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Highlights

Fighting in southern Sudan kills 27: official

AFP Juba, 21/09/09 - Twenty-seven people were killed in an attack by tribesmen in the Jonglei area of southern Sudan, a military spokesman said on Monday quoting local authorities.

Tribesmen from the Lou Nuer ethnic group raided the Dinka Hol village of Duk Padiet on Sunday morning, forcing a company of soldiers based there to flee.

"There are reports that 27 people have been killed," said Major General Kuol Diem Kuol of the southern Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA). The identities of those killed were not immediately available.

"This information is from the state authorities, and we are still waiting for more details from the report by the SPLA forces there," he added. However, the situation was now "under control."

Clashes between rival ethnic groups in southern Sudan erupt frequently -- often sparked by cattle rustling and disputes over natural resources, while others are in retaliation for previous attacks. However, a series of recent raids has shocked many, with an apparent sharp rise in attacks on women and children, as well as the targeting of homesteads.

Kuol had earlier said he suspected that the raiders on Sunday were backed by supporters of northern Sudan's ruling National Congress Party (NCP).

NCP officials have repeatedly denied such accusations. North-south tensions remain high, with Sudan still divided by the religious, ethnic and ideological differences that fuelled a 22-year civil war which ended in a 2005 peace deal.

No referendum without elections, says Sudan's dominant party

Sudantribune.com Khartoum, 19/09/09 – Conducting the general elections scheduled for April next year is imperative for the implementation of the other outstanding benchmarks of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) including the referendum for the south, said National Assembly Speaker Ahmed Ibrahim Al-Tahir.

Speaking at a meeting in Kadugli, Southern Kordofan, last Thursday, Al-Tahir who is also a Vice-President of the National Congress Party (NCP), stressed that the referendum on self determination for southern Sudan can only be implemented through elected governments in Khartoum and Juba.

Al-Tahir also called on political forces to prepare themselves for free competition.

South Sudanese in Khartoum will vote in referendum - SPLM

Sudantribune.com Juba, 18/09/09 - A senior official of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) has said Southern Sudanese residing in the national capital, Khartoum, will be allowed to vote in the upcoming 2011 referendum.

Michael Makuei Lueth, minister for Legal Affairs and Constitutional Development in the semi-autonomous Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS) and legal advisor to the SPLM Executive Political Committee said his party has agreed to allow residents of Khartoum who are the people of Southern Sudan to cast their votes.

Makuei further explained that such a compromise is attached to the condition that the Khartoum

exercise will be monitored jointly by the United Nations (UN), International Organization for Migration (IOM), Southern Sudan Referendum Commission (SSRC) and Southern Sudanese associations in the national capital.

He re-affirmed the SPLM's position that Southern Sudanese in other northern states will not be allowed to vote.

Makuei further added that there is still a huge gap of differences between the two parties on other contentious issues among which included the percentages required to confirm unity of the country or declare independence for the South.

He said a meeting would take place on Thursday evening between the Vice President of the Republic Ali Osman Mohamed Taha and the Government of Southern Sudan's Vice President, Dr. Riek Machar Teny, to try to narrow the gap.

SPLM Deputy Secretary General for Northern Sector, Yasir Arman, is reported to have said however that all Southern Sudanese residing in all states of northern Sudan will be allowed to vote without any exception.

NCP planning multi-parties convention in Juba

Sudantribune.com Khartoum, 19/09/09 - The NCP, along with 19 other political parties represented in the Government of National Unity (GoNU), are planning to hold a convention in Juba, reports London-based **Al-Sharq Al-Awsat**.

The meeting agreed on the establishment of eight committees to interact with several political parties and brief them on the purpose of the Juba convention tentatively scheduled to take place in sometime in October. The move is an apparent attempt to counter an SPLM-sponsored meeting of opposition parties in Juba next week.

NCP Vice-President, Presidential Assistant Nafei Ali Nafei, said that the proposed NCP-sponsored convention is to be dubbed 'Convention of the People of Sudan' and will mainly discuss the issue of unity.

SPLM Spokesperson Yien Mathew criticized the proposed NCP meeting saying it amounts to "political jealousy" and said it is doomed to fail.

He accused the NCP of wanting to maintain control over power and not being genuine "on reconciliation and national healing".

LRA moving north - S. Sudan army official

Sudantribune.com Juba, 18/09/09 – "According to the intelligence we have, LRA leader Joseph Kony and his deputy Okot Ozimo, are heading toward Darfur. Some of his forces will remain in DRC and his troops are leading a difficult life making it hard for them to operate in Southern Sudan," says Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) Spokesperson Major General Kuol Diem Kuol said last Wednesday. He added that an LRA attack is expected in Western Bahr El Ghazal.

Kuol noted that particularly in Tumbura County of Western Equatoria on September 11, 2009, SPLA military intelligence found fresh footprints of the LRA from Central African Republic heading towards Raja County in Western Bahr-EI-Ghazal State.

"For Kony to move away from South Sudan, the National Congress Party (NCP) in Darfur are now threatening our forces in the North of Raja County in such places like Timza, Karita, and Kitkit ... -- there is a big threat that Murahileen militias are threatening our SPLA forces to give room to allow Joseph Kony and his deputy to reach Darfur and then to Chad without fear of a military reprisal," he added.

GOSS calls on law enforcement agencies to combat human rights abuses

Sudantribune.com 17/09/09 - The Chairperson of the Government of Southern Sudan's Human Rights Commission, Ms. Mary Eluzai, has called on states and law enforcement agencies to promote and protect civilians from human rights abuses.

Speaking to **Sudantribune**, the official said that reports from individuals and human rights activists indicate that at least thousands of innocent civilians, mostly women, children, and elderly people, have been killed in recent tribal clashes across southern Sudan.

"As a Human Rights Commission, we called upon all the state governments to promptly and impartially investigate responsibility for any attacks on civilians, and urged all parties to the armed conflict in the region to respect the prohibition under international law against targeting civilians," she said.

"Many eye witnesses have in number of times come to my office saying attacks were properly organized and conducted by experienced ex-military personnel in their respected communities for raids and other criminal acts resulting into displacement of thousands of civilians across the region."

She further said they have received reports that some of the displaced persons carried automatic rifles, as is the custom for tribal men in most areas of South Sudan.

UN to reopen probe into peacekeeper's death in Sudan: Philippines

AFP Manila, 20/09/09 - The Philippines said Sunday that the United Nations has agreed to reopen an inquiry into the 2007 death from malaria of a Filipino UN peacekeeper in Sudan who Manila alleges was denied prompt medical attention.

The UN agreed to review the case after Defence Secretary Gilberto Teodoro raised the matter last week with UN Undersecretary General for Peacekeeping Alain Le Roy, the foreign department said.

Lieutenant-Colonel Renerio Batalla died of cerebral malaria in October 2007 while serving as a military observer with the United Nations Mission in Sudan, the department said in a statement.

A UN investigation released seven months later recommended a reprimand for a UN doctor due to negligence and for not administering immediate treatment, but Manila's demand for the unnamed doctor's removal from UN service was denied. "A review will go a long way in assuaging whatever doubts or apprehensions that have come about as a result of the tragic death of one of our own," the statement quoted Teodoro as telling Le Roy.

Batalla was one of 11 Filipino military officers serving in Sudan.

Presidency receives draft Darfur Native Administration Law

SMC Khartoum, 16/09/09 - A committee studying the role of the native administration in Darfur has submitted a draft Native Administration Law for Darfur to the Presidency of the Republic. Mohammed Osman Khalifam, the head of the committee, said that main features of the proposed law underline the importance of the role of the native administration in Darfur.

Sudanese president calls on Darfur rebels to join Doha talks

Sudantribune.com Khartoum, 19/09/09 - In a message to Sudanese on the occasion of the Eid Al-Fitr holidays, President Omar Al-Bashir urged the armed groups in Darfur to put aside their arms and join the Doha peace process for Darfur.

"As the war in Darfur begins to subside and is almost over, we ask whoever is left from the armed groups of Darfur to drop their guns and work with us to make the next round of peace talks in Doha the last one in the path of pain that our people have borne" he said.

Sudan's army says more areas of North Darfur cleared of rebel presence

AP Khartoum - The Sudanese army said Sunday it has cleared several more areas of rebel control in North Darfur ahead of peace talks set for October. Rebels have denied the government claims. The state news agency quoted the military saying it had targeted in particular the Abdulwahid faction of the Sudan Liberation Army (SLA). There was no word about casualties, only that the army had "purged the areas of the remnants" of the rebels.

The government claims could not be independently verified. They follow rebel reports of intense fighting in the area starting Thursday. SLA members said at least three of their fighters were killed and many civilians were displaced.

North Darfur State Governor Osman Mohammed Kibir said that the regions of Korma and Tawila had been cleared of rebels and the internally displaced in the massive camps could now return home — something the rebels and refugees themselves have rejected citing lack of security.

The joint U.N.-African Union peacekeeping mission in Darfur said it could not confirm the details of the fighting since it does not have a presence in the area, but had received reports about the violence from both sides.

"We are waiting to send an urgent mission there to verify and assess the security and humanitarian situation," said UNAMID spokesman Nourredine Mezni.

Public freedoms remain severely restricted in Sudan – rights centre

Sudantribune.com *London, 17/09/09* - Months before the general elections scheduled to take place in April 2010, freedom of expression and public discussion are increasingly targeted by Sudan's security apparatus, said a human rights center today (17/09/09).

"Since the beginning of August, Sudanese authorities have systematically targeted any activities, symposia, public rallies or lectures related to the elections. Also, censorship of the media by the security services has, in recent weeks, increasingly targeted discussions of the elections," said the London based the African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies (ACJPS).

In a statement released on Thursday the ACJPS enumerated a series of incidents – ban of public talk or press conferences, raid of offices of political groups, and press censorship—demonstrating the restriction of public freedoms in the country in flagrant violation of the interim constitution of 2005.

The rights centre reported the ban of a public talk on the next year elections last August held by the opposition Sudanese Congress Party despite having the necessary authorization. It also detailed a raid carried by security agents on the offices of an opposition party (Haq) in South Darfur.

This month the security services which review the content of the daily newspapers before it goes to print prevented the publication of Al-Sudani on September 9 and Al-Midan on September 10 after the belated removal of many articles.

"These incidents demonstrate that the government is actively restricting these rights and, by extension, undermining the possibility for free and fair elections and the credibility of the polling exercise," said the centre.

IMRC starts repatriate IDPS from within the South

SMC, 19/09/09 - The International Migrants and Relief Commission (IMRC) has started the transportation of some 500 IDP households families from Central and Western Equatoria and Jongolei states to their home towns in other parts of southern Sudan.

Coordinator for the southern Sudan repatriation program, Kormaj Chol, said that there are thousands of IDPS living in different parts of the south who want to be repatriated to their original villages. He cited the logistic challenges involved in the IMRC operation since the IDPS are living in remote areas.

Chol urged the federal and regional governments and NGOs to contribute to the success of the operation.

Donors pledge \$600 million annually to South Sudan

Miraya FM, 20/09/09 - The Head of the Joint Donor Team in southern Sudan, Michael Elmquist, says the government of the semi-autonomous region will receive a yearly grant of about US\$600 million from donors till the interim period ends. He told **Miraya FM** that the donor team had also taken immediate steps in helping the Government of South Sudan in the economic crisis.

Michael Elmquist said funds have been allocated for the construction of roads, reintegration of ex-combatants and the purchase of pharmaceuticals. The donor team has reached agreement with Juba to enhance fiscal and economic progress in the South. The Joint Donor Team Leader added that the government has in return pledged to combat corruption and streamline the salaries of government employees.

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