CISSA concludes successful visit to North Darfur (*SMC*)

Southern Sudan

GoSS cabinet studies effects of US sanctions on its oil revenue

(AlIntibaha) A meeting yesterday of the GoSS cabinet presided over by GoSS President Salva Kiir deliberated over a number of issues including the US unilateral sanctions imposed on Sudan and its effects on the country's economy and southern Sudan's economy in particular.

A spokesperson for the cabinet said that the meeting reached agreement on the formation of a ministerial committee to study the impact of the sanctions especially with regards to oil revenue.

Other Headlines:

- [South Sudan court clears Australian of murder charge](#)

Darfur

Stage is set for settling Darfur problem: Minnawi

(Khartoum Monitor) Senior Assistant to the President and Chairman of Darfur Transitional Authority, Minni Arku Minnawi in a meeting with San Gedo which operates in humanitarian work said that the Government of National Unity (GoNU) is exerting great efforts to settle the Darfur problem as the stage is now set for realizing stability in Darfur.

He said that the decision by factions which did not sign the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) to hold talks with the Government is a good move.

He disclosed that the meeting tackled the situation in Darfur and many humanitarian issues in the region.

Juba meeting on Darfur postponed for a week

(Rai AlShaab) The secretary and head of the SPLM caucus in North Darfur State has revealed that the meeting of Darfur Peace Agreement non-signatory groups scheduled to be held in Juba has been postponed for one week at the request of the movements.

Sayed Abdalla said that the non-signatory movements have requested more time to bring in their members from outside the country.

He said that the SPLM committee headed by Edward Lino that recently toured the Darfur region had sent out invitations for the meeting and managed to win the agreement of 19 united groups. He said that AbdulWahid and Dr. Khalil have also expressed their willingness to attend.

US sanctions undermine Darfur peace: Sudan's FM

(AFP via SudanTribune.com) Sudan on Wednesday accused the United States of playing politics over Darfur, claiming that tougher US sanctions will only set back the deployment of UN peacekeepers in the region.

Sudanese Foreign Minister, Lam Akol, said the latest US sanctions announced last month came just as his government was preparing to thrash out the details of a force for Darfur comprising UN and African Union soldiers. [Follow the link to the full text [US sanctions undermine Darfur peace: Sudan's FM](#)].

Sudan's intelligence chief reiterates peaceful solution for Darfur crisis

(Xinhua via SudanTribune.com) The chief of Sudan's intelligence department reiterated on Wednesday the government's commitment to a peaceful solution for the current crisis in the western Sudanese region of Darfur.

Salah Abdallah Mohamed Gosh, the director general of the Sudanese National Security and Intelligence Service, made the remarks while addressing the opening session of the fourth conference of the Committee of Intelligence and Security Services of Africa (CISSA).

He said that all the peace agreements which had been signed by the Sudanese government represented extremely important steps for realizing permanent peace and stability in Sudan and said the government is committed to cooperating with all the parties concerned for solutions to the Darfur crisis.

Sudanese Vice President Osman Mohammed Taha, on his part, stressed his country's readiness to overcome the obstacles on the way of realizing the peace in Darfur.

He urged the international donors to keep their commitments to extending Sudan with helps for the rebuilding and reconstruction process in Darfur, adding that the Sudanese government would continue its efforts even without the assistances from the outside. [Follow the link to the full text [Sudan's intelligence chief reiterates peaceful solution for Darfur crisis](#)].

France backs off plan for Darfur humanitarian corridor

(AP via SudanTribune.com) French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner appeared to back off Wednesday from a proposal for a "humanitarian corridor" for Darfur but insisted France was working out a plan to help the troubled Sudanese region.

Kouchner, who co-founded the aid group Doctors Without Borders and has been a prominent humanitarian crusader, has sought to focus on Darfur since President Nicolas Sarkozy named him last month. Kouchner first floated the idea of a humanitarian corridor May 29, but some aid groups protested that it would be too risky.

On Wednesday, Kouchner said, "A humanitarian corridor is a good concept when it can be adapted." He said the initial idea was for an aerial corridor, but that "it is not at all certain that we can do it."

"We cannot decide for others," he said after a government meeting, but didn't elaborate.

Kouchner said that the important thing was to ensure the security of people living outside refugee camps.

Reuters reports meanwhile that Kouchner will be traveling to Africa this week, his first official trip to the continent where he was once an aid worker, and diplomats say he will press for a high-level meeting on Darfur.

Kouchner will travel to Mali on Thursday before heading to Chad, where violence in neighbouring Darfur has increasingly spilled across the border.

Kouchner hopes to bring together an "enlarged contact group" of foreign ministers in Paris this month from heavyweights such as the United States, Russia, and Sudan ally China, as well as key African players to pressure Sudan to accept a hybrid African Union and United Nations peacekeeping force, diplomats said.

"(The aim) is to have a broad political profile with people who do not necessarily have the same perspective, like the Chinese and the Americans, around a table and notably to push for the issue of the hybrid force," one French diplomat said.

France hopes the meeting, provisionally planned for June 25, will bring together about 20 countries and organisations, and that U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice will attend, he added. [*Follow the links to the full texts [France backs off plan for Darfur humanitarian corridor](#); [France's Kouchner returns to Africa, Darfur in mind](#)*].

Reactions to US unilateral sanctions

Sudan's parliament adopts resolution to reject US sanctions

(*STV via BBC Monitoring*) The National Assembly has adopted a resolution by a majority vote rejecting the US sanctions on Sudan. The resolution followed a detailed discussion by members of the statement made by the foreign minister. The council considered the US Administration's resolution as an obstacle to the peace process, as well as detrimental to humanitarian conditions and out of conformity with the efforts exerted to contain the conditions in Darfur that have begun to witness noticeable improvement, by the testimony of the international community. The council pointed out that the US decision was supported only by Great Britain.

Dr Ghazi Salah al-Din, the head of the parliamentary bloc of the National Congress Party, said that the resolution to reject the US sanctions followed wide consultations with various political forces in the council to achieve a consensus and an accord.

The National Assembly further decided to contact the UN Security Council and the UN General Assembly, the AU, the Arab League, and parliamentary unions to explain the dangers of the decision on efforts by the National Unity Government, the AU, and the UN to establish peace. The assembly will continue to follow the ramifications of these decisions.

Darfur rebel group regrets US sanctions against its leader

(*SudanTribune.com*) The Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) has regretted sanctions imposed by the US administration against its leader. The rebel group however hailed Washington humanitarian aid to Darfur people and its efforts for peace in the troubled region.

The spokesperson of the JEM, Ahmed Hussein Adam, expressed regrets that the name of Khalil Ibrahim, the chairman of the rebel group, has being included in the additional sanctions imposed on Sudanese officials and companies last week.

Adam said the JEM chairman is a man of peace and to sanction him with the responsible of crimes against humanity and genocide is unwise step, adding “we hope that US Administration can reconsider its decision soon”.

Adam further praised the continual humanitarian assistance provided by the US to displaced and refugees and efforts exerted to achieve peace in the western region of Sudan.

However, the JEM spokesperson reminded that the US has a pivotal role in the resolution of the Darfur conflict, “and we are seeking to engage dialogue with Washington in order to explain our position and we reaffirm once again that we have no any hostile position against the American administration even we consider it as friend” he further said.

In an interview with Sudan Tribune last April a State Department official said the JEM leader was bringing up issues that were irrelevant to the Darfur crisis at the Abuja talks. He further mentioned that Ibrahim’s agenda is that of Hassan Turabi, the head of the opposition Popular Congress Party and an ex-ally of President Bashir. [*Follow the link to the full text [Darfur rebel group regrets US sanctions against its leader](#)*].

Bush considers no-fly zone for Darfur an option

(*Reuters via SudanTribune.com*) U.S. President George W. Bush said on Wednesday the United States may support the enforcement of a no-fly zone over Sudan’s Darfur region to help put an end to the fighting there.

"We would consider that," Bush told reporters on the sidelines of a Group of Eight (G8) summit when asked if a no-fly zone to stop the violence in Darfur was an option.

"I want to see people helping Darfur by joining us and sending clearer and stronger messages to President Bashir," Bush told a small group of reporters in the Baltic coast town of Heiligendamm on the first day of the 3-day G8 summit.

"I'm frustrated because there are still people suffering and yet the U.N. process is moving at a snail’s pace," he said. [*Follow the link to the full text [Bush considers no-fly zone for Darfur an option](#)*].

Other Developments

ICC formally requests the extradition of Darfur war crimes suspects

(*SudanTribune.com*) The International Criminal Court (ICC) transmitted a formal request to the Sudanese government for the extradition of two Darfur war crimes suspects.

The judges of the ICC issued their first arrest warrants for suspects accused of war crimes in Sudan's Darfur region in early May.

The warrants were issued for Ahmed Haroun, state minister for humanitarian affairs, and militia commander Ali Mohamed Ali Abdelrahman, also known as Ali Kushayb. Sudan has so far rejected handing over the two suspects.

The request issued by the registry division at the ICC noted that Khartoum had an obligation to "cooperate fully with [the ICC]" under the aegis of UN Security Council (UNSC) resolution 1593 which referred the situation in Darfur to the ICC.

Similar requests were sent simultaneously to the member countries of the UN Security Council, State parties of the ICC in addition to Egypt, Libya, Ethiopia and Eritrea.

The International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) published a notice for the arrest of Haroun on its website yesterday. The ICC signed an agreement with the INTERPOL enabling it to use its telecommunications network and databases.

The Chief Prosecutor of the ICC Luis Moreno-Ocampo is expected to brief the UNSC on Thursday on the latest developments regarding the Darfur case. Court officials speaking by Sudan Tribune declined to say whether Ocampo will request the intervention of the UNSC in forcing Khartoum to hand over the suspects. Sudan has routinely rejected the jurisdiction of the ICC over its citizens.

However Ocampo expressed confidence that the arrest warrants against the two Darfur war crime suspects will be executed after meeting with the Secretary-General of the Arab league Amr Moussa in Cairo last week.