

11th Nov 2010

www.unmissions.unmis.org



Media Monitoring Report

United Nations Mission in Sudan/ Public Information Office

Referendum Watch

- CPA parties discuss Mbeki's paper on North-South relations (*Al-Sahafa*)
- CPA parties begin talks in Vienna (*Al-Watan*)
- UNSC to hold session on Sudan (*Al-Akhbar*)
- Interior Ministry says NGOs spread hate between North, South (*Al-Sahafa*)
- Sudan jams UN radio's website (*AFP*)
- IOM to open Sudan referendum offices in eight countries (*VoANews.com*)
- Southerners in US petition SSRC over inadequacy of polling centers (*ST*)
- USC Le Roy praises Darfur strategy (*Al-Raed*)
- South Sudan should not repeat Western Sahara mistake - Polisario diplomat (*ST*)
- South Sudanese ask Australia for referendum aid (*the Citizen*)
- Sudan urged to protect citizenship rights regardless of vote outcome (*ST*)
- Secession ruins the country, leads to south-south wars –Turabi (*Al-Ahram*)
- Kenya invites Al-Bashir to IGAD summit, date and location unknown (*ST*)
- SSRC received 20 vehicles in Juba (*Al-Ahdath*)
- Lakes state governor gives security assurances during referendum (*ST*)
- Carter Center notes progress but urges critical steps to ensure credible voter registration and referenda processes (*All Africa Global Media*)
- Tropical disease kills 300 in Southern Sudan; more deaths expected from kala azar outbreak (*AP*)

Other Headlines

- SPLA denies presence of Darfur rebels in the South (*the Citizen*)
- Fighting on the rise in Darfur ahead of south Sudan vote (*AFP*)

NOTE: Reproduction here does not mean that the UNMIS PIO can vouch for the accuracy or veracity of the contents, nor does this report reflect the views of the United Nations Mission in Sudan. Furthermore, international copyright exists on some materials and this summary should not be disseminated beyond the intended list of recipients.

Address: UNMIS Headquarters, P.O. Box 69, Ibeid Khatim St, Khartoum 11111, SUDAN
Phone: (+249-1) 8708 6000 - Fax: (+249-1) 8708 6200

Highlights

CPA parties discuss Mbeki's paper on North-South relations

Al-Sahafa 11/11/10 – The NCP and the SPLM began yesterday discussion on a document submitted by AUHIP Thabo Mbeki on the nature of relations between the North and the South after referendum. The document tackles key issues particularly citizenship, sharing of resources, debts and oil. The parties' discussion will continue today.

Meanwhile, *Al-Sudani* 11/11/10 reports that the Misseriya and the Dinka have revealed ongoing preparations by the CPA parties and African mediators to organize a meeting between the two communities after the Eid holiday.

CPA parties begin talks in Vienna

Al-Watan 11/11/10 – The NCP and the SPLM began talks in Vienna yesterday as part of efforts by the international community to resolve the parties' differences before the referendum.

Foreign Minister Ali Karti, who heads the Government delegation, said the talks would focus on post-referendum issues especially Abyei, border demarcation, popular consultation and the North-Sudan relations.

UNSC to hold session on Sudan

Al-Akhbar 11/11/10 – The UN Security Council will hold a session on Sudan next Wednesday to discuss referendum and to find out how far the two CPA parties are ready for the process. Reportedly, Foreign Minister Ali Karti will lead the NCP delegation and GoSS Minister of Peace Pagan Amum will lead the SPLM delegation.

SPLM Representative in Washington Ezekiel Jatcoth said the SC meeting is important to assess what have been implemented and to see whether the parties are ready for the upcoming referendum.

Interior Ministry says NGOs spread hate between North and South

Al-Sahafa 11/11/10 – The Ministry of Interior has accused unnamed voluntary organizations and other entities of spying in favour of foreign countries by seeking to polarize youths to spread hate between the South and the North after secession.

The Ministry anticipated security threats during the conduct of the upcoming referendum which, it said, requires a plan to ensure safety of civilians.

Assistant Director General of Police, Gen. Al-Adil Al-Ajib, addressing a seminar in Khartoum yesterday on referendum challenges, confirmed the existence of internal and external challenges during referendum which require the consolidation of efforts of security and judicial organs.

Meanwhile, *Al-Intibaha* 11/11/10 reports the Ministry of Interior is anticipating a number of challenges during the upcoming referendum in the form of assassinations that might be carried out by pro-unity elements if secession is opted for besides the possibility of chaos by unruly

elements such as the “niggers” who may resort to riot, looting civilian property, rigging and destruction of voter lists and attempt to bring in arms and explosives.

Maj. Gen. (police) Mohamed Ali, who presented a paper to the seminar, pointed out possible problems if secession takes place. Other participants expressed fears over presence of rebel movements in the South and the possibility of attacks on northerners in the South during the referendum.

Maj. Gen. (police) Ba’shar Ahmed Bashir, for his part, accused unnamed organizations working under the umbrella of the UN, of using its (UN) number-plates in their vehicles to serve the interests of foreign quarters and to cause unrest.

Sudan jams UN radio's website

AFP 10/11/10 - Sudanese authorities were late on Wednesday blocking access to the UN-backed Miraya FM radio's website, an official with the station said.

"The Internet site has been jammed since the end of the afternoon. We don't know why," the official said, asking not to be named.

The information ministry in Khartoum and telecommunications officials were unavailable to comment on the move denying access to the website, www.mirayafm.org.

Earlier on Wednesday, the radio station's Arabic website published a statement from the most heavily-armed rebel group in Darfur, western Sudan, playing down defections from its ranks.

In August, the BBC said its Arabic services had been taken off FM radio in north Sudan. Launched in June 2006, Miraya FM broadcasts in English and Arabic, operating as a partnership between the joint United Nations-African Union peacekeeping mission UNAMID and a Switzerland-based independent organization, the Hironnelle Foundation.

Sudan Tribune website 10/11/10 reported that access to the website of the UN-sponsored Miraya FM radio in Sudan was temporarily blocked for several hours on Wednesday by the country’s National Telecommunication Corporation (NTC), Sudan Tribune has observed...

Yesterday afternoon, Miraya’s website opened onto the logo of NTC which said that “this site has been blocked.”

However, the website was accessible again later in the evening.

A source from Miraya FM confirmed to Sudan Tribune that the radio’s website was blocked yesterday’s afternoon, saying that the radio’s administration was not aware of the reasons for the blockade and did not receive any notification from the authorities...

Broadcast media in Sudan is tightly controlled by the state and heavily regulated by the NTC, which also filters and monitors internet content.

There are 16 radio stations broadcasting on FM frequencies in the capital Khartoum, almost all of them focus exclusively on entertainment, religious affairs or sport.

IOM to open Sudan referendum offices in eight countries

VoANews.com 10/11/10 - The spokesman for Sudan's referendum commission said his organization has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to open registration centers in eight countries, including the United States.

George Benjamin said the offices will help register Sudanese in the Diaspora ahead of the scheduled 9th January referendum.

The referendum commission also said that its media campaign aimed at educating Sudanese to fully participate in the upcoming referendum is proceeding according to plan in the run-up to the voter registration exercise.

Benjamin said both the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) and the governing National Congress Party (NCP) unanimously agreed to open the registration centers to accommodate Sudanese living abroad to participate in the referendum.

"By virtue of this MOU, the IOM will carry out some duties on behalf of the commission in the eight countries of the Diaspora including the United States. They are going to establish three centers in the United States, one is in Washington, D.C, another one in Omaha, Nebraska, and the third one will be in Phoenix, Arizona," said Benjamin.

"There is contemplation to have a fourth center in Dallas, Texas. The purpose of these centers is for southern Sudanese to be registered there and also to vote in the same centers where they registered. The IOM will do that on behalf of the commission."...

Southerners in US petition SSRC over inadequacy of polling centers

Sudan Tribune website 10/11/10 - Leaders representing various south Sudanese communities in the United States of America on Wednesday called on the referendum commission to increase polling centers in areas with a dense populations of South Sudanese.

The position paper addressed to Ibrahim Khalil, chairman of the referendum commission and his deputy Chan Reec Madut, South Sudan President General Salva Kiir Mayardit, the Sudanese Ambassador to the US among other leaders, asked that Southern Sudanese abroad be given more powers to play an active role in verification of potential voters during voter registration and voting periods.

The leaders also expressed great concerns over the referendum process.

"There is a mounting concern and frustration of the people of Southern Sudan living in USA as January 9th, 2011 draws closer, over the murky and uncertainty of setting polling stations within our proximity, the management process, and lack of flow of information from the responsible referendum bodies. Therefore, as South Sudanese Community leaders, we are hereby expressing our position regarding the process," the leaders said in a release seen by Sudan Tribune.

The position paper signed by twenty leaders calls for a free and fair voting so as to strengthen the trust Southern Sudanese have in the referendum process, democracy and constitutional set up of the Referendum Commission.

Expressing concerns over processes involved in the conduct of the referendum, the leaders accused people they described as enemies of peace and said to be working tirelessly against it.

“No expertise is needed to see how CPA has been tampered with, likewise, we are seeing the referendum is following suit by compromising its legitimacy.

“No independent agency other than IOM should be responsible for conducting, registering, manning and staffing the polling stations without the involvement of the community. This clearly demonstrates the vulnerability of the process to threats such as rigging. We have identified several problems including, unauthorized privilege escalation, use of dubious characters, and a quite considerable outsider threats,” they said.

Drawing lessons learned from April’s elections, the leaders argued that the system is bound to suffer similar flaws and so demanded the need for a polling station in each of the 50 states of United States of America.

“There is no genuine point of limiting polling centers. Limiting them to two or three will deny many prospective voters the right to easy access to a polling station. The demographic nature of the Sudanese population in relation to state of residency and proximity to polling stations makes it very difficult if not impossible to travel,” the leaders argued.

They also recommended that “in case the number above is not possible; establish 3 polling centers in each region for a total of 12 centers in the USA for easy reach and convenience”.

USG Le Roy praises Darfur strategy

Al-Raed 11/11/10 – Undersecretary General for Peacekeeping Operations Alain Le Roy has commended the new strategy adopted by the Sudanese government to resolve the Darfur issue, saying UNAMID stands ready to cooperate and coordinate for the implementation of that strategy for achieving sustainable peace in Darfur. Le Roy made the remarks at a meeting yesterday with the North Darfur state Government in presence of JSR Ibrahim Gambari. Le Roy also pointed out the initiatives undertaken by UNAMID with regards to protection of civilians, creation of partnership and trust with IDPs to pave the way for the implementation of the strategy.

South Sudan should not repeat Western Sahara mistake - Polisario diplomat

Sudan Tribune website 10/11/10 - A diplomat from Western Sahara, a disputed territory between Morocco and the Polisario Front, has warned Southern Sudan not to make the same mistakes they made in their failed bid to become independent through a referendum.

The territory of Western Sahara has been contested by Morocco and the Algerian-backed Polisario Front since colonial power Spain withdrew in 1975.

Under a peace deal in 1991 the territory has been due to stage a referendum on self-determination from Morocco but is still to take place.

Western Sahara’s Ambassador to Ethiopia and Permanent Representative to the African Union, Sidi Omar, warned on a visit to south Sudan’s capital Juba, that any delay to the south’s

referendum may result to its indefinite postponement as was the case in Western Sahara.

According to the regions Ambassador, the Polisario Front agreed to Morocco's proposed delay in good faith but nearly two decades later the vote has still not taken place.

The referendum on the future of the West African territory was to be conducted under the supervision of the United Nations in 1992, but was later on postponed indefinitely following disagreement over who should be eligible to vote.

The main sticking point has been voter identification. The Polisario Front has insisted that only people registered in a census conducted by Spain in 1973 should be allowed to vote. While Morocco wants the 300,000 Moroccans who have settled in the region since 1975 to be accorded voting rights.

The diplomat presented the advice in a meeting on Wednesday with South Sudan's Vice President, Riek Machar Teny. He said he came to Juba carrying a message of solidarity from the leader of the Polisario Front to the President of the Government of Southern Sudan, Salva Kiir Mayardit.

Omar expressed Polisario Front's readiness to support the timely conduct of the referendum in Southern Sudan and accept its outcome, adding that it would establish good relations with Southern Sudan should it become independent.

The Vice President on his part assured the diplomat of his government's commitment to conduct the referendum on time as scheduled for January 9, 2011. He said post-referendum issues and North-South demarcation will not be allowed to hold the referendum hostage because they can be completed after the referendum.

South Sudanese ask Australia for referendum aid

The Citizen 11/11/2010 - The government of Southern Sudan is to send a delegation of eight MPs to Australia next week, seeking urgent assistance in the lead up to the Jan 9th referendum. The leader of the delegation, Barri Wanji, chairman of the Southern Sudan Legislative Assembly's economic and development committee said there was a desperate need for technical and financial assistance to ensure a trouble-free vote.

Sudan urged to protect citizenship rights regardless of referendum outcome

Sudan Tribune website 10/11/10 - An international consultative meeting on Sudan has urged leaders in north and south of the country to ensure that the citizenship rights of Sudanese people are not affected by the January 2011's vote on south Sudan secession regardless of its outcome.

The final communiqué of the second meeting of Sudan Consultative Forum (SCF), which was held November 06 in the Ethiopian capital Addis Ababa in the presence of international and regional partners, said the participants had "drew particular attention to the issue of citizenship rights and the importance of ensuring that the people of the Sudan do not suffer any abrogation of human rights during or after the referendum on self determination."

The meeting was co-chaired by the African Union (AU) Commissioner for Peace and Security, Ambassador Ramtane Lamamra, and the United Nations (UN) Under Secretary-General for

Peacekeeping Operations, Mr. Alain Le Roy.

It was attended by representatives of Sudan's neighboring countries as well as representatives of the permanent members of the UN Security Council.

The meeting's final communiqué seen by Sudan Tribune said that the meeting had listened to presentations by the CPA signatories and received briefings by Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General in Sudan, the AU-UN Joint Special Representative for UNAMID and the AU-UN Deputy Joint Chief Mediator for Darfur.

It also received a briefing from the Chairperson of the AU High-Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP) on Sudan.

The meeting said it had called on south Sudan government and north Sudan to release pledged funds to accelerate the progress of the referendum...

Secession ruins the country, leads to south-south wars – Al-Turabi

Al-Ahram Al-Youm 11/11/10 – Leader of the Popular Congress Party (PCP) Hassan Al-Turabi said secession of the South would disintegrate the country, ruin resources and could lead to famine and revolutions. In press statements in Doha, Al-Turabi anticipated south-south wars should secession take place.

Kenya invites Al-Bashir to IGAD summit, date and location unknown

Sudan Tribune website 10/11/10 - The Kenyan President Mwai Kibaki today extended an invitation to Sudanese President Omer Hassan Al-Bashir to attend the Inter-Governmental Authority for Development (IGAD) special summit that will tackle the South Sudan referendum scheduled to take place next January.

Sudan's official news agency (SUNA) said that the acting Kenyan foreign minister George Saitoti handed the invitation letter to Bashir which also addressed bilateral relations between the two countries.

Bashir expressed appreciation to Kenya's role in hosting the peace talks between North and South Sudan which led to signing the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA). He promised to satisfy the invitation for the IGAD summit. However, the SUNA report did not say when or where the IGAD summit will take place.

Saitoti said that Kibaki invited Bashir in his government's capacity as head of IGAD subgroup on Sudan.

SSRC received 20 vehicles in Juba

Al-Ahdath 11/11/2010 - SSRC received yesterday in Juba 20 vehicles and one helicopter from the UNDP as part of referendum support package. Mr. Denis Kadima, Head of UNIRED, revealed that 200 more vehicles were on the way to the South to support SSRC movements in the region.

Meanwhile, Mr. Chan Reec, head of SSRB, asserted that the commission was ready for the

registration kick-off on the 15th of the current month adding that assistance was expected to be received from France, Canada, Norway, Japan, UK and Sweden. Reec also stated that the international organization has pledged to rent a number of vehicles to address the shortage.

Lakes state governor gives security assurances during referendum

Sudan Tribune website 10/11/10 - The Governor of Lakes state Chol Tong Mayay, assured Church leaders gathering in Rumbek that full security protection will be provided during the south's referendum on independence in January.

Addressing the congregation during the official launching of the Sudan Catholic Bishops' plenary, the governor said that security will be beefed up in his state, adding that the referendum will be conducted in a "free and fair atmosphere".

Tong said that he believed citizens of Lakes state had already decided which option to take at the referendum. Most observers say that a vote for secession from the north is the most likely outcome of the vote.

Governor Tong said that inhabitants of Lakes State are free to campaign for either the unity of Sudan or separation.

The Governor recognized the work of the Church in Southern Sudan, and especially in Lakes State, citing the various learning institutions established and managed by the Catholic Diocese of Rumbek during the war and after.

He expressed his appreciation of the role of the Church in advocating for Southern Sudan internationally as the semi-autonomous region prepares for its referendum.

He said the relationship between the Church and the State was vitally important during this time when the Southern Sudanese people are facing what has been described as "a choice of a lifetime".

Some members of the Church are openly advocating for an independence vote, while others have said that it is not the place Church to take a stance ahead of the poll.

Carter Center notes progress but urges critical steps to ensure credible voter registration and referenda processes

All Africa Global Media 11/11/10- In its latest statement on Sudan's referenda processes, The Carter Center noted important progress by the Southern Sudan Referendum Commission (SSRC) and Southern Sudan Referendum Bureau (SSRB) in establishing and swearing in nearly all of the county subcommittees of Southern Sudan and publishing a referendum calendar.

The Carter Center also welcomed the arrival of registration materials to the country and the start of training on voter registration procedures. These accomplishments are key steps forward in implementing the Southern Sudan referendum process.

At the same time, the Center urged officials to accelerate preparations for the conduct of voter registration and the referendum, including the training of staff, distribution of materials, clarification of eligibility requirements, and the expansion of voter education.

The Government of Sudan (GoS) and Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS) should reconfirm their commitment to a genuine referendum process and urgently release funds to support this goal. Increased efforts should be made to conclude negotiations on critical post-referendum issues, and to inform Sudanese citizens about the potential impact of the vote.

The date is fast approaching for the referendum in Southern Sudan as set forth in the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) and the Southern Sudan Referendum Act (SSRA), and preparations should be redoubled. With less than three weeks remaining until the voter registration is scheduled to start for the Southern Sudan referendum, the GoS, GoSS and the SSRC and SSRB should take all possible steps to achieve this ambitious timeline. Urgent action is needed to ensure that registration staff is recruited, trained, and deployed in a timely fashion and plans are in place to distribute registration materials to referendum centers. Funds, equipment, and vehicles must be transferred to the states and counties as soon as possible. Additionally, many aspects of the referendum process need clarification in order to ensure that citizens of Southern Sudan are empowered to participate meaningfully in the processes with a full understanding of the implications of their votes. In particular, the SSRC should urgently issue the rules and regulations for voter registration, observer accreditation procedures, and campaign regulations.

The GoS, the GoSS, the SSRC, and SSRB should expand voter education efforts in both Northern and Southern Sudan and make greater efforts to communicate clearly with the population regarding the many tasks to be completed before voting day. The public, Northern and Southern Sudanese alike, lack a clear sense of how voting will be structured and what the implications of the two possible outcomes - unity or secession - will be for their future. Greater information should be provided to the population about the status of post-referendum negotiations, with a focus on citizenship and the right of minorities.

Delays in budget approval and funds disbursement to the SSRC and SSRB have disrupted steps for both bodies to become fully operational, and the GoS, the GoSS, and the international community should urgently ensure that sufficient funds are made available to the referendum administration to support the holding of a genuine, credible referendum that adheres to the current referendum calendar.

The increasing threats of a possible return to war and other inflammatory statements made by members of both the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) and National Congress Party (NCP) are counterproductive and create a negative climate as the referendum draws near. It is the responsibility of the leadership of both parties to respect their obligations to uphold the final phase of CPA implementation and the Interim National Constitution and to instruct party members to refrain from making threats that could derail the processes.

Similarly, the parties should make clear their unequivocal commitment to respecting the rights of minorities, including pastoralists. To this end, party and government leaders should provide clear guarantees that regardless of the outcome of the referenda, minority populations in both Northern and Southern Sudan will not face forced expulsions or be stripped of property and assets. Balanced, accurate coverage by domestic and international media can and should facilitate the dissemination of such assurances. Media should be cognizant of their role and refrain from exacerbating the already charged political environment. Likewise, efforts to ensure a robust campaign period free from intimidation and interference will contribute to a credible referendum

process and security in Sudan.

Although progress has been made in the Southern Sudan referendum process, the Abyei referendum process has stalled, with the failure to form the Abyei Referendum Commission or reach a resolution of the critical issue of determining voter eligibility in Abyei. The NCP and the SPLM should conclude an agreement on the composition of the Abyei Referendum Commission as quickly as possible so that preparations for the referendum can move forward.

The referenda processes are designed to realize self-determination, a democratic right granted to the Southerners and residents of Abyei by the CPA and the Interim National Constitution. The NCP and SPLM will be judged by their commitment to protecting the welfare of the Sudanese and their right to self-determination, while ensuring that they never again have to endure war to settle differences...

Tropical disease kills 300 in Southern Sudan; more deaths expected from kala azar outbreak

AP 11/11/10 - Officials in Southern Sudan say an outbreak of a parasitic tropical disease has killed more than 300 people — and that the worst of the health crisis is yet to come. The World Health Organization says the outbreak of kala azar began in September 2009 and has intensified in recent months. More than 7,000 cases have been reported this year.

The parasite that causes the disease is transmitted through sand flies. The illness mainly affects children whose immune systems are compromised by malnutrition.

The peak of the outbreak is predicted to come in December or January, coinciding with Southern Sudan's Jan. 9 independence referendum that is expected to result in the creation of the world's newest country.

Other Highlights

SPLA denies presence of Darfur rebels in the South

The Citizen 11/11/10 – SPLA top official has denied the presence of any Darfur rebels in Southern Sudan, calling for a UN investigation committee to refute the accusations made by Sudan's National Intelligence and Security Services (NISS).

SPLAQ commander-in-chief James Hoth Mai told the Middle East daily that SPLA had not offered any support to Darfur rebels and dismissed Khartoum's accusations as baseless while he considered the presence of the SLM Chairman Minni Minnawi in the South as normal state of affairs. He pointed out that Darfur rebels have been fighting the central government to the north of the borders of 1956 and not inside southern territory.

Fighting on the rise in Darfur ahead of south Sudan vote

AFP 11/11/10 - fighting between the army and one of the main Darfur rebel groups is intensifying ahead of a referendum on southern independence that could change the map of Sudan and the balance of power between the warring parties.

The Justice and Equality Movement and pro-government forces have crossed swords several

times in the past five days, after months of relative calm.

On Wednesday, JEM clashed with police in South Darfur, who were escorting a convoy of nearly 100 Lorries to south Sudan, with 37 police killed in the fighting and an estimated 60 dead among the rebels, according to UN officials.

The interior ministry said the rebels had attacked a fuel and supplies convoy, while JEM said government forces had hit its positions.

"Our forces shot down a MiG warplane this afternoon at 4:30 pm (1330 GMT) near Al-Majrou in North Kordofan," senior JEM commander Suleiman Sandal told AFP late on Monday.

Last weekend, more clashes erupted between JEM and the Sudanese army in North Kordofan and North Darfur, with both sides claiming victory.

"The army attempted (on Saturday) to take control of water sources between Umm Barru and Kornoi (in North Darfur), fighting broke out and we defeated them," Sandal said earlier. "There were casualties on both sides and we took 20 prisoners," he added.

However, the army said it had "destroyed the JEM forces in Furawiya, a rebel stronghold in a desert region of North Darfur.

Government forces also launched an attack in early October on Abdelwahid Nur's faction of the Sudan Liberation Army in Jebel Marra, a fertile plateau in the heart of Darfur.

On Wednesday, the joint United Nations-African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) called on the rebels and the government to stop the fighting.

"The resumption of the fighting has a negative impact on our work," UNAMID chief Ibrahim Gambari said on Sunday, after meeting UN aid Chief Valerie Amos.

"The movements who have not joined the political process should do so - JEM and Abdelwahid - and we have to make the point that there is no military solution to this conflict," he added.

JEM agreed a ceasefire and entered peace talks with Khartoum earlier this year but the talks foundered amid renewed fighting.

Darfur has a population of around eight million, out of some 40 million Sudanese in total, and the war-torn region covers around 500,000 square kilometres (193,000 square miles), or 20 percent of Africa's largest country.

But the balance, and the threat posed by the rebels, could change if southerners vote to break away in the referendum scheduled for January 9.

Darfur represents close to 30 percent of north Sudan and is the only region in the north where armed groups still often clash with government forces.

"The Sudanese army does not want to fight on two fronts at once, and that's why it wants to weaken the rebels before the referendum in south Sudan," a Sudanese analyst said.

Presidential adviser Ghazi Salaheddine is pushing for a political solution to the Darfur crisis and says Khartoum wants to finalise a peace accord acceptable to the various rebel groups that could be signed by the end of the year.

"We do not want any peace process to derail the other, neither the (Comprehensive Peace Agreement with the south) to derail Darfur, or Darfur to derail the CPA," Salaheddine said last week.

But none of the main rebel groups looks ready to sign a peace deal in the face of the latest violence and JEM's claim late last month that it is having some success in recruiting fighters from formerly pro-government Arab militias in Darfur.

We're on the Web!

See us at:

www.unmissions.unmis.or

g

United Nations Mission In Sudan - Public Information Office

Address: UNMIS Headquarters, P.O. Box 69, Ibeid Khatim St, Khartoum 11111, SUDAN

Phone: (+249-1) 8708 6000 - Fax: (+249-1) 8708 6200