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Headlines

- President Al-Bashir cancels trip for OIC meeting in Turkey (***Sudantribune.com***)
- NCP-SPLM agree to overcome differences (***local dailies***)
- SPLM accuses NCP of harbouring the LRA in Darfur (***Rai Al-Shaab***)
- Sudan electoral board denies obstructing foreign observers activities (***Sudantribune.com***)
- UN official calls on journalists in Juba to play their role in elections (***The Juba Post***)
- Voter registration for Sudanese living abroad to start next Tuesday – NEC (***Al-Ayyam; Miraya FM***)
- Southern Sudan faces famine danger after poor rains-UN (***Agencies***)
- Southern Sudan asks to restitute money paid for undelivered grains (***Sudantribune.com***)
- Sudan soldiers strike Moyo (***Daily Monitor***)
- Authorities release some 611 female inmates (***local dailies***)
- SLM-Abdulwahid cites preconditions to participation at Doha talks (***Al-Wifaq***)

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Highlights

President Al-Bashir cancels trip for OIC meeting in Turkey

Sudantribune.com Washington, 08/11/09 – Vice-President Ali Osman Mohamed Taha warned President Al-Bashir not to travel to Turkey to attend the Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation (COMCEC) of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) in Istanbul, according to a news report.

The **BBC Arabic Service** quoting Sudanese sources in Istanbul said that Bashir listened to Taha's advice telling him that Israeli and Greek fighter jets may intercept his plane en route to Turkey. They pointed out that Greece has made a pledge to the EU to arrest Bashir.

The report said that Sudanese presidential jet landed in Istanbul without Bashir on board.

Bashir was due to arrive in Turkey on Sunday afternoon according to Sudanese media. Sources in Khartoum told Sudan Tribune that the government "is trying to keep it [Bashir's visit] quiet" in case Turkey comes under pressure to backtrack on the invitation causing a last minute cancellation and an "embarrassment".

Turkish officials confirmed that Bashir will not attend earlier today without giving details.

Sudan official news agency (SUNA) said that Bashir "delayed" his visit to Turkey in light of the ongoing dispute with SPLM over crucial parts of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA).

The Sudanese head of state's anticipated arrival in Turkey has generated controversy and criticisms from human rights groups and the European Union (EU) which privately urged the NATO member to consider the invitation it extended.

Turkey rebuffed the objections saying it is only a host of the OIC conference while saying that a bilateral visit by Bashir, who faces an arrest warrant by the International Criminal Court (ICC) for his alleged role in Darfur atrocities, in the future "is out of question".

International Crisis Group analyst Fouad Hikmat said the decision showed how much the ICC warrant had hindered Bashir's movements.

"I don't think he'll be able to venture out beyond the immediate neighbourhood, or maybe the Gulf. His people don't want to take any risks. Once he's in international airspace, he is in no man's land," he told *Reuters*.

NCP-SPLM agree to overcome differences

The NCP and the SPLM have agreed to end differences between them, report **local dailies**.

Following a meeting yesterday of the NCP-SPLM joint political committee, Nafi Ali Nafi, the Assistant to the President of the Republic, announced that the two parties agreed over several points among which is their wish to continue constructive dialogue on the outstanding issues, to cease hostile remarks over the media and to avail an atmosphere conducive to discussing the issues. He revealed that the two sides will meet today to continue in their discussions. He also expressed confidence that the people of Sudan would "soon hear some good news".

SPLM Secretary General Pagan Amum echoed Nafi's call saying there needs to be "positive atmosphere" before the upcoming April 2010 presidential and parliamentary elections. Amum further said that confidence building measures need to be put in place to reach national consensus.

In a related development, SPLM Spokesperson Yien Mathew reports that the parties are as close as 48 hours away from reaching an agreement on the outstanding issues.

Meanwhile, an SPLM source told **Akhbar Al-Youm** that the movement would hold an extraordinary meeting within two days to be presided over by FVP Salva Kiir Mayardit for debate on and assessment of the status quo to take crucial decisions. The paper has also learned from sources that the NCP and the SPLM would hold an important meeting today and an agreement is likely to be reached.

SPLM accuses NCP of harbouring the LRA in Darfur

SPLM stalwart, Edward Lino, has accused the NCP of harbouring Ugandan LRA rebels in Darfur, **Rai Al-Shaab** reports. In response to accusations, he also challenged the NCP to form a committee to tour detention centres in southern Sudan to see for themselves if these centres hold any NCP member.

Sudan electoral board denies obstructing foreign observers activities

Sudantribune.com Khartoum, 08/10/09 - The National Electoral Commission (NEC) has dismissed a statement made by the Carter Centre accusing the Sudanese electoral body of hampering the work of foreign observers to the voter registration process.

On November 2, Carter Centre expressed concerns about the obstacles facing election observers, including delays in finalizing their accreditation procedures. It also mentioned delays in election preparations, as well as continued reports of harassment of political party and civil society activity.

NEC Secretary-General, Jalal Mohamed Ahmed, said on Sunday that the electoral body had welcomed the Carter Centre and provided it with the necessary authorizations. He further said the accreditations of some observers from the Centre were delayed due to the long proceedings of residence permits.

The security authorities have received the required documents and approved it, he said. He further stressed that all the Carter Centre staff are now allowed to carry out their duties normally, urging the centre to clarify the truth about this issue.

The NEC officials told SUNA — despite the reports reflecting the delay and slow in the process — that voter registration was going well.

A picture of a government vehicle with electoral banner for the National Congress Party is circulating in the mailing lists and discussion forums to show the use of public vehicles by the ruling party in the electoral campaign.

However the NCP has denied the use of public means in the campaign saying it was not in need of means and potential of government to implement or finance its political campaign for the next election. Mr. Majid Haj Amin officer of NCP political mobilization asked the opposition parties to produce evidence to back their claims.

UN official calls on journalists in Juba to play their role in elections

Addressing journalists at the Grand Hotel in Juba, UNMIS Public Information Officer Antonette Miday said that media house have important roles to play in the ongoing voter registration and forthcoming elections, reports **The Juba Post**. She said that voter education should be a priority role of the media so that people are informed at all levels.

She added that this is a historic moment in the history of the country and the media has to play its part towards the issues by keeping the people informed so that they could make informed choices.

Voter registration for Sudanese living abroad to start next Tuesday – NEC

Voter registration for Sudanese abroad will start tomorrow and will continue until the end of this

month, reveals NEC Deputy Chairman, Abdullah Ahmed Abdullah. **Al-Ayyam** reports that the NEC would send delegations to countries that have a large number of Sudanese to brief the Sudanese on the processes involved.

Meanwhile, **Radio Miraya FM** reports that Deputy Chairman Abdullah said that the NEC has did not opened voter registration centres in Uganda, Kenya and Ethiopia because Sudanese refugees residing there have no identification documents. He said that the NEC may however, reconsider this decision.

Southern Sudan faces famine danger after poor rains-UN

Agencies Khartoum, 09/11/09 - Southern Sudan could face famine following low rainfall and a surge in tribal conflicts, the UNICEF said on Sunday.

UN officials earlier this year said at least 1.2 million people in the underdeveloped region could be left without enough food after a poor start to the rainy season. On Sunday a senior UNICEF staff said there were now fears of an even greater emergency after poor rainfall at the end of the rainy season in October and the beginning of November.

"Here the crisis is going to hit very hard, we're just seeing the beginning of it at the moment," UNICEF's deputy executive director Hilde Johnson told journalists on a visit to the south's oil-producing Jonglei state.

"If we are not able to handle the situation well ... we can expect very, very significant levels (of hunger) which can border on the red flag emergency which becomes a famine," she said.

The dry season is just beginning in the south, but people are already hungry with the failure of harvests, and the situation is expected to worsen in coming months as the few reserves of food are used up. Poor rains in recent weeks mean that local cattle herders are expected to begin shifting their herds soon to find fresh pastures and water, bringing them into conflict with rival ethnic groups in the region.

Johnson added an increase in tribal fighting had driven many families away from their homes and sparse crops, leaving them even more vulnerable.

Johnson and other UNICEF officials visited a therapeutic feeding centre in Bor, the capital of Jonglei, where babies with swollen bellies and clearly protruding ribs and backbones were fed a fortified peanut paste.

Upper Nile governor Gatluak Deng Garang, told reporters on the trip tensions were mounting again in the area on news that members of the Lou Nuer tribe were planning to enter the lush Sobat River area that belongs to their long-term enemies, the Jikany Nuer. "If they come with their arms there will be another conflict," he said.

Southern Sudan asks to restitute money paid for undelivered grains

Sudantribune.com Juba, 08/11/09 - The semi autonomous government of Southern Sudan has demanded immediate restitution of money paid for undelivered grains by some contractors to various ten southern state officials.

On Monday 2, the regional government acknowledged missing some \$200 million with no clear records showing how this money has been spent.

David Deng Athorbei, the minister of finance and economic planning said his government is asking states that signed documents allowing contractors who did not deliver grains to pay back the money allegedly given to these contractors.

"There are states that signed contractual documents agreeing to purchase and deliver the grains but our investigation teams revealed it had been falsely signed as they did not receive any grains," he said.

"They did it because most of the contractors were friends, family members or senior members of their administrations, otherwise this should have not been done," he stressed.

The minister said decision to ask for restitution of the money paid for undelivered grains was discussed and agreed by a ministerial committee formed to follow the case. The issue was also discussed at southern Sudan council of ministers which according to him had endorsed decision of the committee.

The committee has started summoning some state governors to consider immediate repayment. He added that if they fail to refund the money, the ministry will be forced to cut it against their annual grant budget.

Sudan soldiers strike Moyo

The Sudanese People's Liberation Army (SPLA) has renewed their offensive against residents in Moyo District, Uganda-based **Daily Monitor** reports. This time, the attack by seven SPLA fighters occurred as they were allegedly hunting for Mr Thomas Olima, whom they accuse of spying on the Sudan administration. They had earlier arrested Mr Olima and tortured him but he managed to escape back to Uganda.

Mr Olima was reportedly carrying out research work for Goodball Institute based in Entebbe. The soldiers armed with guns and sticks invaded Gmberi village, Pamujo Parish, Metu Sub-county on Friday. When the search for Mr Olima turned fruitless, the soldiers held five of his family members and one official from the National Forestry Authority including two Police constables hostage for over four hours.

Authorities release some 611 female inmates

Authorities have released some 611 inmates and their 189 children from the Omdurman female prisons facilities, report **local dailies**. Addressing a ceremony to mark the event held yesterday, Social Welfare Minister Samia Ahmed Mohamed stressed their commitment to release all female inmates and to engage civil organizations in a bid to identify the reasons why women are sent to prison.

SLM-Abdulwahid cites preconditions to participation at Doha talks

SLM-Abdulwahid Spokesperson Yahya Bolad said that the SLM has agreed, following a recent meeting with Joint UN-AU Mediator Djibriel Basole, to join peace talks in Doha with preconditions. According to **Al-Wifaq**, the SLM Spokesperson said that they want to see a mechanism in place for the protection of civilians in Darfur before going to the Doha talks. Bolad also intimates that SLM leader Abdulwahid Mohamed Nur and the joint mediator may soon meet in Paris.

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