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Highlights

Dialogue with US will continue – NCP official

NCP Political Secretary Mohamed Mandour Al-Mahdi has said the government would continue dialogue with the US Administration despite the obstacles being created by powerful pressure groups, *Al-Sahafa* reports.

Meanwhile, *Al-Ayyam* reports Al-Mahdi did not rule out an NCP-SPLM alliance to contest upcoming elections.

In a related development, Sudan's Communist Party has accused unnamed circles of seeking to disrupt upcoming elections, affirming its right to defend itself. The party's spokesperson Yousuf Hussein said his party complained to authorities about what he considered acts of violence against the Communist Party. Hussein has called on authorities to hold the imam of Al-Gireif mosque and his group accountable for inciting violence against the Communist Party.

Congress delegation's visit has four objectives – US Embassy

The *Citizen* reports that the US Embassy has confirmed the arrival of a US Congressional delegation in Khartoum yesterday. According to the Embassy's press release, the visit targets monitoring of USAID program in the Sudan, evaluation of UNMIS performance, CPA implementation progress and efforts for resolving Darfur issue.

Petroleum Commission to meet today

Chaired by President Omar Al-Bashir and in the presence of FVP Salva Kiir Mayardit, the National Petroleum Commission will hold its second meeting today, *Al-Raed* reports. Kiir will arrive from Juba today for the meeting which will discuss a range of issues including revenue sharing from Abyei oil wells in light of the PCA ruling.

Abyei Boundary Commission encounters obstacles

Abyei Chief Administrator Arop Moyak has said that the national committee tasked with demarcating Abyei boundaries will arrive in the area during the next two days to begin its work on the ground with the assistance of experts including from UNMIS, *Al-Ahdath* reports. However, sources within the committee revealed that lack of funding could be an obstacle for the committee's work.

Meanwhile, *Miraya FM* reports a project for the construction of the Abyei-Gogrial-Wau road was launched on Monday. The road construction is funded by the Unity Support Fund. The Spokesman of the Abyei administration, Chol Angoi said that over 1000km-long road would connect the area to other important areas in south Sudan, adding that Abyei citizens will benefit a lot from the road.

MPs summon minister over “UNMIS land grabs”

The *Citizen* reports that members of the Central Equatoria Legislative Assembly Monday issued a letter of summons, demanding the State Minister of Physical Infrastructure to appear before the Assembly early on Wednesday to explain charges that a UN agency is among land grabbers in Juba. According to the letter of summons, land plots were allotted to individuals but UNMIS came up and fenced the plots.

About a week ago, the Governor of Central Equatoria State Clement Wani Konga informed the governors' forum that UNMIS had grabbed a total of 80 plots within the surroundings of the areas allotted to members of the Assembly. MPs are demanding that the Minister should answer as to how their plots have been occupied by UNMIS and the land of the State Assembly meant for a Library is also now owned by individuals and investment companies.

W. Equatoria takes measures to protect international agencies

Miraya FM 25/8/09 - the governor of Western Equatoria state Jema Nunu Kumba confirmed that her government has taken precautionary measures to provide protection for international agencies to resume their activities in some areas which they had earlier deserted due to security reasons. Kumba revealed that efforts were being exerted by the state in coordination with local organizations to provide basic needs to the displaced in the areas affected by the withdrawal of these organizations.

Over 90% of Southern Sudanese will vote for separation – survey

Sudan Tribune website 24/8/09 – An overwhelming majority of the people of Southern Sudan are expected to vote for separation to form their own independent country in the 2011 referendum, according to a survey result.

(The survey recently conducted by the US-based National Democratic Institute NDI), and presented to the Governors Forum in the Southern Sudan Parliament, has indicated that the region is moving towards becoming an independent country.

Based in Washington, DC, NDI is a “nonpartisan, nongovernmental organization that has supported democratic institutions and practices in every region of the world for more than two decades...and works to establish and strengthen political and civic organizations, safeguard elections, and promote citizen participation, openness and accountability in government.”

NDI works on five continents in more than 110 countries with political parties, governments, parliaments and civic groups to establish and strengthen democratic institutions and practices.

Its officials told the Juba parliament in the joint Forum that the survey they conducted in many towns and villages across Southern Sudan dwelled mostly on the respondents' views on issues of good governance, the upcoming general elections and referendum in the South.

They said the findings have indicated that over 90% of the people surveyed said they are discontented with the status quo under the CPA arrangements and want to establish their own independent country in 2011.

When asked by the surveying team whether their current view of the status quo would change if a Southerner is elected to the post of the national President of the Republic of Sudan, the report indicated that an overwhelming majority would still vote for separation.

They argued that electing a Southerner as the President of the country would not stop the North from exploiting the resources from the South because Northerners would still continue to take 50% of the resources.

According to the report, they also said electing a Southerner to the Presidency in 2010 could simply be a trick to lure Southerners into voting for unity in 2011 and once that is done the Northerners would remove the President and return the country to their agenda; hence back to square one.

They however think that electing a Southerner to the Khartoum palace for eight months between April 2010 and January 2011 would only be an added advantage to use his or her presidential powers to help the South in facilitating the process towards independence.

On governance, the report indicated that respondents in overwhelming majority were also very much concerned about insecurity and corruption in the region.

But it said that a good number of Southern Sudanese were blaming insecurity and corruption or scarcity of resources partly on the North and would want to judge it squarely on Southern Sudan leaders once independence is achieved.

The NDI team, however, warned officials of the semi-autonomous government that the people of Southern Sudan will have even higher expectations of basic service delivery to them, than they currently have during the interim period, if independence is achieved by 2011.

In a related development, the Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi yesterday said that he would support the independence of South Sudan if its citizens decide so in the 2011 referendum but warned that it would become a "very weak state."

Gaddafi in a meeting with JEM leader Khalil Ibrahim said he has long standing conviction with regard to Southern Sudan from a historical perspective.

"South Sudan I had my own opinion on it since a very long time ago and the days of Joseph Lagu and days of late Garang" Gaddafi was quoted by the official Libyan official news agency (JANA).

"It was in reality attached and became part of Sudan due to the colonial divisions that we talked about. Colonialism created a new map and new people according to its interests and wherever its armies reached," he added.

The Libyan leader suggested that secession of South Sudan would be the logical choice to be made by Southerners.

"I told them my brothers that even if you secede I will support your independence. Why? Because you don't speak Arabic; your language is English and your language is local. Your religion is not Islam; you are animists and some of you are Christians. You are from another side not from Sudan, different from Darfur and Nubia and East Sudan and Khartoum," Gaddafi said.

Last June Gaddafi angered Khartoum when FVP Salva Kiir disclosed that the Libyan leader pledged to him that he would support an independent South Sudan. The Libyan embassy in Khartoum at the time denied that Gaddafi made any such remarks in his meeting with Kiir.

JANA cited Gaddafi as saying that Southern Sudanese have characteristics that are "not in harmony" with Sudan and that it was better to be left a separate state "similar to Burundi or Rwanda."

However, the Libyan head warned the Southern Sudanese about the downsides of separation.

"You will be a very weak state and you will need someone to support you from outside and you will be colonized either by the US, China or Europe...or Israelis" he said.

"Whoever that will colonize you will oppress you and take your wealth and lie to you telling you that he will help you and your independence and that you are newborn state," Gaddafi added.

Gaddafi said that since this is South Sudan "destiny", he recommends that they remain with united Sudan, saying it is better than being independent "under the protection of other imperialist or Zionist powers."

Last month Egypt, another neighbor of Sudan, said that separation of South Sudan would lead to proliferation of poverty and internal conflict within the new state.

Tribal violence in Warap state leaves 2 dead and 6 injured

Miraya FM 25/8/09 - A violent tribal conflict in Warap State has left two women dead and six other people injured. The clash allegedly started by armed members of the Lwanj tribe of Rumbek North County. Three of the six injured people are believed to be personnel of SPLM, while the other three are civilian youth. The acting head of the Legislative Assembly of Lakes State, Mareik Nang'a Mereik, told Miraya FM that three cattle camps were raided and that the clashes were still ongoing between the youth Luaj and the cattle raiders.

Reportedly, the youth of Rumbek North County on Monday morning held a peaceful protest rally at the United Nations headquarters in the region and presented a document, urging the UN to intervene in resolving the conflict.

In austere times, war on graft shapes up in South Sudan

The **Daily Nation** 25/8/09 - In a chain of well-choreographed events last week southern Sudan showed a glimpse of a rare step in the fight against corruption. Police arrested an undersecretary for alleged stealing and, the Cabinet raised the pay and powers of the anti-corruption czar. The ruling Party called upon the media to join the anti-corruption fight. But it is Josephine Lagu who has both excited and intrigued, leaving a mark of history, when police bundled her into a cell for allegedly banking some \$323,010 meant to support Southern Sudanese students in Uganda into a personal account. Students in Uganda went on strike in July and sent a delegation to Juba, seeking help. The full scale of this scandal won't be known until the programme in other countries is also investigated, but, nonetheless, Josephine becomes the first undersecretary in the Government of Southern Sudan to be arrested.

In that sense, Josephine follows in the footsteps of a former Finance Minister who became the first minister to be detained over alleged corruption. Both are firsts, relative to their positions. But the similarities end here. From when they get into jail, their paths are different. And those different trajectories of Josephine's and Athur Akuien's cases – nearly 30 months apart from one another — help shed light on the growth of Southern Sudan's institutions.

Thousands flee renewed LRA rebel raids

IRIN 24/8/09 - Fresh attacks by Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) rebels in Southern Sudan have forced thousands of people to flee their homes and created a worrying spike in humanitarian needs, UN officials and aid workers warn.

The recent attacks have triggered widespread panic and fear in regions bordering the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and the Central African Republic (CAR). In some areas, the UN has suspended humanitarian work.

Aid workers and UN staff were evacuated by two helicopters on 13 August from Ezo, close to Sudan's border with DRC, after an attack blamed on the LRA.

The rebels appear to have timed their raid to coincide with a church service, looting stores and abducting several children.

The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) said in a 21 August statement it “is deeply concerned about the fate of the large number of refugees and IDPs caught in the latest attacks in several villages along the borders of the three countries”.

Many of those fleeing had already been forced from their homes by previous LRA attacks, according to UNHCR spokesman Andrej Mahecic.

The LRA “continues to wreak havoc” in the region and “the numbers of refugees and displaced are rising steadily”, said Lise Grande, UN Deputy Resident Humanitarian Coordinator for Southern Sudan.

More than 180 people have been killed by the LRA in Southern Sudan since late July, Grande added.

“Altogether since late 2008, over 230,000 have been internally displaced as a result of the LRA; more than 25,000 people have entered Southern Sudan as refugees,” said Grande.

Aid workers report a worrying humanitarian situation, describing an “atmosphere of terror” in DRC.

“The people are stuck between a rock and a hard place,” said Katharine Derderian, a humanitarian adviser for the aid agency Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) Belgium, who has recently returned from an assessment in DR Congo.

“They are too scared to return to the rural areas, so they are unable to cultivate their fields, or to even send their children to school because they fear the LRA will attack,” Derderian added.

“But resources are being stretched in all areas - health, food and other services - within the urban areas where the people have moved to.”

Southern Sudanese officials say they are doing all they can to protect civilians – but attacks have even been made on the regional capital Yambio.

Colonel Joseph Ngere Paciko, deputy state governor of Western Equatoria, the Sudanese region hit hardest by the LRA, said the expert jungle guerrillas preferred to target civilians and avoid patrols by the Southern military, the Sudan People’s Liberation Army (SPLA).

“They are avoiding any conventional attack... they are not willing to confront SPLA forces,” Paciko added.

But analysts warn that military might alone will not provide a lasting solution.

“The LRA still remain a threat not merely because of their numbers, but simply because they are a guerrilla group,” said Louise Khabure, of the International Crisis Group (ICG) think-tank.

“They move around in small groups and nobody knows when and how they will attack; the armies involved are using conventional means which are inappropriate for handling guerrilla operations,” she added.

With an upcoming vote for Southern Sudan on its potential full independence due in 2011, some fear the LRA may resume its role as a proxy force for those keen to block the emergence of a fully autonomous south.

Khabure said she suspected that “residual support from Khartoum is still maintained”, referring to the support north Sudan gave the LRA during Sudan's 22-year civil war against Southern forces.

Finding a solution to end the LRA insurgency will be tough, she said, but the first step would be to renew contact with LRA leaders – who have been silent for months.

“Credible contact is needed with Kony,” said Khabure. “From there, hear him out first to get indications of what he wants. There will be a need to negotiate new terms of assembly, and then containment.”

AU Panel briefs NCP, SPLM on its vision to address Darfur

The AU Panel on Darfur, headed by the former South African President Thabo Mbeki, yesterday presented its vision to the NCP and the SPLM on how to address the Darfur issue for their endorsement before it is submitted to the AU summit in Libya for approval, ***Al-Sahafa*** reports.

Presidential Adviser Mustafa Osman Ismail told reporters, after a meeting with the Panel, that the current visit would be the last for the Panel; adding that the Panel would present its report to the AU summit in Tripoli by the end of this month.

However, Ismail declined to elaborate on the Panel's proposals, saying it presented a verbal vision as to how Darfur's humanitarian, security, health and political situation could be addressed.

Ismail reiterated Sudan government's adherence to Doha as a venue for Darfur talks, saying efforts by the Arab League and Egypt should converge into the Qatari initiative. “If we feel that some efforts do not pour into the Qatari initiative, we will stop them,” he said.

For his part, SPLM SG Pagan Amum told reporters that the SPLM delegation headed by GoSS VP Rieck Machar heard a report by the Panel on its proposals to resolve the Darfur crisis. Amum stressed the need for an UN-monitored comprehensive ceasefire to create a conducive atmosphere for Darfur talks.

Amum said the question of justice could not be ignored, adding a mechanism should be set up to look into the role of the Criminal Court, and it should be African like in Rwanda.

The Panel will meet today with the Umma Party Chairman Mr. Sadiq Al-Mahdi as well as other party leaders before it submits its proposals to the AU summit.

Meanwhile, ***Al-Wifaq*** reports Arab League Secretary General Amr Musa told reporters in Cairo that matters in Khartoum were now moving towards settlement of the Darfur crisis.

In a related development, ***Sudan Tribune website*** 24/8/09 reported JEM has urged the Libyan leader to exert efforts to end the six year conflict in Darfur during his presidency of the African Union.

Col. Muammar Gadhafi met on Sunday August 23 with a delegation of the rebel group led by Dr. Khalil Ibrahim who is visiting the country for talks on the Darfur peace process.

"The Movement wants peace and we are sincere in this," said Ibrahim in a speech before the Libyan leader. "We believe that it is in the interest of the Movement and the people of Darfur, to address this problem and you are in the African Union command," he added.

Speaking at the meeting, the Libyan leader regretted that Darfur has become a region of war and insecurity. He also stressed that peace would be first in the interest of Darfur people.

He further said that Darfur conflict would top the agenda of the upcoming AU summit on security and peace in the continent scheduled to be held in Tripoli at the end of August.

UNAMID donates supplies to women's prison

UN News Centre 24/8/09 - UNAMID today donated supplies to a women's prison in the western Sudanese region of Darfur.

Following a request made last month for support by the detention centre in Khanaga, the Mission, known as UNAMID, has contributed items, including cooking utensils and bedding. It also has approved the construction of accommodation for female prisoners.

Today's donation to the prison in North Darfur state is a manifestation of UNAMID's commitment to bolstering national institutions to allow them to better respond to people's needs, the mission said in a press release.

Adada quits Darfur peacekeeping mission

Sudan Tribune website 24/8/09 — The UN Secretary General, Ban Ki-Moon has accepted the resignation of the African Union – UN joint representative in Darfur, Rodolphe Adada who will quit his functions on August 31.

In a letter sent to the UN Secretary General on July 30 Adada, informed Ki-Moon of his intention to conclude his service as Joint Special Representative on August 31.

The JSR observed that the security situation in Darfur has improved and that the deployment of troops is on track.

Ban Ki-Moon, in his acceptance letter, conveyed his appreciation for the dedication of the JSR to the hybrid AU-UN operations in Darfur.

"You have led UNAMID with distinction during its most challenging initial deployment phase and in an environment of unprecedented difficulty," said the UN chief.

Sudan mulls immunity for aid workers' kidnappers

Reuters 24/8/09 - Sudan is considering offering legal immunity to the kidnappers of two aid workers in Darfur as part of a new push to free the women during the holy month of Ramadan, a minister said on Monday.

Armed men seized the two women from Irish aid group GOAL in early July; the longest-running abduction in a new surge of kidnappings in Sudan's violent west.

The abductions have raised fears for the future of the internationally-funded aid effort in Darfur, already reeling from years of attacks on personnel, raids on compounds, and Khartoum's expulsion of 13 humanitarian organizations in March.

State minister for humanitarian affairs Abdel Baqi al-Jailani told Reuters he now knew the names of the eight kidnapers, who he said were members of a nomadic tribe in north Darfur seeking a ransom.

The government is negotiating with the abductors through senior members of their tribe who were planning to appeal to their Islamic sensibilities during Ramadan, he said.

"We have said what they have done is a crime. They should be punished ... But at this stage, our aim is to free the ladies. So we are trying to tell them that we are ready to negotiate ... forgiveness." By "forgiveness" he said he meant Sudan was ready to discuss the possibility of legal immunity for the kidnapers.

The minister said sources close to the kidnapers' base continued to report the women were in good health.

"From the reports I received, the two ladies are OK. They have adapted themselves to their surroundings ... I must say they are very strong."

Al-Jailani dismissed as baseless reports in two local newspapers quoting unnamed security sources saying that the abducted women had married members of the kidnapping group.

Darfur activists urge Obama to get tougher

Usatoday.com 24/8/09 - Darfur activists upset about President Obama's Sudan policy are launching a critical advertising campaign that urges him to step up pressure on Khartoum.

The move comes as the Obama administration is preparing to release a delayed review of U.S. policy on Sudan. Activists, who had hoped Obama would focus more than the Bush administration did on Darfur and take a tougher line, say they fear disappointment.

Advertisements purchased in U.S. newspapers to begin running Tuesday highlight past statements on Sudan by Obama, Vice President Joe Biden and Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton and urge the officials to live up to their words. They are signed by Humanity United, Save Darfur, the Genocide Intervention Network, I Act, Enough! and Investors against Genocide.

The groups say they have purchased ad space in newspapers including The Washington Post, the Wall Street Journal and two local papers on Martha's Vineyard in Massachusetts, where Obama is vacationing this week.

One spot quotes Obama's statement on the appointment of his special envoy to Sudan, Scott Gration in March.

"Sudan is a priority for this administration, particularly at a time when it cries out for peace and for justice," Obama said.

"President Obama, it is just a nice quote unless it inspires equally strong action in Sudan," the advertisement says. It urges the administration to ensure the international community enforces consequences for human rights violations in Sudan.

Some of the activists have been critical of Gration for what they believe is an emphasis on

incentives for the Sudanese government to cooperate.

Some of the activists say the Administration needs to make clear that it will press for sanctions and other punitive measures if the Sudanese government commits or condones human rights violations.

"There is considerable angst about how the policy is unfolding," said John Prendergast, co-founder of Enough! "The current strategy is a recipe for a return to war."

“Behind the news”

Al-Wifaq reports it has learned from its sources that the committee tasked with the conduct of ministerial reshuffle has finalized its consultations and the ministerial reshuffle will be announced during the few coming days. New faces will join the cabinet especially Al-Dirdiri Mohamed Ahmed who will take over as Justice Minister, Osama Abdullah as Energy Minister and Maj. Gen. Hassan Saleh as Defence Minister.

Torrential rains in Khartoum render families homeless

Miraya FM 24/8/09 - Khartoum state witnessed torrential rains on Sunday night which left several families homeless as houses collapsed and marginal settlements harshly damaged. Houses were swept in Ta'wedat area, north Ed Babkir. The heavy rains which lasted for about four hours also disturbed transportation in the city and cars and people deserted the flooded streets.