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# Media Monitoring Report

United Nations Mission in Sudan/ Public Information Office

## Referendum Watch

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# Highlights

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## **SSLA says referendum will not take place in three states**

*Al-Sahafa* 15/12/10 – The Southern Sudan Legislative Assembly (SSLA) has informed the National Assembly that three southern states would be excluded from the conduct of the upcoming referendum for security and logistical reasons.

Chairman of the National Assembly Labour Committee El Fateh Izzeldine told reporters yesterday that SSLA Speaker James Wani told MPs during recent visit to Juba that referendum would not be conducted in Unity and Jonglei states due to security problems and that north Bahr el Ghazal state would also be excluded from the conduct of the process on logistical grounds including the failure by the European countries to honour their commitments toward the process.

## **3.5 million People registered for South's referendum**

*The Citizen* 15/12/10 – SSRC Deputy Chairman Justice Chan Reec announced yesterday that 3,275,577 people were registered in 95% of registration centres in southern Sudan while 114 centres have not yet reported due to inaccessibility and lack of communication.

Addressing a press conference at the Ministry of Information, Chan said that in northern Sudan 16,890 people were registered in 43% of the registration centres while 5,889 have so far been reported registered in parts of the Diaspora.

## **Constitutional Court accepts suit against SSRC in form and content**

*Sudan Vision* 15/12/10 - Constitutional Court accepted yesterday in form and content the objection submitted by a group of Sudanese lawyers against the SSRC over the constitutional breaches that accompanied the commission's performance during the voter registration period.

The Chief of the lawyers group, Ismail Hassan Haj Hamad said that the demands include revoking all the procedures of the voter registration process and dissolving the SSRC besides establishing a new commission committed to the SSRC law which avails the chance for all southerners to exercise their constitutional right in a free and fair manner.

*Sudan Tribune website* 15/12/10 reported Ismail Hassan Haj-Hamad head of legal team that filed the challenge as saying that the next step would be for the court to consider relief requested by them and also order the South Sudan Referendum Commission (SSRC) to file a response to the motion after hearing the arguments and then issue a final ruling.

He said that they have asked the court to annul all procedures arising out of the voter registration and immediately halt work of the SSRC until the court reaches a decision on whether the commission should be dissolved and have a new one established that would adhere with the Referendum Act of 2009.

The lawyers have officially filed their case last Sunday saying they “represent ordinary citizens who believe that their constitutional rights have been violated”.

Lawyers speaking to Reuters said that the court would likely rule after three days.

Among the arguments put forward by the group that the referendum law stipulates that registering the voters and finalizing the lists should have been completed three months prior to the vote. Because the Sudanese national assembly has not passed any amendments to the current law and thus the voter registration process should be deemed unconstitutional.

Another source at the commission told Sudan Tribune that the SSRC chief Mohamed Ibrahim Khalil has already informed both the NCP and the SPLM of the legal loopholes that exist in the process but received no response.

He added that Khalil was directly warned by a handful of NCP officials that they will push for a legal challenge against his commission and it was hinted to him that he should resign.

The head of the SSRC came under fierce attack in recent weeks from the NCP which claimed that he has turned a blind eye to "blatant" violations committed by the SPLM in the registration process.

The NCP alleges that the ex-Southern rebel group is intimidating potential voters so that they don't register in order to make it likely that the referendum will result in a vote for secession.

### **DDR programme to continue after referendum**

*Al-Intibaha* 15/12/10 – DDR National Council has confirmed that the DDR would continue regardless of the referendum outcome, dismissing reports that the programme would stop after the referendum.

DDR Military Committee chair Lt. Col. Hussein Abdul Zahir told the newspaper yesterday that Chairman of the National Council of DDR Gen. Bakri Hassan Saleh has directed the continuation of the programme after the referendum, adding that they target 90,000 elements in SAF and PDF in the North, 25% of which have so far been demobilized.

### **Presidents of Egypt and Libya to visit Khartoum and Juba soon**

*Al-Sudani* 15/12/10 – Egypt and Libya have decided to exert efforts at their leadership level to address the Sudanese issue. Sources said contacts are ongoing between the two countries and that an Egyptian delegation is currently in Libya to coordinate stances of the two countries on the Sudanese issue.

According to the sources, the contacts between Egypt and Libya are likely to culminate in a visit by Presidents Mubarak and Kaddafi to Khartoum and Juba during the few coming days.

### **FVP Kiir accuses parties of buying vote**

*Al-Ayyam* Juba, 15/12/10 – First Vice-President, President of the Government of Southern Sudan, Salva Kiir Mayardit, says the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) recent bombardment of some areas in southern Sudan was meant to derail the referendum and ruin the region.

“They want us to reciprocate and then cause an outbreak of war ... this would not happen. We do not want to derail the referendum,” he said, adding that he has issued directives to the SPLA not

to retaliate.

“We have asked the international community and the UN to investigate the reports,” he told a graduation ceremony of the South Sudan Police Force. The FVP reiterated commitment not to return to war.

The FVP noted that there are people who pay SDG500 to buy voter registration cards in order to make sure the 60% threshold required for recognition of the outcome of the referendum is not met. Others may try to steal and then burn the ballot boxes when the time comes all in a bid to derail the process.

On Abyei, he said that the Misseriya would continue to roam the Abyei area unhindered.

### **No backtracking on the CPA – VP Taha**

*Al-Intibaha* 15/12/10 – Vice-President Ali Osman Mohamed Taha said the government would proceed with firm determination to ensure that the people of southern Sudan enjoy their right to self-determination.

Taha, who was addressing the opening ceremony of school competition in Khartoum yesterday, said there would be no backtracking on the 9 January 2011 referendum.

“We want to demonstrate to those who think that 9 January 2011 would be a day of panic and chaos in Sudan that Sudan would remain peaceful and stable and would have a brighter future,” Taha said.

### **Ruling party ready to accept referendum outcome, says al-Bashir**

Addis Ababa, Dec 15, 2010 (Sudan Tribune/All Africa Global Media via COMTEX) -- As Sudan nears a referendum on southern independence, President Omar al-Bashir says that his ruling National Congress Party (NCP) is prepared to peacefully accept the outcome regardless of the result.

The Sudanese president made the remarks while addressing international delegates, diplomats and African leaders gathered in the Ethiopian capital, Addis Ababa, for the 5th international conference on Federalism - which kicked-off late on Monday.

"We are committed to accept the results whether the vote leads to unity or secession as long as the referendum is conducted in a free, fair and transparent manner," said Bashir.

"In Sudan, we are still awaiting the unity of our country in accordance with the stipulations of Comprehensive Peace Agreement, which calls for the two partners of the agreement to work together to make the unity option attractive," President Bashir told the conference.

However, with unresolved issues yet pending, there are growing concerns of a possible return to war. Bashir However said that his government is working with south Sudan's SPLM to assure peace and cooperation between the Sudanese people and stressed that there will not be a return to war.

He went on to say that, regardless of the final outcome, the upcoming "referendum must not be

used as an excuse for a renewed civil war in Sudan."

"The NCP together with our partners SPLM have already gone too far in setting and coordinating our plans for a mutual and brotherly relationship between north and south, both in case of unity or secession," he said.

"We have agreed to put behind our backs all issues that might lead to a resumption of hostilities. Sustainable peace is going to be our motto in all cases." ...

## Other Highlights

### Police arrest protesters of girl flogging video

*Dailies* 15/12/10 – Police arrested yesterday 45 women and 5 men representing activists, politicians, media persons and university students who took to streets in Khartoum to protest a widely circulated video showing a woman being flogged by policemen. The detained persons were charged with incitement of riots.

*Sudan Tribune website* 14/12/10 reported that over forty protesters mostly women were arrested Tuesday by the Sudanese authorities following a peaceful demonstration staged to protest against brutal flogging of a young woman by the police.

The protest took place after the widespread circulation of a video showing a laughing police officer whipping the woman. The video is posted on YouTube but also several Arab channels broadcasted some extract where appear blue-uniformed policemen who took turns whipping her across the head and feet.

The state security officers arrested 46 women and six men today in central Khartoum near the ministry of justice while they were taking part in a demonstration organized by the "No to Women's Oppression Coalition".

The angered women wanted to deliver a protest letter to the minister of justice calling for the abolition of the "Public Order Regime". A number of laws and legal dispositions prohibit mixing of unmarried couples also ban women wearing of pants or any other indecent dress in public places. The criminalized acts are punishable by fines or lashes.

The organizers said Police permission had been granted for the demonstration. However the police charged them with "civil disobedience" and undermining the work of police officers before releasing them later.

Security men seized the equipment of a BBC correspondent who was trying to report about the protest. Eye-witness said he had been thrown to the ground before to confiscate his material.

Sudanese officials defended the whipping of women saying it is provided in the Sharia, Islamic law, but said probing the way the flogging was implemented.

Commenting on the protest, Khartoum governor Abdel-Rahman Al-Khidir warned in a statement to the Bleue Nile TV that his government "will not allow anyone to exploit this for political ends."

However, *Al-Rai Al-Aam* 15/12/10 reports that authorities released 6 men and 46 women on bail after they were charged under articles 68, 69 and 77 of the Penal Code. According to the authorities, the detained people had taken part in an unauthorized demonstration.

Meanwhile, *Al-Intibaha* 15/12/10 reports National Assembly Legislation and Justice Committee member El Fadil Haj Suleiman as saying that the Committee would hold a meeting today with the Ministry of Justice, Chief Justice and Director General of Police for discussion on the flogging video to know the basis of the punishment and how it was administered.

In another development, *Al-Sahafa* 15/12/10 reports that the public order police apprehended yesterday nine female university students, two ladies and two men on charge of indecency inside a coiffeur in Khartoum II.

Acting on a tip-off, policemen raided the coiffeur in Khartoum II, finding a man dressing the hair of a girl and another man in an indecent situation with another girl.

### **Juba suffers acute shortage of jet fuel**

*Al-Intibaha* 15/12/10 – Southern Sudan has been hit by an acute shortage in fuel, especially jet fuel, forcing some aircraft companies to cancel flights scheduled for Juba.

Meanwhile petrol prices have gone up with authorities trying to import it by land through a neighbouring state.

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