

**Office of the Spokesperson****UNMIS BRIEFING TO THE PRESS***9 May 2007*

Below is a near verbatim transcript of the press conference held by United Nations Mission in Sudan Spokesperson, Ms. Radhia Achouri, on 9 May 2007 at the UNMIS Press Briefing Room.

DARFUR***Appointment of the Joint AU/UN Special Representative for Darfur***

In a joint Communiqué issued on 8 May 2007, United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and Chairman of the African Union Commission Alpha Oumar Konaré announced their decision to appoint Mr. Rodolphe Adada of the Republic of Congo as Joint AU-UN Special Representative for Darfur.

In accordance with the Conclusions of the 16 November 2006 High level Consultations on Darfur, which were endorsed by the 66th meeting of the PSC and Presidential Statement S/PRST/2006/55 of the United Nations (UN) Security Council, the Special Representative for Darfur will head the AU-UN peacekeeping Mission in Darfur. On behalf of the Secretary-General and the African Union Commission Chairperson, the Joint Special Representative will have overall authority over the peacekeeping mission in Darfur, oversee the implementation of its mandate, and be responsible for the mission's management and functioning.

Revitalization of the political process/UN and AU Special Envoys for Darfur Visit to Sudan

Special Envoys for Darfur Jan Eliasson and Salim Ahmed Salim arrived yesterday in Khartoum from Cairo, where they held discussions on the ongoing efforts to re-energize the Darfur political process and the recent developments in this regard, including follow-up on Tripoli meeting and its outcome, the Tripoli Consensus. Today, the two Special Envoys are in Juba where they are scheduled to meet with First Vice-President and President of the Government of southern Sudan Salva Kiir. The focus of the discussion will be on the SPLM initiative to assist in re-energizing the peace process and well as on the way forward in expediting the political process.

The two Envoys will be holding a press conference tomorrow in this room and will brief you on their recent activities.

Meeting of the Joint Commission

UNMIS is taking part in the sixth meeting of the Joint Commission established in accordance of the DPA Final Security Arrangements. The meeting started two hours ago at AMIS DPA Implementation Team Office in Khartoum.

We will update you on the outcome of this meeting when more information is available.

Light Support Package

The United Nations handed over to AMIS on 8 May the medical support items stipulated in the Light Support Package. These items consist of pharmaceutical products, including drugs and vaccines, and a fully equipped ambulance. The hand-over took place during a ceremony at AMIS Forward Headquarters that was attended by Senior AMIS Officials, including AMIS Deputy Head of Mission, the Force Commander and the Police Commissioner, as well as UNMIS senior officials.

Security and Humanitarian Developments

Various incidents took place in IDP settlements, negatively affecting humanitarian operations. An NGO staff member was shot in the forehead in Hassa Hissa camp (West Darfur) on 30 April. In the same camp, IDPs continue to deny access to polio vaccination teams. In Riyadh camp, also in West Darfur, armed men threatened NGO staff with violence if they did not stop children's activities involving dancing and singing. A similar incident had taken place in Ardamata, another Geneina camp, on 23 April. Armed men stole a generator for a water pumping station in Hassa Hissa on 1 May, while the battery and accessories of a water station in As Salaam camp in North Darfur was also robbed at gunpoint on 29 April. Food distributions in Kalma camp (South Darfur) remain suspended after the 26 April incident when an NGO distribution team was threatened by armed men until sufficient safety guarantees can be obtained. Another NGO also continues to suspend its operations in Kalma camp after credible rumours of a planned hijacking of their vehicles.

Yesterday, an international organization vehicle was hijacked in Al Fasher and a security guard of a UN agency was shot dead in Kutum.

New displacements continue to be reported throughout Darfur, as result of inter-tribal fighting and militia attacks. Continuous new arrivals in Nyala have now brought all the camps to exceed their maximum capacity. Al Salam was the last camp to reach full capacity (over 12,000 IDPs).

Nevertheless, the humanitarian community continues to exert efforts to increase access and/or resume activities in areas difficult to access. Access to the Jebel Marra continues to increase with humanitarian organizations operating from Nertiti (West Darfur). NGOs returned to Um Dukhum (West Darfur) after they had relocated in mid-April due to the wide-spread insecurity. Humanitarian activities have also fully resumed operations in Ardamata camp on 3 May, where NGOs had suspended their work following the beating up of three NGO staff on 23 April. In South Darfur, assessment missions have been visiting areas with a reported large influx of newly displaced people. Food distributions are ongoing in the remote areas of North Darfur.

The first meeting of the High Committee for the implementation of the 28 March Joint Communiqué was held on 2 May. We distributed to you the Joint Government /UN press release on the meeting and we do have copies of it in the room.

On 5 May, two UN international staff members traveling to Khartoum were temporarily detained and denied access at Nyala Airport. The HAC and National Security demanded that the staff produce HAC travel permits. They were released after they presented their passports. The actions of HAC were in violation of the Joint Communiqué and SOFA agreements.

CPA AND RELATED DEVELOPMENTS

UNMIS CPA Monitor

The April edition of the UNMIS CPA monitor will be issued tomorrow, 9 May. The CPA Monitor is accessible at: <http://www.unmis.org/english/cpaMonitor.htm>.

The April CPA Monitor will highlight developments in the CPA implementation in April, which include:

- The Ongoing high-level meetings between the CPA Parties to tackle contentious issues, including through the NCP-SPLM Joint Leadership Committee.
- National Council for DDR Co-ordination plans for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, to begin in Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile in May.
- The 4th session of the National Assembly, which opened on 2 April.
- The pilot census, which was completed in the second half of April.
- The Commission on the Rights of Non-Muslims in the National Capital, which met for the first time on 12 April.

Pilot Population Census

The pilot census that was started on 15 April was completed on the 30th of the same month. The Pilot Census was carried out in the 25 states of Sudan. The UNFPA Population Census Support Unit monitored the pilot census enumeration process in some states namely: North Darfur, West Darfur, South Darfur, Damazin, Sennar, Gezira. The enumeration process in southern states was monitored by both the UNFPA and South Sudan Commission for Census, Statistics and Evaluation (SCCSE) staff. The enumeration process is being assessed by the two statistical offices, the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) in the north and SSCCSE, in the south and it will be evaluated by the Technical Working Group (TWG) which will meet in May 23-26 in Gedaref. The TWG members are the CBS, SSCCSE, UNFPA, UNOPS, Statistics Norway, US Census Bureau, and French Cooperation.

Based on the monitoring missions' reports, UNFPA is of the view that the pilot census enumeration was successful despite the very tight schedule.

The United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) is also assisting the Census operations with the delivery of vehicles, boats, computers, infrastructure and logistics/operations support. UNOPS assisted in the delivery of Pilot Census forms to all states in the south, and have been organizing the transport of mapping teams to remote areas with UNMIS. UNOPS has also been carrying out radio training, procurement training, operations planning and transport activities with the South Sudan Commission for Census, Statistics and Evaluation (SSCCSE) as well as delivering equipment for the census in the North.

In the framework of the Multi-Donor Trust Fund, UNOPS has been allocated \$12.3M to implement activities in support of the Census operations in 2006-2007. These activities are focused on procurement and infrastructure for the North, and procurement, infrastructure, capacity building and operations support in the South.

IDP AND REFUGEE RETURNS

According to the latest UNHCR latest statistics, and as of 5 May 2007, the total number of Sudanese refugees repatriated through organized and assisted self-repatriation programmes, reached **60,458** individuals. The total number of Sudanese refugees who returned to Sudan since 2005, including through self-repatriation, reached **142,620** individuals.

Regarding IDPs, and up to 5 May, the cumulative organized return total reached **32,122** individuals. We have the latest statistics on return of refugees and IDPs in the room.

Spontaneous returns to Abyei have notably slowed with the beginning of the rainy season. As the ground has become saturated, the resultant limitations in terms of both road access and accommodation construction have served to deter new returnees.

The last IDP convoy from Damazin to Kurmuk locality was forced to turn back when heavy rains rendered roads impassable. In response, UNMIS, IOM and UNHCR closed the return operation for the season.

UNMIS ACTIVITIES

Gender-Child Protection-Human Rights

On 1 May, UNMIS Gender and Child Protection Teams provided a presentation on Gender Based Violence to 90 participants from Rashad, Kumbur, Longan, Ildo, Irrel Police Stations in Kauda.

On 30 April 2007, the UNMIS Gender, Child Protection, and Human Rights sections, in Abyei, in cooperation with UNDP, concluded a two-day workshop for 25 community leaders on Human Rights.

Civil Affairs/Human Rights

On 6 May, UNMIS Khartoum attended a one-day workshop organized by the Human Rights Commission and the Peace and National Reconciliation Commission of the National Assembly in collaboration with AGWAD Reconciliation Centre (NGO) on 'Social Reconciliation and "Judiya"'. The workshop, attended by a large group of traditional leaders (Sufi Sects and tribes), CSOs and Parliamentarians, discussed the Darfur -Darfur Dialogue Commission (DDDC), "Judiya" and human rights in the DPA. Recommendations included creating institutions and mechanisms to strengthen "Judiya" and the need to begin with the preparations for the DDDC process, which should be promoted at the locality level in Darfur. (*Judiya is the traditional, communal reconciliation heritage of Sudan, a mechanism usually led by respected elders.*)

HIV/AIDS

HIV/AIDS Unit is planning to conduct a training workshop for HIV/AIDS Peer Educators in support of AMIS troops, CivPol, military observers, UNMIS staff. The workshop, supported by DPKO Trust Fund, is to tentatively take place from 24 June to 05 Jul 07 in Al Fasher. Participants from the UN agencies and the local Government ministries of Health, Interior, Culture and Education, are also expected to take part in the workshop.

The HIV/AIDS awareness campaign launched by the HIV/AIDS Regional Committee (HARC) in Rumbek, initiated by UNMIS HIV/AIDS, and headed by International Rescue Committee (IRC) has so far reached **15,986** individual from the general population. The HIV/AIDS Regional Committees initiated by UNMIS HIV/AIDS Unit implement outreach programmes for sustained positive Behaviour Change among target groups at the State level. So far, UNMIS HIV Unit has six functioning HIV/AIDS Regional Committees (Juba, Kassala, Nyala , Wau, Abyei and Rumbek.).

UN Police

UNMIS CivPol continues its capacity-building activities, including through training. A three-week training programme for 40 police officers started in Juba on 25 April 2007. On 05 May 2007, UNMIS Police, together with members of Kadugli Traffic Police organized a parade on traffic awareness. On 03 May 2007, UN Police at Dilling Team Site started their 9 day computer training course for the Dilling Police Station. On 02 May 2007, UN Police in Melut Team Site in El-Renk with the Civil Commissioner of EL-Renk County, Shok Deng Shok and the Police Commissioner, opened a training workshop for 30 participants.

On 05 May 2007, the UNMIS Police Commissioner and the UNDP Representative turned over 20 Desktop Computers and 3 Laptops to GoS police during the opening of the Computer Laboratory at

the GoS High Police Academy in Khartoum, in support of the 15th Computer Course for Senior Police Officers with the rank of Captain.

Q & A

Q: What updates can you give us on prospects for the appointment of an SRSG for the mission given the long period the mission has not had a replacement for the former SRSG?

Can you tell us something about the draft budget the United Nations had presented for its mission in Sudan and on the draft budget on the HSP?

Anything news about the HSP?

Spokesperson: On your first question, there are no updates from my side on the appointment of a Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Sudan that will be heading United Nations Mission in Sudan. I will ask again New York if there is any development in this regard but the decision will be the decision of the Secretary-General himself so let's see if New York will have more on this .

On the budget of United Nations Mission in Sudan that the Secretary-General submitted to the General Assembly, the General Assembly committee dealing with budgetary and administrative issues will be meeting during this month I think and they will be considering this report. That particular committee is actually the committee that approves the budget of the peacekeeping missions and the regular budget of the United Nations. So far, the budget has not been approved; I am not clear when the budget and administrative committee will be meeting – I know that they are going to be meeting this month. And once they approve our budget, we will of course circulate to you the resolution of the General Assembly. Just to let you know, again, it is the General Assembly that approves budget and not the Security Council. The Security Council establishes the mandate for peacekeeping but it is the General Assembly that approves the funds to be allocated to run such operations.

On the Heavy Support Package, as I said earlier at another briefing, the issue of funding is not an issue, it's actually the easiest part . We already have something close to \$70 million to start with; there have been submissions by the competent departments of the United Nations Secretariat put forward before the General Assembly and its competent bodies to look at. So we do not expect difficulties on that one. So the funds are not an issue.

As for other developments regarding the Heavy Support Package, I gave you the last update that I know of that was last week and it is still the same information. I know that the Department of Peacekeeping Operations has been in touch with the Troop Contributing Countries to provide the military personnel foreseen in the HSP and we are in the process of identifying the civilian staff also to be deployed in the context of the HSP. We are also – not we here in Sudan but in New York – are also in contact with Police contributing countries to identify contributors to the police force that is going to be deployed in support of the African Union Mission in Sudan in the context of the HSP.

On the ground here as I told you last week, after looking at the ground situation at the areas where we are supposed to deploy our staff for the HSP, we sent a joint UN-AU Note Verbale to the Government of Sudan requesting their assistance in the allocation of land. I do understand that there is work ongoing from the technicians of United Nations Mission in Sudan to search for water. As you know that area is not particularly rich in terms of water resources.

To sum up, we are basically doing a lot of ground work but I would like to reiterate that you should not expect any of these people to be deployed under the HSP to deploy before six months. We need at least a six months period to proceed with the deployment for obvious reasons because, as I explained in my last two briefings, we need the actual groundwork to be done and for that we need the land, we need to provide water resources, we need to dig for water and see if it is available or not, if it is not available we will have to look for alternative ways and means. These people obviously can not be deployed if the logistical side that would provide for their actual accommodation, offices and their personnel accommodations is not ready yet with the requisite requirements in terms of security, basic requirements required for them to work and so on.

That is what I have for you today and I will keep following up on this particular issue because I know that all of you are quite keen on knowing what is going on in this regard. And whenever we have developments we will obviously bring them to your attention.

Q: What you said about us not expecting the deployment of joint forces before six months ...

Spokesperson: ... sorry, I did not say forces. What I said is United Nations staff who would be deployed in the framework of the HSP. This is a different issue from the hybrid operation.

Q: Is the team that you mentioned in the last press briefing still looking at the nature of the ground in Darfur?

Spokesperson: I have just now answered this question. I said that following their field study, a joint African Union, United Nations correspondence was sent to the Government of Sudan seeking its assistance in providing the land required based on the field study carried out, in order to enable us set in place the logistics and infrastructure required for the deployment of those personnel in the framework of implementation of the Heavy Support Package.

Q: My second question is on the initiative by envoys Eliasson and Salim [*indiscernible question on the envoys' trip to Juba and talks with Salva Kiir*].

Spokesperson: No, it is the contrary. The two Special Envoys went today to Juba to meet with First Vice-President Salva Kiir and they are going to be discussing with him, mainly, the SPLM initiative that is aimed at helping get the DPA non-signatories to come on board on the political process.

They are going to see him to basically listen what is it that he is putting on the table and to discuss other issues because the SPLM initiative is one initiative that we as the United Nations welcome, particularly given the fact that the SPLM is a major national actor, and the two envoys are in contact with all internal and external parties who have initiatives as far as the political process is concerned. The aim is eventually to see how all these initiatives are consolidated and brought under the umbrella of the United Nations and the African Union Special Envoys as per the provisions of the Abuja Communiqué of 30 April 2006 and the Addis Conclusions. This is what is going to be discussed.

Mr. Eliasson and Mr. Salim will hold their press conference. Obviously they will give you more details. As far as I know, the meeting with Mr. Salva Kiir will be taking place sometime today – I know they talked of a discussion but I don't know what happened because. So both envoys will clarify for your benefit tomorrow what is it that they discussed with Mr. Salva Kiir.

Q: You mentioned in your briefing that there was a suspension of food distribution in Kalma Camp. Did all humanitarian agencies suspend operations there or only some?

Spokesperson: On Kalma Camp . I only mentioned the issue of food distribution in Kalma Camp that was suspended. I am not clear whether the other NGOs and humanitarian workers operating in Kalma Camp have also suspended their activities but I will ask my humanitarian colleagues and come back to you. But, as a matter of fact, what they said was about food distribution. What happened in Kalma Camp was that some IDPs, during a food distribution operation, provoked a riot. They did not proceed in an orderly fashion and provoked a riot and of course riots present an immediate and obvious threat to the conducting of any operation so this suspended the food distribution.

In general, there are so many considerations involved in what is happening in the IDP camps. In some camps, and I have highlighted this worrying phenomena before, there is an increasing presence of weapons in camps. We are not saying who and are not laying accusation on anybody but there are weapons and I would not go further. If we have confirmed reports pointing out at any group of people and so on we might be able to elaborate further on this.

Two; around certain camps, there is a presence of various groups – militia, some rebel groups, bandits. There are different groups roaming around the camps, which create tension. In some camps there is also another phenomenon which is the presence of alcohol that is locally produced at some IDP camps. This has sometimes led to certain incidents.

Some other disturbances – like when I said for instance the disruption of the polio vaccination in some camps that I cited in my briefing – has nothing to do with any presence of anybody or alcohol. It has to do with the fact that some some IDPs do not trust some local staff members working in conducting these polio campaigns and so on. They don't trust them and sometimes say they are spies for the government, Janjaweed or whatever. These are also facts of life that we have to live with.

Of course these issues have to be handled in terms of building trust because, as far as the United Nations and the humanitarian community is concerned, we do not discriminate when we have Sudanese people working with us. Actually we always praised the efforts taken and the sacrifices undertaken by Sudanese nationals who in fact represent the biggest bulk of the humanitarian personnel working in Darfur. I think that at some point I gave you the statistics but in any case, national staff working within humanitarian operations make up more than 90% of staff working there, and the majority of the attacks that I keep mentioning to you in my briefings or through the News Bulletin are on Sudanese staff.

That is our stand on this issue. Of course we also try to understand the state of mind of the IDPs because, by the end of the day, we are talking about people who are traumatized and the last thing that you can expect from them is for them to have full confidence and trust in anybody with whom they are not familiar with. This is because of suspicion, because of trauma, because of bad experiences, because of stereotypes and, in this particular context, there is a lot to do by community leaders in IDP camps and also the international partners and the Sudanese at large – even you as media – to try to dissipate this mistrust between Sudanese. That would help.

Thank you very much and we will see you tomorrow and, as I said, I will try my best to confirm the time of the press conference but please free yourself, if you are interested in attending, at around 14:00 hours in the afternoon