



UNITED NATIONS MISSION IN SUDAN UNMIS

Media Monitoring Report, 08 March 2007
(By Public Information Office)

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HIGHLIGHTS :

UN/ Agencies

UN chief urges Sudan to positively respond to UN-AU operation

(*SudanTribune.com*) UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has written a new letter to Sudanese President on the framework for the hybrid operation agreed between the African Union (AU) and the United Nations, UN spokesperson Michele Montas told reporters on Wednesday.

In the letter to President Omar Hassan Al Bashir, Ban detailed a proposed UN-AU hybrid force of up to 24,000 personnel to help resolve the deadly conflict in Sudan's Darfur region.

The hybrid force represents the final phase of a three-phase plan agreed to by the United Nation, African Union and Sudanese government in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in November to help end the fighting between the Sudanese government, allied militias and rebels, which broke out in 2003.

Ban has already written to Bashir on the second phase, which includes the provision of additional personnel and equipment, but has not yet received a reply.

UN condemns killing of AU soldiers in Darfur

(*SudanTribune.com; The citizen, AlAyam*) The United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) on Wednesday condemned the killing of two soldiers serving in the African Union (AU) peacekeeping force in Sudan's troubled western region of Darfur, stressing that attacks against AU personnel constituted a grave violation of international law.

According to the African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS), the two soldiers were abducted and subsequently killed in the town of Gereida, South Darfur, on 5 March. A third soldier was seriously injured during the incident, AMIS said, adding that the attackers were believed to be "elements belonging to SLM/A (Sudan Liberation Movement/Army)" faction led by Minni Minnawi.

UNMIS expressed deep concern at the repeated attacks targeting those who had the mandate to assist people affected by the conflict in Darfur, particularly AMIS and humanitarian workers. "UNMIS called on all parties to the Darfur conflict to respect the neutral and impartial status of AMIS and recalled that any attack against the African Union personnel deployed in Darfur is a serious violation of international law and relevant resolutions of the United Nations Security Council," UNMIS said in its statement.

Eliasson: Sudanese government welcomed me, supported my mission and peaceful resolution for Darfur possible

AlHayat; The UNSC in its session last Tuesday was informed by Jan Eliasson, UNSG envoy for Darfur, in the report on his visit to Sudan. Sudan UN ambassador said that the Council deliberated upon the peace process in Darfur. Eliasson explained that Sudan's government welcomed him and facilitated his visit, the Ambassador said.

UNHR commissioner, Arbour regrets Khartoum refusal entry of UN mission in Sudan

AlHayat UNHR commissioner, Louis Arbour, described the decision of the Government of Sudan of preventing Human Rights Commission to visit the Sudan is a deplorable decision. She explained that the UN Human Rights Council will decide upon how to react to that decision. It is worthy to mention that the Sudan authorities object to some members of the mission especially the former commissioner of the council, who considered the massacres committed in Darfur genocide.

UNHCR launches \$56.1 mln appeal for South Sudan refugees

(SudanTribune.com) On Tuesday, 6 March UNHCR launched a US\$56.1 million appeal for its operations in south Sudan to help tens of thousands of southern Sudanese refugees and internally displaced people return home and reintegrate in their communities.

The funds are needed to boost the ongoing voluntary repatriation programme to assist the return from nearby countries of more than 100,000 refugees this year; to help 25,000 internally displaced people (IDPs) return home, to provide returnees with reintegration packages, to rehabilitate health clinics and schools and to improve shelter and sanitation.

The appeal acknowledges returnees face considerable challenges and that major efforts are needed to ensure the return is sustainable. It says that despite considerable achievements during the past two years, many receiving communities are still struggling to absorb returnees. This is largely due to the destruction and poor state of infrastructure and basic services in the war-affected areas of return.

GoNU

Sudan president receives message from US president

(*SudanTribune.com*) Sudanese President Omar el-Bashir received on Wednesday a written message from U.S. President George W. Bush on bilateral relations and efforts to advance the peace process in Sudan, the official SUNA news agency reported.

The message dealt with implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in South Sudan, the situation in the western region of Darfur and how to persuade the rebel movements which did not sign the Abuja agreement on peace in Darfur to sign the agreement.

The message was conveyed to President el-Bashir by Andrew Natsios, the special envoy of the U.S. president to Sudan, who is currently visiting Sudan, in a meeting.

US Rice assistant arrives Khartoum

AlAyam Assistant US secretary of state for human rights and democracy will start a visit to Sudan next week to discuss human rights issues with officials and others involved in Darfur issue. The State department in its report classified Darfur crisis as the worst humanitarian catastrophe in the world.

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Al-Rai Al-Aam. The GoS linked the implementation of Phase Three of the UN support to AMIS to naming a new SRSG for Sudan by the UNSG. The UNSG has asked Alpha Omar Konare, the President of the African Commission, to travel to New York next week for consultations on the nominees for replacing Jan Pronk.

Konare will later be travelling to Khartoum to agree with the GoS on SRSG for Sudan. Sudan Ambassador to the UN said he has discussed with Jan Eliasson, following the UNSC session on Sudan, efforts for resolving the Darfur issue and Eliasson's briefing to the UNSC. Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr. Lam Akol, said the implementation of Phase Three of the UN support to AMIS requires the presence SRSG in Sudan.

Southern Sudan/ SPLM

1126 Miseriea defect from SPLA

AllIntibaha 1126 Miseriea men defected from the SPLA. In a celebration held yesterday in Al Dibib, they announced their abandonment of the SPLM/A and instead they decided to join the Popular Defence Forces.

A spokesman of the break away Miseriea elements said that their move to rejoin the PDF was a result of the statement which was made by president Bashir in his visit to the southern kordofan state.

Cholera kills 16 in Sudan's Upper Nile

(SudanTribune.com) The recent cholera outbreak in Malakal, the capital of Upper Nile State, and Khurfulus shows little signs of abating as new cases continue to be admitted everyday.

According to the UN News bulletin, eight people died in both the towns respectively taking the toll to sixteen. Over 160 people were affected by the disease in Khurfulus and 130 in Malakal.

While earlier, most cholera cases were coming from the south of Malakal now the trend is more from the north. One case was also reported from as far as Shuluk ringing alarm bells about the imminent spread of the disease.

Meanwhile, the cholera task force is being chaired directly by the State Minister of Health who is keeping a close watch on the situation.

Governor accused of undermining Eastern Equatoria women

(SudanTribune.com) As we are going to celebrate the International Women Day tomorrow under the theme Ending Impunity for Violence against Women, we would take this opportunity as women of eastern Equatoria state, to demands from Governor Ojetuk fulfilment of 25% positions promised to southern Sudanese women by SPLM/A that was also enshrined in the CPA, remarks Mrs. Beatria Amony Ogak, Acting Director of Gender in the ministry of Social development, eastern equatoria state.

The 25% of women would translate to three cabinet positions for women, but Governor of Eastern Equatoria State, Aloisio Emor Ojetuk is ever oppressive on women rights despite directive from President Salva Kiir that he should give women their position even if it means he governor relinquishes his position for the shake of women, she reiterated.

Mrs. Ogak said there are many challenges facing women in the state and the main among them are; Lack of funding, lack of transportation for out reach awareness campaign to women in rural community. Under staff compounded with lack of qualify staff to run women programmes at the state and grassroots levels.

The first International women day was officially and openly observed in eastern Equatoria state on March 8th 2006. Tomorrow would be the second celebration with many activities organized by women and men in the state with the Governor Ojetuk being the chief guest.

Darfur/ Darfur Peace Agreement

UK condemns killing of AU soldiers in Darfur

(SudanTribune.com) Foreign and Commonwealth Office Minister for Africa Lord Triesman has condemned the killing of two Nigerian soldiers yesterday in Southern Darfur in an area controlled by the Sudan Liberation Army forces of Minni Minawi, Senior Assistant to the President of the Sudan.

Lord Triesman condemned the killing saying “These tragic deaths bring home the reality of the risks that African Union soldiers are facing to protect the citizens of Darfur.” “My condolences go out to the families of the two soldiers killed; he added.

The British Ambassador to the Sudan met Minni Minawi today and raised these attacks with him. Minawi said he was currently investigating what had happened.

Trial of 3 Sudanese accused of Darfur crimes is postponed

(SudanTribune.com) The Darfur trial of three Sudanese accused of crimes in the war-torn region was postponed Wednesday, officials and Sudan’s official news agency, SUNA, said.

Officials wouldn’t say why the trial, which was scheduled to begin Wednesday in a court in the western Darfur capital of El-Geneina, was postponed.

But SUNA reported that the accused men, who include a member of the country’s security forces who is being sought by an international war crimes court, had appealed the charges.

Sudanese authorities haven’t provided any information about the charges or described the crimes the three are accused of committing. It wasn’t immediately clear if a new date was set for the trial.

US says Darfur genocide continues, rights abuses rife

(SudanTribune.com) Washington issued a damning human rights report on Sudan, saying genocide in Darfur continued and blaming both government and rebel forces for attacks in the remote region.

It said there was widespread impunity for crimes including torture and that thousands more people had been killed by government forces and its allied militias, known locally as Janjaweed, in Darfur in 2006.

Khartoum denies genocide and blames the Western media for exaggerating the four-year-old Darfur conflict. European governments are reluctant to use the term.

US envoy to hold talks with Libya on Darfur

(SudanTribune.com) The US envoy to Sudan, Andrew Natsios, said he would travel to Tripoli on Wednesday for talks on getting Libya involved in UN and African Union efforts to end the Darfur conflict.

Natsios was speaking to journalists at the end of his latest trip to Sudan and after two hours of talks with President Omar al-Beshir, who is balking at proposals for UN troops to assist an AU force in attempting to pacify Darfur.

Libya has taken a role in seeking to bring an end to the four-year-old conflict in the huge western area of Sudan, which has left an estimated 200,000 people dead and 2.5 million homeless.

Natsios called for the groups, whose leaders he met in Chad in January, to unify.

His visit comes hard on the heels of an unprecedented move by the International Criminal Court (ICC) in The Hague, which has accused two Sudanese officials of a string of war crimes in Darfur.

Darfur rebels ready to reunite -Sudan's Salva Kiir

(SudanTribune.com) Fragmented Darfur rebel groups are ready to meet in south Sudan to overcome the divisions that have plagued anti-government forces and stymied peace efforts, Sudan's top southern politician said.

Salva Kiir said the scattered rebel movements had signalled they wanted Sudan's southern authorities to help them forge a united front that could negotiate effectively with the government on ending years of bloodshed in the Darfur region. Kiir said he was hopeful of a peace deal for western Sudan this year.

Once the NCP agrees to send observers to the talks and backs security guarantees for rebel leaders then invitations will go out for a venue in the south yet to be fixed, said Kiir.

Kiir did not detail how he would overcome the differences between the rebels but said that once they did, Bashir's NCP was ready to negotiate a political solution to the Darfur crisis.

Minnawi: stay in Khartoum was frustrating

Alwan; The Citizen. Mini Minawi said that the time he has spent in the Republican Palace is disappointing. He accused the NCP of being behind the instability in Darfur. "Sudan's ruling party has no desire to end the crises in Drfur and is still largely to blame for the chaos there.

Minawi called for handing over the Minister of State for Humanitarian Affairs, Ahmed Haroun, to the ICC.

AU discloses arrangements to deploy joint forces in Darfur

Rai AlShaab The commissioner of the AU Peace and Security Commission said that arrangements are being made to deploy joint forces in Darfur.

The ICC Question

National Assembly Legal Committee condemns ICC

Sudan Vision The Seminar of Sudanese Judicial Authority and the International Criminal Court (ICC) recommended forming a mechanism for representing Sudan regarding reply to the ICC accusations. The seminar further called for trying all those who have violated the law in Darfur. The seminar also recommended for finding a political solution for the problem and supporting reconciliation.

The seminar was organized by the Legal Committee in the National Assembly and was attended by some senior legal experts, police officers and media representatives. Justice and Legislative Chairperson Badria Suliman confirmed that the Sudanese Judicial Authority is independent and works according to the laws and regulations. She said the accusations of the ICC Prosecutor is based on political agenda and have no legal grounds.

Allow International Monitoring of Darfur Trials – Human Rights Watch

(SudanTribune.com) Sudan should immediately open its special court trials to independent international monitors, Human Rights Watch said today. On March 6, Sudan announced it will start trial proceedings today in a special criminal court in Geneina against three people on charges relating to attacks in West Darfur. One of the accused, “Ali Kosheib,” (a pseudonym for Ali Mohammed Ali), was named as a suspect by the prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) in court filings last week.

Under the Rome Statute, the ICC will find a case inadmissible if it determines that the national authorities are genuinely willing and able to investigate or prosecute the case in the national justice system. The national proceedings must encompass both the person and the conduct which is the subject of the case before the ICC in order for a case to be inadmissible.

“The decision to try Ali Kosheib immediately following the ICC prosecutor’s announcement is obviously an attempt to pre-empt the international court case,” said Sara Darehshori, senior counsel in Human Rights Watch’s International Justice Program. “Sudan should let independent international monitors observe the trial in if it wants to show that it’s anything other than window dressing.”

Minawi supports the Hague trial and asks for Haroun resignation; Kiir: No agreement yet with the NCP over The Hague

AlAyam FVP and President of the GoSS, Salva Kiir, said there is no agreement yet with the NCP over The Hague.

Meanwhile, Senior presidential assistant, Mini Minawi said that the time he has spent in the Republican Palace is disappointing. He accused the NCP of being behind the instability in Darfur. Minawi called for handing over the Minister of State for Humanitarian Affairs, Ahmed Haroun, to the ICC.

Other Developments

20 injured in clashes during the demolition of two villages in Omdurman

AlSahafa Clashes between policemen and inhabitants of Al Nayalab and Igidat villages, south of Omdurman, took place after the citizen's protest against the demolition orders issued by local authorities. A police official, who denied commenting, said they are to examine reports on demolition of the two villages. Inhabitants informed AlSahafa that more than 500 houses were levelled down without prior notice.

Student activists put the squeeze on Sudan oil industry

(SudanTribune.com) After four years of failed Darfur diplomacy, a group of American and British students is trying to hit Khartoum where it hurts, by pressing foreign companies to stop doing business with Sudan's oil industry.

Billions of dollars are believed to be involved in indirectly funding Khartoum's war effort, which the student "task force" hopes to staunch, although some critics fear the population could suffer more than the regime.

Some Sudanese economists put the percentage of oil revenue going to the army, security and police force at well above 80 percent.

The group aims to strangle that flow of money by targeting foreign firms that support Sudan's oil-dominated industry as well as the savers and pension funds that finance them.

Activists point out that even a tiny state like Vermont manages a three-billion dollar pension fund. If private mutual funds enter the equation, the overall sums involved are huge, even if small percentages of investment in companies involved in Sudan are removed.

Activists point to the success of a previous campaign in 2003, when Canadian energy company Talisman eventually pulled out of Sudan after its stocks fell following a divestment drive over accusations it had helped the government kill and displace civilians to clear the way for oil exploration.