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Media Monitoring Report

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Referendum Watch

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<http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article36106>

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Highlights

Referendum is in danger of being rigged – NCP

Al-Rai Al-Aam 29/8/10 – The NCP has warned of what it described as “rushed” referendum, saying the SPLM is controlling 90% of the Referendum Commission membership which means the process is at risk of being rigged. “Any rushed referendum will lead to serious consequences,” Qutbi Al-Mahdi, NCP Secretary for Organizations, warned.

Sudan Tribune website 28/8/10 reported that the NCP cast doubts on the neutrality of the Juba-based referendum commission branch saying it is fully under the control of Southern Sudan ruling party which is suspected by Khartoum of promoting separation.

In statements to the pro-Khartoum government (SMC) published on Saturday Fateh Al-Rahman Shella, NCP media secretary, accused the SPLM and its allied parties of controlling more than 90% of the membership of Southern Sudan Referendum Commission Bureau (SSRB) in Juba.

Headed by Justice Chan Rec Madut who is also the Deputy Chairperson of Southern Sudan Referendum Commission, 51 members of SSRB were sworn in last week before the Chairperson of the Commission.

He said that according to the information collected by the NCP, 46 of the SSRB are SPLM members and two from another party supportive of Southern Sudan independence, SANU, while two others are not identified. He further added that one of the members is Ugandan-born.

He said that these figures show that the SPLM can manipulate the result of the referendum and indicate the possibility of fraud in the crucial vote for southern Sudan independence.

Shella said the membership of the Commission is required to be neutral and non-partisan underlining that the parliament had excluded Taj Alsir Mohamed Saleh because of being a member of the Democratic Unionist Party.

"When we call to assign the security (of the referendum process) for the police national and the monitoring to local and international instances we were hedging against such behavior," he stressed.

However, Chan Madut, Deputy Head of the Southern Sudan Referendum Commission, speaking to *Al-Ayyam* has rejected the NCP's claim that 90% of Commission's membership is dominated by the SPLM describing the statement as “unfounded”. Madut has also refuted NCP's claim with regard to the presence of a non-Sudanese among the Commission members.

“Commission secretary-general appointment has not been resolved yet” – Khalil

Al-Sahafa 29/8/10 – Head of the National Referendum Commission Mohamed Ibrahim Khalil said that the controversy over the appointment of the Commission's secretary general had not been resolved yet due to sharp polarization between the North and the South.

Yesterday, Khalil met with a Norwegian delegation for discussion on the need for the referendum to take place on time and in a conducive atmosphere. He revealed that the Commission had been allotted a HQ in Al-Taef in Khartoum near the Elections HQs.

Meanwhile, *Al-Ayyam* reports that Ambassador Omer Al-Sheikh, who was nominated for the post of Commission Secretary-General, has announced that he would not take the post, adding that his decision to reject the post is final. He said he had decided to apologize because of being criticized by some Commission members, warning that he would take up the matter with the judiciary over what he described as defamation.

Kiir to visit Khartoum today to participate in Presidency meeting

Ajras Al-Hurriya 29/8/10 – FVP and GoSS President Salva Kiir Mayardit is reportedly due in Khartoum today to take part in the Presidency meeting tonight. Sources said the meeting would discuss several pending issues including the demarcation of the border, facilities that the Presidency could provide to the National Elections Commission and the appointment of the Commissions' Secretary General.

However, *Al-Rai Al-Aam* 29/8/10 reports that Kiir has invited President Al-Bashir and VP Ali Osman Taha to an *Iftar* today in Juba and the Presidency meeting will be convened after the *Iftar*.

According to *Al-Ahram Al-Youm*, President Al-Bashir regrets the invitation, Taha will attend.

Renewed LRA attacks may occur before referendum - ex-Ugandan Aide

Sudan Tribune website 27/8/10 - The Lord's Resistance Army could attempt to re-enter Uganda through southern Sudan according to a former aide to Uganda's President Yoweri Museveni.

Richard Todwong, told Sudan Tribune that an attempt to re-enter Uganda via Sudan and Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) from the LRA's base in Central African Republic (CAR) could undermine the Southern Sudan's quest for independence.

The former aide to Uganda's President Yoweri Museveni said that such a move could easily be employed as a scapegoat to destabilize the population in the south ahead of their preparations for the forthcoming referendum.

"The LRA now appear to have been a forgotten force, but they may be planning to re-launch new attacks on civilians as they plan to re-enter Uganda through South Sudan or the DRC," Todwong said.

"Such a move is likely to disorganize the population in the south especially at this time when the referendum preparation[s] is ongoing. Of course not ruling [out] the fact that they [the LRA] could also be used as scapegoats by those opposed to southern independence," he added.

Other Highlights

Senior SPLA officer and 11 civilians killed in separate murders in Yei

Sudan Tribune website 27/8/10 - August 27, 2010 (JUBA) – A colonel in the southern army –

the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) - and eleven civilians were killed on Thursday in Yei town of Central Equatoria state in two separate incidents involving soldiers.

Military sources say Colonel Peter Gatkuoth Chol was shot dead by one of his soldiers, Lieutenant-Corporal Majur Philip Mathier, who was alleged to have been drug addict and who drank heavily.

Majur was previously disciplined for his behavior of frequently smoking cannabis, known locally as 'bongo'. He was put to jail until recently when he was released. While attempts to reach the SPLA spokesman for clarifications failed, the anonymous military sources say after the soldier's release he got hold of a gun and went to where the Colonel stayed during which he shot him at a close range while the Colonel was sitting and chatting with some of his other colleagues. The assailant managed to escape from the scene.

Late Colonel Peter Gatkuoth was the army's officer in charge of the SPLA Engineering Corps in Yei town.

In a separate incident later on Friday, , a soldier alleged to have been one of the GoSS presidential guards based in Yei town shot dead eleven people mostly women and children from the family of his former in-laws. The soldier who is only revealed to Sudan Tribune by his first name as Makuor massacred members of the family of the girl he was about to marry.

The sources alleged that Makuor was in serious argument with the family of the girl from the Kakwa community after he tried to renege on the agreement he had earlier reached with the girl's parents that the girl would first complete the current academic year before could marry her.

Following the massacre of the civilians, the commander in charge of the SPLA forces in Yei County, Brigadier General Thok Chuol Luak, had reportedly appealed to the civil population in the town to remain calm and allow the authorities to investigate the matter and take necessary action.

A team of senior military officers including Lt. General Wilson Deng from the SPLA General Headquarters and the Commander of the Military Police in Southern Sudan, Brigadier General Stephen Buay Rolnyang, had been dispatched to Yei from Juba on Friday to calm the situation and bring the culprits to book.

The murderer of the 11 family members is reported to have been arrested while the culprit responsible for the death of the Colonel is said to have escaped and is being pursued by the law enforcement agencies.

However, SPLA Spokesperson Kuol Deim on Saturday said they arrested soldiers involved in the two separate killings of eleven people in Yei River County, Central Equatoria State on Thursday and Friday.

"Our forces in Yei upon passage and receipt of information related to the two separate incidents occurring at different times launched restrictive search and managed to get and arrest a soldier who killed his in-laws on Friday in Yei. They continued the search in collaboration with local authorities and security forces until the other criminal who escaped after killing a military officer

was also found today on Saturday in Lainya County, Central Equatoria," said the army spokesman.

"Investigation will be conducted to get the actual cause of the killing but the primary information we have now is that the cause was purely an administrative issue," he said, dismissing allegations that it was a tribal dispute.

"These incidents have nothing to do with tribal conflicts. They are pure criminal acts," said General Kuol, adding that there are people, especially in the north, who have connected and regarded the two separate incidents as tribal conflict which is not the case.

Sudan's Bashir attends Kenya constitution ceremony

Reuters 27/8/10 - Kenya chose not to arrest Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir on International Criminal Court charges of genocide when he arrived on Friday for a ceremony for the East African nation's new constitution.

He was escorted into Nairobi's Uhuru Park, where the signing ceremony was taking place, by Tourism Minister Najib Balala, a fellow Muslim.

Kenyan Foreign Minister Moses Wetangula confirmed Bashir was invited alongside other regional leaders for Friday's festivities. "His visit has no impact at all on Kenya's future commitment to the ICC," Wetangula said, without elaborating.

ICC judges reported Kenya to the U.N. Security Council and the Assembly of States Parties, which oversees the work of the court, for allowing Bashir's visit so they could take any measure "they may deem appropriate."

"Kenya has a clear obligation to co-operate with the court in relation to the enforcement of warrants of arrest," ICC judges said in their decision.

US President Barack Obama, whose father was Kenyan, said he was disappointed the country had hosted Bashir. "We consider it important that Kenya honor its commitments to the ICC and to international justice," he said in a statement.

The European Union's foreign policy Chief Catherine Ashton urged Kenya to arrest Bashir and ensure its own cooperation with the ICC over the 2008 violence.

"She urges Kenya to respect its obligations under international law to arrest and surrender those indicted by the ICC," an Ashton spokesman said. "She calls upon Kenya to continue to cooperate with the ICC in its investigation into the 2007-2008 post-election violence."

In a less direct statement, U.N. spokesman Martin Nesirky said Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon "urges all states party to the Rome Statute to cooperate with the court" in line with their obligations under a Security Council resolution.

Rights groups said Kenyan President Mwai Kibaki's hosting of Bashir raised questions about the country's commitment to cooperate with the ICC on the Kenyan investigations.

"Kenya will forever tarnish the celebration of its long-awaited constitution if it welcomes an international fugitive to the festivities," said Elise Keppler of New York-based Human Rights Watch.

"Whether Kenya allows a suspected war criminal into Kenya is a test of the government's commitment to a new chapter in ensuring justice for atrocities."

Sudan Tribune website 28/8/10 reported that the Kenyan Prime Minister Raila Odinga was intentionally kept in the dark on plans to admit Sudanese president Omer Al-Bashir into the country for the ceremony of signing Kenya's new constitution, his party said today amid growing divisions in the cabinet on the decision to invite him.

The Orange Democratic Movement (ODM) Secretary General Anyang Nyong was quoted by Kenyan newspapers as saying that that the party was unaware that Bashir would be at the event and only realized it when he arrived to join other dignitaries and heads of state at the ceremony. "We would like to point out to Kenyans and the international community that this was indeed a very unfortunate visit that could put into question the commitment of the government to implement the Constitution of the second republic in letter and spirit," Nyong told a news conference on Saturday according to Capital FM website.

On Friday the Kenyan foreign minister Moses Wetangula brushed aside the local and international criticism saying that it was not an African tradition to embarrass or harm guests.

Wetangula asserted that his country will not allow "anyone to make friends and enemies" for it, revealing that Kibaki himself extended the invitation to Bashir.

But the ODM SG rejected Wetangula's assertions and said that his party will demand an explanation for the incident from him.

"As we maintain cordial relations with our neighboring countries, we must not forget or disregard our equally important adherence to international conventions and commitments," Nyong said.

"There was no knowledge on our part as partners in government on an invitation to al Bashir. The Minister for Foreign Affairs must come out clean and give us a very clear explanation of what happened," he stressed.

He also disclosed that PM Odinga was unaware that Bashir was coming to town.

Odinga's spokesperson told CNN yesterday that he was "shocked" at al-Bashir's presence and that his attendance was "out of the blue."

He also said that he had not spoken to Odinga but described the situation that developed as "impossible."

The Kenyan Land minister James Orengo also joined other cabinet members such as Deputy Defence Minister David Musila and Fisheries minister Amason Kingi in condemning the visit.

“This is definitely not a good beginning to compound a new Constitution with an act of impunity,” Orendo said adding that besides the explanation, Kenya had to take full responsibility.

“We first have to give an explanation to ourselves because we broke our law that is supreme, besides violating an international agreement that we are a signatory.”

Musila again expressed his shock over the visit. “We were shocked beyond words when we heard the master of ceremonies announce the arrival of President Bashir at Uhuru Park,” said Musila.

“His name was not on the list of invited guests that we had and some of us had been assured by a government official that Sudan would be represented at the function by President of the South, Mr. Salva Kiir.”

‘The Standard’ newspaper revealed the details surrounding Bashir’s arrival into Kenya which was cloaked with secrecy to pre-empt any negative reaction.

Sources told the newspaper that as part of the plan, Bashir’s plane landed in Nairobi’s Wilson Airport rather than the traditional Jomo Kenyatta International Airport as Kenya closed its airspace to facilitate President Bashir’s arrival and departure in a well coordinated and guarded operation known only to a few.

Wilson Airport is the region’s busiest airport, which had been ordered closed for the whole day on security grounds by authorities.

Bashir had negotiated his security and received guarantees before accepting Kenya’s invitation, the security sources told the newspaper.

Furthermore, only a handful of top Kenyan civil servants from the ministry of foreign affairs, public service and internal security coordinated Bashir’s visit and ensured all other government officials were kept in the dark.

Most Kenyan officials were under the impression that Sudan First Vice President and South Sudan government (GoSS) president Salva Kiir was going to be present at the ceremony as a representative of his country. The Kenyan foreign ministry had confirmed Kiir attendance earlier this week.

The Kenyan Sunday Nation newspaper quoted a Southern official as saying that Kiir was planning to carry out the visit until the last minute and chided Nairobi saying they have humiliated GoSS president.

“Our president was all set to travel to Nairobi for the ceremony and had even sent his advance team, only to be called by President Bashir on Thursday afternoon informing him that he would be in Nairobi. Mr. Kiir had no choice but to cancel his trip because protocol does not allow them to travel out of the country at the same time,” said the head of the Southern Sudan referendum campaign, John Andrugua Duku.

“We were shocked to see him there. Why did the Kenya government invite our president while

knowing very well that they had invited Bashir,” Duku added.

Bashir arrived on Friday accompanied by his adviser Mustafa Ismail, foreign minister Ali Karti and intelligence chief Mohamed Atta. He stood in a front-row position alongside other regional leaders during the ceremony. However, he later skipped a luncheon with Kibaki and returned home.

The U.S. president released a statement on Friday congratulating Kenya on the new constitution but directed criticism at it for allowing Bashir to attend.

According to *AFP* 29/8/10, Former UNSG Kofi Annan said on Sunday Kenya should clarify its position on the International Criminal Court after it last week hosted Sudan's Omar al-Bashir, wanted for genocide.

"Like many, I was surprised by the presence of President Al-Bashir of Sudan in Nairobi for the promulgation of Kenya's new constitution," Annan said in a statement in his capacity as chair of the Panel of Eminent African Personalities.

"Kenya has specific obligations as a signatory of the Rome statute and is also cooperating with the International Criminal Court on investigations relating to the 2007/8 election violence," said the text issued in Nairobi.

"In the circumstances, the government should clarify its position and reaffirm its cooperation with and commitment to the ICC," said Annan, whose team brokered a power-sharing deal between Kenyan President Mwai Kabaki and his former foe turned Prime Minister Raila Odinga after the 2008 violence.

Al-Bashir travels to Senegal for conference

Al-Ahram Al-Youm 29/08/10 – President Al-Bashir is traveling to Dakar today to participate at a two-day summit. Sources said the President would be accompanied by the National Security Advisor Mohamed Atta and Foreign Minister Ali Karti.

George Athor is wanted dead or alive – SPLA

Khartoum Monitor Juba, 29/08/10 – “It’s time that the SPLA started its role to fight any renegades hampering a successful referendum in 2011,” SPLA Spokesperson Kuol Deim Kuol told a media forum in Juba yesterday. He said that the SPLA wants George Athor dead or alive.

The SPLA Spokesperson also said that another renegade soldier, Gatluak Gai, has been defeated and military intelligence report that he is currently in Khartoum for treatment.

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