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Media Monitoring Report

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Post-Referendum Watch

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Highlights

VP Taha rejects Mbeki's proposals

Al-Akhbar 14/3/11 – AUHIP Chair Thabo Mbeki has declined to speak to the press after meeting with VP Ali Osman Taha yesterday in Khartoum.

Sources revealed to the newspaper that Mbeki, who requested the meeting with Taha, presented proposals to the latter to address some issues but his suggestions received no positive response.

SPLM's suspension of dialogue with the NCP has frozen the work of Mbeki's committee which is handling a host of issues relating to post-referendum arrangements.

According to *Sudan Tribune.com* 14/3/11, Mbeki briefed Taha on the post-referendum talks, mediated by him, that took place in Addis Ababa between the NCP and the SPLM.

NCP official Ibrahim Ghandour said in press statements that Mbeki would head to Juba to continue discussions he began in Khartoum with the South Sudan government on ways to defuse tensions and provide a roadmap for future dialogue between the two sides.

US, Norway, Britain want Sudan talks to resume

AFP 15/3/11 - The United States, Norway and Britain on Tuesday called for the resumption of talks between Khartoum and southern Sudan ahead of the south's planned independence later this year.

The southern Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) called off the talks on Saturday, accusing the ruling National Congress Party (NCP) in Khartoum of plotting the ouster of its breakaway government.

The Sudan Troika, made up of the United States, Norway and Britain, expressed "serious concern" about the breakdown of the talks.

"In this sensitive period, it is critical that the NCP and SPLM maintain their dialogue and make further progress toward the creation of sustainable economic, political, and security arrangements," it said in a statement.

It urged both sides to "take steps against alleged actions that destabilize each other's governments and territories, and to lay the ground for mutual cooperation with the goal of the creation of two viable states in July."

The Troika also expressed concern about recent deadly violence in the disputed border district of Abyei, calling on both sides to "take immediate measures to restrain armed groups under their influence."

The Troika statement, signed by US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, Norwegian Foreign Minister Jonas Gahr Stoere and British Foreign Secretary William Hague, condemned the

violence there. "Allegations of support to proxies are serious, and should be investigated," it said.

SPLM proves NCP supports militia

Khartoum Monitor 14/3/11 – SPLM SG Pagan Amum, speaking to press and diplomatic missions in Juba yesterday, showed evidence proving the NCP's support to militia group to destabilize the South. He said his party would not resume dialogue with the NCP on post-referendum issues and remaining part of the CPA provisions if the NCP does not stop giving support to the militia to create havoc in the South.

Al-Akhbar 14/3/11 reports Amum as saying that the documents revealed the NCP and SAF are backing Athor's forces and that the NCP has also drawn up a plan to overthrow the government in the South with the help of Upper Nile rebels. Amum said the documents would be shown to the international community and local media in Juba.

Meanwhile, Federal Defence Minister Gen. Abdul Rahim Mohamed Hussein has dismissed Amum's claims, saying they would refute the documents line by line. He added that this is not the first time the SAF has faced "war of documents", citing southern Kordofan experience.

In a related development, NCP political relations secretary Ibrahim Ghandour has revealed that the Presidency would hold a meeting on Thursday to discuss dispute over Abyei, according to *Al-Ahdath* 14/3/11.

Defector calls for interim government in the South

Al-Raed 14/3/11 – Gen. Abdul Bagi Ako, adviser to SPLM Chairman Salva Kiir Mayardit, who defected from the SPLA recently, said that dissolution of the GoSS and formation of a new government inclusive of all political parties with Muslims represented by 30%, is a condition for entering negotiations with the GoSS.

The newspaper's sources said several factions and military commanders particularly Maj. Gen. Tobi Madut's faction and a Misseriya battalion have joined Abdul Bagi who claimed that prominent SPLA commanders are backing him, with some having expressed their readiness to fight on his side. Abdul Bagi said their goal is to reunify Sudan.

103 orphans caught in middle of South Sudan fighting

AP 14/3/11 - More than 100 orphans were trapped between fighting forces over the weekend when rebel troops battling Southern Sudan's army invaded an orphanage, officials said Monday.

None of the children or the orphanage workers were harmed, but it appears that gunfire was exchanged while the children were inside the facility, said Doris Kirchebner, a spokeswoman for SOS Children's Villages International, the aid group that runs the children's home in the city of Malakal.

Rebel fighters battling the south's Sudan Peoples' Liberation Army, or SPLA, entered the facility Saturday, and the fighting began while the children and staff were still inside, she said.

"We have heard that they entered one house and occupied it and it was possible to move the children to another house," she said. "What we know is that the whole compound was surrounded by SPLA soldiers. It was not possible for anyone to get in or get out."

"It is not easy for them (the children)," Martha Choat, a minister in the Upper Nile state government said by phone from the hotel in Malakla. "For the past two days they were sleeping with no blankets and bed sheets."

The take-over of the orphanage came amid a spate of fighting Saturday that saw 40 rebels and two SPLA soldiers killed, said army spokesman Col. Philip Aguer.

The U.N. on Monday, though, called for "unhindered" access to populations affected by fighting in Jonglei and Upper Nile states. It said that many people affected by fighting remain inaccessible.

Georg Charpentier, the U.N.'s humanitarian coordinator in Sudan, said that humanitarian agencies are negotiating with the SPLA for access into the no-go zone, as well as for the setting up of humanitarian corridors. The U.N. said two aid agencies have had to leave the area because of the no-go zone declaration.

Misseriya say ready for all eventualities

Akhir Lahza 15/03/11 – Mohamed Abdallah Adam, a prominent Misseriya figure said yesterday that his people continue to get killed "by the hundreds" and have never tasted the fruits of peace since the signing of the CPA. More Misseriya have been killed in peacetime than in war, he added. He further noted that they still face threats to their lives as the land issue remains on hold with no solution in sight.

Mohamed warned however that the land issue is "a matter of life and death" for the Misseriya. He criticized recent statements by SPLM Secretary-General Pagan Amum on halting talks with the NCP and pointed out that such a move would only increase the risk of clashes and may plunge the region back to war. He called on the parties to the CPA to shoulder their responsibilities before their own people and work to defuse the situation.

President Al-Bashir directs facilitation of return of southerners

Al-Ahram Al-Youm 14/3/11 – President Al-Bashir has directed the facilitation of voluntary return of southern Sudanese who are desirous of moving home.

"We have briefed the President on the ongoing efforts to enhance humanitarian situation in Darfur and the status of cooperation with various states, the international community, donors and international organizations," State minister for humanitarian affairs, Dr. Mutrif Siddiq, told reporters after a meeting with the President yesterday.

Siddiq said the government is also keen to "Sudanize" humanitarian work but pointed out that the Sudanization process does not mean replacing international NGOs with national ones. "We mean the state institutions should be in the lead. That is our understanding of Sudanization of humanitarian aid. We will continue to cooperate with the international community which is supporting us" he said.

Pipeline through Djibouti closer than Port Sudan – Oil Minister

Al-Sudani 15/03/11 – Federal Ministry of Petroleum Lual Deng says his ministry has commissioned a study since last year on possible alternatives to the northern Sudanese export

outlets for oil from southern Sudan. He pointed out that the study was commissioned purely for the sake of contingency measures should technical obstacles hit the current facilities and showed that oil pipelines running from Malakal to Djibouti would be shorter than pipelines from Malakal to Port Sudan.

Deputy Speaker to defy order not to attend parliament

Al-Ahdath 15/03/11 – Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly, Atem Garang, says Speaker Ahmed Ibrahim Al-Tahir is trying to cause President Al-Bashir to renege on the constitutional obligations that link the South with the North. Atem, a senior SPLM figure, said that Al-Tahir's insistence that southern Sudanese parliamentarians don't attend the next sessions of parliament is a sign that the NCP is doing everything possible to obstruct solutions to the Abyei problem before 9th July. He said that the NCP seeks to defer solutions until after parliament sits and decides on issues pertaining to Abyei in the absence of southern lawmakers. He wondered whether the no-show order was the individual view of Speaker Ahmed Al-Tahir or representative of the NCP's views.

"In the morning of the 4th of April, we would go to parliament and see what Al-Tahir would do. Would he bring in the police to block us from practicing our constitutional right ... would he consider us foreigners before 9th July?" he wondered.

Other Highlights

North Sudan violating basic rights, says UN envoy

AFP 14/3/11 - The UN rights expert on Sudan accused the authorities on Monday of violating basic human freedoms, and called on them to charge or release all political detainees.

"In northern Sudan, fundamental rights and freedoms including the freedoms of expression, assembly and association continue to be violated by law enforcement authorities, in particular the National Security Service (NSS)," said Mohamed Chande Othman after an eight-day visit.

He said he was denied a request to meet the country's security chief to raise concerns about those violations, and about the detention without charge of opposition leaders, students and others.

"I call upon the government to release all those detained, including political detainees, or charge them with a recognisable offence and prosecute them in accordance with the law," Chande said.

His visit to Sudan coincided with the latest anti-government protest in Khartoum, last Wednesday that was swiftly repressed by hundreds of baton-wielding riot police and resulted in dozens of arrests.

Chande emphasised Khartoum's duty to guarantee freedom of expression and protection from arbitrary arrest as "enshrined in Sudan's national constitution."

He urged reform of the legal framework under which the security service operates, to bring it fully in line with human rights principles.

On Abyei, *Reuters* 14/3/11 reported Chande as saying that a surge of violence in Sudan's

contested Abyei border region could derail the country's north-south peace process, a U.N.-appointed human rights expert said on Monday.

He said there had been five major clashes in Abyei since the south Sudanese voted to declare independence from the north in a referendum in January.

"Abyei still remains a flashpoint which could potentially derail the entire peace process," he said in the statement at the end of his second visit to Sudan since being appointed.

Chande said there had also been at least 16 clashes in southern Sudan since the referendum. "I am concerned about the increasing loss of lives, and displacements of civilians caused by criminality, cattle rustling, inter-communal violence, and fighting between the SPLA (southern army) and militia groups," he said.

The judge said fighting between government forces and Darfur rebels had intensified since December, adding he had visited refugees in the mostly desert territory.

"Their situation is deplorable, to say the least," he said. "I am concerned that without immediate humanitarian assistance the situation of these people, many of whom have been displaced for a second or third time, could reach catastrophic levels."

Egypt shelled trucks bringing arms from Sudan-source

Reuters 14/3/11 - Egypt's army shelled at least six vehicles trying to smuggle weapons into the country from Sudan last week, security sources told Reuters on Monday.

"There was a smuggling attempt last Thursday and border guards stopped it," a security source said, adding that the vehicles were intercepted near the southern Egyptian city of Aswan. Details on casualties were not immediately available.

The vehicles carrying ammunition and rocket-propelled grenades were detected as they made their way along an ancient desert trade route linking Egypt and Sudan.

Another source confirmed border guards intercepted the vehicles after they entered Egyptian territory.

The Egyptian army has been governing the country since a popular uprising ousted President Hosni Mubarak on Feb. 11.

Border security is one of their top priorities. There is a civil war in Libya to the west and smuggling across the porous Sudan border to the south. To the east, they are managing the border with the Hamas-run Gaza Strip and Israel.

Hamas obtains its weapons via Egypt's Sinai Peninsula, bringing them in through tunnels. Arms smuggling by Bedouin tribal networks is mainly by land across the border with Sudan, and then up to the Sinai Peninsula which borders Gaza. Sudan denies allowing illegal weapon shipments across its territory.

PDF to graduate 4500 Mujahideen

Al-Sudani 14/3/11 – The People's Defence Forces (PDF) is to celebrate the graduation of 4500 recruits on Thursday in Khartoum.

PDF coordinator in Khartoum state Al-Jaili Al-Tayeb told reporters that the graduation ceremony, to be held under the patronage of Khartoum state governor, will also include various military parades, adding that the function would be attended by Defence Minister, Chief of Army Staff, commanders of military zones in Khartoum, commander of central zone, police and security commanders and prominent Mujahideen from within and outside Khartoum state.

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