HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE UNMIS NEWS BULLETIN AND RADIO MIRAYA 15-21 June 2007

Council calls for quick implementation of hybrid operation

A 15-member UN Security Council mission arrived in Khartoum on 17 June and met with Sudanese President Omar Al Bashir and Foreign Minister Lam Akol. Later, at a press conference, mission leaders Ambassador Dumisani Kumalo of South Africa and Ambassador Emyr Jones Parry of the United Kingdom, accompanied by Mr. Akol, reiterated that the Government of Sudan (GoS) had accepted the hybrid operation without any conditionality. They said the hybrid operation would be led by a Special Representative, jointly appointed by the AU and UN, and that the Force Commander would be African. While there would be unity of command, the command and control processes would be those of the UN.

Urging the UN, AU and GoS to accelerate implementation of the operation, Ambassador Jones Parry added, "For our part, we will put in place the process by which the hybrid can be financed." The Council emphasized the need for an immediate ceasefire and called on the government to exercise self-restraint despite "lots of temptation, given the performance of the rebels". Mr. Akol said the President had made it clear the ball was now in the UN court to fund the hybrid operation, so that implementation could occur as soon as possible."

Acting Special Representative visits Darfur

Acting Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Sudan Tayé-Brook Zerihoun concluded a two-day visit to the capitals of the three Darfur states, Nyala, El Geneina, and El Fasher. During the 20 and 21 June visit, Mr. Zerihoun met with UN staff and briefed them on deployment of the hybrid operation in Darfur, the need to streamline existing UNMIS activities in Darfur and the coordination of UN support to AMIS in preparation for the hybrid operation.

Mr. Zerihoun also met with local government officials of the three states and discussed the security and humanitarian situation in the region, recent developments regarding the political process, UN support to AMIS through the Light and Heavy Support Packages and agreement on the hybrid operation. He also met senior AMIS officials and discussed the AU-UN partnership in reviving the Darfur political process, implementing the UN support packages and the hybrid operation.

HEARD on RADIO MIRAYA

On deployment of the hybrid UN-AU peacekeeping force in Darfur...

"The Sudanese Foreign Minister told us that the Government of Sudan has accepted the hybrid force without any conditions, and the President himself has confirmed it also. We encourage all parties to fully implement the cease fire agreement as discussed."

Dumisani Kumalo

South African Ambassador to the UN 18 June

On rising tensions in the Kajbar region of the Northern state, following anti-dam construction clashes between residents and the police.

"We will fight till the end, and we will not rest until the machines, the police, and workers at the construction site are withdrawn, and the work in the project is stopped. We want the federal government to come forward and clearly discuss this matter with us."

Ibrahim Othman

Chairman of the anti-dam construction citizens committee 17 June

SPLM meeting on Darfur postponed indefinitely

UNMIS participated in a meeting on 15 June in Khartoum called by First Vice-President Salva Kiir to brief the diplomatic community, the UN and AU on Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) efforts to assist the Darfur political process. Mr. Kiir announced that the SPLM conference aimed at bringing the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) non-signatories together, scheduled to take place on 18 June, had been postponed indefinitely due to lack of preparation of some non-signatory groups and the refusal of non-signatory Sudan Liberation Army (SLA) leaders Abdulawhid Nur and Ahmed Abdul Shafie as well as Justice and Equality Movement leader Khalil Ibrahim to attend.

DDDC workshops organized by UNMIS

UNMIS Civil Affairs has been helping to organize workshops on the Darfur-Darfur Dialogue and Consultation (DDDC) throughout Darfur for IDP representatives, native administration, political parties, civil society organizations, DPA signatory movements and intellectuals. The DDDC Preparatory-Committee secretariat discussed with participants their impressions and assessment of current conditions in Darfur and their implications on the conduct of the DDDC. The first workshop took place in Nyala during the third week of May, a four-day workshop began on 18 June in Zalingei, and a similar workshop will be held in El Geneina.

IDPs returning south by river

In the first return operation by river, some 451 IDPs boarded an IOM-chartered barge in Kosti last Wednesday for a two-week journey to their homes in Southern Sudan's Lakes and Jonglei states. The returnees are part of a group of 2,400 IDPs from camps in Khartoum who will be returning home on the Nile river. The barge will first stop in Shambe in Lakes State to disembark 255 IDPs, before sailing further south towards Bor in Jonglei State. The barge has over 30 International Organization for Migration (IOM) support staff, including six cooks.

"With the onset of the rainy season, travel by river remains one of the only options for those wish to return home to South Sudan," said Mario Tavolaj, IOM's Chief of Mission in Khartoum. Over the next seven weeks, IOM intends to complete six barge rotations between Kosti and key towns along the Nile in South Sudan.

UN Refugees Commissioner visits Southern Sudan

UN High Commissioner for Refugees António Guterres arrived in Juba on 19 June to commemorate World Refugee Day. He also visited UNHCR operations in the Yei and Juba areas before leaving for Nairobi. The visit was part of a three-day mission to Uganda, Southern Sudan, and Kenya.

In Southern Sudan, tens of thousands of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) are returning home after decades of conflict. Since 2005, more than 155,000 Sudanese refugees from at least seven countries in the region have come back to their homes, including 64,000 through UNHCR's voluntary repatriation operation.

On the agreement demobilizing child soldiers, signed between UNICEF and the SLM...

"The children who were associated with the armed groups and armed forces of the SLM/A will be reintegrated into their families, and communities. UNICEF welcomes this, and considers it as an opportunity for many children in Darfur to restart their childhood."

Edward Cowardine Spokesperson, UNICEF, Khartoum, 14 June

Commenting on Western Bahr el Ghazal Minister of Information asking Miraya to stop broadcasting in Wau, as the state radio was already broadcasting...

"Miraya FM's goal is to serve the people of Sudan; we cannot cease our transmissions. The state radio has to create its own audience. We think it has an important role to fulfill, by broadcasting in local languages for which the UN does not have the resources."

Leon Willems

Chief of Radio Miraya FM 20 June

Security and Humanitarian Developments

North Darfur

On 16 June, armed men entered a national NGO compound in Kabkabiya and stole one vehicle.

South Darfur

Some 750 IDPs arrived in Al Salam camp from the Katila area in13 trucks. Four more trucks were on their way.

During a mission to Gereida from 11 to14 June, UNMIS' Nyala office found that Janjaweed attacks outside the town were continuing and women were subjected to rape and harassment.

On 19 June, five INGO staff traveling in a hired vehicle from El Deain to El Ferdous camp (60 kilometres southwest of El Deain) were shot at by an armed man.

West Darfur

A convoy of two INGO vehicles with five staff was looted on 19 June by two armed men between Nginyo and Delij (52 kilometres from south of Zalingei).

Another INGO vehicle with four staff members was hijacked on 19 June in Gorno (60 kms northeast of Zalingei), before being rescued by the GoS police.

A policeman was reportedly killed on 18 June when a convoy of government police (Central Reserve Police) traveling from El Geneina to Sirba was attacked by an unidentified group that reportedly took away two police vehicles.

UNHCR moved 301 Chadian refugees from the Arara area to Um Shalaya camp. This was the last movement until the end of the rainy season.

Two Arab militiamen were killed on 17 June in ongoing clashes with JEM operating in the Misterei area, 45 kilometres southwest of El Geneina.

Southern Sudan and Transitional Areas

Seven bodies were found on a road eight kilometers from Tore, 92 kilometres northwest of Yei, on 16 June. The dead men included two Southern Sudan Policemen.

Seven people were killed (one SPLA soldier and six civilians, including three women) and three wounded, when a drunken SPLA soldier opened fire on 18 June. The incident occurred in Jonglei (300 kilometres south of Malakal) where some SPLA soldiers were celebrating, having received their salaries after a seven-month gap. The drunken soldier was shot dead by a colleague.

In Kadugli, Southern Kordofan state, three minefields at Shat Shafaya village were cleared and the land handed back to the local population, which has already recommenced agricultural activities in the area.

MIRAYA HIGHLIGHTS

Gender based violence
Discussion with Keji Cecily
and Taban Christopher of
CHF International (19/6).

Health insurance in South Sudan

Discussion with Dr. Nikson Barnaba Bali, Executive Director for Equatoria State, Dr. Mayan Madid Mayan, Executive Director for West Bahar El Ghazal, and Dr. Job Deng, Acting Executive Director for Upper Nile State (18/6).

Power situation in Juba
Interview with Professor
Ajuai Magot Choul,
General Manager of the
South Sudan Electricity
Corporation discussing the
subject (13/6).

Central Equatoria Budget
Discussion with Hon. Logo
Mulukwat, Chairman,
Economic Development,
Finance and Public
Accounts, of the Central
Equatoria State Legislative
Assembly (13/6).

Darfur: The Road to Peace

In this special behind-thescenes program, journalists and presenters discuss their work in Darfur, with anecdotes on the making of the program

UN Mirror-Census

Interview with Rabha Ali Khayar, UNMIS RRR section. Also includes a two-part report that follows a family returning to Kadugli.