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Media Monitoring Report

United Nations Mission in Sudan/ Public Information Office

Referendum Watch

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

Highlights

President Al-Bashir rules out North-South war

Local dailies 14/12/10 – President Al-Bashir, addressing an inaugural session of 5th conference on federalism in Addis Ababa yesterday, confirmed that the two CPA parties had made great strides on coordination to keep good relations between them regardless of the vote outcome. He said while Sudan was still striving to keep its unity, it was also committed to implement the CPA including the conduct of a timely referendum and recognizing its results if the process is free, fair, transparent and lawful.

Sudan Tribune website 13/12/10 reported that President Al- Bashir arrived in the Ethiopian capital on Monday to attend the 5th International Conference on Federalism, first ever to be hosted by an African country.

The three-day conference, is being held under the theme: “Equality and Unity in Diversity for Development” and is expected to provide a forum for academicians and practitioners to discuss issues of federalism and decentralization also for sharing experience related to challenges associated with the governance and operation of federal and federal-type systems.

Bashir lauded such an important conference on Federalism is first ever held in an African soil. He said the conference will help to share experiences among African federal states and reflect the unity of Africans.

“We are all here gathered here to consolidate the concepts of freedom and democracy” President Bashir said adding “we are here to learn from each other a peaceful and political transformation of power” Sudan Tribune learnt from Bashir’s Arabic translation as saying.

“Establishment of a federal government system in Sudan has brought a change to solve country’s problems and political situation in Sudan has become better since then” he said...

Presidency has not failed on Abyei – NCP

Al-Raed 14/12/10 – Contrary to SPLM claims, the Presidency has not failed to resolve the Abyei issue, NCP leading figure, Qutbi Al-Mahdi, said, adding that possibilities still exist for negotiations towards a compromise on the territory. Speaking to reporters yesterday, Al-Mahdi censured the SPLM position against Misseriya participation in the Abyei referendum, saying that the position has no “legal, historic, political or geographic basis”.

Al-Mahdi denied US reports that the North is in an arms race with the South of the country.

SAF troop movement to Abyei and southern borders

The Citizen 14/12/10 – SPLA spokesperson Philip Aguer Panyang revealed that SAF troops have moved to the border of Abyei and some parts of the southern Sudan. He said they have almost crossed the border but SPLA would not respond to their provocation.

“They have been doing that to interrupt the referendum of southern Sudan and we are not

surprised to hear about it," he commented, adding that SPLA is working for peace and would not be provoked by SAF warmongering before South Sudan becomes an independent nation.

He, however, observed that SAF intends to make Abyei the next battlefield. "This is a violation of the CPA because all the armed forces and parties were to work for people's welfare but SAF is determined to reignite war in the Sudan. SPLA is determined not to react to such reckless provocations," Aguer said.

"We, the SPLA will never accept any violation against the CPA but will work according to the will of the people," he added.

He asked the UN peacekeepers at the border and the international community to respond to SAF's belligerence before they take any action in Abyei where the people of the ten chief Kingdoms of nine Dinka tribes are located. He advised SPLA troops to stop listening to the endless rumours about SAF but stand firm with the GoSS to ensure that the referendum takes place peacefully without any violence.

SAF and SPLA trade accusations of military build-up in Abyei

Miraya FM 13/12/10 - The Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) has accused the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) of entering Abyei area with 10 military tanks and 15 Toyota land cruiser vehicles. Al Ahkbar Al Youm daily quoted the SAF spokesman, Al-Swarmi Khalid Saad, as saying that such developments can lead to conflict.

Meanwhile, the Head of the Abyei Administration, Deng Arop, has denied the accusation, countering that it is the SAF that has troops inside Abyei.

On his part, the spokesman of the SPLA, Colonel Philip Aguer, told Radio Miraya that the SAF allegations are baseless and untrue.

Europe vows extra help for Sudan, concerned over Abyei

AFP 13/12/10 - The EU praised voter registration in South Sudan as a milestone for its January self-determination vote while saying Monday it was concerned over poll delays in the oil district of Abyei.

The 27-nation bloc also said it was ready "to step up engagement" with Khartoum and "establish a long-term dialogue on issues of common interest".

Whatever the outcome of the January 9 referendum, which could partition Africa's largest country, the EU "remains committed to providing assistance to the people in the north," its foreign ministers said in a statement.

The European Union also pledged to examine closely possible EU support for an international debt relief effort through the IMF, World Bank and Paris Club "consistent with political progress" in Sudan.

Careful not to preempt voters' choice, European governments said they would kick in to support peace and development across the whole of Sudan whatever the outcome of the polls.

Abyei lies on the faultline between north and south Sudan and there are signs that a referendum due in January on whether it remains part of the north or joins an autonomous or independent south will be delayed.

US says Sudan out of time on Abyei referendum

Reuters 13/12/10 - Sudan has run out of time to organize a referendum on the future of its disputed Abyei region, meaning the North and South must agree to a political solution for the oil-rich territory, a senior U.S. official said on Monday.

Scott Gration, the Obama administration's special envoy for Sudan, also said veteran U.S. diplomat Dane Smith had been appointed to deal with Darfur, where violence continues even as the international community focuses on Sudan's January plebiscites.

Gration said the United States believed Sudan was on course for a Jan. 9 referendum on independence for the South but that a simultaneous vote on the future of Abyei, which both North and South claim, was no longer possible.

"I think we've passed the opportunity for there to be a poll," Gration told reporters. "It will take a political solution to resolve this issue."

Gration said Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir and Salva Kiir, the president of the South, were personally involved in discussions. Analysts say a potential deal could involve either portioning the region or allowing the South to take it over while compensating the North.

Gration said the United States and others were working hard to defuse any potential violence over Abyei.

"This is probably not a situation where either side will be happy," Gration said. "What we're looking for is a solution that probably makes both sides angry but neither side mad."

Gration said the United States remained worried about the western region of Darfur and was naming Smith, a seasoned State Department Africa hand, to work with the United Nations, the African Union and the Khartoum government on ways to stabilize the situation.

"It gives us that additional focus, that additional specific effort that we need to be able to turn the tide here in Darfur," Gration said.

"From bringing key rebel movements back into a revitalized peace process to delivering tangible improvements in security on the ground, the challenges in Darfur are considerable," said Omer Ismail, a policy adviser at the Enough Project.

"But with the right levels of attention and expertise they can be achieved."

Gration, who recently traveled to Darfur, said the United States held the government of Sudan primarily responsible for improving conditions in Darfur but said the rebel groups must also refrain from violence and permit humanitarian access.

Demonstrations in Unity state to protest detention of returnee trucks

Al-Rai Al-Aam 14/12/10 – residents in Unity state staged a demonstration yesterday to protest detention by the Misseriya of over 20 trucks carrying southern returnees since three days at “Kharsana” and “Keilik” areas in southern Kordofan. The trucks are prevented from entering the state.

SPLM youths Representative John Matip handed over a petition to the Governor of the Unity state Willian Daoud to be forwarded to GoSS VP Riek Machar. According to the petition, the demonstrators allowed the central government, GoSS and southern Kordofan state 24 hours to ensure the release of the trucks, warning of possible attack on the Misseriya and oil areas if they continue to hold the trucks.

GoSS repatriates over 28,249 from Khartoum

The Citizen 14/12/10 – Southern Sudan Relief & Rehabilitation Commission has repatriated over 28,249 internally displaced persons from Khartoum to almost all the states in southern Sudan within two weeks.

Commission chairperson William Chan Achuil, in an interview yesterday, said the returnees are motivating them much by turning up in big numbers with a decision to come home during this month. He added that many southerners are waiting on the streets, market places and fields asking for faster transportation, citing that over 1,700 IDPs in Kosti are still awaiting barges to Upper Nile, Jonglei and Greater Equatoria.

UN confirms northern air raids on south Sudan

Reuters 13/12/10 - The United Nations said on Monday that forces from Sudan's north bombed the south this month, the first independent confirmation of attacks which have raised tension before a referendum on southern secession.

The southern ruling party, the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), has accused the north of a series of bombing raids on its territory in November and December which it said were aimed at derailing the referendum. However, until Monday the U.N. peacekeeping mission had not commented on the reports.

"After verification it was established by the (joint ceasefire commission) members that air attacks took place in the vicinity of Timsaha in Western Bahr al-Ghazal and no casualties have been reported," said U.N. spokesman Kouider Zerrouk.

Only Khartoum's army has an air force. The joint ceasefire commission has officers from the armies of the north and south as well as the U.N. peacekeeping mission (UNMIS).

The northern army had denied the bombing raids and was not immediately available to comment on Monday. UNMIS said it was referring to air raids this month, not the November attacks.

The SPLM has said it would not reply militarily to what it called a provocation from the north, to keep the referendum on track. Sudan's north-south civil war claimed about 2 million lives and destabilised much of east Africa.

The northern army accuses the south of supporting rebels from the western Darfur region who

are fighting Khartoum. UNMIS said the joint ceasefire commission should be used to investigate such allegations.

The SPLM also accused the northern ruling National Congress Party (NCP) of engineering a case brought to the Constitutional Court on Sunday calling for a halt to the referendum because of massive violations during the voter registration.

But Sudanese observers said on Monday the registration was free from violations that would derail the process, pouring cold water on NCP reports of widespread manipulation.

"The registration process for the 2011 southern Sudan referendum was conducted free from violations that could significantly impact the integrity of the process, despite some shortcomings with key preparations and planning," the statement from the joint Sudanese observer missions SuGDE and SuNDE said.

The observers had 500 monitors in the south and 200 in the north during the registration process which ran from Nov. 15 to Dec. 8.

"Scattered incidents of intimidation and obstruction were reported but did not seem to be part of a broader pattern, and potential registrants were generally able to participate in the process without constraint," the statement said.

Aid groups call for action to prevent new LRA massacres

AFP 14/12/10 - Aid groups on Tuesday urged the international community to avert a third consecutive year of massacres by Lord Resistance Army rebels in central Africa in the run up to Christmas.

They called on the United Nations Security Council to set up an expert panel to address the threat of the LRA.

In a report headlined "Ghosts of Christmas Past", an alliance of 19 aid agencies said the LRA, who have preyed on civilians for more than two decades, was the most brutal rebel group in central Africa.

"Today the LRA continues to attack marginalised communities in Sudan, Central African Republic (CAR), and DRC almost four times a week," the aid groups said in their report.

"These communities await Christmas with fear," added the groups, who include Oxfam, Christian Aid, Refugees International, World Vision and War Child UK, among others.

Marcel Stoessel, Oxfam's country director in DR Congo, said it was inconceivable that international leaders had tolerated such a brutal situation -- and had done so for the last 20 years.

"The acute suffering and mass population displacement the LRA has generated across international borders is undermining stability in an already fragile region, where southern Sudan is preparing to hold a landmark referendum on secession in early 2011," the report said.

The aid groups welcomed recent steps taken by the United States and the African Union to disarm the LRA, protect civilians and increase humanitarian aid.

But it said that kidnapped people had to be helped to return home, villages had to be protected -- for military action against the LRA carried the risk of devastating retaliation by the rebels against local civilians.

The aid groups also called for the UN Security Council to set up an expert panel as "there is a chronic lack of information about the motivation, composition and location of the LRA".

They insisted too, on the need to improve infrastructures and communication. "It is no coincidence that the LRA operates in some of the most remote and underdeveloped areas of Central Africa," it argued.

NCP official rejects dual nationality for southern Sudanese

Al-Ahram Al-Youm 14/12/10 – NCP Political Secretary Dr. Ibrahim Ghandour stressed that giving southern Sudanese dual nationality is unacceptable. "If they want the nationality of the North why don't we stay in one country," he wondered. "Secession of the South is a responsibility shared by all," he added.

"The North contributed more than a billion dollar from its oil share for South's development," he told Al-Jazeera in an interview yesterday.

He said, "The SPLM is playing with fire by backing Darfur rebel movements". Ghandour said his party's position on referendum remains the same that it "will organize a timely process and will recognize its results if it is conducted in a free and transparent atmosphere and reflecting the will of the southern Sudanese".

Meanwhile, *Al-Rai Al-Aam* 14/12/10 reports Ghandour has warned SPLM separatists of serious consequences of a violent separation. He said SPLM separatists continue to incite southerners to vote for secession but they seem unaware about the danger of a possible violence and war if it is not peaceful. He added that the separatists would be responsible for the consequences of a violent separation and the serious harm that might befall the southern Sudanese.

Five lawsuits filed with Constitutional Court against referendum

Al-Sahafa 14/12/10 – Constitutional Court justice who also serves as spokesperson Somi Zaidan Attia said the suits filed with the Court against referendum were still at the phase of preliminary consideration, adding that five suits have so far been filed with the Court, four from individuals and groups and the fifth suit is challenging the constitutionality of the CPA.

He said the Court would consider the suits after they meet certain conditions and the Court's decision would be final.

Al-Watan 14/12/10 reports that the Court accepted the suit but it is still at the administrative stage and would be considered within three days as an urgent question.

SPLM "satisfied" with Referendum Registration

Miraya FM 14/12/10 - Sudan People's Liberation Movement has expressed satisfaction on the registration process for the January 2011 Referendum. Deputy Secretary General for Southern Sudan Sector, Ann Itto, also denied allegations by some political parties in southern Sudan

of SPLM's domination of the preparation of referendum process. Itto said SPLM was involved in all referendum activities because the party wanted to ensure that the process was conducted well.

Observers give referendum registration pass mark

The Citizen Juba, 14/12/10 – The Sudanese Network for Democratic Elections (SuNDE) and the Sudanese Group for Democracy and Election released yesterday a joint statement on the conduct of the voter registration process throughout Sudan and in Uganda, Kenya, Ethiopia, Australia and the US where they had sent observers.

SuNDE chairman Lony Ruot said the registration process for the referendum was conducted free from violations that could significantly impair integrity of the process, despite some shortcomings with the key preparations and planning. He noted that the process as a whole showed marked improvement over the voter registration for the last elections in southern Sudan.

He pointed out that isolated incidents of intimidation and obstructions were reported but these "did not seem to be part of a broader pattern" and potential registrants were able to participate without constraint.

Washington says registration process transparent, violence free

Sudan Vision 14/12/10 - Washington Special Envoy to the Sudan, Gen. Scott Gration has expressed his satisfaction with the efforts devoted by the South Sudan Referendum Commission(SSRC) ,praising the process of voters registration at home and abroad.

"The registration process is transparent and free of violence," Gration told reporters in Khartoum yesterday after his meeting with SSRC Chief, Prof. Mohammed Ibrahim Khalil.

We hope that the voting process will proceed smoothly and transparently to yield an outcome satisfactory to voters, the Sudanese people at large and the international community voiced the American envoy.

SSRC Protocol Department convened a meeting with the representatives of national international organizations tasked with the referendum monitoring. There, the department head, Ambassador sa'ed Sa'ad briefed participants on the supervision procedures and how to compile databases, affirming dispatching of registration lists to all states in North Sudan and some of the centers in the eight countries identified by the referendum act.

Representatives inspected the IT Department and there they got assured that systems are ready to start processing registration data.

Parties' talks on post-referendum issues achieve breakthrough – SPLM

Al-Raed 14/12/10 – SPLA Minister Nhial Paul said yesterday's talks between the NCP and the SPLM on post-referendum concerns in Juba achieved breakthrough particularly on security, nationality and citizenship issues.

Nhial told reporters that the two sides also discussed a range of other contentious issues and that they would be reconvened in Khartoum to resolve the remaining issues.

According to *Al-Akhbar* 14/12/10, Nhial said the two parties agreed on a range of controversial issues including citizenship, nationality, security and international treaties and that financial and economic issues were postponed to be sorted out in another round of talks in Khartoum scheduled for 18 December.

Sudan urges national oil companies to boost production in block 6

Sudan Tribune website 13/12/10 - The federal minister of oil Lual Deng has invited national oil companies to intensify oil production in block six to reach a million barrel in the future, reported the country's official news Agency (SUNA) on Monday.

Deng, who was speaking at a workshop held on Monday in Khartoum on the role of national companies in oil industry in the coming period, revealed that his ministry was planning on beefing up exploration in promising areas.

The minister further asked national oil companies to focus on block six in order to uplift its production to reach a million barrel a day.

Situated on the borders between south Darfur and southern Kordofan, block six is the only oil-exploration block entirely located in north Sudan. The block consists of eight oilfields operated by China's national oil company CNPC...

According to SUNA, the oil ministry is aiming to increase the rate of oil production through new exploration and improvement of current fields to reach 740,000 barrels a day by 2015.

Nearly 80 percent of Sudan's proven daily output of 490,000 oil barrels is produced from oilfields in the semi-autonomous region of south Sudan, but the pipeline that carries the oil to export terminals and refineries runs through north Sudan...

Libyan official says north to blame should the south secede

Al-Sahafa 14/12/10 – Abdulrahman Shalgam, Libya's Permanent Representative to the UN, says northern Sudan is to blame for not making Sudan's unity attractive to southern Sudanese.

"Libya's position is that secession would have negative implications but then could we be more Sudanese than the Sudanese themselves should the referendum results in separation? Of course not!" said Shalgam who was speaking to UAE-based *Al-Baya* newspaper.

INTERVIEW-West offers incentives for Sudan action on peace

Reuters (Khartoum) 14/12/10 - Western nations are offering Sudan economic incentives including lifting U.S. sanctions and reintegration with the World Bank to tempt it away from isolation after the south splits next year, Norway said.

Norway, the United States and Britain represent nations who were instrumental in sealing that accord and are guarantors.

"Western countries are increasingly focusing on the need to have clear incentives for the north, of course contingent on the willingness of the north to take part ... in a positive way," Norway's Deputy Foreign Minister Espen Barth Eide told Reuters.

"Removal of sanctions, re-entry into economic institutions, the World Bank, the IMF and so on, investments ...that dialogue is going on," he said in an interview in Khartoum on Tuesday. He said Norway could also help Sudan with debt relief for its more than \$36 billion external debt.

Western nations fear that once the south splits, the north will become increasingly isolated and Islamist, especially as President Omar al-Bashir is wanted by the International Criminal Court for war crimes and genocide.

"The hope is that this approach will tilt it in this more open, more pluralistic direction," Eide said.

Norway, a major oil producer, has been advising both north and south on cooperation over Sudan's about 500,000 barrels per day of crude, which lies mostly in the south with the infrastructure in the north. It has also provided technical help on extraction and revenue management.

"We are looking at ways to take more gains out of each field ... this is a question of money and technology and you balance the cost to the gain," he said, adding Norway could raise the yield from Sudan's oil from 18 percent to 20 percent.

The minister said properly-managed oil revenues would help the impoverished south develop.

"It's going to start as a weak state -- they have some institutions but those institutions have very limited capacity," Eide said. He said Norway was helping to strengthen government, political parties and civil society.

"(Government is) also tax collection, border guards and all the nitty gritty institutions that you need to get things going and a lot of that has to be built almost from scratch," he said of the south. "What I do not want to see is that we do it for them," he said of donor nations.

Sudan's north-south war killed about 2 million people and destabilised much of east Africa. Eide said he believed there was enough incentive for both sides not to return to violence, blaming aggressive rhetoric from the north and south on building leverage ahead of end-game negotiations.

The former foes have still to agree on post-referendum issues including how to continue sharing oil, sharing assets and the debt, citizenship of millions of southerners and nomads who have built lives across the border and on demarcating the disputed north-south border itself, where much of the oil lies.

South Sudan must establish media laws, journalists urges

Sudan Tribune website 12/11/10 - The founder of an independent newspaper The Citizen Nhal Bol says there are many challenges in the media in Sudan including press freedom, independent ownership and lack of professional journalists.

Bol, told Sudan Tribune in Juba that operating in northern Sudan is difficult especially when covering the International Criminal Court (ICC), which issued an arrest warrant for the Sudanese

President Omar Hassan al-Bashir for alleged genocide and war crimes in Darfur.

He says that the Khartoum government has often attempted to block the work of The Citizen, which was established in 2005.

But he said that there were challenges in the whole of Sudan covering the south's referendum on independence, with northern politicians advocating unity while in the southern government has openly called for the south to vote for separation.

Bol also said there are not enough professional journalists or independent media houses in Sudan. He said that The Citizen recently needed a bank loan to stay in operation.

He said that The Citizen was transferring itself to the south so they did not become isolated should the south vote for independence.

Bol said in South Sudan there is a different ideology in terms of understanding the role of the media. He said that it was easy to have dialogue but said that in the six years since the north south peace deal media laws have not been established in the south.

He said the lack of a media law, which he says he has been fighting for means that journalists can be arrested at the order of politicians.

Bol said he is now preparing to set up a printing press in Juba that will not only produce newspapers but also print books and examination papers for schools in the south.

Other Highlights

Southern parties request ICC trial for SPLM leaders

Al-Ahram Al-Youm 14/12/10 – The South Sudan Democratic Forum (SSDF) has accused the SPLM of failing to honour the recommendations of the south-south dialogue conference. SSDF Secretary-General David Biel claims that the SPLM distributed only SDG 4 million to 23 southern political parties and organisations to pave the way for the conduct of the referendum. He wondered about the fate of some SDG98 million earmarked for support to the political parties. The SSDF figure threatened that they make seek ICC action against some SPLM leaders for complicity in crimes against humanity and for killing secessionists before they themselves joined the rally for secession.

Minnawi is responsible for the death of the DPA – NCP

Al-Akhbar 14/12/10 – NCP figure Ibrahim Gandour says SLM's Mini Minnawi is responsible for scrapping the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA). He pointed out that SLM leader did not want to implement the security arrangements they agreed upon and the NCP would not let the Senior Presidential Aide to keep his forces and "liberated territories". He called on Minnawi to abide by the DPA.

He downplayed recent remarks by Minnawi claiming that the NCP has declared war on his forces. Gandour pointed out that a replacement has been appointed for Minnawi at the helms of the Transitional Darfur Regional Authority.

Governor warns against use of girl flogging video to embarrass government

Al-Sahafa 14/12/10 – Khartoum State Governor Abdulrahman Al-Khidir has warned against the use of a video, posted on YouTube showing policemen flogging a girl, for the purpose of embarrassing the government. He said some circles known to the government are seeking to exploit this issue for certain agendas.

He pointed out that the girl in the video had been flogged thrice in the past on immorality and prostitution-related offences.

He said the ongoing investigation is limited to how the incident was videoed and leaked, adding that the policemen who administered the flogging were transferred to another section and had admitted excesses in the manner they carried out the penalty.

Sudan police arrest women protesting at flogging video

Reuters (Khartoum) 14/12/10 - Sudanese police arrested dozens of women protesting on Tuesday against laws they say humiliate women after a video of a woman being flogged in public appeared on the Internet.

"Humiliating your women is humiliating all your people," the women shouted as they were being arrested on Tuesday.

Around 50 women sat down outside the justice ministry holding banners and surrounded by riot police telling them to move.

Three plain-clothed security men threw the BBC correspondent to the ground, confiscating his equipment.

All the women were arrested and taken to a nearby police station. Their lawyers were prevented from entering, but senior opposition politicians were allowed to go inside.

The women said they had tried to get permission for the protest but had been refused. The police declined to comment.

"The authorities here take the law into their own hands. No one knows what happens inside these police stations," said one of their lawyers, Mona el-Tijani. "This video was just one example of what happens all the time."

Sudan's justice ministry said it would investigate whether the punishment was administered properly.

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