

**Office of the Spokesperson****UNMIS BRIEFING TO THE PRESS****4 July 2007**

*Below is a near verbatim transcript of the press conference held by United Nations Mission in Sudan Spokesperson, Ms. Radhia Achouri, on 4 July 2007 at the UNMIS Press Briefing Room.*

**DARFUR POLITICAL PROCESS**

The AU and UN Special Envoys for Darfur, Dr. Salim Ahmed Salim and Mr. Jan Eliasson, are due to arrive in Sudan for their fourth visit. Special Envoy Jan Eliasson is due to arrive in Khartoum this evening and will depart on 8 July. Special Envoy Salim Ahmed Salim will arrive on 7 July for a visit that will take few days.

The scheduling of the two Envoys visit, who have so far undertaken their visit jointly, aims at maximizing the duration of their visit in order to ensure in-depth consultations and discussions with all relevant Sudanese stakeholders, including DPA signatories and non-signatories, as well as those involved in the DDC process, in particular civil society groups and representatives of IDPs and native administration as well as tribal chiefs. The visit will also focus on preparations for the Tripoli international meeting hosted by the Libyan Government, which will take place on 15 and 16 July and which will be jointly chaired by the AU and UN. The meeting is a follow-up to the high-level gathering that took place in Tripoli on 28 and 29 April 2007 and its outcome, the Tripoli Consensus on the Political Process for Darfur. The two Special Envoys will review in this regard with the AU-UN Joint Mediation Support Team its preparatory work for the Tripoli Meeting, as well as the status of implementation on the first phase-Convergence of Initiatives and Consultations Phase- of the Joint AU-UN roadmap for the Darfur political process, jointly prepared by the two Special Envoys.

The two Envoys are scheduled to meet with Government officials and will brief them on the results of their joint efforts and the next steps they envisage in moving the Darfur political process forward.

**UN AGENCIES/UNMIS**

UNMAO reports that suspension of operations has began due to the early onset of the rainy season and in preparation for the coming wet season stand-down period (July – September), prior to the commencement of the new demining season in October.

Activities undertaken by UNMAO and its partners during the month of June include:

- Continuation of mine clearance operations in Southern Kordofan State, where 426,945 sqm were cleared at all opened minefields and a total of 120 anti-personnel (AP) mines, 2 anti-tank mines and 1,600 explosive remnants of war disposed of.
- Continuation of mine clearance in Kurmuk along the Ethiopian border with the UNMIS Pakistani Military Demining Company and a Swiss NGO.
- Completion of route survey, verification and clearance of Magwi – Pageri route, while work on Moli – Karpeto – Sindiru - Juba was suspended on 22 June for the rainy season stand-down.

UNMAO INGO implementing partners completed clearance of three dangerous areas on the Juba-Bor road, the general mine action assessment of Akobo, and the route surveys of Rokon-Gobo and Pibor-Akobo routes. UNMIS Bangladeshi military demining company continued with clearance of the temporary Central Demolition Site near Juba, containing numerous UXO in various conditions. The company also completed clearance of seven pits at the foot of Jebel Kujoor and an emergency clearance tasking at the Ministry of Legal Affairs, where small arms ammunitions were discovered during excavation work.

-UNMIS Cambodian military demining company continued with in-country training in Malakal and will resume work on the technical survey and clearance of the minefield at Dolieb Hill at the start of the next demining season.

-UNMIS Kenyan military demining company completed the destruction of seven UXO stockpiles in Gogrial in Wau and an implementing partner NGO completed the Wau- Raga route survey, as well as the survey and clearance of the Aweil Rice Field project.

-Completion of operations on the route survey, verification, and clearance from Limbe to Kajo Keji and from Moyo to Kajo Keji.

UNMAO reports that travel restrictions continued to hamper its operations in Kassala despite the fact that its workplan had been submitted to and approved of by the Northern Mine Action Authority and Humanitarian Aid Commission and all required travel procedures followed. UNMAO had to postpone many tasks planned in South Darfur, also because of operational restrictions.

The UN Mine Action Office in Sudan was awarded a Certificate of Achievement and Recognition by the President of the Republic of Sudan, H.E. Omer Hassan Ahmed El-Bashir, at a ceremony in Friendship Hall in Khartoum on 10 June, in recognition for its achievements and support to the people in Sudan.

## **RETURNS**

UNHCR, in cooperation with Southern Sudan Return and Rehabilitation Commission, the Humanitarian Affairs Commission, the Ministry of Finance, UNMIS Recovery, Return and Reintegration Unit, and other UN Agencies, organized an evaluation workshop on 2 and 3 July in Damazin on reintegration of returnees in the Blue Nile State. The workshop targeted line ministries connected with humanitarian service delivery, local authorities, UN agencies, INGOs, and local NGOs. A total of 64 participants took part in the workshop.

The main objectives of the workshop were to undertake a comprehensive evaluation of the living conditions of returnees in the Blue Nile State, to sensitize government partners, INGOs, NGOs and UN agencies on the urgent needs of host communities for adequate services, assess the situation surrounding basic humanitarian service delivery, identify challenges, and develop an action plan that specifies intervention roles for all humanitarian service actors in the State.

The Blue Nile State has been the focus of huge influx of returns of Sudanese refugees in Ethiopia and IDPs. As the number of returnees gets larger and service delivery process gets more challenging, the humanitarian service community, including the Government humanitarian departments in the Blue Nile State, has thought it expedient to evaluate the service trend, with the view of inspiring new strategies of reintegrating the returnees, and providing provide new energies in the protection drive of these vulnerable groups till they are satisfactorily reintegrated into the main society.

## **UNMIS ACTIVITIES**

### ***CPA related activities***

**UNMIS Civil Affairs in Juba** has facilitated over the last week meetings between the Bari-Mundari-Nyangwara tribes to resolve their long outstanding differences. A taskforce was established to enhance and normalize community relationships in the conflict areas, identify challenges in the proposed repatriation of the Mundari cattle camps and resettlement of the displaced Bari communities. Resolving this long standing conflict will bring great relief to many Bari communities along northern Juba who have been displaced due to insecurity.

**UNMIS Civilian Police** continues its activities in support of capacity-building in Southern Sudan and the Transitional Areas. On 01 July 2007, the UNMIS Civilian Police team, co-located with the local police in Rumbek, conducted training on community policing to 34 local policemen. On 30 June, UNMIS Civilian Police in Kauda organized a one-day workshop on child protection at Kudiba police station. Last week, UNMIS Police co-located with local police in Wau visited all the police posts to train police officers on the procedures of maintenance of property seizure registers. They also trained traffic police on response to traffic accidents. On 25 June, UNMIS Civilian Police and the HIV/AIDS Unit organized a five-day public awareness campaign workshop on HIV/AIDS for the Southern Sudan Police Service personnel at the headquarter of Southern Sudan Police Services in Juba. The workshop was attended by over 30 police officers of various ranks. On 01 July, UNMIS Civilian Police visited Abyei GoS Police Station and briefed the local police on safe custody of detainees.

**UNMIS Pakistani contingent** transported on 29 June 9,000 kgs of Sorghum from Damazine to Kurmuk. The Food assistance is provided by the State government to refugees, IDPs and the local community. Kurmuk local authorities expressed their appreciation for the assistance provided by UNMIS Pakistani contingent in delivering food assistance to the population in need which could not be provided for the last three months due to lack of transportation facilities. Sorghum is one of the most important seed used in Sudan and about 80 %of the Sudanese population use Sorghum as their basic food.

### ***Darfur related activities***

**Acting SRSG Tayé-Brook Zerihoun** met on 3 July with the new Force Commander of the African Union Mission in the Sudan, Gen Martin Luther Agwai, who arrived in Khartoum from Addis Ababa on 2 July. Gen. Agwai was appointed in May 2007 by the AU Commission Chairperson, Alpha Oumar Konaré, in consultation with the UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, in accordance with the Communiqué of the 66th meeting of the AU Peace and Security Council, held in Abuja, Nigeria, on 30 November 2006. Gen. Agwai will serve first as the Force Commander of AMIS and later as the Force Commander of the AU-UN hybrid operation once established. Upon completion of his meetings in Khartoum with Government and UN officials, Gen. Agwai will travel to Darfur to take up his functions as AMIS Force Commander.

## **SECURITY DEVELOPMENTS**

### ***Southern Sudan and Transitional Areas***

Inter-communal clashes increased in the areas surrounding Jonglei State. On 26 June, Boya tribesmen reportedly killed a person and injured another during a cattle raid in Lalanga, Eastern Equatoria State. On 26 June, Lou-Nuers tribesmen raided cattle in three villages in the vicinity of Nassir, Upper Nile State, which are inhabited by Jikany-Nuers. The two communities are also engaged in a dispute over land ownership in Wanding, Nassir County.

### ***Darfur***

On June 26, fighting between GoS forces and Non-Signatory forces was reported in the areas South of Tawilla, North Darfur State. The security situation continues to have a significant impact on the humanitarian situation, but an international organization started this week providing drugs to health

workers in Tawilla, who are serving the IDP camps around the town. On 26 June, food distribution in the area North of Tawilla for the month of June was completed.

Carjacking, attacks and theft targeting humanitarian workers continued. Information of these incidents is regularly provided in UNMIS News Bulletins.

## **HUMANITARIAN DEVELOPMENTS**

### ***Southern Sudan and Transitional Areas***

During the last week, FAO and its implementing partners completed about 90% of the distribution of seeds and tools in all counties in Southern Sudan. A total of 24,750 households have been targeted of which 80% are returnees and 20% from the host communities.

UNMIS continued close monitoring of the barge movement from Kosti towards Bor, Jonglei State, expected to arrive on 6 July. The Return and Reintegration Working Group (RRWG) in Bor, including a reception committee organized by the SSRRC and UNMIS, is preparing the arrangements of basic service. In addition to the cooked meal upon arrival provided by UNHCR, the returnees will receive a three-month food ration from WFP. Transportation from Kosti to Bor and the provision of NFIs was organized by IOM, whilst accommodation at the way station has been organized by UNHCR and an implementing partner INGO.

### ***Darfur***

Continuous insecurity in eastern Jebel Marra has led to the displacement of 2,700 new IDPs to El Fasher during the month of June 2007. No food distribution was carried out in northern Dar Zaghawa and Kutum in June, leaving 165,000 conflict-affected people without food aid.

In South Darfur, insecurity continues to cause the displacement of thousands of IDPs to Al Salam camp and to Um Dukhum. Al Salam camp, which had a population of 13,300 in March, now houses over 33,000 IDPs, with over 2,300 IDPs still to be verified.

In Um Dukhum, West Darfur, where the nutrition level was reported to be critical, WFP and an INGO have been distributing emergency food rations for two weeks to nearly 950 IDP families who fled from militia harassment in Um Dafog. A large number of refugees/returnees are also moving from Chad and the Central African Republic. A UNHCR team from Mukjar is presently in Um Dukhum to verify the numbers of refugees and returnees. On 26 June, the Ministry of Health in Zalingei informed that the number of severe malnutrition cases in Garsila hospital in the period from January to 24 June 2007 was 172 with 28 deaths. The Ministry also reported that a total of 53 fistula cases were treated at Zalingei hospital from January to June, with a 94% success rate.

On 27 June, UNMIS led a joint assessment mission with UN agencies and INGOs to El Salaam IDP Camp, South Darfur. The number of IDPs had reached 33,007, all receiving food assistance. The mission concluded, however, that the available services would not be adequate to sustain the current population at this location and recommended closure of the camp. Alternative solutions for the IDPs need to be identified and coordinated with HAC and other authorities.

## **Q & A**

**Q:** [*indiscernible question on suspension of humanitarian operations in South Darfur*]

**Spokesperson:** I don't understand your question; I don't get what you are referring to. On South Darfur, please check my briefing points as I did not say anything about suspension of humanitarian assistance in that area.

**Q:** There are reports from Accra that African states have not contributed troops for the Hybrid Operation. Furthermore, the Security Council is yet to issue a resolution on the operation. *[Indiscernible about question about failure of the hybrid operation]*

**Spokesperson:** I don't think it is a question; it is more of a statement from your side. We keep you informed on every thing that is taking place.

Yes, you are right; the Security Council has not issued a resolution as yet. However, the Security Council, according to yesterday's announcement to the press by the President of the Security Council of the month, the Permanent Representative of China, on the monthly program of the Security Council, the Security Council members will be looking at a draft resolution on the establishment of the hybrid operation sometime next week.

On Accra, I was not in Accra and do not know what was said there but - again, please check the News Bulletins that we issue regularly because you keep asking me questions the answers of which are provided for in the United Nations Mission in Sudan News Bulletins ... so please do your homework – the Department of Peacekeeping Operations held a meeting with potential troop and police contributors on Friday and briefed them on everything that has to do with the Hybrid Operation with the particular focus on troops and police requirements that particular operation. I understand that DPKO is waiting for responses from potential troops and police contributing countries. DPKO reiterated, again, during that meeting that priority will be given to the African troops and if certain needs will not be available from within the African continent, then other offers will be considered. That is the state of affairs. Furthermore – and the information is in the News Bulletin if you care to read it – ASG Hédi Annabi informed the press that the next step will be for potential contributors to visit Darfur to assess the situation to determine equipment needs.

Talking about failure of the Hybrid Operation when the operation has not even started yet is a statement from your side and not a question. Well, we only give you facts and can not speculate on the fate of an operation that does not even exist yet. In its briefing to the troop and police contributing countries, DPKO highlighted existing challenges of logistical nature on the ground in Darfur. Yes, this operation is – as the Deputy Secretary-General put it to the African Union Summit in her statement on behalf of the Secretary-General – this is a first-of-its-kind operation to be deployed in the history of peacekeeping; the first peacekeeping operation to be jointly conducted by two organizations and, obviously, the challenges in Darfur are quite familiar to you. There is an absolute commitment and resolve by the African Union and the United Nations to expedite this process and we do also understand that the Government of Sudan has stated its commitment to cooperate and make this Hybrid Operation work on the ground.

That is my answer to you and let's not speculate.

**Q:** *[Indescribable about the Humanitarian Joint Communiqué and access issues]*

**Spokesperson:** On your question, I will refer you back to the press releases that were issued jointly by the Government of Sudan and the UN.. There were two press releases that were issued so far by the joint high-level committee that follows up on the implementation of the Joint Communiqué. Overall, in the two press releases, the participants to the meeting – the Government of Sudan, the United Nations and other participants – expressed their satisfaction at the status of implementation of the Joint Humanitarian Communiqué. There are some instances where there are some difficulties

in terms of access due to insecurity mainly, but the overall implementation process of the Joint Humanitarian Communiqué is going well according to the High Level Committee.

**Q:** [*Inaudible questions on mechanism the United Nations employed to resolve tribal conflict in Equatoria and what challenges are anticipated on the Hybrid Operations, including participation on non-African troops*]

**Spokesperson:** First of all, I explained the understanding regarding the troops that would be contributed to this Hybrid Operation. And as I said, the understanding is to give priority to troops from African countries. This means that, ideally, if all contributions necessary could be covered by African states, they will be taken. In case some needs of military or policing nature would not be available in the African continent, then other offers from non-African countries will be considered. That is the understanding between the Government of Sudan, the African Union and the United Nations reached in Addis Ababa. On what Troop Contributing Country has been identified so far, I have no answer to that question. The meeting of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations with potential troop and police contributing countries just took place on Friday. I will follow up on your question with my colleagues in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations.

On your question about the tribal and reconciliation initiatives, I am not fully aware of the extent or the dimensions of the issues on which the tribes concerned are having differences, but I would get you in touch with my colleagues in Juba who are following up on this particular issue.

On the mechanism, there is a task force established at the initiative of United Nations Mission in Sudan that is a forum for dialogue between the leaders and the representatives of the three tribes to get them to talk together and to help them resolve their issues in a sustainable way. And I highlighted in my briefing as you would recall that if this situation is resolved, its impact in the long term will be very positive and very valuable. And this is why it is given priority.

If there are no other questions, then thank you very much and see you at our next briefing.