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Media Monitoring Report

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Commentaries

- Sudan at the crossroads (**The Guardian**)

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/belief/2009/dec/10/sudan-comprehensive-peace-agreement-church>

- An ill-chosen voice from Khartoum (**The Globe and Mail**)

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/opinions/editorials/an-ill-chosen-voice-from-khartoum/article1395178/>

- Sudan: The country of a million crises (**Asharq Al-Awsat**)

<http://www.aawsat.com/english/news.asp?section=2&id=19088>

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Highlights

Presidential meeting called off today over plane issue

Al-Akhbar reports that the Presidency meeting (Al Bashir, Kiir and Taha) scheduled this morning is postponed due to delay in the arrival of the First Vice President from Juba. A Presidential plane carrying the Minister of Presidential Affairs is expected to take off early this morning heading to Juba to fly Salva Kiir. The delegation of the First Vice President had earlier rejected boarding a newly maintained Presidency plane which has not yet been ceremonially inaugurated. **Khartoum Monitor** reports that a GoSS source said the presidential plane which arrived in Juba yesterday morning to fly FVP Salva Kiir to Khartoum was not up to standards to fly the second person in the country, resulting in the postponement of the meeting by one day. The Presidency meeting according to the paper will be held today. **Al-Ray Al-Aam** reports the office of the First Vice President said the plane is an Antonov that does not carry the Sudan flag.

Salva Kiir says “we reject the call for overthrowing Al-Bashir”

Al-Rai Al-Aam reports Salva Kiir had rebuffed the slogans chanted in Juba yesterday by demonstrators in front of late John Garang’s grave which called for overthrow of President Al-Bashir. He told demonstrators that “bringing down Al-Bashir meant my fall as well because we are sitting in *“one saddle”* which is the CPA.” Kiir added that SPLM would not pull out of the government because “we can not rule without him and he can not rule without us”. The CPA realized a great deal of achievements, but the NCP was still slowing the implementation of important parts of it, Kiir affirmed. He attributed the move taken by SPLM last Monday to the movement’s willingness to send a message to the foreign countries, particularly the signatories of the CPA, the paper adds.

NCP wants southern Sudanese to accept unity by force - Salva Kiir

Al-Ayaam daily reports First Vice President Kiir said NCP wants Southern Sudanese people to accept unity by force. Following a meeting with the Russian special envoy, Kiir affirmed the government in Northern Sudan did not take urgent measures to convince Southern Sudanese of the significance of the unity. He also accused the central government for not implementing the CPA.

SPLM, allied opposition call on Government to step down

Khartoum Monitor quotes UDP (Union Democratic Party) representative Dafallah Ahmed Daffalah as saying during a political symposium on Tuesday “enough is enough, we in the alliance call on the current regime to step down and hand over power to Sudanese masses”. He further added that UDP does not recognise and would not participate in the NCP-led elections because of widespread reports of fraudulent and buying of voter registration slips. He called for the dissolution of the National Elections Commission because the Commission has started rigging the elections. Representative of Hak party Halla Abdul Halim called for the removal of draconian laws and urged all the allied forces to continue the protests throughout the country. SPLM SG Pagan Amum said that the alliance will not stop fearing the dictator until the entire system crumbles. Pagan further said that the alliance must work to effect serious reforms before the 2010 elections. Minni Arka Minnawi from SLM/MM said people must stand up for their rights while Umma party leader Al-Mahdi urged the crowd to work hard for the New Sudan.

Abyei Referendum and Popular Consultations bills to be tabled in front of the

Cabinet today

Local dailies report the Federal Council of Ministers' session today will listen to a number of bills including Referendum, Abyei and Popular Consultations which will be presented by the Justice Minister Abdel BASit Sabdarat. The Spokesperson of the Council Omer Mohamed Saleh said "there was a thorough discussion between the NCP and SPLM on these bills ahead of introducing them to the Council. Saleh anticipated endorsement of the bills prior to passing them to the National Assembly.

Elections to be held on time – NEC

Khartoum Monitor reports that the election shall be held in its fixed time according to its timetable. The paper quotes NEC media manager Abubaker Al-Waziri saying that the registration period will not be extended as ample time has already been allowed. He added that no complaint has been received during the registration period, although a large number of nationals have not registered and lost their right to vote. The daily further reports that the appeals against the Electoral register continues from 10th to 16th December. Head of NEC's Geographic Department, Mukhtar Al-Asam said that a pre-final version of the electoral register will be published 20th December and a final version will be announced after clarification from the Judiciary.

Arab League Secretary General conducts talks in Khartoum, visits Darfur

Sudan Vision reports that the Arab League Secretary General Amro Musa will visit Darfur within the second half of December. It's his third visit to Darfur during which Musa will inaugurate a number of model villages set up under the auspices of the AL to help in overcoming the adversity caused by conflict. Musa will meet President Bashir and other officials before departing to Darfur. Talks are expected to cover the recent confrontations between the CPA partners, coming elections, referendum, the ICC and the Doha peace talks. Meanwhile, Arab League Ambassador in Charge of African, Sudan and Somalia Affairs Samir Hosni revealed that preparations are underway for holding the international conference for investment in Southern Sudan in February 2010 under the auspices of the AL with accordance to the Doha Summit decision. The conference is expected to gather wide Arab and international participation and will be attended by First Vice- President Salva Kiir and ALSG.

Gen. Kiir forms South Sudan military Command Council

Sudan Tribune reports that GoSS President Salva Kiir Mayardit issued yesterday a decree constituting the SPLA Command Council with effect from 10th December 2009. The 46-member army body is chaired by President Kiir with second-in-command Gen. Paulino Matip Nhial, SPLA Deputy Commander-in-Chief. Third-in-command is SPLA affairs minister, Lt. Gen. Nhial Deng Nhial, fourth Lt. Gen. Bior Ajang Dut, Undersecretary in the ministry of SPLA Affairs, fifth Lt. Gen. James Hoth Mai, SPLA's Chief of General Staff, sixth the SPLA Deputy Chief of General Staff for Operations, Lt. Gen. Obote Mamur, followed sequentially by the rest of Deputies to the Chief of General Staff and dozens of senior officers in the army. The Command Council will serve as the body that decides on military issues.

Russian special envoy remarks on Bashir's reelection draw fire

Sudan Tribune reports angry reactions by Sudanese political to statements made by Russian special envoy Mikhail Margelov in which he appeared to be endorsing president Omer Hassan Al-Bashir for another term in the upcoming presidential elections. The Russian news agency *Ria Novosti* Arabic service said that Margelov expressed skepticism about the chances for another figure to replace Bashir as president when Sudanese go to the polls in April 2010. "I have not yet seen this alternative [to Bashir] even back in January when I had to convince [our] western partners that the arrest warrant by the ICC to arrest the Sudanese president is not viable"

Margelov was quoted as saying in response to a question on availability of other candidates to run for president against Bashir. He also disclosed that he plans to meet with the ICC prosecutor Luis Moreno-Ocampo early next year to discuss "the balance and effectiveness of the court in the Sudanese case". "There is an emerging feeling that the ICC decision on arresting the current Sudanese president was rushed and politicized".

The Sudanese president hailed bilateral ties and in statement to *Ria Novosti* Arabic service he expressed hope that Moscow could enter as a "strategic partner" in the oil and energy sector as well renovating the railroads considered the largest in Africa.

Umma party's senior figure Mariam Al-Mahdi, deplored the statements made by the Russian Envoy saying that the choice of who to become president should be made by the Sudanese people. "The Russian envoy has little understanding of the Sudanese political arena. He has limited his dialogue during his tenure to the two partners [in GoNU NCP & SPLM]" she said.

PCP leader Hassan Al-Turabi expressed "surprise" over Margelov's position but downplayed its significance. "What he said has no impact on the ground and with no weight" Al-Turabi said adding that the Russian presence in Sudan and the region has been "non-existent" since the fall of the Soviet Union. "Their role is now limited to selling weapons" he said. SLM/AW Chairman Abdel-Wahid Al-Nur accused Russia of supporting Bashir to secure its commercial interests. "They think that once Bashir is gone, the Sudanese people will tap other venues for their arm supplies" Al-Nur said. "Russia provides weapons to Sudan almost for free and the regime uses it to bomb and kill our people in Darfur" he told *Sudan Tribune*. Al-Nur said that he has not been contacted by Margelov noting that he has held meetings with all international envoys for Sudan including the Chinese one. Margelov has so far only met with the JEM leader in the Chadian capital last October which is his first meeting ever with a Darfur rebel group. Ibrahim, speaking to *Sudan Tribune* said that Margelov owes the Sudanese people "an apology". "I had a lengthy meeting with him and explained our point of view...if Russia wants to be of help in resolving the Darfur crisis then it has to work with all the relevant parties" he added.

Meanwhile, ***Al-Watan*** daily reports Russia opted to take a distance and not to interfere in Sudan issues but expressed readiness to assist in preparing the way for solutions. The Russian Envoy Margelov told reporters that the Sudanese and Russian Parliaments agreed to deploy Russian monitors for elections in Sudan.

The ***RIA Novosti News Agency*** further reported that Envoy Margelov has said that a Russian consulate should be opened in Juba.

Sudan describes UN chief's explanation for phoning Bashir 'absurd'

Sudan Tribune reports that the Sudanese government blasted the justification provided by the office of the UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon for calling president Omer Hassan Al-Bashir over the weekend. Ban Ki-moon's Spokesperson Martin Nesirky said that the call was "a humanitarian intervention" for the two UNAMID kidnapped staff in Darfur. A senior unnamed Sudanese official speaking to *Al-Ahdath daily* described the explanation provided by Ban's office as "flimsy and illogical besides being absurd". "Ban phone Bashir in his capacity as president of Sudan. If he did not call him with this recognition then why did he call?" the official asked. "The reasoning given is a disregard to the norms and international conventions" he added.

I will not run for presidency unless assurances are made - Al-Mahdi

Al-Khartoum reports the chairman of Umma National Party Al-Sadiq al-Mahdi confirmed that his party did not discuss his candidature for President of Sudan adding that he would not take that move before ensuring "validity of the pitch". Speaking to ***Al-Jazzera TV*** yesterday, Al-Mahdi said his party did not have reservations over elections in spite of the violations he said the NCP had committed in voter registration.

Iranian Foreign Minister begins Official Visit to Sudan

The *Iranian TV* reported that Iranian Foreign Minister Manuchehr Mottaki arrived in Khartoum last night in response to an official invitation from his Sudanese counterpart. Mr. Mottaki will hold meetings and negotiations with high-ranking Sudanese officials during his visit. *SUNA* reported that the joint Sudanese-Iranian ministerial committee was held six months ago to formulate bases for cooperation between the two countries.

SPLM members burn down Zakat Chamber in Kurmuk

Al-Intibaha reports that an SPLM-affiliated group set on fire the Zakat Chamber in Kurmuk and residences of the Deputy Governor and the Chairman of the Local Legislative Council on the backdrop of the crackdown of Monday's rally.

Gunmen launch third attack on Darfur peacekeepers

Reuters reported that gunmen ambushed UNAMID peacekeepers in Darfur and exchanged fire with them for 25 minutes in the third attack on the force in less than a week. According to UNAMID, the unidentified attackers opened fire on the Pakistani armed police unit on Tuesday afternoon as it was escorting a convoy just outside Nyala, south Darfur. No one was injured and the attackers fled after a force of Nigerian UNAMID soldiers came to the scene to help, said communications chief Kemal Saiki. "It is a scandal that our forces are being targeted ... They are impartial. They take no sides," he told Reuters. "Once again we are having to emphasise the fact that our forces are in Darfur to try and help bring peace and stability."

Saiki said he did not want to jump to any conclusions about whether the shooting was linked to two attacks on UNAMID units on Friday and Saturday in north Darfur that killed five Rwandan peacekeepers. "There have been successive attacks. But it is difficult to jump to conclusions. This one took place in Nyala which is a different area altogether." *UN News service* reports Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Alain LeRoy saying "the force remains very committed and it's clear that they will continue their job," Also addressing reporters yesterday Under-Secretary-General for Field Support Susana Malcorra said that "we are facing a changing reality," adding that her office is looking into "how to take care of the safety and security of our staff in a more systematic manner."

Great Lakes nations to send war crimes suspects to ICC

The Kenyan *East African daily* website reported 7 December that signatories to the 11-member International Conference on the Great Lakes [ICGLR] have agreed to commit military officers suspected of crimes against humanity to The Hague. The decision extends to heads of illegal, armed groups. The meeting in Kampala late last month was attended by representatives from Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda, Uganda, Burundi, DRC, Zambia, CAR, Sudan and the Republic of Congo. The representatives said they would compile evidence for prosecution at The Hague and other international courts of all leaders of illegal armed groups and government forces suspected to have committed war crimes.

South Sudan Government launches 5-year anti-corruption strategy

Miraya FM reports that the GoSS has launched yesterday its anti-corruption five-year strategy for the period of 2010-2014. Speaking during the occasion the Minister Of Labor, Public Services and Human Resources Development, Awut Deng, appealed to all the stakeholders to work together to combat corruption.

SSLA summons ministers of Labor and Legal Affairs

Miraya FM reports that the South Sudan Legislative Assembly has summoned the GoSS Minister of Legal Affairs and Constitutional Development and Minister of Labor and Human

Resources Development to respond to questions on the exclusion over one hundred lawyers from the pay roll.

Lam Akol informs National Assembly about ban on his party in South Sudan

SUNA reports that Chairman of SPLM – Democratic Change Lam Akol, has informed officially the National Assembly on the ban imposed by SPLM on his party from practicing political work in South Sudan with the pretext that it was not registered in the south. Akol said that the GoSS issued November 9 the decision signed by President Kiir. National Assembly Deputy Speaker Mohamed Al-Hassan Al-Amin said that the Parliament wants Lam Akol to provide a specific suggestion so the Parliament can discuss and issue a decision about it.