



CJMC playing vital role, says Under-Secretary-General Guéhenno

UN Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Jean-Marie Guéhenno completed his week-long visit to Sudan on 29 January. During his last two days he visited Juba, where he met with Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS) officials, including First Vice-President of Sudan and President of the GoSS Lt. Gen. Salva Kiir, as well as UN staff, and attended a meeting of the Ceasefire Joint Military Committee (CJMC).

Speaking at the CJMC meeting, Mr. Guéhenno said it was a constructive body playing a vital role in bringing Sudan's former adversaries together. The CJMC had achieved great results, especially in implementing security arrangements, including redeployment of forces from contentious areas, he said.

The Under-Secretary-General further emphasized that leaders at the highest level of government had reiterated support for the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), which set up the CJMC as a forum for the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) and the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) in 2005. The Sudanese people should never forget the historical decision which led to the signing of that agreement, he said.

UNMIS Force Commander Lieut. Gen. Jasbir Singh praised the two parties to the CPA -- the Sudan People's Liberation Movement and the National Congress Party -- for their renewed cooperation in implementing the accord. Representatives of the SAF and SPLA expressed commitment to the redeployment of their remaining forces.

UNHCR repatriating refugees from Kenya

The UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has resumed repatriation of Sudanese from Kakuma camp in northwestern Kenya, after temporarily suspending the operation last year due to tribal clashes.

Repatriation resumed on 24 January with the first flight to Bor, the capital of Jonglei state in Southern Sudan, UNHCR Spokesperson Ron Redmond told reporters on 29 January in Geneva. Returns are expected to continue at an average of four flights per week from Kakuma, using a plane chartered by the International Organization for Migration.

Mr. Redmond said organized returns would focus initially on Bor, but also include Pochalla, Pibor and Akobo, close to the border with Ethiopia. At the end of last year tribal clashes – sparked by cattle thefts – erupted in Bor,

HEARD on RADIO MIRAYA:

On the Sudanese government accusing the US Embassy's Charge d'Affaires of meddling in the country's domestic affairs ...

"These are strange statements [from] a diplomat heading his country's diplomatic mission talking about sensitive issues [related to] internal affairs... He knows very well that any foreign interventions will further complicate things... the timing of his statements, and his interference, despite him being a diplomat, will [only] worsen the situation."

Ali Al-Sadiq
Foreign Affairs Spokesman
27 January

On the SPLM deciding to hold its second national convention in May 2008 ...

"First, the government assets should not be used, and the SPLM should depend on its own resources. One thousand five hundred representatives of the movement's branches in Sudan, and abroad will be attending the national convention. Women's [attendance] will constitute twenty five per cent at least."

Yasir Arman
SPLM's National
Convention Spokesman

leading to the deaths of at least 30 people and injuring 100 others.

The repatriation program, which brought 3,000 refugees back to Jonglei last year before the clashes began, has also been impeded by lack of basic infrastructure in return areas of Southern Sudan. Mr. Redmond said UNHCR was helping to remedy the situation by drilling boreholes and rehabilitating or building schools and health-care centres.

New UN Support Vessel makes first trip to Juba

The newly arrived UN Support Vessel of the Bangladeshi Force Riverine Unit departed from Malakal on 29 January for its first trip to Juba, the capital of Southern Sudan. The ship will only travel during daylight hours, taking about seven days to reach Juba.

In addition to providing logistical support and protection for UNMIS, the Riverine Unit assists with transport for UN agencies and NGOs. It also offers humanitarian assistance to the local population.

Actor George Clooney named Messenger of Peace

Award-winning actor George Clooney spoke about his new role as a UN Messenger of Peace at a UN headquarters press conference on 31 January.

Mr. Clooney's briefing followed a ceremony during which the actor was presented with a UN Messenger of Peace certificate and a dove pin. Introducing Mr. Clooney, Kiyotaka Akasaka, Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information, said UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon had recognized the actor's desire to "help focus world attention on the noble aims and objectives enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations", in selecting him as one of his Messengers of Peace. The Secretary-General had also said Mr. Clooney had demonstrated his dedication "to what is best in humankind", over the course of his remarkable artistic career.

When asked about his status as a celebrity Messenger of Peace, Mr. Clooney said it was becoming an increasingly difficult challenge to get "things that are truly important to us" on the news or international radar. "It seems as if at times celebrity can bring that focus ... you can bring a camera where you go because they'll follow you and you can shine a light on it. That seems to be my job in this."

Having just returned from Darfur, Mr. Clooney told correspondents about the hope he sensed among the people on the ground: "They see these bright blue hats and they feel a new energy in the air. They know that only the United Nations can help on this scale. They know it, and you know it."

28 January

On the Chadian government denying accusations of supplying JEM with arms ...

"Sudan and Chad are two neighbor countries, and supposed not to have any differences between them. We are committed to having good neighborly relations, and we don't help anyone against Sudan. Our stand regarding this is clear."

Omar Yahia
Spokesman of the Chadian
Presidential Palace
29 January

On the outcome of the Hijliej conference held in Southern Kordofan State to resolve the Misseriya – SPLA conflict ...

"We agreed that the SPLA army should remain where they are now to protect the civilians of Northern Bahr El Ghazal State, who had been disarmed previously. The process of disarming the Misseriya on the other side of Southern Kordofan will continue, and until then the [answer to the] question of the redeployment of the army will come from the JDB."

Col. Madut Biar
Governor of Northern Bahr
El Ghazal State.
25 January

Japan contributes \$12 million to WFP road project

The Government of Japan has contributed \$12 million to the World Food Programme (WFP) road repair and mine removal project supporting peace and recovery in Southern Sudan.

The Japanese grant will be used to build 85 kilometres of new roads and maintain 595 kilometres of previously re-built roads, making it easier to deliver vital food assistance and ensuring roads remain useable during the rainy season.

"This project started as a way to efficiently deliver food by road – but it has also opened up local markets and is helping to restore food independence for people returning to their communities," said Kenro Oshidari, WFP Representative in Sudan.

Roads to be repaired with the new Japanese grant stretch northward from the southern town of Yei near the Ugandan border through the important commercial towns of Faraksika and Rumbek, and then eastward to the town of Yirol, in Lakes State.

The WFP roads project is expected to continue until 2009, with a total budget of US\$246 million.

HIV/AIDS campaign held in Malakal

An HIV/AIDS awareness campaign was organized at Upper Nile University in Malakal by the UNMIS Indian Contingent on 25 January. The campaign aimed to sensitize young people about the danger of HIV/AIDS through a series of seminars, exhibitions, lectures, films and a poster-making competition.

Medical officers from the Indian Field Hospital, UNICEF and the World Health Organization gave lectures and interacted with participants. The Indian Battalion produced an AIDS awareness booklet as part of the campaign. UNMIS Commander Col. Rathore donated a set of 20 reference books to Upper Nile University library.

Security Developments

Southern Sudan and the Three Areas

A commercial vessel belonging to the North Sudan River Transportation Company hit a private boat on 28 January near Agok (160 kilometres southeast of Bentiu), causing the death of seven local tribesmen. The tribe immediately arrested the vessel's crew. Discussions are ongoing between the company and families of the deceased, who have agreed to accept compensation.

In Blue Nile State, the NGO MAG (Mines Advisory Group), under contract to the UN Mine Action Office, was attacked by some 50 people armed with wooden sticks and knives while conducting a road assessment between Dindirol and Mughaja on 27 January. Vehicles were damaged but the team members sustained no injuries. The cause of the attack is as yet unknown.

MIRAYA HIGHLIGHTS

Live Debates and Call-ins

Customs of Pojulo Tribe: Chief David Lemi (23 January).

Articles: 16) Personal liberty 17) Freedom from slavery, servitude and forced labor (in relation to the work of organized forces, e.g. Police): Isaac Ribek and Peter Apollo, members of Rule of Law promoters (24 January).

Do you think Abortion is OK? And in which cases? (25 January).

Features and Interviews

Features: Prices in Juba town, Soldiers cleaning Juba, HIV Aids.

Darfur: The Road to Peace

An interview with Khamis Ali Abdulla of the Compensation Commission based in El- Geneina, Darfur