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# Media Monitoring Report

United Nations Mission in Sudan/ Public Information Office

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Address: UNMIS Headquarters, P.O. Box 69, Ibeid Khatim St, Khartoum 11111, SUDAN  
Phone: (+249-1) 8708 6000 - Fax: (+249-1) 8708 6200

# Highlights

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## **National Security Advisory Committee discusses Sudan-US relations**

The National Security Advisory Committee held yesterday its first workshop on Sudan-US relations, reports **Akhir Lahza**. The six-hour workshop culminated into a number of recommendations that would be tabled before the Presidency and the decision-making circles in the country.

## **SPLM extends Parliament boycott indefinitely**

**Local dailies** report the SPLM has decided to extend its boycott of parliamentary sessions indefinitely. According to **Al-Sahafa**, the NDA parliamentary group is also likely to walk out of today's session intended to discuss the national security bill, arguing it can not discuss bills in the absence of the SPLM.

National Assembly Deputy Speaker Atem Garang (SPLM) told reporters yesterday that the SPLM parliamentary group decided to support the SPLM leadership in boycotting the Parliament until key bills such as the referendum bill, popular consultation for the Nuba Mountains and the Blue Nile as well as the Abyei referendum bill is included on the agenda of the Parliament.

## **New US policy on Sudan negatively affects “marginalised Sudanese” – GoSS**

GoSS Spokesperson and Information Minister, Paul Mayom Akech, says that the recently-released US policy on Sudan greatly affects war ravaged regions across the country, **Al-Khartoum** reports.

The GoSS has welcomed the new US Policy saying it provides a unique yet complex opportunity for the central government to learn and adjust areas of international concern but that the policy affects the poor majority particularly in the marginalized areas of Sudan, Akech said.

The official said that Southern Sudan is still part of united Sudan under the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), needing developmental machineries, which according to him said, can not get into the region since routes of entry is part of North Sudan.

"We cannot have heavy machineries coming into the region when there are sanctions that ban imports heavy machines to the country," he said adding that this policy requires "an honest review" from Sudanese people and governments.

## **OCHA condemns abduction of ICRC aid worker in Darfur**

In a statement issued on 24/10/2009, the United Nations Humanitarian Coordinator in Sudan, Ameerah Haq, condemned the kidnapping of an aid worker working for the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), **Al-Sudani** reports.

"The kidnapping of Mr Gauthier Lefevre serves nothing but to undermine humanitarian work in the region, at the sole expense of those who benefit from such endeavour. It harms the chances of creating a safe and secure environment for delivering humanitarian relief and impacts negatively on our ability to deliver food and basic health and welfare services in areas where they are most needed," Haq Commented.

Haq called on the kidnapers to immediately and unconditionally release Mr. Lefevre, a French-British national who was kidnapped north of Al Geneina on Thursday 22 October 2009, while returning from a field trip to help local communities obtain clean drinking water.

## **Sudan president forms committee to study Mbeki report**

**Sudantribune.com** Khartoum, 25/10/09 – Sudan has announced it received a report of the AU Darfur Panel and has assigned a committee chaired by Vice-President Ali Osman Mohamed Taha to study the report and to formulate recommendations.

The government has meanwhile praised the efforts exerted by the high level task force to carry out a comprehensive study of the situation in Darfur. In a statement by the Government Spokesperson and Minister of Information, Sudan re-affirmed its commitment to maintain cooperation with Chairman of the African Union Commission, Jean Ping, and the high-level task force.

## **NCP official says SPLM is “in crisis”**

A prominent member of the NCP has criticised the SPLM over its position on the draft referendum bill. According to **Al-Ahdath**, NCP's Qutbi Al-Mahdi said that the SPLM's reneging on the deal over the referendum bill is a reflection of the crisis it is in and of the lack of coherence within the movement. In a press statement yesterday, Qutbi accused some elements within the SPLM, including SPLM SG Pagan Amum, of attempting to weaken NCP-SPLM relations and to derail efforts for democratic transformation.

“It is clear that Pagan did not understand the agreement reached between VP Taha and GoSS VP Riek Machar,” he said.

## **Minister denies SPLM claims that two versions exist of the security bill**

Justice Minister Abdalbassit Sabdarat assets that contrary to claims SPLM claims, the draft National Security Bill that his ministry tabled before the Council of Ministers is the same draft endorsed by the NCP-SPLM joint committees, **Al-Ahdath** reports. He pointed out that the two sides were not in agreement on articles 50 and 51 that concerned the functions of the National Security Organ and the length of time admissible for extrajudicial arrests.

The minister who was speaking at a symposium on the bill said that most of the debate between the two sides was based on some 83 amendments that the SPLM wanted to introduce in the bill. He pointed out however that the situation the country is passing through requires a strong security apparatus.

## **President Mubarak, Kiir and Mirghani likely to meet in Cairo**

FVP Salva Kiir Mayardit will hold a meeting today with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak for consultation on a range of issues including the situation in the South, **Al-Rai Al-Aam** reports. Egyptian Cabinet Spokesperson Magdi Radi said the Egyptian Prime Minister Ahmed Nadeef had affirmed support for the full implementation of the CPA in a manner that would lead to the unity of the Sudan. However, he said, Nadeef also confirmed Egypt's respect to the future choice of the southern Sudanese.

Meanwhile, sources said President Mubarak, Kiir and DUP leader Mohamed Osman Al-Mirghani are likely to hold a meeting for discussion on the pending issues between the NCP and the SPLM particularly the referendum bill.

## **SPLM prefers unity if the CPA is implemented, says Pagan Amum**

SPLM Secretary-General Pagan Amum said that the SPLM prefers unity if all provisions of the CPA are implemented, reports **Al-Khartoum**. He pointed out however that the people of southern Sudan, and not the SPLM, will have the final say on the issue of unity or secession.

## **Abyei Boundary Demarcation Commission complains of obstacles**

**Al-Sahafa** reports that the Abyei Boundary Demarcation Commission has called on the Presidency to take a decisive decision with regards to the border demarcation. The Commission submitted to the Presidency a letter detailing the obstacles impeding its work including threats to their JIU escorts by the Misseriya, the PDF and the Mujahideen stationed along the road to prevent movement north of Line 10:10. The Abyei Administration warned of the consequences of a delay in the border demarcation process.

## **DDR-North Commission to reintegrate 693 PDF ex-combatants**

The Secretary-General of the North Sudan DDR Commission, Dr. Salaf-el-deen Saleh, has announced that preparations are complete for the demobilization and reintegration of some 693 PDF ex-combatants in Gedharef State, reports **Akhir Lahza**. Speaking at a ceremony to mark the reintegration of 33 child soldiers yesterday, he pointed out that the reintegration programme carried out in collaboration with the UNICEF and another organisation is the first of its kind in Sudan.

## **West Darfur authorities locate position of abducted French aid worker**

Authorities in West Darfur have managed to locate the position of the abducted ICRC aid worker, reports **Akhir Lahza**. Deputy Governor Al-Sanousi Bashar said that security officials went to the abduction site after blocking the roads into Sirba locality, 50 kms north of Al-Geneina, and expects the move to lead to the arrest of the culprits.

## **Arab League and GoSS prepare for economic conference**

**KUNA Cairo, 25/10/09** - Arab League Secretary General Amru Moussa said Sunday that the Arab League and the GoSS are preparing an economic conference designed to support development and investment in southern Sudan.

## **Blue Nile Governor dismisses statements on intention to join to the South:**

**Al-Sahafa** reports Blue Nile state governor Malik Aggar has dismissed statements attributed to him to the effect that he had called for accession of the region to the South, saying such a decision would be taken by the residents of the area based on their assessment of the CPA. Aggar who made the remarks at a press conference yesterday, also said preparations were continuing for the visit of President Al-Bashir to the area as well as the federal cabinet meeting scheduled for Thursday in Damazin.

## **MFA denies Aggar statement on return of ousted NGOs**

**Al-Wifaq** reports the Ministry of Foreign Affairs dismissed statements attributed to Blue Nile State Governor Malik Aggar that the ousted INGOs have been readmitted. According to Al-Ayyam, Aggar said that three of the ousted NGOs had been readmitted; saying the INGO ouster resulted in loss for his state estimated at \$24.4 millions.

## **SPLA frees 46 Darfurians abducted by LRA rebels**

**Sudantribune.com Rumbek, 25/10/09** — The SPLA in Raja County, Western Bahr-EI-Ghazal State, has managed to free 46 Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) from Darfur abducted by the LRA.

LRA rebels attacked a camp of Darfur IDPs at Kor-el-Madia village, Raja County, in Western

Bahr al-Ghazal which has a long border with Darfur. During that attack of 21/10/09, the LRA killed three policemen from southern Sudan and two civilians.

"Today, Kor-EI-madia is celebrating the return of 45 abductees who were finally reunited again with their families after they had been hostages of the troops of notorious LRA Joseph Konyi," said the spokesperson of the southern Sudan army, Maj General Kuol Diem Kuol.

The number of the abducted IDPs from Kor-EI-madia was unknown but yesterday the SPLA forces that were pursuing the LRA rebel, managed to get them as the LRA rebels ran away leaving all the abducted people plus looted properties, he stressed.

The SPLA Spokesperson however denied the capture of LRA members saying the rebels ran away with three rifles that they seized from the three policemen they killed.

He disclosed that more troops were already been dispatched to hunt the LRA rebels, adding the SPLA also will deploy more troops to protect civilians in southern Sudan.

### **Amin Hassan Omar warns situation is deteriorating in Darfur**

Amin Hassan Omar, a government negotiator on the Darfur issue, has warned that the security and humanitarian situation in Darfur is bound to deteriorate following the failure of this year's crop season, reports **Akhir Lahza**. Omar who was speaking at a symposium on Sudan-US relations said that such deterioration could only be avoided if government puts in place strong measures to avoid foreign disasters that may affect the country.

In a related development, **Al-Khartoum** reports that State Minister for Humanitarian Affairs, Abdulbagi Jailani, assured the press in Nyala yesterday that the crop season in South Darfur has registered an 80% success. He said that he was in the state to assess the situation in the IDP camps.

### **Musa Hilal not happy with the manner in which Darfur issue is handled**

**Al-Wifaq** reports that the Arab tribes in Darfur are in the process of submitting a memo to Sheikh Musa Hilal to demand his withdrawal from the Government, to protest being neglected by the Government. Hilal told **Al-Wifaq** that so far he did not receive such memo but confirmed that the tribe was getting restless.

### **DDDC to facilitate consultation with West Darfur tribal leaders**

**Reliefweb.int Khartoum, 25/10/09** – The Darfur–Darfur Dialogue and Consultation (DDDC) will facilitate a consultation with tribal leaders from six West Darfur localities on October 27 – 28, 2009.

In collaboration with the Zalingei University Peace and Development Studies Centre and the United Nations African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) Civil Affairs Department (CAD), the DDDC is bringing together 65 tribal leaders from the West Darfur localities of Bendisi, Mukjar, Nertiti, Um Dukhon, Wadi Salih, and Zalingie to discuss the root causes of the Darfur conflict and build consensus around common ground issues.

### **US to impose sanctions on Sudan if Khartoum supports Hamas – Diplomat**

Al-Sahafa reports MFA senior diplomat yesterday revealed that the US Administration warned it would impose sanctions on the Sudan as part of new strategy if Khartoum supports Hamas, or US interests are affected by Sudan's relations with Iran or Syria or if Sudan provides support to the LRA. The diplomat reportedly made the remarks at a symposium organized yesterday by the National Security Advisory on Sudan-US relations.

Meanwhile, State Minister at the Presidency Idriss Mohamed Abdulah, Speaking at the same symposium revealed that \$ 150 million has been raised for the upcoming elections.

## **Sudanese paper urges electoral body to ensure free, fair polls**

**Sudan Vision website** Khartoum, 25/10/09 - The National Elections Commission (NEC) called on the political parties and forces to struggle for winning the upcoming elections through votes in ballot and not bullet boxes. The NEC also affirmed its commitment to equal chances in the official media means amongst all the political parties with guaranteeing the political forces to appeal if that commitment was not met. However, the NEC drew the attention to one of the vital issues in the upcoming elections and voting which is what we can call the gun political forces.

Currently we have a considerable number of such armed political movements, starting from the south were the SPLM [Sudan People's Liberation Movement] has its army (SPLA) [Sudan People's Liberation Army] which is ruling the south through the muzzles of the guns. In western Sudan, we have Minnawi, Dr Khalil, and other armed factions which think that the gun is the only means to regain their rights. The question that poses itself is will it be possible to conduct a free and fair elections in the presence of such armed political forces in the constituencies where citizens are supposed to cast their votes? It is obvious that it will be very difficult to say that there will be free and fair elections in such areas dominated by those armed groups.

We urge the NEC to continue its efforts to guarantee that the upcoming elections will be conducted in a healthy environment far from the presence of the armed political forces. It is also the responsibility of GoNU [Government of National Unity] to spare no effort in disarming those armed political forces before the elections time to enable citizens to cast their votes freely without any fear. Let us but hope that the democratic transformation process goes smooth to achieve the real aspiration of the people without being motivated by the gun's political parties.

## **Sudanese Communist Party protests deadline for voter registration**

**Al-Rai Al-Aam via BBC Monitoring** Khartoum, 25/10/09 - The Sudanese Communist Party has protested the short duration of the period allowed for voter registration, set to start on 1 November for one month. Eng Siddiq Yusuf, the head of the elections committee at the party, told **Al-Rai Al-Aam** yesterday that the constituencies have been divided into 16 registration centres with two committees appointed for each constituency. He noted that each committee is in charge of eight centres. "This way, the 30-day period would have been distributed on the basis of three days per each centre," he said. "This time is not enough to register all the voters."

He considered that distributing registration centres this way was a prelude to rigging the elections, noting that the success of the elections is measured by the number of registered voters. "We contacted the NEC about this last week and asked to meet with it to discuss the issue but it has not responded until now," he said. He said the political parties would be forced to break into the Commission to discuss the registration with it if it continued to stall, as he put it.

## **Government officially receives AUPD report**

A **Sudan TV** broadcast reveals that the Sudan has officially received a copy of the report compiled by the AU Panel on Darfur. The Presidency, in a statement issued yesterday, appreciated the AU concern for and keenness to resolve the Darfur issue. The statement affirmed Sudan Government's commitment and cooperation with the AU Commission. The statement added that President Al-Bashir has tasked a committee headed by VP Ali Osman Taha to review the report and recommends accordingly.

## **Sudanese minister says cash provided during hostage talks**

**The Irish Times** – The Sudanese government provided money to local tribal chiefs during efforts to secure the release of the two Goal aid workers held for 107 days in Darfur, the country's humanitarian affairs minister has said.

Abdul Bagi al-Jailani, who oversaw negotiations for the release of Sharon Commins and Hilda Kawuki, told **The Irish Times** that the funds were supplied to “help and facilitate” the work of mediators. The Irish and Ugandan ambassadors were aware of the payments and offered to contribute, he added.

“It was not a ransom given to the wrongdoers, it was money given for facilitation to chiefs and stakeholders in the area.

“This is normal – they rent cars; they need petrol for those cars; and they need to have some things for their families,” he said.

Mr Jailani said he told reporters at the weekend that the payments added up to around 150,000 Sudanese pounds (€44,000). “I just gave a rough figure. It is not the exact figure because nobody has the right to question me on how much I spent on that action . . . except the government of Sudan,” he said.

“Nobody has provided any money to release the ladies. This is why they were detained for such a long time. We will not provide any ransom because we have 90 NGOs working in this region, and by doing so we would encourage malpractice,” Mr Jailani added.

Last week Musa Hilal, a former militia leader who is now special adviser to Sudanese president Omar al-Bashir, told The Irish Times that the kidnappers had received the equivalent of €150,000. Claims to the contrary were “just politicians’ talk”, he said.

Mr Hilal, an influential tribal leader in Darfur, played a key role in securing the women’s release after President al-Bashir asked him to assist in the case.

Asked why Mr Hilal would make such claims regarding a ransom, Mr Jailani replied: “He is the one who should answer that question.”

The Department of Foreign Affairs said the Government did not pay any money to secure the release of the two aid workers, and assurances had been received from the Sudanese government that it had paid no ransom either.

Goal chief executive John O’Shea said his organisation did not pay any money to any individual or groups in exchange for the women’s release.

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Address: UNMIS Headquarters, P.O. Box 69, Ibeid Khatim St, Khartoum 11111, SUDAN

Phone: (+249-1) 8708 6000 - Fax: (+249-1) 8708 6200