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Highlights

Parties to have equal opportunities for elections campaigning in the media

At a meeting yesterday with Information Minister Al-Zahawi Ibrahim, President Omar Al-Bashir underlined the need to give political parties in the country equal opportunities to use state media for their elections campaigning, **Al-Ahdath** reports. The Minister said that apart from elections-related coverage, state media would also give precedence to programmes that strengthen the tenets of peace in the country and those that encourage unity.

SPLM “manoeuvring” over referendum – NCP

NCP Political Campaigns Manager Ibrahim Gandour has called on the SPLM to desist from its “tactical manoeuvres” over the referendum, **Al-Ahdath** reports. The NCP official cited the recent proposals by the SPLM to overcome the deadlock over the draft referendum bill as an example of such manoeuvres. He called on the SPLM to seek guidance from international examples in order to implement the constitution and the CPA. He further pointed out that the referendum is an issue to be decided upon by the voters. The role of the government and the parties to the CPA on the issue is only to facilitate the process, he said.

SPLM slams NCP on recent criticisms

Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly, Atem Garang (SPLM), has lashed out at Speaker Ahmed Ibrahim Al-Tahir (NCP) over recent statements in which, on calling on the SPLM to show commitment to its obligations to the implementation of the CPA, he reportedly said, “gone are the days of pampering for the SPLM.”

Deputy Speaker Atem said that the SPLM categorically rejects the use of such language that is “reminiscent of the pre-CPA *jihadi* rhetoric,” reports **Al-Ahdath**. He pointed out that the SPLM has spent four years in dialogue with the NCP over the implementation of the CPA. “The NCP now seems to have tired of the use of dialogue as a means to help implement the CPA.

GoSS collects 1113 pieces of guns; halts weapons dragnet for one day

The Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS) has ordered a one-day halt of the disarmament campaign in order to assess the operation, SPLA Spokesperson Kuol Diem said. He added that officials have collected 1,113 pieces of firearms during the campaign, **Al-Sahafa** daily reports. Deim said that the operations would resume today.

Meanwhile, **Ajras Al-Hurriya** daily reports that the SPLA has confessed some misdeeds did occur during the disarmament operation in southern Sudan. Spokesperson Kuol Diem noted that 15 SPLA soldiers and one SPLA officer have been apprehended for such misdeeds and will be tried at a military tribunal. He said that the one-day halt in operations has given them the opportunity to evaluate the operation and brief the SPLA soldiers on how better to carry out these operations. Responding to questions on reports that the Dutch Consulate in Juba was robbed by SPLA elements during the operation, Deim denied such reports but pointed out that three SPLA soldiers did go to search the consulate and immediately left when they learnt of the diplomatic status of the premises.

President pardons children involved in JEM raid on Omdurman

President Omar Al-Bashir issued a decree yesterday granting amnesty to the ten minors still being held by authorities in connection to the JEM raid on Omdurman, **Al-Rai Al-Aam** reports. Sources say that the President has ordered their immediate release.

Sudan ex-PM, Sadiq Al-Mahdi pessimistic over Darfur solutions

Sudantribune.com 16/9/09 - National Umma Party leader Sadiq Al-Mahdi has expressed pessimism over prospects of a political solution for the problems in Darfur.

"There are upcoming storms in Darfur [clear] to whoever has a heart or is carefully listening," Al-Mahdi told participants at a Ramadan dinner banquet hosted by his Umma party.

Al-Mahdi did not elaborate on what he meant by his remarks at a time when top UN officials and military peacekeepers described the war in Darfur as being over. He has criticized statements by former UNAMID chief Rudolph Adada in that regard warning that it would push Darfur rebels to step up military operations to prove the contrary.

UNMIS FC urges CPA partners to solve disagreements through dialogue

Radio Miraya 16/9/09 - UNMIS Force Commander Maj. Gen. Paban Jung Thapa, has urged the partners to the CPA to resolve all the outstanding issues in the implementation of the CPA through dialogue. Maj. Gen. Thapa expressed confidence that the people of Sudan would maintain the peace and would implement the CPA.

He said four and a half years of coexistence after the signing of the CPA is a good example for the Sudanese to know that they can live together and settle their differences without resorting to violence.

Situation in the South insecure – Egyptian FM

Egyptian FM Ahmed Abu Al-Gheith and SPLM-DC leader Lam Akol discussed yesterday the situation in the Sudan especially in the South, **Al-Ahdath** reports. Abu Al-Gheith expressed concern over the deterioration of the economic and humanitarian situation in the region and described the situation as "insecure" given the failure of the partners to agree on key CPA benchmarks, particularly the elections and the referenda.

NCP downplays "Broken Silence's" call for military intervention in the South

Al-Ahdath reports that NCP official Ibrahim Gandour has downplayed a call by an organisation known as "Broken Silence" for military intervention by the US in southern Sudan to curb LRA activity. Gandour considered the call an attempt to further aggravate the situation in the south of the country. SPLM Spokesperson Yien Mathew said however that the movement was conducting consultations on the development and would make its position public after finalising those consultations.

Khartoum objects to OHCHR's claims of discriminating against women

The Sudan Government delegation to the meetings of the 12th session of the UN Human Rights Council has categorically rejected allegations by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, against the backdrop of the trial of journalist Lubna Hussein, that women are being discriminated against in the Sudan, **Al-Ahdath** reports. The delegation pointed out that the media was lured in and used by some circles that used the case for political gains. The delegation expressed surprise that the issue was being cited by the UN as a human rights violation. Sudan says that Lubna Hussein was tried in an open court of law and was condemned for wearing indecent clothes, and not a trouser, as cited in the human rights report.

Yassir Arman's immunity under consideration – Deputy Speaker

Al-Intibaha reports National Assembly Deputy Speaker Mohamed Al-Hassan Al-Amin as saying that the Parliament has received requests to lift immunity from four MPs including Yassir Arman and the matter is under consideration.

French envoy in Khartoum to discuss Darfur peace

The French Special Envoy to the Doha talks on Darfur is in Khartoum as of last Tuesday, **Al-Rai Al-Aam** reports. The envoy is on a three day visit during which he will hold talks with government officials within the framework of consultations for preparations for the forthcoming round of talks.

Gunmen carjack two humanitarian trucks in South Darfur

Sudantribune.com 17/9/09 - Gunmen carjacked two trucks transporting food items near the town of El-Daein in South Darfur, UNAMID reported today.

The two trucks contracted by WFP and carrying food items from El Obeid to El Daein were carjacked about 80 kilometres from El Daein.

The armed men forced the drivers to divert their course and detained them. However, they managed to contact the owners of the trucks, who alerted the police and the Humanitarian Aid Commission (HAC). The police and HAC negotiated the release of the drivers but the stolen items were not recovered.

UNAMID peacekeepers in the area "are monitoring these developments."

UNHCR distributes radio sets in Kajo Keji

UNHCR has distributed around 17000 wind-and-solar-powered radio sets in parts of Kajo Keji, in southern Sudan, along with food and non-food aid assistance to returnees. The grant is part of a Dutch aid programme for southern Sudan, **The Citizen** reports.

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