

Update Note for the Secretary-General
27 December 2007

1. Lebanon

Graziano reports¹ that while the general agreement among the two sides remained in favour of electing Gen. Suleiman to the presidency, the ongoing stalemate continued with the disagreement on the legal process to amend the constitution, and on the power-sharing formula in the new government. In line with the opposition's demand to establish a national unity government as a precondition to amending the constitution, some discussions have emerged with a new formula involving giving the president a number of ministerial portfolios as a way to provide balance of power between the two sides in the Cabinet.

Diplomatic efforts led by the US did not succeed in bridging the gap between the rival politicians despite a second visit of the US Assistant Secretary of State, David Welsh, to Lebanon during the reporting period. Furthermore, the pressure exerted on Syria by both the US and France did not break the presidential impasse. Presidents Bush and Sarkozy were firm in addressing Syria, including Bush's warning to Damascus to desist from interfering in the Lebanese political situation. The French offer to host a meeting between Speaker Berri, Gen Aoun and MP Hariri in order to revive the inter-Lebanese dialogue was dismissed by local politicians.

2. Sudan

Qazi reports² that on 26 December, President Bashir issued a number of Presidential Decrees appointing and re-appointing three SPLM Presidential Advisors, eight Ministers and eight State Ministers to the GNU. According to GoSS Minister of Presidential Affairs, the new SPLM ministers will first be sworn in today and then attend a session of the GNU Council of Ministers.

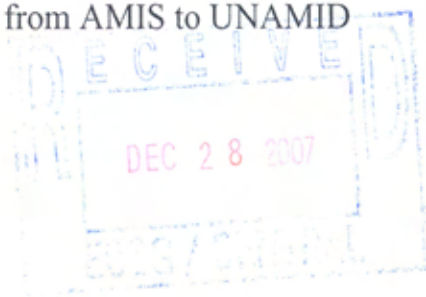
Qazi adds that the new reshuffle witnesses the appointment of Pagan Amum as Minister of Cabinet Affairs. Lam Akol is out of the new ministerial team. The appointments officially end the two-month long NCP-SPLM standoff.

Adada reports³ that late on 24 December 2007, the office of the Joint Special Representative received a phone-call from Ambassador Jamal El-Sheik from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs officially informing UNAMID of the Government's objection to the ceremony marking the Transfer of Authority from AMIS to UNAMID scheduled for 31 December 2007.

¹ (CQY-326 of 25/12/07)

² (Daily Situation Report for 24-26/12/07)

³ (009 of 26/12/07)



GoS reiterated their position in a telephone conversation yesterday with the DOA, Mohamed Yonis, and expressed their wish to deal with the outstanding issues from the Lisbon Meetings before the TOA ceremony.

In light of the above, the Senior Management of UNAMID decided to cancel the Military Parade scheduled for 31 December 2007 and cancel all invitations to media and dignitaries. Instead, Senior Management suggests that the AU Chairperson and the SG or the AU Commissioner for Peace and Security and the USG for DPKO sign the certificate and hand it over to the JSR on 31 December 2007.

Subsequently, DPKO, in its response, advice⁴ that UNAMID, while duly considering and reflecting GoS's concerns, should take a number of symbolic and operational actions on 31 December.

3. Côte d'Ivoire

Choi reports⁵ that on 24 December, a group of 100 "Dozos" traditional hunters (who fought the war alongside the Forces nouvelles) blocked the northern axis of Bouake, i.e. Bouake-Katiola-Korhogo, to ascertain their fate in the DDR process. The "Dozos" took to the streets firing shots and demanding their enrolment in the ongoing DDR process, and immediate increase in their monthly allowances. The "Dozos" disbanded after receiving assurances from the FN leadership to look into their demands. Meanwhile, the situation in Bouake has returned to normal.

Choi also reports⁶ that on 26 December, he called on the Minister of Defence, Mr. Amani Nguessan, to ascertain the necessary arrangements being made to ensure an effective implementation of the DDR programme, in particular the cantonment of FDS and FAFN elements. He underscored the crucial importance of maintaining the momentum in the OPA implementation process so as to attract adequate donor's financial support. He also assured the Minister of the UN's continued commitment to support the Ivorian peace process as mandated by the Security Council.

4. Ethiopia-Eritrea

Ennifar reports⁷ that the Eritrean Government website, *Shabait.com*, reported that the Acting Commissioner for Coordination with the Peacekeeping Mission, Col. Zecarias Ogbagaber, claimed in a press release that Ethiopian troops conducted a "small scale attack" at 3:00 am on 26 December in the Tsorena area of Eritrea's Southern Region, but were repelled by Eritrean militias and security forces patrolling the

⁴ (2893 of 26/12/07)

⁵ (Daily Situation Report of 24-26/12/07)

⁶ (Daily Situation Report of 26/12/07)

⁷ (Daily Sit

Temporary Security Zone (TSZ). Colonel Zecarias is also reported to have said that Ethiopian troops had planted land mines during the past three days in the Egri-Mekel area, which damaged a peacekeeping vehicle. Ethiopia, for its part, has rejected the report and said that Addis Ababa had no reason to provoke a new conflict with Asmara.

5. Nepal

With the completion of second stage registration/verification, Martin issued the report on monitoring of the management of arms and armies, shared already with both parties (PM and Maoist Chairman Prachanda). The report confirms that out of the Maoists' total claimed strength of 32,250 fighters, 19,602 were verified, including 15,576 men and 3,846 women. 8,640 combatants who did not present themselves for verification purposes were automatically disqualified. 4,008 remain to be discharged from cantonments, including 2,973 assessed to be under the age of 18. Discharge of those disqualified, including minors, however, has not yet taken place due to disputes over the Maoists' demands for government payments to the discharged combatants. The recently-signed 23-point agreement includes the commitment to this end. Martin also points out that the agreement states that the special committee, formed as per the CPA to supervise, integrate and rehabilitate the Maoist army combatants but met only once in July, will move ahead with the process of integration of the verified combatants.

Martin has made public the verification totals at a press conference held in Kathmandu today, though the full report remains confidential until its submission to the next meeting of the Joint Monitoring Coordination Committee.

6. Kosovo

DPKO reports⁸ that Kosovo's two main political parties, the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK) and the Democratic Party of Kosovo (PDK) led by Hashim Thaci, reportedly reached an agreement "in principle" yesterday to form a coalition Government.

UN Office in Belgrade reports that the Serbian Parliament yesterday overwhelmingly approved a resolution confirming a united state policy on Kosovo. The resolution specifies that "the defense of Kosovo, as an integral part of Serbia, shall be a priority for the state institutions and all public factors in the country until the adoption of a compromise on this issue based on SCR1244." It states that any act of proclaiming and recognizing the independence of Kosovo, as well as any international action stemming from such an act, "shall be declared null and void." The Parliament instructs the Government to "adopt a specific and comprehensive plan of measures" in

⁸ (DPKO Situation Centre Briefing Note of 27 December)
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case of Kosovo's independence and also to "intensify the activity of the state institutions" in the exercise of Serbia's constitutional powers in Kosovo.

The resolution refers to the EU Council's 14 December conclusions, recognition of Kosovo's independence by any country, and the deployment of the proposed EU mission, as actions that "would directly put at risk the sovereignty and territorial integrity" of Serbia. It further states that "diplomatic and all other relations with countries that might recognize Kosovo's independence shall be reviewed on a case-to-case basis," while demanding that "all Serbian state institutions shall use every legal recourse before the competent international and national courts to safeguard the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Serbia." As for NATO, the resolution declares "Serbia's military neutrality in relation to the existing military alliances until a referendum could possibly be called to adopt a final decision on is issue."

UNOB further reports that President Tadic, in a deviation from his and his Democratic Party's previous stand, addressed the Parliament saying that the Serbian Army is "ready to help KFOR in the protection of the non-Albanian population in the event of violence in Kosovo," adding that "if KFOR were unable to protect the Serbs, the Serbian Army is prepared to protect at all times the interest of its citizens." PM Kostunica, in his statement to the Parliament, fiercely criticized the US for "intentionally sacrificing the state and national interests of Serbia," and rejected the idea of Serbia's joining the EU if it as a bloc recognized an independent Kosovo.

UNMIK reports that though the Serbian resolution did not generate much media reaction in Kosovo, an editorial in a leading daily called upon UNMIK and KFOR to be "more determined" to prevent the functioning of the Serbian state in Kosovo.

7. Afghanistan

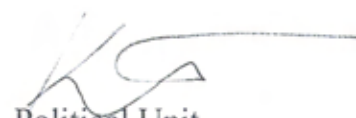
With regard to the expulsion of a UNAMA staff, Mervyn Patterson (see Update of yesterday), UNAMA informs DPKO that the expulsion seems more directed against the EU than the UN. The Governor of Helmand and the head of the official "national reconciliation" project were both opposed to the UK project in Helmand, and it appears that either the EU as an institution, or Michael Semple as an individual, had become identified with the UK project. The connections between the UK project, the EU, the UN, and the Afghan Government, however, remain murky but seem to be at the heart of this matter.

Patterson provided his preliminary accounts to DPKO. He explains that as "increasing numbers of Taliban commanders have displayed an interest in reconciling," "various amongst these have been in touch with a variety of bodies, both national and international, on the subject of reconciling" and that "the British Embassy consequently requested the EU Office to explore the possibilities for reconciliation. He adds that

those consulted by the EU – the Ministry of Interior, the National Directorate of Security, the Governor, and the PRT – were “fully supportive of developing a concept, as evidenced by the participation of the MoI in the visit” and that President Karzai had also been briefed by the UK Ambassador. UNAMA also held “parallel discussions with the MoI and NSD about reconciliation activities, including those in Helmand” and has recently facilitated Helmand Taliban’s entry into the Strengthening Peace Programme.

According to Patterson, on 23 December when UNAMA and EU representatives met with the Governor to “discuss *inter alia* the situation and – of particular interest to the EU team – to consult regarding the reconciliation concept,” the Governor “accused the EU representative of not having consulted with him, of having paid money to the Taliban, and of not having coordinated with the central government.” The Governor ordered the arrest of two Afghans - UNAMA staff Amini and Naqeebullah Stanikzai, a consultant on reconciliation – following the “authorization from Kabul.” Despite continuing efforts by UNAMA, the Governor has so far refused to release them, citing in turn the order of NDS (denied, however, by its head) or the President. Petterson’s report does not make it clear as to whether government officials were actually present at his meeting with local elders, but it does not appear that they were.

UNAMA is continuing to determine the precise facts of the incident.



Political Unit
27 December 2007

Cc: DSG, VN, KWS