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Media Monitoring Report

United Nations Mission in Sudan/ Public Information Office

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- **Blackmail in Sudan.** [Editorial]. *The Times* (UK).17/03/2009. <http://unhq-apps-01.un.org/dpi/nmu.nsf/ac/2009-03-17CREA-7Q8G88>
- **The world's great genocide test** [Op-Ed] By Nat Hentoff. *The Washington Times*.16/03/2009. <http://unhq-apps-01.un.org/dpi/nmu.nsf/ac/2009-03-17CREA-7Q8HN6>
- **The International Criminal; Court and global morality** [Op-Ed]. By Judy Green. *Daily Camera* (Boulder, Colorado).17/03/2009 <http://unhq-apps-01.un.org/dpi/nmu.nsf/ac/2009-03-17CREA-7Q8GVE>
- **Defiant Bashir orders out foreign aid worker 'spies'** *The Guardian* (UK).17/03/2009. <http://unhq-apps-01.un.org/dpi/nmu.nsf/ac/2009-03-17CREA-7Q8GWW>

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Address: UNMIS Headquarters, P.O. Box 69, Ibeid Khatim St, Khartoum 11111, SUDAN
Phone: (+249-1) 8708 6000 - Fax: (+249-1) 8708 6200

Highlights

Local Arabic and English Language Press

Humanitarian Affairs begins “Sudanizing” aid work

Al-Sahafa reports Humanitarian Affairs Minister Ahmed Haroun has clarified that what President Al-Bashir meant by “Sudanization of aid work” is the transformation of national NGOs to take a more proactive role. “President Al-Bashir did not mean INGOs would be expelled after that goal is achieved,” he told **Reuters**.

Meanwhile, the Humanitarian Affairs Ministry is working on a plan to implement the President’s instruction to Sudanize aid work. The Ministry says that “until the plan is prepared and implemented within the specified year, INGOs in Darfur will not be affected, including UN agencies”. Also, relations with donors would not be affected. HAC Commissioner Hassabo Mohamed Abdul Rahman told a press conference yesterday that the joint Sudan Government/UN task force had completed its field surveys in Darfur and would return to Khartoum today. A meeting would be held with the UN and its agencies next week to discuss the outcome. He dismissed claims that there is distrust between national NGOs and IDPs. He said UN Humanitarian Coordinator John Holmes had requested clarification and was told that the “Sudanization plan” does not target UN agencies. According to **Al-Ahdath**, Hassabo said the DSRSG Aameera Haq was briefed on the government decision to “Sudanize” aid work and that the relationship between the government and UN agencies would be sustained especially with those who have directly worked with the government for many years.

Akhir Lahza cites **SMC** sources for a report that US and French NGOs had built camps in Jebel Marra to house witnesses for the ICC. According to **Al-Raed**, US intelligence trained about 400 people who were brought to the camps by trucks from El-Fasher, Nyala and the Jebel Marra area. **Al-Wifaq** claimed Solidarites (France) and Oxfam (UK) had been studying the topography of the areas east of Jebel Marra.

Al-Bashir addresses rally of Darfurians

President Al-Bashir, addressing a Darfurian rally of support in Khartoum yesterday, praised Libya’s support for Sudan. “Whosoever takes up arms does not represent Darfur. The Darfur Movements’ demands do not represent the Darfur people, he said. Those living in air-conditioned hotels abroad will not solve the problem. It will be solved under a tree in a village in Darfur,” he said, noting that implementation of the Darfur People’s Forum recommendations was already underway. He pledged to provide returnees protection in their villages, and called on Darfur tribes to reconcile.

Meanwhile, **Al-Raed** reports President Al-Bashir will visit South Darfur today to address a rally of 20,000 tribal fighters on horseback.

Defence Ministry to reopen train camps

Al-Sahafa reports Sudan’s Defence Ministry has pledged to reopen training camps to counter ICC allegations. Maj. Gen. Al-Haj Sayed Ahmed, Defence Ministry’s representative at a ceremony held yesterday to mark “Mile 40 battle anniversary”, said the ICC crisis had reignited Jihad and that no Sudanese national would be handed over for trial abroad. Meanwhile, the People’s Defence Forces (PDF) announced that the number of its fighters stands at 3 million.

Al-Intibaha, quoting Egypt's **Al-Ahram** newspaper, reports that Egypt's Foreign Minister Ahmed Abu al-Gheith has said diplomatic efforts to convince SC members to invoke Article 16 to defer the ICC arrest warrant were unsuccessful.

Al-Khartoum cites informed sources saying Khartoum has instructed its Ambassadors in Washington and in NY not to receive the ICC arrest warrant for President Al-Bashir.

Dia al-Din Belal, **Al-Rai Al-Aam** columnist, advises the government not to combine judicial and political strategies. "The government should pursue one approach, judicial or political. Combining the two will weaken the government's case" he writes. "The government had better to keep the peace agreements, speed up democratic transformation, complete the political process in Darfur and ensures that national justice follows" he adds.

CPA partners agree on four laws

Al-Watan reports NCP, SPLM Joint Political Committee announced yesterday that an agreement was reached on four controversial laws and that they are about to agree on the national security law. GoSS VP and the Committee co-chair Riek Machar said the two partners agreed on the land ownership, civil and criminal codes as well as the human rights law. He said South Sudan referendum bill, popular consultation bills for the Blue Nile and the Nuba Mountains and the Abyei area referendum law had been send back to the subcommittees for further discussion.

SPLA violates peace accord –NCP state official

Akhir Lahza, 16/3/09 -- Blue Nile State deputy governor and head of the state's ruling NCP party, Ahmad Karmanu, has accused the SPLA of infringing the Naivasha agreement because most of its forces have not pulled out of Kurmuk town. Those who had pulled out, kept returning, fully armed and were cause of chaos in the town, he said. For stability to be restored to Kurmuk, it was essential that SPLA forces withdraw, he said.

Foreign Minister tenders his resignation

Ray Al-Shaab cites MFA source that Foreign Minister Deng Alor has submitted his resignation to the FVP Salva Kiir but no action was taken. The paper's source claimed Alor's continuous absence and complete silence have negatively impacted diplomatic efforts and internal administrative work.

White Nile Petroleum Company pulls out from Block 5B

Al-Rai Al-Aam reports the White Nile Petroleum Company has withdrawn from its Block 5B oil concessions in Jonglei and parts of Warrab. Another oil company has similar plans to withdraw on the grounds the operations are "not feasible" and because of "harassment by authorities."

Police confirm their ability to protect foreign missions

Al-Akhbar reports that the UN Police Commissioner said yesterday at a ceremony marking the end of a UNDP-sponsored training course for Sudan's Popular Police that UN Police would work to help consolidate security in Sudan and would establish centres in the IDP camps and to help build the capacity of the Popular Police. Speaking at the same event, the head of Sudan's Popular Police Forces expressed hopes that such trainings would continue. Eight hundred and fifty Popular Police personnel graduated at the event. **Al-Raed**, also reports that the Chief of Sudan Police Forces, Mohamed Nagib Al-Tayeb, assured the UNMIS Police Commissioner at a meeting yesterday that the Sudan Police is able to provide protection for diplomatic and UN missions in the country to enable them carry out their duties. He expressed hopes that UNMIS

Police would reflect the truth about the stable situation in Sudan to international public opinion.

Websites/International News Coverage

Sudan leader rallies tribesmen in Darfur

18/3/09, **Reuters** -- Sudan's President Al-Bashir rallied thousands of spear-waving Arab tribesmen in Darfur on Wednesday as he maintained his defiant stance against international moves to arrest him for war crimes. He vowed to confront Western "colonisers" at the gathering of Rizeigat tribespeople -- a group including clans that have produced some of the fiercest pro-government militias in the Darfur conflict.

Bashir's emotional speech came amid signs of a growing standoff between Sudan and the West following the ICC's decision to indict him for masterminding atrocities in Darfur.

The vast crowd of Rizeigat tribespeople, many riding horses and camels, swore a mass oath of allegiance to the president at the rally in the remote Sibdu valley area in south Darfur.

In a speech broadcast live on **Sudan TV**, Bashir told the gathering the West was trying to remove him from power, but he was ready to confront any attack. "These knights on horseback now have spears, but tomorrow on the battlefield they will have machine guns," he said, referring to the crowd.

Bashir called for an end to fighting inside Darfur, saying the government was pushing through a string of development projects from roads to hospitals.

According to Associated Press, a defiant Al-Bashir called on the Darfur rebels to lay down their arms. He told his supporters that no international court, nor the U.N. Security Council, can touch even "an eyelash" on him in defiance of an international warrant for his arrest.

Meantime, **AFP** reports that UN chief Ban Ki-moon condemned the killing of an UNAMID peacekeeper in an ambush and said he was "deeply concerned" about increased security threats to the mission in Darfur.

Fighting ends in Jonglei's Pibor, death toll raises to 750 people

Sudan Tribune, 18/3/09, Bor Town -- Pibor County commissioner Akot Mazi said fighting over cattle between his people and Lou-Nuer has ended with at least 453 Murle confirmed dead, 106 others missing and 20 wounded. An estimated 300 Lou-Nuer also perished according to the Public Security officer who visited the scene on Monday. Interviewed by phone, Mazi claimed that 17 administrative units or Bomas were burnt down, 600,000 cattle stolen and 6,000 persons displaced.

Fighting erupted in Murle areas of Lokuagule and Kwangor payams following retaliatory attacks from Lou-Nuer.

A Jonglei State team of security and UN agency personnel visited the embattled areas on Monday. Majur Awuou, a State information officer, said there were bodies lying on the ground.

Indonesian parliamentary delegation to visit Sudan

Sudanese Media Centre website, 17/3/09, Khartoum -- Indonesia is to send a parliamentary delegation to Sudan in the next few days mainly to discuss the ICC arrest warrant decision and its repercussions.

Obama to name Sudan special envoy - official

AFP, 17/3/09 , Washington, - US President Barack Obama will on Wednesday name retired Air Force general Scott Gration as his special envoy to Sudan to confront what Washington sees as a "horrendous" situation in Darfur.

Former fighter pilot, Gration, a personal friend of Obama, was the pick of both the president and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. the official said. Gration, who sometimes traveled with Obama on the campaign trail last year, had expertise on African issues and was also versed in the operational requirements of training peacekeepers and of airlift capabilities. Gration, a Swahili speaker who grew up in Africa, got to know then senator Obama in 2006 when they traveled together to visit Darfur refugees in camps in Chad.

Earlier, Clinton voiced fresh US condemnation of President Al-Beshir's expulsion of 13 INGOs, saying the move put 1.4 million people at risk. She said the Sudanese president "will be held responsible for every single death that occurs in those camps."

Clinton said countries that support Bashir "have a responsibility to persuade the government in Sudan to change its decision." Sudan must either allow aid workers back in, or "must replace with money and personnel those who have been expelled so that innocent lives are not lost and further undermined," she said.

State Department spokesman Robert Wood said the United States has intensified its contacts in recent days with key players like China, the African Union and the Arab League to press them to use their influence to persuade Bashir to reverse course.

Darfur rebel faction merges with JEM

Sudan Tribune website, 17/3/09, Paris -- A leading rebel commander has joined JEM saying that disunity and divisions among Darfur forces have compromised the Darfur cause. Adam Ali Shoggar, a former commander of the Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM) has signed a pact with JEM under which SLM group is incorporated under the leadership of Khalil Ibrahim.

Sudanese people were "beggars" before the Bashir era - Ismail

Sudan Tribune website, 17/3/09, Riyadh -- A senior Sudanese official hailed accomplishments in the country since the 1989 coup that brought President Al-Bashir to power. Presidential adviser Mustafa Osman Ismail, speaking at a press conference in the Saudi capital, compared the people of his country to "beggars" before Bashir, according to a report in the London based Al-Sharq Al-Awsat.

He was responding to a question about the sharp rhetoric being used by Sudanese officials since the ICC announced its arrest warrant for Bashir. Inviting the media to look back "When this government came to power the Sudanese people were like beggars...when this government came to power there was no sugar, the Sudanese people used to drink tea with dates" he added.

Ismail went on to describe Arab media as "stupid" saying "they are unable to differentiate between breaking news and national security" He singled out Al-Jazeera TV as an example, saying it "rushes" to conduct interviews with any Darfur figures "who own only seven or eight vehicles to call them rebel leaders".

Arab League rejects arrest for Sudan's president

Associated Press, 17/3/09, Damascus – The Arab League rejected an international arrest

warrant for Sudan's president on charges of war crimes in Darfur, and its leader said Qatar has done the same, clearing the way for the beleaguered Sudanese leader to attend an Arab Summit there later this month.

"The court asked Qatar and the Arab League at the same time, but our legal position on the matter does not allow what the ICC is requesting," Arab League head Amr Moussa said Monday during a visit to Syria.

Only three Arab League states recognize the Netherlands-based court — Jordan, Djibouti and Comoros. It was unclear whether they have endorsed Moussa's statement.

Arab league chief on Doha summit, Al-Bashir's arrest warrant

Extracts from Qatari-based *Al-Rayah* interview with Arab League Secretary General Amr Musa, website posted 15 March:

[Q] What's on the summit agenda?

[Musa] The future of the political work in the region will be put forth before the upcoming Arab summit in Doha in the light of the current challenges. There are many files, foremost among which is the Sudanese crisis and its developments, in addition to the Palestinian cause which represents the main issue, and the peace file which is threatened with suspension, in addition to the moves made in this regard. This comes at a time when we hope that international politics towards peace will be changed and that serious work will be resumed to achieve peace. And, of course, all this requires the Arab summit to deal seriously with these important issues so that necessary decisions can be made to deal with such issues.

[Q] Does the official announcement by the Sudanese that President Al-Bashir will take part in the Doha summit constitute a dilemma for the Sudanese leadership and for Qatar, the host country of the summit?

[Musa] Qatar has announced that it welcomes the hosting of President Umar al-Bashir during the Arab summit, and the Sudanese president decided to attend the summit, which is a normal thing. As for talking about the crisis which would result from that, it is the issue which the Arab leaders will discuss in their next summit with the presence of the Sudanese president.

[Q] How do you see the ICC's resolution against the Sudanese president, and what about the Arab League's next moves?

[Musa] The ICC's resolution includes major threats and I still stress that I reject the politicization of the ICC. I believe that the door is still open before a move to be made within this framework to postpone the procedures of the trial and there are coordination and consultations between the Arab League and the African Union regarding the Arab-African move. Also, there is an Arab-African high level delegation which will head soon for Washington to consult with the UNSC member states in order to urge it to apply article 16 from the Rome Statute in a bid to postpone the resolution for one renewable year.

On another front, I have recently paid a very important visit to Sudan during which I met President Umar al-Bashir, a number of ministers, Sudanese Ummah Party leader Sadiq al-Mahdi and Uthman al-Mirghani, and representatives from the United Nations and the African Union. All these meetings aimed at working on grasping all the repercussions of the recent events following the ICC's resolutions related to arresting President Al-Bashir. The Arab League is holding consultations with the African Union Peace and Security Council over the dispatching of a high level delegation to New York within the coming days to resume the joint efforts aimed at the implementation of article 16 from the main statute of the ICC which allows the UNSC to postpone the ICC's resolution.

[Q] Will Sudan's expulsion of a number of humanitarian organizations operating in Darfur have more negative implications?

[Musa] There are more than 100 organizations which are still operating there, and these organizations include American, European, Arab, and Sudanese ones, and this helps the continuation of the humanitarian mission. As for the organization whose missions were ended for reasons explained by the Sudanese Government, there are ongoing consultations to bridge this gap and put humanitarian issues in Darfur in order between the Sudanese Government on the one hand and a number of organizations and the United Nations on the other hand. There is a Sudanese conviction that Sudan should go ahead maintaining humanitarian activities in Darfur.

I affirm again that the Darfur people are suffering considerably and they need the establishment of development projects to fulfill their needs. From that point, what we work for is to make a compromise between the procedures and prerequisites of justice on the one hand, and the procedures and prerequisites to maintain Sudan's sovereignty and stability on the other hand in the light of the challenges facing Sudan.

We are also working to activate the bundle of the Arab solution concerning Sudan. We agreed to activate it quickly. We hope to succeed in our endeavours in the Arab League and the African Union to compromise between the requirements of justice and the requirements of stability in Sudan, as well as to work to get out of this serious crisis. As for the Arab stand, we continue our movement within the legal framework that we reached during the extraordinary meeting of the Arab foreign ministers held on 4 March.

Humanitarian Affairs Minister Interview

Commenting on the statements by the Darfur war crimes prosecutor: It is a regret that Chief Prosecutor Nimir Ibrahim could issue such a statement (the prosecutor had said that investigations continue on Haroun's alleged roles in Darfur) at such a time. I have not received any summons to court in this relation to Darfur. If we assume that he was seeking to play a complimentary role to the ICC process, such an act should have taken place before now. The prosecutor's statements are an isolated case that does not rhyme with the general orientation of the government and contradicts government's position on the ICC.

On whether he rules out such an investigation: I would like to stress that I am not above the law – I essentially consider myself a lawyer. I would be pleased to relinquish my immunities and appear before court if a notification is issued by the justice. This is really sad for me even at personal levels and I feel bad that things should go that way with the Minister of Justice and the prosecutor (for Darfur war crimes). Armed conflict does not end in courts but passes through negotiations and reconciliations and then comes the role of the courts.

On why the statements seem to have disturbed him: We denounce ICC's Ocampo for running his business through the media and making of himself a media star. We do not want our Ministry of Justice to also run their legal work through the media and become a Sudanese Ocampo. I do not think we should bring up legal issues through the media.

On whether Mr. Nimir's statements may have represented a view within government and Bashir's chances for the elections: These statements by the prosecutor and the Minister of Justice are isolated incidents. Government is united on the ICC. President Bashir and the government are stronger now than before the ICC decision and the ICC has in fact improved Bashir's chances for the coming elections.

On whether relations with the west would be affected should Bashir win elections while travel restrictions continue and what economic implications the ICC would have on the country: It is basically European states that support the ICC decision. Bashir in fact does not visit European

states and we do not have anything to do with Europe that would require that he go there.

On the economy, the Sudanese economy has revived when the country was under economic sanctions from Europe. We have our relations with the west for the economic development of our country.

Responding to reports that some parties outside Sudan believe Sudan should cooperate with the ICC: The ICC is not a court but a political forum lacking justice.

Asked to respond to Sadiq Al-Mahdi's statements about a hybrid court: The idea is not viable and it's unacceptable. We have a competent and efficient judiciary that is also an inalienable symbol of our sovereignty.

On whether he was involved in the Darfur crisis and whether he felt in a worse situation with the ICC decision on Bashir: I carried out my duties (as state minister for the interior) at the time in a professional manner and in accordance to the constitution and the laws. I made no mistakes. On how I feel, there is nothing new about the ICC decision. The decision was not a judicial act.

On possibilities for return of the expelled NGOs and whether this was a reaction to the ICC: The return of these NGOs is not needed. The NGO expulsion was not a reaction to the ICC or a punishment. This is part of a new drive for nationalism by some African states – Eritrea and Ethiopia are examples. Some NGOs operate as though they are organs of the ICC.

We are in a period of transition. We are members of the United Nations and welcome the UN and those NGOs that abide by the law. Those NGOs that have agendas are not welcome in Sudan.

Sudan summons French envoy over Beshir warrant

17/3/09, Khartoum, (**AFP**) - Sudan's foreign ministry has summoned the French ambassador to Khartoum after a French official reportedly said Paris was pushing for Qatar to arrest President Omar al-Beshir on war crimes charges. A diplomatic source said Patrick Nicoloso was summoned after French foreign ministry spokesman Eric Chevallier reportedly called for Qatar to implement an international arrest warrant against Beshir when he visits Doha this month.

Sudanese media quoted Chevallier as telling the pan-Arab **Asharq al-Awsat** newspaper that France "is pushing ICC members and non-members to help the court implement the arrest warrant... especially if he travels to Qatar."

According to a French foreign ministry transcript of the interview supplied to **AFP**, both **Asharq al-Awsat** and Sudanese media had misquoted Chevallier.

SPLM inches closer to removing two officials

Sudan Tribune website, 17/3/09 -- SPLM declared today that two of its members have "departed" from the official party line paving the way for their expulsion from the movement. The two are former foreign minister Lam Akol and the MP Ghazi Suleiman.

A statement attributed to SPLM spokesperson, Ben Mathew said that Akol and Suleiman no longer represent the views of the movement.

"Some of the figures working with them are desperately trying to undermine the SPLM line and sabotage relations between the SPLM/NCP partners, the statement read. "The national secretariat will undertake appropriate organizational measures and will present it to the upcoming meeting of the political bureau and national liberation council".

Both men had recently taken strong positions with regard to the ICC arrest warrant for President Al-Bashir.

Sudanese Media Centre (SMC) quoted Akol as saying that since the statement was issued to the public via media release, he would consider it as representing the views of SPLM leadership and respond “when the time comes”.

UN rejects Sudan leader's aid distribution plan

17/3/09, Geneva, (**AFP**) - The United Nations said Tuesday that it could not allow Sudanese organisations to distribute its relief aid in Darfur, after President Omar al-Beshir said local agencies would soon fill the role.

"For the moment this decision does not concern the institutions of the United Nations," UN spokeswoman Marie Heuze said. "It is not conceivable either to let local organisations distribute our resources and aid supplies," if UN agencies were excluded, she told journalists. The UN kept a close track of its relief aid in all emergencies, and donors insisted on accountability, she said. Many of the expelled NGOs were sub-contracted by the UN to provide relief assistance in Darfur.

The UN believes the expulsions will have a "strong" long term impact on the UN and the international community's capacity to deliver relief in Darfur, Heuze said. International agencies have some 14,000 staff in Sudan, of which 13,000 are Sudanese nationals, according to the UN.

UN condemns fatal ambush of Darfur peacekeepers

UN News Centre, 17/3/09 - Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and UNAMID have condemned an ambush earlier today that led to the death of one blue helmet, the second such attack on peacekeepers in the strife-torn region of Sudan in a week.

Mr. Ban “is deeply concerned by the increased security threats faced by UNAMID in Darfur. He calls on all parties to fulfil their responsibility to ensure the safety and security of UN and UN-associated personnel in Sudan,” said a statement issued by his spokesperson.

Approximately eight unknown gunmen opened fire on an escort patrol that was returning to its base in Nyala, South Darfur, wounding one peacekeeper as the blue helmets returned fire in self-defence, UNAMID said in a news release. The wounded soldier was immediately taken for medical treatment at the mission's hospital in Nyala and later died while being evacuated to Al Fasher for further medical treatment.

“These ongoing attacks against UNAMID peacekeepers will not dissuade us from pursuing our mandate in Darfur,” AU-UN Joint Representative Rodolphe Adada said. This is the second time in just over a week that UNAMID peacekeepers have been ambushed by unknown armed men while conducting their duties in Darfur.

On the humanitarian front, the Secretary-General is continuing to make telephone calls to leaders in Africa and the Middle East to address the humanitarian situation in Darfur, UN spokesperson Marie Okabe told reporters.

Blazes rip through Sudanese refugee camps in Chad

UN News Centre, 17 March – UNHCR said today it was hastening to replace supplies and put preventive measures in place after five accidental fires swept through two camps for Sudanese refugees in remote eastern Chad in the past four weeks.

A 9-year old boy died and some 1,455 people were left homeless in the Amer and Djabal camps, due to the fires, which were caused by poorly tended open fires fanned by heavy winds, UNHCR said today.

A total of 250,000 Sudanese refugees from the strife-torn Darfur region are hosted in 12 UNHCR-administered refugee camps in eastern Chad, and other 60,000 refugees from the Central African Republic (CAR) are in five UNHCR-assisted sites in the south of the country.

Security Council welcomes blue helmets taking over in Chad, CAR

UN News Centre, 17/3/09 - The Security Council today welcomed this weekend's successful transfer of authority from European forces to United Nations peacekeepers in the war-torn nations of Chad and the Central African Republic (CAR). The UN Mission in the two countries, known as MINURCAT, took over the military and security responsibilities of European forces (EUFOR) at midnight local time on Sunday.

In January, the Council approved the deployment of over 5,500 blue helmets – 300 police officers, 25 military liaison officers and 5,200 military personnel – with MINURCAT to replace EUFOR, which has been in place since March 2008.

Currently, the Mission is composed of some 300 uniformed personnel, mostly police, plus some 325 international civilians.

Eastern Chad faces an acute humanitarian challenge with over 290,000 Sudanese refugees from the Darfur war, more than 180,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) and a further 700,000 individuals among host communities in need of food, water and health care. Northern CAR has also been affected by a spill-over from the Darfur conflict as well as by other armed groups.

The transfer of authority was marked by a ceremony, attended by Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Alain Le Roy, in the Chadian town of Abéché, where MINURCAT is headquartered. Today's Council statement also stressed of the importance a further improvement of regional relations, in particular between Sudan and Chad."

Uprooted continue to return home in northern Uganda, UN reports

UN News Centre, 17/3/09 - Northern Ugandans uprooted during two decades of fighting between the Government and the LRA are continuing to return home, OCHA announced today. Clashes between the Government and the LRA drove nearly two million people from their homes, devastating infrastructure and services.

Fewer than one-third of original IDPs are still in camps as of February, marking a 9 per cent decrease since last November, according to OCHA. Since December 2008, nearly 80,000 people have returned to their villages of origin in the Great Lakes region nation, either from camps or transit sites.

As of the end of February, in addition, over 48,000 refugees have fled fighting in the troubled North Kivu province, in the DRC, taking refuge across the border in Uganda.

OCHA said that the pace of new arrivals from North Kivu has slowed in the last month. More than 8,000 Congolese refugees have been relocated to two transit centres since August 2008, and the UNHCR has received a \$1.2 million grant from the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) to help those in need.

Meanwhile, the largest-ever food distribution operation in the Karamoja region in Uganda's north-east kicked off, targeting more than 80 per cent of the population over the next nine

months. Only 1 per cent, or \$2.9 million, of the 2009 UN Consolidated Appeal for Uganda has been met as of the end of last month, OCHA reported.