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Media Monitoring Report

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Highlights

10 people killed, 20 wounded in armed clash in Juba

Al-Intibaha 21/6/10 – 10 people were killed and 20 wounded in a cattle-related attack in Central Equatoria. Reportedly, a group of unidentified armed men killed 10 Murle while herding about 1000 heads of cattle near a bridge in Juba city. An SPLA force, charged with securing the bridge, refused to intervene to protect the Murle from the attackers. The wounded were transported to Juba hospital for treatment. The Murle, who have criticized authorities in Juba for failing to provide them protection, threatened to retaliate.

South Sudan militia chief says scores die in battles

Reuters 20/6/10 - A rebel militia leader said on Sunday his forces had fought six battles with south Sudan's army in the past week, killing scores of people in the region's Jonglei oil state.

South Sudan's army (SPLA) dismissed the comments from militia leader George Athor, saying they have not fought his forces since a previously-reported clash on Tuesday.

Athor, a former SPLA general, launched a revolt saying he had been cheated in the race for Jonglei governor in April elections.

His move has raised fears for the stability of the region in the run up to a referendum, scheduled for January 2011, on whether south Sudan should split away as an independent country.

"They (the SPLA) have been attacking us ... all in Jonglei, within Khorfulus County," Athor told Reuters via satellite phone. "We have repulsed back some attacks. They are still maintaining their attack on some areas ... The last fight was yesterday and we are expecting fighting at any time up to now."

He said 85 government soldiers had died in the fighting which had killed only eight of his men. It was not possible to verify the figures independently.

"All that he is reporting is not true," said SPLA spokesman Kuol Diem Kuol. "The last fight between us and him was on the 15th of this month."

South Sudan, the source of most of Sudan's oil, secured a referendum on whether to split off as a separate country in a 2005 peace deal that ended more than two decades of civil war with the north.

Analysts say southerners overwhelmingly want to secede.

Southern leaders have said Khartoum is backing militias to destabilise the south, an accusation denied by the north.

French energy group Total (TOTF.PA) holds a largely unexplored oil concession in Jonglei.

Jonglei's Twic East County witnesses insecurity caused by Athor's forces

Sudan tribune website 20/6/10 - June 20, 2010 (JUBA) – Twic East County of Jonglei state has been experiencing insecurity caused by the forces loyal to the renegade former army

general and Deputy Chief of General Staff of the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), says the representative of the County in the Southern Sudan Legislative Assembly.

Deng Dau Deng, on his return from the visit to the County on Sunday said people were being killed in the area by forces loyal to George Athor.

About 16 people have been killed over the last two months of insecurity emanating from George Athor, he said.

"People come with uniforms from nowhere and attack villages and kill people in Twic East County," he lamented, calling on the authorities to arrest the situation.

Egypt seeks clarification from Sudan on remarks attributed to FM Karti

Sudan Tribune website 20/6/10/Dailies 21/6/10 - The spokesperson for the Egyptian Foreign Ministry Hussam Zaki revealed today that his government formally requested "clarification" from Khartoum regarding statement by the newly-appointed foreign minister Ali Karti.

Karti was sworn in this week as the new foreign minister in the new government following the elections concluded last April. At a press conference later the Sudanese top diplomat criticized the Egyptian government describing their engagement in the issues in Sudan as "weak".

"Egypt's role in the issues of the country is weak," he said, adding that the Egyptian elite's knowledge of the situation and complexities in Sudan is shallow.

"Sudan is the strategic backyard of Egypt" Karti said.

Egyptian media quoted Zaki as saying that Egypt supported Sudan politically and was keen on achieving reconciliation between various Sudanese political forces.

"Our special relations with Sudan stem from our common strategic interests," Zaki said, asserting that officials in both countries were aware of the depth and strength of the relationship.

Zaki said that Egyptian foreign minister Ahmed Aboul-Gheit asked their ambassador in Khartoum to get an explanation from the government on the purpose behind Karti's remarks.

A senior unnamed Sudanese official told the London-based *Al-Hayat* newspaper that Karti's remarks were "misunderstood".

UN Humanitarian Coordinator visits WES to assess LRA victims

The Citizen 6/21/10 The Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary General and UN Resident Humanitarian Coordinator in Sudan Georg Charpentier has met with the governor of Western Equatoria State Joseph Bakosoro on Saturday. The visit to the state is aimed at getting the first hand information from the Ugandan Lord Resistance Army (LRA) victims and assess the general security situation, Georg said.

Meanwhile, Governor Joseph Bakosoro said that security and the 2011 referendum are the main issues which need joint efforts from both the international community and the government in order to achieve success. The governor pointed out that the people of the state have never enjoyed peace since the signing of the CPA in 2005 due to the presence of the LRA and the Ambororo tribe.

Court sentenced JIU soldier to death for killing two Misseriya

Local dailies 21/6/10 – Khartoum North Criminal Court yesterday sentenced a JIU soldier, accused of killing two Misseriya herders, to death by hanging. The second accomplice was sentenced to life imprisonment and the third to imprisonment for five years for their involvement in the crime.

Mbeki mediates between the two partners in Addis today

The Citizen 6/21/10 Talks between the two partners to the CPA will kick off today in the Ethiopian capital Addis Ababa, under the sponsorship of the African Union and Norway. Former South African President Thabu Mbeki will undertake mediation between the two parties.

Member of SPLM delegation, Ezekiel, said the meetings would focus on post-referendum issues, such as oil, water, nationality and Sudan external debts. SPLM will be represented at the talks by a delegation led by General Secretary Pagan Amum, who left Washington yesterday on his way to Addis Ababa. The movement's delegation includes Nhial Deng, Kosta Manipe, Dr. Luka Biong, Yassir Arman, and Ezekiel Jatcoth while the NCP delegation is headed by Deputy Chairman Dr. Nafie Ali Nafie along with Yahia Hussein, Dr. Mutrif Siddig and others. Sources indicated that the summit will deal with all the files related to Darfur talks, including opening new avenues for dialogue with Justice and Equality Movement.

Sudanese sources also indicated that Sudanese, African and International parties are making efforts to make the referendum a success by resolving the contested issues, adding that some important countries in the region consider conditions unfavorable for holding the referendum on time, arguing that if the border dispute is not settled, it would be impossible to carry out the referendum that might result in a secession of a country whose borders are not known, particularly Abyei area.

Sudan's NCP urges Libya to press JEM on joining Doha talks

Sudan Tribune website 20/6/10 - An official at the ruling National Congress Party in Sudan called on Libya to press the leader of the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) rebel group fighting in Darfur to join the ongoing peace talks in Doha.

The head of the Darfur sector at the NCP told government sponsored Sudanese Media Center (SMC) A-Fadl Abdullah Al-Fadl that Libya is capable of convincing Ibrahim to resume negotiation with Khartoum if it had the political will.

Al-Fadl said that Libya has several tools to pressure JEM given its relations with various rebel groups in Darfur.

He stressed that it is best for JEM to pursue a peaceful solution instead of military options saying that their recent defeats makes the latter unattainable for the rebel group.

Abdullah Badeen who is the NCP secretary in North Darfur, told SMC that it is imperative that Libya exerts pressure on JEM on the grounds that the negotiations have produced positive results in favor of the movement including release of their POW's and dropping charges against them.

He accused JEM of violating the cessation of hostilities agreement and framework accord.

Recent fighting erupted in Darfur between JEM and government troops has left little hope of renewing a Qatari-sponsored peace process. The Darfur rebels urged the U.N. chief and joint chief mediator to facilitate the return of its leader to Darfur, saying current situation would

impede efforts for peace.

Sudan's prominent journalist and editor-in-chief of Al-Watan passed away

Local dailies 21/6/10 – Sudan's prominent journalist, owner and editor-in-chief of Al-Watan daily newspaper, Sayed Ahmed Khalifa, passed away in Cairo. His family said the body will be flown to Khartoum today by an Egyptian aircraft and will be buried in Al-Sahafa cemetery in Khartoum the same day.

Sudan NBA basketball giant Manute Bol dies

BBC News 20/6/10 - Basketballer Manute Bol, the 7ft 7in (2.3m) sporting legend from southern Sudan, has died at the age of 47.

He died at a hospital in the US state of Virginia where he had been treated for kidney problems.

After playing for 10 seasons for the America's prestigious NBA league, he worked for an aid group promoting reconciliation in Sudan.

"Sudan and the world have lost a hero and an example for all of us," Sudan Sunrise's Tom Prichard said.

Born into the Dinka community in southern Sudan, Manute Bol spent his boyhood rearing cattle and only started playing basketball in his teens.

When he was talent-spotted and went to the US, he could not speak any English. He was one of the two tallest players ever to compete in the NBA, but after he retired he was reported to suffer from terrible rheumatism.

Pre-referendum Watch

Sudan may ask UN to run a referendum -party official

Reuters 20/6/10 - Sudan may ask the United Nations to run a referendum on the future of a politically sensitive border region after northern and southern leaders failed to appoint organisers, a party official said on Sunday.

The residents of Abyei are less than seven months away from a vote on whether their border territory, close to key oilfields, should be part of north or south Sudan.

The vote has regional significance because, on the same day, the people of south Sudan have been promised a ballot on whether to separate from the north to become an independent state.

Yasir Arman of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), the dominant party in the south, said northern and southern leaders had failed to agree on who should join a commission to organise the Abyei vote despite months of debate.

"So far we have failed ... If it becomes clear that we cannot agree then the only way out is the United Nations," he told Reuters.

"The problems are the names. The National Congress cannot agree. We have been giving them the names, names from the civil service and lawyers, and hopefully we can still agree."

If Abyei residents decide to join the south they could, at a stroke, become part of Africa's newest

country, taking their oil reserves and rich grazing land out of Khartoum's control.

Political analysts have said time is running out to organise the votes and there is a risk of violence if southerners believe the north is trying to delay or disrupt the plebiscites.

Arman, the SPLM candidate in a presidential election held in April, said his party would submit a fresh set of names in a final attempt to reach agreement.

An official from the north's National Congress Party (NCP) said Arman was trying to increase political pressure.

"I am sure we can still bridge the gap between the NCP and the SPLM on this. We have had differences before which we have settled," said the NCP's Rabie Abdelati.

No one was available to comment from the United Nations.

Arman said the NCP and SPLM were due to discuss Abyei and other issues related to the referendum in Mekele, the capital of Ethiopia's northern region of Tigray, this week.

Outstanding issues included the position of the north-south border, the nationality of southerners in the north and vice-versa, and the sharing of debts and oil revenues if the south, as widely expected, chooses to secede.

According to ***Sudan Tribune website*** 21/6/10, SPLM official and local leaders have called on the CPA partners to speed up composition of membership of the Abyei referendum commission, or refer it to the United Nations for resolution, warning that any delay to form the commission would have dire consequences.

Yarsir Saeed Arman, the SPLM Deputy Secretary General for Northern Sector and former presidential candidate for the party, was quoted on Saturday as saying that the two peace partners may resort to asking the United Nations to intervene and run the Abyei referendum if the partners failed to reach a consensus over names required in the composition of the formation of the commission.

Arman told the press that all attempts to form the commission based on some names previously submitted by the SPLM have not been approved, despite months of negotiations between the two parties.

However, an official from the north's National Congress Party (NCP) said Arman was trying to increase political pressure.

"I am sure we can still bridge the gap between the NCP and the SPLM on this. We have had differences before which we have settled," said the NCP's Rabie Abdelati.

The Abyei Paramount Chief, Kuol Deng Kuol, also told Sudan Tribune from Khartoum on his way to Juba that there is a real need for the two parties to conclude their discussions over names required in the formation of Abyei referendum commission.

"I am actually in Khartoum on the way to Juba to meet President Salva Kiir Mayardit, so I hear from him the current efforts on formation of Abyei referendum commission," he said.

Professor Monywaar Monyoc at the Council of States in Khartoum told Sudan Tribune there is

little time left for formation of two referenda commissions if the intentions of the peace partners are to conduct them as per the CPA.

“The concern of many people is not that these commissions will not be formed but the time itself, because I see that there is little time left for formation and establishment of these institutions if the intention of the two partners is to conduct southern and Abyei referenda as per the provision of Comprehensive Peace Agreement,” he said.

Political analysts have said that time is running out to organize the votes, warning there is a risk of violence if southerners believe the north is trying to delay or disrupt the plebiscites.

SPLM rejects NCP’s proposal to involve UN police in the referendum

Al-Sahafa 21/6/10 – The SPLM has rejected a proposal by the NCP to amend the South Sudan Referendum Act to allow the UN police to join GoSS police and national security forces in securing the referendum process.

Reportedly, the two partners ended their meetings two days ago but will resume them on Thursday in Juba to resolve the pending issues.

SPLM leading figure Deng Alor said the two partners could not reach a radical solution on how the UN should participate in the referendum. However, he said, there was an agreement between the two partners on partial participation of the UN in the referendum, adding the NCP’s position is that the referendum law should be amended to entrust the task of referendum security to the UN. Alor said the SPLM objects to amendment of the referendum law, adding the issue of referendum security has been entrusted on the GoSS police and national security personnel in the South. Similarly, he said, the national police and national security would be tasked with the referendum security in Khartoum. Alor, however, said an agreement was reached for contacts between the NCP, the SPLM and the UN separately to find out more about the UN participation.

Analyst: South Sudan violence could undermine 2011 referendum

VoANews.com 20/6/10 - An analyst at the International Crisis Group (ICG) told VOA the government of the semi-autonomous southern Sudan is concerned violent activities of an armed splinter group could undermine the upcoming referendum scheduled for January 2011.

Fouad Hikmat said there is a need for President Salva Kiir’s government to find a way to engage the splinter group ahead of the referendum.

“It is important that the government of south Sudan and the SPLM (Sudan People’s Liberation Movement) should try to reach (out) to them because this sort of splintering group it could mushroom into something (else) and, therefore, it could create a risk for the referendum,” he said.

Scheduled for January, the referendum will allow residents in southern Sudan to decide whether to be part of Sudan or become an independent country.

The SPLM has often accused President Omar Hassan Al-Bashir’s dominant National Congress Party (NCP) of supporting “violent elements” in the semi-autonomous southern Sudan to destabilize the region ahead of the referendum.

But, the NCP denies the allegation saying it is committed to working closely with the SPLM to ensure the referendum is held as stipulated in the 2005 peace accord signed between the two

parties ending more than two decades of civil war.

Supported by some disgruntled former soldiers in south Sudan's army, George Athor, a former general in the SPLA, has been launching attacks in the south claiming he was cheated in the race for Jonglei governor in Sudan's last April general elections - a charge the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) denies.

Analyst Hikmat said President Bashir's unity government should resolve ongoing problems ahead of the referendum.

"I think the priority now is to agree on what is the program and the priority of the government of national unity after it has been established. If the government, which is composed of the elected NCP and the SPLM, they don't have a common program with the clear priority, and including setting up the conditions for a credible referendum, I think they are going to get into trouble when the time comes for the referendum," Hikmat said.

He also said both the NCP and the SPLM will not benefit if the ongoing violence in the south undermines the credibility of the referendum.

Meanwhile, over the weekend, a leading member of the SPLM is quoted as saying Sudan may ask the United Nations to conduct a referendum on the oil-rich Abyei region after both his party and the NCP failed to agree on a team to organize the poll.

Analyst Hikmat said there is need for the international community, including the African Union and the United Nations, to help resolve all issues with the implementation of the rest of the provisions of the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) to ensure a smooth referendum next year.