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Media Monitoring Report

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Highlights

Elections Special:

NCP, SPLM agree to hold elections in Southern Kordofan

The NCP and the SPLM have agreed to hold elections in Southern Kordofan at the presidential and national levels but the process at the state level will be postponed, **Al-Sahafa** reports. The agreement was announced by VP Ali Osman Taha and GoSS VP Riek Machar who addressed a conference of the Southern Kordofan's Council of Elders in Kauda.

According to **Sudan Tribune website** 28/2/10, the two CPA partners, during the two-day conference in Southern Kordofan called on neighboring communities to promote peaceful coexistence.

VP Taha and GoSS VP Machar visited Kadugli to attend North-South border conference that kicked off on Saturday and was attended by representatives of 10 Sudanese states including South Darfur, Northern and Western Bahr el Ghazal, Warrap, Unity, Upper Nile, White Nile, Sennar and Blue Nile.

Both leaders expressed the need for a peaceful co-existence between the border communities. While Taha called on the communities in the state to exercise peaceful relations that would contribute to an attractive unity, Machar praised the conference, saying it came at the right time because of the coming elections, calling on the neighboring communities to refrain from inciting cross border or inter-community violence during elections.

NCP, SPLM reaches “breakthrough deal” on poll

BBC website 26/2/10 – The NCP and the SPLM have reached a deal on the distribution of seats in the Parliament, ending a long deadlock. The south will get an extra 40 seats in the Parliament, meaning MPs from the region could block constitutional changes. Seats were also allocated for Abyei Area and Southern Kordofan.

Al-Ayyam reports that the National Umma Party has rejected what it described as “unconstitutional and illegal” measures taken by the NCP and the SPLM to settle their dispute over the census results by increasing the Southern Sudan's representation in the National Assembly. In a press statement circulated following a meeting of the party's Political Bureau yesterday, the National Umma Party pointed out that parliamentary representation is determined by the polls.

President Al-Bashir to visit Juba today

Local dailies report that the NCP presidential candidate Omer Al-Bashir will visit Juba today to launch his elections campaign. According to **Al-Rai Al-Aam**, GoSS has finalized preparations for the visit and that FVP Salva Kiir would receive Al-Bashir.

Government briefs UNMIS on completion of elections preparations

Al-Rai Al-Aam reports that Undersecretary at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Mutrif Siddiq has briefed the Acting SRSG Jaspir Singh Lidder on the completion of preparations for the elections. Siddiq said the security situation in Darfur is stable and praised UNMIS' activities in Southern Sudan, saying the Sudan Government would facilitate the successful completion of the

Mission's task. Foreign Ministry spokesperson Muawia Khaled said Siddiq and Liddar discussed a range of issues including the current political situation as well as administrative issues.

Police ready to secure elections – Interior Minister

Al-Akhbar reports Interior Minister Ibrahim Mahmoud Hamid as saying that the police forces are ready to secure elections and to protect polling stations. Hamid made the remarks at a meeting with media yesterday. According to **Al-Ahdath**, Hamid said elections would be held all over the country save 10% of Darfur region.

NEC defends directive to regulate electoral campaigns

Khartoum Monitor quoted **Miraya FM** as saying that the NEC has defended the statement it issued last week to regulate electoral campaigns, saying it is meant to prevent tension between candidates at all levels. NEC Deputy Chairman Abdallah Ahmed Abdallah said the directive is in line with Sudan's laws and does not target any particular party.

Meanwhile, the 23-party Juba Alliance has threatened to boycott the polls if the NEC does not shelve the directive. Alliance Coordinator Mubarak Al Fadil Al-Mahdi said the directive undermines movement of political parties and interferes with their internal affairs.

Muslim clerics calls on the electorate to avert poll-related violence

SUNA 28/02/10 – The Sudan Scholars Committee called on voters in the coming elections to refrain from violence and hate rhetoric and to stick to good electoral processes.

NEC Deputy Chairman Abdallah Ahmad Abdallah received on Sunday a high-level delegation of the Committee who affirmed their support to the NEC. They promised to urge voters to avoid clashes and accept the result of the polls with an open mind.

River Nile State bans use of shrines for elections campaigning

Islamic authorities in River Nile State have imposed a ban on the use of shrines in the state for by any candidate for elections campaigning, reports **Al-Ayyam**. Sheikh Osman Abdelhadi, who heads the Muslim Propagation Committee in the state, said that they have decided to take such measures to preserve the sanctity of shrines.

Anti-NCP group calls on citizens to defeat the NCP

An anti-NCP group has called on the electorate not to vote for NCP candidates in the April elections, **Al-Ayyam** reports. Addressing a gathering of people at a newly-opened bus terminal in Khartoum East, the group called on opposition parties to support a single candidate to save the country from social, economic and political deterioration.

Curfew imposed in Fariang County in Unity state

Unidentified gunmen killed two police personnel last Friday in Fariang County in Unity state, **Al-Intibaha** reports. Sources said the unlawful imposition of fines and levying of fees could be the reason for the killing. Reportedly, local authorities imposed a one-month curfew in the area.

NCP's insistence on "Sharia" can lead to separation – Foreign Minister

Foreign Minister Deng Alor, speaking yesterday to the Kuwaiti-based **Al-Jarida** newspaper, warned that the NCP's adherence to the application of Islamic Sharia could be a direct cause of separation of the South, **Al-Rai Al-Aam** reports. Alor also revealed that the two partners are yet to reach an agreement on the contentious issues including referendum, formation of the referendum commission and the North-South border demarcation. He warned that the situation in the Sudan could explode if elections are rigged by the NCP.

Egypt invites Kiir, Bashir in a last ditch bid to preserve Sudan's unity - report

Sudan Tribune website 28/2/10 reported that Cairo would soon dispatch its Foreign Minister Ahmed Aboul-Gheit and intelligence chief Omer Suleiman to Khartoum to invite President Omer Al-Bashir and FVP Salva Kiir to visit Cairo for a "last ditch" attempt to preserve Sudan's unity, a newspaper reported today.

The Kuwaiti-based **Al-Jarida** newspaper quoted multiple sources in both capitals as saying that Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak will also visit Khartoum and Juba thereafter.

Al-Jarida added that Cairo is concerned that the mounting tensions between the two peace partners would distract them from efforts to build security, stability and unity.

ICC says No absentia trial for Sudan president

Sudan Tribune website 27/2/10 – The ICC denied news reports in Khartoum that it intends to push for conducting in absentia (confirmation of charges) hearing for Sudanese President Omer Al-Bashir.

"There is a procedure for confirmation of charges in absentia under the Rome statute but the Office of the Prosecutor is not considering this option at the moment" Béatrice Le Fraper du Hellen, Head of Jurisdiction, Complementarity and Cooperation told Sudan Tribune in an email.

"We are preparing additional evidence in relation to President Al Bashir's intent to commit genocide, and the cover up of such crimes by the Sudanese state apparatus including the Humanitarian Affairs Commission and foreign affairs officials" du Hellen said.

"Since the arrest warrant was issued against President Al Bashir by the judges in March of 2009, he is being marginalized and isolated in the international community, and the Sudanese authorities are forced to show goodwill in peace negotiations. We will continue to work towards the increased isolation and finally the arrest of President Al Bashir. This is our priority" she added.

On Wednesday the ICC prosecutor requested a closed hearing with the pre-trial judges saying it intends to file additional information.

"The Prosecution considers that a hearing would provide it with an opportunity to seek the Chamber's guidance on the most efficient and appropriate means to proceed" the prosecutor's requests reads.

Presidential advisor escapes near accident on plane

Sudan Tribune website 28/2/10 reported that Mansour Khalid, a senior SPLM member and Presidential Advisor narrowly escaped a plane crash at Khartoum Airport on Friday. The plane had a bad landing but managed to avoid destruction.

The official, who was returning to Khartoum after a visit to Juba, was on board with other national figures like Khartoum University law professor, member of the National Elections Commission, Akolda Mading Tier.

Professor Akolda said they survived an accident as the Sun-Air Boeing 737 was about to land and another plane was taking off. The pilot was quick to pull up so as to avoid colliding with the

plane that was taking off and quickly lunged downwards to resume the aborted landing. As a result, the aircraft's front undercarriage hit the ground before the back carriage. The pilot struggled to control the aircraft until it came to a stop.

All the passengers including him, said Professor Akolda, were shocked and too scared to talk to one another when the pilot was struggling to avoid the crash. "We did not know what went wrong between the pilot and civil aviation authorities at the airport until later on Saturday that we were able to learn that the pilot of Sun-Air Boeing 737 was instructed by the aviation control to delay landing by 10 minutes in order to allow another aircraft take off on the same runway."

But, according to him, he said the pilot landed in defiance leading to narrowly escaping mid-air collision with the aircraft taking off. Instead of aborting the landing, the pilot resumed landing in the middle runway, almost losing control.

Hundreds feared dead in Darfur clashes - UN

Reuters 1/3/10 - Hundreds of civilians are feared to have died in a surge of fighting between the Sudanese army and rebels in the turbulent Darfur region, a UN source told Reuters on Monday.

A spokesman for Sudan's army denied any fighting was taking place in Darfur's mountainous Jabel Marra region and accused insurgents of harassing and attacking locals.

Reports of clashes throughout last week have marred Khartoum's announcement of a new peace push in the region and come just over a month ahead of national elections.

"We think that we have a mounting number of casualties ... The lower estimate is around 140. The higher estimate is closer to 400," said a UN source. He said the figures referred to civilian deaths.

The army spokesman told Reuters: "There are no clashes between the Sudanese army and the forces of Abdel Wahed's movement."

Abdel Wahed Mohamed al-Nur is the leader of a branch of the rebel Sudan Liberation Army (SLA).

Sudanese President Omar Hassan al-Bashir declared the war in Darfur over last Wednesday, announcing the release of 57 rebel captives after reaching an initial settlement with the JEM, Darfur's most powerful rebel force.

Bashir's government signed an agreement in Doha on Tuesday committing Sudan to reaching a final peace deal with the JEM by March 15.

But the SLA and other rebels have rejected the deal, demanding that security be restored on the ground before talks begin.