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# Media Monitoring Report

United Nations Mission in Sudan/ Public Information Office

## Referendum Watch

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# Highlights

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## **CPA partners to meet in Addis Ababa next week**

*Al-Ayyam* 2/11/10 – Presidential Adviser Ghazi Salahuedine has revealed after a meeting with US envoy Gration that the two CPA partners would meet in Addis Ababa on 6 November to discuss post-referendum arrangements and Abyei.

Gration, for his part, said “all indications are that registration will begin on time” and called for protecting southerners in the North and guaranteeing of their full rights.

## **SSRC Spokesperson quits, urges delay of independence vote**

*Sudan Tribune website* 1/11/10 - The spokesperson for South Sudan referendum commission (SSRC) Jamal Mohamed Ibrahim announced that he has submitted his resignation and spoke of deep disagreements he had with the head of the commission and its secretary general.

Today, the SSRC spokesperson told the London-based *Al-Sharq Al-Awsat* that he is stepping down for reasons that he would not disclose publicly but spoke of "disturbing disagreements" with some of his peers at the commission.

"I do not wish to convey negative talk on the commission.....there are things that are just not right," he told the newspaper in an interview.

Ibrahim said that while he respects the commission chief, he said that dealing with him was "difficult" adding that he also had differences that he failed to resolve with the SSRC's SG Mohamed Osman Al-Nijoumi.

"I used not to sleep at night when I look at the country on verge of breaking apart but we accepted to work in the commission voluntarily to make referendum a fair and transparent process," he said.

He also expressed skepticism that the vote can be held as scheduled on January 9th saying that there is little time between registering the voters and carrying out the vote.

"The referendum date must be adjusted from January 9 to April or May 9th so that environment is conducive to carry out the referendum and the two sides are able to resolve the Abyei issue," Ibrahim added...

## **SSRC complains to Mbeki of lack of funding**

*Al-Ahdath* 2/11/10 - The South Sudan Referendum Commission has complained of lack of funding as donors have not honoured their pledges, saying no money was deposited in its account from the UN or civil society organizations. It said the central government and GoSS partially met their pledges and promised the balance later.

Head of AUHIP Thabo Mbeki who met yesterday with SSRC Chairman Mohamed Ibrahim Khaled said he would urge the donors to honour their pledges so that the process takes place on

time.

### **Referendum encounters challenges - UNIRED**

*Ajras Al-Hurriya* 2/11/10 – UN has announced that donors have honoured 50% of the \$63 million pledge they have made to provide logistical support for the conduct of the referendum.

Chief of UNIRED Dennis Kadima told a press conference yesterday in Khartoum that the NCP and the SPLM are committed to conduct the process on time but recognized the weakness of the infrastructure in the South which he described as a challenge for the upcoming process.

Mr. Kadima said the materials are expected to be delivered to target areas of referendum within three weeks.

*Al-Rai Al-Aam* 2/11/10 reports Mr. Kadima as saying that the remaining time is sufficient to start voter registration on time, adding that challenges may delay land transportation of referendum material but the UN is using air transport to remote and isolated areas.

Mr. Kadima said he had no information about any internal or external contacts to postpone Southern Sudan referendum for five months.

### **Obama renews Sudan sanctions, keeps pressure on vote**

*Reuters* 1/11/10 - President Barack Obama on Monday renewed U.S. sanctions against Sudan's government, keeping pressure on Khartoum to stick to the timetable for holding a referendum that could split the country in two.

But Washington also held out for the prospect for reconsidering its tough approach if Sudanese leaders make progress in resolving the country's bitter north-south dispute and improving the situation in the troubled Darfur region.

Sudan is 10 weeks away from the scheduled start of a referendum that could lead to independence for its oil-producing south. If mishandled, the referendum could destabilize the region.

The White House issued a letter from Obama to Congress saying he was extending long-standing economic sanctions, a notice required by law each year to keep them in place.

The measures restrict trade and investment in Sudan and also block the assets of the Sudanese government and certain officials, among other things.

With trust low as both sides in the referendum exchange recriminations, progress has slowed on resolving volatile disputes such as the status of the oil-producing Abyei region, determining citizenship and forging an oil-sharing accord.

White House spokesman Tommy Vietor said the United States hoped Sudan's leaders "will make the urgent and difficult choices necessary to secure peace for the Sudanese people."

"As we work to support these choices, the United States will review the Sudanese government's progress on resolving outstanding (peace agreement) implementation issues as well as other

relevant circumstances, to include improving security and humanitarian access in Darfur," he said.

"If the government of Sudan acts to improve the situation on the ground and advance peace, we stand ready to work with Sudan to ensure its rightful place in the international community.

### **Sudan rejects extension of US economic sanctions**

**AFP** 2/11/10 - Sudan on Monday rejected US President Barack Obama's decision to extend economic sanctions on Khartoum ahead of the country's January referendum on southern independence, saying it was not justified.

"The US president's decision to extend economic sanctions is not new to us. We were not surprised by the decision, we reject it," Moawiya Osman Khalid, a spokesman for the foreign ministry, told reporters.

"We see no reason for the decision of the American administration which continues with its failed policy towards Sudan," he said, adding that the United States had "lost the chance to play a constructive role" in Africa's largest country.

### **SAF repulses SPLM aggression, forcing it to withdraw southward**

**SUNA** 1/11/10 - The Spokesman of the Armed Forces, Lt. Col. Al-Sawarmi Khalid Saad, announced that Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) has staged an aggression on the Armed Forces last Saturday at Al-Zamali area, Sennar state, five kilometers north of January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1956 border.

He said in a statement to SUNA that the attacking SPLA force was estimated at an infantry company supported by three armed Land Cruiser vehicles and a vehicle carrying a mortar gun and a tank

Lt. Col, Saad said that the attack lasted for one hour, adding that the Armed Forces confronted the aggressors and forced them to withdraw to south of the border of January 1st, 1956.

He said that the SPLM tended to portray the incident as happened south of the border of January 1st, 1956...

**Sudan Tribune website** 1/11/10 reported that Northern and southern Sudan armies are trading accusations over the responsibility for fighting between the two sides occurred last Saturday on the border between Sennar and Upper Nile states.

The two parties agreed that their troops clashed in the morning of Saturday but the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) says that Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) soldiers penetrated inside Upper Nile state and the latter says SPLA troops attacked them inside Sennar state.

Southern Sudan army spokesperson Kuol Diem Kuol, said Sunday that troops from northern Sudan army ambushed SPLA soldiers and returned back to their positions.

"They clashed with about 10 of our soldiers and wounded one officer and then they ran back to their base," said Kuol.

SAF spokesperson today released a statement where he said that southern Sudan army penetrated to Al-Zamali area located 5 klm inside Sennar state where they attacked northern troops.

*Al-Sawarmi* Khaled said they agreed with the SPLA to investigate the attack through the UN peacekeepers and determine who carried out the attack as it was decided by the Joint Defense Board (JDB).

He went further to say they were surprised by the public statements made by the SPLA accusing SAF of ambushing their troops inside southern Sudan border, breaching the ceasefire established by CPA.

Both sides stressed their commitment to implement the signed agreements and to avoid return to war. Talks between the two parties are stalled over Abyei and disputed parts of the north south border.

The Sudanese army spokesperson said the JDB formed a joint committee to probe the incident indicating that UNMIS peacekeepers declined to investigate the attack despite their okay to operate in the northern Sudanese side of 1965 border.

### **SPLM MPs slam budget**

*The Citizen* 2/11/10 - SPLM parliamentary bloc in the National Assembly slammed the budget at the general features stage, pointing out that it took no account of development in the South. Head of SPLM parliamentary block, Thomas Wani, censured the budget's adoption of local currency transfers to GoSS as compared to hard currency transfers to the northern and eastern Sudan states. He added that the peace agreement has allocated 50% of oil revenues to be employed in the development projects in the South.

## **Other Highlights**

### **Sudan closes Darfur radio, rights group offices**

*Reuters* 2/11/10 - Sudan shut the Khartoum office of Radio Dabanga, whose reports on Darfur have angered it, and arrested 13 staff from the radio station and a rights group that shares its offices, the group's chairman said on Tuesday.

Abdelmageed Salih, head of Human Rights and Advocacy Network for Democracy (HAND), told Reuters nine journalists and four HAND activists were detained during the weekend raids.

"They also raided and closed our office and took all the things inside like the computers and documents and Radio Dabanga equipment," he said from the United States where he now lives.

A civil society leader said on Monday nine were arrested.

Radio Dabanga, registered in Holland, is one of few media outlets still reporting on the Darfur conflict. It is not licensed in Sudan and the government continually writes to the Dutch government asking them to close the station, Salih said.

HAND also has no legal status in Sudan. The government cracked down on rights groups following a 2009 International Criminal Court arrest warrant for President Omar Hassan al-Bashir for war crimes in Darfur. Many activists fled the country fearing for their lives.

A source in Sudan's National Security and Intelligence Services said they had no information about the arrests.

"When viewed in relation to the upcoming voter registration and referendum in the South...the arrests...show the determination of the Sudanese government to suppress civil society during this critical time, and the extent to which the freedom of expression... will not be tolerated," the African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies said in a statement...

### **Riots in Khartoum over lack of public conveyance**

*Al-Intibaha* 2/11/10 – civilians have demonstrated along Sharia Al-Qaba in Khartoum to protest lack of public transportation. The demonstrators have pelted Khartoum state-owned public buses but riot police have succeeded in containing the demonstration. The demonstrators have demanded quick resolution of the problem of shortage of public transportation.

*Al-Watan* 2/11/10 reports that hundreds of commuters gathered yesterday in the heart of Khartoum to protest lack of public buses, adding that large number of commuters were seen standing for hours waiting for public buses to take them home.

Reportedly, the public transportation crisis in Khartoum continues to worsen since more than a week.

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