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(By Public Information Office)

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UN/ Agencies

[Attacks against aid workers put Darfur relief operations at risk - UN](#)

(ST) March 26, 2008 (KHARTOUM) – Intolerable attacks against aid workers in Sudan’s Darfur jeopardize vital humanitarian operations in the war-wracked region, the United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator said today.

In a statement released in Khartoum, Ameerah Haq said the humanitarian community in Sudan condemns all acts of violence taking place in Darfur, where rebels have been fighting Government forces and allied militia since 2003.

The statement further said that the community calls upon those responsible to immediately cease all attacks, calls for the immediate release of those abducted and urges that no impunity is given to those who continue to target humanitarians anywhere in Sudan.

On Monday Mohamed Ali, a driver contracted by the UN World Food Programme (WFP), was shot dead and his assistant was seriously injured by unidentified assailants while travelling on the main route into Nyala, the capital of South Darfur state.

That attack followed the deadly stabbing of two other WFP-contracted drivers on the weekend in Unity state in southern Sudan, and is only the latest in a string of hijackings, abductions and killings in the country and particularly in Darfur.

Yesterday WFP’s representative in Sudan, Kenro Oshidari, deplored the latest attacks and warned that the agency’s contracted trucking companies and drivers were facing daily acts of violence.

29 drivers with World Food Programme contract trucking partners and four others working with the State Water Corporation, a key partner of UNICEF, remain unaccounted for having been abducted at gunpoint in separate incidents.

There are more than 14,000 humanitarian workers in Darfur and many thousands more in other parts of Sudan. They are supported by technical experts, civilian drivers and ancillary workers without whom life-saving humanitarian activities would not be possible. The vast majority of these are Sudanese citizens.

The kidnapping of four State Water Corporation staff working with UNICEF on 20 March means that 180,000 people in North Darfur risk not receiving clean water this year, said the statement.

The hijacking of 56 World Food Programme contracted trucks – currently resulting in 36 missing trucks and the abduction of 29 drivers – has slowed food delivery to Darfur, threatening the ability of WFP to provide timely food assistance to more than 2 million people throughout the coming rainy season.

Earlier this year a hybrid UN-African Union peacekeeping mission known as UNAMID was deployed to try to quell the suffering and violence but so far only about 9,000 uniformed personnel are in place, well below the 26,000 expected when the operation reaches full capacity.

[UN anti-crime agency starts reforming South Sudan prisons](#)

(ST) March 26, 2008 (UNITED NATIONS) – In its first project in Sudan, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) recently started assisting the Government of South Sudan in its prison reform process in the region as it emerges from two decades-long civil war.

The project is funded by the Global Peace and Security Fund of the Government of Canada and undertaken in cooperation with the International Centre for Criminal Law Reform and Criminal Justice Policy and the United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS).

The project follows a specific need identified by the Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS) to help build and strengthen the capacity of prison management to lead the prison reform process.

"This includes enhancing the capacity of the Southern Sudan Prison Service to respond more effectively to the needs and circumstances of children, women and other groups with special needs in prison," says Mark Shaw, UNODC Inter-Regional Adviser, who leads UNODC's work in Sudan.

At the invitation of the GoSS and UNMIS, UNODC conducted an exploratory assessment mission to determine the kind of support that could be provided in the area of prison reform. The mission also looked at establishing a longer-term penal reform assistance programme.

At the moment, the prison service functions with almost no reliable information on the prison population and its own staff, Mr. Shaw said. The UNODC website carries a photograph of a wooden board on a prison facility, on which numbers of prisoners had been chalked in by hand.

In order to achieve sustainable reform, the project focuses on three areas: Information management capacity development, Human resource development and Policy development and regulations.

"As a first step, a survey of the current prison population will be carried out to understand its characteristics and the needs of the detainees," Mr. Shaw stated. A system to manage such information will then be developed.

In addition, senior staff will be trained in issues crucial for prison reform, including administrative procedures, planning, international standards, and responding to the needs of prisoners with special needs, including women, children and the mentally ill.

In order to improve the management of the Prison Service as well as to develop longer-term penal policies focusing on vulnerable groups, UNODC is providing expertise to support the drafting of relevant legal, policy and regulatory frameworks, the agency said.

According to the Comprehensive Peace Agreement signed in 2005, the responsibilities of Government of Southern Sudan include management of the prison service.

GoNU (CPA, DPA, ESPA)

Presidential Advisor Dr. Mustafa: we have turned down American offer to establish relations with Israel

(Al-Sahafa) The Presidential Advisor, Dr. Mustafa Osman Ismail, has questioned the intentions of the ICC towards Sudan and accused Israel of supporting rebel movements in Darfur.

Dr. Mustafa revealed conditions set by the US Administration for normalizing relations with Sudan. According to Mustafa Osman these conditions include, inter alia, the establishment of relations with Israel.

Dr. Mustafa made the statements while presenting a paper to the conference of workers trade unions of eastern Africa countries in Eritrea.

Sudanese FM, French officials discuss Chad and Darfur

(ST) March 26, 2008 (KHARTOUM) — Sudanese Foreign Minister discussed with the French Ambassador in Khartoum and France's envoy for Darfur, Sudan-Chad relations and France efforts to bring peace in Darfur.

Deng Alor discussed on Wednesday with Ambassador Christine ROBICHON and the French special envoy for Darfur peace talks, Issa Maraut, the outcome of Dakar nonaggression agreement signed by Sudan and Chad on the sideline of the Islamic Conference on March 13.

Since, Chad and Sudan have accused each other of breaking Dakar agreement.

Further, Issa Maraut briefed the Sudanese minister of Geneva meeting which brought together representatives of the five permanent members in the UN Security Council, UN and African Union envoys for Darfur and the leader of the rebel SLM Abdel-Wahid al-Nur on March 18.

The French official said the meeting was part of France's commitment for a solution to the Darfur crisis. He further said it was an opportunity to establish a dialogue between al-Nur and the AU envoy, Salim Ahmed Salim and other international players.

Al-Nur had refused to deal with Salim since his rejection of Darfur Peace Agreement signed in May 2006 between Sudanese government and the SLM led by Minni Minawi.

Sudanese pro-ruling National Congress Party media accuse France regularly of supporting " the Chadian aggressions against Sudan."

Yesterday, the Sudan Media Centre, which is close to the intelligence services, reported that Chad and the rebel JEM are preparing an attack against Sudan with the French support.

[Lino accuses GoNU of depriving peace in Abyei](#)

(Khartoum Monitor) The Governor of Abyei Edward Lino has called on the people of Abei to work together in order to develop the region. This was amidst large crowd that came to receive him in Abyei. He said that among his agenda is the co-existence between Dinka Ngok and all the adjacent tribes. He accused the GoNU of depriving Abyei of peace. Meanwhile he promised the citizens that his government would deliver both peace and basic services.

Governor Lino added that the National Congress Party refused to solve the Abyei crisis. He asserted that he would demand Abyei's share of oil for the tribes of Dinka Ngok and that of Misseriya. He also stated to Abyei citizens that his government would try its level best to build houses and the project would start in May. This will be preceded by laying a plan to develop the region socially, economically and culturally.

Abyei Governor also called the civil societies and community based organizations to assist the government in peace and confidence building. He has called on the UN forces and the Joint Integrated Units to cooperate with the new government. He explained that oil has its negative effects on the region revealing that the oil revenue is spent on developing the northern States while nobody thought of developing Abyei.

It was worth mentioning that Governor of the Unity State Brig. Gen. Taban Deng received the Abyei Government delegation at the Unity State.

[UN let us to starve – returnees](#)

(The Citizen) Returnees stranded on the way from Khartoum to Southern Sudan have said they face starvation after the United Nations left them stranded on the way.

A United nations official recalled a convoy of 800 internally displaced persons set off from Khartoum for Lakes State, one of the internally displaced person said in a telephone call to the Citizen.

He said they are short of food and water.

He said bread in the area is very expensive, costing them one SDG apiece.

“The lentil that was distributed to us each family five kilos in Kadugli week ago has got finished and here is the beginning of our children starving,” said Gabriel Marial Machar.

Ten trucks and 7 buses of 800 set off for Lakes State.

However, the convoy was recalled after the passengers almost reached the town of Mayom in western Upper Nile State on Tuesday evening at four o’clock.

Calling from Pariang Country Marial told the Citizen by telephone that they were deported after reaching Mayom country.

The convoy was turned back by a UN clerk picked up from Kadugli in Southern Dordofan. “The man called us back but he did not exactly clarify the reasons to us until now, but when we kept asking why our convoy is facing deportation, he only says that the route is unsecured. At the same time the officials are saying that there was a call from Khartoum to stop the trip, but a call from who is not specified,” said Marial.

He said there are so many different armed groups around them. He said the official has not told them who is causing the insecurity. He said there is no police around to protect them.

Marial said they would like the UN, GoSS and GoNU to get involved immediately under any circumstances.

“We in this convoy and others who are repatriating must not give up in order to remain in Khartoum. Even if we had been deported from destination center in Khartoum, we would not go back to houses we left,” Marial said. “We must reach the southern Sudan by all means,” Marial lamented.

[Chol: Census in southern Sudan could be a nightmare if additional funding is not secured](#)

(The Citizen) The Southern Sudan census boss, Mr. Chol, Wednesday warned the census could be a nightmare if additional funding is not secured as some \$11 m is needed to fund the remaining part of the process.

Mr. Chol also warned of insecurity in some areas.

Localized insecurity in some areas can impede the process, said Chol. Remnants of LRA are still said to be in western Equatoria.

However, Chol said he discussed the issue with the Council of Ministers and that he had been given a go ahead with the census. Mr. Chol said he was optimistic that the necessary arrangements would be in place before the deadline.

[April 7th set for donors' round table conference in Khartoum](#)

(Sudan Vision) The High Technical Committee for the Round Table Conference between the government, the UN and donors has set the 7th of the coming April as date for the preparatory meeting for the donors' conference to be held in Paris in May.

Chairman of the North Sudan DDR Commission, Dr. Sulaf Addeen Saleh, revealed that the meeting held yesterday has discussed Sudan's proposed plan for the conference, remarking that the North and South DDR Commissions and the DDR National Council have drawn up a tripartite strategic plan (2008-2011) that covers not less than 180,000 veteran fighters. He said the Commission has calculated and registered the greater part of the persons included in the DDR program, except Darfur.

He reiterated that the UN was unable to support the DDR program for various internal and external political reasons and consequently the reintegration process has included only limited groups of friendly forces, woman soldiers and the disabled. He indicated that the bulk of the project will be implemented through local capacities and such support as extended by the international community via the Paris conference.

Saleh expressed his hope that the international community meets the pledges it had made regarding pending peace issues in Sudan and the concerns related to the demining, voluntary return of IDPs and reconstruction programs, affirming that what has so far been accomplished in that respect was below the required standard.

For his part, the General Coordinator of the South DDR Commission, Kuel Aguer Kuel, expected the Paris conference to avail support within a period of not more than six months, disclosing that a subcommittee has been formed to prepare for the Round Table Conference to submit its conclusions to the Chairman of the DDR National Council, Lt. Gen. Bakri Hassan Saleh, who will pass on invitations to the relevant parties. He added that around 90 persons will participate in the Round Table Conference.

"We are optimistic that the donors will this time meet their pledges and address this matter with due seriousness within the framework of finalizing the Comprehensive Peace Agreement," said Kuel, pointing out that they were seeking to integrate veteran warriors into civil society in order to convert them into productive forces.

[Sudan to destroy anti-personnel landmines in Juba](#)

(ST) March 26, 2008 (KHARTOUM) — The National Mine Action Centre said it will destroy next Monday in Juba some 4,997 antipersonnel landmines, as part of Sudan's commitment toward the Ottawa Treaty, or the Mine Ban Treaty, which was ratified by Sudan in 2003.

Director of the National Mine Action Center, Col. Al-Awad Al-Bashir, said Sudan has destroyed the first 4,488 of its stockpiled antipersonnel Mines on 30 April 2007 in El-Silait area, Khartoum North.

Al-Awad said Sudan's move comes as part of its commitment to Ottawa Treaty which stipulates the destruction of stockpiled antipersonnel mines by the member states after 4 years of implementation of the Treaty.

He pointed out that Sudan has fulfilled its commitment to the agreement before the date stipulated by the treaty, the official SUNA reported.

He further said that the destruction of mines will be celebrated in Juba in presence of a number of federal and state ministers, including the Minister of Humanitarian Affairs, as well as the UN's agencies working in domains of Mines.

[Higher Information Committee for Population Census Reviews Media Preparations](#)

Khartoum, Mar. 26 (SUNA)- The higher information committee for the Fifth Population Census, chaired by the Secretary General of the Ministry of Information and Communication, Abdul-Dafie Al-Khatib, Wednesday met and reviewed the latest preparations of the mass media for the coming population census. The higher committee expressed its satisfaction over the campaign which was launched by the media, especially the National Broadcast Corporation and Sudan News Agency (SUNA) at the capital and the states' levels toward success of the Fifth Population Census. The committee called for intensification of the information campaigns about the importance of the coming census at the remote areas and the displaced people camps. The higher information committee approved a proposal of SUNA on holding news forums in the northern states to acquaint with the census.

GoSS

[Malakal set to construct Upper Nile-Jonglei road](#)

(ST) March 26, 2008 (MALAKAL) — The Upper Nile State welcomed today a convoy of construction equipments and supplies, as it prepares to kick off the construction of a road to link the state with the neighbouring Jonglei state.

The Upper Nile State's Minister of Physical Infrastructure, Peter Pal Riek welcomed, on Wednesday at the gate of the city a convoy of 25 dump-trucks loaded with construction materials and supplies.

These supplies belong to a contractor who's hired by the State to construct 50Km of roads in the State's capital and a highway connecting Upper Nile and Jonglei.

The Governor of Upper Nile State, Maj. Gen. Gatluak Deng Garang, expressed determination to build the capital internal roads before the beginning of this rainy season.

Currently, road access out of Malakal is not possible during the rainy season (May – December), and travel even within Malakal itself becomes problematic due to clay and black cotton soil mud.

Darfur

[Canada reiterates support to Darfur peace process](#)

(ST) March 26, 2008 (EL-FASHER) — The visiting Foreign Minister Maxime Bernier reiterated Canada's support for Darfur peace process as well as financial support to the hybrid peacekeeping operation in the war-wracked region.

Bernier announced on Wednesday during a visit to the capital of North Darfur State that Canada's continued support for international efforts to achieve sustainable peace in Darfur and the implementation of peace through humanitarian and diplomatic action.

Canada, the second-largest voluntary financial supporter of UNAMID after the United States, will allocate up to \$71 million in voluntary support for the UNAMID and UNMIS peacekeeping missions in Sudan; and continue the loan of over 100 armoured personnel carriers to UNAMID troop-contributing countries.

The minister reaffirmed the Canada's commitment to continue providing humanitarian assistance to the affected civilians in Darfur and to support the hybrid peacekeeping mission of the United Nations and the African Union working in Darfur.

Canada, through the Canadian International Development Agency, will provide up to \$100 million in humanitarian assistance, early recovery and governance to address the needs of the conflict-affected people of Sudan. This is an increase from \$71 million in 2007-08.

Also he stressed his country's commitment to participate in the International Donors Conference on Darfur, which he said will be held in Paris, in the coming weeks in order to reaffirm Canada's commitment to support the long-term programmes on development Darfur.

Bernier urged the United Nation, the African Union and the Sudanese government to work together to create the appropriate atmosphere to enable the displaced to return to their villages.

Bernier plans to travel Thursday to Juba to meet officials of the government of Southern Sudan.

In a conference call with Canadian press from Khartoum, Bernier was asked what would happen if the Sudanese government refuses to stop attacks against civilians or to facilitate the deployment of Darfur force.

Bernier said there's an opposition motion on the Commons order paper calling for disinvestment in Sudan, and suggested the Conservative government might support such a motion if Khartoum remains intransigent.

"It's up to them if they want to improve the relationship . . . they must show their willingness," he said.

[South Darfur Government calls on UNAMID to compensate families of victims of incident in Nyala](#)

(Al-Khartoum) Authorities of South Darfur State have called upon UNAMID to begin immediate investigation and to hold the responsibilities of the incident that cause the loss of lives of several civilians when a UNAMID armored vehicle collided with a passenger bus. They emphasized that they would not allow UNAMID to exceed its mission in the area of traffic particularly in the night.

South Darfur State Government Advisor, Dr. Abdul Rahman Al Zain Al Nour, stressed the need for UNAMID to compensate the families of those killed in the incidents pointing out that the State Government had embarked upon liaising officially with competent bodies regarding the incident.

Miscellaneous

[Council of Ministers Secretariat announces summer working hours](#)

Khartoum, March 26 (SUNA) - The General Secretariat of the Council of Ministers pointed that the working hours in the government's departments as from April 1 will be from 7.30 a.m. to 3.30 p.m. for the holders of posts from the First Special Sector until Grade 10. The Secretariat added that the working hours for the holders of posts as from Grade 11 to grade 17 would be from 7.00. a.m. till 4.00. p.m.