

**UNITED NATIONS MISSION IN SUDAN****UNMIS****Media Monitoring Report 25.3.2008**

(By Public Information Office)

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# **Highlights**

## **UN/ Agencies**

### **UN demands freedom of movement in Abyei**

(Al-Ayyam) UNMIS renewed its call to the parties to the CPA to allow freedom of movement in the north and south of Abyei.

The Director of UNMIS Public Information Office, Mr. Khaled Mansour, told Al-Ayyam yesterday that UNMIS observers were not allowed freedom of movement in the areas north and south of Abyei.

Mr. Khaled said the Mission sent many letters to the Government and SPLM with regard to freedom of movement in Abyei Area to enable the Mission to verify allegations of firing between the Messeriya and SPLA. He said the Mission had engaged in dialogue with the party that is denying the freedom of movement.

“Sometimes freedom of movement is denied for two days,” he said.

### **SAF redeploy by 97.2% - UN**

(Al-Rai Al-Aam) UNMIS Force Commander and CJMC Chairperson, Lt. Gen. Jasbir Singh Lidar, told SMC that SAF redeployed by 97.2% north of 1.1.1956 Line while SPLA percentage stands at 11.3%.

## **GoNU (CPA, DPA, ESPA)**

### **GoS says relations with America will normalize only if Sudan name is removed from the terrorist list and sanctions are lifted**

(Al-Sudani) Sudan Government announced that normalization of relations with Washington depends on removal of its name from the terrorist list and lifting of the economic sanctions imposed by the US Administration adding that relations with American suffered due to the agenda Washington wants Sudan to carry out.

Foreign Office spokesperson, Ambassador Ali Al Sadiq, in press statements yesterday said Sudan’s understanding of relations with American was more deeper than the issue of containers as it views them as relations between two countries and two peoples.

Meanwhile the American Charge d’Affaires, Mr. Alberto Fernandez, said contacts were continuing with the Government but so far, there was nothing new.

The spokesperson said dialogue was the sole way to improve relations between Khartoum and Washington pointing out the need for making concessions for continuity of dialogue.

### **Sudan and EU differ over ICC**

(Al-Rai Al-Aam) ICC Prosecutor, L. Ocampo, has threatened to push hard for the surrender of those wanted by ICC in connection with war crimes in Darfur.

At a meeting with Sudan Ambassador to Brussels Mr. Luis refused to show any flexibility on the questions of Sudanese wanted by ICC.

Sudan Ambassador to Brussels, Mr. Najeeb Al-Kheir, told the newspaper that the European Parliament and the Pacific-Caribbean Group discussed relations between ICC and the Group. Sudan delegation to the meeting said ICC resolution was not binding on Sudan Government and that Sudan ICC-related differences with EU were over priorities.

Sudan wants peace to be achieved first while the European Union wants the Sudanese involved in war crimes be prosecuted first.

### **FVP: SAF has not withdrawn from Abyei, Huftrat al-Nahas and Higlig**

(Al-Sahafa) The First Vice President of the Republic has strongly denied claims of existence of conflicts and problems within the Government of Southern Sudan confirming stability of security situation and the finalization of disarming militias in all areas.

The First Vice President in statement to the newspaper said implementation of the CPA was progressing satisfactorily but he accused SAF of not withdrawing from Abyei, Huftrat al-Nahas and Higlig areas.

### **State Minister for Information: Census will cover Halaib and Darfur, Israel is involved in Darfur**

(Al-Sahafa) The Minister of State for Information, Dr. Kamal Obeid, said there were differences within the SPLM, the key partner of the NCP in the Government.

He reiterated the government position that what was going on in Darfur is a conspiracy intended to weaken the country adding that Israel was involved in Darfur as it has vendetta against Sudan.

He confirmed that the forthcoming census would cover all parts of Sudan including the border area of Halaib and Darfur.

### **Constitutional body asks the presidency to agree on Sudan's elections law**

(ST) March 24, 2008 (KHARTOUM) — The National Constitutional Review Commission (NCRC) approved 90 per cent of the articles of the elections bill draft. It further referred the disputed articles to the Sudanese presidency to resolve it because of the lack of consensus between the two peace partners.

The points of contention are about how to identify the percentage of geographic constituencies (60% or 40%), and how to calculate the percentage of women representation of 25%. Besides divergence over the number of electoral constituencies, 26 constituencies (as the number of states) or the whole country would be considered as one constituency.

The co-chairman of the NCRC, Abdellah Idriss in a press conference held with the co-chairman, Abel Alier, said that the purpose of lifting the points of contention for the presidency is the need to run the elections in the time fixed by the CPA and the fact that they are not authorized to settle the matter by vote when the two peace partners have different positions.

The SPLM's deputy secretary general, Yasir Arman, said in a press conference on Saturday that the NCP and the SPLM agreed to allocate 55 % to geographic constituencies and 45% to proportional representation including a women's list.

Idriss pointed out that the NCRC received a pledge from the President of the Republic, Omer al-Bashir, Monday to give the issue due concern, adding that the Commission would meet the First Vice President in this regard. However he didn't specify a date to resolve the disputed points.

He affirmed that the draft law prepared by the NCRC settled key issues.

He said that the mixed system, which is applied for the first time in Sudan, is a qualitative leap; in addition to giving women a participation rate of 25%. In this regard, the NCRC has developed controls in the law to ensure the neutrality of the Electoral Commission and adopted enough material in the bill to reduce the phenomenon of corrupt methods besides the control of the election by local and external observers.

He reviewed the approach taken by the committees of the NCRC to achieve national consensus and the meetings held with the various political forces; in addition to the demand formulated by the NCRC to ask them to provide a written point of view on the elections law.

### [Canada's foreign minister arrives in Sudan](#)

(ST) March 24, 2008 (KHARTOUM) — Canadian Foreign Minister arrived on Monday to Khartoum for talks with Sudanese officials, to hold talks on Darfur crisis and the implementation of Sudan peace agreement signed in January 2005.

During the March 25 to 28 trip, Maxime Bernier will meet official from both the Government of National Unity and the Government of Southern Sudan, urging them to address ongoing violence in Darfur, the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement and human rights said the foreign ministry.

Bernier who visits Sudan for the first time was received by the foreign minister Deng Alor.

The visiting minister is expected to discuss bilateral relations with his Sudanese counterpart tomorrow while he would visit al-Fasher, the capital of Nort darfur state on

Wednesday followed by a visit to Juba to meet Sudanese First Vice President and President of southern Sudan government.

Bernier will meet with representatives from the United Nations and African Union, which has deployed a joint peacekeeping mission to Darfur. It is planned to number 26,000 troops but has been slow to get off the ground.

### [Philippines wants information on the death of peacekeeper in S. Sudan](#)

(ST) March 24, 2008 (NEW YORK) — The Philippines has asked the United Nations to provide answers to the death of a Filipino peacekeeper in Sudan in 2007.

Lieutenant Colonel, Renerio Batallan died of malaria on October 23, 2007, in the Lakes State capital of Rumbek a day after his 41st birthday and a few weeks before he was supposed to end his year-long service in Sudan.

Ambassador Hilario Davide, Philippine permanent representative to the UN in New York, requested the UN official investigation report on the case of Lieutenant Colonel, Renerio Batallan, a Filipino Army officer who was reported to have succumbed to malaria while serving as a military observer with the UN Mission in Sudan (UNMIS).

-Davide earlier sought the report but failed to get it. He then reiterated it through a note verbale sent to UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon.

Philippine ambassador also raised concerns over Batalla's death in the statement he delivered before the 2008 Substantive Session of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations last week.

"It has been more than four months since Lieutenant Colonel Renerio Batalla of the Philippines expired but there are still questions left unanswered," Davide said in his statement which was posted on the mission's website.

"Unfortunately, we do not have the answers as until now the Philippine Government has not received a copy of the Board of Inquiry report on the circumstances surrounding his death," he said. "The Philippines seeks those answers to help Lieutenant Colonel Batalla's family find closure and also to allow us to draw lessons from this tragedy."

The Philippine mission wanted to know if Batalla received prompt and proper medical care after he presented himself at the UN clinic with malaria-like symptoms; if indeed he died of cerebral malaria; and if enough efforts were exerted by UNMIS authorities to have him evacuated immediately to the nearest regional medical facility.

The Philippines is among the 30 top troop contributing countries with a total of 670 military and police personnel serving in the UN missions in Afghanistan, Cote d' Ivoire, Darfur, Georgia, Haiti, Liberia, Kosovo, Nepal, the Sudan and Timor-Leste. The number includes 21 military observers, 13 of whom are deployed in the Sudan.

### [Salva Kiir returns to South Sudan capital from Arab Emirates](#)

(ST) March 24, 2008 (JUBA) — Sudanese First Vice President and President of southern Sudan government, Salva Kiir Mayadrit wrapped up his two-day trip to the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

Speaking to the press following his arrival to Juba airport, Kiir said he was very satisfied with the outcome of talks held with high ranking officials in the UAE. He added that discussions were focused on the development of economic and trade ties between the two countries particularly southern Sudan.

Kiir asserted that Emirates' officials and businessmen are expected to visit Juba in the near future to discuss investment projects in the region.

On his visit to the UAE Kiir said: "I came here to update the UAE leadership on the progress that we have made so far in implementing the Comprehensive Peace Agreement(CPA), which was signed in 2005. This visit is also part of our strategic commitment to cement the UAE-Sudanese relations, particularly in the areas of trade and investment".

Kiir added: "I'm impressed by the UAE model of development. This is something that is worth emulating and I'm sure Southern Sudan will benefit from this model, particularly in the area of oil and petrochemical industries".

First Vice President Salva Kiir also urged UAE investors to invest in Southern, noting that Sudan is rapidly attracting foreign investments.

Sudan and the UAE, he said, have had long and vibrant relations, dating back to the days of the late Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, who was the first Arab leader to visit Southern Sudan.

### [Sudanese children kidnapped in Chad last year return home](#)

(ST) March 24, 2008 (KHARTOUM) — Around half a dozen Sudanese children who were kidnapped last year by French group out of Chad will return to home according to a Sudanese official.

The Sudanese minister for social affairs Samia Mohamed said that the children will be handed over to their parents starting Wednesday.

Mohamed told the official Sudan news agency (SUNA) that her ministry engaged in extensive contacts with UNICEF and Red Cross to bring back the kids and identify their families.

Nine French nationals, six reportedly members of an aid group and three of them journalists, were arrested last October in connection with a plot to spirit more than 100 children, mostly Chadians, out of Chad on the grounds that they were Darfur orphans in danger of being killed.

The children's ages range from 1 to 12, with most of them 3 to 8 years old. The French group named Zoe's Arc said it had arranged French host families for the children.

Six of the French aid workers were eventually convicted and sentenced to eight years of hard labor by a Chad court.

Mohamed also said that her ministry is also seeking compensation for the families of the children

## **GoSS**

### **Salva Kiir: there are no conflicts or problems within GoSS**

(Al-Wahda) The First Vice President of the Republic, Salva Kiir, has denied the existence of any conflicts or problems within the Government of Southern Sudan.

He said security situations were stable, as militias have been disarmed in all areas and the completion of formation of all institutions.

The First Vice President confirmed that the Government of Southern Sudan was currently operating in total harmony.

The First Vice President made the statements in connection with his visit to UAE.

## **Darfur**

### **Four UNICEF drivers in Darfur abducted**

(Ray Al-Shaab) UNICEF yesterday said four of its drivers who were accompanying Government engineers for water projects were abducted and called for their immediate release.

UNICEF said bandits intercepted a convoy of three vehicles and a truck that was carrying four engineers and four drivers in the area of Um Tajok in north Darfur.

The drivers were abducted and a digging machine was missing. Representative of UNICEF in Sudan called for the immediate release of the team and their tools.

## **Miscellaneous**

### **NCP and Umma Party agree on 80% of issues**

(Al-Khartoum) NCP and Sadiq-led Umma Party agreed on 80% of the issues on their agenda. The joint committee set up between the two parties would discuss on Monday the issues of liberties and elections.

The two parties did not elaborate about the issues agreed upon.