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Media Monitoring Report

United Nations Mission in Sudan/ Public Information Office

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Highlights

UNMIS has no mandate to deploy at the border –Minister

Akhbar Al-Youm (Khartoum) 17/10/10 – Sudan Government has rejected a plan to create a buffer zone between the North and the South.

Acting Foreign Minister Kamal Hassan said no military force could deploy without the Government's consent and an agreement on the mandate, adding the Government is not officially informed about this matter.

Al-Rai Al-Aam (Khartoum) 17/10/10 reports that NCP Mobilization Secretary Haj Magid Siwar yesterday categorically rejected US President Obama's statement about a possible bloodshed in the Sudan, adding the statement is intended to set the world stage for a new conspiracy against the country.

On reports of a buffer zone, Siwar has rejected the deployment of international troops, describing the proposal as an attempt by the US to destabilize the country. He said the Government would not agree to a buffer zone. "Mandate of UN troops in Sudan will end when the referendum is over. UNMIS has not mandate to deploy at the border. Presence of any force would create tension and conflict at the border areas," he said.

UN needs green light to move troops to border - Khartoum

AFP (Khartoum) 15/10/10 - A senior Sudanese official said on Friday the United Nations would need Khartoum's approval to move troops to the tense north-south border to avert violence ahead of a southern independence vote.

"I don't think that would be legal... The (UN) Security Council cannot deploy more soldiers without the government's approval," Rabie Abdulatti, a senior official with the ruling National Congress Party (NCP), told AFP.

A top UN official in New York said earlier that UN troops are to be moved to the frontier to head off violence in the run-up to the January referendum that could see the break-up of Africa's biggest nation.

The extra troops were ordered to "hotspots" on the border after the Security Council was told that the south's leader feared a war with the north over the looming referendum on southern independence.

US ambassador to the United Nations Susan Rice said southern Sudan's president Salva Kiir had asked for a frontier buffer zone with only UN troops when he met Security Council ambassadors last week.

"President Kiir also warned that he fears the north may be preparing for war and may be moving troops southward," Rice told the council.

After the meeting, UN peacekeeping chief Alain Le Roy said UN troops would be moved toward the north-south border within weeks.

"We will increase our presence but only in some hotspots," Le Roy said. The UN mission, UNMIS, did not have enough troops to create a buffer zone along the whole 2,000-kilometre (1,250-mile) border.

Sudan objects to UN plans for new border troops

BBC News 16/10/10 - The Sudanese government has said the UN cannot move new troops to its tense North-South border without its consent.

President Omar al-Bashir's security adviser, Salah Gosh, rejected the plan, saying troops could not be deployed without the consent of the government.

Ibrahim Ghandour, another leading politician in Al-Bashir's National Congress Party (NCP), said any tension in the region could be sorted out between the two sides, so a buffer zone between North and South was not necessary.

The BBC's James Copnall in Khartoum says there has been a surge in inflammatory statements in recent weeks in Sudan, as the referendum approaches.

SAF warns UN against deploying troops on North-South borders

Sudan Tribune website (Khartoum) 15/10/10 - The Sudanese Armed Forces reacted angrily to the announcement by the United Nations peacekeeping chief Alain Le Roy yesterday in which he said that the world body intends to redeploy peacekeepers in the south to Abyei and other hotspots along the north-south border ahead of the referendum to create limited buffer zones.

On Friday an unnamed UN official told Reuters that as of yesterday, the United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) "significantly increased its troop presence in the [Abyei] area.

Preparations for the Jan. 9 vote have proceeded haltingly amid political and logistical obstacles, and the southerners have accused the northerners of stalling, warning of violence if the referendum is delayed.

A spokesperson for the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) slammed the statements made by Le Roy saying it demonstrates his "ignorance".

"The remarks made by the official in charge of peacekeeping at the United Nations Alain Le Roy on the deployment of UN buffer troops on the border between North and South, reflects nothing but ignorance on the course of events in Sudan or harassment aimed at [Sudan's] stability and integrity," said SAF spokesperson Al-Sawarmi Khalid Sa'ad in statements carried by Sudan official news agency late on Friday.

The senior military official affirmed to SUNA the army's ability to deal with any incidents affecting the security and safety of citizens whether they are in the north or south.

Sa'ad further stressed that UNMIS has a "specific mandate" which does not include deployment on the North-South borders but to monitor the implementation of the CPA.

SAF spokesperson described statements by the UN peacekeeping chief as contributing to aggravating the situation and escalating it which he said coincides with the arrangements for the referendum. He added that there was no threat to the security and safety of Southerners after president Omer Hassan Al-Bashir himself provided assurances.

Sanaa Hamad, a state minister at the Sudanese information ministry, told SUNA that the push for buffer zones is a result of pressure by the West but emphasized that Sudan is a sovereign country and as such a move can only take place with the consent of Khartoum.

Reuters (Khartoum) 16/10/10 reported that Sudan's army has criticised U.N. moves to set up buffer zones along the country's north-south border ahead of a politically sensitive referendum, calling the plan a sign of either ignorance or interference.

U.N. officials told Reuters on Friday the world body was moving peacekeepers to hotspot areas to create limited buffer zones because of fears that conflict may erupt in the build-up to a referendum on whether the south should declare independence or stay in Sudan.

"The remarks ... on the deployment of a U.N. buffer zone on the border between north and south reflect nothing but ignorance of the facts on the course of events in Sudan or harassment aimed at (Sudan's) stability and integrity," Sudan's army spokesman told the state SUNA news agency late on Friday.

Army spokesman Al-Sawarmi Khaled told SUNA on Friday there was no threat to southerners' safety and that Sudan's armed forces could deal with any security incidents. He added the U.N. peacekeepers in the country already had their own job to do, monitoring the roll out of the 2005 peace accord.

A U.N. official told Reuters the mission had already deployed more peacekeepers to Abyei, a central oil-producing area claimed by the north and the south.

Parliament rejects UN troop deployment

Akhir Lahza Khartoum, 17/10/10 – The Parliamentary Committee on Defence and Security has rejected a proposed UN troop deployment to avert an outbreak of violence along the north-south border. The committee described such a development as a violation of the CPA and interference in the internal affairs of Sudan.

Committee chairman Mohamed Murkaz Kuku pointed out that the Ministry of Interior has plans in place to guarantee security and there is no need for such a deployment. He pointed out that the parliamentary committee would convene shortly to discuss the issue and come up with a vision.

South's choice will be respected – UNSG

Al-Rai Al-Aam (Khartoum) 17/10/10 – UNSG Ban Ki-moon told journalists in Marrakech yesterday that the choice of the southern Sudanese would be respected. He said the situation in the Sudan remains extremely fragile but the UN would continue to support the concerned parties to organize a credible referendum.

According to **AFP** (Marrakech) 16/10/10, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon urged global

leaders Saturday to close ranks and address problems in Sudan and vulnerable countries around the world, along with others posed by organised crime.

Speaking at the opening session of a two-day World Policy Conference in Marrakech, he reiterated a message delivered last month to a UN general assembly in New York.

Referring to a January referendum in southern Sudan that analysts expect will partition Africa's largest country, Ban said: "The stakes are very high.

"Everyone is very much concerned about the future of Sudan, the future of Africa."

Ban said the UN would deploy monitors "in every county of southern Sudan starting from this week until the end of the referendum" to track developments there.

Addressing the conference theme of global governance, the UN chief said "I have been urging leaders of the G20 that they should not lose sight of the challenges and plights of many vulnerable countries."

Pro-Israel lobby behind Obama's support for South independence - official

Sudan Tribune website 16/10/10 - Presidential Adviser Mustafa Osman Ismail on Saturday said that recent remarks by US President in support of South Sudan independence is a result of pressures by pro-Israel lobby groups who are pushing for Sudan's partition.

"At the outset, the United States was saying it wants Sudan to remain united, then it moved a little to say that what it will accept whatever the southerners want, and today it raises its voice saying that secession will be inevitable," he said.

"This shows that there are US pressure lobbies linked to Israel talking and pushing things in this direction," he added.

The Sudanese official also blasted Obama over his statements on possible bloodshed if the southern Sudan referendum is postponed. Ismail said that pro-Israel lobby groups are providing him with false reports.

On Thursday, U.S. President Barack Obama said that Sudan is one of his "highest priorities".

"This is a dangerous area. The last time there was a war between north and south, 2 million people were killed. And so right now what we're trying to do is organize a referendum where the south in a peaceful, legal fashion could decide to break off and form their own nation separate from what is currently all of Sudan. We've only got about 90 days to get this done," he added.

"But it's something that we all have to pay attention to, because if you have an outbreak of war between the north and south in Sudan, not only could that erupt in more violence that could lead to millions of deaths, but solving the problem in Darfur becomes that much more difficult, because Khartoum, the seat of government for northern Sudan, could end up feeling more threatened and not being willing to deal with some of the continuing violence that exists in western Sudan and Darfur,".

Ismail, who is a former foreign affairs minister, was speaking to the press from Doha where he delivered an invitation to the Qatari government to participate in a donor conference for eastern Sudan. He also met with the business community to encourage them to invest in Sudan.

Speaking about the position of southern Sudanese political forces, he said the Sudan People Liberation (SPLM) through its chairman are supporting the independence but other parties are divided.

He expressed regret that unionists are voiceless and not allowed to express their point of view in the South and asserted that the African continent, except Uganda, supports the unity of the country.

*AFP*16/10/10 reported that Sudan's vice president on Saturday criticised US President Barack Obama for warning of possible bloodshed if a referendum on independence for south Sudan does not take place as planned in January.

"Obama receives reports from entities who do not know what is happening in Sudan," Ali Osman Taha told a news conference in Doha.

"This is not the first time he speaks as such of Sudan, and it will not be the last. He makes those remarks based on what he hears from pressure groups."

On September 24, Obama and UN chief Ban Ki-moon led international warnings that the planned January 9 votes must be held on time and peacefully.

"At this moment, the fate of millions of people hangs in the balance," Obama told a special UN meeting.

"What happens in Sudan in the days ahead may decide whether people who have endured too much war, move towards peace or slip backwards to bloodshed."

Taha also criticised Washington's stance on Sudanese unity.

"The United States was initially saying it wants Sudan to remain united, then it moved a little to say that what it wants whatever the southerners accept, and today it raises its voice saying that separation will be inevitable," he said.

"This shows that there are US pressure lobbies linked to Israel talking and pushing things in this direction."

Taha ruled out using force to defend Sudanese unity.

"The Sudanese army has been withdrawn completely from the south. We do not allow any thought implying that we intend to use military force," he said.

But he warned of possible conflict in oil-rich Abyei, a flashpoint region straddling both sides that is also scheduled to vote on January 9 to decide whether to remain in the north or join the south.

"This matter is dangerous because it is based on a dialogue between two major tribes and

societies -- Misseriya and Ngok Dinka -- and any agreement or concession without the consent of both sides will lead to a war," he said.

Misseriya Arabs are thought to favour remaining in a united Sudan and Ngok Dinka are seen as supporting joining an independent south.

Referendum would take place on schedule – Al-Bashir

Al-Tayyar Khartoum, 17/10/10 – President Al-Bashir has reiterated that the southern Sudan referendum would take place on schedule and underlined the need for a free and fair aprocess in a manner that would reflect the will of the people of southern Sudan.

At a recent meeting at the Council of Ministers with members of the UN Secretary-General's Panel on the Referenda in Sudan, Al-Bashir expressed confidence that the Panel would be impartial in the discharge of their duties.

The head of the Panel, former Tanzanian President Benjamin Mkapa, told the press following the meeting with President Al-Bashir that the Sudanese leadership is sincere, willing and able to conduct the referendum.

Sudan votes hampered by threats, delays, funding - UN

Reuters (Khartoum) 15/10/10 - Plans for referendums that could split Sudan in two are being hampered by delays, poor funding and a "negatively charged atmosphere" of threats and accusations, a U.N. panel said on Friday.

Members of a high-level U.N. panel on Friday told journalists they were "very concerned" about a lack of progress in preparing for the votes with less than 90 days to go before the official start date of Jan. 9, 2011.

"On both sides (north and south) the atmosphere remains negatively charged. Threats and accusations are being made," said former Tanzanian president Benjamin Mkapa, head of the panel U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon set up to monitor the referendums.

Mkapa said the commission set up to run the southern independence vote was short of funds and did not have enough money to hire staff or pay for basic equipment and the transportation of election materials.

"Funding from both the Government of National Unity and the Government of Southern Sudan is lagging. They must come forward with their share of the funds," he told a press conference.

Mkapa said the panel, which just ended a four-day tour of Sudan, was particularly concerned about the situation in Abyei where "the situation on the ground ... is reported to be very tense."

U.N. officials told Reuters there is too little time to raise additional peacekeepers for Sudan before the vote, though the world body is redeploying UNMIS peacekeepers in the south to Abyei and other hotspots along the north-south border ahead of the referendum to create limited buffer zones.

"As of yesterday, UNMIS has significantly increased its troop presence in the (Abyei) area," a U.N. official said.

Northern officials said on Thursday it would be impossible to hold the Abyei vote on time and they were open to a delay, an option Abyei's SPLM administrator dismissed as "unacceptable."

Mkapa said he was still confident the referendums could be "successful" without going into further details.

Fears of conflict as Sudan heads for partition vote

AFP (Khartoum) 15/10/10 -Fears of renewed conflict haunt the run-up to a January referendum in southern Sudan that analysts expect will partition Africa's largest country.

President Omar al-Bashir told parliament this week he would "not accept" an alternative to unity, although he was committed to a 2005 peace treaty that ended a 22-year war with the south and gave it the right to hold a vote on independence.

Foreign Minister Ali Karti later said Khartoum would respect the outcome of the January 9 referendum and a senior official with Bashir's National Congress Party (NCP), Rabie Abdulatti, told AFP that Bashir's comment was not a "threat."

Bashir's speech "should not be interpreted as a threat ... he proposed incentives to the southerners to choose unity," he said.

Bashir's government insists it does not want to obstruct the referendum.

In a sign of the tensions between Khartoum and Juba, the United Nations agreed to move troops to the south's disputed border with the north, following calls by southern leader Salva Kiir to create a buffer zone along the whole 2,000-kilometre (1,250-mile) border.

UN peacekeeping chief Alain Le Roy said the UN mission, UNMIS, did not have enough troops to do that, adding: "We will increase our presence but only in some hotspots."

But Abdulatti said on Friday that the United Nations could not send additional peacekeeping troops to the border without Khartoum's prior consent.

"I don't think that would be legal ... The Security Council cannot deploy more soldiers without the government's approval," he said.

A member of a visiting UN Security Council delegation said earlier this month that Kiir warned of the south conducting a unilateral vote if the referendum suffers "huge delays."

Preparations for the vote are already behind schedule, and much to the dismay of southern officials, Khartoum said this week that another referendum also scheduled for January 9 on whether the oil-rich Abyei region will join the north or south should be postponed.

But Pagan Amum, secretary general of the south's ruling Sudan Peoples' Liberation Movement (SPLM), rejected any such delay.

"Any delay is unacceptable, and it is a call that would affect the peace process," warned Amum. "The (Abyei) referendum is still possible to go ahead on time if the NCP cooperates."

An Islamist opposition leader who once mentored Bashir before they had a falling out said on Thursday he feared Sudan could turn into another Somalia.

"I am afraid that what happened in Somalia might happen to us in Sudan, and even worse, because the Somalis are one people, one country, one religion, but we are different kinds," Hassan al-Turabi said.

"It can go in one direction or the other -- war or peace," he added.

The border is one of the key disputes that will decide the future of the country, said Sudan specialist Roland Marchal with the Paris-based National Centre for Scientific Research.

"There is a lot of confusion, emotion and contradictions, but nothing is settled yet," he said.

South to form transitional government, calls for elections after referendum

Sudan Tribune website 16/10/10 - A conference in Juba of Southern Sudan's political parties has resolved to form a new transitional government in the region after the result of Januray's referendum on independence is announced.

The conference on the upcoming referendum and post-referendum era was called for by the President of the Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS) and Chairman of the SPLM Salva Kiir Mayardit. Organized by GoSS, the meeting aims to reach a consensus on the referendum and the future of the south.

Chaired by the south Sudan's Vice President, Riek Machar Teny, the five-day conference has been attended by the leaders of 25 political parties in southern Sudan and southern political leaders who are members in northern political parties.

Delegates have conducted intensive discussions on the future of the south since the conference was opened by Kiir on Wednesday.

Senior SPLM officials including the two other deputies, James Wani Igga and Malik Agar as well as the party's Secretary General, Pagan Amum, participated in the dialogue.

Sources close to the conference told Sudan Tribune that a consensus has been reached by all the political parties, including the ruling SPLM, to form a new transitional government inclusive of all the political parties soon after the declaration of the referendum results.

The transitional government of national unity in the South would then fix a date for fresh elections, the source said. It will also conduct a fresh credible population census in the region as well as review the Southern Sudan interim constitution and draft a new permanent constitution, they went on.

Sources at the conference say that all parties present including the NCP leaders, have agreed to timely, free, fair and transparent conduct of the referendum on January 9, 2011.

The final resolutions of the conference are expected to be read out on Sunday in the presence of President Kiir during the official closure of the event.

The Citizen 17/10/10 reports that the conference on dialogue and consensus building among political parties in Southern Sudan has been extended, it would conclude today. The dialogue was to end last Friday but the three committees on reconciliation, referendum and post referendum issues could not complete their tasks as scheduled. The organizing committee announced that the drafting secretariat was not able to winding up due to heaviness of the workload. However, anonymous sources told the citizen that there were difficulties in reaching a consensus on post-referendum issues. Sources indicated the presence of differences over the duration of the interim period that fluctuated between 6 and 18 months, adding that the majority were inclined towards a six month interim period after the referendum for forming a broad base interim government.

According to *Al-Sahafa* 17/10/10, the South-South dialogue conference failed for the second time to issue final recommendations due to continued discussions, observations and comments received by the drafting committee. UDF leader Peter Soli revealed that his party has submitted a proposal to direct a call to the people of the Southern Sudan to vote for secession. He aid that his party has also proposed to the meeting the formation of a government of national unity in the South prior to the referendum.

Al-Mahdi warns of possible war

Al-Sahafa (Khartoum) 17/10/10 – National Umma Party leader Sadiq Al-Mahdi, in statements to Al-Jazeera TV, has said that the “language being used by the NCP and the SPLM is the language of war”. He has described the NCP’s statement about impossibility of conducting Abyei referendum and the SPLM’s hint that it might organize the vote unilaterally under international supervision as a “serious development”.

We will loose 70% of our oil reserve if separation takes place - Minister

Al-Sahafa 17/10/10 – Minister of Finance Ali Mahmoud has revealed that the North would lose 70% of its current oil reserve and 50% of its revenues should the South secede. Mahmoud, who made the remarks in an interview to *Al-Sharq Al-Awsat* in Washington where he is attending the World Bank meeting, said his Ministry has adopted new policies aiming to reduce imports, to increase tax and custom duties and to rationalize government spending.

According to *Al-Intibaha* 17/10/10, Mahmoud revealed that Khartoum told the World Bank that referendum would only be held if Sudan’s foreign debts are written off.

Presidency is meeting tomorrow

Akhbar Al-Youm (Khartoum) 17/10/10 – A high-level official revealed to the newspaper that the Presidency would hold a meeting tomorrow. According to the source, the meeting will focus on the status quo.

Ajras Al-Hurriya 17/10/10 reports that the Presidency meeting would discuss the upcoming referenda and Ethiopia’s proposal on Abyei.

Reportedly, FVP Salva Kiir Mayardit would meet with leaders of the political forces after the

Presidency meeting.

Ethiopian initiative on Abyei unveiled

Al-Ahdath Khartoum, Juba, 17/10/10 – The SPLM has unveiled an Ethiopian initiative to resolve Abyei crisis between the CPA partners. The SPLM said the proposal would be tabled before the forthcoming meeting of the Presidency expected to take place on Monday.

The SPLM has called for good preparations for the meeting to ensure a good outcome.

Other Highlights

LRA rebels to be given “terrorist” status - African Union

AFP 16/10/10 (LIBREVILLE) -Central African countries plagued by the brutal rebellion of the Lord's Resistance Army are working to reclassify the group as terrorists, the African Union said on Saturday.

At a meeting this week in the Central African Republic aimed at promoting a joint approach to the LRA, participants agreed to take steps to have the LRA classified as terrorists, rather than rebels, by the AU.

This would give affected countries greater access to international funds and require increased levels of judicial cooperation.

Representatives from Uganda, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Sudan met in Bangui on Wednesday and Thursday, along with Kenya, where they also agreed to step up joint military action.

"Participants agreed to the following concrete measures: the creation of a joint centre of operations, the creation of a joint taskforce to lead actions against the LRA, and the deployment of joint border patrols," the AU said in a statement.

LRA sighted near South Darfur

Akhir Lahza Khartoum/S. Darfur, 17/10/10 – Mohamed Adam, an MP for Oum Dafok, South Darfur, said LRA soldiers were spotted near the South Darfur borders with the Central African Republic. He expressed concerns over the development.

Adam said that security authorities had been monitoring the movement of a group of LRA combatants around the Abirau area in the CAR (about 65 km from the Sudan border) and that these elements have also been seen in the local markets. He promised to raise the issue with the local legislative authorities.

Doha talks to close end of October

Al-Ahdath Doha, 17/10/10 – The five committees formed between the Sudan government and the Liberation and Justice Movement (LJM) are expected to wrap up their work next Tuesday and are expected to table their recommendations to their respective heads.

Mohamed Kheir, a member of the Sudanese government delegation to the Doha talks, said that the talks might be concluded by the end of this month.

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