



UNITED NATIONS MISSION IN SUDAN

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Media Monitoring Report

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By Public Information Office

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Highlights

UN/Agencies

UN to participate in parliament sessions intended to endorse electoral act

(Ray Al-Shaab/SUNA) Minister of Parliamentary Affairs, Joseph Okelo, table on Sunday the Elections Act, 2008 before the National Assembly. The Assembly, chaired by its Speaker Ahmed Ibrahim Al-Tahir, decided in its extra-ordinary sitting Sunday to hold morning and evening settings on Tuesday and Thursday to discuss the general features of the bill and discuss it at the third reading stage. The Assembly's Legislation and Justice Committee will discuss Wednesday the amendments in the bill.

The Speaker of the Assembly, Ahmed Ibrahim Al-Tahir, affirmed that the political forces would be allowed to attend the deliberations from the balconies of the parliament. He also affirmed that Jimmy Carter's Centre was invited through Dr. Gazi Salahuddin, adding that UN expressed desire to participate in the sessions and present some visions.

UNMIS organizes workshop for Sudanese journalists

(Khartoum Monitor) Khartoum Monitor of today devoted its full back page to public report on workshop organized by UNMIS Public Information Office (PIO) during the period from 16-18 June 2008. The workshop was organized for Sudanese journalists to familiarize them with CPA so that in turn they can disseminate it.

According to the article the participants discussed CPA protocols and questions were also asked particularly one question that was raised to the workshop organizers regarding UN neutrality in Sudan's conflicting areas as civilians are claiming that UNMIS is taking side of some parties, the question received no answer. Certificates were awarded at the conclusion of the workshop and one of the important recommendations was that such workshops should be conducted in the rural areas like Abyei, Blue Nile, Southern Kordofan, Kassala, Darfur region and other southern States rural areas besides the northern States.

GoNU

President Al-Bashir participates in the AU summit in Egypt

(SUNA) - President of the Republic, Field Marshal Omer Al-Bashir, and the accompanying delegation arrived Sunday at Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt, to participate in the 11th ordinary Session of the Assembly of the African Union (AU), due to be held from 30 June - 1 July. The Egyptian Prime Minister, Dr. Ahmed Nadief and a number of the Egyptian officials received President Al-Bashir upon arrival at Sharm El-Sheikh airport.

The President has affirmed Sudan's efforts for realization of peace in Uganda through the mediation launched by the Government of Southern Sudan between the Ugandan government and the Lord Resistance Army. This came in an intervention made by the President of the Republic in the summit meeting of the African Peers Review Mechanism held in Sharm Al-Shiekh, Egypt, Sunday.

GoSS

Unidentified assailants kill WFP driver in South Sudan

(ST) June 29, 2008 (KHARTOUM) – Unknown gunmen killed today a Ugandan driver in an ambush in southern Sudan, bringing to five the number of WFP-contracted drivers murdered in the region this year.

Muzamil Ramadan Sida, 28, shot and killed on the Juba-Yei road in the evening of 27 June after he delivered food to a WFP warehouse in Juba, the U.N. World Food Programme announced.

His assistant escaped after steering the truck to a stop 300 metres from the attack site. The gunmen followed the truck and took the driver's personal belongings.

Daniela Owen, WFP's coordinator for South Sudan condemned the "senseless killing" of the driver saying such "attacks are completely unacceptable."

Sida's body was returned to Koboko, Uganda, yesterday.

His death followed the killing of a driver and his assistant in April and two drivers in March. Both of those incidents were in Unity State, South Sudan.

Eight southern Sudanese parties form new alliance

(ST) June 29, 2008 (JUBA) — Eight southern Sudanese political parties established a new alliance aiming at expanding and deepening cooperation between the coalition and the signatories of the 2005 peace agreement over the future of southern Sudan.

The "Alliance of South Sudan Political Parties" aims to ensure and broaden cooperation with major parties signatories to the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA).

The parties that constituted the alliance are: United Democratic Front (UDF), Sudan African National Union (SANU), United Sudan African Parties (USAP Two), United South Sudan Party (USSP), Southern Sudan Democratic Front (SSDF), South Sudan Democratic Forum (SSDF), Covenant Democratic Party (CDP) and Sudan National Labour Party (SNLP).

The members of the new alliance called on President Salva Kiir Mayardit to urgently convene south-south dialogue to prepare for the coming general elections in 2009 and referendum in 2011.

The delegates observed and commended that it would be necessary and important for southern political parties of Sudan to forge alliance with SPLM especially when it comes to passing of the referendum bill that is going to be presented by the ruling National Congress Party (NCP) that enjoys majority of 52% members in the national assembly while SPLM has only 28% and other political parties add up to 20%.

The alliance further stated that they would not file a presidential candidate at national level but would support SPLM nominee for such a position.

On the other hand, the Covenant Democratic Party (CDP) and the Sudan National Labour Party (SNLP), both are members of the new alliance, decided to merge in one political organization.

The Covenant Democratic Party (CDP), emanated from Cairo Egypt by southern Sudanese students in May 2005 under the chairmanship of Mr. Benjamin Ochan Erkolano has finally relocated to southern Sudan capital of Juba in early last year. According to the chairman, CDP has over 3500 registered members both in exile - United States, Canada and Australia and in the five states of southern Sudan; Unity 350, Upper Nile 100, Eastern Equatoria, 150, Central Equatoria 270 and Northern Bahr el Ghazal 250.

Meanwhile the Sudan National Labour Party (SNLP) was founded in June 1986 and registered in 1997 under the Chairmanship of Mr. James Anderia Agany along with over two million registered members in the whole country. The party headquarters is in Khartoum with southern branches in Malakal and Juba office is expected to be operational from next month under the supervision of Mr. Shadarach Baker Michael as party Secretary General of Southern sector.

Sudan official: Cargo plane crashes in Khartoum

KHARTOUM, Sudan (AP) — A Sudanese official says a cargo plane has crashed minutes after taking off from Khartoum's airport, killing at least two people. It was the second plane crash in Sudan's capital in a week and the third this month.

Abdel Hafez Abdel Rahim, a civil aviation spokesperson, said that at least two of the plane's four-member crew died in the crash. The crew is believed to be Russian.

Ambulance sirens were heard in Khartoum after the crash Monday around 8 a.m.

Abdel Rahim says the plane, destined for the south Sudanese capital of Juba, "crashed about one kilometer or so from the airport."

UN-operated Miraya Radio reported black smoke rising just south of the airport and said the Yushin 76 plane belonged to private Sudanese company Ababiel.

Darfur

Over 20 persons killed and scores wounded in tribal clash in Nyala

(Al-Wahda/Al-Khartoum) Over twenty people have been killed and scores others wounded in bloody incidents occurred yesterday between Tarjam and Beni Halba tribes in Eddel Fursan area, south of Nyala, the capital of South Darfur State.

Governor of the State Ali Mahmoud has ordered the cessation of all government activities and the visit of the Presidential Assistant Nafie Ali Nafie, scheduled for today, is also postponed.

The Commissioner of the Commission on Welfare and Development of Nomads in South Darfur Mr. Amin Essa Eleiwa was killed yesterday by stray bullet when he attempted to intervene to stop fighting between the two tribes.

Darfur rebel chief welcomes appointment of new peace envoy

(ST) June 29, 2008 (PARIS) — Darfur rebel chief welcomed the appointment of the Burkina Faso Foreign Minister Djibril Bassolet as joint peace envoy for Darfur urging him to work with peace lovers to achieve security for Darfuri before negotiations.

Abdel-Wahid al-Nur urged Bassolet to break the deadlock of the peace process by working to convince Khartoum to stop attacks on civilians and disarming its militias as well as evacuating the new settlers from the displaced lands.

The rebel chief stressed that talks should be conducted within a climate where attacks against the civilians should be totally stopped. He also underlined that peace negotiations should be dedicated to deal with the root causes of the conflict and not with the consequences of the war, the humanitarian situation and the displacement of local populations.

The appointment of the Burkina Faso top diplomat comes after two years of the failure of Abuja peace talks mediated by the AU envoy Salim Ahmed Salim. Last year the U.N. appointed Jan Eliasson to amend the broken confidence between Salim and the rebels. But he failed too.

Al-Nur also urged the International Community to review its position towards the protection of the relief workers in the region, adding that "it is too natural that the hybrid peacekeeping force protects the humanitarian activities in Darfur."

Increasing insecurity due to direct attacks on WFP, convoys and frequent clashes between Sudanese and rebel forces have forced the U.N. agency to cut rations in half for Darfur.

Al-Nur warned the political parties saying that Sudan can't be divided in a part where there are elections and another part where citizens are deprived from their constitutional rights.

The rebel leader stressed that such move could provoke frustration and push Darfuri to commit violence to stop this additional injustice.

Displaced Darfuris struggle against hunger in Zam Zam camp

(ST/Reuters) June 30, 2008 - Markets stocked with fresh fruit and vegetables, Shiny new gas stations, freshly built houses, Smooth paved roads and a pizzeria.

These are not images one would normally associate with Sudan's western Darfur region, where hundreds of thousands of people are estimated to have died in five years of conflict. But they are all found in El Fasher, capital of North Darfur state.

El Fasher is home to thousands of civilian and military personnel working for the United Nations-African Union joint peacekeeping mission (UNAMID), and while food here is plentiful, prices are inflated after poor harvests.

The United Nations says a "perfect storm" of growing violence, overcrowding in refugee camps and bad harvests could cause a food crisis in Darfur, home to the world's largest humanitarian operation.

Just 10 km (6 miles) from El Fasher's colorful market stalls, thousands of displaced Darfurians struggle to survive in the Zam Zam camp, battling disease, bandits and growing hunger.

These people used to get over 2,000 calories a day. Now they survive on 1,400 calories as aid agencies cut rations because of attacks on food convoys. Some of the children have bloated bellies, a possible sign of malnutrition.

Eric Reeves, a Darfur activist and professor of literature at Smith College in Massachusetts who has studied Sudan for nearly a decade, warns that ration cuts may cause "significant human starvation in the coming months."

There is little hope of a political breakthrough to allow the people at Zam Zam, some of whom have been in the camp for years, to return home.

Stalled peace talks were dealt another blow last month when the rebel Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) attacked a suburb of Khartoum. Top U.N. and AU envoys have said an international summit should be called to put pressure on the parties to come back to the negotiating table.

This is a land where U.S. officials say "genocide in slow motion" is taking place, a charge Sudan denies. It is also a land where foreign peacekeepers complain of being bored.

When a U.N. delegation visited Zam Zam in June, it came face-to-face with misery: a child holding up his hands for food; a 35-year-old widow talking of how she struggles to feed her eight children; a woman speaking haltingly about a gang rape.

But Sudan's Ambassador to the United Nations, Abdalmahmoud Abdalhaleem, says Zam Zam is "a five-star camp".

Emilia Casella, a spokeswoman for the U.N.'s World Food Program in Khartoum, says 62,000 live here in rudimentary shelters made of mud, thatch and sheets of plastic. They fled their homes to escape Sudanese Armed Forces and pro-government mostly Arab militia known as Janjaweed.

A senior U.N. police officer from Nigeria, whose job it is to patrol the camp and protect the people from bandits and rebel recruiters, estimates there are 52,000 in the camp.

What is not in doubt is the fact that these lives lived in limbo are becoming more precarious.

Attacks on WFP convoys and frequent clashes between Sudanese and Chadian forces along Sudan's western border have forced the U.N. agency to cut rations in half for Darfur, an area the size of France where it fed some 2.7 million people in April alone, out of a total population of 6 million.

Sudanese government promises of escorts for aid trucks have often not materialised, and diplomats in New York, speaking on condition of anonymity, fear Khartoum does not care.

This has made life harder for Fatimah, the 35-year-old mother of eight who has been in Zam Zam camp for four years.

She tells reporters that even before rations were cut, she did not get enough to feed her children.

When the U.N. delegation arrived, the former vegetable farmer held up a sign with a drawing of helicopters gunning people down and the words "No for war, yes for peace."

PROTECTION

WFP's Casella said rations would be cut again in July as the agency had been unable to improve distribution. At any one time, she said, there are 800 to 1,000 trucks on the roads of Darfur, carrying food relief.

"We need to deliver 1,800 metric tonnes of food into our various Darfur warehouses each day. But, we're only managing 900 metric tons or less, lately," she said.

"The issue is that the banditry has slowed the truck turnaround time. Many drivers are wary of travelling on the roads unescorted. They have to wait for police escorts (mandated by the authorities) and in some areas these police escorts are only moving once a week," she said by e-mail from Khartoum.

Further hampering aid agencies, funding shortfalls have led the WFP to cut back its helicopter and plane flights around the region, where seasonal rains make many roads impassable.

UNAMID peacekeepers sometimes escort convoys but a lack of troops and helicopters make it impossible to protect them all.

Only 9,000 troops out of a planned 26,000-strong UNAMID force are on the ground in Darfur.

Full deployment is a long way off, due to Khartoum's insistence that most troops come from African countries and U.N. bureaucratic requirements.

The United Nations hopes UNAMID will be at 80 percent of full strength by the end of the year, but diplomats in New York say this will be very difficult to achieve.

At UNAMID headquarters in El Fasher, there is a sense of frustration.

"We don't do very much," one peacekeeper told Reuters on condition of anonymity. "I'm not sure what we're doing here."

Would they be willing to do more to protect food convoys to make sure the people in nearby Zam Zam get fed? Yes, they say.

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