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Media Monitoring Report

United Nations Mission in Sudan/ Public Information Office

Post-Referendum Headlines

- North waging economic war on the South – SPLM Atem Garang (*Al-Sahafa*)
- SPLM to participate in SC meeting on 13 July – Machar (*Ajras Al-Hurriya*)
- WFP resumes food distribution in Lakes and Jonglei states (*ST*)
- Government of South Sudan calls for responsible media fraternity (*ST*)

Southern Kordofan Elections Focus

- NEC to announce southern Kordofan election results today (*Sudan Radio*)

Other Headlines

- Rights abuses in Sudan unabated, report shows (*ST*)
- Gezira Pastoralist Union submits petition to UN over violation of human, animal rights (*Ajras Al-Hurriya*)
- Sudan accuses peace mediator of supporting US positions in Darfur peace process (*ST*)
- Foreign Ministry denies Israeli allegation on Sudan's involvement in arms smuggling from Iran to Gaza (*the Citizen*)

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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

North waging economic war on the South – SPLM Atem Garang

Al-Sahafa 15/5/11 – SPLM leading figure Atem Garang has described the blockage by the NCP of movement of food materials to the South as an attempt to provoke southerners into kicking out pastoralists and then use it as an excuse to arm pro-Khartoum Arab tribes to target the South as in the case of the Misseriya. He described what is happening now as an economic war being waged on the South. He said the NCP should remember that there are also millions of Arab nomads in the South.

Meanwhile, an official of South Sudan Chambers of Commerce, William Akuec, blamed the Presidency for the halt of movement of food items from the North to the South, according to *Al-Akhbar* 15/5/11. He pointed that Sudan is still one country, wondering who has ordered the blockage.

SPLM to participate in SC meeting on 13 July – Machar

Ajras Al-Hurriya 15/5/11 – GoSS VP Riek Machar, who headed a delegation to Malaysia to attend Commonwealth conference, told reporters that the GoSS would participate in a UNSC meeting on 13 July whose agenda includes an item on recognition of South Sudan state by the Council and member states.

WFP resumes food distribution in Lakes and Jonglei states

Sudan Tribune Website 14/05/11 - The UN WFP has, after nearly a month of suspending its operations, officially resumed distribution of food rations to the population in Lakes and Jonglei states of South Sudan.

In a statement issued on Friday, WFP said it would renew food distribution in both states after it reportedly received assurances from local authorities of protection from any form of insecurity. An estimated 240,000 people will, as a result, receive food rations, courtesy of WFP.

Government of South Sudan calls for responsible media fraternity

Sudan Tribune website 14/5/11 - The GoSS on Saturday called for a responsible and professional media fraternity in the region.

The call came in response to increasing pressure on the Ministry of Legal Affairs and Constitutional Development to submit a media law to both the Council of Ministers and South Sudan Legislative Assembly for deliberation and immediate approval.

Jackline Alfred Duku, a journalist with Central Equatoria state in an interview with Sudan Tribune from Juba said, "Although we are guided by ethnics, it is always good to have something we can use as reference. We find it difficult to operate without legal provision. We do not have anything which we can use as legal reference. We have been requesting this from the Government of South Sudan since it came into existence without success. We started demanding tabling and approval of the media law before census and elections were held. We have raised it several times".

"Some of us, out of patience, have even written to the president demanding approval of the media law without success. Maybe the authorities think the media law is not a priority to be passed. They have been dodging us for six years", explained Duku.

Mustafa Biong Majak Kuol, director general in the ministry of information, said on Saturday that his ministry was exerting efforts to ensure that a media law is passed, but that it should not be used as an excuse not to remain ethical and professional. He said the ministry was "working in collaboration with heads of various media associations".

"The government respects and promotes press freedom. The government has no intention of controlling the press. The Government of South Sudan has principles which respect press freedom but this must not be misused to unnecessarily report against the government. We need a professional and responsible media to operate in the south", explained Kuol in an interview with Sudan Tribune on Saturday.

Alor Majak, a member of executive committee of Abyei Community Development Association, in a separate interview with Sudan Tribune in Abyei town on Saturday said South Sudanese journalists should never give in to the government's demands for a statutory regulation of the media.

He advised South Sudanese journalists to establish a voluntary media council that could not impose penalties other than naming and shaming journalists involved in unprofessional practices.

Majak, a former journalist trained in Cuba, turned politician, urged journalists to explain to people that the media would serve them better if they had access to government records and that the public needed to realise that freedom of information was not just for journalists, but also for all the public, "because repressive regimes can have difficulty attracting tourists, donors and investment".

"It's typical for private news media to accentuate the negative when they are competing for circulation and advertising against subsidized state-owned media that accentuate the positive [...] Criticism of public officials' policies and actions do not constitute personal insults, and freedom of the press includes the freedom to be irresponsible.

"I must acknowledge the job well done by the media of south Sudan during the referendum. The media helped sensitise the general public to turn out in their numbers."

"Freedom of information would demonstrate that the government is transparent and respectful of citizens' rights" He said.

He said the greatest underlying resistance to the release of public records arose from the personal feelings and not the concerns about procedures and policy.

He said, too often, public officials thought of their offices as their private possessions, forgetting that they held the offices in trust for the public.

"And they hold those records in trust for us. Government records are a treasure chest of

information and knowledge, waiting to be opened, and the public don't really know what will be found when the lock is broken," he said.

Southern Kordofan Elections Focus

NEC to announce southern Kordofan election results today

Sudan Radio/dailies 15/5/11 – the NEC stated that it would hold a press conference today in Khartoum to announce results of southern Kordofan gubernatorial and legislative elections, amid claims by each party to have won the elections.

Sudan Vision 15/5/11 reports ruling NCP candidate Ahmed Haroun as telling a press conference yesterday that the narrow difference in number of votes he won and those won by SPLM's candidate and deputy governor, Abdel Aziz Al Hilo, was due to what he described as forgeries and illicit election practices exercised by SPLM.

Haroun severely faulted left-wing members of Sudan People's Liberation Movement and SPLM (North Sector), particularly Yasir Arman, for damaging the spirit of coordination and reconciliation that had prevailed between the two partners.

Yassir Arman, SPLM SG, also told a press conference yesterday that their movement and the Popular Congress Party (PCP) were considering the possibility of withdrawing their MPs from the Parliament as a reaction to rigging of elections in Southern Kordofan, according to *Al-Sahafa* 15/5/11. He said the SPLM would boycott the executive and the legislative organs in southern Kordofan, adding that the SPLM would not resort to war but it would resist. Arman described election rigging as a coup against popular consultations.

In another development, SAF spokesperson Al-Sawarmi Khaled told *SMC* that the army would not tolerate destabilization of security in southern Kordofan by any quarter, pointing out that only the SAF and the other organized government forces have the right to maintain presence in the state. He said the armed force would nip in the bud any attempt to meddle with the security of the region.

Other Highlights

Rights abuses in Sudan unabated, report shows

Sudan Tribune Website 13/5/11 - Various forms of human rights violations and conflict-concomitant abuses continue to be rife in large parts of Sudan, an international report indicated on Friday.

In its 2011 annual report on the state of the world's human rights, the London-based Amnesty International (AI) painted a grim picture of the human rights state in Sudan, documenting a large number of violations and abuses committed by state actors.

“Human rights violations, mainly by the National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS), continued to be committed with impunity,” AI said.

The global human rights advocator singled out the case of Adil Ibraim Karar, a 56-year-old activist who remains detained by the NISS despite the release of over 70 other activists who attempted to stage anti-government protests earlier this year, as deserving of urgent action.

AI said that Karar was snatched on 31 January on suspicion of intending to take part in anti-government demonstrations.

“He has not been charged with any recognizable criminal offence and is being held by the NISS in an unknown location in Khartoum,” AI said.

According to AI, Adil Karar “suffers from asthma and back problems,” adding that he has reportedly been “refused medical treatment and access to pain medication. He is at risk of torture or other forms of ill-treatment.”

“Perceived critics of the government were arrested, tortured or ill-treated and prosecuted for exercising their rights to freedom of expression, association and assembly,” AI noted.

AI also said that “hundreds of thousands of civilians continued to suffer the effects of armed conflict and restricted access to humanitarian aid.”

“In Darfur,” AI said, “the conflict escalated and included attacks on villages which resulted in thousands of newly displaced people. Sexual violence against women remained rife in and around camps for the internally displaced. Abductions and attacks on humanitarian convoys also increased.”

AI noted that Sudan has continued to apply the death penalty, “including against juveniles.”

It also said that women, young girls and men were arrested and flogged in the north because of their “dress” or “behavior” in public places.

Gezira Pastoralist Union submits petition to UN Mission over violation of human, animal rights

Ajras Al-Hurriya 15/5/11 – Pastoralist Union in Gezira Abba submitted a petition to the UN Mission’s Human Rights Section on violations by officials in the White Nile State of human and animal rights. The petition indicated many instances of violations including assassinations, mutilation, beating and looting and attack on pastoralists.

Pastoralist Union Chair Abdul Rahman Siddiq said their demands include the immediate intervention of the Ministry of Justice to address the problem.

Sudan accuses peace mediator of supporting US positions in Darfur peace process

Sudan Tribune website 14/5/11 - Sudan accused the Joint Chief Mediator Djibril Bassole of supporting the positions of US administration at the ongoing peace process in Doha to end the eight year conflict in Darfur.

US Senior Adviser for Darfur, Dane Smith, who was invited by the mediation to attend the direct talks between Sudan’s government and Justice and Equality Movement (LJM), last week made a

set of proposals to push forward the talks between the two parties.

Smith asked Khartoum to not block the arrival of a rebel delegation from Darfur to Doha. He also proposed to postpone talks on the security arrangements and the implementation mechanisms of the peace agreement to the period after the stakeholders' conference which will take place at the end of May in Doha.

The spokesperson of the Government of Sudan (GOS) delegation, Omer Adam Rahama, accused on Saturday Bassole of supporting the US positions at the negotiating table in Doha because he aspires to realize political interests for his country Burkina Faso where he is appointed minister of foreign affairs recently.

"Bassole surprised the government delegation by brining Smith to a meeting between GOS and JEM to discuss the resumption of talks," said Rahma in a statement to the semi official SMC website. He further said the Joint Chief Mediator used to support the positions that prolong the negotiations.

The Sudanese delegation spokesperson added the government does not object the presence at negotiating table of the U.S. envoy to Darfur as an observer but not as a broker or a partner to the negotiations.

Djibiril Bassole, since his re-appointment last month as foreign minister in a ministerial reshuffle in Burkina Faso, thought to resign from his post as chief mediator but the UN Secretary General asked his country to allow him to end a process he put in place since two years ago.

The Sudanese government expressed willingness to sign a peace agreement with the Liberation and Equality Movement (LJM) and slammed JEM saying it was not seriously interested in a peace deal.

The talks between the two parties are deadlocked on the administrative status of Darfur region and the security arrangements. JEM rebels accuse Khartoum of wanting to sign only a separate deal with the LJM and close the Doha process with the rebel groups.

Foreign Ministry denies Israeli allegation on Sudan's involvement in arms smuggling from Iran to Gaza

The Citizen 15/5/11 – The Ministry of Foreign Affairs yesterday categorically denied any involvement of Sudan in weapons smuggling with the knowledge or help of the Sudanese Government to any state or entity abroad.

Ministry's spokesperson Khaled Musa told reporters that Israel's allegations of arms smuggling from Iran to Gaza are intended to distort image of Sudan to justify recent attack on car in eastern Sudan.

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