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Media Monitoring Report

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Highlights

Sudan suspends BBC broadcasts on FM

AFP Khartoum, 08/08/10 - Sudan halted Monday **BBC** broadcasts in Arabic on FM radio frequencies after suspending its agreement with the British public broadcaster for reasons it said had nothing to do with its newscasts.

In a statement carried by the official **SUNA** news agency late on Sunday, the information ministry alleged that the **BBC** had imported technical equipment via British diplomatic courier.

Shortly after midnight, the **BBC** broadcasts on FM radio in the Sudanese capital could no longer be heard while other stations were operating normally. The information ministry also took the **BBC** to task for training schemes in the absence of a "final agreement" with Khartoum, and for broadcasting in the southern Sudanese capital Juba without central government approval.

"The suspension has no connection at all with news broadcast by the **BBC** from Sudan," the statement said.

SPLA elements seize Sudanair relief laden chopper in Upper Nile State

Al-Rai Al-Aam Khartoum, 09/08/10 – A group of SPLA elements seized yesterday a Sudanair helicopter at the airfield in Upper Nile's al-Falluj area. A high ranking source at the airfield revealed that the chopper was on a flight chartered by a local NGO to ferry relief items to the area. The flight crew and some airfield staff are said to have been marched off by the SPLA elements to Melliet while the other soldiers took over the airfield.

The chopper was reportedly on a flight path from Khartoum-Falluj-Fanjak-Khartoum.

Sudanese journalists welcome lifting of press gag

Sudantribune.com Khartoum, 08/08/10 - A Sudanese journalist and a local watchdog of press freedom have welcomed the decision by authorities in Sudan to lift pre-publication censorship against local newspapers though both say they expect a comeback.

Describing the system, the acting editor-in-chief of **Ajras al-Hurriyah** newspaper, Faiz al-Silaik, told the New York-based Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) on June 7 that "in Sudan, the security officer is the editor-in-chief. He decides what runs in the paper and what doesn't."

"Censorship is unconstitutional and illegal to begin with" says Amar Awad, who heads the freedoms committee of the Sudanese Journalists Network (SjN), a local group of journalists dedicated to defending press freedom, in response to the NISS's claims of "a constitutional right" to impose censorship.

Awad told **Sudan Tribune** yesterday that "press freedom is not a grant by the NISS, it is our right and that right has been given back to us"

"We welcome the decision but we also think it is incomplete in view of the fact that there are still newspapers under suspension and journalists in prison." Amar added.

His remarks refer to the case of **Rai Al-Shaab** newspaper which was shut down in May for publishing a report alleging that members of Iran's Revolutionary Guards had set up a weapons factory in Khartoum to manufacture arms intended to be supplied to Islamists in Somalia and Hamas movement. Three of the paper's journalists were arrested, reportedly tortured and put on trial. On July 15, the three journalists received prison sentences ranging from two to five years.

Awad opined that “censorship could still return at any point, which makes this move even more incomplete”, calling on the NISS “refrains from its attempts to curtail freedoms and subjugate chief editors through financial constraints”

“It is a mistake that has been corrected” says the managing editor of Al-Ahdath daily newspaper, Osman Fadul Allah, about the decision to cease censorship. “But the mistake could be made again” he adds.

Speaking to *Sudan Tribune* yesterday, Osman said that “as long as the government can’t stomach and respect the role of the press and as long as some of those in the government continue to view the press as their enemy, the spectre of censorship will remain hanging over the heads of Sudanese journalists”

Armed elements using children as human shields in Kalma Camp - Governor

Al-Sahafa Khartoum, 09/08/10 – Government will not stand idle while killings and robberies take place in the IDP camps of South Darfur, says South Darfur Governor Abdulhameed Musa Kasha. Speaking to the press in the wake of a meeting with President al-Bashir yesterday, Kasha said warned that the perpetrators not escape justice. He refused to describe the UNAMID position against handing over the criminals as “uncooperative” but pointed out that high level contacts are underway between the two sides “... and we can not say for sure until we get a response from UNAMID within the next 24 hours”. He also said that government may renew its demands that the culprits be handed over to authorities.

The Governor also rebuffed claims by SLM’s Abdulwahid that government forces had entered the IDP camp. “If we had wanted to do so, we could do so in a matter of minutes but for fear of risking the lives of the women and children that the armed elements use as human shields.”

Government mulls emptying Kalma Camp of non-IDP residents

Al-Sahafa Khartoum, 09/08/10 – Deputy Governor of South Darfur State, Abdulkareem Musa, says the state government is preparing to carry out a campaign to comb the Kalma IDP camp of arms and to expel all those non-IDP residents. He said that this campaign would kick off soon “... whether or not UNAMID accepts”.

Kalma should not impact negatively on UNAMID and Sudan - Gambari

Sudantribune.com Khartoum, 08/08/10 - The head of the hybrid peacekeeping operation said today UNAMID’s rejection to hand six IDPs wanted by the Sudanese government should not deteriorate relations between his mission and the host country.

In a meeting held today in Khartoum with the State Minister of Humanitarian Affairs, Mutrif Siddiq, Gambari "reiterated the Mission’s willingness and commitment to work with the Sudanese Government in a cordial and cooperative manner in challenging situations, in the interests of justice and the people of Darfur".

He further "expressed the Mission’s regrets and his personal concern over the recent events in Kalma and Hamadiya IDP camps in South Darfur and the negative impacts these might have on the future of the peace process".

Gambari told the Sudanese minister that the UNAMID has increased the number and robustness of its patrols, as well as the number of military and police personnel deployed to protect the population.

He also urged immediate access should be granted to INGOs and humanitarian agencies to provide IDPs with urgently needed assistance, particularly given the current rainy season. He further called on the Government to allow those persons who left the camp to return if they so wished.

Darfur lawyers determined to represent Kalma suspects in law suit

Al-Ayyam Khartoum, 09/08/10 – The Darfur Lawyers' Council has announced its willingness to defend before the courts those suspects arrested by government over the recent violent incidents in Kalma and Al-Hamidiya IDP camps in South and West Darfur respectively. In a statement, the group of lawyers expressed concern over reports that prejudice may affect trial of the suspects.

No objection to talking peace with JEM's Khalil inside Sudan

Al-Ahdath Khartoum, 09/08/10 – Sudan says it may agree to talks with JEM leader Ibrahim Khalil within Sudanese territory on condition that the JEM abide by the cessation of hostilities agreement signed in Doha in a show of goodwill. Amin Hassan Omar, the head of the Sudan Government delegation to the Doha talks, said that the government is closely following statements by the JEM and its movements. He also said that the government is ready to talk with whoever has a problem with the authorities.

Referendum Monitor:

Bleak picture on the implementation of outstanding CPA benchmarks - AEC

Al-Sahafa Khartoum, 09/08/10 – AEC Chairman Sir Derek Plumbly draws a bleak picture on the implementation of the remaining CPA benchmarks citing difficulties that have to be overcome. Plumbly, who was speaking yesterday at symposium on Popular Diplomacy, noted that the parties to the CPA should finalise implementation of the peace deal and conduct the referendum on schedule. He cited border demarcation and the formation of the Abyei Referendum Commission as some of the challenges ahead. With 154 days to the referendum, he lamented that there is yet no road map and no flexibility on the implementation of the outstanding benchmarks.

On Abyei, Sir Derek underlined the need to finalise the formation of the Abyei Referendum Commission and warned that the area may turn into a "Sudanese Kashmir" if the issues are not resolved. He however expressed confidence in the ability of the two parties to resolve the problems.

Plumbly also underlined the need for a fair and transparent conduct of the referendum and for respect for the outcome.

On his part, the head of the South Sudan Referendum Commission, Abdulla Mohamed Abdulla, urged for a postponement of the referendum to 10 May 2011 to give more time for the processes involved. "It is impossible to carry out all the processes required for the referendum to take place on schedule."

SPLM moves quickly to dismiss referendum postponement reports

Sudantribune.com Juba, 08/08/10 – SPLM Secretary-General and GoSS Minister for Peace and CPA Implementation in the government of South Sudan (GoSS), Pagan Amum, has refuted media reports attributed to him saying that the referendum for the South would be postponed for another six months until July 2011.

Amum allegedly made the remarks during his recent visit to Cairo at the invitation of the Egyptian government which hosted talks between the CPA partners.

At a press statement in Juba International Airport on his way to Khartoum on Sunday, Amum said the report published by the newspapers was not true, stressing that he is opposed to rescheduling the referendum describing the report as unfounded. He said that the two sides had agreed to the conduct of the referendum on schedule.

“Any attempt to delay the referendum would be considered as renegeing on the CPA. If the referendum is not possible or obstructed, this will invoke other articles in the agreement [CPA], that’s why we said in the agreement that there are other mechanisms, one of them for example could be that the parliament of southern Sudan take over the process of organizing the referendum fully without the north if obstruction is coming from the north” said Amum at a press conference in Khartoum.

The procedures, which would be unacceptable because it could affect the endorsement of the referendum result or resort to the other choice of a limited delay to the referendum timetable to complete these procedures," said Al-Tahir.

Referendum does not end with the vote – SPLM-DC

Al-Wifaq Khartoum, 09/08/10 – SPLM-DC Chairman Lam Akol has lashed out on the parties to the CPA, accusing them of failing the CPA. He told a symposium in Khartoum yesterday that the referendum issue would not be brought to rest merely by the vote. He underlined the need for dialogue within southern Sudanese so that the region does not fall under the yolk of hegemony by a single tribe. He said that southern Sudanese have to sit down to agree on the options for the referendum.

Referendum Youth groups defends Southern Sudanese quest for separation

Sudantribune.com Khartoum, 08/08/10 - A southern Sudanese youth referendum advocacy group called Southern Sudan Youth Forum for Referendum (SSYFR) has strongly defended popular opinion among Southern Sudanese to vote for a sovereign and independent Southern Sudan during the upcoming referendum on self-determination.

Speaking during a meeting with a joint parliamentary group from the National Congress Party (NCP) and Sudan People’s Liberation Movement (SPLM) in the National Assembly on Sunday, Southern Sudan Youth Forum for Referendum representative Mr. Ajou Deng said that Southern Sudan have decided to vote for separation during the referendum describing calls for unity as unrealistic.

Members of My Referendum for Freedom (MRF), a civil society group that is creating awareness on referendum among southern Sudanese through civic education programs, also said that the current situation does not favour unity of Sudan adding those calling for a united Sudan are not “sincere” as evidenced by the negative media campaign from Khartoum against southern Sudan and those calling for separation.

The Chairperson of My Referendum for Freedom, Nyanthon Hoth Mai said those calling for unity have failed to address the critical issues that led to the war between the North and South. "It’s important that we critically look at the issues that brought fighting among ourselves. Even if Southern Sudanese vote for a united Sudan now, that does not really solve the problems of the Sudan. We will still go back to war”, she said. She strongly criticised the so-called Unity Support Fund set up to convince Southerners to vote a united Sudan describing it as “coating bitter with sugar”. “We did not go to war because of money and availing money for unity will not convince Southerners to vote for unity”, she maintained.

The youth also called on those for calling for unity to focus on solving Darfur crisis instead of focusing on Southern Sudan because "Southern Sudan is gone long time ago". They also cautioned

the ruling elites in Khartoum against rigging referendum as this will lead to a renewed war between the North and the South. The Youth maintained that Southern Sudan and Northern Sudan will continue to live side by side and that there is no need to panic as Southern Sudan prepares to separate.

Joint members of parliamentary group, among them representatives from Darfur in the National Assembly said they will present their report on issues raised by the youth when the National Assembly convenes.

Southern Sudan Youth Forum for Referendum is holding a public rally today (Monday) to mobilise Southern Sudanese to vote for separation during the upcoming referendum.

On their part, members of the parliamentary committee representing the NCP, PCP, SPLM and independents called on the youths to think widely before deciding on secession, reports *Al-Tayyar*.

Blue Nile state forms advocacy committee on Popular Consultations

Al-Ahdath Khartoum, 09/08/10 – Blue Nile State has formed a six-member parliamentary committee charged with raising awareness on Popular Consultations. Siham Abeid, a local MP, said that the committee was formed from initiative of the two partners at the state level.

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