**Amid Sudan Deaths, Bashir Victory Declaration, Silence at UN, Disdain for Rebels**

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UNITED NATIONS, April 26 -- With Sudan's Omar al Bashir declaring victory in Sudan amid deadly clashes and kidnapped UN peacekeepers, in New York the UN Security Council, which had been scheduled to meet about Sudan, was silent Monday morning.

The Council's schedule provided for a meeting about UNMIS, the UN Mission in South Sudan. Inner City Press was told that UNMIS chief Haile Menkerios would be present and take questions. But at this key moment, in the UN's basement, the Council sat empty.

Over in the UN's three story North Lawn building, an Assistant Secretary General told Inner City Press that Bashir's 68% of the vote made him look more legitimate than "those countries where the leader claims ninety-eight percent."

Is this why the UN is implicitly blessing the election? "This way we avoid violence," said the ASG. And the UN gets to stay in the country. But at what cost to its credibility?

Moments later, a South African diplomat told Inner City Press his country's peacekeepers had been released. Just as Al Bashir said it would be: once the results -- and his winning -- were announced. As they say in legal Latin, res ipsa loquitur: the things speaks for itself.

On Friday, before al Bashir declared victory, Inner City Press asked the UN about violence:

*Inner City Press: There are these reports of 50 civilians killed in South Darfur that I am sure, I believe, the UN has probably seen. There are also, it’s reported that Mr. [Djibril] Bassole was told by JEM [Justice and Equality Movement] that they believe the Government is about to begin another military assault in Darfur. What’s the UN doing, just as an update? Has it gone to Jebel Marra? Is it trying to investigate the death of civilians? And can you confirm JEM’s concerns?*

*Spokesperson Martin Nesirky: Well, it’s not for us to confirm JEM’s concerns, of course. On the second part, UNAMID [African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur] has also received an unconfirmed report, but the mission has not received any reports that confirm signs of an imminent attack by the Government, or indeed the presence of the JEM in east and North Darfur. So, that’s the first bit, that we’ve heard these unconfirmed reports. We cannot, we have not received any reports that would confirm signs of an imminent attack.*

*And as for the violence in South Darfur that you are referring to, according to UNAMID, and you may wish to ask them for more details, but from what I understand, this was an incident on 20 April, and it involved inter-tribal violence, the details of which are a little sketchy, I would say. But its result, from what we know, according to UNAMID [is] 15 people killed, 24 injured. This also included Sudan border guard police, who were, according to UNAMID, ambushed in the course of this inter-tribal violence that I referred to. That’s pretty much what I have for you there. As I said, it may well be that UNAMID could provide you with more details.*

UNAMID chief Ibrahim Gambari was meeting one on one with al Bashir, who telling promised to get the kidnapped UN peacekeepers from South Africa released. Reporting by Inner City Press indicates that the kidnappers are affiliated or aligned with Bashir's government. The UN has said nothing.

Insiders tell Inner City Press that Gambari would like Bassole to step down, so he could take over the Doha portfolio as well. Gambari was pushed out of his role in Iraq by UNAMI chief Ad Melkert. On Sudan he wants to consolidate his position. In New York he had told Ban, I can help with with GA President Ali Treki. He told Treki the same. Thus are careers made and preserved in the UN. But what about Darfur? What to make of the UN's and Council's silence?

Footnote: In front of the empty Security Council Monday morning were ambassadors of several developing countries, waiting for a meeting of the Non-Aligned Movement next door. The NAM recently told UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon he has no jurisdiction over war crimes, should not follow through on his promise to name a panel on Sri Lanka. And Ban has not moved forward, reverting to meeting with the Sri Lankan attorney general and hoping, like Sudan's scam elections, that the issue fades away.