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Media Monitoring Report

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Referendum Watch

- Presidency meeting failed to take place (*Al-Rai Al-Aam*)
- CPA parties conclude meetings in Vienna (*Al-Khartoum*)
- CPA parties agree on 85% of contentious issues (*Al-Wifaq*)
- Mbeki, Kiir and Taha to discuss Abyei referendum postponement (*Al-Sahafa*)
- Voter registration to start tomorrow in 3,000 centres (*Al-Rai Al-Aam*)
- South Sudan puts out referendum symbols (*ST*)
- SPLM sets up referendum operation rooms in South Sudan (*ST*)
- S. Sudan monitors see risk of fraud in voter lists (*Reuters*)
- Demonstrators hold international community responsible for deterioration of political situation (*Ajras Al-Hurriya*)
- Netherlands donates \$ 10 million for referendum (*Al-Ahdath*)
- UNMIS conducts exercise in Wau on protection of civilians (*Miraya*)

Other Headlines

- JEM, SAF heavy fighting at the border with the South (*Al-Rai Al-Aam*)
- Sudan bombing won't renew conflict – Official (*AP*)
- Khartoum accuses south Sudan of aiding Darfur rebel group (*AFP*)
- Sudan's NCP chides Darfur peace partner over remarks (*ST*)
- Kenya admits ICC warrant for Bashir forced IGAD venue change (*ST*)

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Highlights

Presidency meeting failed to take place

Al-Rai Al-Aam 14/11/10 – The delay of arrival of FVP Salva Kiir Mayardit and the departure of President Al-Bashir for pilgrimage resulted in the postponement of a reportedly crucial Presidency meeting scheduled to take place yesterday to discuss pending issues.

Sources said the Presidency sent an aircraft to Juba to fly Kiir to Khartoum but it failed to take off after five attempts. However, due to the importance of the meeting, Kiir decided to come aboard a Kenyan aircraft and he was able to meet President Al-Bashir at the Airport. No date has been fixed for another meeting.

Ajras Al-Hurriya 14/11/10 reports the short-notice meeting was requested by the NCP for discussion on controversial issues.

Al-Intibaha 14/11/10 reports a sources as saying that the meeting was of special importance and the SPLM was to blame for failure of the meeting.

CPA parties conclude meetings in Vienna

Al-Khartoum 14/11/10 – The NCP and the SPLM have concluded their talks in Vienna and have reportedly reached understandings on post-referendum issues particularly on Abyei territory and the demarcation of the border. Sources said mediators of the meeting advised that the territory be administered jointly by the two partners and stressed the need to complete the demarcation of the border.

The two parties' representatives are expected to submit their understandings to the Presidency for consideration and decision.

CPA parties agree on 85% of contentious issues

Al-Wifaq 14/11/10 – an anonymous source revealed that the CPA parties have made great strides towards an agreement on the controversial issues, saying they have agreed on 85% of the pending issues with only 15% of issues remaining and they are determined to resolve them.

Reportedly, the parties have agreed to maintain an economic cooperation between the North and the South including the use of one currency for two years as well as security and military cooperation.

Mbeki, Kiir and Taha to discuss postponement of Abyei referendum today

Al-Sahafa 14/11/10 – AU mediator Thabo Mbeki is to hold a decisive meeting today with FVP Salva Kiir Mayardit and VP Ali Osman Taha for discussion on Abyei.

Sources are expecting Mbeki to raise the issue of delay of Abyei referendum in accordance with certain steps that will reassure residents of the area and help avert an explosion of the situation.

However sources said it is unlikely that the meeting would achieve breakthrough on key issues

particularly on the Abyei territory and demarcation of the border.

JEM, SAF heavy fighting at the border with the South

Al-Rai Al-Aam 14/11/10 – The Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) have attacked JEM fighters while trying to cross the border into the South.

SAF spokesperson Lt. Col. Al-Sawarmi Khaled confirmed the attack on JEM southwest of the town of Meiram in southern Kordofan, adding SAF inflicted heavy casualties on the JEM and 67 of their wounded fighters were transported to Juba, Yei and Uganda by organizations' aircraft.

Voter registration to start tomorrow in 3,000 centres

Al-Rai Al-Aam 14/11/10 – SSRC has announced that voter registration would begin tomorrow Monday across the country.

SSRC Spokesperson and Head of SSRC Media Department George Makuer said the SSRC had received considerable funding from the federal government and GoSS for the process and denied that the SSRC had officially requested the Presidency to postpone the referendum. Reportedly, the Commission has called for the postponement of the referendum for six months.

According to *Al-Khartoum* 14/11/10, the SSRC announced yesterday centres for voter registration in the northern states and names of heads of committees at these centres.

South Sudan puts out referendum symbols

Sudan Tribune website 13/11/10 - In presence of hundreds of people who thronged the Juba-based Nyakuron Cultural Center to witness the historical event, the regional referendum body unveiled Saturday the long-awaited symbols that will be used to determine the future of Southern Sudan on January 9, 2011.

Explaining the two symbols, Justice Chan Reec Madut, deputy chairperson of the Southern Sudan Referendum Commission and Southern Sudan Referendum Bureau chairperson, said the two-hand symbol held together represents the option for unity, while separation is portrayed using a waving hand.

Justice Chan Reec also appealed to the southern Sudanese to fully understand the two symbols, saying the duo will determine the destiny of the country during the referendum on self-determination.

But already, a vocal member of Parliament from Abyei region has urged the Bureau to find alternatives to the two approved referendum symbols, describing it as "totally confusing" to the would be voters, although his remarks could generate more debate on referendum.

According to Arop, the two referendum symbols are likely to confuse voters, given that nearly 90% of the southern population are illiterate, having been affected by the over two-decade civil war that took place in the country.

"I think it would have been better if the referendum bureau put something that will not confuse our people. The symbols suggested for the voting process will only benefit the educated ones at

the expense of illiterate people," the Abyei lawmaker told Sudan Tribune Saturday.

Arop further said the problem would have been made easier if different animals were chosen or if the referendum bureau had stuck to the symbols of a tree or star for unity and separation respectively.

On the contrary, Acuil Malith Banngol, an official from the ruling Sudan Peoples' Liberation Movement (SPLM) southern sector secretariat, praised the referendum bureau, saying the two symbols are simple and straight to understand.

"The two hands mean togetherness, while the single one stands for bye. What is so difficult to understand there? Its straight to the point," he said.

Nhial Bol, the Managing Editor of the Citizen newspaper said the unity and separation symbols, which were resolved after a series of debates, are simple enough for anyone to understand and reflect the historical events that have been happening between the north and south of the country.

Daniel Deng, the Executive Director of Deng Foundation, a non-profit making organization also welcomed the new referendum symbols, but urged all stakeholders to focus more on civic and voters' education, describing it as the basic foundation a successful referendum.

South Sudan is due to hold its referendum on self-determination in January 2011. The event is widely seen as a key part of Sudan's 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), which ended over two-decades of a bloody civil war fought between north and south.

SPLM sets up referendum operation rooms in South Sudan

Sudan Tribune website 12/11/10 - The SPLM has set up referendum registration rooms, with just few days to the long-awaited voters' registration exercise earmarked for November 15 to December 1.

The centers, to be stationed in all the 10 states of Southern Sudan, will serve as avenues for coordinating the referendum registration exercise and subsequent phases of the entire process. It was established by the SPLM's general secretariat in its southern sector.

Henry Wani Rondyang, the officer in-charge of information and public relations said the newly-established registrations rooms, which will compose of teams in the 10 states, including Abyei, Blue Nile and Southern Kordofan areas.

The team will liaise with relevant local public institutions, such as Southern Sudan Referendum Bureau (SSRB), the various referendum taskforces, media outlets, civil society organizations and all stakeholders involved in the referendum process, Rondyang said.

"The ROR [Referendum Operation Room] will also coordinate and share information with international bodies such as UNMIS [United Nations Mission in Sudan], which has a role in the referendum process, international observers, etc," he further stressed. Acuil Banngol, an official from the SPLM southern sector urged all eligible voters to ensure that they are registered at the various registration centers, saying the referendum offers a vital opportunity for southerners to determine their destiny.

Meanwhile, with assistance from the US government funded International Republican Institute (IRI), the SPLM southern sector has already trained trainers and supervisors to aid the referendum preparation process in the state. Others will reportedly be sent to Blue Nile and Southern Kordofan to prepare people for popular consultations.

S. Sudan monitors see risk of fraud in voter lists

Reuters 14/11/10 - A south Sudan civil society umbrella group said on Saturday that voter lists for the southern referendum on secession could be falsified because it was not clear who would be eligible to vote.

Southerners will begin to register on Monday for the January 9 plebiscite, the climax of a 2005 north-south peace deal that ended Africa's longest civil war. Most analysts expect the south to choose secession.

SuNDE, which brings together 75 south Sudanese civil society groups monitoring the vote, said the commission organising the poll had not clarified which ethnic groups are considered southerners, which could cause mistakes during registration.

"Unfortunately the SSRC (Southern Sudan Referendum Commission) has provided little guidance on how to determine eligibility," SuNDE said in a statement.

That would be a particular problem in north-south border areas and in the north, where inter-marriage between tribes meant physical appearance alone would not be enough to identify a person of southern descent, it said.

"The lack of clarification on eligibility requirements could cause eligible voters to be denied registration and ineligible voters to be registered and leaves the voter registration process vulnerable to manipulation," the statement said.

SSRC spokesman George Makuer said the commission had not thought there was a problem over eligibility so had not made a list of ethnic groups that would qualify as being indigenous to the south.

"The commission doesn't have that list because it was not seen as necessary -- the indigenous southern Sudanese are well known," he said

Makuer said he was not sure if the Dinka Ngok tribe in Abyei would also be eligible to vote in the southern referendum.

Demonstrators hold international community responsible for deterioration of political situation

Ajras Al-Hurriya 14/11/10 – Thousands of youths staged a demonstration yesterday in Kadugli (Southern Kordofan) warning of procrastination and delay of the CPA implementation. The demonstrators blamed the international community for the deterioration of the political situation in the state and demanded the implementation of the remaining CPA provisions particularly the protocols on Southern Kordofan, Nuba Mountains and the Blue Nile areas.

Netherlands pledges \$ 10 million for referendum

Al-Ahdath 14/11/10 – Foreign Minister Ali Ahmed Karti, speaking to reporters after a meeting with Dutch Foreign Minister, announced the donation of \$ 10 million by the Netherlands in support for the SSRC.

Meanwhile, the Dutch International Cooperation minister expressed intent to visit Sudan in the near future to acquaint himself with the developments on the ground.

UNMIS conducts exercise in Wau on protection of civilians

Miraya FM 13/11/10 - A four-day rehearsal exercise on UNMIS responsiveness to protect civilians in crisis situation has been concluded in Wau, the capital town of Western Bahr el Ghazal State. Speaking to Radio Miraya, the sector two UNMIS coordinator, Colonel Johnson Ondieki, said the rehearsal exercise nicknamed "Operations Swift Shield II" was a success.

Meanwhile, troops from both battalions of Bangladeshi and the Indian peacekeeping reserve forces which moved from Juba to Wau also participated in the exercise. The four governors of Greater Bahr el-Ghazal states, the joint integrated units and the people were also involved and made aware of the UNMIS civilian protection package.

Other Highlights

Sudan bombing won't renew conflict – Official

AP 13/11/10 - A bombing on the disputed north-south border of Sudan heightened concerns of renewed conflict in the region, but a Southern Sudan army official says the attack was aimed at rebels, not the south, and observers doubt this one incident would lead to anything more serious.

The borders of Northern Bahr Ghazal and Southern Darfur, where the bombing occurred, are in dispute and the 2005 peace deal required the border between Southern Sudan and the north be demarcated. That exercise, however, has also been fraught with delays.

Col. Philip Aguer, spokesman for the Sudan People's Liberation Army, which protects oil-rich Southern Sudan, said Saturday that north Sudan's military bombed a disputed north-south border area but the attack was not meant for the south.

Aguer said north Sudan military officers consulted with their southern counterparts through a joint military panel after the Friday bombing by an Antonov plane and determined the bombs were launched in the north, but landed in Southern Sudan territory close by. The panel, called the Joint Defense Board, is part of the 2005 peace deal and is meant to help avoid misunderstandings between the armies of the north and the south.

"The bomb fell in our territory by mistake and the SAF (Sudan Armed Forces) admitted it was not intentional," said Aguer. He said the bombing took place in Northern Bahr Gazal State, located in the southwest of the country and part of Southern Sudan, but would not give a precise location. Aguer said there were casualties but declined to give details.

The top U.N. official in Southern Sudan, David Gressly, said casualties are in the single digits and a U.N. team is going to the area to assess the situation.

Lazaro Sumbeiywo, the Kenyan retired general who mediated the 2005 peace deal, said that since signing the agreement, north and south had only fought once, in 2008, in a dispute over the oil-rich area of Abyei.

Sumbeiywo declined to comment on the Friday incident but said when he went to assess the general situation in Southern Sudan two weeks ago, he did not find the semiautonomous region tense.

"In the sense that both parties need each other. The south has the oil and the north has the pipeline. How do you kill the conveyor and expect to get anything?" Sumbeiywo told The Associated Press.

Aguer said that the north's military said they were targeting members of the Justice and Equality Movement rebel group, which has bases in Southern Darfur state bordering Northern Bahr Gazal. JEM is the most powerful of the Darfur rebel groups and has been fighting a rebellion in western Sudan's since 2003...

BBC News website 14/11/10 reports that the southern army says a northern plane bombed its territory, injuring several people.

The bomb landed in the Northern Bahr Gazal state on Friday, said southern army spokesman Col Phillip Aguer. He said the incident took place when the northern armed forces were pursuing Darfuri rebels near the border.

A northern army spokesman confirmed that troops had engaged the rebels, but said the fighting had taken place 23km (14 miles) north of the border...

Khartoum accuses south Sudan of aiding Darfur rebel group

AFP 13/11/10 - The Sudanese army on Saturday accused the armed forces of southern Sudan of aiding Darfuri rebels, a day after clashes in a region between the country's north and south close to Darfur.

On Friday, the Sudanese army clashed with fighters of the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) near Al-Meirem, a sector bordering the south's North Bahr al-Ghazal and the north's South Kordofan, an army spokesman said.

Southern Kordofan is a state of central Sudan strategically located between the south of the country and Darfur.

"The JEM fled from the southern side of the border and was received by the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA)," Khartoum's army spokesman Sawarmi Khaled Saad told AFP.

"The SPLA evacuated the JEM's wounded towards the towns of Juba, Yei and even to Uganda. This is unacceptable," said Saad.

Both Khartoum and the SPLA, meanwhile, denied reports that the Sudanese army had bombed SPLA positions.

"There was no bombardment of SPLA positions. There were clashes between a Darfur rebel group and the Sudanese army in Southern Kordofan," SPLA spokesman Philip Aguer said.

"One of the bombs fell on the side of South Sudan. We have discussed the matter with the Sudanese army. It was unintended. The matter is closed," the spokesman said.

JEM spokesman Ahmed Hussein Adam said the army had bombed rebel fighters and civilians up until Saturday morning. "But it's not true that the SPLA... is giving military aid to the JEM," he said by telephone from Doha.

A delegation from the rebel group met peace mediators in the Qatari capital on Saturday and afterwards Adam said the group was ready to resume negotiations with Khartoum.

"We have handed the mediation a written paper representing our vision for a comprehensive solution," he told reporters.

"We will do our best to manage a transparent and constructive dialogue to find a strategic solution to the region's crisis."

Adam called JEM's presence in Doha "a serious signal that the movement prefers a peaceful solution although it is capable of other options."

JEM is working on creating "a broad front of resistance, involving all the armed factions" in Darfur in case talks with Khartoum break down, the spokesman said.

Sudan's NCP chides Darfur peace partner over remarks

Sudan Tribune website 13/11/10 - The ruling National Congress Party (NCP) on Saturday blasted the statements made by the head of the Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM) faction Minni Arcua Minnawi and described him as someone who is implementing foreign agenda.

The Darfur rebel leader who was the major figure to sign the peace agreement in Abuja more than four years ago, have grown disgruntled over the years with the NCP and ended up residing in the South Sudan capital of Juba. He has yet to retain his title as a senior presidential assistant after being stripped of it following April's general elections.

Minnawi was reported as saying by local media that the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) is a "failed maneuvering tactic" and that the negotiations underway in Doha with other rebel factions are nothing but a "negotiation tactic".

The head of organizations bureau at the NCP Qutbi Al-Mahdi told the government-run Sudanese media Center (SMC) website that Minnawi's statements lack credibility and objective political discourse.

Al-Mahdi added that Minnawi is now "hostage" to internal and external agendas after losing presence on the ground in Darfur. Furthermore, the NCP official said that the ex-rebel leader failed to implement his end of the DPA and the security arrangements in particular.

He also mocked Minnawi saying that he is seeking support from the semi-autonomous Government of South Sudan (GoSS) to re-launch armed rebellion against the central government describing him as a "rejected personality" from the government and all negotiating parties in Darfur.

Minnawi's faction has been hit by defections and a series of attempts by his aides to remove him which he blamed on NCP.

As head of the Darfur transitional authority Minnawi has also not been able to establish a suitable environment for the implementation of the deal on the ground with the local authorities. The newly elected governors in the region reportedly have bad relations with him and refuse to work with him.

Observers say that Khartoum lost interest in Minnawi and is more focused on reaching a deal with SLM led by Abdel-Wahid Al-Nur and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) headed by Khalil Ibrahim.

Kenya admits ICC warrant for Bashir forced IGAD venue change

Sudan Tribune website 13/11/10 - The Kenyan government for the first time acknowledged that it was forced to change the location of the Inter-Governmental Authority for Development (IGAD) special summit on Sudan to avoid the controversy over the attendance of President Omer Hassan Al-Bashir.

The meeting was originally scheduled to take place in Nairobi on October 30th but in light of international and domestic pressure was moved to Addis Ababa. Later it was announced that it was postponed indefinitely for unknown reasons.

Kenya is a full member of the ICC and is therefore theoretically obligated to apprehend the Sudanese leader should he set foot on its territory. However, the East African nation chose not to do so when Bashir attended the promulgation of the new Constitution last August drawing fierce criticism at home and abroad.

Ethiopia on the other hand is not signatory to the treaty that founded the Hague based tribunal. On Wednesday the Kenyan president Mwai Kibaki invited Bashir to the IGAD summit though it was not specified at the time where it would take place and when. The invitation was delivered by the acting Foreign Affairs minister George Saitoti who traveled to Khartoum for that purpose.

A Kenyan official today confirmed that the summit will take place in Addis Ababa to prevent Al-Bashir's presence from overshadowing the meeting.

"We don't want to take our eyes off the ball. This is a very crucial meeting and we want to extract a commitment from the main actors in Juba and Khartoum that they will respect the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) and that they will play their role in ensuring the referendum goes ahead peacefully," acting Foreign affairs Permanent Secretary Patrick Wamoto was quoted as saying by the 'Daily Nation' newspaper.

Wamoto said that invitations for the summit in Addis Ababa went out in President Kibaki's name because Kenya chairs the subcommittee on Sudan in the IGAD.

He further said Kenya would have preferred that the meeting be held in Naivasha where the North-South peace agreement was signed but the risk that Bashir's presence would provide the main focus of international attention during the meeting forced a rethink.

Wamoto's remarks stroke a different tone from the former Kenyan FM Moses Wetangula who denied that ICC warrant had anything to do with relocating the summit.

"We are trying to see if we can have it in Addis, which is the seat of the AU (African Union), so that the twin bodies of IGAD and the AU itself can deal with the issues, in preparation for the January 9 referendum," Wetangula told Reuters by phone.

"We have not and we will not divert any meetings out of Nairobi because of ICC. ICC does not have a hold on Kenya, we are a signatory to a treaty establishing it so we cannot live under fear over a treaty that we are just a party to," he said.

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