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Referendum Monitor

Referendum security is responsibility of police and UN

Al-Rai Al-Aam 16/9/10 – Deputy Head of the National Referendum Commission Chan Ric Madut has revealed a directive by the Presidency on the need for the presence of local and international observers as well as national political parties to monitor the referendum process.

Madut, who was speaking to reporters following the Commission meeting yesterday, said referendum security is the responsibility of police in the South and the North in addition to the UN. He said the Commission has unanimously agreed on the final shape of the registration forms.

According to *Sudan Tribune website* 15/9/10, the Southern Sudan Referendum Commission (SSRC) on Wednesday finally held its first meeting and thrashed out issues related to the formats of voter registration forms, however, it failed to specify a date for the actual start of the laborious process of voter-registration.

Following SSRC's meeting, the newly appointed secretary general stated that the referendum commission had deliberated and agreed on all details of registration forms and decided to print them abroad, reported the official *Sudan News Agency (SUNA)*.

However, Al-Nijoumi said that no decision had yet been made as to the country in which the forms would be printed or a specific date for the beginning of the registration process.

He further pointed out that the printing process would be supervised by the United Nations in collaboration with the government of Sudan and the Government of Southern Sudan. Fingerprints, age and place of residence are among the data to be filled in the registration forms, reports *Al-Ayyam*.

According to Al-Nijoumi, the registration forms would be finalized in four weeks time, a forecast which raises doubts on whether the commission will be able to start voter registration in October as it previously predicted.

Security Council calls on all sides to ensure peaceful referenda

UN News UN, 15/09/10 - The Security Council today called on all parties to take urgent action to ensure that next January's referenda to determine whether southern Sudan remains part of Africa's largest country or becomes an independent nation are peaceful and held on time.

In a press statement after receiving a briefing from Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Alain Le Roy, the 15-member body acknowledged that Sudan is in a critical period as it prepares for the historic referenda, the final stage of a January 2005 peace accord that ended two decades of civil war between the south and the central Government.

"The members of the Security Council called for the parties to the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) to take urgent action to facilitate peaceful and on-time referenda that reflect the will of the Sudanese people, to respect their results, and to resolve key remaining post-referenda issues," the statement said.

UN Chief says Sudan would be among his priorities

Al-Sahafa/Agencies New York, 16/09/10 – UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon says he regards the 2011 referenda in Sudan as a top priority for peace and security in the region and other parts of the world. “Sudan would be among my top priorities,” he told the *AFP*. He explained that he had called for a high-level meeting on Sudan on the 24 of September.

The UNSG also expressed concern over the humanitarian situation in Darfur.

NCP proposes converting Abyei into an integrated area, SPLM rejects

Al-Sahafa Khartoum, 16/09/10 - Reports have it that an official NCP proposal over the future of the Abyei region has caused angry ripples within the SPLM camp. The NCP is said to have proposed that Abyei be turned into a demilitarized integration zone for both north and south whichever way the referenda swing and that residents of the area be granted dual nationality and the right to exercise their full constitutional rights in the North and the South. The SPLM has categorically rejected the proposal and is reportedly angered by the move.

According to reports, the NCP had pointed out that earlier attempts to resolve the Abyei problem have not borne fruit and has called on its partner to transcend the Abyei Protocol and consider the area an integrated zone.

Our destiny threatened by possible disputes on referenda results – Al-Mahdi

Al-Sahafa Khartoum, 16/09/10 - National Umma Party leader Sadiq Al-Mahdi says Sudan is facing the “most dangerous phase in its history” with the coming months crucial in determining whether “Sudan would be or not”. He expects disputes over the southern Sudan referendum result come January 2011 and warns that such dispute may plunge the country into a “catastrophic scenario and devastating confrontations”. He said that should the parties return to war then the results would be catastrophic as such a war would be carried out against the background of massive destructive capability and strong foreign alliances from each side. He said he expects the referendum to have more flaws than the elections.

Al-Mahdi pointed out however that there is still a way out of the quagmire through handing the UN responsibility for the conduct of the referendum and the formation of an inclusive Council of Wise Men that would seek to address the outstanding differences between the two CPA partners.

He also warned that a non-peaceful separation of southern Sudan would only further aggravate the problems of the country with the situation in Darfur as the primary victim.

Southern Sudan National Anthem composed

The Citizen Juba, 16/09/10 – A seven-member technical committee has produced the final draft of the Southern Sudan National Anthem barely three months ahead of the January 2011 referendum. The four-stanza anthem titled “South Sudan Oyee!” is only waiting for musicians to provide the appropriate tune.

First unity versus separation debate to take place in Khartoum today

Ajras Al-Hurriya Khartoum, 16/09/10 – The National Unity Support Organisation is organising today a debate that would pit advocates for the country's unity against those for separation. This first debate of its kind would take place at the Friendship Hall (starting 20:00 hours) and would feature Satti Sarkoti (Secretary-General of the Just Peace Forum) and Farouk Gatkoth (Secretary-General of the Democratic Salvation Front) in the separation camp and with, on the other hand, Sadig Al-Mahdi (Umma Party leader) and Dr. Wani Tombe in the unity camp. NCP and SPLM stalwarts, Ibrahim Gandour and Luka Biong respectively, would recap on the panel discussions.

Other Highlights

Northern Bahr el Ghazal calls for urgent support to disaster victims

Sudantribune.com Malakal, 16/09/10 - Authorities and the people of Northern Bahr-el-Ghazal have launched an appeal for more support to the increasing number of flood victims and the repair of damaged infrastructure and crops.

James Mawien Arol, the deputy county secretary for the Southern Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (SSRRC) in the state made the appeal at an emergency meeting held with relief organizations in Malual Kon, Aweil East County.

The meeting was convened in the wake of downpours that caused flooding and destruction in the past few days, which according to statistics have affected over 89,000 people across the area.

The official told the weekly coordination meeting attended by representatives of national and international organizations operating in the area that climate change and variability continue to pose formidable challenges to the developmental efforts and the quest to improve the lives of the people. The heavy downpours of the rain in the state continues to experience in recent weeks, which culminated in floods that have caused havoc to communities and infrastructure, can be ascribed to climate change.

"As a government therefore, we cannot sit on our laurels and allow our people to suffer without taking appropriate steps to ameliorate this formidable problem. It is against this background that the government and people of Northern Bahr el Ghazal state demonstrated once again its usual caring, high-minded gesture and commitment by mobilizing physical and moral supports to victims of floods throughout the affected areas," said Arol in his message read out at the forum.

He disclosed that experiences from seasonal occurrences have it that the rains might continue up to mid-October 2010. Asked about the current situation, he said there has never been rains for last three days in Aweil town but reports reaching the commission are showing that more and more people are experiencing floods in all the counties and payams in addition to the infrastructural damage that would require huge resources and logistics support to repair and maintain.

South Sudan to install early warning systems

Sudantribune.com Juba, 15/09/10 - The Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS) will soon establish an early warning system, equipped with modern instruments capable of detecting anticipated natural disasters like floods, revealed James Kok Ruei, minister of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management.

Establishment of this state-of-the-art system, the Minister told journalists on Tuesday, will be in compliance with the stipulated national policy on disaster management and early warning component; one of the key components of the newly created ministry.

“My Ministry will work closely with the Information and Broadcasting Ministry once this early warning system is established. As a government, we feel our communities need to be capacitated to know how to respond to any disaster situation they are faced with,” Kok told the media during the weekly media forum organized by the Information and Broadcasting Ministry.

Currently, an estimated nearly 27,000 people have been displaced by flood in Southern Sudan states of Warrap, Unity, Jonglei and Northern Bahr El Ghazal, with the latter most affected.

According to the Minister, about 11,230 have been left homeless in Aweil, the state capital of Northern Bahr El Ghazal, while less than 500 have so far been resettled in highlands.

“The humanitarian situation in Aweil is pathetic. We are kindly requesting all stakeholders, humanitarian agencies and other organizations to help rescue the situation before it runs out of hand,” he appealed.

The Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management Minister lauded the Federal Government and the Humanitarian Aid Commission in Khartoum for its generous contribution of 500 tents and food items, considered essential elements among flood victims. The GoSS reportedly sent 5,000 bags of cereals to Aweil.

Meanwhile, William Achuil, the Director of Southern Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (SSRRC) has appealed to southerners in the north and the Diaspora to benefit from the assisted repatriation plan that has been drawn by government.

“SSRRC is closely working with the Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management Ministry to ensure that our people properly return to their homes. It is our responsibility to ensure that such people are assisted,” the SSRRC Director told journalists.

Israel to mediate between SPLA and renegade forces

Al-Ahram Al-Youm Khartoum/ Juba, 16/09/10 - Spokesperson for a group of SPLA defectors Gabriel Tab has revealed that Israeli intelligence would mediate to end differences between the SPLA and the renegade group. He said a Mossad official made telephone contacts with George Athor and Galuak Gai from Nairobi and stressed the importance of negotiations between them to end their differences. According to Tab, all the SPLA defectors have insisted that SPLA accept their conditions as pre-requisite for talks to end their mutiny.

LJM rebels capture three LRA members in South Darfur

Sudantribune.com Khartoum, 15/09/10 - Rebels from the Liberation and Justice Movement (LJM) have detained three members of Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) in a remote area of South Darfur, the group said today.

The arrest comes after an attack by the notorious rebel group on LJM positions in Davaq, which

borders Western Bahr-el-Ghazal and Central African Republic (CAR) in the morning of Thursday 2 September.

Following the attack, "we set up regular patrols in the area to prevent any surprise attack," said LJM deputy chairman Abdulaziz Abu- Nummosha who was speaking to *Sudan Tribune* from Doha, the official venue of the peace talks.

On September 13 "One of our patrols clashed with a group of the LRA rebels and we captured three elements, two men from Uganda and a woman from the Democratic Republic of Congo, Abu Nummosha further said.

However, he said today the arrested LRA fighters "delivered valuable information confirming their connections with the Sudan Armed Forces". They were "wearing SAF uniform", and "they confessed they were supported by the Sudanese army," he stressed.

He said he will call in the coming days the leadership of his movement to meet to discuss their participation in the peace process because the Sudanese government continues to breach a ceasefire agreement they signed on March 18.

The three LRA members "informed us that they roam between Western Bahr-el-Ghazal and South Darfur since October 2009. They were not stable in a particular site., said the deputy LJM leader.

Arab foreign ministers mull draft resolution rejecting ICC warrants

Al-Ahram Al-Youm Cairo, 16/09/10 - Arab Foreign Ministers, at an ordinary session today, will debate a draft resolution to reject the ICC indictment of President Al-Bashir. The ordinary meeting is intended to prepare for the Arab League extraordinary summit scheduled for October in Libya. Foreign Minister Ali Karti will represent Sudan at today's meeting.

Sudan rejects Bassole's plan to meet JEM leader in Darfur

Sudantribune.com Khartoum, 15/09/10 - Sudan's presidential adviser in charge of Darfur has officially rejected any probable demand to allow the return to Darfur of Khalil Ibrahim, chairman of the rebel Justice and Equality Movement (JEM).

Speaking to the press in Khartoum after a meeting with the Joint Chief Mediator on Wednesday, Ghazi Salaheldin said Djibril Bassole did not file a demand to allow the return of JEM leader to Darfur.

"If the demand is presented it would not be acceptable" because there is no link between the return of Khalil Ibrahim to Darfur, and the resumption of negotiation in Doha, said the presidential adviser.

Those who are committed to the negotiations are those who go to Doha, he further said.

From his side, Bassole said he would keep on contacts with the other rebel leaders who are not involved in the peace process — JEM leader and Paris based Abdel Wahid Al-Nur — in order to conclude a comprehensive peace agreement.

The joint envoy also told reporters he was informed about the new strategy for peace in Darfur saying as mediator he welcomes all the efforts to bring peace and stability to the restive region in western Sudan.

However he stressed on the need to include in this new approach the negotiations for peace in Darfur with the rebel groups.

Amin Hassan Omer, the head of the government delegation to Doha talks stated after a separate meeting with Bassole that the negotiations will resume after a meeting on Sudan in New York on 24 September.

Nonetheless he added that a meeting would take place on September 20 in Doha to review the work of different committees and determine the issues requiring more discussions.

Meanwhile, the Sudanese government will officially adopt the new strategy for peace in Darfur on Thursday 16 September in the weekly meeting of the cabinet chaired by President Omer Al-Bashir.

During a meeting with aid groups working in Darfur held Wednesday at the humanitarian affairs ministry, Ghazi stressed that the new strategy is a comprehensive framework to end the conflict. He also said his government is keen to reach a solution based on the wishes and aspiration of the people of Darfur.

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