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Special Envoy concerned about fighting in Darfur

UN Special Envoy to Darfur Jan Eliasson expressed concern at a press encounter in Khartoum on 11 August about continuing military clashes in Darfur, both between tribes as well as rebel movements and the government.

Speaking on the final day of his Sudan visit, which began on 7 August, Mr. Eliasson appealed to concerned parties to respect the cessation of hostilities and create conditions conducive to peace negotiations. The next step in those negotiations, he said, would be to decide with participants on the venue, date, agenda and participation in the coming meeting.

Mr. Eliasson and AU representative Boubou Niang had just returned from a visit to Darfur, where the Special Envoy said they had “extremely friendly and constructive” meetings with internally displaced persons (IDPs), representatives of civil society and traditional leaders. The Special Envoy also visited Chad, where he discussed the Arusha talks with President Idriss Deby and the country’s Foreign Minister.

UNMIS holds high-level consultations with SPLM

An UNMIS delegation led by Acting Special Representative of the Secretary-General Taye-Brook Zerihoun held high-level consultations with the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement (SPLM) in Juba on 10 August. The SPLM team was led by the Vice-President of the Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS), Riek Machar, and included several members of the Cabinet, the Chairmen of the Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR), Demining, and Relief and Rehabilitation Commissions and the Sudan People’s Liberation Army (SPLA) Chief of Staff.

The SPLM and UNMIS officials discussed the Mission’s major activities, priorities for implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) and various mission support issues. Participants agreed that the consultations would take place every three months, and that ad hoc technical teams would be established to follow up on specific issues.

UNMIS hopes to initiate similar consultations in North Sudan with the leadership of the National Congress Party.

Heavy rain and flooding continues in south

Heavy rains and flash floods are predicted to continue across Southern Sudan, and water levels along the Nile and its tributaries expected to rise considerably, according to a report issued by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) on 10 August.

Key concerns in Jonglei State are displacement, disease outbreaks and food insecurity due to flooding and lack of preparedness for emergency response, the report said. Heavy rains have continued in Upper Nile state, causing seasonal rivers to overflow surrounding farmland. In Unity State, flooding has cut off the CARE (INGO) clinic in Biu Ruweng county, access to safe drinking water has remained difficult and sanitation is deteriorating.

Populations living in flood affected areas faced a higher disease risk due to lack of access to clean water, poor sanitation, hygiene and reduced access to basic primary health care as roads deteriorated, the report said. In addition, the continued deterioration of roads and airstrips was greatly hampering the delivery of humanitarian assistance in affected areas.

The GoSS has continued to support humanitarian activities to flooded communities and to mobilize staff and material support. International agencies, including UNICEF and the World Food Programme (WFP), are assisting with food aid, chlorine, medical supplies, blankets and plastic sheeting.

Security and Humanitarian Developments

North Darfur

The Sudan Liberation Army/Minni Minawi faction (SLA/MM) handed over to a Nyala INGO on 12 August a Toyota Landcruiser that had been carjacked near Al Salam IDP Camp. The SLA said its pursuit of the vehicle had brought on an exchange of fire with the perpetrators. An SLA soldier was wounded and evacuated to Khartoum for medical treatment.

West Darfur

An unknown man shot and killed the bodyguard of the Minister of Social Affairs, Sultan Hashim Osman, in El Geneina on 8 August. Local people have blamed the incident on internal issues between the Minister and his family in Kulbus area, stating that the attack was aimed at the Minister, not the bodyguard.

Southern Sudan

A group of 1,000 demonstrators marched to UNMIS headquarters in Abyei on 13 August to protest the lack of implementation of the Abyei Protocol. The group handed over a petition, which will be given to Acting Special Representative of the Secretary-General Taye-Brook Zerihoun. The demonstration, which was peaceful, was addressed by UNMIS Abyei Head of Office.

An unknown armed group stole a herd of cattle from Luri village (Juba area) on 6 August. Two days later, during a skirmish between Luri villagers and the armed group, one villager was killed and another seriously wounded. Local police are investigating the incident.

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