



UNMIS

Office of the Spokesperson

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Assistance by the United Nations to the Development of Sudanese Aviation Infrastructure

Khartoum, 21 July 2006 – In an article published by the Sudanese Arabic Daily Al Watan in on 20 July 2006, the Deputy Secretary-General of the Sudanese Aviation Chamber, Mr. Omer Abdulmajid, has criticized the United Nations for charging passengers traveling on its aircrafts.

In reaction to this, the United Nations in Sudan would like to underscore the following:

1- Aviation assets are critical for the conduct of the United Nations' activities in Sudan. These assets are used to move humanitarian supplies, support the movement of staff who are helping to improve the lives of thousands of Sudanese throughout this country, and support casualty and humanitarian evacuations. UNMIS has been making its aircrafts available to transport Sudanese Government officials and key political figures inside and outside the country to attend important events. When the flights concerned are part of a regular schedule, the seats are made available free of charge. Neither UNMIS nor the U.N. Humanitarian Air Services (UNHAS) carry private citizens. Their services are limited to the individuals previously mentioned.

2- Due to funding shortfalls, UNHAS - which is financed by voluntary donors' contributions, was compelled six months ago to introduce a 100-dollar charge on its passengers. These passengers, as stated above, are humanitarian workers and Government officials and do not include private citizens of any nationality.

3- With respect to aircrafts contracted to support U.N. activities; all carriers, including Sudanese companies, are allowed to bid for services requested through the U.N. Headquarters in New York. Contracts are awarded, based on a combination of criteria of quality and cost, to the lowest bidder whose aircraft technically meets the requirements established by the International Civil Aviation Organization.

4- The U.N. is not charged landing fees. This exemption is granted to the U.N. by virtue of the Status of Forces Agreement signed by UNMIS and the Government of Sudan earlier this year. These exemptions are extended to U.N. operations throughout the world. In return, the U.N. is making substantial contributions to improving Sudanese aviation infrastructure.

The United Nations has recently partnered with the Sudanese Civil Aviation Authority (SCAA) to address the needs of airport infrastructures throughout Sudan, be it runway repairs, navigational aids, airport fencing, air traffic control, or other requirements. All airports are in the process of being surveyed, with master plans developed and the required work programmed and initiated. Projects which were completed include upgrading the Rumbek airport, repairing the runway in Wau, constructing a tower in Wau and El Obeid for use by the SCAA, providing fire trucks for numerous airports to improve their emergency response, and installing a navigational aid system and runway lighting in Kadugli.

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