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**UNMIS NEWS BULLETIN\****8 March 2007****Ban Ki-Moon sends another letter to President Bashir***

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has written a new letter to Sudanese President Omar Hassan Al Bashir detailing a proposed United Nations-African Union (AU) hybrid force of up to 24,000 personnel. AU Commission Chairman Alpha Oumar Konaré is expected to send Mr. Bashir an identical letter.

A UN spokesperson described the letter as being “in line with our agreement to proceed in transparency and share with the Sudanese Government the joint AU-UN planning on a strengthened peacekeeping presence in Darfur.”

Mr. Ban had earlier written to Mr. Bashir on the second phase but has not yet received any response from the Sudanese President. Mr. Ban’s Special Envoy for Darfur, Jan Eliasson, told reporters yesterday that the Sudanese had accepted in principle the hybrid force.

The UN and AU have concluded that between 19,000 to 20,000 troops, together with 3,700 police officers and 19 formed police units, will be required on the ground, and the two will now proceed to develop detailed operational plans.

The hybrid force represents the final phase of a three-phase plan, agreed to by the UN, AU and Sudanese Government, to help end the fighting which broke out in 2003 between the Sudanese Government, allied militias and rebels seeking greater autonomy. The conflict has killed over 200,000 people and uprooted 2.5 million.

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***UN calls on ending impunity for violence against women***

In his message on the occasion of International Women’s Day, the UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said, “This day is an opportunity for all of us -- women and men -- to unite in a cause that embraces all humankind.” This year’s theme is “*Ending impunity for violence against women*”.

The Secretary-General drew attention to the plight of women saying, “In almost all countries, women continue to be under-represented in decision-making positions.” He added that their work continues to be undervalued, underpaid, or not paid at all. He regretted that a majority of the 100 million children not in school were girls, and, of the more than 800 million illiterate adults, the majority were also women.

In an article, Louise Arbour, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, highlighted the difficulties in prosecuting perpetrators of violence against women. “ICC action is gearing up to bolster the cumulative experience of international justice mechanisms that have brought to light specific types and patterns of sexual crimes targeting mainly women and girls in war torn zones,” she said.

In Sudan, the Government, the UN and civil society groups marked International Women’s Day across the country with workshops, marches, speeches and concerts.

UNMIS saluted all women working and living in Sudan, and reiterated its call for Sudanese women to be full-fledged partners in shaping their society and country. UNMIS expressed solidarity with the women of Sudan who have been enduring the devastating toll of war, particularly in Darfur, where violence against women and girls, including rape, continues unabated and is used by some as a tool of war.

It urged all actors in Sudan to redouble their efforts to end impunity for violence against women and ensure that the rights of women, are strengthened, promoted, respected, and protected. The UN family in Sudan pledged to continue working with the Government of National Unity, the Government of Southern Sudan, civil society and NGOs, to ensure that Sudanese women are empowered.

### ***Security and Humanitarian Developments in Darfur***

#### **South Darfur**

On 5 March, fighting was reported between the Targam and Rezegat tribes in Yara (40km Northwest of Kass) killing three Targams, who were attacked in their homes.

#### **West Darfur**

On 7 March, Arab militiamen swept through Ardamata IDP camp on Turlili Mountain (15km Southeast of Ardamata camp) and captured two civilians in connection with the killing of one of their relatives. They then went to the Government police station with the two suspects, but refused to allow the police to investigate. Later, they handed over the two suspects to the Military Intelligence/SAF camp in Ardamata. Some 250 militiamen surrounded Ardamata camp on the east and north side demanding a meeting with community leaders. Humanitarian operations in the camp have been temporarily suspended.

### ***Southern Sudan and Transitional Areas***

UNMIS in Wau is facilitating a ten-day Peace, Reconciliation and Justice Conference in Raja, aimed at diffusing tensions between the communities arising from militia activity and a high influx of refugees coming from Darfur. The militia commanders had refused reconciliation meetings with the locals, claiming that they would only do so if instructed by Khartoum. An AJMC mission will visit the area soon.

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