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# Media Monitoring Report

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## Referendum Watch

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# Highlights

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## **Unilateral creation of buffer zone counterproductive – Foreign Ministry**

*Al-Rai Al-Aam* 18/10/10 – The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has denied any knowledge about intent by the UN to create a buffer zone between the North and South, saying the issue has not been presented at any level of negotiations. The Ministry, in a statement issued yesterday, denounced resort to the media and public opinion to raise issues that are not on the table. The statement stated that unilateral creation of a buffer zone would be counterproductive.

According to *The Citizen* 18/10/10, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' statement urged all international partners to abide by the original mandate of UNMIS and assist the two CPA partners to reach a peaceful political settlement of the pending post referendum issues and complete the implementation of the remaining points of the CPA and refrain from futile statements.

The Ministry reiterated yesterday that the statements of the UN diplomats with regard to the deployment of UN forces along the north south borders “to create limited buffer zones because of fears that conflict may erupt in the buildup to the referendum” was not presented to the government of Sudan at any negotiation level as it based only on request of CPA party, namely SPLM chairman and GoSS President Salva Kiir.

The statement deplored the unilateral proposals that ignore the basis of conformity and hamper the aspirations of cooperation characterizing the relation of Sudan with the UN in the past period based on testimony of all partners.

The ministry of foreign affairs said the UNMIS mandate is to assist all the CPA partners to implement the agreement. The ministry warned that any attempt to impose unilateral actions in this context or advocating may lead to opposite results contrary to the very objectives for which UNMIS has been established besides calling for deploying separating forces sends negative messages on the situation on the borders and create unwanted tensions.

The statement said the impression of the UNSC delegation at the end of its recent visit as expressed by the delegation leader was that they had touched a true desire and strong determination by both CPA partners to implement the remaining clauses of the agreement a matter which was further stressed in the meeting of the two vice presidents in Juba on 12<sup>th</sup> October.

The UN official on Friday said they were moving peacekeepers to hotspots to create limited buffer zones because of fears that conflict may erupt in the buildup to a referendum on whether southern Sudan should declare independence or remain part of the country.

Meanwhile, the SPLM has announced that the UN does not need consent of the central government to create a buffer zone between the North and the South and called on the NCP to justify its rejection of the plan.

National Assembly Deputy Speaker Atem Garang who is also a senior SPLM member told reporters yesterday that the SPLM's request for a buffer zone is based on concerns that the North is preparing for war.

### **UN yet to decide on Sudan reinforcements**

*AFP* (Khartoum) 18/10/10 - The UN has not yet decided whether to send more troops to the tense border between north and south Sudan ahead of a southern independence vote in January but has concentrated its peacekeepers in sensitive areas, a UN official said on Monday.

"While the Security Council and the secretary general have expressed their readiness to consider additional support to address security concerns, no decision has yet been made by them for additional troops," head of the United Nations Mission in Sudan, Haile Menkerios, told a news conference.

Earlier this month, south Sudan president Salva Kiir asked a delegation of visiting UN Security Council ambassadors to boost troop numbers along the border to create a 32 kilometre (20 mile) wide buffer zone.

UN peacekeeping chief Alain Le Roy said UNMIS could not create a buffer zone along the entire 2,000-kilometre (1,250-mile) border with the 10,600 troops and police at its disposal.

But Khartoum has rejected any increase in the strength of the peacekeeping force.

"So far, UNMIS has been making adjustments to the deployment of its existing troops, overstretchedly deployed throughout the ceasefire zone, to defuse tensions," Menkerios said.

"If at any point, there is any need to make an adjustment to that deployment in order to reinforce work in certain areas to help defuse tensions or possible tensions, then we do so," he said.

Menkerios said that UNMIS had deployed extra peacekeepers to the disputed oil district of Abyei on the north-south border as tensions mounted over the preparations for a vote on the district's future which is supposed to be held on the same day as the wider southern independence referendum.

"I refer to Abyei as an example where we made some deployment of our reserves in order to reinforce continued patrolling," the UNMIS chief said.

### **South secession is possible and so does war – Adviser**

*Al-Watan* 18/10/10 - Presidential Adviser Mustafa Osman Ismail, speaking to Al-Arabiya TV, said secession of southern Sudan is possible and the central government is preparing for that scenario. Ismail pointed out that war is also possible and his Government is prepared for that.

Ismail stressed the need that the SPLA should be kept aloof so that the referendum process is conducted in a free and fair atmosphere.

### **Presidency to meet tomorrow**

*Al-Sahafa* Khartoum, 18/10/10 – The Presidency is due to hold a keynote meeting in Khartoum tomorrow in a bid to address key CPA pending issues including Abyei and demarcation of the

border.

GoSS Minister for Regional Cooperation Deng Alor said that a team of three SPLM members would engage counterparts in the NCP in discussing preparations for the forthcoming meeting of the Presidency on Tuesday and Wednesday.

Some newspapers report that the Presidency meeting will be convened today.

Meanwhile, Alor indicated that the CPA partners would resume talks on Abyei in Addis Ababa on 27 October.

### **No time and no need to renegotiate the CPA – SPLM Biong**

*Al-Ahram* 18/10/10 – Cabinet Minister Lika Biong said President Al-Bashir's recent speech before parliament on the possibility of re-negotiating the CPA with regards to the security arrangements and wealth sharing for the sake of unity would "fall on deaf ears".

Biong, who is also a prominent SPLM member, pointed out that there is no need and no time for a renegotiation of the 2005 peace deal. However, Biong has praised the President's statement, describing the incentives as a "major effort" but pointed out that there is no way that key issues stipulated in the CPA such as the referenda and popular consultations would be changed.

### **South to organize its own referendum if Khartoum continues to obstruct - Wani**

*Sudan Tribune website* 17/10/10 - Southern Sudan government will organize its own referendum on the independence of the semi-autonomous region if Khartoum obstructs its running as scheduled on January 9, 2011, said the head of Juba parliament.

The National Congress Party (NCP) government in Khartoum says it is committed to hold the vote on southern Sudan independence as agreed next January. But, it also repeats that this date would only be observed if an agreement on border demarcation, Abyei and Sudan's debt is reached before.

The first vice-president and head of southern Sudan government Salva Kiir who declared publicly his support for the independence will hold a meeting in Khartoum on Monday with President Omer Al-Bashir and Vice-President Ali Osman Taha to discuss the outstanding issues.

"If the referendum is hampered, southern Sudan has the right to conduct its own referendum under international supervision to decide the future of the region, whether unity or separation, and this is what will happen," said James Wani Igga the chairman of Southern Sudan Legislative Assembly.

"This is the legal choice for us. It is known that Sudan's transitional Constitution and the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) will end by January 9, 2011, and if the referendum is not conducted it means returning to the first quarter," he defended this option in an interview with the Chinese Xinhua.

However he ruled out a unilateral declaration of southern Sudan independence from the parliament arguing "This option cannot be taken because it is not legal. I'm the chairman of the

southern Sudan parliament and I'm aware that this procedure is not possible".

Analysts agree that the 9 January referendum will allow Juba government to get the recognition of the international community, which seemingly is the major concern of the SPLM leadership.

Regarding Abyei future, James Wani was very clear to say that a unilateral referendum will also be organized in the oil rich area to decide on whether they want to remain part of northern Sudan or rejoin southern Sudan.

"This is an important part in the CPA. Non-conducting of the Abyei referendum threatens peace and stability in Sudan," he said.

### **SPLA anticipates war at border areas by mid November**

*Al-Sahafa* 18/10/10 – The SPLM has anticipated an outbreak of war at the border between the North and the South by mid November to disrupt referendum registration on 14 November.

Sources said scores of households have fled the Abyei territory, the Dinka moved southward and the Misseriya to the North. The SPLA has dismissed the Misseriya claims that the former had deployed at a location 17 km away from northern border of the territory.

### **President Al-Bashir to chair a decisive meeting of NCP today**

*Al-Ahram Al-Youm* 18/10/10 – President Al-Bashir is to chair a decisive meeting of senior leaders of his ruling National Congress Party tonight for debate on the referenda, Darfur and a plan on how to handle possible scenarios that may arise due to complications of the status quo. "The crucial meeting will determine the party's position on a range of challenges and discuss plans for all eventualities," Rabie Abdul-Atti, NCP senior leader, said.

### **South-South dialogue recommends an interim government**

*Al-Sahafa* 18/10/10 – Participants at the south-south dialogue conference have agreed to form an interim government headed by Salva Kiir if the south opts for secession and the interim government would be tasked with formulating a new constitution and preparing for general elections.

The Conference has also recommended the conduct of the referenda on time and called on the North and the South to allow equal opportunity for advocates of both unity and secession to speak their minds. The conference has also recommended that the southern Sudan police and the national security be tasked with security of the referendum.

### **UNSG speaks on behalf of dominant groups within SC – NCP**

*Akhir Lahza* 18/10/10 – The NCP has accused UNSG Ban Ki-moon of speaking on behalf of dominant groups within the Security Council with regards to Sudan, saying the SG's statement in Paris to the effect that the situation in the Sudan is extremely fragile is incorrect and does not reflect the reality on the ground.

NCP leading figure and National Assembly Deputy Speaker Ms Samia Ahmed Mohamed told reporters yesterday that SG Ban Ki-moon can not impose anything on Sudan a part from what is contained in the mandate. She said UN troops were deployed in the South to carry out specific task and the central government would not agree to any redeployment of these troops.

### **NCP official says extremists groups may move to hotspots**

*Al-Watan* 18/10/10 – NCP political secretary Prof. Ibrahim Ghandour said that deployment of international troops between the North and the South might attract extremist groups. He did not rule out that terrorist elements might exploit such atmosphere to carry out their activities, citing Al-Qaeda's operations in hotspots where troops are targeted. "The safety valve of the entire region lies in a united Sudan," he said.

### **SPLA describes Joint Defense Board as unreasonable**

*Sudan Tribune website* 17/10/10 - The Sudan Peoples' Liberation Army (SPLA) has described the Joint Defense Board (JDB) as a useless body, accusing Sudan Armed Forces of not following directives of the board made up of the 2005 peace partners, according to Miraya FM.

The radio station, which is run by the United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS), quoted the SPLA's spokesman, Maj Gen Kuol Diem Kuol of accusing the SAF of moving troops towards the north-south border.

As there has been much threat from the Khartoum government about the refusal of UNMIS or International Communities deployment in the border between the north and South for the referendum of South Sudan.

Kuol said that the arrangements are underway for a meeting between the President of the Government of Southern Sudan, Salva Kiir Mayardit and SPLA generals who rebelled against the southern government after April's elections.

### **Referendum Commission complains of budget shortages**

*Miraya FM* 17/10/10 - The Southern Sudan Referendum Commission has criticized the international donors and the Governments of National Unity and Southern Sudan for not meeting their financial commitments towards the 2011 referendum. The Commission's spokesperson, Ambassador Jamal Muhammad Ibrahim, in an interview with Radio Miraya affirmed that his institution suffers severe budget shortages.

He added that such situation would affect its independence stipulated by the referendum act. Meanwhile, Ibrahim said that the commission is putting the final touches on the timetable for the conduct of southern Sudan's referendum on self-determination. He confirmed the commission would send its representatives to the eight countries which will host referendum centers abroad.

## **Other Highlights**

### **Sudan Humanitarian Coordinator alarmed by limited access in Darfur**

*Sudan Tribune website* 17/10/10 - Limited access to some parts of Jebel Marra hampers the humanitarian efforts to reach the needy in the mountainous area in Darfur.

Sudanese army intensified attacks on eastern Jebel Marra locations which are under the control of the rebel Sudan Liberation Movement Army led by Abdel Wahid Al-Nur.

The air and ground attacks displaced thousands of civilians from their villages. But the

peacekeeping force and the aid groups are denied by the Sudanese army from entering the area which is declared military operations zone.

"The United Nations Humanitarian Coordinator in Sudan, Mr. Georg Charpentier, is concerned by limitations on humanitarian access in view of intensified fighting in parts of Eastern Jebel Marra in Darfur," said a statement released this week.

Charpentier nonetheless welcomed recent access by WHO and UNICEF to some parts of Eastern Jebel Marra, urging parties "to the conflict to facilitate humanitarian access on a regular basis".

He also added he notes recent pledges from the Sudanese officials to enlarge access and to allow for coverage of the national immunization campaign that started on October 14.

### **Justice Minister appoints new Prosecutor General for Darfur**

*Miraya* 17/10/10 - Minister of Justice, Mohamed Bushara Dosa, issued a decree on Sunday, relieving the Prosecutor General for Darfur crimes, Nimer Ibrahim, and appointing the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Justice, Abdul-Dayem Zamrawi in the position. The Minister affirmed in a press statement to SUNA his ministry's keenness and commitment to the realization of justice in Darfur.

He added that issuance of the appointment decision aimed to upgrade the representation level and to strengthen the efforts for realizing justice in the region. Dosa appreciated the efforts exerted by Nimer Ibrahim and his committee, indicating that the newly-appointed committee includes senior advisors and high ranking representatives from the regular forces.

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