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Office of the Spokesperson**UNMIS NEWS BULLETIN****14 February 2007****UNSG Special Envoy Jan Eliasson and AU Special Envoy Salim Ahmed Salim depart to Darfur for a two-day series of meetings***

Dr. Salim Ahmed Salim, the Special Envoy of the African Union for Darfur, and Mr. Jan Eliasson, the Special Envoy of the United Nations Secretary-General for Darfur, left today to Al Fasher, Capital of North Darfur State. The two Envoys will be holding in Darfur, today and tomorrow, a series of meetings with local authorities, representatives and field commanders of DPA non-signatories rebel groups and IDP representatives. They will be also holding meetings with AMIS Deputy Head of Mission and AMIS Force Commander as well as with the United Nations' organizations.

UN Human Rights Council High-Level Mission to Darfur will continue its work outside Sudan

In a press release issued today from Addis Ababa, the United Nations High-Level Mission to assess the human rights situation in Darfur announced that "it decided that it can no longer allow the continued uncertainty regarding visas from Sudan to impede the continuance of the Mission, having completed its very important and productive Darfur consultations and briefings in Addis Ababa."

Nobel Peace Laureate and Mission Leader Jody Williams said that the Mission will proceed and collect all relevant information from locations outside the country. The Mission's report to the Human Rights Council, she said, will be presented as mandated.

The High-Level Mission was established by a decision of the Human Rights Council (S-4/101), adopted by consensus at a special session on Darfur in December 2006. It began its programme of work in Geneva on 5 February, and proceeded to Addis Ababa six days later. It has held dozens of meetings, consultations and interviews with experts, non-governmental organizations, human rights specialists, humanitarian actors, community representatives, and United Nations and African Union officials. It has also reviewed a wide range of relevant documents. The mission will continue its work in Addis and other locations and return to Geneva, as scheduled, on 21 February, after which it will prepare its report to present to the Council at its fourth regular session in March.

Acting SRSG Zerihoun meets a joint delegation from the Council For International Peoples' Friendship (CIPF) and the Sudanese United Nations Association

On 14 January, Head of Mission Zerihoun met with a joint delegation from the Council For International Peoples' Friendship (CIPF) and the Sudanese United Nations Association headed by Mr. Ahmed AbdelRahman, Secretary General of the CIPF and Dr. Bashir AlBakri, Chairman of the United Nations Association in Sudan. They briefed on their joint plan for holding a "National Symposium on Sudan and the UN" with a view to raise awareness among the Sudanese about the positive role played by the UN in Sudan, improve the image of the UN among the general public and build the base for a constructive and positive relationship between the UN and Sudan. Mr. Zerihoun, expressed his full support to the initiative and co-operation with the organizers for the success of the event.

IDPs organized return to Blue Nile state gathers pace

Organized return of internally displaced persons (IDPs) to their homes in Blue Nile State is gaining momentum.

Some 747 IDPs have returned home in eight convoys since 23 January, and another two convoys are scheduled for later this week, UN High Commission for Refugees ([UNHCR](#)) said yesterday. They represent the first wave of organized return of an estimated 15,000 IDPs under an agreement signed last year by Sudan's Government of National Unity, the Government of Southern Sudan and the United Nations.

Another 4,700 Sudanese who had been living in refugee camps inside neighboring Ethiopia have returned to Blue Nile state so far.

About 165,000 people were displaced in Blue Nile State during the Sudanese civil war.

UNHCR is working with the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) to provide seeds and tools to locals in southern Sudan and to help people living in rural areas develop income-generating activities.

UNHCR said that out of 35,000 IDPs registered in 2006, 21,000 had expressed a strong desire to return home to Blue Nile despite the state's under-development and lack of infrastructure.

In total, UNHCR estimates there are 4 million southern Sudanese who are internally displaced, including 1.8 million living in the area around the capital, Khartoum.

At least 100,000 former refugees have returned from neighbouring nations to their homes in the south, with the majority doing so on their own but about 30,000 people being assisted by UNHCR.

Some 328,000 refugees from the civil war remain in Uganda, the Central African Republic (CAR), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Kenya, Ethiopia, Eritrea and Egypt.

Security and Humanitarian Developments in Darfur

North Darfur

On 13 February, a UN Agency convoy was denied access to an area in Muzbat at a military checkpoint 5 km from Kutum. The UN Agency was told that a military pass was required to access the areas where the convoy was headed. The convoy was eventually allowed to pass but with the warning that no future movements will be allowed without the military pass.

South Darfur

On 13 February, an INGO ambulance was hijacked in Muhajiryia, 10 km in the direction of Sennit . The driver and translator were later released in the Yoyo area.

West Darfur

Two armed men in military uniform entered an INGO compound in Um Dukhum early in the morning of 13 February in an attempt to loot money. They attacked the guard who sustained injuries before fleeing the scene. Two staff members of the INGO living nearby came to the rescue of their colleagues and while they were transporting the injured to the hospital, their house was robbed.

On 12 February, a vehicle carrying traders from Abata to Zalingei was stopped by six armed nomads in military uniform, 10 kilometers from Abata. The traders were stripped of their clothes and their money.

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