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# Media Monitoring Report

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# Highlights

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## **Sudan gets long-delayed referendum voter books**

**Reuters** (Khartoum) 24/10/10- Printers delivered hundreds of thousands of registration books for Sudan's southern independence referendum on Sunday, clearing a major hurdle in delayed preparations for the vote, organisers said.

South African printers flew 500,000 voter registration books to Khartoum on Sunday, enough for southern voters living in Sudan's 15 northern states, said the spokesman of the referendum's organising commission, Jamal Mohamed Ibrahim. Millions more will soon arrive in the southern capital Juba, he added.

"This is a giant step forward ... When the materials are around everyone feels confident that these things are going ahead," commission deputy chairman Chan Reek Madut told Reuters from Juba.

The commission has already started training referendum registration staff and organisers still hope to start voting on January 9, he added. "That is our hope and it is our aim," he said.

## **NCP, SPLM differ over Presidency meeting agenda**

**Al-Sahafa** 24/10/10 – FVP Salva Kiir Mayardit and VP Ali Osman Taha held consultations yesterday on pending issues including the utility of the forthcoming meeting in Addis Ababa in the absence of the minimum understanding needed between the two partners to hold negotiations on sticky issues particularly Abyei.

Meanwhile, the joint committee between the NCP and the SPLM has reportedly failed to reach understanding on pending issues especially Abyei area and the agenda for the Presidency meeting. Reports said if the joint committee agrees on the agenda, the Presidency meeting will be held today.

Head of AUHIP Thabo Mbeki is making contacts with the two partners to salvage the situation and to assist them to agree on some points to save upcoming Addis Ababa meeting from postponement.

However, **Al-Ahdath** 24/10/10 reports that the NCP and the SPLM have postponed their upcoming meeting in Addis Ababa intended to discuss and resolve dispute over the Abyei area and the demarcation of the border until 6 November. Head of Government delegation Gen. Salah Gosh reportedly returned home from Ethiopia.

## **Heated debate between NCP, SPLM over status of southerners**

**Al-Rai Al-Aam** 24/10/10 – The two CPA partners have affirmed that peace would be their strategic choice whether the result of the referendum is unity or secession.

While the NCP has ruled out a renewed war between the North and the South and warned of serious consequences of targeting northerners in the South, the SPLM called for the protection of

the rights of the southerners in the North and northerners in the South.

The remarks were made by NCP official Mohamed Mandour Al-Mahdi and SPLM leading figure Luka Biong who is also the federal Cabinet Minister at a symposium organized by the newspaper yesterday on status of the southerners in the North after secession.

Al-Mahdi reiterated the Government's commitment to respect and protect the southerners in the North and ruled out a renewed war between the North and the South but warned of consequences of possible unruly reaction if northerners in the South are targeted. On Abyei, Al-Mahdi pointed out that it might derail the south Sudan referendum.

Biong, for his part, called for giving northerners in the South and southerners in the North the right to choose either nationality after secession, saying "secession is inevitable".

In a related development, Presidential Assistant and NCP deputy Chairman Nafie Ali Nafie, in an interview to the newspaper, said secession was likely, adding that chances for unity are now slim but separation would not be catastrophic for the North.

**United Democratic Party calls for Abyei referendum to be handed over to UN**  
*Sudan Tribune website* 22/10/10 -The United Democratic Party on Friday called on the dominant parties of north and south Sudan to hand over the running of the referendum on the future of the oil-rich region of Abyei to the United Nations.

Speaking from Khartoum, Tong Lual Ayat, the leader of the United Democratic Party, told Sudan Tribune his party supports position of other southern political parties which call on parties to hand over Abyei referendum to the United Nations if they cannot reach a compromise.

"We in the United Democratic Party support position of all southern Sudanese political parties to hand over Abyei referendum to the United Nations because time is running [out] very fast."

Ayat said this was needed as repeated discussions had so far failed to have a successful outcome.

"We are calling for handing over of Abyei to the United Nations because the two parties have held several discussions in the past on the future of the region but failed to reach any consensus. This is what encouraged the conference to call for handing it over to UN," he said.

The UDP leader is skeptical about the possibility of reaching a meaningful outcome in the second round of talks expected to resume later this month between the two parties. There are less than 80 days to go until the referendum.

"We are in October getting to November yet [the] parties are not showing signs of commitment to reach any understanding over future of Abyei referendum. This is what raises concerns over possibilities to reach any agreement even if talks resume because none of them seem ready to compromise their interest," said Ayat.

**Mbeki "optimistic" over Sudan flashpoint district deal**  
*Sudan Tribune website* 22/10/10 - Former South African president Thabo Mbeki on Friday expressed optimism ex-civil war foes in Sudan can resolve differences ahead of a landmark

referendum in the contested oil-producing region of Abyei.

With less than 80 days to go before the vote is due, Mbeki is leading an African Union team to break a stalemate after talks collapsed last week between north and south Sudan over who will be eligible to vote.

"Absolutely, we are optimistic," Mbeki told reporters after holding "very good" talks with southern president Salva Kiir.

"We have got to believe that the leadership of Sudan is interested in success," Mbeki added, speaking alongside fellow team members, former Nigerian president Abdulsalami Abubakar and Burundi President Pierre Nkurunziza.

They are due to hold talks in Khartoum with Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir on Monday.

The vote on whether Abyei should remain in the north or join the south is scheduled to take place at the same time as a referendum on the potential independence for the south on January 9.

The flashpoint district's future has long been a major bone of contention between north and south.

New rounds of face-to-face talks were due to begin on October 27 in the Ethiopian capital Addis Ababa, but Mbeki said they would go ahead only after the two sides had been brought towards a closer negotiation point.

"You must convene a meeting that will succeed," said Mbeki.

"So we are working closely to make sure that we are able to knock together an agreement that would be supported by everybody, which would make sure the country moves forward in conditions of peace," Mbeki added.

A key sticking point is who is eligible to vote...

### **US urges compromise ahead of new Sudan talks**

*Reuters* 22/10/10 - North and south Sudan must be ready to compromise next week when they meet in Ethiopia to discuss remaining obstacles to January elections that could see the oil-rich south emerge as an independent country, U.S. officials said on Friday.

President Barack Obama's special envoy for Sudan, Scott Gration, said the talks on Wednesday could be one of the last chances to agree on the framework for the vote, which observers fear may open the door to new conflict in the region which only emerged from decades of civil war in 2005.

"There's no more time to waste," Gration told a news briefing.

"The parties must be prepared to come to Addis with an attitude of compromise. The entire world is watching and will make judgments based on how the parties approach these talks, on how they act in the next couple of months.

Gration reiterated that the United States, which has offered Khartoum a package of incentives if it cooperates on the referendums and to bring peace to the western region of Darfur, would not support any delay to the January votes.

"We're committed to on-time referenda in both Abyei and southern Sudan," Gration said. "It is really up to the parties to take the decisions and take the actions to make this a reality."

### **Governor gave security the freehand to impose stability**

*Al-Ahdath* 24/10/10 – Governor of Khartoum state Dr. Abdul Rahman Al-Khedir has warned against attempt to undermine security of the state, saying the security apparatus would be given the freehand to impose security and stability in the state.

Addressing a function held yesterday in Omdurman to honour police spokesperson Gen. Ahmed Imam, Al-Khedir said Sudan is at cross roads, adding the southern Sudanese in the North would be respected and protected even if they vote for secession.

Deputy Director of Police Gen. Al-Adil Yagoub, addressing the ceremony, said the police forces would spare no efforts to preserve stability.

### **Khartoum not ready for war, adviser says**

*Sudan Tribune website* 22/10/10 - An advisor on security affairs to President of southern Sudan, John Kong Nyuon, on Thursday urged the region not to believe statements attributed to senior officials from Sudan's ruling National Congress Party (NCP) that the north and south may return to war.

Nyuon in his statement was especially critical of former Sudanese foreign minister Mustafa Osman Ismail for his comments on 30 September, asking students to prepare for war.

"The most irritating one was the statement which called on youth and students from higher learning institutions in the north to prepare for war in case the south secedes, by Mustafa Osman Ismail, a presidential advisor and Secretary General for external relations in the National Congress Party."

"These are just political propagandas. They are not prepared for any war at all because they know they will not fight [as] it [...] was in the past. What they are making these days is a simple oratory of intimidation to scar potential southern voters in the north to vote against their will in favor of unity," said Nyuon.

Nyuon, said that even if war did breakout, the Khartoum-based NCP did not have the ability to win as they had left themselves in "an isolated triangle."

He pointed to the ongoing conflict in the western region of Darfur as an example of how the Khartoum has failed to win military confrontations.

"Can Khartoum really win a war involving four regions? Will they really win any war? They may have been lucky in the past to use marginalized groups and people by using disgruntled individuals from corners of Sudan to fight their wars. But this is not what the current situation tells." said Nyuon.

## **Sudan MPs wary of referendum chaos**

*The Nation*/All Africa Global Media via COMTEX 21/10/10 - Southern Sudan lawmakers have expressed fears that the upcoming referendum that will decide the fate of Africa's largest country will spark chaos.

Speaking at a meeting with members of Kenya's Constitutional Implementation Oversight Committee, the Southern Sudan MPs said the environment in their country was likely to precipitate conflict.

Peter Bashir Gbandi Alawa, the government chief whip in the Parliament of Southern Sudan, said that his country had only 83 days to go to the January 9 referendum -to determine whether or not to secede from the larger Sudan-yet "there were a lot of negative aspects".

"Voters have not even been registered, the funding mainly from the North is not even forthcoming, there are cases of insecurity, the south itself has issues of accessibility, and we are heavily polarized along the North-South divide," said Mr Alawa.

He told the Committee, chaired by Mander Central MP Abdikadir Mohammed, that the suspicion over the fairness in the referendum process arose from lessons in implementing the peace agreement where the North had flouted some of the provisions.

"This is about a county which has never been free since 1963. We've been having nominal independence," said Mr Alawa.

Similar sentiments were put forward by Mr David Biel Jal, an MP in the Southern Sudan Parliament.

"There's massive redeployment of forces between the North and South. It is as if they don't think this referendum will take place," said Mr Jal.

"We've had a lot of difficulties. The South says if there's no voter verification, then there's no need for a referendum," he added.

"If the referendum is done under these circumstances, it means the south will not accept the results and that means war."

The MP also accused the North, which is the larger government headed by President Omar al Bashir, of doctoring figures of the Southerners displaced to Khartoum in the 39-year war.

"We had 700,000 people when the census figures were released, how is it that all of a sudden the government says we have three million of them living in Khartoum?" posed another MP, Jimmy Wongo.

Mr. Wongo said the South Sudan Referendum Commission did not enjoy the confidence of all the people and that, still, the Referendum Act has "a lot of loopholes which are today becoming an obstacle" to carrying out the exercise.

"The present chairman is partisan. He's a unionist. He was the Speaker of a Parliament in which I sat in 1996. Mr. Mohammed Ibrahim Khalil belongs to the UMMA party. The secretary general of the commission is a northerner and a unionist. This commission doesn't enjoy the confidence of all of us, especially, we the southerners who're going to vote," said Mr. Wongo.

"We want to take our people across the referendum. If Khartoum allows us to do our referendum peacefully, and they don't change the date, then we're going to succeed."

Another lawmaker said that oil in Southern Sudan was going to be a problem as the country heads to the referendum.

"Unless a proper discussion is carried out on this matter before we go to the vote, we're going to have a blow-up," the MP warned.

The MPs warned of voter intimidation by the government forces, a gagged media singing the unionists' anthem and lack of resources as their major problems.

Their Kenyan counterparts had shared their experiences and lessons learnt from the 2005 referendum, the 2007 post-poll chaos and the 2010 successful referendum that ushered in a new Constitution.

"Change requires sacrifice, and that's what you should consider as you head to the referendum," said Mr. Alfred Khang'ati, an assistant minister in Kenya's Prime Minister's Office and a member of the Oversight Committee.

Cabinet minister Chirau Ali Mwakwere also added his voice: "The key question to consider is whether you want change or you want it to remain business-as-usual; and that should be your starting point in voter education. You have to mobilise them to vote, if you don't do that, some people will infiltrate and you'll get disappointing results."

Mr. Mohammed said: "Essentially, this referendum is a political process and you must have political understanding before going for a referendum. Without such a settlement, the aim of the referendum will be lost as the parties will be busy scoring points. You should also have a clear post-referendum framework."

Ms Rachel Shabesh, a Kenyan MP who also sits in the Pan-African Parliament pleaded with the Southern Sudan delegation to address the core issues before they go to the vote.

When the meeting ended, assistant minister Elizabeth Ongoro said: "I will not comment. That's your war and you'll have to fight it."

Mr. Mohammed, the chairman, added: "The process in Southern Sudan is in the interest of everyone in Africa. Knowing how easily things can go wrong, I am very worried about the situation. This country (Kenya) will be happy to do anything it can for the success of the process."

## **Implementation of CPA condition for normalizing US-Sudan ties –Kerry**

*Xinhua* (Khartoum) 24/10/10 - Chairman of U.S. Senate Committee for Foreign Relations

Senator John Kerry said Friday the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) and the conduction of south Sudan referendum are basic conditions for normalization of relations between Khartoum and Washington.

Kerry said at a press conference that nothing could push forward the relation between the United States and Sudan but the full cooperation in the implementation of the CPA and the conduction of a free and credible referendum.

The U.S. senator urged Sudan's ruling National Congress Party to provide conditions for a fair referendum with accepted results, saying the U.S. congress "has real concern on this matter." He added if any party opted not to commit to the right path, the U.S would resort to other alternatives including sanctions.

Senator Kerry arrived in Khartoum on Friday on a three-day visit to Sudan to assess the situations in the country ahead of the south Sudan referendum, set for January 2011.

Earlier on the day, Spokesman of Sudanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs Muawiya Osman Khalid told Xinhua that Kerry's visit came as part of following up the issues relating to the implementation of the CPA, particularly the south Sudan referendum.

"Kerry will hold talks in south Sudan on Saturday and on Sunday will hold talks in Khartoum with Sudanese Vice-President Ali Osman Mohamed Taha, Sudanese Presidential Advisor Salah Abdalla Gosh and Sudanese Minister of Foreign Affairs Ali Ahmed Karti," he said.

## Other Highlights

### **US eases Sudan embargo, sparing farming equipment**

*Reuters* 21/10/10 - The United States has relaxed sanctions on Sudan to exempt farm equipment, a move seen as part of a wider scheme of carrots and sticks before a sensitive referendum that could split Africa's largest country.

"Specific licenses may be issued on a case-by-case basis authorising the commercial exportation or re-exportation of U.S.- origin agricultural equipment and services to ... Sudan," the U.S. Office of Foreign Assets Control said in a statement issued on its web site on Wednesday.

"The purpose of this new licensing policy is to benefit the Sudanese people by enhancing local food production and strengthening the agricultural sector," it added...

### **JEM rebels to meet Darfur mediator in Doha**

*Sudan Tribune website* 23/10/10 - The rebel Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) announced today they will send a delegation to Doha, official venue of peace process, to meet the Joint Peace Mediator.

JEM which froze its participation in Doha with the Sudanese government since last May said today it will send a delegation to Doha to discuss with Djibril Bassole ways to reform the forum in a way to reach a just and comprehensive peace agreement.



Bassole, held a meeting on Friday with the rebel group in London to discuss the resumption of the negotiations with the Sudanese government to end the seven year conflict...

### **African pressure groups protest Al-Bashir's expected visit to Kenya**

*Sudan Tribune website* 23/10/10 - Twenty-three pressure groups from different African countries have sent a protesting letter to the Kenyan President Mwai Kibaki against a possible visit by Sudan's President Omer Al-Bashir to Nairobi at the end of this month to attend a regional summit on south Sudan.

Earlier this month, Kenya called for a summit of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) in Nairobi on October 30 in order to discuss the upcoming referendum on south Sudan secession. However, the country's Foreign Minister Moses Wetangula declined to say whether Al-Bashir would be allowed to visit the country.

Yesterday, 23 pressure groups sent a letter to the Kenyan President Muwai Kibaki to protest Al-Bashir's invite, saying that his visit would be "an insult" to the victims of Darfur conflict and make "a mockery" of Kenya's commitment to the ICC.

"A return visit by Al-Bashir would make a mockery of Kenya's declared commitment to the International Criminal Court, and would be an insult to victims of atrocities in Darfur and globally" said Hassan Shire Sheikh of the East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Projects.

The letter stated that Kenya's domestic law, the International Crimes Act and the Kenyan Constitution all oblige the Kenyan government to adhere to its commitment to the ICC.

"For all of these reasons" says the letter "we urge the Kenyan government to clearly affirm its commitment to cooperate with the ICC, as states such as South Africa and Botswana have done, and clarify that President al-Bashir will be arrested should he enter Kenya."

The letter said that arresting Al-Bashir would be "an important way to show respect for victims in Darfur, along with Kenya's commitment to accountability for crimes committed during electoral violence in Kenya."...

### **25000 residents fled from South Darfur camp after violence - UN**

*Sudan Tribune website* 22/10/10 - Some 25,000 residents fled Kalama IDPs camp after clashes between pro and anti Doha peace process , the UN secretary general said in a report to the Security Council Friday.

In his report about the UNAMID activities, Ban K-Moon said the clashes pushed "at least 35 fatalities and the displacement of some 25,000 IDPs from the camp to Nyala and surrounding villages".

He further added that some thousand of these IDPs sought refuge at the UNAMID community policing centre located next to Kalma camp...