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Media Monitoring Report

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Post-Referendum Watch

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Highlights

Presidency to meet today to resolve dispute over Abyei

Al-Sahafa 10/3/11 – The Presidency is to hold a meeting today to resolve dispute over Abyei territory amid reports that the higher joint political committee between the two parties has failed to reach an agreement on the issue of oil in Defra area.

Sources said the SPLM, at the joint political committee's meeting yesterday, demanded the withdrawal of police and central reserves police forces deployed in Defra for oil security, saying oil security is entrusted on the JIUs.

Meanwhile, FVP and GoSS President Salva Kiir Mayardit arrived in Khartoum yesterday, expected to hold a meeting with President Al-Bashir today.

GoSS Minister of Regional Cooperation Deng Alor told *Al-Ahdath* 10/3/11 that the meeting would come up with guidelines for the joint political committee on how the Abyei and border demarcation issues should be resolved, adding the directive would serve as work-plan for the political committee between the two parties.

Differences within GoSS over war on Athor

Al-Intibaha 10/3/11 – Differences between GoSS President Salva Kiir Mayardit and his deputy Riek Machar have escalated over SPLA's war on renegade Gen. George Athor.

Reliable sources said Machar is angry at GoSS' war policy and the disagreement between the two leaders plunged the government into a major crisis, with SPLA forces refusing to move to Fangak and Fam al-Zaraf to fight Athor.

Meanwhile, *Al-Ahdath* 11/3/11 reports SPLA spokesperson Philip Aquer as saying that an aircraft landed last Sunday in "Al-Warawai" area in Jonglei state and flew Athor and his aides to an unknown destination, adding SPLA is still attacking Athor's forces.

Federal Defence Minister, SPLA Minister to meet on Wednesday

Al-Ahdath 10/3/11 – Federal Defence Minister Gen. Abdul Rahim Mohamed Hussein and SPLA Affairs Minister Nhial Deng Nhial are to meet in Khartoum next Wednesday under the patronage of AUHIP Chair Thabo Mbeki.

Sources said the meeting would focus on security arrangements and other pending issues.

Outstanding CPA issues should be resolved by end of March – NCP

Al-Raed 10/03/11 – Nazar Khaled, a member of the NCP political bureau, says the NCP has set the end of this month as deadline for resolving all the outstanding CPA issues. He told the Sudan Media Centre that his party has rejected an SPLM proposal for a timeline for discussions on these issues, pointing out that the issues should all be discussed as a package in order to save time. He said the SPLM was seeking to further complicate the issues related to oil, currency and border demarcation in order that these issues are referred to the international community for

arbitration after the end of the Interim Period “just as they managed to manipulate their way to separation”.

Opposition to lodge complaint to UNSG against UNMIS Human Rights

Al-Ahram 10/3/11 – Chairperson of the Opposition National Consensus Forces, Farouq Abu Eissa, told a press conference yesterday at Turabi-led PCP’s HQs that the opposition would lodge a complaint against UNMIS Human Rights Section for dereliction of duty. He accused the Mission’s Human Rights Section of collusion with the Government, adding the Section is not doing its duty to raise awareness and defend human rights.

“The opposition is in the process of complaining to UNSG Ban Ki-moon and Independent Human Rights Expert Chande against the Section” he said.

Meanwhile, Abu Eissa said the opposition would hold a meeting next week to discuss political developments in the country, indicating that police cordoned off, from four directions, the square where a rally was supposed to take place yesterday, warning of an approaching tough day for the government.

Al-Ahdath 10/3/11 reports Abu-Eissa as saying that Chande stands witness to the UNMIS’s silence over what he described as inhumane and unlawful manner in which local authorities dispersed the protesters.

The opposition described the demonstration yesterday as “a step towards a final divorce between the opposition and the regime.”

Sudan clamps down on opposition protest, detains dozens

Sudantribune.com 09/03/11 - Sudanese security forces arrested and beat dozens of opposition activists soon after they begun their planned demonstration in downtown Khartoum on Wednesday, drawing condemnation both domestically and abroad.

Opposition activists disregarded earlier warnings by the police that their planned protest would be an unlawful act and convened around Abu Genzir square in central Khartoum on Wednesday afternoon, chanting slogans calling for the downfall of President Al-Bashir’s government.

Hundreds of anti-riot police reinforced by plain-clothed agents of Sudan’s National Intelligence and Security Services (NISS) swiftly moved in with batons and dispersed the protestors as soon as they started to gather in the square.

Over 50 opposition members were arrested and released during the evening including the leader of the Sudanese Communist Party, Mohamed Ibrahim Nugud, the leader of Sudanese Congress Party, Ibrahim Al-Sheikh, and the leader of Unionist Nasserist Party, Gamal Idris.

In a press conference he held later, the chairman of the opposition National Consensus Forces, Farouk Abu Eissa, denounced the arrest of Nugud and other opposition leaders. He also condemned the harsh repression against the protesters saying the "country is ruled by a group of gangs" who disregard the law.

He also said the strategic goal of the opposition is to overthrow the regime and to restore

democracy, rule of law and justice for the marginalized Sudanese.

"The Sudanese government must immediately release all demonstrators" said Erwin van der Borgh, Africa Director at the global human rights organization Amnesty International in a press release on Wednesday.

Amnesty International noted that some of those arrested include "prominent human rights activists, politicians and journalists."

The opposition Democratic Unionist Party condemned in a press release seen by Sudan Tribune the campaign of arrests waged by security forces against political leaders and activists as well as the "brutal" manner in which the security authorities dealt with protestors at Abu Ginzeir square.

The party called on the government to enter into a dialogue with the opposition in order to extricate Sudan from its crises.

Sudan security arrest dozens at opposition rally

Reuters 9/3/11 - Security agents arrested and beat dozens of opposition supporters on Wednesday minutes after they started a rally against the 21-year rule of Sudan's president Omar Hassan al-Bashir, witnesses said.

The protest in downtown Khartoum was the latest in a series of attempts by youth groups and opposition parties to follow the lead of anti-government uprisings across the Arab world. But the movement has so far failed to attract wide support.

Police have cracked down on protests with increasing speed and ferocity since uprisings in neighbouring Egypt and Libya.

The regional unrest has come at a sensitive time for the Khartoum government as it struggles with an economic crisis, prepares for the secession of its oil-producing south and continues to fight rebels in its western Darfur territory.

Small groups of protesters gathered in Khartoum's Abu Janzeer square in the early afternoon, as more than 500 police and security officers patrolled the surrounding streets, a Reuters witness said.

As soon as they started shouting slogans, the security forces moved in and arrested most of the protesters, including the veteran leader of Sudan's Communists, Mohamed Ibrahim Nugud.

Bashir's ruling National Congress Party (NCP) had earlier warned the rally would be illegal. State media quoted senior party member Nazar Mahjoub accusing protest organisers of trying to spread chaos.

"We are calling for Bashir to step down," said Farouk Abu Issa, chairman of the National Consensus Forces, a loose coalition of opposition parties that organised the protest.

"The message is that the Sudanese people will continue fighting, in the same way as the Egyptian and Tunisian people, to restore democracy," he told Reuters before the protest.

Other opposition figures stopped short of calling for regime change and acknowledged they had

so far failed to rally huge popular support behind their cause.

"We need to mobilise the people more seriously ... At the moment we spend too much time talking to the media and holding closed speeches and press conferences," said Mariam al-Mahdi from the opposition Umma party before the rally.

"There is total chaos, total failure in Sudan ... We are poor. We don't have a voice. Life is very hard for non-NCP people. You don't get access to anything," added Mahdi, daughter of former Sudanese prime minister Sadeq al-Mahdi.

Mahdi and Issa said police arrested three organisers of the rally from the opposition Communist and Ba'ath parties in the early hours of Wednesday morning.

Sudan violence "unacceptable" - US

AFP 9/3/11 - The United States on Wednesday condemned as "unacceptable" violence in a village in Sudan's flashpoint Abyei region where some 300 buildings were reported torched by militia linked to Khartoum.

"The United States deplores the recent violence in the Abyei region of Sudan and calls on Northern and Southern Sudanese leaders to take immediate steps to prevent future attacks and restore calm," White House spokesman Jay Carney said in a statement.

"This dangerous standoff is unacceptable for the Sudanese people, and we condemn the deployment forces by both sides." ...

Carney also called on Sudanese President Omar al-Beshir and south Sudan president Salva Kiir to meet "as soon as possible and demonstrate that they are serious about making urgent progress in talks to resolve Abyei's final status"

"Both North and South must also provide the UN Mission in Sudan the full and unfettered access required to fulfill its mandate, which includes assessing the security and humanitarian situation where fighting has taken place and protecting civilians," he said.

Carney recalled Obama's warning to the Khartoum government in September at a United Nations conference that it had two paths forward - peace and greater benefits from the world or conflict and obstruction leading to isolation.

He said that a successful referendum in which the South decided to secede from the North in January was only the first step on a path to fulfilling the Comprehensive Peace Agreement between the two sides.

"The government of South Sudan too must recommit itself to resolving the remaining contentious issues in dispute," he said.

Jobless graduates protest in Sudan oil area: witnesses

Reuters (Khartoum) 10/3/11 - More than 200 unemployed graduates took to the streets to demand jobs in the main oil-producing state of northern Sudan on Thursday, witnesses said, a rare display of dissent in a politically sensitive area.

Thursday's protest over a lack of jobs in the town of al-Fula in Southern Kordofan state may cause the government concern as the area is dominated by the Arab Misseriya nomads, a well-armed group that has supported Khartoum in the past. Al-Fula lies in Sudan's oil Block 6, controlled by a consortium led by CNPC of China.

The unrest in neighbouring Libya and Egypt has come at a sensitive time for the Khartoum government, already facing an economic crisis, the secession of its oil-producing south and an insurgency in the western region of Darfur. Southern Kordofan borders both Darfur and south Sudan.

Graduates gathered in the streets on al-Fula on Thursday morning shouting "We need jobs" and "We need to start our lives", a witness told Reuters by phone.

Police made no immediate move to stop the protest or arrest the graduates, said the witness. There are no official figures for unemployment in Sudan but analysts estimate it at around 20 percent. Graduates, particularly from outside Khartoum, regularly complain about a shortage of jobs.

Sudan to open diplomatic liaison office in Juba

Al-Raed 10/03/11 – Following a meeting in Juba with the GoSS, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs says it is taking practical steps to open a liaison's office in Juba and is resolved to cooperate with the GoSS Ministry for Regional Affairs on diplomatic issues ahead of opening a diplomatic mission after July 2011. Undersecretary for Foreign Affairs, Rahamatalla Mohamed Osman, said southern diplomats and Ambassador would continue to serve until their new state is declared.

SSLA seeks probe into returnee funds

Al-Raed 10/03/11 – The Southern Sudan Legislative Assembly has recommended the formation of a commission of enquiry with the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and the Southern Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Commission on the fate of \$24 million earmarked for the returns operations to southern Sudan. Parliamentary opposition leader Onito Adigo told parliament during deliberations over the fiscal budget that despite the fact that the funds have been allocated, many returnees remain stuck either in Kosti or Khartoum.

SUDAN: Managing the great trek southwards

IRIN 10/3/11 - Southern Sudanese living in the North are on the move. More than 249,000 have left since October 2010, and thousands more continue the trek southwards, filled with hope and excitement at the prospect of starting life in their new country.

The mammoth task of moving so many people - by bus, on barges along the Nile and by rail - has not been easy, says the South Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (SSRRC), tasked with coordinating the move with the support of UN and NGO partners.

"We moved more than 200,000 people between October and January with 60 million Sudanese Pounds [about US\$21.5 million] we got from the Government of South Sudan [GOSS], but that money has now run out and we still have more than 120,000 who need to be moved," said Rev William Chan Achuil, chair of the SSRRC.

The number of Southerners estimated to live in the North ranges from 1.5 million to two million,

but many will choose to stay, worried about the difficult living conditions in the South. Aid agencies projected that the number of returns before and after January's referendum could reach 500,000.

According to the SSRRC, about 21,000 people are stranded in Khartoum, having left their homes and sold property when the SSRRC announced it was moving people south. Many have been waiting for two months, living in makeshift shelters and struggling to feed their families. "We are appealing that these people be assisted immediately," Achuil said.

Southerners who can afford to pay for transport have long left, but many cannot afford the whole journey and get halfway before camping out at Kosti Way Station, in White Nile State, about 350km south of Khartoum.

About 80 percent of people heading south go through Kosti. The way station is built to house 800-1,000 people, but by end-February held close to 6,000, some of whom had been there for up to three months.

"Overcrowding at the way station has led to several problems – one of the major issues is a shortage of medication for common illnesses such as respiratory and eye infections, and malaria," said Melanie Murphy, Kosti operations director with Fellowship for African Relief, an NGO managing the way station with the support of the Sudanese government and other NGOs...

Other Highlights

Clashes kill 17 in Sudan's Darfur: army

AFP 9/3/11 (Khartoum) - Heavy clashes between a major rebel group and the Sudanese army in central Darfur have killed 15 rebels and two soldiers, army spokesman Sawarmi Khaled Saad said on Wednesday.

"Clashes between the armed forces and groups affiliated with Abdulwahid (Nur) during recent military manoeuvres in Jebel Marra... killed 15 rebels, wounded many more and led to the seizure of a large number of arms and ammunition," Sawarmi said in a statement carried by the Sudanese Media Centre. Two soldiers were killed in the clashes and 10 wounded, the spokesman added.

It was not immediately possible to get independent confirmation of the casualty figures. Exiled rebel leader Abdelwahid Nur heads a faction of the Sudanese Liberation Army that has so far refused to join UN-brokered peace negotiations being held in the Qatari capital Doha...

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