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Media Monitoring Report

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Pre-Referendum Monitor

US VP Biden: Southern Sudan referendum should be conducted in a peaceful and credible manner

Al-Sahafa daily reports that the USA will officially recognise the Southern Sudan State in case voters opt for secession in the upcoming referendum affirming that the US will also extend its support to the new state.

A two-hour meeting took place yesterday in Nairobi between the US Vice President Joe Biden and the President of the Government of Southern Sudan Salva Kiir Mayardit including six other members of the two delegations.

Biden called on the international community to be prepared for the results of the Referendum stressing that it should be conducted in a peaceful and credible manner.

SPLM Secretary-General Pagan Amum informed the paper that the meeting discussed the US-Sudanese relations and focused on the CPA and the outstanding milestones top of which is the referendum. He added that Biden confirmed the US position on the CPA implementation and the conduct of the referendum on time.

Pagan added that the US administration pledged to provide technical and financial support to the Government of Southern Sudan and the Referendum Commission to ensure that the process occurs in a credible manner that reflects the will of Southern Sudanese people.

Biden expressed readiness to provide technical support to the two Naivasha parties on post referendum arrangements when requested, Pagan added.

Meanwhile, Pagan said Salva Kiir met yesterday with the Kenyan President Mwai Kibaki who affirmed his country's support to conduct the process on time and voiced respect to the choice of Southern Sudanese.

Referendum can be conducted without demarcated borders - Machar

Sudan Tribune website quotes GoSS Vice President Riek Machar as saying that the upcoming referendum on Southern Sudan's independence can be conducted without a complete demarcation of the North-South border pointing out that the exercise can be carried out without official borders.

He made the remarks during his meeting in Juba with Fouad Hikmat, the Special Advisor for African Union and Sudan for the US-based think tank International Crisis Group (ICG).

The Vice President of the semi-independent region earlier said about 80% of the North-South border has been agreed upon by the joint committee of the two parties. The remaining 20%, which constitutes some of the oil fields and agricultural lands in the South, have remained contentious while the dialogue is ongoing.

He however expressed optimism that the borders will be demarcated before the conduct of the referendum in order to avoid any risk of relapsing to post-referendum violence like in the case of border dispute between Eritrea and Ethiopia in 1998, following Eritrean's vote for independence from Ethiopia in 1993.

Machar also maintained his view that the people of Southern Sudan are more likely to vote for independence given the failure by the North to make unity attractive with the South for the last six years. He criticized the ruling NCP for campaigning for a unity without a vision or acceptable program on which such a unity could be based.

Mass rally in Juba calls for secession with participation of southern MPs

Al Sahafa reports that a group of civil society organizations announced yesterday in a mass rally in Juba their preference to secession and declared their group would be an "ambassador" for the independence of Southern Sudan and for the establishment of a modern state.

Gathering at Juba stadium, some two thousands activists raised slogans calling for independence and rejecting unity.

The Chairperson of Central Equatoria Youth Association Pitia Salamon addressed the rally and stated the group named "Youth for Secession" is not concerned about the unity of the country.

Economic experts warn of the negative impacts of secession

Dailies report economic experts warned of the negative impacts of secession on Sudan's economy during a conference organised yesterday by the Economic Research Department at the Ministry of Science and Technology. The Governor of the Central Bank Sabir Mohamed Al-Hassan said he expects a deficit in the general budget and loss of 10% of the balance of payments, because oil covers a high rate of exports revenues. Sabir sketched three scenarios for the currency in case of secession: having one currency in the two states under a monetary federation; a choice by one state to the currency of the other state; or changing the currency in the two states. He did not anticipate the last scenario to occur because of the high cost.

Other Highlights:

Sudan's Beshir declines World Cup invite

AFP reports today from Pretoria, South Africa that Sudanese President Omar al-Beshir has turned down an invitation to attend the World Cup opening ceremony according to an official closing speculation on whether he would be arrested in South Africa.

"He was invited to the World Cup opening ceremony but he indicated that he won't be coming," foreign ministry director general Ayanda Ntsaluba told reporters.

The host country, which is expecting 20 African heads of state during the month-long tournament, had extended an invite to Beshir to attend Friday's kick-off.

But Zuma said last month the Sudanese leader would be arrested under an international war crimes warrant if he accepted.

As a signatory to the conventions setting up the court, South Africa is legally bound to arrest Beshir if he comes to the country.

LRA kills one and abducts nine people in Southern Sudan

Al Rai Al Aam daily reports at least one person was killed and nine others were abducted in an attack launched by the LRA on Pazande village near Tambura, Western Equatoria State.

The Press Secretary in Tambura Locality Mabenj Joseph said the LRA targeted a food and drugs depot at a primary health care center in the village, the paper reports.

Trial of Rai Al Shaab journalists begins amidst strict security measures

Al-Sahafa reports that Khartoum Criminal Tribunal began yesterday trial for the four journalists of Ray Al-Shaab daily amidst strict security measures. The police surrounded the court and prevented journalists from attending the session that lasted for six hours. The session started with a request from the defense to meet with the defendants. The head of defense, advocate Kamal Al-Jizouli then requested opening the session and allowing journalists to attend and report on the deliberations based on the right to public trials. The Prosecutor stated that the media had been prevented from reporting on the case during investigations to ensure confidentiality of information adding that he would accept the defense request as the case moves to the Court. The Prosecutor stated that by publishing an article on the paper issued on 9 May, the defendants represented a threat to the security of the state and inflamed sedition and therefore called for trying them under articles 21, 53, 50, 26, 25, 24, 69, 66, 64, 63 of the Criminal Act and articles 26, 24 and 23 of the Press and Publications Act.

NEC: elections in eight constituencies in Gadaref and Red Sea to begin next Tuesday

Akhir Lahza reports NEC affirmed that elections in eight constituencies in Gadaref and Red Sea would begin next Tuesday and that elections in a constituency in North Darfur were postponed until mid July. The paper adds that elections in seven constituencies in which candidates passed away would be conducted in the coming period.

NEC announces the results of re-run elections in 22 national and state constituencies

Al-Ayaam reports the National Elections Commission announced the results of 22 re-run elections at the national and state levels. The NCP won in 18 constituencies whereas an independent and an SPLM candidate won in Southern Sudan. The other two constituencies went to two factions of Umma Party.

Sudan media slam the return of censorship

(**AFP**) – Media censorship and repression have made a comeback in Sudan since the re-election in April of President Omar al-Beshir, opposition and independent papers say.

"During the electoral period there was no censorship... but now it is back," said Annur Ahmed Annur, editor-in-chief of the independent daily **Al-Sahafa**.

Last September, Beshir announced the lifting of press censorship, ending a system under which newspapers were screened by censors every night to purge sensitive articles before publication.

But newspapers were also informed of red lines that should not be crossed, including matters of national security and articles sensitive to public morality in the conservative Muslim-majority country.

During the election period Sudanese journalists covered the country's first multi-party polls in two decades without having their articles screened by intelligence services beforehand.

But since the return to power of Beshir, who is wanted by the International Criminal Court for alleged war crimes and crimes against humanity in the western region of Darfur, the old practices seem to have returned.

The authorities shut down **Rai al-Shaab** (The Opinion of the People), the newspaper of Islamist opposition leader Hassan al-Turabi, saying it had falsely reported that engineers from Iran's Revolutionary Guards were working in Sudan.

The trial of four of the newspaper's journalists, accused of spying and terrorism, began on Wednesday at the North Khartoum criminal court behind closed doors and amid a heavy police presence, an **AFP** journalist said.

Intelligence services visited two evening papers last month to remove several articles deemed hostile before their publication, and last week state censors in Khartoum made the rounds of several opposition and independent papers, while pro-government newspapers were left alone.

"This censorship brings fear among the media so the media end up (in) self-censorship," Annur added.

"We have decided not to publish the paper this week," said Fayez al-Sillik, editor-in-chief of **Ajras al-Hurriya**, which is considered close to the ex-rebel Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) and was also targeted by state censors last week.

Sillik believes the new measures are here to stay.

"It's a new policy... They want to control everything like at the beginning of Inqaz," the name given to the 1989 coup that brought Beshir to power, Sillik told **AFP**.

Since the elections, "there has been a great setback on liberties and freedoms," said Yasser Arman, Beshir's main presidential rival in the April elections.

"There have been arrests of political leaders, medical doctors and journalists," Arman, an SPLM leader, told **AFP**.

On Tuesday, the United States voiced new criticism of Sudan for increased repression and a "deteriorating environment."

State Department spokesman Philip Crowley said a number of incidents in recent weeks have increased US concern, including the arrest of opposition leaders, censoring opposition newspapers and violence against their employees.

Nine journalists working for south Sudan radio and television, detained for not having covered the inauguration of south Sudan leader Salva Kiir in May, were released on Monday.

Sudan boasts around 30 newspapers and periodicals in English and Arabic, published daily to represent all persuasions -- from pro-government to Islamist and communist -- and showcase the country's multi-faceted political make-up.

ICRC facilitates handover of released detainees

The Citizen reports that the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) facilitated the handover to the government of 35 members of the Sudanese Army, who were released by the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) this week. The released detainees were handed over in Nyala, South Darfur. "Both JEM and the Sudanese authorities requested that the ICRC help with the transfer in our capacity as a neutral intermediary between the warring parties," said Jordi Raich Curco, head of the ICRC's delegation in Sudan.

Sudan Tribune reports that the released prisoners included 34 soldiers from the Central Reserve and one from the Parachute Regiment of the Sudanese army according to the JEM Secretary for Humanitarian Affairs, Suleiman Jamous. "26 of the POWS are injured and in dire need of medication," he further stressed.

Lam Akol: SPLM seeks to exclude our MPs from the southern parliament

Al Intibaha reports that the SPLM-DC Chairman Lam Akol accused some members of the SPLM of carrying out intimidations not to allow presence of his party's MPs at any Parliament in Southern Sudan. Following the decision to stripe immunity of four MPs from his party, Lam Akol informed reporters that SPLM attempts to sanction activities of his party in the South.

Meanwhile, a statement issued by SPLM-DC revealed that the head of the movement in Kadok was taken by armed men from his house to an unidentified place.

ICC moves in Kampala political without any legal bearing: politicians

Sudan Vision reports on the forum organised by the Sudanese Media Center in Khartoum, under the theme of "The International Criminal Court (ICC) and Africa" where reportedly all speakers have agreed that the Court is political, rather than legal, noting that it had been established for serving the interests of particular super powers. SPLM-DC Chairman Lam Akol mentioned that ICC Prosecutor Ocampo defied the law that had provided for investigations on the ground while former Minister of Justice Mohammed Ali Al-Mardi noted the coincidence between the court's resolutions and statements issued by some Darfuri movements.

Lam Akol reportedly said that although more than 8,000 complaints had been tabled before the ICC, all of which related to crimes stipulated by the Rome Statute, the Court investigated only five cases in Africa. He added that the fact gave the impression that the Court had been established exclusively for Africa due to its poor representation at the UN Security Council, and for being the continent that witnessed civil wars most.

He further noted that, "the court has no jurisdiction over Sudan as long as its national judiciary is willing and capable of assuming its functions."

Mohammed Ali Al-Mardi further accused Ocampo of departing professionalism and impartiality by confessing that he had conducted his investigations in 17 countries, excluding Sudan, besides, hiding 100 witnesses at different places to be used when the need arises.

SPLM calls on Southern Kordofan people to participate in the census

Al Khartoum reports that the SPLM-Southern Kordofan Sector issued a statement on the

population census and urged all members of the party in the State to effectively participate in the complementary census scheduled in the period from 15 to 30 June 2010. The statement noted to a number of reasons that led to re-running the census in the state.

Miraya website further quotes the Head of Media in the Census Committee in the state, Bashar Hamadallah Khamis, as saying that despite heavy rains and difficult roads the committee has managed to complete all preparations necessary for the exercise.

He added that committees comprising of Christian and Muslim religious leaders and civil administration representatives are running awareness campaigns to sensitize the state citizens on the importance of the census.

Cambodia to send troops as UN peacekeepers to Sudan

Cambodian news agency **AKP**, June 8 - A contingent of Cambodian soldiers is ready to be deployed to UNMIS in late June to replace the old contingent.

General Sem Sovanny, general director of the National Centre for Peacekeeping Forces and ERW Clearance (NPMEC) said the Cambodian de-miners are trained every day in conformity with the working system of the UN in Sudan.

Cambodia sent 135 de-miners to Sudan in 2006 for UNMIS, and then 139 in June 2007 to replace the old ones. The de-miners were renewed again in 2008.

Russia prepares to rotate peacekeepers in Sudan

Russian news agency **RIA Novosti** reports today that the Russian aviation group, operating in Sudan as part of an international peacekeeping operation, has begun preparations for its summer rotation according to the Defense Ministry.

The first unit of Russian peacekeepers arrived in Sudan in April 2006. They are expected to remain in the region for five or six years, with rotations every six months.

"The personnel have gathered at the [Torzhok pilot training] center for mission debriefing," spokesman Lt. Col. Vladimir Drik said.

"The group is being supplied with spare parts, medical equipment and other supplies necessary for their autonomous operation," the official said.

The current Russian peacekeeping contingent in Sudan comprises 120 personnel and four Mi-8 helicopters equipped according to UN and international standards.

Russian peacekeepers provide transport services for UN military observers in Sudan, including accompanying freight and carrying out rescue operations.

In March and April, the Russian helicopter unit transported almost 1,800 passengers and over 86 metric tons of cargo as part of preparations for the country's general elections. The Russian peacekeepers also delivered ballots to polling stations in southern Sudan.

Personnel from the group were awarded UN medals in May for their outstanding performance in the region.

Commentary

The need to contain escalating tribal conflicts in Darfur

Al-Ayyam, 9 June - The report issued yesterday by the joint peacekeeping forces in Darfur deserves to be pondered because it recorded a large increase in the number of the victims of the armed conflict in the province and described the past month of May as having been one of the bloodiest months in the province over the past two years. This escalation comes after a period of relative calm which the province witnessed in the past period.

The number of those killed during the month was more than 600 persons. Official military quarters raised doubts about this figure but did not provide specific figures based on their information. It appears that the reason for the discrepancy in the estimates is due to the fact that the statistics by the international forces included a number of deaths that have not been

confirmed, that is, cases counted in on the basis of information reaching the mission from internal sources which the mission could not verify. But even if we go by the figures the mission said it was certain about, they reflect a new high and serious figure for deaths in one month. The mission said that the confirmed figure is 491 deaths while the unconfirmed deaths were within the range of 100 cases.

The increase in the figures is due to the armed tribal conflicts that have taken place among the Arab tribes in Darfur and that led to large numbers of victims. These events coincided with the failure of the framework agreement between the Government and the Justice and Equality Movement [JEM], something which led to the eruption of the armed confrontation between the two sides once again after a period of relative calm. All these incidents occur at a time in which the Doha talks have been resumed with JEM still absent from the negotiating platform. For his part, the spokesman for the Armed Forces, Brigadier Al-Sawarmi Khalid Sa'd, confirmed that there have been battles and casualties in both the battles between the armed forces and the rebels and in the armed tribal conflicts. But he said that the UN statistics contain some exaggeration. What matters to us here is that the battles have been resumed and that tribal conflicts have become a source of additional bloodshed in Darfur. This aspect must find quick remedy and be met by efforts to mend the social and tribal fabric in the province. The rebellion is a tribal issue and it finds international and regional attention as there are more than one quarter that deals with it and there is a platform for dialogue in Doha. But the tribal side does not find sufficient attention even though tribal conflicts, which have nothing to do with the rebellion's agenda, have continued to erupt here and there and to recur, something which means that there are internal tribal tensions and factors that cause confrontations among tribes because of competition over natural resources. The heavy presence of weapons increases the acuteness of these tensions and the number of those killed and lead to the prevalence of a culture of vendettas. This issue will make a solution to the Darfur problem more complicated because even if the peace talks with the armed groups succeeded this peace would still remain threatened because of the escalating tribal problems. So an internal mechanism must be created to deal with tribal conflicts. The tribal leaderships and civil society organizations in Darfur must be mobilized and an early-warning system must be created to monitor the regions and causes of tribal tensions and seek to find treatments before they lead to the eruption of tribal battles. There has to be institutional action to bring about internal tribal reconciliation on the largest possible scale, otherwise the tribal confrontations will increase, lead to serious consequences and abort any political settlement that might be reached. This would make restoring security and stability in the province a very difficult matter under the shadow of the tribal conflict and the continued vendettas. Civil society organizations in Darfur have a major role in seeking to bring about tribal reconciliation and bypass these tensions and continuous tribal feuds. Unless they focus on performing this role, the situation will become more complicated.