



THE WEEK In Focus

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE UNMIS NEWS BULLETIN AND RADIO MIRAYA 30 Mar -5 Apr 2007

Five AMIS peacekeepers killed, helicopter attacked

Five AMIS peacekeepers were shot and killed on 1 April by unidentified armed men while they were guarding a water point in Um Baru, 220 kilometres from El Fasher. Three of the armed men were also killed in a return exchange of fire. A day before, gunmen shot at an AMIS helicopter carrying the AMIS Deputy Force Commander and his team at Kurni in West Darfur. No injuries were reported.

Secretary-General condemns killing

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon strongly deplored the killing of five AMIS peacekeepers in Darfur, adding that such incidents illustrated the need for a hybrid peacekeeping force in the region. He will be sending a team of experts from the Department of Peacekeeping Operations to Addis Ababa on 9 April, where the AU and UN will hold a technical meeting with Sudanese experts to finalize the heavy support package. Mr. Ban will convene a high-level consultation on 16 to 17 April with AU Chairman Alpha Oumar Konare to discuss Darfur. The UN and AU Envoys for Darfur, Jan Eliasson and Salim Ahmed Salim, respectively, will also participate.

Konare calls for speeding up three-phase approach

AU Chairperson Alpha Oumar Konare strongly condemned the attack on the AMIS peacekeepers, demanding that recent incidents be speedily investigated and that the culprits be brought to justice under international law. He viewed increasing hostility against AMIS as a calculated attempt to derail ongoing AU-UN efforts to re-energize the peace process in Darfur. Mr. Konare stated that it had now become imperative to speedily implement the three-phase approach to peacekeeping in Darfur, particularly the Heavy Support Package and Hybrid Operation. Condemning the attacks, UNMIS called on all Darfur parties to respect the neutral and impartial role of the African peacekeepers. It also called for urgently identifying the attackers and holding them fully accountable to the law.

Human Rights Council to convene group on Darfur

On 30 March, the UN Human Rights Council adopted a resolution regretting that the high-level mission could not visit Darfur and expressing deep concern about ongoing human rights violations in the region. It decided to convene a group presided over by the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Sudan, which will work with the Government of Sudan (GoS) and appropriate AU human rights mechanisms to ensure effective follow-up and implementation of resolutions and recommendations on Darfur.

HEARD on RADIO MIRAYA

On the UN Secretary-General's call for a political solution to the Darfur crisis.....

"We believe that the SG's statement, made after meeting with President Omar Al Bashir, reflects Sudan's flexibility in dealing with the situation. Contrary to allegations made by the media and other countries, Sudan is always open for negotiations, and ready to cooperate at any time..... never failing its commitment to the arrangements and agreements with the UN and the AU."

Ali Al Saddiq

Spokesperson, Ministry of Foreign Affairs. (4 April)

On GoS finally setting up the Darfur Interim Authority this week.....

"One of its tasks is to complete the structure of the Darfur Interim Authority, including the positions of chairman, the three state governors, the commissioners and advisors, in addition to the rest of the General Secretariat. The rest of its tasks are related to security and the Security Arrangements Commission".

Seif Al Din Saleh Haroun

SI M Spokesperson (3 April)

UN Relief Coordinator urges regional approach

Briefing the UN Security Council on his recent mission to Sudan, Chad and the Central African Republic, John Holmes, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, said he was struck by the complexity of conflicts in all three countries. They included ancient rivalries and tensions between different ethnic and tribal groups, pastoralists and farmers, exacerbated by the encroachment of the desert and the breakdown of traditional structures.

There was a definite regional aspect to it, with a clear spillover from Darfur. If individual conflicts were to be resolved, a regional approach would be needed, he stated. However, there was an internal aspect to each conflict and national solutions were also necessary. In each country, the fundamental and crying need was for political solutions brought about through dialogue and mediation. On Darfur, he noted generalized insecurity and lawlessness, with violent incidents occurring almost daily, although relatively little fighting was actually taking place between government forces and rebel groups. Indicating that over a third of Darfur's population - 2.2 million people - was displaced, he warned that the politicization and militarization of camps had become a time bomb waiting to go off.

Sixty tribals killed in S Darfur

Suspected Rezigat Abbala tribesmen attacked and killed 60 members of the Tarjem tribe and wounded hundreds of others in the area of Maraya Janki (47 kilometres west of Nyala) on 31 March. The Tarjem Shura Council has demanded an investigation to identify the nature of weapons used against the victims, protection by the government, recovery of looted money, and provision of humanitarian aid to the victims.

UNMAO Head briefs on Sudan Mine Action

Marking International Mine Awareness and Assistance on Mine Action Day, 4 April, the Director of the UN Mine Action Office in Sudan, Jim Pansegrouw, said 21 states in Sudan were contaminated by landmines, the most affected being South Kordofan, Northern Bahr el Ghazal, Eastern and Western Equatoria and areas around Malakal, Kurmuk, and Juba. The situation in eastern Sudan was unclear as UNMAO has no access to the area. While Darfur had no landmines, unexploded ordinances (UXOs) were present.

Achievements made to date included: clearance of 11 million square metres; opening of 12,000 kilometres of roads; clearance of 1,800 kilometres of roads; identification of 1,824 dangerous areas, clearance of 700 dangerous areas, and the destruction of 2,921 anti-personnel mines as well as 1,309 anti-tank mines. Other UNMAO activities in Sudan included rehabilitation of the Kassala to Hamesh Goreb road in coordination with the National Highway Authority, the launching of a landmine/UXO victim assistance project, funded by Japan, and the Landmine Impact Surveys in affected states. In coordination with the Sudanese authorities, the UN organized a series of events in Khartoum, Kadugli and Juba to mark International Mines Day.

On the first anniversary celebrations of UNICEF's 'Go to school' initiative

"The number of our teachers has risen to six thousand in Central Equatoria state, and we have been paying their salaries since last November. And since the school enrollment is free, there has been an increase in the number of students. If we have to have a budget cut now, this would cause a lot of problems for the Ministry."

Prof. Lokulenge L.Lole
Minister of Education,
Equatoria (3 April)

MIRAYA HIGHLIGHTS

Interviews & Features

Electricity Problems in S Sudan:

Interview with the CEO, Southern Sudan Electricity Company, Prof. Ajuoi Magot Chol, on the current power crisis in Juba, the extension plans for the grid, and electrification of Southern Sudan. (2 April)

Mine Awareness and De-Mining Action:

Interview with Commissioner Mine Action Activities, GoSS - Mrs. Margaret Mathiang. (2 April)

National Health Insurance:

Interview with Ex. Dir. National Health Services South Sudan Nixon Baranaba Bali and the Director, Statistics and Data Collection, GoSS, Hamis Juma. (3 April)

'Go to School' enrolls over 500,000 in south

UNICEF reported that 850,000 children were currently enrolled in schools of Southern Sudan, compared to only 343,000 during the war. Most students joined since the 'Go to School' initiative, which aims to have 1.6 million children in school by end 2007, was launched on 1 April 2006.

The 'Go to School' initiative is supporting the development of over 200 new permanent classrooms, along with the rehabilitation of nearly 300 existing classrooms. Over 400 emergency classroom tents have been provided for outdoor schools while permanent construction gets underway. In answer to its appeal for \$30 million for education in Southern Sudan, UNICEF has received pledges for 30 per cent of that amount.

South Korea donates half a million to WFP

The World Food Programme (WFP) received \$500,000 from the Republic of Korea for its Sudan operation, the largest emergency operation worldwide. In 2007, WFP aims to provide 5.5 million people in Sudan with 682,000 metric tons of food aid, at a cost of \$685 million. The aid will help people affected by the conflict in Darfur, people returning to their place of origin in South Sudan, and vulnerable residents in the Central, East and three Transitional Areas of Blue Nile, South Kordofan and Abyei. WFP in Sudan has received a total of US\$465 million so far – 68 per cent of its required funding for this year.

Security and Humanitarian Developments

South Darfur

Six people were reportedly killed on 4 April in a shooting in El-Nahada area of Nyala. No details are available.

West Darfur

Over 1,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) arrived at Hamediya camp during the last week, fleeing violence by Abala tribesmen and claiming that many of their men were killed.

Violence against women:

Feature on the different views and the psychological impact of violence against women.

Darfur, the Road to Peace:

Disarmament of armed groups and militias, as outlined in the DPA.

Interview with Al-Fasher based lawyer, Khalil Tukras. The program also included messages from IDPs to relatives and friends living in various camps and towns throughout Darfur.

UN MIRROR

HIV/AIDS Unit in UNMIS

Interview with Mrs. Zeinab Farouq, training officer of the HIV/AIDS unit, on spreading awareness against the disease, in all regions of the mission.

An INGO driver and two loaders who were carjacked on 28 March in Azerni (24 kilometres east of El Geneina) were released. National Security handed-over the hijacked vehicle, saying it was recovered around Jebel Moon.

An IDP Sheikh was shot dead by six unidentified men in Hassa Hissa camp in Zalingei.

Southern Sudan and Transitional Areas

On 28 March, a convoy of UN-contracted trucks carrying food items was attacked near Riwoto village, north of Kapoeta, 220 kilometres east of Juba.

On 28 March, alleged Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) elements attacked Nabazia village near Maridi, looting food stocks and abducting six young girls aged between 12 and 17 years of age.

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