



Ban Ki-moon reports on UN-AU Darfur force

Establishment of the UN-AU Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) has been delayed by challenges in obtaining land for offices and accommodation, as well as feedback on troop-contributing countries submitted to the Government of Sudan (GoS), according to a recent report by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.

The Secretary-General stresses the importance of government support and cooperation on land issues, landing rights for UN aircraft and finalization of the troop-contributing country list for UNAMID. He also expresses concern about continuing violence across Darfur as well as the lack of unity among rebel groups ahead of the Libya talks, emphasizing the need for all parties to enter negotiations seriously committed to a final settlement for the conflict.

The report is available in all UN official languages at the following address:
<http://www.un.org/Docs/journal/asp/ws.asp?m=s/2007/596>

UN and AU say peace talks as scheduled

UN Special Envoy for Darfur Jan Eliasson stressed in Khartoum on 11 October that Darfur peace talks in Sirte, Libya, would go ahead as scheduled on 27 October, warning that any delay could only mean more bloodshed.

Speaking at a press conference with Senior Advisor to the AU Special Envoy Sam Ibok, Mr. Eliasson said the mediation team was keen to ensure inclusiveness in the talks. Invitations to participants from signatories and non-signatories to the Darfur Peace Agreement as well as representatives of civil society would be sent in the next few days, he said.

The UN envoy said he had held a series of meetings in Khartoum with government officials, Arab tribal leaders from Darfur, and representatives of regional partners from Chad, Egypt, Eritrea, and Libya to finalize preparations for the talks. Mr. Ibok emphasized that the AU would not accept any party trying to “shoot its way to the talks”, parties talking and fighting at the same time, and individuals or groups stalling peace negotiations.

UNMIS holds workshop on Sudanese rights report

UNMIS' Human Rights unit organized a one-day workshop in Khartoum on 9 October to highlight conclusions the UN Human Rights Committee had made to Sudan's third report on implementation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Workshop participants, who included 32

HEARD on RADIO MIRAYA

On the SAF's justifications for not withdrawing from oil areas due to security reasons ...

"I don't accept this because there are joint units of the SAF and Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), composed of twenty four thousand soldiers. If there are troubles in the oil areas, we should deploy the joint units there and then the SAF must withdraw."

Salva Kiir Mayardit

First Vice-President and
President of Southern Sudan
10 October

On the SPLA withdrawing from the north except for a small unit in Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile States ...

"We have a very small force in the Nuba Mountains which was supposed to redeploy to the south, but we lack the means for transportation, so we postponed our retreat to the end of the rainy season when the roads are accessible. We also asked our partners in the government to provide helicopters from the Defense Ministry to lift the SPLA soldiers from the Nuba Mountains to their posts in the south, but they said there was no reason why they should do that. We raised this issue with the United Nations for consideration."

Salva Kiir Mayardit

First Vice-President and
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representatives of Sudanese human rights organizations, women groups and civil society organizations, adopted a set of activities to implement the Human Rights Committee's recommendations and conclusions.

The unit held another one-day workshop on 10 October on "Human Rights Approach to Budget Analysis", attended by 30 representatives of human rights organizations, civil society groups, economists, journalists, and lawyers. Participants discussed economic and social rights relating to the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, the Joint Assessment Mission (JAM) Report, the Interim National Constitution and Sudan's obligations under the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and developed a human rights approach to budget analysis.

UNAMID lacking equipment, but hiring staff

Top UN officials said on 8 October in New York that UNAMID had several key aviation and ground transport shortfalls, but that it was on track to deploy initial essential personnel before January, when it was to take over from the existing AU force.

Speaking at a UN Headquarters press briefing, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Affairs Jean-Marie Guéhenno said UNAMID was still lacking ground transport, light tactical helicopters and transport helicopters. He expressed concern at the equipment the force still needed, adding that the mission would be unable to deliver on key aspects of its work without it.

Acting Head of the Department of Field Support, Assistant Secretary-General Jane Holl Lute, however, noted that most key posts in UNAMID's leadership had been identified and filled, with only a few remaining vacant. Two battalions were being readied to strengthen the AU mission ahead of UNAMID, and progress had been made on major contracts in the areas of civilian aviation, fuel and rations.

UNMIS continues training Sudanese police

UNMIS Civilian Police have continued to hold training programmes for their Sudanese counterparts in several areas, including protection, HIV/AIDS, computers, the English language and evidence collection.

The mission's police held a ten-day workshop on gender, children and vulnerable people protection as well as HIV/AIDS on 1 October in Kudiba police station in Kauda, a basic computer training course for senior Southern Sudan police officers in Bentiu on 5 October, and English courses for local police in Bor. It also trained local police on collecting and preserving crime scene evidence in Rubkona on 6 October, and on community policing in Yei on 4 October, in cooperation with the UN Development Programme.

Acting Special Representative meets US Envoy

Acting Special Representative of the Secretary-General to Sudan Tayé-Brook Zerihoun met on 5 October with visiting US Envoy Andrew Natsios. Their

On postponing the Tripoli talks on Darfur ...

"We should stay on course and go for the talks in Libya starting on the 27 October. I do not think that the situation will anyway improve by waiting. On the contrary we will run the risk of deterioration... We should quickly agree at the very beginning of the talks on a credible cessation of hostilities. That is so urgent that I would decline the ideas of postponement and hope that we will be able to start the talks on the 27."

Jan Eliasson

UN Envoy for Darfur
7 October

On the status of the CPA if problems between the National Congress Party (NCP) and Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) continue ...

"The current atmosphere between the NCP and the SPLM is poisonous. There's blame from both sides. ... Now is the time to make a course correction on the CPA, because the CPA is off track, before things deteriorate further. This means deeds and not words are needed by the NCP and SPLM to solve outstanding issues now, and not leave them for later."

Andrew Natsios

US Special Envoy to Sudan
7 October

discussions focused mainly on implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement.

Security and Humanitarian Developments

North Darfur

Fighting was reported in Tawila (about 60 kilometres east of El Fasher) on 9 October. Initial reports indicated that an exchange of fire had taken place between Sudan Liberation Army/Minni Minawi (SLA/MM) elements and Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) soldiers, but circumstances of the incident remain unclear. UN staff working in Tawila were temporarily relocated to El Fasher.

Shooting broke out in Zam Zam internally displaced person (IDP) camp (about 13 kilometres south of El Fasher) on 9 October, allegedly linked to the SLA/MM's pursuit of suspected carjackers. No injuries were reported.

A joint UNMIS/Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) assessment mission conducted on 6 October to Haskanita reported that the town, currently under government control, was completely burned down except for a few buildings. Reportedly, civilians fled to neighboring areas of Haskanita when the attack on AMIS took place on 29 September.

A government military convoy was ambushed by an armed group in an area 90 kilometres west of El Fasher on the Tawila-Kabkabiya road on 5 October.

South Darfur

Following the attack on 8 October in and around Muhajariya (80 kilometres east of Nyala), an estimated 6,000 villagers and IDPs living there fled to the north of the town, seeking refuge around the AMIS site. Other residents reportedly fled to neighboring villages and surrounding areas, leaving the town, which had a population estimated at 20,000, completely deserted.

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and AMIS have been providing medical care and water to several wounded and displaced civilians from Muhajariya. Reports indicated that a large number of civilians were killed, wounded or missing, including children. The UN relocated 29 INGO staff from Muhajariya to Nyala.

A GoS military convoy moving from Songo (about 160 kilometres south of Nyala) towards Nyala was reportedly ambushed on 7 October by unknown gunmen near Abu Jabra (70 kilometres south of Nyala).

On 5 and 6 October, a group of unknown armed people ambushed and looted five commercial vehicles along the Nyala-El Fasher road, about 30 kilometres north of Nyala. Attackers shot at one of the vehicles and injured the driver.

West Darfur

Two armed men in military uniform stopped on 3 October an INGO car in a two-vehicle convoy three kilometres from Nertiti on the Nertiti-Thur Road. The attackers forcibly took a GPS, a watch and money from the passengers. The INGO staff were unharmed and drove back safely to their base in Nertiti.

MIRAYA HIGHLIGHTS

Live Debates and Phone-ins

Murle tribe : Chief of Murle tribe on the tribe's way of life and traditions.

Impact of HIV/AIDS on women and children in conflict and post conflict : Guests included Capt. David Marel, SPLA Secretariat, and Maj. Festo Ladu, SPLA (10 October).

Southern Sudan Commission for Census, Statistics and Evaluation (SSCCSE): John Maciek, SSCCSE Chairperson, discussed challenges facing the coming census and what is being done.

Social problems affecting communities in Southern Sudan:

Have your say : A delegation from the Greater Upper Nile Fashoda in Juba discussed the purpose of their visit and outcome of their meetings with the President of Southern Sudan and Vice-President of Sudan (8 October).

Interviews

Interview on the importance of the fifth population census:

The Director of the Population Unit at the National Statistic Council discussed the importance of the upcoming census, saying the statistics would be the base for drawing electoral constituencies and development projects in the states of Sudan.

Report on the national strategy for water in Sudan:

The Middle East and Africa Studies Center held a seminar entitled "A National Strategy for Water in the Sudan". Several scientific papers were discussed on the water problem in Sudan.

Darfur: the Road to Peace

Youth groups initiating sports competitions as a mean to promote peace in North Darfur.