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- **Washington Post: Analysis: South Sudan secession a risky precedent:**
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Referendum Watch

Presidency to meet on Abyei

Al-Sudani Khartoum, 25/01/11 – The Undersecretary at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Rahamatullah Mohamed Osman has revealed that the Presidency will hold a meeting on Abyei in the coming days.

Osman, who met with a visiting Director of the African Affairs Department at the German Foreign Ministry, said the post-referendum issues are taking a long time but they are not difficult to resolve. He added that the Sudanese Government would accept the result of the referendum and expressed hopes the international community would continue supporting the peace process including writing off Sudan's debts to ensure stability and development in both the North and South Sudan.

Al-Ahdath meanwhile reports that an SPLM delegation is expected in Khartoum in the next two days to participate in preparations for the meeting of the Presidency slated for 27 January. SPLM's Yassir Arman said that Abyei and the nationality would be the main issues on the table but pointed out that the possibilities of dissolution of the institutions that came into being as a result of the CPA may shadow the talks. Arman however underlined the need to maintain such institutions like the Presidency until the end of the Interim Period.

The SPLM figure also underlined the need for a north-north inclusive dialogue that would lead to new constitutional arrangements in the north.

Salva Kiir vows to contest for South Sudan presidency after secession

Sudantribune.com Juba, 24/01/11 – FVP Salva Kiir Mayardit has declared his intention to contest the presidency of the newly created nation, should the semi-autonomous region gain independence in July this year.

"There is no vacuum in leadership as many of you are already thinking. Those who think that I will step down after the referendum are wrong. I was given the mandate by the people and I have to fulfill my obligations," Kiir told delegates attending the opening of the second session of Southern Sudan Parliament.

"As southerners, we should never allow individual interests override our national interests. Nations are built by people through sacrifice, patriotism and a common goal," the southern leader said.

He further appealed to members of Southern Sudan Legislative Assembly (SSLA) to expedite the passing of certain key bills, citing the 2011 budget, transitional constitution as well as other relevant laws necessary to guide the new nation.

On Abyei, President Kiir vowed to protect the grazing rights of the nomadic Misseriya tribe, and urged the NCP to remain committed to the ongoing post-referendum negotiations with the SPLM.

FVP Kiir adheres to Abyei protocol and referendum

Al-Sahafa Juba, 25/01/11 – Addressing the Southern Sudan Legislative Assembly yesterday, FVP Salva Kiir Mayardit said he rejects the idea advocated by some people from the Abyei region that the south unilaterally issues a decision to annex the area to southern Sudan. He called

upon the people to give him the chance to resolve that issue within the framework of the Presidency and expressed confidence that he and President Al-Bashir would be able to resolve the outstanding issues.

The FVP further called on southern Sudanese to remain calm as they wait to receive the results of the referendum.

South Sudan's Kiir urges Abyei to be patient

AFP Juba, 24/01/11 - South Sudanese president Salva Kiir urged the contested border district of Abyei on Monday to remain patient while negotiations over its future continue, as the south gears up for likely separation following an historic referendum.

"It is very unfortunate for us to lose innocent lives again and again while we are on the verge of having peace," said Kiir, who added that he was "optimistic" about agreeing a solution with President Omar al-Bashir.

"But I would ask the people of Abyei not to take any unilateral decision to join the south, and to give me a chance to find a peaceful settlement with my brother President Omar al-Bashir," Kiir said, addressing the south Sudan legislative assembly for its first day of work since the referendum.

Kiir praised Bashir's "noble stand to respect the outcome of the referendum and to support the emerging new state in the case of secession."

Preparations must now focus on the period ahead, Kiir said, speaking at the opening session of the south's parliament, at which he urged lawmakers to "pass and adopt the transitional constitution which will become the foundation of the new order."

"While we are waiting for the final outcome of the polls, the referendum task force is now left with two key tasks," Kiir said, "(That is) to work out a transition constitution, and two, preparing the government of southern Sudan for the period after the end of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, at past midnight, July 8, 2011."

The challenges ahead will be tough, Kiir said. "There is no easy walk to freedom," Kiir added, citing former South African president Nelson Mandela as an "inspiration for liberation."

As well as Abyei, Kiir said negotiations were continuing on the future sharing of Sudan's oil wealth -- which lies mainly in the south but with pipelines only running north -- as well as issues such as debt, and citizenship, and the demarcation of the north-south border.

"The newest nation in the world is being born -- for every newly born baby, there are always challenges associated with birth," said the southern parliament's speaker, James Wani Igga.

"We must have the right constitution to address the challenges, which is a long list."

Excitement is rising in the south at the prospect of independence. "We assure all of you, the Promised Land is only some metres away, no longer kilometres," said Igga.

But Kiir urged patience with the referendum's final results not expected until mid-February.

"In your excitement, you should not cause misery to yourselves and others," he added, saying the rights of northerners in the south must be respected.

He called for "no celebratory gunfire" on the day of announcement. "The last bullet of the long struggle has been released in the casting of the ballot, and we now have to wait patiently to see whether the bullet has hit the target or not," Kiir said.

South Sudan to retain its name as an independent state: report

Sudantribune.com Nairobi, 24/01/11 - South Sudan has decided to name itself the Republic of South Sudan upon the near-certain declaration of its independence as a result of a referendum vote whose final result is due to be announced mid-February, the region's officials revealed on Sunday.

A steering committee formed by the Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS) has been working to decide on a number of issues concerning the attributes of the potential state, including the adoption of an official coat of arms, a national flag and a national anthem.

Benjamin Marial, GoSS's minister of information and a member of the steering committee, revealed on Sunday in the region's capital Juba that south Sudan would retain its current name as an independent state, according to a report published on Monday by the *New York Times*.

"The majority preference is for South Sudan," he said, adding that the decision was made last week and its official announcement could be made on 14 February to coincide with the announcement of the referendum results.

Marial said that the committee had discussed a dozen of potential names but finally agreed to adopt the Republic of South Sudan due to the familiarity and convenience of the name.

Explaining the rationale of the choice, the minister said "It is the easiest one for the time being; there are already many things with that name. It makes it easy to transform the government."

But the committee's decision is not final, Marial said that the committee would refer its decisions to a higher authority for final approval, but later added that he did not expect any resistance.

"But should the people of South Sudan in the future want a new name, they will have that chance," Marial said.

National Assembly heads for a major overhaul

Al-Sudani Khartoum, 25/01/11 – The National Assembly has launched a major review of its institutions and has revealed it would reduce the number of the parliamentary committees. Deputy Speaker Haju Gismalsid says southern Sudanese MPs in the national parliament would stand to lose their entitlements and be paid their dues in full by early February.

Speaking following a meeting of the legislative body yesterday, he said that there is also a motion to amend the National Elections Law to allow for the impact of the departure of southern Sudanese. He said that the amendments would include that the membership of the National Assembly remain 350.

Speaker of the National Assembly, Ahmed Ibrahim Al-Tahir, said that with the departure of southern Sudanese parliamentarians from the House, the membership would continue with the remaining number until its full five-year term is exhausted.

North Sudan could quadruple oil output, says minister

AFP Khartoum, 25/01/11 - Sudan's oil minister said Monday that North Sudan could nearly quadruple its crude production within three years and that French oil firm Total was set to start drilling in the South in April.

"[Oil production in the North] will be higher than in the South. They can get 500,000 barrels per day in three to four years, if they double their efforts," Lual Deng told reporters in Khartoum.

“We think the production in the North will start increasing ... It will take time to develop those reserves, but the oil is there.”

He added that most of the new production would come from Block 6, a block in Southern Kordofan that borders Darfur and currently produces around 70,000 bpd, and where there had been “very positive indications” on finding new reserves.

Deng also said that Qatar Petroleum International was in the final stage of talks with French firm Total and the other partners in the consortium that operates South Sudan’s giant Block B, and that drilling could start in April.

“Our target is to start drilling by the beginning of April,” he said, adding that an agreement that saw QPI joining the consortium had to be reached before work could start.

Deng said the Qatari firm had also expressed interest in other exploration blocks in Sudan.

Tension in opposition meeting

Al-Sahafa Khartoum, 25/01/11 – A tense atmosphere prevailed at a meeting of opposition figures yesterday as Sadig Al-Mahdi (Umma Party) briefed them of his recent meeting with President Al-Bashir (NCP). Farouq Abu-Eissa, a spokesperson for the opposition alliance, said that the opposition continues in its resolve to oppose the government. He said that a communiqué would be issued at the end of a meeting opposition leaders plan to hold later today.

Authorities arrest PCP official

Al-Ahdath Khartoum, 25/01/11 – The Secretary for Youths’ Affairs at the Popular Congress Party (PCP) has been arrested by authorities, Hassan Abdallah Al-Hussein, a prominent member of the party, reported yesterday.

Al-Hussein described as “unjustified” the campaign of arrests targeting members of his party. He said that this shows that the regime has turned its back to its “guarantee for freedom” rhetoric at a time when the country needs a more open climate.

Popular Consultations Watch

NCP and SPLM differ over Popular Consultations in Blue Nile State

Al-Ahdath Geisan, 25/01/11 - Blue Nile state is reportedly experiencing a simmering crisis between the two parties, the NCP and the SPLM, over the conduct of popular consultations.

While many local leading SPLM figures have demanded autonomy, local NCP leaders including the Commissioner for Geisan, Burraee Abu Shanab, are of the view that the popular consultations process has been “emptied of its content” by some parties, citing as an example the demands for autonomy. He however attributed this to the high rates of illiteracy in the region.

The Deputy Speaker of the Blue Nile State Assembly Mamoon Hamad told reporters yesterday that local leaders have been criticized by residents for not doing enough to push the federal government to pay attention to development in the region. Hamad described the situation in the state as explosive.

Other Highlights

Foreign Minister Leaves for Washington

SUNA Khartoum, 24/01/11 - Foreign Minister, Ali Karti, Monday left for the United States on a three-day visit to meet with a number of American officials, members of the US Congress and American research centres

In a press statement to SUNA, the spokesman of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Khalid Musa, said that Karti would meet during the visit with US Secretary of State, Hilary Clinton, to discuss the political developments in Khartoum-Washington relations and conducting transparent dialogue on the obstacles facing normalization of the relations between them.

Musa said that Karti would also push the US to scrap sanctions imposed on Sudan and to remove Sudan from its list of state sponsors of terrorism.

He said that the Foreign Minister would hold a series of meeting in Washington to review the peace process and to renew the commitment to implement the remaining items in the peace agreement and to solve the pending issues through negotiation.

Musa said that debt relief and Darfur would also feature in the discussions between the two sides.

Meanwhile, the Foreign Ministry's spokesperson said that a senior US government official is expected soon in Khartoum.

Voter registration begins for Southern Kordofan elections

Radio Miraya 24/01/11 - Registration of voters for the upcoming Southern Kordofan gubernatorial and state legislative assembly elections began today, as political parties launched their campaigns, *Radio Miraya's* correspondent in Kadugli reports.

In an exclusive interview with *Radio Miraya*, the current Governor of South Kordofan, Ahmed Haroun, said the electoral process as an important step towards achieving political security and stability in the state.

Abyei suffers high commodity prices

Al-Sahafa Khartoum, 25/01/11 – Traffic has returned to the road linking Abyei with Al-Mujlad in Southern Kordofan after a blockade caused by an outbreak of violent conflict between elements from the Misseriya and Dinka Ngok. The problems started when a group believed to be Misseriya blocked the road early this year.

Mjr. Gen. Bashir Mekki Al-Bahi who commands the 14th Infantry Battalion said yesterday that the SAF has taken every precaution to preserve calm and stability in the region.

The blockade by Misseriya elements on the northern gateway to Abyei had caused great suffering to the people in the region as the flow of goods from the north ground to a standstill sending the price of essential commodities and services skyrocketing with a dwindling supply of commodities in the local markets.

Koual Deng, a local Dinka Ngok elder, agrees calm has returned to the area but says the standard of living is on a downward spiral. He said this is probably because a large number of Misseriya

fighters have based along the roads to the north and are blocking commodities from entering the area. “This is an organised activity and a clear dishonour to the state that allows citizens to block a vital road,” he said.

Misseriya warn against backtracking on Kadugli agreement

Akhir Lahza Abyei, 25/01/11 – Nimir Babo Nimir, a prominent member of the Misseriya tribe, says total calm and stability has returned to the Abyei area but warns against backtracking on the Kadugli agreement. He pointed out that the Kadugli agreement was a major contributor to the restoration of normalcy in the area.

The Misseriya, he says, would on their part remain committed to the agreement and would do nothing to cause insecurity in the area. He pointed out that the tribe is however ready to confront the SPLA should it breach the Kadugli deal on Abyei.

Juba facing power outage

Radio Miraya 25/01/11 - Juba is facing power cuts due to breakdown of its main electrical system, Southern Sudan Electricity Corporation said Monday. Speaking to the press in Juba, the Area Director of the Corporation, Kazi Yugusuk Tombe explained that the city's main electricity system developed technical problems last Sunday.

Yugusuk urged Juba residents to be patient and added that engineers have started working to restore the system.

Unity state apologizes after rebel's appearance on state radio

Sudantribune.com Bentiu, 24/01/11 - The Council of Ministers in South Sudan's Unity state has condemned the appearance of renegade colonel Gatluak Gai, on *Bentiu Radio*.

Addressing listeners over state-run *Bentiu Radio*, Gai said he was willing to find a peace deal with the government at both state and regional level. Unity State governor Taban Deng Gai has asked some of his advisors and ministers to find ways to begin negotiations with Gai.

Before his rebellion Gai was a colonel in prisons services in Unity State. However, when he was introduced by Mamun Diew Kai, *Bentiu Radio's* Director-General, described Gai as Lt. General.

Authorities in the oil-rich state have condemned the mistake and asked the Minister of Information and Communication, Gideon Gatpan Thaor, to immediately correct and denounce the error.

Thaor said that the government deeply regretted and apologized to the public and the SPLA.

6 killed in Jonglei village raid

Radio Miraya website 24/01/11 - At least six people were killed and others wounded when unknown gun men attacked Jalle Payam in Jonglei State last Saturday. Member of Parliament Kuol Bol Ayom, who visited the area, told *Radio Miraya* that a four-year-old was abducted in the incident. Bor County Police commissioner, Col. Chol Achiek, said that incident occurred at night, and it was difficult for police to respond immediately.

Massacre in Upper Nile

Quoting “sources”, *Al-Intibaha* reports that an unidentified group of military personnel killed last Monday some 63 civilians in a remote area north of Upper Nile State. “Eyewitnesses” say the victims were first taken to the remote area on board an unmarked vehicle then lined up and

shot dead. The paper says a source in Juba has confirmed the incident did happen and the victims were “unionists” but refuses to say where exactly this happened “for security reasons”.

Sudan warns UNAMID not to exceed its mandate

Sudantribune.com Khartoum, 24/01/11 - The head of the Transitional Darfur Regional Authority (TDRA) Ja'afar Abdel-Hakam has warned UNAMID to stick to its mandate, a day after Sudanese authorities raided an IDP camp without notifying the peacekeeping force.

UNAMID chief Ibrahim Gambari and UN Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator Georg Charpentier met with Abdel-Hakam and the state's security committee on Monday.

Government sponsored *Sudanese Media Center (SMC)* website quoted Abdel-Hakam as saying that TDRA rejects implementation of hidden agendas by foreign groups operating in Darfur.

The West Darfur governor also said that UNAMID must adhere to its mandate and support the government's domestication strategy put in place. He underscored that relations between the governorates of Darfur states and UNAMID is that of a partnership.

On Sunday, UNAMID said that Sudanese authorities conducted an extensive cordon-and-search operation in the Zamzam IDP camp located on the outskirts of El-Fasher.

The mission said that the raid violated the Status of Force Agreement (SOFA) requiring notification and consultations prior to any actions regarding IDP camps.

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