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Referendum Watch

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Highlights

“We do not lie to the people ... southerners will be in the South and northerners will be in the North” – NCP Nafie

Al-Sudani 10/11/10 – Presidential Aide and NCP Deputy Chairman Nafie Ali Nafie has blocked the way for any endeavour to grant southern Sudanese dual nationality if they opt for secession saying “after secession southerners will be in the South and northerners will be in the North”, describing talk about one people in two countries as “nonsense”.

“Logic for dual nationality contradicts itself, we do not lie to the people,” he said. “Their head claimed southerners are being persecuted so why he wants them to continue holding the nationality of their persecutors,” he said while addressing a referendum media campaign yesterday in Khartoum. Nafie said unity is invaluable and his party would strive to buy it with any price.

“Abyei will not be sold out. The problem should be resolved in an acceptable manner and then the referendum can take place,” Nafie said, according to *Al-Rai Al-Aam* 10/11/10.

Nafie lashed out against advocates of secession describing them as “traitors”, adding that the SPLM has breached the CPA by turning its back to unity and warned that separation should not be imposed.

Meanwhile, *Al-Sahafa* 10/10/10 reports Governor of Khartoum State Abdul Rahman Al-Khedir has pledged to protect all southern Sudanese regardless of their choice at the upcoming referendum. “Rumors are being floated that southerners will be targeted if they vote for secession which is not true. Khartoum state is committed by law to protect all the people including southerners,” he said, in his address to the same function.

Sudan Tribune website 9/11/10 reported that the ruling National Congress Party (NCP) in Sudan has laid out three options before the Sudan People Liberation Movement (SPLM) to break the deadlock on the oil-rich region of Abyei that lies on the North-South borders.

The NCP deputy chairman Nafie Ali Nafie said today at a rally for unity in Khartoum that the SPLM choices on the issue include accepting a delay to the Abyei referendum, finding a solution prior to the vote or conceding the whole region to the North.

Nafie accused the SPLM of seeking to suppress the rights of the Misseriya while focusing on the Dinka Ngok and stressed that they would not compromise on the rights of the Arab tribe.

He also ruled out granting dual citizenship to Southerners should the South vote to secede in the referendum saying it is an “illegal” course of action as there would be two sovereign states after the split.

The NCP official also described those who support separation as “traitors” who are executing the plans of colonialist powers. He also claimed that the SPLM is intimidating prospective voters

residing in the North to return South and cast their votes.

"The strange thing that they [SPLM] tells them [Southerners in North] to go vote and return [North afterwards]," Nafie said.

Alternative to Abyei referendum in Sudan may be option - US

AFP 9/11/10 - The United States suggested for the first time Tuesday that it might not be possible to organize a referendum January 9 in the Sudanese region of Abyei, and suggested north and south weigh an "alternative."

"Discussions continue on Abyei, and we will continue to hold the parties to their obligation to a referendum on Abyei... unless they arrive at an alternative that is mutually agreeable to both sides," said State Department spokesman Philip Crowley.

"While it is theoretically possible that the referendum could still go on schedule regarding Abyei, we recognize that that is increasingly problematic. We are not relieving the parties of their obligation. Today, they're obliged to cooperate and schedule a referendum on Abyei on January 9," said Crowley.

Yet "we recognize that given that there is not agreement between north and south on the details of that referendum, if they, you know, are able to arrive at a different course of action that is up to them but it has to be a mutually agreeable alternative," Crowley added.

"It is up to the parties to decide, you know, you know, to arrive at a mutually agreeable solution to Abyei. And it's their responsibility, first and foremost," he stressed.

Southern Sudan invites investors to "secure" land

AP 9/11/10 - The government of Southern Sudan is trying to woo potential investors to what will likely become the world's newest country in January.

Minister of Energy and Mining Garang Diing Akuong said Tuesday that Southern Sudan will be a "very conducive" place for investors.

Southern Sudan begins voting Jan. 9 on an independence referendum that most observers expect to pass.

Minister of Information Barnaba Marial Benjamin said that since a 2005 peace deal with the north, Southern Sudan has shown a strong safety record for businesses and aid agencies. He called Southern Sudan "secure" with attractive laws for investors.

Energy Ministry official David Loro said the south will build three new oil refineries if it secedes.

Sudan affirms beginning of voter registration as scheduled

Xinhua 9/11/10 - South Sudan Referendum Commission (SSRC) on Tuesday affirmed possibility of starting voters' registration as scheduled on Nov. 15 inside and outside the country.

"The commission has completed its arrangements for the beginning of voter registration as

scheduled inside and outside Sudan according to the set timetables for the referendum," SSRC spokesman George Benjamin told reporters.

"The SSRC is racing against time to conduct the referendum on time and needs to exert intensive efforts to conduct it in a free and transparent manner that reflects the will of the southern Sudanese citizens," he added.

He explained that the arrangements for the voting centers in south Sudan have completed and that most of the preparations were in place, adding that the staff needed short training and then they would be ready.

In the meantime, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's special representative for Sudan Haile Menkerios on Tuesday met in Khartoum with SSRC Chairman Mohamed Ibrahim Khalil and discussed the ongoing arrangements for conducting the south Sudan referendum.

"The commission believes it is possible to start registration on time and we will continue to work together to make sure that it does so," Menkerios told reporters here following the meeting.

"The locations have not all been finalized but we do believe that it is possible to get them in place to start registration on time inside and abroad," he added.

The UN official further expressed optimism that the referendum process would be successful despite the difficulties as all parties were working together for that goal.

The voter registration is scheduled to begin on Nov. 15 and last until Dec. 2, while the southerners are expected to head for voting boxes on January 9, 2011 to decide whether south Sudan should remain united with the north or secede.

South Sudan plans to build three oil refineries after secession - official

Sudan Tribune website 9/11/10 - The Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS) plans to build three new oil refineries should citizens of the semi-autonomous region choose to secede in the upcoming referendum scheduled for January 9, 2011.

The disclosure came at a press conference by the GoSS Energy Ministry Undersecretary David Loro said on Tuesday.

In May, the Akon Refinery Co., a joint venture between Khartoum-based Eyat Oilfield Co. and Southern Sudan's state-owned Nile Petroleum Co., announced a tender for bids to build a 50,000 barrel per day refinery. The cost of the project is estimated at \$1.8 billion, according to the company's website.

The huge Warrap refinery project, which is expected to take about three years to complete from the date it kicks off at the construction sites. To transport the crude oil to Akon refinery site in Warrap state the Company will also construct a pipeline of some hundreds of kilometers long from the Unity state oilfield.

Currently the crude oil from Unity and Upper Nile states is being transported through the thousands of kilometers long Chinese-constructed pipeline to the international market via Port

Sudan in the far North-eastern part of the country.

South Sudanese youth stage pro-separation rallies across region

Sudan Tribune website 9/11/10 - The thirst for separation among South Sudanese appeared to be clear on Tuesday as thousands of people marched along the streets of Juba, the semi-autonomous state capital, advocating for the timely conduct of the long-awaited referendum on self-determination.

The half-day occasion, organized by the Southern Sudan Youth Forum for Referendum (SSYFR) also took place in the other state capitals, with the main event held in Aweil, the provincial capital of Northern Bahr el Ghazal.

The event started with a long procession, involving youth, women, and lawmakers, members of the international community as well as government officials, who marched from Juba football stadium before converging at the mausoleum for the leader of the southern movement who signed the 2005 peace deal John Garang de Mabior.

Among attendees were over 10 members from the Kenyan Parliament, part of the 30-member delegation on a courtesy visit to South Sudan, while 18 of their counterparts accompanied the SSYFR team on a similar mission in to Aweil.

The procession was characterized by huge banners, traditional dances, loud chants, with messages that clearly signaling that those participating intend to opt for independence when voting begins on January 9.

“We are tired of slavery. Separation is our ultimate goal. No to unity and yes for separation” a banner, held by two youth in orange shirts read.

Angelo Diing Dhel, SSYFR’s secretary for mobilization told Sudan Tribune that as a youth entity, they remain committed towards helping southerners realize a free, fair and transparent referendum that will reflect the decisions of the population.

He appealed to members of the international community to ensure that the referendum is held on time, despite the logistical challenges, which he said have caused set-backs to civic education and mobilization work.

Peter Atem, the Chairperson of Greater Equatoria, Bahr el Ghazal and Upper Nile (GIBU) referendum forum, urged the youth to play leading roles in creating awareness among the grass root communities through extensive civic education.

Turkana Central MP, Ekwee Ethuro, said that Southern Sudan referendum is an avenue for the population to express their right to determine their future rather than what Anglo-Egyptian rule and Khartoum governments since independence have imposed on them.

“The outcome of the forthcoming referendum needs to be respected at all costs. This is simply because it will reflect the decision of the majority and it’s important that the process is held in a peaceful manner,” the Turkana Central MP told Sudan Tribune.

His Kenyan counterpart, Charles Kilonzo said that as lawmakers, they remain committed in

supporting the people of South Sudan, repeating calls for the full implementation of the CPA.

Kilonzo, who represents Yatta constituency said, “The option for peace as clearly spelt out in the CPA has to be maintained. That is why provisions of the CPA have to be fully implemented in letter and spirit.”

Forces of rebel general George Athor rejoin southern army – SPLA

Sudan Tribune website 9/11/10 - The forces loyal to the former Deputy Chief of General Staff of south Sudan’s army - the Sudan People’s Liberation Army - have begun the process of rejoining the SPLA five months after their rebellion began.

Lt. Gen. George Athor Deng rebelled in May this year following the announcement of gubernatorial election results in Jonglei state, which he lost as independent candidate, but blamed it on rigging by the south’s ruling Sudan People’s Liberation Movement (SPLM)...

GoSS interior minister visits Jonglei to assess referendum security

Sudan Tribune website 9/11/10 - Southern Sudan’s minister of internal affairs Gier Chuang Aluong says inaccessible road network and the hesitance of some armed groups to disarm or join the official army of south Sudan are standing in the way of a peaceful referendum.

The minister is visiting Jonglei to assess security ahead of the beginning of voter registration for the referendum. He said that “enemies of peace” who had refused to accept the regional presidential amnesty for other armed groups (OAGs) had created a bottleneck to peaceful referendum processes.

“The [Southern Sudan] Referendum has enemies – there are enemies of peace; all over the world,” said Gier to reporters following a close meeting in Bor with Jonglei state governor Kuol Manyang Juuk.

Jonglei state high committee (SHC) for the referendum has already expressed concern over the mobility of referendum material as the floods have further weakened the states poor road network.

Reuben Garang Yuol, the chairperson of Jonglei SHC told a press briefing two weeks ago that vehicles meant to transport referendum staffs to voter registration centers will not be traveling due to floods.

Local authorities say there was a recent attack in the state. But they have declined to name the suspected group or the location if the incident.

“It seems that some elements are still ambushing people but we hope they change their mind and come back,” said Gier on the security challenges in Jonglei state. He called upon the people of Jonglei state to assist law enforcing agents by “providing information”.

“Our people should make sure that the referendum is conducted [peacefully] because it’s a one time exercise and nobody should be allowed to tamper with it. This is the conclusion of all suffering and it must end on positive note,” he said.

Flanked by Jonglei state governor Kuol Manyang Juuk and other state ministers, Gier addressed police, wildlife officers and the fire brigade and prison officials at the newly built police headquarters on Makuach road, east of Bor town, the capital of Jonglei state.

Both the governor and regional minister urged law enforcement agencies to work closely for the safety of civilians during the referendum processes.

Governor Kuol said he was impressed by the fitness shown by police and the fact that young people outnumbered older officers.

SSRC prefers amendments to the current referendum schedule

Al-Rai Al-Aam 10/11/2010 – SSRC said that amendments to the referendum schedule would allow it to better organize the different phases of the process but its amendment is subject to agreement between the CPA parties. John Makair, SSRC Press Officer, asserted following a meeting between SSRC Chairman Mohamed Ibrahim Khalil and SRSG Haile Menkerios that the Commission stated in many occasions that it was working under intense pressures. However, Mr. Makair told the press that referendum arrangements were on the final steps despite time constraints.

Khartoum Monitor 10/11/10 reports the SRSG as saying that the UN is supporting the referendum process since time is approaching. The Sudanese Government should prepare everything for the referendum to take place on time. He added that they would continue to work together to ensure that the preparation for the referendum is going on well. Logistics as far as in the South are of much concern, but training of those who have been hired is almost about 80% of the work done. He said they need a short final training for the staff, which will be in place and on time. Locations and other things have not been all finalized, but we do believe that it is possible to get them in place in order to start registration on time. Not everything is going to be ready because some of the county centres are not going to be ready, this does not mean that registration can not start. Once the registration starts, transport, communication and other necessary means will be there on time to ease the work.

Refugees Commissioner concerned many IDPs have no identification documents

Al-Sahafa 10/11/2010 - Refugees commissioner, Balgees Ismail, expressed concern that thousands of IDPs and refugees do not have identification documents whereby they could work and travel freely in case of secession. Ms Balgees stated yesterday in a workshop organized by the SSRC that thousands of women needed to streamline their status as they would be faced with constraints following the referendum with regard to their return to the south and start of new life there.

Other Highlights

UN humanitarian chief concerned over situation in Abyei and Darfur

Al-Sahafa 10/11/10 – Undersecretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator Ms Valerie Amos, at a press conference yesterday in Khartoum, said deeply concerned over deterioration of humanitarian situation in the South, Abyei territory and Darfur

region. She revealed that UN had made contingency planning to preposition food should secession take place and called on the Sudanese parties to facilitate a phased return of southerners in the North.

Xinhua 9/11/10 reported that Ms Amos on Tuesday concluded her five-day visit to Sudan, asking for a renewed commitment from the Sudanese authorities in the South and in Darfur, to ensure the unhampered delivery of humanitarian assistance to the people in need, a UN spokesman said.

Amos, who is also the UN under-secretary-general for humanitarian affairs, said before she left Sudan that "she had come to see for herself the status of the humanitarian response, to strengthen working relationships with the key stakeholder in Darfur and Southern Sudan," Farhan Haq, the UN spokesman, told a daily news briefing here.

Amos was also in Sudan to "seek assurance from authorities on their responsibility to protect and uphold the rights of the population," Haq said.

"She said she asked for a renewed commitment from the authorities, in the South, in Darfur and at the federal level, to ensure that the delivery of humanitarian assistance is unhampered and free from any political, ethnic or religious consideration," Haq said.

"Amos said the importance of finding durable solutions for displaced populations was also raised during her discussions," said the spokesman. "She stressed that all people have the right to return home or settle in an alternative location of their choosing, but the conditions need to be appropriate and their safety and security must be guaranteed."

"She said that ensuring that returns take place in a free and principled manner is the responsibility of the Sudanese government," Haq added.

She said humanitarian agencies have reported a worrying deterioration in their operating environment in recent months in Southern Sudan, Abyei and Darfur, adding that insecurity is limiting the freedom of movement of aid workers and their ability to provide assistance.

Some 27 international aid workers and peacekeepers have been kidnapped since March 2009, with four still in captivity, Amos said. "I welcome the government's efforts to resolve kidnapping cases and call for perpetrators to be apprehended and brought to justice."

The issue of finding a durable solution to the problem of internal displacement came up during her discussions with officials and with displaced persons, and she stressed that people have the right to return to their original homes or to settle in alternative areas of their choice.

Arab militiamen join SLM rebels in North Darfur

Sudan Tribune website 9/11/10 - Darfur's rebel Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM) said today that a group of Arab militia has joined their ranks after denouncing government policy to divide Darfurians.

A group of former Arab militia group led by Deifalla Abdel Rahim has defected from the government army and merged with Sudan Liberation Movement/Army led by Abdel Wahid Al-

Nur.

The agreement was signed Monday in Frtini, eastern Kabakbiya, North Darfur said Nimir Abdel-Rahman, SLA spokesperson. "Talks with the group lasted for more than a week," he told Sudan Tribune.

"They joined our group because they believe we have a right cause and struggle for justice and citizenship rights," Nimir said.

He disclosed that the two parties agreed to address a joint message to all the Arab militia groups to distance themselves from the government policy in the restive region.

"The government recruited the Arabs and directed them to attack the civilians not the rebel groups while the rebels avoided to attack their villages," said Nimer. "Deifalla underlined this point," he added.

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