



Arusha talks for Darfur agree on common agenda

The talks in Arusha, Tanzania, from 3 to 6 August brought together various rebel movements from Darfur, who agreed on a common platform for future peace negotiations with the Sudanese government. Held under the auspices of the UN and AU, the Arusha meeting was aimed at creating an enabling environment for the non-signatories to prepare for negotiations.

Apart from a common agenda on power and wealth sharing as well as land and humanitarian issues, the meeting agreed to include concerns of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees. The rebel leaders also agreed on a cessation of hostilities in the event that no provocation arose. Welcoming the adoption of Security Council Resolution 1769, the meeting expressed full cooperation for the implementation of the Hybrid Operation in Darfur.

UN mediator Jan Eliasson said he was hopeful for Darfur, while his AU counterpart Salim Ahmed Salim said he expected the talks to be concluded within the next two months. Significant absentees at the meeting were two popular leaders from Darfur, Abdul Wahid Nur and Suleiman Jamous.

Special Envoy Eliasson briefs Sudanese leaders

UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Darfur Jan Eliasson visited Sudan from 6 to 10 August, following the Arusha talks with leading personalities of Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) non-signatory movements. Meeting Presidential Advisor Nafie Ali Nafie and Under-Secretary of Foreign Affairs Mutrif Siddiq on 7 August, he briefed them on the outcome of the Arusha meeting. He also visited El Geneina, Nyala and El Fasher, meeting with IDP representatives, tribal leaders, Arab nomads, civil society groups and local authorities. Mr. Eliasson left for the Chadian capital N'Djamena on 10 August to meet President Idriss Deby.

UNMIS holds high-level consultations with SPLM

UNMIS senior officials, headed by Acting Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Tayé-Brook Zerihoun, visited Juba on 10 August, holding the first round of high-level consultations with the Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS). The meeting follows a series of discussions initiated by UNMIS to undertake periodic consultations with the parties to review implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA).

The high-level consultative mechanism between UNMIS and the parties will meet regularly to assess common objectives and concerns and discuss priorities in CPA implementation. UNMIS plans to hold similar consultations with the Government of Sudan leadership in Khartoum later this month.

HEARD on RADIO MIRAYA

On the 6 August joint executive committee meeting of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) and National Congress Party (NCP) on Abyei...

"If we do not reach a solution through political dialogue, we can request the arbitration committee to intervene. It might even be referred to the United States because it has provided a proposal to solve the Abyei issue. The final choice is to refer the issue to the Constitutional Court."

Pagan Amum
Secretary General,
SPLM

(Pagan Amum had earlier said that if the NCP continued to hinder resolving the Abyei problem, the SPLM would ask the United States to intervene and temporarily administer the region.)

Floods affect at least 365,000

Recent torrential rains have flooded many parts of Sudan, especially the states of Kassala, Khartoum, Northern Kordofan, Unity, and Upper Nile. With over 30,000 houses fully destroyed, at least 365,000 people have already been directly affected, including 64 dead and 335 injured.

The UN and partners have so far assisted up to half a million people affected by the floods, including preventive aid to avert the risk of epidemics. So far, they have supplied essential non-food items to approximately 200,000 people, whose household goods were lost in the destruction. Families received blankets, plastic sheeting, jerry cans for storing clean water, cooking sets, and sleeping mats.

In cooperation with the government, the UN has also provided water purification products and hygiene education to about 500,000 people without access to clean water. Over 1,400 kilogrammes of chlorine powder and 878,000 chlorine tablets had already been supplied.

According to estimates from the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), floods have affected more than 15,000 people in three Southern Sudan states. With rains expected until mid-September, the situation may become even worse.

Air operations for IDP returns conclude

International Organization for Migration (IOM) sponsored air operations for IDP returns from Khartoum has ended, with some 1,530 IDPs returning to Central and Western Equatoria States since they began in mid-July.

The air returns were part of a Joint Organized Return Programme of the Government of National Unity, the Government of Southern Sudan, the UN and IOM, in which 63,000 Southern Sudanese IDPs will be helped to return home 2007. So far, nearly 45,000 displaced Southern Sudanese have been assisted by road, barge and air since the programme began in early February. The United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) has been assisting the air operation by providing cargo flights to transport the luggage of returnees to Juba.

UNHCR and COR recommend recognition of Chadian Refugees

The UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and Sudanese Commissioner for Refugees (COR) have recommended in a report that thousands of new arrivals in Darfur from Chad be recognized by the government as refugees. However, it warns that refugee status should not be granted to active or former combatants who could be part of the groups from Chad.

The joint recommendations follow months of in-depth field assessments by UNHCR and COR throughout West Darfur. It is estimated that as many as 30,000 people have left Chad for Darfur in a steady flow since early this year. A large number of arrivals, many Arab nomadic or semi-nomadic tribes, have settled along the Wadi Azoum river bed, on lands belonging to Darfurians now displaced in camps or living as refugees in eastern Chad.

More information on report at: www.unhcr.org

On the detention of the Democratic Unionist Party's Deputy Chairman, Ali Mahmoud Hassanin....

"We have submitted official memoranda to the Attorney General, the Minister of Interior and the National Security Bureau. National Security did not respond, the Interior Ministry was supposed to respond yesterday but did not and the Attorney General said in the press that he has no idea about the situation, while he is the only one who should know."

Ali Elsayed
Democratic Unionist
Party member and
Chairman, Peace &
Reconciliation
Committee in
Parliament

On conclusion of the Arusha talks ...

"The real powers which are now engaged in the war imposed on our people in Darfur against the Sudanese Government here in Arusha have agreed to this negotiating, which includes issues of compensation, issues of power and wealth sharing, security arrangements. There are two new issues to the negotiating files, tribal lands and internally displaced persons and their rehabilitation."

Ahmed Hessain
Spokesman, Justice
and Equality
Movement

Security and Humanitarian Developments

North Darfur Fighting reportedly broke out in Tawila market on 7 August between some GoS and Sudan Liberation Army/Minni Minawi faction (SLA/MM) soldiers. At least one GoS police officer was killed. The situation has since returned to normal.

An INGO implementing food security and water projects scaled down its activities in El Taweisha and Allait in the Umm Keddada area, citing security concerns.

South Darfur Six GoS police officers travelling from Buram to Nyala were arrested by the SLA/MM on 31 July at Gereida. Two officers escaped and the other four were released later.

On 8 August tribal fighting between Aballah and Tarjam tribes reportedly broke out at Amar Jadeed (12 kilometres south of Nyala). Three Tarjem tribesmen were reportedly killed and three injured.

Polio eradication campaign began in South Darfur on 5 August, with over 500 teams deployed throughout the State to reach about 786,000 beneficiaries.

West Darfur On 6 August, some 3,000 IDPs from three camps in Zalingei held a demonstration in support of the Arusha talks. Marching from their camp to the UN office, they chanted "Welcome USA" and "Welcome, UN peacekeeping force". Proclaiming Abdul Wahid as the only Darfur leader, they threatened not to return to their villages unless he signed the peace agreement.

Two armed men entered Hassa Hissa IDP Camp on 5 August and shot at INGO guards protecting a water pumping station.

A body, believed to be that of a soldier, was found on 2 August near Ryad IDP camp in El Geneina with a bullet mark on his throat.

Abbala tribesmen killed four people in Helabono village (five kilometres from Zalingei) on 2 August and looted livestock. Four others were injured.

Southern Sudan and the Transitional Areas

During the week of 31 July to 6 August, food, seed and tool distribution for returnees was completed in Northern Bahr el Ghazal State. In addition, 6,600 Non Food Items (NFIs) kits were distributed in Aweil West and Aweil East counties.

The Lakes State Southern Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (SRRC) meeting on 1 August with humanitarian partners and UNMIS expressed concerns about returnees' lack of access to land and vital reintegration elements like schools, shelter, agricultural tools and jobs.

Suspected Buya tribesmen attacked Chahari village on 2 August, killing two locals and stealing several cattle.

One student was killed and five injured when GoSS security forces opened fire on students of Upper Nile University demonstrating in Malakal on 6 August. The situation is calm but unpredictable.

Darfur, the Road to Peace
Exclusive interview with Jan Eliasson, UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Darfur, on the fate of Minni Minnawi in light of power sharing consultations in Arusha.

UN Mirror

Interview with Ahmed Al Murad Suleiman, IOM Team Leader in Selam Camp, Omdurman, about the registration of IDPs and preparations for returns.