

U.N. spokeswoman in Sudan steps down

by UPI

KHARTOUM, Sudan -- The spokeswoman for the U.N. mission in Sudan said she will step down from her position by the end of the week. Spokeswoman Radhia Achouri said in a statement she "was privileged to be part of the UNMIS build-up" in announcing her decision amid the hand-over of peacekeeping duties in Darfur from African Union forces to a joint AU-U.N.-force, the Sudan Times said Wednesday. The development comes as Sudan continues to impose restrictions on the operational capacity of the peacekeeping units, including a ban on night flights and a demand on advanced knowledge of peacekeeping operations. The Sudanese army and other government agencies often launched hostile media campaigns against Achouri and the government frequently expressed outrage against her statements on the humanitarian issue in Darfur. The Sudanese government expelled the U.N. Special Representative to Sudan Jan Pronk in October 2006 for highlighting operations by the Sudanese army in Darfur.

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