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Highlights

Sudan referendum law endorsed in cabinet, 51% ‘Yes’ vote & 60% turnout required

Sudan Tribune and Dailies report the Sudanese cabinet today headed by president Omer Hassan Al-Bashir unanimously approved in its extraordinary meeting Sunday evening the bills of Southern Sudan Referendum, Abyei Referendum and the People’s Consultation in South Kordofan and the Blue Nile.

SUNA said that the law package will be tabled Monday before the National Assembly for ratification. The development followed announcement by the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement (SPLM) and the NCP that they have reached an agreement on a number of disputed issues after days of marathon talks between senior figures on both sides.

“We announce an agreement between the two partners on all points, which had been a source of disagreement on the referendum law in south Sudan,” said Nafie Ali Nafie, deputy head of Khartoum’s NCP. The two parties also agreed to “look into the national security and intelligence law in order to reach an agreement,” Nafie said, without elaborating.

Al-Khartoum daily reports the SPLM Secretary General Pagan Amom described the discussions as thorough, serious and transparent. He added that a sub-committee was formed to look into the return of SPLM and Southern Parties MPs to Parliament sessions in 24 hours.

Council of Minister unanimously endorsed Referendum, Abyei and Popular Consultations bills

Al-Sahafa the endorsed bills will be tabled Monday before the National Assembly for ratification. The State Minister at the Council of Ministers, Kamal Abdel Latif told reporters that the independence of South Sudan will be declared valid with a 60% turnout of registered voters and a 51% yes vote.

SUNA quoted Pagan as saying “I think we proceeded forward by virtue of this agreement toward overcoming the crisis and we are working seriously to settle the remaining issues in order to reach an agreement with an aim to establish stable democratic transition based on peace-building and the extension of freedoms and end the war in Darfur.”

Al-Sahafa reports Pagan pointed out that the two parties agreed on giving access of all political forces to media institutions, particularly the official media, in order to boost democratic transformation process and the smooth and peaceful transition of power to achieve stability and progress in the country.

SPLM MPs to end boycott to Parliament sessions

Akhbar Al-Youm reports a meeting between the SPLM Deputy Secretary General Yassir Arman and NCP Political Secretary Ibrahim Ghandour at the NCP HQ yesterday revealed instructions by President Al-Bashir and First Vice President Salva Kiir advising the two parties Parliamentary groups to resume sessions and discuss all CPA outstanding issues.

Ghandour and Arman told reporters that the meeting discussed the filling of the vacant positions of SPLM in the Parliament referring to positions of those members who defected from the movement. He pointed out that the meeting stressed the importance of approving all laws within the current Parliamentary session.

Today's procession is illegal - Police

Al-Khartoum reports the Khartoum State Police announced that the procession called for by the Juba parties was not permitted by the concerned authorities, adding that the organizers had only notified the Police. If the organizers did not obtain official permission from the concerned authorities, the procession would be considered illegal and the Police would assume its responsibility in protecting lives and properties, the State Police added.

Police rejects opposition request for procession next Thursday

Al-Akhabar reports that the Government Parties coalition submitted a request to obtain permission for a procession it intended to organize next Thursday. The Police responded that the permission required approval of the State Governor.

Juba parties' coalition vows to stage procession, SPLM committed to participate

Al-Sahafa reports the Juba parties coalition vowed to organize a peaceful procession in front of the Parliament today calling on the approval of all freedoms laws. After a meeting with leaders of the Juba parties at the headquarters of Umma Party, the First Vice President Salva Kiir denied that SPLM had departed the coalition following the agreement concluded yesterday with the NCP.

Meanwhile, the meeting welcomed the agreement between the two partners on laws. Faroug Abu Issa told reporters that the meeting decided to carry on peaceful processions and determined to stage a rally today. The paper adds it received information that the meeting rejected a proposal made by Al-Sadiq al-Mahdi to delay the procession.

The Juba parties organized yesterday a conference at Khartoum University attended by thousands of people and addressed by Juba parties' representatives.

Sudan police detain 38 protesters: opposition

AFP reports at least 38 protesters were rounded up on Monday during a police crackdown on a planned pro-democracy rally, a spokesman for the opposition Ummah party told AFP.

Among those detained in Khartoum's twin city of Omdurman was Ummah head Sadiq al-Mahdi's daughter Mariam, also a senior figure in the party, spokesman Mohammed Zaki said.

There was a heavy security presence in the capital while all streets leading to the parliament building where the demonstration was planned were closed, an AFP reporter said.

Earlier, several protesters from the southern Sudan People's Liberation Movement carrying their party flag were beaten as they tried to reach parliament, the correspondent said.

Some 21 opposition groups, including the SPLM and the Ummah party had called a rally to demand greater democracy, even after a deal was reached on Sunday between Sudan's two main political parties on reforms.

Leaders of the former warring north and south announced they had reached an agreement over laws related to a 2011 referendum on independence for the south, as well as a law on the powers of the security services.

15,778,154 voters, (81%) registered, NEC

Al-Ray al-Aam reports the Chairman of the Electoral Register Department at the National Elections Commission Al-Hadi Mohammed Ahmed, announced that the number of those who registered for voting till Sunday has reached 15,778,154.

Speaking at a press conference held at the media center of the Commission, Al-Hadi explained that the number of those who registered inside the Sudan reached 15,675,512 while the number of voters registered at the registration centers outside Sudan reached 112,642.

Akhbar Al-Youm daily published a report on the inauguration of the new media center at the National Elections Commission yesterday. NEC Charman Abel Alier said in a press conference on the occasion that the center was established to ensure neutrality in distribution of information to all political forces to benefit from TV and Radio services, to disseminate information on the activities of the commission and to provide respond voters with required information.

Sudan Tribune published breakdown of the total number of registered voters as follows:

Khartoum: 1.932783, South Darfur: 1318858, Al Jazeera: 1543340, North Kurdufan: 900573, North Darfur: 685879, Kassala: 751342, White Nile: 640835, South Kordufan: 749232, Red Sea: 687181, Jonglei: 481551, West Darfur: 424958, Al Qadarif: 495520, Sennar 516566, River Nile (Nahr an Nil) 435659, Central Equatoria: 532031, Warrap: 421687, Upper Nile 405651, Eastern Equatoria: 393124, Blue Nile: 350618, Northern Bahr el Ghazal: 451789, Northern (Ash Shamaliyah): 269528, Lakes state: 336106, Western Equatoria: 218256, Unity: 522196, Western Bahr el Ghazal: 210239

National security bill before the Parliament today

Al-Sudani reports the National Assembly will discuss today the 2009 National Security bill in the third and last readings.

SUNA reports Dr. Nafie pointed out to an earlier agreement by the two partners in the past period to table the National Security Act before the National Assembly to be discussed freely and transparently.

2,000 killed in 2009 south Sudan violence

AP reports officials from an international medical group say more than 2,000 people have died and 250,000 have fled their homes this year because of fighting in southern Sudan.

Officials from Medecins Sans Frontieres, or Doctors Without Borders, say the violence is the worst seen in the south since the 2005 peace deal with the country's north that ended two decades of civil war.

MSF director of operations in Sudan, Stephan Goetebghebuer, says unlike previous years, the clashes are more frequent and women and children are targeted.

Karla Bil, MSF's medical coordinator in Sudan, says 75 percent of the population in southern Sudan does not have access to basic health care exposing them to deadly diseases.

Sudan points fingers at France in stirring this week's demonstrations

Sudan Tribune reports the Sudanese government today accused France of standing behind the demonstrations staged this week by a coalition of Northern opposition parties along with the Sudan People Liberation Movement (SPLM).

The Sudanese presidential adviser Mustafa Ismail who is also the ruling National Congress Party (NCP) Secretary of External Relations spoke of "pilgrimage" by politicians to Paris to weave plots against the regime.

His peer Nafi Ali Nafi said that to an "old sheik" visited France recently as part of the plan by Paris in reference to Hassan Al-Turabi the leader of the Popular Congress Party (PCP).

Two Abducted UNAMID Employees Released

SUNA reports the two employees of the UNAMID, who were earlier abducted in Darfur, were released Sunday evening at the premises of the joint United Nations and African Union Mission for Darfur (UNAMID) in Zalinge town in the presence of the Commissioner of Zalinge Locality, Yahia Ali Hussein, and a number of the security officials in North and West Darfur States and officials of the UNAMID.

The two employees of UNAMID were kidnapped by unknown armed men in Darfur since August 29. The Director of the Office of Security and Intelligence in West Darfur, Brig. Ahmed Al-Tayeb Abu-Guroun, said that the release of the UNAMID two employees came through coordinated efforts between the government and the UNAMID.

The spokesman of the UNAMID, Nouredine Al-Mezni, expressed his pleasure over the release of the UNAMID two employees which came after a period of detention which lasted for 107 days. He commended the role played by the concern government organs and the native administration for the release of the two UNAMID abductees, stressing that the UNAMID will continue its mission in Darfur in spite of the challenges. The two released UNAMID employees, who are a Nigerian and a Zimbabwean, appeared in good health. They will transported to the headquarters in Al-Fasher and then to Khartoum before leaving home for their countries.

Xinhua reports UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon welcomed on Sunday the return of two peacekeepers who were abducted in Sudan's Darfur in August. In a statement issued by his press office, the secretary-general said he is "deeply gratified to learn" that the two civilian staff members from the African Union-United Nations Mission in Darfur (UNAMID), who had been detained for more than 100 days, are now "free and in the care of UNAMID."

The two international staff members, from Nigeria and Zimbabwe, were abducted at gunpoint from their accommodation in West Darfur, Sudan, on Aug. 29. Ever since, the UN chief has been calling for their safety and early release.

Ban commended UNAMID and the Sudanese government for their efforts in "securing the freedom of the abductees." Stressing the "importance of the peacekeeping and humanitarian work" of the UN in Darfur, Ban reiterated that the "primary responsibility for the safety and security of all humanitarian and peacekeeping personnel lies with the host government."

Government ready to deal with Mbeki's report

Al-Khartoum reports the Government of Sudan reiterated commitment in dealing with the report prepared by African wise men panel. Presidential Adviser Ghazi Salahuddin said Sunday Khartoum "we affirmed readiness of the government to deal with the report to achieve peace in Sudan."

SPLM secretary replies to Bona Malwal over Gogrial speech

Sudan Tribune reports in reply to a complaint made last Tuesday by Presidential Advisor Bona Malwal Madut Riing, another South Sudanese politician has issued a strongly worded statement, disagreeing with Malwal about what transpired in Luony Aker in Gogrial East Gounty, where the presidential adviser claims he was prevented from addressing a tribal gathering.

Malwal had seized on the incident to make a point about lack of freedom of expression in South Sudan. He told his version of the event at a press conference in Khartoum.