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Special Media Monitoring Report on coverage on United Nations activities and related issues

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(By UNMIS Public Information Office)

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Highlights:

Sudan summons UN envoy to explain logistical help to rebel leader

(*ST, the local press* – 26th Jun. **Khartoum**) Sudan summoned on Sunday the UN envoy for an explanation on an alleged helicopter ride given to a Darfur rebel leader; Khartoum accused the world body of providing cover for a rebel leader who rejects a recent peace deal.

Foreign ministry spokesman Jamal Mohamed Ibrahim said that the ministry has summoned an UNMIS DSRSG for an explanation before the acting Undersecretary for Foreign Affairs later today on the alleged helicopter ride given to the Darfur rebel leader. He hinted that the government may take tougher measures against such practices.

The ministry said it had suspended all UN operations in Darfur until further notice, except those of the World Food Programme and the UNICEF.

The foreign ministry said Suleiman Jamous, a dissident member of SLM-Minnawi, was taken Saturday from the main Darfur town of el-Fasher to South Kordofan state on a UN helicopter flight.

The MoFA spokesperson pointed out that by doing this, UNMIS stands in violation of article 12 of the SOFA that obligates the mission to abide by internationally recognized civil aviation statutes that require the mission to declare the flight type, destination, the name of its crew and the passengers on board but, he points out, UNMIS ignored all this and operated the flight in question without notifying the authorities.

He said the government took the step to suspend UNMIS activities in Darfur after the incident was confirmed.

“There are two options before UNMIS,” adds the spokesperson, “UNMIS should either file an apology or admit it violated the SOFA or deny such thing happened and government will insist on its position.”

The spokesperson says that in that case the government has the option of taking “decisions that may relate to respect of state sovereignty” but said he hoped the issue will be resolved and that focus will return to the implementation of the DPA.

The government, he adds, looks forward to true partnership with the United Nations away from threats of invoking of [*reference to Chapter VII*] articles of the United Nations Charter that only obstruct the peace process. He also said that this incident should not be regarded in light of the issue of the AU-UN transition but on its own merit.

He further pointed out that the issue of the United Nations is being handled through other quarters but does not rule out that this latest incident may affect those discussions.

He pointed out that the state has used its right to suspend UNMIS activities as a first step; the second step would be to seek the details from the authorities in Darfur while UNMIS also collects its information and then an appropriate decision will be taken.

The spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs confirmed to BBC radio that the field commander in question who has been transported by UNMIS helicopter is indeed Commander Suleiman Jamous.

On 20 May, Jamous, who was the former SLM-Minnawi humanitarian coordinator, had been arrested and tortured by his group for opposition to the Darfur Peace Agreement.

He was released to the United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) from Muzbat on 22 June 2006 and was taken to el-Fasher, the capital of North Darfur State, where he remained under UN protection. UN human rights monitors were allowed to visit him on 14 June 2006.

According to a humanitarian source, Jamous was commended by the UN and NGO aid workers in Darfur for his good collaboration and competence.

"It was clear that the act was planned to take place behind the back of the Sudanese authorities," a statement issued late Saturday said.

Ibrahim said the rebel leader had his face covered during the transfer, in what he said was a clear indication that the UN officials travelling on the same flight were attempting to hide the man from the authorities.

The foreign ministry said it considered the incident "a flagrant violation of the country's sovereignty and a violation of the agreement under which the UN operates in Sudan."

The holdout SLM led by AbdulWahid al-Nur condemned the UN suspension, saying Khartoum was determined to continue killing the people Darfur.

"By suspending the UN mission in Darfur, the government of Sudan is preparing to finalize the last chapter of its genocidal policy in the absence of the direct supervision of the international community," the faction's spokesperson Jaffer Monro charged in a press statement.

He called on the world body to expedite the deployment of UN peacekeepers.

The world body stresses that it never intended to send troops without Khartoum's consent but has warned that improved security in Darfur is vital for the success of the May 5 peace deal.

After completing a mission aimed at mustering support from the authorities for a UN deployment, the UN's undersecretary general for peacekeeping operations Jean-Marie Guehenno reported no breakthrough.

"The response we had was not the one that we would have liked to hear," he said in a briefing during which he enumerated the ideas he submitted to the government during his consultations.

Bashir has repeatedly warned he will turn Darfur into "a graveyard" for Western troops, accusing the West of seeking to "re-colonise Sudan".

UN denies being informed of suspension of its activities in Darfur

(*Xinhua/ST, the local press* – 26th June. **Khartoum**) A UN spokesperson denied here on Sunday that the world body had been officially informed of the Sudanese government's decision to suspend UN activities in the country's troubled western region of Darfur.

"We have not received any formal or official notification on the decision from the Sudanese government," Radhia Achouri, spokeswoman of the UN Mission in Sudan (UNMIS), told Xinhua.

"We cannot make comments on what we have seen in the press media," the spokeswoman added.

"We do not need to inform them formally of such a decision in such cases," said foreign ministry spokesperson, Ambassador Jamal Mohamed Ibrahim when asked to comment why the UNMIS was not formally notified of the decision to suspend its Darfur operations.

"The incident has occurred and the appropriate measures were immediately taken," he asserted.

Meanwhile, a Sudanese official source, who spoke on condition of anonymity, told Xinhua that the decision to suspend UN activities in Darfur was made because an UN helicopter had transported Suleiman Adam Jamous, a senior member of a Darfur rebel group who rejected a peace agreement, without consultations with the Sudanese government.

He also said that since Special Representative of the UN Secretary General in Sudan Jan Pronk was currently in the Dutch capital Amsterdam, the Sudanese Foreign Ministry was to summon another UNMIS official instead to clarify the incident.

On Saturday night, the Sudanese government ordered Darfur local authorities to suspend UN activities in the region except humanitarian work of the World Food Program (WFP) and other international aid agencies.

Meanwhile, the Sudanese Foreign Ministry announced in a statement that the government had to take this decision because the UNMIS overstretched its mandate by airlifting the leader of the Darfur rebel movement al-Fasher to Masbad and then to Kadugli in Darfur.

"The suspension will be lifted when the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General in Sudan (Prong) clarifies the UNMIS' position," the statement added.

Pro-ruling party youth protest against UN peacekeepers

(*AlAyaam*, ST- 26th Jun. **Khartoum**) Up to 5,000 protestors, mainly from the youth and student organisations of the ruling National Congress Party in Khartoum State, gathered in front of parliament Sunday to protest against a possible deployment of international troops to Darfur.

"Down, Down United Nations," "Down, Down, USA", "We will not be ruled by the CIA," they chanted, as some of them torched a life-size dummy with the words UN and USA inscribed on it.

The Speaker of the Assembly, Ahmed Ibrahim al-Tahir, addressed the demonstrators, renewing Sudan's rejection to any foreign troops.

Al-Tahir referred to the unanimous decision issued by the National Assembly in last February, which affirmed that it [*the House*] is a symbol of the unity of Sudan, and that the independence of Sudan was declared from the Parliament "Once more, the parliament records a historic stance in rejecting any foreign troops n Darfur," al-Tahir told the crowds

He said that the UN is punishing Sudan for signing the Abuja peace agreement by issuing the resolution No. 1679 under Chapter 7 of the UN Charter.

The Speaker of the National Assembly says government should either stand firm in rejecting the deployment of international troops to Darfur or step down.

The Speaker of the National Assembly expressed regret that some "brothers hurried to the members of the Security Council who recently visited the country and wiped their shoes as they expressed support for an international intervention which they see as their chance to rule the country".

The Speaker likened the calls for acceptance of a deployment of foreign troops to Darfur as the request from Prophet Abraham to his son as he sought to offer him as sacrifice.

"But Abraham's request emanated from a command from god while this United Nations request emanates from the grand Satan called the US".

The Speaker said that the fact that the US drafts United Nations Security Council resolutions is in itself a violation of the United Nations Charter.

The protestors who filled the compound of the National Assembly in Omdurman also burnt the US flag, chanted anti-US slogans and *Jihadist* songs.

Political forces slam government on suspension of United Nations operations in Darfur

(*AlAyaam* – 26th Jun. **Khartoum**) Following instructions from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs late Saturday night, the state governments in the Darfurs have ordered an immediate suspension of UNMIS activities in their respective areas.

Meanwhile, UNMIS in Darfur has asked all its employees not to leave their compound or use United Nations vehicles or aircraft as it abides by the instructions of the government.

Meanwhile in the political circles, opposition forces see the recent decision to suspend UNMIS activities in Darfur as a further straining of relations with the international community and that it does not meet the interests of the state.

The SPLM says it was not aware of the reasons behind the problem. Tilara Deng, Minister at Cabinet and prominent figure at the SPLM, says the SPLM asked for more clarification from its partner in government.

The spokesperson for the SLM-Minnawi delegation currently in Khartoum has called on the international community to exert more pressures on the government to refrain from its policies that do not comply with international convention and to put in place appropriate measure to protect civilians.

“We reject this government decision and its use of the policy of sustaining the hunger in Darfur”.

He said that the suspension puts the lives of the citizen in Darfur in danger.

A prominent member of the National Umma Party (the mainstream faction of Sadiq el-Mahdi) urged the United Nations not to heed to the suspension order and to instead intensify its humanitarian operations in Darfur.

The member of the Umma party said the decision was not made in good taste as the United Nations has played a prominent role in the talks in Abuja and is providing unlimited humanitarian assistance to IDPs in the region.

The Communist Party of the Sudan has called for an urgent solution of this problem between the government and the United Nations so that the United Nations may continue its humanitarian activities in the region. A prominent member of the party said that his party does not know the reasons behind the decision.

The DUP believes the decision could have been triggered by the issue of transition of the African Union to a United Nations operation.

Human rights activists say Mr. Jamous who has been under SLM-Minnawi arrest was flown to Kadugli for medical treatment and add that he should not be deprived of his rights to medical treatment as provided for by international conventions.

Sudan says it could assume Darfur peacekeeping mission

(*ST* – 25th June. **Khartoum**) The Council of Ministers sitting yesterday under the chairmanship of President Bashir has reiterated Sudan's rejection to a transition of the African Union to a United Nations operation and says the Sudan is ready to assume a peace-keeping role in Darfur should the African Union fail to extend its mandate beyond 30th September.

In The Hague, Sudan's State Minister for finance, Mr. Lual Deng, renewed Sudan's proposals to field a joint 10,000-strong SAF-SPLA unit to the Darfur region to help the AMIS keep the peace in Darfur.

SPLM describes President Bashir's recent uproar as "legitimate"

(*AIRai AlAam* – 26th Jun. **Khartoum**) SPLM deputy Secretary-General Yassir Erman says it is important that President Bashir's recent vows to "lead the opposition against United Nations troops should they deploy to Darfur" should be handled in an appropriate manner.

He pointed out that the motives behind the statement are known and that President Bashir vented a 'legitimate fury'.

In an interview, Erman said that it is wrong to see the international troops deploying to Darfur as an instrument to help some political forces gain political ground against other.

He said there is no need for a confrontation with the international community and added that the SPLM will use its contacts to try to help the government and the international community each an understanding.

He said it is possible to hold discussions with the United Nations Secretary-General on the issue without "adding fuel to the flames".