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Highlights

Landmines threat to elections and referendum – Minister

Al-Rai Al-Aam reports Humanitarian Affairs State Minister Abdul Bagi Al-Jailani as saying that nineteen states were infected with landmines and expressed fear over possible negative impact on the upcoming election and referendum exercises. Al-Jailani, who was speaking at a conference yesterday in Khartoum, urged donors to fund national efforts to clear the mines.

DSRSG/RHC Ameerah Haq told the conference that UNMIS stands ready to support the Government and organizations operating in the area of landmine clearance to realize the strategic goal of a mine-free Sudan by 2014.

EU mission to monitor Sudan's election

The EU is resolved to dispatch a team to Sudan during the next few weeks to assess the situation for a possible arrival of EU mission to observe upcoming elections, **Al-Rai Al-Aam** reports. The EU statement also called on all parties to make necessary preparations for referendum.

“Regime will be changed by the ballot, not by force” – Gosh

Presidential Adviser for Security Affairs Gen. Salah Gosh has downplayed ability of any quarter to change the Government by force, **Al-Ahdath** report. “The Government can only be changed by the ballot, not by force”, Gen. Gosh said while reacting to statements by PCP leader Hassan Al-Turabi. Gosh added that consultations between Umma Party leader Sadiq Al-Mahdi, PCP leader Al-Turabi and the SPLM constitute no security threat. He said the prospective political parties’ meeting in Juba was directed against the NCP, warning that “they will not allow any party to threaten national security or disrupt elections”.

Flow of waters to Egypt never halt if the South secedes – GoSS

Ajras Al-Hurria reports GoSS Irrigation and Water Resources Minister Joseph Duer Jakok has denied any link between the GoSS and Israel, saying GoSS has nothing to do with the visit of the Israeli FM to some Nile basin countries. He told the London-based **Al-Sharq Al-Awsat** newspaper that he does not see how the separation of the South constitute a threat to the flow of the Nile waters, adding the South has no dam and there is no need to build one.

SPLM submits proposals to NCP to resolve referendum – Minister

Al-Ahdath reports the SPLM has submitted new proposals to the NCP to resolve the dispute over the referendum bill. GoSS Legal Affairs Minister Michael Lueth yesterday said that the SPLM made a number of concessions in order to resolve the dispute including allowing southerners residing in Khartoum, Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, the UK, the USA, Canada, Australia and Egypt to vote on self-determination.

The minister said the SPLM position was that the UN, IOM and the host countries should be authorized to monitor the voting process in those countries and that international organizations should also be allowed to monitor the process in the North.

Nafie criticize talk about a national government

Al-Sahafa reports Presidential Assistant Nafie Ali Nafie as saying that the electoral process is the only way to power and criticized those calling for formation of a national Government. Nafie,

who made the remarks at Kosti yesterday, criticized the political parties that keep talking about a possible elections rigging, saying his party did not need to rig elections. He said his party supports an internationally-monitored election to ensure its fairness.

According to ***Al-Ahdath***, Nafie said that all laws restricting political activity have been lifted, adding that political parties would be allowed to carry out their activities within their respective headquarters without the need for a prior license but they would be required to inform relevant authorities if they want to carry out mass campaigns. Political parties could also campaign through their party newspapers, he said.

Efforts ongoing to achieve robust peacekeeping -UN officials

UN News Centre 15/9/09 – The United Nations is pressing ahead with efforts to boost its peacekeeping capacity, from ensuring sufficient personnel and equipment for operations to providing effective support on the ground, to help transform the lives of people worldwide, top officials said today.

The heads of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and the Department of Field Support (DFS) described how they are seeking to improve the way they operate through the New Horizons initiative and fresh thinking on a support strategy for field missions.

Issued in July as a non-paper, New Horizons highlights the need to strengthen command and control systems at every level, including through more robust accountability frameworks between Headquarters and mission leaders.

It identifies three key challenges currently underpinning operational dilemmas for blue helmets: robust peacekeeping, protection of civilians and critical peace building tasks.

“So far the reaction we received from Member States is altogether extremely positive,” Alain Le Roy, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, told a news conference in New York.

In particular, he highlighted the presidential statement issued by the Security Council last month, in which it endorsed the non-paper and encouraged the Secretariat to continue provide planning and support for peacekeeping missions.

In addition to New Horizons, DFS has issued another non-paper on a support strategy that, among other matters, emphasizes the need to protect UN personnel and to ensure appropriate living and working conditions in missions, while maximizing safety and security.

All of this is taking place at a time when the services of UN peacekeepers are in greater demand than ever, noted Mr. Le Roy. Deployment is at a record high, with more than 113,000 peacekeepers serving in 18 operations on four continents. Also, Member States recently approved an \$8.2 billion peacekeeping support budget.

“Member States are under a lot of pressure because of the financial crisis. They have really focused on us thinking ‘out-of-the-box’ on how to better manage the resources that are assigned to missions, and how to get a best value out of those resources,” said Susanna Malcorra, Head of Field Support.

“We are trying to get up to speed and make sure that we align ourselves not only in how to better manage the resources but also how to set up better frameworks to be more accountable, which is one of the key issues that Member States raise,” she said.

Both officials acknowledged that several missions, including in the Darfur region of Sudan and in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), still lack vital personnel and equipment.

UN okays creation of super-agency for women

AFP 14/9/09 - The UN General Assembly, moving to close the body's gender gap, agreed Monday to set up a powerful new department consolidating the activities of several existing bodies dealing with women's issues.

The 192-member assembly adopted by consensus a resolution backing formation of the new composite entity, which will have a substantial budget, be led by an undersecretary general and will report directly to the UN secretary general "on the basis of equitable geographical representation and gender balance."

The resolution tasked the UN chief to "produce, for the consideration of the General Assembly at its 64th session, a comprehensive proposal specifying the mission statement of the composite entity, the organizational arrangements, including an organizational chart, funding and the composition of the executive board to oversee its operational activities."

Currently, women's issues are dealt with separately by several UN bodies, including the UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), the UN Population Fund (UNFPA), the Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW), the Office of the Special Advisor on Gender Issues (OSAGI) and the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW).

But none of these agencies, with the exception of UNFPA, were deemed by women's groups to be major players.

UNIFEM welcomed the assembly's decision as "an important step toward addressing the gaps and challenges in the existing UN gender architecture."

"The creation of a single UN agency for women is a landmark moment for gender equality and women's rights across the world," Britain's minister of state for international development Gareth Thomas said in a statement.

"It will have a far more powerful voice to help fight for the rights of women, including in many countries where they are still treated as second class citizens," he added.

"The United Kingdom now stands ready to double its funding to the UN on support for women's rights, leading to a better quality of life for millions of women globally who suffer appalling levels of violence and ill-treatment on a daily basis."

SPLM hints at breakthrough on referendum law

Sudan Tribune website 15/9/09 - SPLM leading member and minister for Legal Affairs and Constitutional Development Michael Makuei Lueth today hinted at a breakthrough on referendum law currently under discussion with the ruling NCP.

Speaking by phone from Khartoum, the minister said their discussions with members of the NCP led by Sudan 2nd VP Ali Osman Taha today "sounds promising and almost agreeing on a simple majority vote".

"The way we have interacted today while discussing issues shows signs of possible understanding which if it continues will result into the generally applauded outcome," he said.

However, he was quick to say that the SPLM has yet to seal an agreement adding that discussions are in progress with better understanding than in the past.

Makuei reiterated SPLM's commitment to peaceful implementation of the comprehensive agreement.

"The SPLM position on pending issues is peaceful settlements than media fabrications and unfounded allegations of return to war," Makuei said.

"Why do individuals run very fast to suggest return to war over issues which can be resolved internally?" he wondered, adding that the return to war only alternative to resolving issues.

"Those voices accusing us of wanting to return the country to war are the ones returning the country to war themselves", he said

Clashes, drought worsen food insecurity

IRIN 15/9/09 - The number of people who do not have enough to eat in Southern Sudan has increased significantly from initial projections, due to poor rains and escalating conflict between communities, a food early warning agency has said.

Recent assessments found that up to 1.3 million people were food insecure - an increase of 20 percent on earlier projections. Most of these were in Jonglei and Eastern Equatoria states where needs have tripled and doubled respectively, the Famine Early Warning Systems Network (Fews Net) said in a September update.

Current food insecurity, it added, would persist until late October, when harvests were expected. Despite predictions of a high probability of normal to above normal rainfall between September and December, delayed crops were at risk of flooding - something which is common in Southern Sudan.

"Persistent inter-clan and inter-tribal cattle raiding conflicts since last year, and last year's crop shortfalls caused by June-August dryness followed by floods, have been the main causes of food insecurity," it noted.

In August, Lise Grande, the UN deputy resident and humanitarian coordinator in Southern Sudan, warned that the region faced a massive food deficit caused by a combination of late rains, high levels of insecurity and displacement, disruptions to trade and high food prices.

Eritrea to end SPLM-NCP dispute over referendum

SPLM SG Pagan Amum has said the SPLM and the ruling party in Eritrea reached an agreement whereby the former could benefit from the latter's self-determination experience, **Al-Sahafa** reports. Eritrea is reportedly determined to launch an initiative to resolve the dispute between the NCP and the SPLM over the referendum bill.

According to **Sudan Tribune website** 15/9/09, Eritrean President Isaias Afwerki declared yesterday his support to southern Sudan rights and aspirations

Sudanese First Vice President and President of Southern Sudan government paid a two-day visit to Asmara where they had agreed to enhance bilateral relations between Eritrea and southern Sudan. Kiir returned today to Juba.

Following their meeting on Monday the Eritrean President "asserted the Eritrean government's firm and enduring pledge towards ensuring the rights and aspirations of the people of South Sudan," the official Shabait website reported.

Kiir's visit to Asmara, in response to an invitation extended by the President Afwerki came months after unprecedented attack on the SPLM by the Eritrean leader who had accused the southern Sudan ruling part of corruption.

In his last May statements Afwerki also demanded the SPLM to declare a clear view on the future of Sudan.

According to the Eritrean information ministry website, President Isaias "pointed out that at the present delicate juncture in which the Sudan finds itself, the SPLM under the leadership of Mr. Salva Kiir Mayardit is expected to play a leading role."

"Eritrea is one of the close friends of the people of South Sudan" said Salva Kiir who reaffirmed the SPLM's willingness to boost relations with Eritrea, particularly in exchanging views on developments in the Sudan and enhancing mutual cooperation.

Kiir also discussed with Afwerki political developments in southern Sudan and expressed SPLM's stance on Sudanese issues including Darfur conflict.

President Afwerki also accepted an invitation extended by Kiir to visit southern Sudan.

SAF elements block disarmament operations in Malakal

Khartoum Monitor reports SAF JIUs in Malakal refused to allow an SPLA force to enter the northern sector to disarm civilians, saying the disarmament should be carried out by the Upper Nile Police instead of the SPLA. SAF JIU elements even threatened to clash with the SPLA in case the latter attempted any disarmament operation in the northern sector of Malakal, a source told the paper on condition of anonymity. Efforts by the UN and the joint defense forces to make the JIUs to leave the northern sector have been unsuccessful.

Meanwhile, **Al-Akhbar** reports informed sources have said that SPLA force in Renk imposed curfew on the town since two days to search for arms, claiming the NCP had sent arms to Lam Akol-led SPLM-DC soldiers stationed in the area. According to sources, when the SPLA force did not find the arms they were looking for, they attempted to search NISS office in Renk but they were resisted by the police, leading to killing of an SPLA officer, a policeman and a civilian.

Tripartite mechanism to resume consultations in NY – FM

Al-Ayyam reports FM Deng Alor as saying the tripartite mechanism between the SPLM, the NCP and the US envoy would resume its meetings on the sidelines of the UNGA in NY for discussion on the referendum and the census results. Alor said the mechanism's meeting held recently in Juba failed to achieve the desired results.

SPLA robs Dutch Consulate in Juba

Local dailies report a group of SPLA elements broke into the Dutch Consulate in Juba, robbing unspecified amount of cash from the building. According to **Al-Wifaq**, the Embassy described the incident as terrorism and a flagrant violation of the international law. Reportedly, the Embassy informed GoSS about the incident which apologized and promised investigation.

South Africa is willing to support efforts to end Sudan's conflicts

Sudan Tribune website 15/9/09 — South Africa's Foreign Minister today expressed her country's readiness to help ongoing efforts to settle Sudan's conflict particularly the six year conflict in the troubled Darfur province.

Mrs. Maite Nkoana-Mashabane, who arrived yesterday evening, met on Tuesday with the Sudanese President Omar Al-Bashir for talks on bilateral relations, the implementation of the CPA.

The meeting is the first of its kind between Al-Bashir and a South African official since Pretoria made formally announced in late July that it is legally obliged to execute an arrest warrant for the Sudanese president issued by the ICC.

Speaking to the press following the meeting, the visiting minister stressed that South Africa was willing to help the Sudanese government to overcome all difficulties and to settle all political disputes and armed conflicts.

"We have ideas and previous experience in how to resolve conflicts and internal disputes, and we are ready to submit these ideas to our brothers in Sudan if they want it because we do not wish to impose on them any options," she said.

Nkoana-Mashabane reaffirmed South Africa readiness to continue its peace efforts in the Darfur region, saying that "we have a wide participation in UNAMID in Darfur, and we are ready to continue all the efforts conducive to peace in Darfur."

Foreign Minister Deng Alor reaffirmed today Sudan's willingness to enhance bilateral relations with South Africa. The SPLM minister in the national unity government also pointed that Pretoria has played an important role in the implementation of the CPA, and is also actively participating in the peacekeeping force in Darfur

Bashir's adviser Ghazi Salah Al-Deen said that they raised the issue of the ICC with Nkoana-Mashabane noting that South Africa had objected to the arrest warrant.

Government force, Darfur rebels clash in South Darfur

Government's troops in South Darfur have destroyed three Darfur rebel camps and captured 34 fighters, with the Government police force losing three personnel including an officer, **Al-Rai Al-Aam** reports. The Government's troops were ambushed by a group led by Faisal Balla who defected from the SLM (Abdul Wahid). Commissioner of Al-Wohda Locality (South Darfur) Al-Nur Jabir told the paper yesterday that the Government's force was ambushed by the rebels who also got away with a police vehicle and arms but the vehicle was recaptured when additional military troops were rushed to the scene where a battle was fought resulting in the capture of 34 rebels and destruction of three rebel camps.