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Highlights

“Military officials can not run” – NEC

The National Elections Commission (NEC) yesterday announced the Political Parties' Act and the Constitution prevent military officials from contesting executive and legislative elections, **AI-Ayyam** reports. NEC member Mukhtar Al-Assam said the Commission would not disregard conditions needed to be met for running. Al-Assam has admitted some defects and difficulties encountered in enforcing the elections law besides the existence of mistakes in the circular concerning registration of organized troops for electoral purposes. He revealed that the NEC had sent a letter to FVP Salva Kiir explaining that he could not run unless he steps down as SPLA commander-in-chief.

In response, the SPLM has criticized the NEC for demanding Kiir's resignation from the SPLA high command to run for elections. “The NEC should have waited for the SPLM official response to the letter before making statements,” GoSS Presidential Affairs Minister Luka Biang said.

According to **Sudan Tribune website** 16/1/10, the NEC has sent a warning letter to the semi-autonomous Southern Sudan President and the region's presidential candidate, General Salva Kiir Mayardit, to relinquish his military post in order to be qualified to run for the upcoming April 2010 elections.

The Electoral Law requires that all aspirants who serve in the military, civil service or are judges and want to contest for political positions in the elections should first resign from such positions.

The SPLM Political Bureau on Friday formally nominated the incumbent chairman, Salva Kiir, without any challenger, as the candidate for the Southern Sudan presidency position.

The warning by NEC came immediately after the nomination of General Kiir who is also the interim First Vice President of the Republic of Sudan.

Speaking during a radio program on Friday, Al Asam said that the rule applies to all military personnel without any exception.

Kiir is currently an active army General in the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) and heads the recently formed military Command Council, composed of more than 40 senior SPLA officers, and he is also the Commander-in-Chief of the army by the virtue of being the President of the Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS).

Earlier, the Presidential Affairs minister Dr. Luka Biang Deng who is a close aide to Southern Sudan president ruled out any possibility of General Kiir stepping down from the army after nomination.

However, the Deputy Secretary General of the SPLM and the party's newly nominated presidential candidate at the national level, Yassir Arman, revealed on Saturday that the SPLM had already formed committees to study all the legal and procedural disputes of the elections.

In another development, the SPLM Secretary General, Pagan Amum, said the movement's

Political Bureau also discussed the possibility of forming alliances with some parties in Northern and Southern Sudan for the upcoming elections.

Speaking during a press conference in Juba on Friday, Amum also pointed out that the SPLM Political Bureau would soon announce the party's candidates running for the executive and legislative posts across the country.

NEC has set January 22, as the deadline for receiving the names of selected candidates.

The Commission will directly receive the name of the SPLM candidate for the post of the President of the Republic while the candidate for Southern Sudan president will first pass through the Southern Sudan High Elections Committee in Juba before submitting it to the NEC headquarters in Khartoum.

Reuters 15/1/10 reported that Kiir will run for president of south Sudan in April elections, leaving the post of national presidency to be contested by a lower-ranking northern member of his party.

The decision by Kiir, the head of the southern former rebel Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), is a signal southern politicians are looking for semi-autonomous south Sudan to secede when it votes in an independence poll in less than a year.

Analysts had predicted Kiir to remain as president in the oil-producing south, having spent little time in Khartoum, despite becoming Sudan President Omar Hassan al-Bashir's deputy in 2005 when a north-south peace deal ended two decades of civil war.

"The SPLM nominee for the position of President of the Republic is Yasir Saeed Arman and the nominee for the President of Southern Sudan is the Chairman of the SPLM Salva Kiir," SPLM Secretary-General Pagan Amum told Reuters on Friday.

Kiir has shown little interest in the affairs of the north, intervening only when delays in implementing the peace deal reached crisis level, earning him the title of "vice absent" rather than first vice president.

"We want Kiir to continue being the president of the south to take the people of the south to the referendum ... Yasir Arman is a long term SPLM cadre and a capable leader and our best candidate," Amum added.

Bashir hopes to legitimise his position after the International Criminal Court last year issued a warrant for his arrest for war crimes during a counter-insurgency campaign in Sudan's western Darfur region.

"The Hero Yasir Saeed Arman has been nominated by SPLM Leadership to run against President Bashir," the head of the Southern Sudan Mission in Washington, D.C., Ezekiel Lol Gatkuoth told **Sudan Tribune** 14/1/10.

Arman articulated his party's national ambitions in an interview with Sudan Tribune one year ago. "In many occasions the SPLM in the north has demonstrated that it is growing, it is a force to reckon with. In fact it is one of the biggest forces, and it is to be noted that the SPLM—the movement that started in South Sudan, it is the first movement in the history of Sudan that started in a marginalized area and then it engulfed the whole of Sudan."

The candidate's history of opposition and exile eventually brought him into an alliance with the

rebel Southerners. Prior to joining the SPLM, which had some Marxist orientation itself, at the university Arman had been a member of the National Democratic Front, a student coalition between the communists and the democrats.

While he was a student in the faculty of law at the University of Cairo in Khartoum, Arman had to flee the country in February 1986, accused unjustly of murdering a member of the National Islamic Front which turned into the National Congress Party.

However, Arman become widely known because he presented the news bulletin for SPLM Radio and afterward in 1995 he read the news bulletin of the opposition National Democratic Alliance from Asmara, Yemen.

The northern politician is married to a Dinka woman from Abyei belonging to one of the biggest families of the area.

His relations with the Sudanese Islamists remain tense and combative. In 2007, following the return of the SPLM ministers to the government; First Vice President Salva Kiir proposed Arman's appointment as adviser at the presidency but for the first and last time President Bashir vetoed it.

With regard to his relations within the party, the Deputy Secretary General for Northern Sudan is reported to have had strangely conflicting relations with the Secretary General, Pa'gan Amum.

Nonetheless, in the capital Arman is seen as a very active figure participating in all the political events there. This dynamism could draw him the support of the small political formations in the country.

Communist Party names Nugud as presidential candidate

The Communist Party has nominated its leader Mohamed Ibrahim Nugud to run for presidential elections, saying it will also contest all levels of other elections, *Al-Rai Al-Aam* reports.

Lam Akol to run for presidency in South Sudan

Sudan Tribune website 15/1/10 – The former Sudanese foreign and head of the Sudan People Liberation Movement for Democratic Change (SPLM-DC) Lam Akol will run for the post of South Sudan president, according to a statement released by his office.

“The Alliance of Southern Sudan Political Parties which was in the South-South Dialogue in Khartoum last year met officially on Wednesday 13th January 2010 in Khartoum to nominate a Presidential candidate for the Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS)” the statement reads.

“The SPLM-DC presented their candidate then, Dr. Lam Akol Ajawin who was swiftly endorse[d] by the Alliance as the candidate to be supported by the Alliance in their bid to win the GoSS Presidency in the coming Elections”.

GoSS set up team to follow up referendum procedures

Al-Sudani reports Miraya FM as saying that GoSS has formed a committee known as Southern Sudan Referendum Task Force to follow-up on implementation of the referendum procedures. The team will be headed by GoSS VP Riak Machar. Meanwhile, GoSS Minister of Presidential Affairs Luka Biong said that the activities of the committee include setting necessary procedures for post referendum session and will extend beyond 2011 if southerners opt for separation. Biong added that the force will include representatives from all southern political parties.

In another development, SPLM SG Pagan Amum told *Khartoum Monitor* that although the country is preparing for elections, there are still fears that the NCP would totally be unwilling to demarcate the Abyei boundaries and the North-South border which are supposed to be finalized before elections. Amum said hopes are high but even if the NCP refuses, the coming government under Yasir Arman would demarcate these borders.

“No vacuum in the army after Bashir step-down” – Defence Minister

Defence Minister Gen. Abdul Rahim Mohamed Hussein said there was no vacuum in the army command after Al-Bashir has quit SAF top post, adding the functions of this post have been performed by the Defence Minister, *Akhir Lahza* reports. “There is no post in the army called commander-in-chief. In the army’s chain command there are the posts of supreme commander, chief of staff and Defence Minister,” he said. “The task of the supreme commander is supervisory and the army would be managed by the chief of staff,” he explained. “The task of the Defence Minister is confined to finance, logistics, implementation of strategic policies, international relations and relations with the Parliament”, he added.

UN condemns latest death sentences carried out by Sudanese authorities

UN News Centre 15/1/10 – The United Nations human rights office today strongly condemned the execution on Thursday of six Sudanese accused of murdering a number of policemen during clashes in 2001, despite requests by the world body to determine whether fair trials standards were respected.

The six men were sentenced to death in November 2006 for the killing of 13 policemen during clashes over a forced eviction in the Sudanese capital, Khartoum

A stay of execution was granted by the Supreme Court of Sudan in early December 2009, but it expired on 6 January.

Rupert Colville of the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) strongly condemned these latest executions and reiterated that under international law, the application of the death penalty can only take place in a very strictly defined set of circumstances.

One of these, he told a news briefing in Geneva, is that the sentence of death can only be issued after a trial in which minimum standards for fair trial were respected.

Mr. Colville noted that after their conviction and sentencing, the Government’s attention was drawn to various reports that the men had been detained without access to legal counsel for five months following their arrest, and that they confessed to murder under torture.

Also, just hours before the execution took place, the Secretary-General’s Special Representative in Sudan sent an urgent letter to the Government requesting that no execution take place.

“Regrettably, this appeal was ignored,” said Mr. Colville, adding that the latest executions highlight the growing number of executions that have taken place in Sudan in recent times, many of which were carried out after trials which failed to conform to international standards.

Government calls on UN to aid refugees in eastern Sudan

Sudan Government has called on the UNHCR to assist in confronting the challenge of growing number of refugees who continue to pour into eastern Sudan from Eritrea and Somalia, *local*

dailies report. Reportedly, refugees' camps in eastern Sudan have encountered an acute shortage of food and deterioration of health situation due to the failure of donors to honour their pledges.

Independent Human Rights expert begins mission next week

Al-Watan reports that independent human rights expert Mohamed Chand Osman (Tanzania) will pay his first official visit to the Sudan from 23 Jan to 11 February. Sudan Mission in Geneva announced that Osman would focus during his visit on training programmes, capacity building, and increase of awareness about human rights issues in Sudan as well as to follow up and address issues left by his processor Sima Samar.

Yambio getting ready for peace 5th anniversary

Sudan Tribune website 16/1/10 – It is two weeks into the New Year 2010 but in Western Equatoria State (WES), the last days are compressed till January 19 – when celebration for the 5th Anniversary of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) will be held.

The celebration in Yambio, the capital of Western Equatoria State, has attracted thousands of Sudanese hoping to witness the last chance of celebrating CPA as a united Country pending southerners' decision next year in a referendum for self determination as unity is seen as frail option.

Yambio residents, like politicians here, have security, economical and social reasons to welcome this year's celebration. In every corner of a football pitches and stadiums, the security is tight. Economically, citizens selling local products like bananas, oranges, lemon apples or pineapples should brag.

"I'm very happy to see that people from all over Sudan are coming to Yambio," said Alice, a roadside retailer selling fruits that are favorites for many visitors from hot or temperate regions of the Sudan.

Indeed, the living styles of WES citizens are also an added advantage to hosting CPA anniversary. Unlike in other towns of Southern Sudan where villagers are entirely dependent on imported food items, the reverse is true – to some degree, in Yambio.

In this town where dust is generated by increasing traffic and constructions, the cyclists, motorists and pedestrians loaded with cassava, yam and sugar canes among other items converge to inundate the market where prices are fairly low.

"This is what I sell every day. I have a plantation of banana," a man speaking through a translator told the Sudan Tribune early on Saturday.

Population in the town has doubted as the long awaited event nears. Though lodges and hotels owners have raised night fares nearly to perpetuity, getting accommodating rooms remain a challenge. Thus, schools now host visitors.

As final preparations at Yambio International Stadium continue, sport teams from the ten Southern states have already started the CPA 5th Anniversary tournament. The football, volleyball, basketball and athletic teams are in knock-out stages for final matches scheduled for January 19.

Military garrison mutinies in Darfur

A central reserve force led by Al-Firdos Garrison commander Mohamed Al-Rakib has mutinied in South Darfur, **Ray Al-Shaab** reports. Local sources said that commander Al-Rakib and his soldiers got away with 100 FWD vehicles and a large number of weapons including rocket launchers and ammunition. The mutineers are reportedly moving toward Bahr el Arab to join the Revolutionary Forces Front led by Maj. Gen. Musa Jadain (South Darfur).

Arab League to meet in Darfur

Sudan Tribune website 16/1/10 – Ambassadors from the Arab League Council will head to Darfur for a rare meeting outside Cairo aimed at showing Arab support for the restive region of Darfur where government militias killed 300, 000 civilians.

The Arab League Secretary General Amr Moussa will visit Darfur on February 12 to inaugurate a number of humanitarian projects in North Darfur state. Initially the visit had been scheduled to take place on January 20.

Moussa will take part in the opening of three hospitals and three villages in the three states of Darfur that have been implemented and financed within the Arab support for stability in Darfur.

Arab League will participate in the consultative meetings of donors to be held on April 18 in Doha, which includes the European Union, the United States, Japan, the African Union, and the Arab League as well as representatives of some international organizations in order to identify the role of these actors to support and promote the peace process in Darfur, Ambassador Halima said. Pointing out that the League will follow closely consultations between civil society and Darfur rebel movements and the talks between the government and the rebels.

Chad bombs rebels near Sudan border - UFR

AFP 16/1/10 — Chadian air force jets bombarded rebel positions in a region bordering Sudan and the Central African Republic, a rebel source said on Saturday.

The warplanes carried out the air strikes on Friday near the village of Tissi, said the senior official with the Union of Forces for Resistance (UFR) rebel group who requested anonymity.

The rebels responded by shooting at and hitting one of the aircraft, the official said, adding that: "We expect an intensification of the Chadian army's operations."

Most of the UFR rebels are based in Sudan's Darfur region, with a force also in Chad.

Chad and Sudan to deploy border patrols next month

Sudan Tribune website 16/1/10 — Chad and Sudan agreed to deploy next month a joint force to patrol the troubled border between the two countries, says a joint statement released in the Chadian capital on Friday.

The joint military and security committee which was meeting in the Chadian capital since January 7 had initially to manage the deployment of the troops within two week.

The timetable was agreed by both parties under a Memorandum of Understanding "on the concrete steps to normalize relations between Chad and Sudan," according to the joint statement.

"The manning of the outposts and securing of the border of two countries" should be effective "from 15 to 20 February 2010, while there will be held a" meeting of the Joint Committee on military and security ", according to the text.

On the Chadian side, an observation post is to be established in Abeche, eastern Chad, while from the Sudanese side, it will be installed in El-Geneina, the capital of west Darfur.

Chad and Sudan "were given a period of two months each to take the steps necessary to put an end to any presence, any support and any action by armed groups in one country or another" , said a diplomat who requested anonymity.

The Chadian President recently demanded the Sudanese government to disarm the Chadian rebels and to remove them from Darfur. He also urged to expel the leadership of the rebel groups from Sudan.

The normalization process takes place after several years of mistrust and bitterness between the two governments. It is seen as necessary step to settle the seven year conflict in Darfur region where some 300.00 people killed and some 2.7 other displaced.