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# Media Monitoring Report

United Nations Mission in Sudan/ Public Information Office

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# Highlights

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## Local Arabic and English Language Press

### *Umma Party Secretary General died in car crash*

**Local dailies** report Umma Party Secretary General Abdul Nabi Ali Ahmed, 58, will be buried today in the Imam Al Mahdi Tomb. He died in a car accident on a highway outside the capital. He was driving with his two sons south of the capital when the accident occurred. The sons survived. President Bashir and the Party leader Sadiq Al-Mahdi will attend the funeral. He was born in Maleet (North Darfur) and graduated from Faculty of Engineering in Khartoum University in 1973. He obtained PhD from Britain and served as Governor of Darfur from 1986 to 1988.

According to **Al-Watan**, SPLM postponed planned function to celebrate Obama's elections victory because of death of the Umma Party official. The celebration was rescheduled for Saturday.

### *Ki-moon calls for respect to ICC decisions*

**Al-Sahafa** reports UN SG Ban Ki-moon has called on all Sudanese parties to respect ICC decisions whose Prosecutor applied for arrest warrant against three Darfur rebel commanders. He told "Radio Sawa" that UN respects independence of judiciary and the judiciary process and emphasized the need for all parties to abide by the ICC decisions.

### *GoSS discusses N-S boundary process*

**The Citizen** reports GoSS Cabinet on Friday held a lengthy discussion on the process of North-South border demarcation. The Cabinet directed a Ministerial Committee to assist and work closely with the GoSS component of the N-S Border Technical Committee on issues that might need political guidance. GoSS VP Riek Machar briefed the Cabinet on the demarcation process three days after the Government organized an information sharing workshop on the issue.

### *Presidency to issue decree on appointment of Elections Commission and Parties Council members today*

**Akhbar Al Youm** reports the Presidency will issue a decree today to endorse appointment of Elections Commission and Parties Council members. According to the sources, the members will be sworn in on Tuesday.

### *AUPSC to discuss CPA tomorrow*

**Akhir Lahza** reports AU Peace and Security Council will discuss tomorrow in Addis Ababa progress of the CPA implementation and efforts being exerted by the two partners to implement the CPA's six protocols. MFA's DG of Africa Ibrahim Ahmed Abdul Karim told the paper that the 3-day meeting would discuss challenges impeding CPA implementation.

### *JMST reveals proposal for mechanism to monitor ceasefire*

**Al-Ayyam** reports JMST revealed a proposal to set up a ceasefire monitoring mechanism representative of all parties to the conflict in Darfur. The team confirmed continuity of consultations with armed movements to decide venue and date for upcoming talks.

### ***Defence Minister left for Pakistan***

***Akhbar Al Youm*** reports Defence Minister Gen. Abdul Rahim Mohamed Hussein left yesterday for Pakistan on an official visit in response to an invitation from his Pakistani counterpart. The Minister yesterday attended a dinner hosted by Pakistani Ambassador to the Sudan. The dinner was also attended by Navy Chief of Staff Gen. Al-Zain Bala, Air Chief of Staff Gen. Ahmed Ali Al Faki and ground troops Deputy Chief of Staff Gen. Mohamed Gerham. They also accompanied Defence Minister on his visit to Pakistan.

### ***US is making efforts to remove obstacles hindering UNAMID force deployment***

***Al-Sudani*** reports USA revealed it was making efforts to remove obstacles hindering UNAMID force deployment in Darfur. It said it provides 26% of total needs of the force estimated at two billions dollars every year. US Charge d'Affaires Alberto Fernandez told the newspaper that UNAMID force was still encountering logistical constraints.

### ***Presidents Bashir and Idriss Deby to meet in Doha next week***

***Al-Rai Al-Aam*** reports President Bashir and Chadian President Idriss Deby will meet in Doha next week. Diplomatic sources in N'djamena said Deby told a Sudanese delegation which visited Chad recently that he was determined to meet Bashir in Doha as part of efforts to normalize relations between the two countries and to support efforts to resolve Darfur issue.

According to the newspaper, President Bashir will preside over Cabinet meeting in Port Sudan on Thursday and proceed to Qatar on Friday.

## **Websites/International News Coverage**

### ***ICC prosecutor submits additional evidence against Al-Bashir***

***(Radio Miraya website)***, 21/11/08 - ICC prosecutor Luis Moreno-Ocampo told Miraya FM that he had submitted additional evidence to ICC judges regarding the suits he raised against President of the Republic Umar al-Bashir.

The ICC Prosecutor said the judges would issue their judgment after examining the evidence, which is not concerned with the efforts exerted to solve the crisis in Darfur. In an interview with Miraya FM, Ocampo said he had not revealed the names of the three accused of war crimes in Darfur as had been requested by the ICC. He said the judges would study the evidence he submitted against the leaders accused of killing 12 AU peacekeeping soldiers in Haskanita and that the ICC would soon issue arrest warrants. He noted that the charges involved relate to murder, abduction and intentional attacks on employees and soldiers of peace missions. Ocampo also pledged that he would continue to track Ugandan LRA leader Joseph Kony and four of his top supporters, all accused of crimes against humanity in north Uganda. Abdallah Sulayman of the Sudan Liberation Movement said the movement would hand over any members to the court the ICC might accuse.

Meanwhile, MFA Undersecretary Dr Mutrif Sidiq said the government considered the ICC prosecutor's latest war crime charges against leaders of armed movements in Darfur as an attempt to achieve a political balance following the charges made against President Al-Bashir. Sidiq told Miraya that the government refused to hand over any Sudanese citizen to the court, whatever his political background.

### ***US embassy in Sudan boosts security after ICC rebel indictment***

***(Sudan Tribune website)*** The US embassy in Khartoum beefed up security measures around

its complex in wake of the announcement by the prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) that he requested secret arrest warrants against three Darfur rebel commanders.

The pro-government daily Al-Rayaam quoting unidentified sources reported that the embassy carried out precautionary measures "in order to prepare for any escalation between Sudan and the ICC".

The newspaper said that the embassy set up extra concrete blocks around the complex preventing access to the embassy "in case of surmounting the first barrier as well as hanging curtains that blocks view into the building's courtyard". One source told the newspaper that the embassy recruited Sudanese ex-army commanders to assist in devising the surge in security measures.

The U.S. special envoy to Sudan, Richard Williamson in an interview with **Reuters** welcomed the ICC move against rebel groups.

"I believe that for justice to be credible and for restorative justice to take place, all sides who commit crimes against humanity, war crimes, genocide have to be held to account" the US official said.

The US has been working on constructing a new embassy south of Khartoum for over 2 years. Last year a standoff occurred between Washington and Khartoum over 400 containers that were blocked by Sudan's treasury because of non-payment of customs fees.

Sudan blocked another shipment containing equipments for the new embassy prompting the US administration to threaten that they will stop working on the new building.

### ***Top UN official appeals for over \$2 billion to fund humanitarian projects***

**(UN News Service)**, 20/11/08: The top United Nations relief official on Thursday called for more than \$2 billion for humanitarian projects next year in Sudan, with almost half of the funds being earmarked for the war-torn region of Darfur, where violence has uprooted nearly half the 6 million-strong population.

The \$2.2 billion for the Sudan Work Plan is part of the larger Consolidated Appeal launched yesterday that has a \$7 billion price tag - making it the largest appeal ever - and seeks to provide urgent aid to 30 million people in 31 countries. It dwarfs by far last year's call for \$3.8 billion for 25 million people.

Speaking in Geneva Thursday, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs John Holmes said that while a quarter of the needs for Sudan have been met, over \$1.5 billion is still needed for the vast nation in 2009.

"The extent of the appeal to donors is even more ambitious given the global economic environment and the parallel needs swelling in the neighbouring Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Somalia, Ethiopia and elsewhere," he said at the launch of the fifth annual Sudan Work Plan.

Humanitarian efforts in Sudan must not slacken or be reduced, stressed Mr. Holmes, who also serves as UN Emergency Relief Coordinator.

"More than ever, the international community and the governments concerned need to pull

together to ensure that millions of people are afforded access to relief and recovery assistance," he added. "Otherwise, we risk undermining achievements to date or jeopardizing critical events ahead."

In the past four years, the UN and its partners have endeavoured to deliver food, water, shelter and other basic services to many parts of the country and have also built clinics and schools.

"But the scars of decades of war take a long time to heal," the official said, underscoring that any gains made must be solidified.

With the conflict in Darfur on Sudan's western flank entering its seventh year, some 2.7 million people have been forced to flee their homes, and millions more rely on life-saving aid. Insecurity thwarts people's access to markets and clinics and also impedes aid workers' attempts to reach the vulnerable.

Mr. Holmes also underscored the need to push ahead with the "search for lasting peace," noting that "leaving Darfur in its present state is not an acceptable option for anyone."

Also in Sudan, he said humanitarian aid is crucial to both save lives and support the fragile 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) which ended the separate long-running civil war between north and south.

In some regions of the country, more than half of the population still has no access to clean water, with even fewer able to access proper sanitation, the Coordinator said, adding that diarrhea remains a leading cause of death in parts of Sudan's east.

### ***Natural resource management tops UN agenda***

**(IRIN)**, Geneva, 21/11/08, Geneva -- As part of the UN's US\$2.2 billion humanitarian appeal for Sudan, officials said their agencies would work to better manage natural resources in the African nation in the upcoming year.

"This year [2009], there will be more emphasis on recovery and more attention paid to natural resource management," Toby Lanzer, the UN's deputy humanitarian coordinator in northern Sudan, said on 20 November, in light of the desertification taking place in the country.

Tree-planting projects were under way to help stave off environmental changes, which were considered a major contributor to the violence in Sudan's west, and to offset the carbon emissions of peacekeeping missions. While some three million trees were set to be planted, 10 times that number would be needed long term.

In Darfur the UN was working on providing access to land for more cattle owners without letting the grazing animals damage crops. This would help alleviate a critical problem - food, Lanzer said. However, Darfur would remain a difficult area to live and work in, and some 17,000 aid workers were still in the region.

Responding to complaints about attacks on aid workers, Sudan's humanitarian aid commissioner, Hassabo Mohamed Abdel Rahman, said his government was working to secure their safety and reduce attacks on humanitarian aid convoys. "The government is committed to full access for aid workers in Sudan," he pledged.

However, attacks continue and many areas remain out of the government's reach, particularly in areas close to the borders with Chad and the Central African Republic, both suffering from

instability.

Haroun Lual, the minister for humanitarian affairs in the national unity government, said he expected the UN and African Union peacekeeping mission to be fully staffed by next June, in a move that would hopefully bring more stability and security to the region.

The Consolidated Appeals Process for Sudan is the largest of all the UN appeals this year, which total \$7 billion. About half the money for Sudan is earmarked for the World Food Programme.

"The good news is that we already secured \$620 million," Lanzer said, noting that most of the money was in the form of US food donations.

His counterpart in the south, Lise Grande, said the money requested would fund projects such as education for one million children through donations of school supplies and repair of buildings; granting 1.5 million people access to safe water, and emergency assistance for some 400,000 households, mostly in Darfur.

Rahman noted that about one-third of the 2009 appeal was for recovery and not relief, which was a starting point to helping the population eventually stand on its own feet.

The UN asked for about \$180 million less in its previous appeal for the largest African country, which was 68 percent funded as of 10 November, equaling about \$1.36 billion in donations from the international community.

### ***Sudan, Darfur rebels fight deadly clashes***

**(AFP)** — Sudanese troops and regional rebels fought deadly clashes in northern Darfur on Thursday, accusing each other of mounting bloody attacks to torpedo a unilateral government ceasefire.

The violence came as the prosecutor of the International Criminal Court sought arrest warrants for three unnamed rebel commanders and eight days after President Omar al-Beshir declared a ceasefire in the war-torn western region.

The army and a witness said fighting erupted when rebels from the nebulous Sudan Liberation Army attacked an army base at El-Hilif in North Darfur state.

Journalist Kurt Pelda, Africa correspondent for Swiss newspaper *Neue Zuercher Zeitung* who is travelling with Darfur rebels, said the rebels tried but failed to capture a relatively new, well-fortified military camp.

"Soon after, two Antonovs came and also helicopters. What I could see is that the Antonovs dropped the bombs just randomly. Later I heard the sound of the rockets that they used (from helicopters)," he told **AFP** by telephone.

Suleiman Marajan, an SLA commander in the area, said five rebels were killed in fighting with the government forces and charged that government bombing burnt one village "completely."

"He (Beshir) broke his ceasefire himself," he said.

Pelda said he saw one dead rebel and several wounded after the rebel attack, which he said came two days after an Antonov struck a suspected rebel area that turned out to be nomadic settlement, dropping 20 bombs.

Army spokesman Brigadier General Mohamed Osman al-Aghbash accused rebels of attacking troops four times since the ceasefire, killing at least four soldiers and leaving another eight missing.

He said one soldier was killed in the fighting at El-Hilif on Thursday, but Marajan flatly denied army claims that 30 rebels died.

According to the army, SLA-Unity "attacked" a humanitarian convoy in south Darfur on

November 13. Two days later, they lured army brass to an undisclosed location on the pretence of wanting talks, then killed an officer in an ambush.

On November 16, rebels attacked police in south Darfur, killing an officer and a policeman, and leaving eight policemen missing, Aghbash said.

He said the army would continue to hunt down criminals, thieves and kidnappers and accused rebels of staging the attacks in order to provoke the army into a reaction.

On Sunday, the army and a senior policy official in the main ruling National Congress Party in Khartoum drew a sharp distinction between a truce in attacks on rebels and an ongoing campaign to flush out "bandits".

The government insists that acts of self-defence do not compromise the eight-day ceasefire.

### ***U.S. condemns Sudan army, Darfur rebel clashes***

**(Reuters)** - The U.S. special envoy to Sudan condemned the fresh fighting between the Sudanese army and rebels in Darfur on Thursday, saying the clashes made it difficult to take Sudanese pledges of peace seriously. "This is a continued military offensive by the Sudan armed forces, part of a pattern of violence the United States condemns and others should condemn," U.S. special envoy to the Sudan Richard Williamson told **Reuters**.

"This continued offensive really undercuts any efforts to move toward peace and it undercuts President (Omar Hassan) al-Bashir's statement last week about a ceasefire," he said in a telephone interview.

Rebel commander Suleiman Marajan told **Reuters** by satellite phone in Sudan that five of his fighters were killed in the bombings. But Abdalmahmoud Abdalhaleem, Khartoum's U.N. ambassador, said the army had not attacked the rebels. "Williamson should not base his statements on hearsay," he told **Reuters**. "The government is not retaliating. These are fantastic stories by the rebels to provoke the government into breaking the ceasefire." Abdalhaleem added that Khartoum remained "fully committed to the ceasefire."

Williamson said it was not only the government that was breaking the truce. He said the rebels were also undermining the credibility of their own stated commitment to peace.

The U.S. envoy said he was heading to Doha to meet rebel representatives about a Qatar-sponsored peace initiative. "But all that possibility (of progress on peace) disappears if statements about ceasefire are violated from both sides before the ink is dry on the promise," he said.

### ***British embassy denies Miliband's interview with Sudan news agency***

**(Sudan Tribune website)**, 21/11/08 -- An interview published by Sudan official news agency (SUNA) with British Foreign Secretary David Miliband last week is fabricated, according to a statement by the **British embassy in Khartoum**. "The statements that SUNA news agency attributed to the Foreign Secretary David Miliband on November 19 are completely inaccurate" the embassy spokesperson said in a statement. "The Foreign Secretary did not give any interview to SUNA. Nor did he speak about Sudan in the terms described during his recent visit to Damascus" the spokesperson added.

SUNA's reporter in Damascus quoted Miliband as saying in an interview that London and Paris are working together to introduce a Security Council resolution deferring the ICC indictment of President Al-Bashir.

"The UK supports the international efforts undertaken in the UNSC aiming at suspending a decision by the International Criminal Court (ICC) to Sudanese president Umar Al-Bashir for another year" Sudan's state agency quoted Miliband.

"We realize that these international measures will not solve the crisis but will complicate it even

further and may be put the future of peace in Sudan on the brink of collapse" he added.

But the British embassy stressed that UK policy regarding on the ICC is "unchanged". "The UK continues to urge the Government of Sudan to co-operate with the ICC and to take bold, ambitious and concrete action to bring peace in Darfur" the embassy spokesperson said.

SUNA published a report this week saying that France and Britain have agreed to boost efforts to push for a deferral following efforts exerted by Syria, the current president of the Arab League, to persuade the two permanent members of the Security Council. Asked about the news, French diplomatic sources speaking with Sudan Tribune from Paris expressed surprise and reiterated that France had not changed its initial stance on the necessary cooperation with the ICC.

Sudan has not ratified the Rome Statute, but the UN Security Council triggered the provisions under the Statute that enables it to refer situations in non-State parties to the world court if it deems that it is a threat to international peace and security.

### ***Darfur ceasefire offers chance for peace-UN relief chief***

**(Reuters)** 21 Nov - Nearly six years after conflict broke out in Sudan's western region of Darfur, there is huge frustration in the aid community that the situation remains "blocked", but a unilateral ceasefire recently declared by the government could give peace efforts a much-needed boost if it is honoured, the U.N.'s relief chief said on Friday.

"The key is implementation, not declaration, but I think we should welcome it for what it is and try to make sure it is put into practice because that will then give the actual peace efforts a better chance than they've had in the last couple of years," U.N. Emergency Relief Coordinator John Holmes told AlertNet in an interview before heading off on a 10-day trip to Chad and Sudan.

Holmes said the implementation of Khartoum's unilateral truce - declared by the president last week alongside moves to disarm militias and step up development - was vital for improving security for aid workers on the ground. In recent months, access to Darfur's 2.7 million displaced people has deteriorated due to growing violence, with more journeys now being made by helicopter than road, Holmes said.

"The attacks on the humanitarian workers have got worse - and let's be clear that these are attacks by groups linked to rebels, nothing to do with the government - although we also ask the government to provide security in a better way," Holmes said.

The United Nation's latest humanitarian profile for Darfur, released in early October, noted that the crisis "reached a new depth" in the third quarter of this year. It said widespread violence and insecurity continued to uproot people, causing large movements into already overcrowded camps.

In September 2008, access to people affected by the conflict dropped to 65 percent, a level not seen since October 2006. So far this year, 11 national aid workers have been killed and humanitarian premises have been attacked or broken into 144 times, the report said. That compares with 13 deaths and 93 assaults on property during the whole of 2007.

Holmes said there was a need to put pressure on both the government and the rebels to keep up momentum to reach a peace settlement.

"Both sides have got to be ready to negotiate seriously and reach an agreement," he said.

"People always point their fingers at the government of Sudan but actually the rebel movements are divided still, without a united platform even for negotiations."

Holmes has urged donors to keep up funding for aid in Darfur - on which around 4.5 million people depend - amid the global credit crunch and growing humanitarian crises in other countries, including Democratic Republic of Congo and Somalia.

"We're putting a million dollars a year into the humanitarian effort into Darfur, and it's a relatively

successful humanitarian effort despite all the difficulties," he said. "But I recognise more than anybody else that there are better uses for that money."

Holmes will also visit southern Sudan, where living conditions remain dire three years after the signing of a peace deal. The aid chief urged the international community not to neglect the region because its peace remained fragile.

"We need to make sure there are some good peace dividends for the south, and...it doesn't slip back into conflict because that would be absolutely catastrophic," he said. "We need to make sure the Comprehensive Peace Agreement doesn't unravel, because if it does, there's no chance of peace in Darfur or anywhere else."

### ***New Darfur radio station to begin broadcasts on 1 December***

**(Sudan Tribune website)** 20 Nov - A new radio station went on air Saturday, reporters of Radio Dabanga announced, pledging to report from inside Sudan as well as abroad. News and information programmes will commence on 1 December. Broadcasts will be in three vernacular languages - soon to be expanded to four. Reporters say they will produce "independent news and relevant information for all Darfuri: city folk, villagers and herdsman, IDPs, refugees, Darfuri abroad and in Sudan." Radio Dabanga is a project of the Radio Darfur Network, a coalition of Sudanese journalists and international media development organizations, supported by a consortium of international donors, humanitarian community organizations and local NGOs. The radio station is operated by Press Now in the Netherlands. The name is derived from a type of large storage vessel called dabanga (also sometimes written damanga or dabunga) used by Sudanese farmers to preserve food. Farmers tend to hide their valuables at the bottom of these containers, making them both precious and delicate. Thus there is an Arabic adage, "life is brittle as dabanga; roll it slowly." The radio station commented, "The message of this proverb is that diplomacy is needed in life to solve problems."

### ***Tough homecoming to war-ravaged south Sudan***

**(AFP)** 23 Nov - It is hard work coming home when your country was at war for two decades. Homes must be built from scratch, fields for crops cut where the wild and tough bush has grown, and warning signs erected in areas with landmines.

"Lack of food is the biggest problem," said Josephine Mayo, a farmer who returned in January to the southern Sudan village she abandoned in 1998 when two of her children were killed in fighting and the settlement burnt.

Ngerjebi, a small farming community in lush countryside some 30 miles (50 kilometres) from Juba, the capital of semi-autonomous southern Sudan, is typical of many villages across this grossly under-developed region.

Four million people were displaced from or within south Sudan, according to assessments made after the 2005 peace that ended 21 years of civil war by joining the southern rebel leadership with the Arab-led north in government. The displaced are now coming home. Around 1.7 million have returned, according to an October report by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), and life is far from easy.

Many complain of insecurity in a region awash with guns and militia remnants and -- three years after the peace deal was signed -- an exhausting lack of services despite the south's sizeable oil revenue. It's a situation worrying some deeply.

A British think tank, the Overseas Development Institute (ODI), recently warned of "growing concern" about the need to support the returnees. "The challenge lies not simply in avoiding fresh violence, but in preventing the emergence of a future failing state", a report said.

While acknowledging that peace has held despite the challenges of coping with a giant influx of people, most have been left "extremely vulnerable" to disturbances or shocks, the ODI said. "Opportunities for citizens to be economically independent have been slow to develop and large numbers have not yet benefited from economic growth." The same complaints are heard repeatedly on the ground.

"We are lacking basic services -- health services, water, a proper school," said Albano Tombek, the 45-year-old Ngerjebi chief, who returned to an empty village in March.

Peace has brought changes for some as the region opens up to trade, but much of south Sudan -- an area bigger than Spain and Portugal combined but with few miles (kilometres) of paved roads -- remains extremely remote.

"I'm happy to be home but there are big challenges ahead," Josephine said. She talked wearily about caring for 20 relatives, including her children and those of family members killed in the war.

"There is not enough food. We could not plant many crops because we had to build our homes, and we also had few tools and seeds," she added, waving at the scattered collection of thatch huts and small patches of crops.

Most of those returning are also the poorest. The IOM estimates 60 percent are families headed by single women and that 59 percent are children aged between five and 17 -- many going to ancestral homes for the first time.

Those who built a successful life outside, during the long years of war, are those with the education and skills most needed to develop this damaged region.

But many of them are reluctant to return with families to a land without health services and education, fearing instability ahead of a 2011 referendum that could see the south of Africa's largest country secede.

"I'm just visiting relatives but I'm still based in Kenya," said businessman Joseph Achak.

"Some businessmen are back, but there are not the schools for my children like they have in Nairobi ... After independence I'll return for good."

Some of those who have come back say they were deeply disappointed when they arrived. Many prefer to remain in the city.

"I heard that there were would be health services and electricity, but there was nothing," said William Lado, 26, who grew up in a camp in northern Sudan. Now Lado drives a motorbike taxi in Juba.

"There are no jobs in the countryside, nothing to do," he said.

Some are bitter at what they complain is gross corruption by government officials, newly savouring the taste of power. Others fume that social spending is docked in favour of the military.

Last month southern lawmakers approved a 980-million-dollar top-up to the 1.5-billion-dollar annual budget, blamed largely on massive military overspending.

"Reintegration has as a result put additional pressure on an already under-served and economically poor resident population," the ODI said.

"It has also exposed fundamental weaknesses in the fledgling regional government, and in the work of international agencies."

Government authorities say they are working hard to support those returning, but that they face a giant task.

"People have high expectations, but we have been frank with them about the situation," said Stans Yatta, state director of the South Sudan Refugee and Rehabilitation Commission for Central Equatoria state.

"No one is forcing anyone to stay or to go; it is their decision."

Yatta said it was hard to provide all services before people arrived, since it was only then that the needs were clear.

"The war is over and we are rebuilding the country, and people need to come back to their lands and participate in that," Yatta added.

"How can you start schools when there is no one there, or build water boreholes if there is no one to drink from them but the monkeys?"

### ***Funding woes continue to plague HIV fight***

**(IRIN/PlusNews)** 20 Nov - For over a year, the South Sudan AIDS Commission (SSAC) has

been setting up offices in the ten states that make up Southern Sudan, but a combination of funding delays and a population largely uninformed about HIV is keeping the fight against the pandemic from moving forward.

Southern Sudan's strategic framework for fighting HIV is expected to cost around \$656.12 million over a period of five years, of which \$124.16 million has been secured, leaving a funding gap of about 80 percent.

However, according to the UNAIDS country progress report only \$4.1 million had been spent as of February 2008, and funding delays were largely due to the inability of implementing agencies to absorb and manage the money, as well as persistent security concerns in some states.

"Until now I don't have an office; I am mobile," Paul Juoch, director of the AIDS commission in Unity State, told *IRIN/PlusNews*. He has worked in a room that also served the drugs store in the state's ministry of Health since he started the job in 2007.

A few months ago his office burnt down and he has temporarily moved to a local hospital, where he refurbished an unused room. The state finally gave his office 2,000 square metres of land, "But we don't have the resources to develop that land for our activities," he said.

More troubling than the lack of office space has been the stubborn refusal by the local population to accept Juoch's HIV message. When he sought help from local officials in the state capital, Bentiu, to educate people about the use of condoms as a way to fight the disease, they turned him down. "If I go to a school and I tell them to use condoms ... it's like you are introducing sex to people," he said.

It is still taboo to talk openly about sexual matters, but high-risk behaviour is not uncommon; according to a 2007 study in the regional capital, Juba, 11.7 percent of men and 5.9 percent of women had sex with a casual partner in the last 12 months. Studies have also shown that fewer than 25 percent of men in southern Sudan report consistent condom use with casual partners.

"Sometimes I feel like quitting," said Juoch, who returned from the US in 2007 to take up the position. "I am always frustrated that people are not responding."

Juoch's experience is repeated in states across the south; when Benjamin Waigo was appointed director of the SSAC in Eastern Equatoria State, he found there were no voluntary counseling and testing centres. "The ministry there had nothing," he told *IRIN/PlusNews*.

Waigo has also encountered widespread unawareness of HIV and how to prevent it; soldiers, a major target in prevention activities, are reluctant to believe a disease can kill them after they survived a 21-year war with the northern government, while much of the local civilian population believes that HIV is a "foreigners' illness".

"Southern Sudan is arguably at a stage where many countries in sub-Saharan Africa were in the 1990s," said Douglas Graeme Higgins, chief of programmes in the Southern Sudan Office of UNICEF, the UN children's fund, which is responsible for drafting a behaviour change communication strategy for the region. "Changing attitudes, leave alone behaviour, is not easy."

The region's population of 10 million can be broadly divided into three groups: those who stayed in the south during the war; returnee populations from the capital, Khartoum; and returnees from neighbouring countries such as Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda.

A 2008 study by the Bonn International Centre for Conversion, a peace and development NGO, found that people who had remained in Sudan during the war, whether in the south or Khartoum, largely

blamed returnees from outside Sudan for bringing HIV to the region.

"They often think that AIDS came from the [Democratic Republic of] Congo and East Africa," Waigo said. "The people from Ethiopia [and] East Africa are generally well aware of the pandemic, compared to those who stayed."

Although a conclusive picture of HIV prevalence in Southern Sudan has not yet been established, limited surveillance at antenatal care sites shows prevalence ranging from 0.8 percent at some sites to as high as 11.5 percent in others.

### ***Illegal courts in Southern Sudan - GoSS***

(***Miraya FM Nov 22***) GoSS Ministry of Legal Affairs and Constitutional Development announced on Friday in Rumbek town of the Lakes State that most of the Courts functioning in Southern Sudan are illegal.

Speaking to ***Miraya FM*** at the sidelines of a two day workshop for Lawyers and Advocates on the Comprehensive Peace Agreement and Transitional Legal Framework and Impact on Legal Practice and Policy, the Senior Legal Counsel in the Ministry of Legal Affairs and Constitutional Development, Dr. Jibril Isaac Awow, said that Lakes State is one of the States in Southern Sudan which needs legal work due to its continuous insecurity.

Addressing the opening of the workshop, the Acting Governor of the Lakes State, Awan Guol Riek, expressed concern over the formation of Lawyers Association in Southern Sudan to defend the rights of accused clients.

The two-day workshop is organized by the United Nations Development Programme and sponsored by the European Union Commission.

## **Links**

**A gleam among the ruins** *The Economist (USA)* - 22/11/2008

[http://www.economist.com/world/mideast-africa/displayStory.cfm?story\\_id=12630209&source=hptextfeature](http://www.economist.com/world/mideast-africa/displayStory.cfm?story_id=12630209&source=hptextfeature)

**PROSPECTS 2009: Stability eludes Darfur border region** *Oxford Analytical* – 21/11/2008

<http://www.oxan.com/display.aspx?ItemID=ES147141>

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