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# Media Monitoring Report

United Nations Mission in Sudan/ Public Information Office

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# Highlights

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## On the Campaign Trail

### UN envoy reiterates keenness to support Sudan election

**Sudantribune.com** Khartoum, 23/03/10 - The head of United Nations Mission to Sudan (UNMIS), Haile Menkerios, reaffirmed today the Mission's readiness to support Sudan's general elections scheduled to take place in April.

The UN official was received today (23/03/10) by the Sudanese President Omar Al-Bashir. He discussed the upcoming election and ongoing preparations where the mission is involved.

"I have discussed with the President the forthcoming elections and implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA). I have expressed the UN readiness to support the elections and help making the democratic experience a success," Menkerios told reporters following the meeting.

He said the UNMIS would be an active partner with the Sudanese authorities to provide the necessary technical aid for successful elections. He stressed the United Nations hopes the elections would be free and credible in order to achieve political stability in Sudan.

Meanwhile, **Al-Sahafa** reports that President Omar Al-Bashir has reiterated keenness of the Sudan Government to cooperate with UNMIS and facilitate its mission in the country. He assured Menkerios that he would receive cooperation from all levels of government in Sudan.

### Bashir softens tone on elections delay

**Sudantribune.com** Khartoum, 23/03/10 - President Omar Al-Bashir today appeared to tone down his position on delaying the elections by saying that if that was to happen no broad-based government would be formed as opposition parties have demanded.

**Kuwait News Agency (KUNA)** said that Al-Bashir in an address to retired army and police figures blasted the opposition saying they have failed to garner any public support during the elections campaign implying that this is why they are requesting a postponement.

"When the party leaders felt they do not have [popular] acceptance they started demanding the postponement of the elections and challenging the impartiality of the National Electoral Commission (NEC), although they took part in its selection and agreed to its members" Al-Bashir said.

He stressed that if elections are put off then the current government formation will remain until after elections takes place, [thus rejecting the opposition request for installing a caretaker government].

### UN to transport ballot papers to southern Sudan - NEC

**Al-Sahafa** quotes NEC Deputy Chairman Abdullah Ahmed Abdullah as saying that the issue of transporting elections-related material to southern Sudan has been resolved. He said that the UN would carry out that mission and has indeed started to do so.

The SPLM had earlier revealed that FVP Salva Kiir has rejected a request by Vice-President Taha and NEC Chairman Abel Alier to have the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) transport voting slips to the south. The United Nations was due to transport the ballots by helicopter around southern Sudan but the National Congress Party (NCP) has delayed the pilots' visas, a UN source and

opposition party officials told **Reuters**.

The UN source, who declined to be named, said the visa problem was eventually resolved but that the UN was aware of the NEC request to allow the SAF to transport the ballots. "It didn't make any sense and we made that clear in our discussions," the source added.

The NEC told **Reuters** its letter was a contingency plan but that the UN was now on track to transport the ballot papers to the south.

"There was a contingency plan that if we could not find someone to move to the south then we may have asked the military to help by availing helicopters," deputy NEC head, told **Reuters**. "This is now not needed".

### **Carter Center denies calling for election postponement**

**MirayaFM 23/03/10** - The Field Director of the Carter Center, Mr Graham Ellison, has denied that the Center called for a postponement of the elections in Sudan, but said it did mention some technical problems that need to be resolved before the elections. Ellison told **Radio Miraya** that the Center advised the National Elections Commission to find solutions to those problems.

Sanna Hassan, a member of the Monitoring Unit at the NEC, told **Radio Miraya** that the international observers have no mandate to talk about delaying the elections.

### **SPLM says it will re-assess the need for participation at the polls**

Following reports of threats by President Al-Bashir to expel foreign elections observers who call for a delay of the April polls, the SPLM has announced it may review its participation in the elections, **Al-Sahafa** reports.

"These threats by Al-Bashir may cause a crisis and confirm that his (NCP) party controls the electoral process," SPLM Secretary-General Pagan Amum was quoted as saying. This, he said, is tantamount to the abrogation of fundamental freedoms and a blatant proof that the forthcoming polls will be neither free nor fair if they are to be conducted in the absence of elections monitors.

"We at the SPLM would review our participation at the polls ...," Amum said. He pointed out that the NEC, and not President Al-Bashir, had the power to issue such threats to the international monitors.

### **Political party calls on NEC chairman to step down**

The Sudan Congress Party is calling on NEC Chairman Abel Alier to step down in order to "preserve his unsoiled historic reputation," **Ajras Al-Hurriya** reports. Party Chairman Ibrahim Al-Sheikh told a press conference at the party's Omdurman headquarters that the NEC has lost its impartiality and its sense of direction and is biased towards the NCP. He also said that his party does not support calls for a polls delay or a boycott and will contest in 59 constituencies around the country.

### **Unidentified gunmen attack convoy of independent candidate in Unity State**

A group of unidentified gunmen recently attacked a convoy of Angelina Teny who is running for Unity State Governor on an independent ticket, **Akhir Lahza** reports.

Yohannes Moses, the Spokesperson for Angelina's campaign, said yesterday that they had a shootout with the gunmen but managed to proceed unscathed to a campaign rally at Fariang and to return under police escort.

## Protests over appearance of party symbol on NEC pamphlet

Abdulazim Eissa, a prominent member of the National Umma party in Northern Kordofan, says he has written a petition to the state high elections committee protesting the appearance of the tree (the NCP electoral symbol) on NEC voter education publications, reports **Ajras Al-Hurriya**. Eissa reports that the state elections committee had dismissed his petition on the grounds that such complaints were the purview of the NEC.

## Sudan poll like vote under Hitler: ICC prosecutor

**Reuters Brussels 24/03/10** - International Criminal Court (ICC) Prosecutor Luis Moreno-Ocampo said on Tuesday that monitoring Sudan's election next month would be like monitoring a vote in Hitler's Germany.

"It's like monitoring a Hitler election. It's a huge challenge," Moreno-Ocampo told a Brussels seminar a day after Al-Bashir threatened to expel international election monitors for saying the vote may have to be delayed to deal with logistical problems.

Sudan's foreign ministry has countered back saying that the ICC Prosecutor is on a "desperate attempt to prejudice the polls" and is doing so under the dictates of his friends, **Al-Khartoum** reports. Osman Nafei Mohamed who heads the Political Affairs Division at the Republican Palace said such statements could only come from a "mentally deranged" person. He said that such statements, instead of eroding Al-Bashir's popularity as planned, would only boost it further.

## Japan to monitor Sudan's general election

**Sudantribune.com Khartoum, 23/03/10** - The Japanese government intends to send a group of observers to Sudan next April to participate in the monitoring of the first general elections in more than 20 years under the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA).

Tokyo is expected to send 15-20 personnel, including experts from the private sector and local embassy officials. These observers will work with those from other nations to inspect polling stations and monitor vote counting, **Nikkei News Service** reported today.

Japan's delegation is expected to remain there until mid-April, when the election results will have been announced.

## Other Highlights

### UN: Clashes on the rise in southern Sudan as polls near

**VoA 23/03/10** - A UN official says incidents of inter-tribal violence have escalated in South Sudan before key elections, killing 450 and displacing nearly 60,000 since the beginning of this year.

UN Deputy Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Juba, Lise Grande, says the number of internal conflicts in the semi-autonomous region has risen from last year's levels.

"What we saw last year was a very sharp rise in inter-tribal violence," said Grande. "There were about 100 separate tribal conflicts last year, and as a result of that, there were almost 400,000 people which were newly displaced. This year alone, since the first of January, we have had more than 70 incidents, just in the first two-and-a-half months of this year."

She says 450 have been killed and nearly 60,000 displaced by the clashes.

Grande said recent clashes have mostly been related to conflict over access to water, especially sensitive to many Sudanese because of traditional livelihoods revolving around cattle.

"A lot of [the conflict] is in the area of Unity State, Lake State, and Warrap State," Grande added. "There has been a real concentration in those three states of intertribal trouble. Now, a great deal of that is related to the competition over scarce resources, particularly water. The cattle are very thirsty at this point, the rains have not come yet, they need to get to the water points, and water points are dried up all along those regular migration routes, and that has been one of the causes of the friction."

Officials working on election issues in the South say violence is just one of the factors that could complicate next month's scheduled vote.

### **Rights body accuses GOSS, GONU of political repression, intimidation**

**Sudantribune.com** Juba, 23/03/10 – A US-based human rights watchdog has openly accused Sudan's Government of National Unity and its semi-autonomous Southern counterpart of grossly undermining processes for free and fair elections.

In a report released on Monday, Human Rights Watch (HRW) said political repression and other rights violations orchestrated by the Khartoum regime and the South Sudan government ahead of the April general elections in Sudan threaten prospects for a free, fair, and credible vote.

"Conditions in Sudan are not yet conducive for a free, fair, and credible election," said Georgette Gagnon, Africa director at Human Rights Watch, adding that, "Unless there's a dramatic improvement in the situation it's unlikely that the Sudanese people will be able to vote freely for leaders of their choice."

The report was compiled by Human Rights Watch's research missions to Sudan from November 2009 to March 2010. Described specifically in the March 21 report were scenarios that involved violating rights and restricting freedoms critical to a fair poll, including freedoms of expression and of assembly.

According to the US-based researchers, Sudanese authorities throughout the country were failing to uphold standards agreed with the African Union in March, which are based on the African Union Declaration on the Principles Governing Democratic Elections in Africa and the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance. Major areas of concern, noted Human Rights Watch, included restrictions on freedom of assembly and expression, freedom of the press, and equal access to the media. Previously similar concerns were also reported during voter registration in November and December 2009.

### **South Sudan hopes to overhaul foreign oil deals**

**Reuters** Juba, 23/03/10 - An independent southern Sudan would review deals struck between Khartoum and foreign oil firms amid concerns about excessive profits and environmental damage, a senior southern minister said on Tuesday.

"These are contracts that were signed during the war," Presidential Affairs minister Luka Biong Deng told **Reuters** in his prefabricated offices in Juba. "We have to look into these contracts."

China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC), Malaysia's PETRONAS and India's Oil and Natural Gas Corp are the main outside oil firms in Africa's largest country and third biggest producer of oil.

Even though Juba's semi-autonomous government has made clear it will respect existing contracts, Biong said it was concerned about environmental damage and also the high profits deriving from contracts negotiated when oil was a fraction of the \$80 a barrel it now commands.

"They have really, really got a huge profit out of these contracts. It is in the interests of the south

to review these contracts -- leave alone the issue of the environment," he said.

He also accused the firms of paying little attention to the needs of the communities around the wells, which mostly lie in the northern portion of what would become an independent Southern Sudan.

"They are using the contracts that they have now with the mindset 'Get out as much as you can' and you can talk about it later on," he said.

"It depends on the way we are going to review these contracts. If these do not meet our minimum requirements, we definitely have to ask some of these companies to give way for newcomers. This cleansing of the whole sector is critical," he said.

"We don't want to send a wrong signal that we are going to cancel all the contracts but we are going to engage with them logically and in an informed way," Biong said.

### **Independent south Sudan 'could keep old currency'**

**Reuters** Juba, 23/03/10 - South Sudan could keep using the national Sudanese currency for up to a year after a looming referendum on independence if its people vote "yes", the head of the region's central bank said on Tuesday.

The Governor of the Bank of South Sudan Elijah Malong told **Reuters** that officials were still deciding what to do with the currency of the oil-producing region after the vote.

Asked to name the most viable option, he said: "If it is a peaceful separation of the south from the north there will be no reason why we would not use the present currency until further notice ... say six months or a year."

Senior northern and southern officials have been holding faltering talks on "post-referendum" issues, including the management of oil reserves. Most of Sudan's oil lies in the south but the only pipelines pass through the north.

Any agreement on the continued use of the Sudanese pound south of the border would mean "the southern economy will still be tied to the national economy", said Malong.

He said two other options on the table were the quick creation of a new currency or temporary use of the U.S. dollar.

"(One option) would be to use dollars for the time being if people decide not to use Sudanese pounds as soon as there is independence. Then there would be a dollarisation of the economy," he said.

Malong declined to comment on the current state of the reserves of the Bank of South Sudan but said there would be no obstacle to the creation of a new currency. "I will not tell you that. It is not your problem."

"We are not an economy ... like the British economy that has been there for millions of years. We are an economy that has started with oil money so if we save oil for three months we will have a lot of reserves," he said.

"We are potentially capable of producing a new currency within six months," the Governor added.

South Sudan's currently semi-autonomous government gets up to 98 per cent of its revenues from its share of Sudan's oil wealth, set out in the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement.

### **Arab league and UNAMID vow to keep cooperating in Darfur**

**Sudantribune.com** Cairo, 23/03/10 - The Arab League and UNAMID have pledged to continue cooperating for the implementation of basic service projects, and to enhance peace and stability in Darfur.

UNAMID Joint Special Representative (JSR) Ibrahim Gambari, who participated in the Darfur donor conference, was received by Arab League Secretary-General Amr Moussa and Egyptian Foreign Minister Ahmed Aboul Gheit on March 22 at the League's headquarters in Cairo.

During the meeting, Moussa welcomed Gambari's plans to involve UNAMID in basic service projects. The two parties further agreed to cooperate "to carry out these projects and to create the appropriate conditions for the consolidation of peace and stability and to facilitate the voluntary return of displaced persons to their homes and villages".

A joint statement issued in Cairo said Gambari also showed UNAMID's readiness to provide needed facilities for the Arab League to monitor the upcoming Sudanese elections in Darfur.

He also thanked Egypt for co-chairing the donor conference and praised the work of the Egyptian troops on the ground. The country is among the largest contributors of peacekeepers to UNAMID, providing over 2,500 military and police personnel.

### **Zalengei in West Darfur to host Rizeigat-Misseriya reconciliation talks**

Representatives of the Misseriya and Rizeigat tribes meet in the town of Zalengei in West Darfur in a bid to ease tensions between their two tribes following recent clashes, reports *Al-Sahafa*.

Zalengei Commissioner, Yahia Ali, reports that the situation has calmed down with the withdrawal of all the fighting groups and the local authorities are consulting with the different groups to reconcile the tribes.

### **Beltone to launch \$1 billion Sudan agriculture fund**

*Reuters Cairo, 23/03/10* - Beltone Private Equity and Sudan's Kenana Sugar Company will launch a \$1 billion agricultural investment fund next week, Beltone said on Tuesday.

"We are launching the fund with the aim of deploying up to \$1 billion for large-scale agricultural projects," Osama Rashad, Beltone's investor relations manager told *Reuters*, adding that the fund would be launched on Monday in Khartoum.

The vehicle will be called Mahaseel Agricultural Investment Fund.

Beltone private equity, a subsidiary of Beltone Partners, had over LE 2.1 billion in assets under management at the end of February 2010, mostly in real estate and retail.

Kenana produces 400,000 tons of sugar a year. Its biggest shareholders are the Sudanese government with 35.63 percent, the Kuwait Investment Authority with 30.5 percent and the government of Saudi Arabia with 10.92 percent, the firm's website said.

The company's farms span over 200,000 feddans (84,000 hectares) in Sudan.

### **Citadel signs Sudan rail agreement**

*Gulf News Dubai, 23/03/10* - Citadel Capital, a Middle East and Africa focused private equity firm with \$8.3 billion (Dh30 billion) in investments under management, announced Tuesday that it has signed a right-of-way agreement with the Sudanese Railway Corporation, the first step in fledgling rail operator Nile Valley Railways' entry into the promising Sudanese market.

"This agreement will allow Nile Valley Railways (NVR) to proceed with the purchase of rolling stock, including wagons and locomotives, that will run on existing infrastructure in which the Sudanese Rail Corporation is making substantial investments," said Karim Sadek, Managing Director at Citadel Capital in a statement yesterday.

The agreement, on which due diligence is being finalised, will allow Nile Valley Railways to offer cargo transport services on Sudanese Railway Corporation's rail lines under a revenue-sharing

agreement.

Sudanese Railway Corporation operates more than 4,500 kilometres of track linking the key coastal city of Port Sudan to Khartoum, Wadi Hefa on the Egyptian border to South Sudan. A rehabilitated line that reopened just last week now links Babanusa in central Sudan with the southern town of Wau.

Earlier this month, the firm announced the acquisition of a 49 per cent stake in Sheltam Railways, which is the largest shareholder and lead investor in Rift Valley Railways (RVRI) of Kenya-Uganda.

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