**As Sudan Expels UN Officials from Darfur for Rape Detection, UN Silent, Menkerios One Year & Out, Gration's Khartoum Jaunt**

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UNITED NATIONS, August 18 -- As in West Darfur UN officials are being expelled for distributing rape detection equipment and collecting signatures on an anti-hunger petition, the UN in New York insists on saying nothing, trying desperately to ingratiate itself to Sudanese authorities.

After a spokesman for the UN Food and Agriculture Organization confirmed the expulsion of its official for circulating the petition on hunger, Inner City Press asked the Spokesman for Ban Ki-moon about this, and the expulsion of other UN officials for conducting research into rape in Darfur. Video here, from Minute 17:41.

Nesirky insisted, contrary to the FAO confirmation, that the UN has “still received no official notification,” is still speaking with the government and “can't say any more.”

But doesn't this reflect a split of the UN Secretariat from from FAO, which confirms the expulsions? Nesirky pointed back at his own answer, that he “can't say anymore.” Can't or won't?

Ironically, Nesirky moderated an August 6 press conference by Margot Wallstrom, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, at which Ms. Wallstrom said that Sudan would be a major focus of her offices since rape by “men in uniform” is widespread there. Video here.

How can the UN work on the issue of rape in Sudan it is lets its personnel be expelled for distributing rape detection equipment, and then refuses to defend them or even speak about the case?

Inner City Press also asked if the UN is facilitating or helping the visit to Sudan by US Envoy Scott Gration. While some said with this trip Gration would be addressing his perceived disinterested in Darfur, now this trip is reported to be mostly about the North - South conflict and the referendum.

So who in the UN would be facilitating his trip -- Haile Menkerios, the head of the UN Misssion in Sudan? Earlier this week, Inner City Press asked Nesirky's acting deputy Farhan Haq to confirm that Menkerios only went to Sudan begrudgingly, with a deal to come back to New York and his Department of Political Affairs job in at most one year. Video here, near end.

That is the informal understanding, Haq said. What does this say about the UN's commitment to protecting civilians in Sudan?

Another joke making that rounds is that while Sudan may throw out the UNAMID mission, it would allow UNAMID chief Ibrahim Gambari to stay. Others say Gambari, despite all odds, may have his eye on the top post in his native Nigeria. We'll see.