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Media Monitoring Report

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- The New York Times: More Votes, and More Deaths, in Southern Sudan <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/01/12/world/africa/12sudan.html?ref=Africa>
- The New York Times: Sudan Advances Towards Its Future <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/01/12/opinion/12iht-edmbeki12.html>
- Al Jazeera net/ video: Sudan's political challenges <http://english.aljazeera.net/programmes/crossroadsudan/2011/01/201111014510225900.html>
- BBC Radio: Torit traders http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/africa/2011/01/110111_torit_northerners.shtml
- Radio Miraya: Interview with Special Representative of the UN Secretary General in Sudan Haile Menkerios http://www.mirayafm.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=4842:interview-with-special-representative-of-the-un-secretary-general-in-sudan-haile-menkerios&catid=220:interviews&Itemid=227

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Referendum Watch

Sudan vote passes 60 percent threshold: southern Sudan official

Reuters/ AFP Juba, 12/01/11 - More than 60 percent of voters have already taken part in south Sudan's independence referendum, meaning the result of the vote will now be valid, a senior southern official said on Wednesday.

"I know very well that by three days of voting the 60 percent threshold has been passed," Anne Itto, from the south's ruling Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), told reporters in the southern capital Juba.

The commission organising the vote was not immediately able to confirm that the threshold had been achieved. A week of voting began on Sunday for the referendum, which is expected to see the south emerge as an independent state.

"The mark that would make the referendum valid is past," said SPLM deputy secretary general Anne Itto, the *AFP* quotes the SPLM official as saying.

"The 60-percent threshold has been achieved but we... are asking for a 100-percent turnout." Itto called on those who had not cast their ballots to do so.

Referendum commission spokeswoman Suad Ibrahim said the SPLM's boast was plausible. "It's quite possible. It could even be higher," she told *AFP*.

Voter turnout passes one million mark in southern Sudan

Al-Rai Al-Aam Khartoum; Juba, 12/01/11 – The third day of voting for the southern Sudan referendum on self-determination continued yesterday amidst a comparatively lower turnout than the first two days. The head of the Southern Sudan Referendum Commission (SSRC), Mohamed Ibrahim Khalil, said however that polling was proceeding smoothly and assured that there is no fear that the 60% threshold may not be achieved. "I think the turnout would be a lot higher than that," he told *Reuters* [according to *Al-Rai Al-Aam*].

Meanwhile the Deputy Head of the SSRC, Justice Chan Rieth, said yesterday that the high voter turnout may enable the SSRC to announce the outcome of the referendum by 31st January instead of the February projection. He revealed at a press briefing in Juba yesterday that the total number of voters in the southern states alone has so passed the 1 million mark – about 46% of registered voters in that region. He further noted that the good turnout may mean that they may not be compelled to extend the polling days beyond Saturday as per schedule.

Rieth further noted that they are yet to receive reports from some southern states but noted that no violations have been reported.

In Khartoum, SSRC Spokesperson Su'ad Ibrahim Eissa put the turnout in northern Sudan at 25% and in the diaspora at 63% of registered voters. She says no detailed account has been received of the overall figure in southern Sudan save from the first day of polling that put the turnout at some 20%. Su'ad also noted that no violations have been reported so far.

Al-Sahafa reports that Eastern Equatoria has so far recorded over 50% turnout of registered voters.

Southern Sudan referendum will "reflect true feelings" of voters: UN envoy

UN Radio [via Reliefweb.org] 11/01/11 - The referendum on independence for Southern Sudan will "reflect the true feelings" of the registered voters, according to Benjamin Mkapa, the head of the United Nations Secretary-General's panel monitoring the process.

Martin Nesirky, the spokesman for the UN Secretary-General says that the panel members met with referendum authorities and voters in the states of South Darfur, Upper Nile and Western Bahr-el-Ghazal.

"The Panel's Chairman, former Tanzanian President Benjamin Mkapa, who visited South Darfur, told journalists in the state capital, Nyala, that he was impressed with the organization of the polling, including the training of staff at the referendum centres. He said he was sure that the outcome of the polling this week would reflect the true feelings of the registered voters in South Darfur."

Mr. Mkapa expressed the hope that when the counting starts on the 15th, the process of tabulating and aggregation and the final announcement would be as smooth and transparent as the voting.

UN and US officials visit polling stations

The Citizen 12/01/11 – The Head of the UN referendum Panel in the Sudan, Benjamin Mkapa, said he is impressed by the organisation of the referendum polling exercise in Jonglei State. Mkapa's comments were addressed to reporters in Bor following a meeting with the state Governor Kuol Manyang.

He also added that he is confident that the vote will continue peacefully and calmly.

Meanwhile US Special Envoy to Sudan, Scott Gration, is on a tour of polling stations in Malakal, Upper Nile State. He told Radio Miraya that he was in the town to observe the polling process.

Ten killed in Sudan ambush as south votes-minister

Reuters 11/01/11 - Armed men killed 10 southern Sudanese in an ambush, a southern minister said on the third day of the southern Sudan referendum on self-determination.

The attack on a convoy of people returning to the south for the referendum was the latest reported violent incident to mar the week-long vote, which is expected to see the south emerge as a new nation.

Vote organisers told **Reuters** the big turnout so far meant the total was almost guaranteed to reach the 60 percent of voters needed to make the poll valid.

"A number of returnees were ambushed yesterday by a group of armed Misseriya. They ambushed 10 buses and seven trailers loaded with the belongings with these IDPs (internally displaced persons) coming from the north," southern internal affairs minister Gier Chouang Along told reporters on Tuesday.

"The 10 south Sudanese could have voted ... These attacks are not in south Sudan. It is in northern Sudan. The Misseriya is not a foreign tribe. It is in Sudan ... so the north is responsible."

Al-Sahafa daily meanwhile reports that hundreds of Misseriya took to the streets of Al-Mujlad, Southern Kordofan, yesterday protesting the recent clashes in the Abyei area. The protestors sent a memorandum to the Presidency giving the SPLA a seven-day ultimatum to redeploy its forces south of the 1/1/56 line.

In a related development, Misseriya activists are calling on the SAF to deploy its forces to the contentious border area. Musa Hamadein, a prominent member of the Misseriya Union, told *Al-Tayyar* daily that they believe the government has failed in its obligations to protect the people of the region. "Why should the Misseriya fight alone while the government looks by?" he wondered. The Misseriya, he pointed out, are not fighting nomads like themselves but are facing the military might of an organised force.

"If they have sold out Abyei to the SPLM, they should let us know before we all perish," he said.

Mohamed Khatir, another prominent member of the Misseriya Union, told *Al-Wattan* that the SPLA is surrounding the Abyei area from all sides. He said that the Misseriya fear an outbreak of war in the area should the south secede.

Menkerios, Pagan and Alor travel to Abyei

Ajras Al-Hurriya 12/01/11 – UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Sudan, Haile Menkerios, and a number of GoSS officials have flown to the Abyei area to assess the developments of the situation there. The GoSS delegation is led by its Peace Minister Pagan Amum and the region's International Cooperation Minister Deng Alor.

Pagan Amum called on Dinka Ngok leaders not to take unilateral decisions but to grant the SPLM and the international community some time after the announcement of the referendum results to resolve the Abyei issue. At a press conference in Abyei yesterday, the GoSS minister called on the US and the international community to intervene to help resolve the problem.

But, according to *Al-Sahafa*, senior NCP figure Ibrahim Gandour has rejected any calls for the deployment of more UN troops to Abyei.

The dignitaries are in Abyei to discuss, together with the Abyei Area Administration, the agenda for Wednesday's conference between the Misseriya and Dinka Ngok tribes, among other things, according to *Radio Miraya*.

UN troops on standby for troubled Sudan region

AFP 11/1/11 - UN troop reinforcements are on standby to go to oil-rich Abyei and UN chief Ban Ki-moon called on rival leaders Tuesday to urgently reach accord on the troubled Sudanese region where scores have been killed in recent days, a spokesman said.

"The UN Mission in Sudan has intensified its patrolling activities on the ground and is on standby to reinforce its peacekeeping presence if the need arises," UN spokesman Martin Nesirky said in a statement.

Ban called on the main parties in north and south Sudan to urgently resume negotiations on Abyei, where the referendum on its future has been indefinitely postponed.

Ban "condemns the reported loss of life and calls upon the National Congress Party (NCP) and Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) leadership to maintain calm and ensure that this issue is resolved through peaceful dialogue."

"The secretary general urges both sides to resume and conclude negotiations on Abyei as a matter of priority," the statement added.

UN admits it moved wanted official on its helicopters

Sudantribune.com Washington, 12/01/11 - The United Nations revealed on Tuesday that it has allowed a Sudanese official wanted by the International Criminal Court (ICC) to board one of its

helicopters and took him to the highly volatile border region of Abyei this week.

"UNMIS is mandated to provide good offices to the Comprehensive Peace Agreement parties in their efforts to resolve their differences through dialogue and negotiations, and I can tell you that the UN Mission in Sudan has been working with the parties, including local authorities, to contain any potential violence that may escalate," U.N. spokesman Martin Nesirky said in his press briefing today in response to a question.

"As you know, there have been clashes in Abyei, and these clashes were actually threatening to escalate into a wider war. And so Governor Haroun was critical to bringing the Misseriya leaders in southern Kordofan to a peace meeting in Abyei to stop further clashes and killings," he added.

Haroun is one of three individuals from the government side named by the ICC as having masterminded war crimes and crimes against humanity in Darfur region. The Sudanese President Omer Hassan al-Bashir is also wanted for genocide in Darfur.

The UN spokesperson suggested that Haroun may well be transported again should the need arise. "The Mission will continue to provide the necessary support to those key players in their pursuits to find a peaceful solution," he said and added that this "was a part of that mediation effort".

But Richard Dicker, director of International Justice program at New York-based Human Rights Watch, criticized the move

"I have real concerns. Ahmed Haroun is a charged war criminal linked to the worst abuses in Darfur." he told Reuters.

"The question I have really is was there no other means for Ahmed Haroun to make it to the meeting," Dicker added.

"I think the U.N.'s posture should be of keeping a distance from him. I think the U.N. should be held to a high standard with regard to their flying Haroun to a meeting. There needs to be a high threshold of necessity."

An opinion issued by the U.N. office of legal affairs in 2006 said contacts between U.N. representatives and people indicted by international courts "should be limited to what is strictly required for carrying out U.N. mandated activities."

In the past ICC prosecutor Luis Moreno-Ocampo have said that the presence of Haroun in his current position is a negative indication.

"The fact that Ahmed Haroun is in Kordofan is not a good sign," Ocampo said. "His career is basically attacking civilians."

Some Western diplomats have also agreed that this was a cause for concern.

SAF denies presence in Abyei

Local dailies quoting Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) Spokesperson Al-Suwarni Khaled denied SAF involvement in recent clashes in the Abyei area, pointing out that neither the SAF nor the SPLA are present in the Abyei area. He said that security in the area is manned by the Joint Integrated Units (military and police). The SAF spokesperson said that the recent clashes were fuelled by the refusal of Southern Sudan Police Services (SSPS) elements to allow Misseriya nomads access to pastureland in an area north-east of the Abyei area. He pointed out however that the situation has returned to normal following a meeting between Governor Ahmed Haroun of Southern Kordofan and the Commander of the 14th Infantry Division stationed near the area.

Groups in Bahr-el-Ghazal violating the referendum - NCP

Al-Ahram Al-Youm Wau 12/01/11 – The National Congress Party (NCP Wau Chapter) has accused the GoSS of “clear violations” of the polling process and of forcing party members to vote for separation.

Halima Augustino, the party’s Secretary for Women’s Affairs, said that these violations are an extension of the campaign of intimidation the SPLM practices against NCP members in southern Sudan to discourage them from monitoring the referendum. She pointed out that an armed group stormed recently into their offices in Wau and threatening them if they do not vote for separation while a GoSS vehicle has been spotted with a loudspeaker mounted on top touring the town and calling on the people to vote for separation.

Northern Sudanese in Juba vote for separation

Al-Tayyar Juba, 12/01/11 – Northern Sudanese residing in Juba who are eligible to vote are supporting separation. Al-Tayeb Yousuf Akasha, a northern trader whose family has been in the region prior to 1956, said that he voted for separation and thinks it gives the people of southern Sudan real freedom. He pointed out that the issue is a problem to the authorities but the people have no problem and can coexist.

Northern opposition parties wrong in seeking to topple the regime – SPLM

Al-Rai Al-Aam Juba, 12/01/11 – Speaker of the South Sudan Legislative Assembly (SSLA) James Wani Iga says the end of the 54 years of north-south conflict in Sudan has arrived. He lauded President Al-Bashir’s recent assurances that the outcome of the referendum would be respected, describing those statements by the president as “unprecedented historic statements”.

Iga pointed out that Al-Bashir took upon his shoulders the burden of the implementation of the CPA after the death of SPLM’s John Garang.

On recent statements by northern opposition groups calling for regime change after a possible secession of the south, the Speaker said that such action was not in the interest of the people and was a violation of the peace agreement. He called upon Sudanese to maintain the peace whatever the consequences.

We will recognize South independence – Umma Party

Al-Ayyam Khartoum, 12/01/11 - Umma Party leader Sadiq Al-Mahdi said his party would recognize a newly born state if the people of the South chose separation from the north. He revealed that his party has rejected an offer from the NCP to participate in the government, saying they will not participate in a government that is likely to face internal and external isolation.

US may drop Sudan from terrorism list by July

AP 11/1/11 - The State Department says it could remove Sudan from its list of states that sponsor terrorism as early as July, if the results of this week's referendum on creating an independent Southern Sudan are accepted by the country's north.

State Department official Princeton Lyman said Tuesday that if voting is deemed legitimate by

international observer groups and the results are accepted, then the US would immediately begin the process of removing Sudan from the terrorism list.

He said that would involve consultations with Congress and probably would take until July to be completed.

Carter denounces statements on Sudan's loan

Sudan Vision 12/01/11 – Former US President Jimmy Carter has denounced statements ascribed to him saying that the government in northern Sudan has expressed readiness to shoulder all Sudan's foreign debts. Carter affirmed that his statements were misinterpreted, expressing his astonishment on information circulated by the CNN ascribing inaccurate statements to his person.

He told the press yesterday that President Al-Bashir affirmed to him that different partners to the peace process are to shoulder their responsibilities in terms of exempting the country from foreign loans as well as removing Sudan's name from the list of states sponsoring terrorism. Carter indicated that he shares the same vision with President Al-Bashir, adding that the US should be fair in distributing incentives between south and north Sudan.

Churches in Sudan's north fear repression after split

Reuters 11/1/11 - Churches in Sudan's mainly Muslim north are trying to reassure their dwindling congregations that they will be safe after the south splits, but Christians fearing repression are still leaving in their droves.

The main churches in the north are resolute they will remain open despite the expected secession of the south in a plebiscite expected to split Africa's largest country.

"Even if there is just one Christian left in the north we will be here because the shepherd cannot leave his flock," said Catholic Quintino Okeny Joseph, Vicar-General of the Archdiocese of Khartoum.

Joseph said Sudan's Catholic Church has had a hard time.

He said the government did not recognise their marriage certificates and had confiscated the Catholic Club -- a massive compound greeting visitors entering Khartoum from the airport.

It has been repainted in Islamic green colours and houses the headquarters of the northern ruling National Congress Party.

"Now things are better, freedom of worship is there -- if it remains this way and the Christians in the north are respected we will be okay," Joseph said.

But Christians -- the majority of whom are southerners -- have been frightened by comments from President Omar Hassan al- Bashir that the implementation of Islamic sharia law in the north would be strengthened after secession.

"When you read the news the fear will come," said Anglican Reverend Emanuel Natania. "The fact that you hear from the leaders that they have decided that sharia law will be the law of the state. As a Christian this touches you so that you fear."

If there is one Christian community not so worried for the future, it's the Copts. Originally from Egypt, Sudan's Coptic Church has been in the north since the 6th Century B.C.

"I tell the people not to worry and there is no problem, the president doesn't want to trouble you," said proto-priest Filotheos Farag, in his distinctive black robes with a long white beard.

Vicar Joseph said Copts were likely treated differently because they were Arabs, not Africans like the southerners.

Farag said it was a cultural difference, taking out a Qu'ran and quoting a verse saying Muslim and Christians share the same God.

Other Highlights:

We asked Minnawi to leave Juba - SPLM's Edward Lino

Al-Ahram Al-Youm Khartoum, 12/01/11 – SPLM figure Edward Lino says they at the SPLM have asked representatives of the Darfur rebel movements to leave southern Sudan. he pointed out that the people of Darfur would remain refugees in southern Sudan if they remain there when should the south separate.

Lino downplayed the impact of the other southern Sudanese parties on the region's political scene pointing out that they carry no weight and were merely proxies for the regime in Khartoum.

On Abyei, the SPLM figure said that the Misseriya have announced they are forming a separate administration in the area but pointed out that the step would not take root.

Prisoners from clashes in Unity State to be released

Al-Rai Al-Aam Juba, 12/01/11 – The GoSS Minister of Interior Gier Chuong says authorities would soon release fighters from Galwak Gai's militia group who were arrested following clashes in Unity State. He pointed out that the 32 combatants would be released because the GoSS is not in war with Galwak Gai because "he is merely being used by Khartoum".

JEM abducts aid workers in West Darfur

Al-Ahram Al-Youm Al-Geneina, 12/01/11 – The Commissioner for Jebel Moon, West Darfur, has reported that JEM fighters abducted last Monday 7 people and seized a vehicle in an area between the county and Kalbash locality. Commissioner Jamal Mohamed said among the abducted are 3 local employees of the international NGO CRS and 4 body guards of a local tribal leader.

He called for a SAF deployment to the area that the army had left since the recent signing of an agreement with the Liberation and Justice Front.

Darfur rebel urges united secular north Sudan

AFP 11/01/11 - Darfur rebel leader Abdelwahid Mohammed Nur on Tuesday hailed the independence vote under way in south Sudan but said he did not want secession for his own region but rather a united, secular north.

Nur, who leads a major faction of the Sudan Liberation Movement/Army, said it was vital for north Sudan to learn the lessons of the likely breakaway of the south and to reject plans by President Omar al-Bashir to impose Islamic Sharia Law in the event of partition.

"Our strategy at SLM ... now we struggle to keep North Sudan united and the only way it can be done is with the implementation of the vision of the SLM, which is for a secular, democratic state with equal citizenship rights," Nur told *AFP* by telephone, speaking in English.

"I appeal to all the international community ... to help us to reach real peace, starting with security ... with a secular state and the end of Talibanistic regime," he said.

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