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Media Monitoring Report

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Highlights

Turabi freed from jail upon orders from Al-Bashir - Dailies

Local dailies 1/7/10 – The National Intelligence and Security Services (NISS) yesterday released PCP leader Hassan Al-Turabi after 47 days in jail. Sources confirmed that the release was ordered by President Omer Al-Bashir.

Sudan Tribune website 30/6/10 reported that Al-Bashir's decision coincided with the 21st anniversary of the coup that brought him to power which was masterminded by Al-Turabi and was considered the de-facto leader for much of the 1990's before both men fell out together.

"I did not expect to be arrested," Turabi, 78, told Agence France Presse (AFP) in his home in Khartoum's Manshiya district.

"Of course I am always against the dictatorship and if I make a statement, I take a strong attitude," he said.

"He has been freed. He has come home," Al-Turabi's personal secretary Awad Babikir told **AFP**. Turabi had been arrested after criticising Sudan's April elections which returned President Omar al-Bashir to power.

Al-Turabi, Bashir's mentor-turned-foe, had been arrested several times since he fell out with the president.

Sudan reiterates sovereignty over disputed border area of Halayeb

Sudan Tribune website 30/6/10 -The Sudanese president Omer Al-Bashir brought the dispute with Egypt over a border area to the spotlight by stressing that his government would never forsake sovereignty over it.

"Halayeb is Sudanese and will stay Sudanese" Bashir told crowds at the coastal town of Port Sudan marking the 21st anniversary of his military coup.

The remark by the Sudanese president is a rare one as he avoided public mention of the disagreement with Egypt over the area but generally referred to it as a possible integration zone between the two countries.

Sudan state media however, omitted any mention to this portion of Bashir's speech.

The Halayeb triangle that overlooks the Red Sea has been a source of tension between the two countries as early as 1958, shortly after Sudan gained independence from British-Egyptian rule.

Relations between the neighboring countries appeared to have soured this month after

the newly appointed foreign minister Ali Karti criticized Egypt saying its understanding of Sudan issues is minimal. Cairo asked Khartoum for clarifications regarding the statements attributed to Karti and secretly dispatched a delegation to defuse tension.

According to the *Sudan News Agency* (SUNA) Al-Bashir stressed that the Doha forum would be the last for negotiation outside Sudan, adding that any one who wants peace should leave for Doha, otherwise he would be taught an unforgettable lesson.

Sudan to impose news blackout on escape of USAID employee killers - report

Sudan Tribune website 30/6/10 - The Sudanese authorities intends to impose a publication ban on anything related to the escape of four men convicted of carrying out the 2008 killing of an employee from the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and his Sudanese driver.

The independent *Al-Sahafa* newspaper said that a news blackout would be announced shortly so as not to compromise the ongoing investigation. It further said that Abdel Raouf Abu Zaid Mohamed who was reportedly arrested again went on food strike and was transferred to hospital as a result.

Ugandan troops suffer major losses in the hunt for LRA

Sudan Tribune website 30/6/10 — Although the details remain highly murky, it appears that the Ugandan army suffered a significant loss of troops in the Central African Republic, or CAR, as those forces continue to hunt for Joseph Kony and the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA).

Exactly how many troops were lost and under what circumstances remain a matter of controversy, and there has been significant speculation groups other than the LRA may have also been involved. While this mystery may not be resolved any time soon, the incident again underscores the fact that the current efforts to apprehend the LRA leadership remain inadequate and demand strengthened international assistance and focus.

In Uganda this is what many know. According to a variety of sources—including the Ugandan media—a number of Ugandan army troops were found dead in CAR at the end of May, 2010.

The number of soldiers killed is in dispute and varies widely depending on the source. The Independent Daily Monitor reported 18 dead, but the Chief of Staff for the Ugandan army, General Aronda, insisted that only 10 soldiers had been killed. Other sources told Enough Project that as many as 53 soldiers, almost an entire squad, were killed. At least five soldiers, the majority officers including the radio operator are reported missing in action.

According to this same source, 17 bodies were returned to a morgue at the Gulu army barracks in northern Uganda, while others were returned to their respective places of origin elsewhere in Uganda. Some of the bodies were allegedly mutilated. Enough was unable to independently verify these claims.

The Ugandan military was quick to implicate forces other than the LRA as having

orchestrated these killings. Ugandan officials claimed that the perpetrators were “Sudanese militias” or “Sudanese poachers.” However, given that a large loss of life to the LRA would run counter to the Ugandan military’s consistent claim that the rebels are a spent force largely on the run, there is a clear incentive for the Ugandans to implicate other forces in the incident.

According to a source in the Ugandan army, on May 26, 2010, a squad of 58 soldiers from the Ugandan Third Battalion operating northeast of Djemah in CAR lost contact with its tactical headquarters. A team of soldiers sent to investigate initially found seven bodies, and that attacks against the squad had occurred in multiple locations.

The commander of the investigating team maintained that the camp of those who attacked the squad did not bear the usual signs of the LRA. The commander noted that the camp showed signs of pack animals, likely donkeys, which would be unusual for the LRA.

The commander suggested that the attackers may have been Janjaweed militias from neighboring Sudan, as they frequently travel on donkeys. The Ugandan military and such militias have frequently encountered each other in CAR, but have never previously been hostile.

If such a militia or group of armed traders did attack the Ugandans, it’s important to ask: why the change of behavior?

While it is certainly possible that these forces killed the Ugandans, the direct or indirect involvement of the LRA should not be discounted. LRA troops could have lured Ugandans into a trap manned by other forces, or conducted the killings directly themselves.

National Assembly extends sessions till July 8

Miraya FM 30/6/10 - The National Assembly has decided to extend its current session till the 8th of July, instead of going on recess starting today the 30th of June. The Sudan Peoples' Liberation Movement (SPLM) had earlier announced suspending its participation in the assembly's committees before going on recess.

President Al-Bashir to attend IGAD summit in Ethiopia

Akhbar Al-Youm 1/7/10 – Sources confirmed that President Al-Bashir will attend IGAD summit meetings in Addis Ababa for discussion on Somalia. Foreign Minister Ali Karti and Presidency Minister Gen. Bakri Hassan Saleh will accompany the President.

Armed Forces refutes allegations of American Base in Sudan

Sudan Vision 1/7/10 - The armed forces spokesman Lt. Colonel Al Sawarmi Khalid Saad has refuted allegation by American General, William Wark, commander of American contingent in Africa who had purportedly said it is necessary to set up an American base in Sudan to combat terrorism and to make South Sudan one of the US defense systems.

In a statement to (SUNA), Saad said such talk is premature because the southern

Sudanese people have not yet opted for secession, scheduled for next January, pointing out that the African countries with American bases have not benefited from them and that they are only providing service for the American defense system in the first place.

Khalid denied the existence of any terrorist activities in the Sudan pointing out that authorization to combat terrorism is granted by the Sudanese security body, not the Americans.

About the armed forces measures to implement the Libyan border closure, Khaled said the armed forces had not taken any measures in that regard as such decision is followed up and executed by the security bodies.

Trial of AFP photographer on Monday

Al-Sahafa 1/7/10 – Khartoum Criminal Court announced that trial of the AFP journalist and photographer Mohamed Al-Sheikh would begin on Monday. Reportedly, the photographer is facing charges of unauthorized photographing under article (75) of Sudan's Criminal Code which prohibits photographing at military zones.

Pre-referendum Watch

President appoints Southern Sudan Referendum Commission members

Al-Ayyam 1/7/10 – President of the Republic Omer Al-Bashir yesterday issued a republican decree appointing the Southern Sudan Referendum Commission members.

“SPLM says will not discuss confederation before referendum” - Amum

Al-Ayyam 1/7/10 –SPLM Secretary-General Pagan Amum told the newspaper that the SPLM would not discuss confederation before the referendum is conducted. He said the SPLM had earlier proposed confederation to overcome the issue of religion and state but the NCP had rejected and insisted on the conduct of referendum. “Proposing confederation at this point is preemption of the referendum results,” Amum said.

In another development, **Al-Intibaha** 1/7/10 claimed that the SPLA has decided to ban travel of southerners to the North until the referendum is conducted.

NCP partners to meet in Juba as Taha visits the South

Sudan Tribune website 1/7/10 – Vice President Ali Osman Taha is expected to visit Juba today, heading a delegation from the Government of National Unity (GoNU).

He is scheduled to meet with First Vice President, General Salva Kiir Mayardit as well as the GoSS cabinet. The meeting is expected to be followed by signing of a number of unspecified projects funded by the Unity Fund.

The dominant National Congress Party in the Government of National Unity has recently embarked on campaigning to make unity attractive to the people of Southern Sudan in the next six months leading to the referendum on independence of the region.

Informed Sources revealed that the meeting will discuss several projects to be implemented by the Government in the upcoming period, besides collecting information about the projects to be supported by the central government in the South.

US and UN must protect millions of Southern Sudanese vulnerable to post-referendum violence and Statelessness

Refugees International website 29/6/10 - Nearly two million southern Sudanese living in northern Sudan are at great risk for targeted violence and statelessness in the aftermath of the planned January 2011 referendum on southern independence, Refugees International said in a report released today. *Sudan: Preventing Violence and Statelessness as Referendum Approaches* draws on a recent field assessment in Khartoum state and calls on the United Nations, the U.S. Government and other nations to assist in the pre-referendum voluntary return of southern Sudanese displaced in Khartoum and implement other measures to prevent violence and loss of legal rights by southerners in the north and northerners in the south.

“Southerners displaced in Khartoum expressed grave concern about their physical safety following the referendum. Many don’t trust Sudan’s security forces to protect them, and it is unlikely that UNMIS – the UN peacekeeping force – will be in a position to offer physical protection,” stated Jennifer Smith, RI advocate and report co-author.

“The U.S. and other nations should provide transportation support for those displaced southern Sudanese who want to return home – not only for their safety, but to lessen the potential for north-south violence in the aftermath of the referendum.” Statements by National Congress Party officials and articles in a newspaper owned by President Omar al Bashir’s uncle questioning why southerners should stay in the north after the referendum have contributed to southerners’ fears.

Despite safety concerns, many southern Sudanese are achieving economic and educational success in Khartoum and worry about forced expulsion. “University students are afraid they will be forced to return to the south after the referendum, sacrificing the tremendous investment of time and money they have made in their education,” stated Smith.

“The critical issue is that southerners in the north and northerners in the south are key targets for post-referendum violence, yet the UN has not adequately included them in its contingency planning,” said Joel Charny, RI’s Vice President for Policy and report co-author. “With six months to go, it’s time to move beyond scenario planning and into action to prevent widespread violence. International actors need to think in concrete terms about the possible risks to vulnerable communities like these and make specific plans about how the international community – represented by UNMIS and the UN country team – will respond.”

The report noted that southerners in Khartoum uniformly expressed great concern about their legal rights following the referendum. “Citizenship issues are supposed to be addressed prior to the referendum but this has not risen to the same level of importance as oil revenue and border demarcation on the long list of priority issues,” stated Charny. “The U.S. and other governments must assist and pressure parties on both sides to

reach an agreement that will prevent southerners in the north and northerners in the south from losing legal rights or becoming stateless.”

Refugees International is a Washington DC-based organization that advocates to end refugee crises and receives no government or UN funding.