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Media Monitoring Report

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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

Presidency meeting postponed

Al-Akhbar 26/10/10 – The Presidency has postponed its meeting which was supposed to take place yesterday until the joint committees between the two partners have finalized their consultations so that all the pending issues are discussed in one meeting. Reportedly, the committees are debating on status of SAF, NISS and police if unity is confirmed in the upcoming referendum.

According to *Al-Rai Al-Aam* 26/10/10, the meeting was suddenly cancelled. *Al-Ahdath* 26/10/10, however, reports that the meeting was cancelled because the committees between the two parties failed to reach an agreement on the pending issues especially Abyei. A source revealed to *Al-Sudani* 26/10/10 that the meeting was postponed indefinitely because the two partners failed to achieve breakthrough on key issues particularly Abyei and the oil dossier but FVP Salva Kiir Mayardit and VP Taha are engaged in intensive consultations to break the deadlock.

SSRC begins distributing referendum material

Al-Sahafa 26/10/10 – South Sudan Referendum Commission Spokesperson Jamal Mohamed Ibrahim told reporters yesterday that the SSRC is in the process of distributing referendum material to all centres in the North, the South and the eight countries so that they have the material ahead of the kickoff of the process. He said SSRC's work is progressing in the needed manner.

SSRC Press Officer George Makeur, for his part, said there was total coordination between Khartoum and Juba on the process.

According to *the Citizen* 26/10/10, Jamal said the referendum would take place on time but acknowledged difficulty of the mission as only 77 days remain for the process to be held on local funding as none of the pledges by the international donors was delivered. He said that preparations for the process are not behind schedule and they can still conduct the referendum on time despite the three months wasted before start of voter registering.

“Every phase is tied to a certain date, we are on the safe side and we are meeting schedules. We are not running behind schedule,” he said. “Except for the fact that we are missing three months, we are to announce the final register on the 4th of January ...”

Referendum official calls for intensive voter education

Sudan Tribune website 25/10/10 - The Southern Sudan Referendum Bureau has asked civil society organizations must step up efforts to creating awareness of Sudan's forthcoming referendum, if the event is to be successfully conducted

Samuel Maccar, a member of the bureau made the comments during a training workshop organized by New Sudanese Indigenous NGOs (NESI-Network), an umbrella entity of 27 civil society and non-governmental organizations.

He said that people spreading the rumor were enemies of peace and stability in the semi-autonomous region.

“The alleged reports of possible postponement in the press are mere lies that are meant to cause confusion ahead of the voter registration,” Maccar said.

However he hinted that voter registration for the poll may be extended by two or three days due to rain and logistical challenges.

Voters’ registration is due to begin 14 November and end on 4 December...

Sudan denies written commitment to conduct referendum on time

Al-Intibaha 26/10/10 – Government sources have disclosed to the newspaper that there was no written commitment made for conducting the vote on time as it was claimed by US Senator John Kerry at a press conference in Khartoum recently. The source explained that the Government delivered to Kerry a detailed proposal on relations between the North and the South after referendum as well as a proposal for resolving the dispute over Abyei. The source said Kerry promised Khartoum that he would have a decision issued by the US President to lift ban on Sudan’s deposits and part of other sanctions if pending issues between the NCP and the SPLM are resolved.

Sudan would be better off after referendum – VP Taha

Al-Ayyam 26/10/10 – VP Ali Osman Taha said the referendum is not the end of the world and that the country would be better off after January 2011. Taha, who was addressing a meeting of the Khartoum State Legislative Assembly yesterday, said the government is committed to meeting its pledges but pointed out that unity is in the interest of the people of southern Sudan.

He said that the government would strive to lay foundations for good neighbourliness and cooperation should the government fail to preserve the country’s unity. He criticised the people who raise fears about possible instability in the country, saying they would not have done so had they known that their statements negatively affect the country’s economy and image.

Al-Intibaha 26/10/10 reports Taha has reiterated the state’s commitment to conduct the vote on schedule and to accept its result. However, Taha also reiterated that unity is a priority for the state. He said Khartoum would reach out to the South for cooperation if secession is chosen but stressed that the enemies would not achieve what they want on January 9. “Referendum is not the final whistle and is not a sign of the doomsday” he said.

He said the state would honour its commitment and would accept the challenge. “Some are of the view that we should find a way to postpone or cancel the process but there is no way and the deadline will be met,” he said. “Referendum will take place on time. If we succeed in achieving unity thank God and if the choice is otherwise then that is also an act of God”.

Taha stressed the need to conduct profound dialogue with the South to achieve unity and reassured the MPs that everything would be fine.

“On behalf of the President of the Republic, I would like to reiterate that we will keep our commitment,” Taha said, according to *Al-Sahafa* 26/10/10. “Our life and security will be better

off after 9 January. This is not a wishful thinking," he said.

"Sudan's security and stability on 9 and 10 of January will be stronger than the enemies may think," he said, according to *Al-Khartoum* 26/10/10.

Chief Administrator rejects US call for Abyei settlement

Al-Sahafa 26/10/10 – Abyei Chief Administrator Deng Arop Kuol has rejected a call by the USA for settling differences over future of the territory.

US Senator John Kerry on Sunday called for settlement of the dispute over the territory but Koul rejected the call, saying for US, settlement means dividing Abyei between the North and the South without referendum.

CPA partners postpone Addis Ababa meeting on Abyei referendum

Sudan Tribune website 25/10/10 - Addis Ababa meeting on Abyei referendum and post - referendum issues has been postponed indefinitely, said the former South Africa's President who brokers the sensitive meeting with US envoy to Sudan.

The meeting is supposed to discuss the organization of Abyei referendum and the border demarcation as well as Sudan's debit. First Vice President Salva Kiir Mayardit and Vice President Ali Osman Taha had to attend it.

South Africa's former President, Thabo Mbeki who chairs the African Union High Level Panel on Sudan on Monday announced the adjournment of talks between the two partners of 2005 peace agreement scheduled to take place in Addis Ababa on 27 October without indicating when they would meet.

Mbeki, who made public the decision after a meeting with President Omer Al-Bashir, said this decision has been taken after consultations with the president and his two deputies.

Nonetheless, he stressed that this postponement will not affect the ongoing preparations to hold the referendum on 9 January as scheduled. He added the parties need more time to agree on the agenda of the talks.

"We saw that it is important to prepare properly for that meeting because it should solve a number of problems. One of them is of course is the problem of Abyei besides other broader issues which relate to ensuring that there is a framework that would deal with all outstanding issues," Mbeki said.

"We will agree later as to when that meeting will take place," he further said.

"For now, it's too early to speculate on when the talks on Abyei will resume. The schedule will depend on the outcome of the ongoing consultative meetings with the two parties to the Comprehensive Peace Agreement," Mbeki told journalists in Juba.

The Northern Sudan NCP wants the participation of cattle herders Misseriya people who used to be present in Abyei for grazing some months every year while the SPLM says the Dinka Ngok have to decide on the future of their land without the Arab tribe.

Speaking Monday at a meeting of the UN Security Council, Sudanese ambassador at the international body warned that conducting the referendum without an agreement with the NCP and the formation of the commission means return to war.

"It is evident that any attempt to conduct the plebiscite before achieving an acceptable settlement between the two parties will mean only a return to war," said Daffa-Allah Elhaj Ali Osman.

Coming months critical for Sudan's future, Security Council hears

UN News Centre 25/10/10 - The next few months will be crucial for Sudan as it prepares to hold two referenda on self-determination in January, top United Nations officials said today, urging all parties to redouble their efforts to ensure that the polls are held on time, free, fair and credible.

"This peace process is unique in the history of the Sudan and the next few months will be critical for safeguarding the achievements made since the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement," Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon writes in his latest report to the Security Council on Sudan.

"As the Comprehensive Peace Agreement deadline for the referendums approaches, public anticipation and anxiety are building up at an accelerated pace. The events of the next three months will have a profound impact on the future of the Sudan.

"The stakes are undeniably high, as failure to meet the deadline for the referendums prescribed by the Comprehensive Peace Agreement could have severe consequences. Notwithstanding the progress made so far, it is imperative that the parties to the Agreement and all relevant authorities redouble their efforts to ensure that they successfully meet the deadline," he states.

Mr. Ban notes that while international partners are eager and ready to support and assist the Sudanese people through this last phase of implementation of the CPA and beyond, it is, and must continue to be, a fundamentally Sudanese effort.

"International contributions have been important and will continue to be so long after the referendums, but only the political will of the Sudanese themselves can drive this process forward. As such, it is the parties to the Agreement that have the primary responsibility to ensure its success," he says, adding that there is no time left for political confrontation and stalemates.

Meanwhile, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Alain Le Roy told a meeting of the Council today that there has been "palpable" progress in the preparations for the southern Sudan referendum, but there was a lack of progress on the Abyei referendum, for which a referendum commission has still not been set up.

He stressed that it is essential that the parties reach agreement, noting that a lack of progress is exacerbating tensions on the ground.

Mr. Le Roy recalled that during the Council's recent mission to Sudan, Southern Sudan President Salva Kiir warned of the serious risk of violence during the referendum and urged the creation of a buffer zone between north and south.

“We are currently considering a number of possible options to increase UNMIS’ presence in high-risk zones along the border, especially traditional migration zones or those where population movements could take place,” he said.

“However,” he added, “it remains important to recognize that an increase in the number of troops would not enable UNMIS to prevent or to contain a clash between the two armies. Our best possible tool against a return to war remains our commitment in favour of a political agreement, i.e. the agreement of the parties on key pending issues.”

Mr. Le Roy added that, as the attention of the international community increasingly turns to the impending referenda, it is important not to lose focus of the acute challenges remaining in Darfur.

During the reporting period, he said, incidents of banditry, carjacking, ambushes and abductions of UN staff and humanitarian workers continued in the strife-torn region.

In his recent report to the Council on the joint UN-African Union peacekeeping mission in Darfur (UNAMID), Mr. Ban noted that clashes between Government and rebel forces have destabilized some areas of the region, caused new displacements and impeded the delivery of humanitarian aid.

“I call upon all belligerents to cease hostilities and join the peace process for the sake of the people they claim to represent,” the Secretary-General said.

NCP official warns of interference in Sudan’s Referendum

VoANews.com 25/10/10 – An NCP official said his party and the SPLM are capable of resolving all outstanding issues ahead of south Sudan’s scheduled 9th January referendum.

Rabie Abdelati Obeid said foreign influence and interference is causing confusion among Sudanese which he said sets a dangerous precedent ahead of the referendum.

“Both partners, SPLM and National Congress Party believe that the war will not solve the problem between the South and the North. And the only way to achieve security and to resolve problems was to sign a peace agreement and that is what happened.”

Obeid further said the NCP is committed to fully implementing the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement which he said was intended to bring about “peaceful co-existence between north and south.” He added that.

“I don’t think the NCP has the intention to attack the South. What is between the North and the South is the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. What concerns the NCP is how to implement the CPA and how to conduct the referendum in a peaceful way and to be transparent and also freedom for the people to opt for either secession or unity.”

His comments came after top U.N. officials expressed new concern about Sudan, where tensions between the north and south are rising as the south's vote on independence draws closer.

Sudan's U.N. ambassador, Daffa-Alla Elhag Ali Osman warned Monday that the country could slip back into another civil war if a referendum goes ahead in the oil-rich Abyei region in January without Khartoum's consent.

NCP official Obeid said "outsiders" should stay away from interfering in Sudan's internal politics.

"I advise all these external people, external countries and foreign organizations to be far away from the two partners (NCP and SPLM) because the CPA mentioned clearly how to solve the problems... Any intervention by external country will not facilitate the way for the two partners to implement the CPA."

South Sudan seeks UN membership

Al-Rai Al-Aam 26/10/10 – US-based SPLM representative Ezekiel Jatcoth, speaking to Radio Sawa yesterday, revealed that SPLM representatives in Washington have discussed the possibility of the south becoming a UN member.

Southerners Stage Huge Procession in Khartoum Calling for Unity

Sudan Vision 26/10/10 - the High Council for Peace and Unity, the Union of National Unity Youth, the General Union of Sudanese Students in Khartoum State and the Student Organization for Peace and Development in cooperation with the Khartoum State staged yesterday a peaceful march in Khartoum to express the choice of the southern citizens in the referendum.

Large numbers of southern Sudanese also took part in the demonstration and chanted slogans calling for unity and opposition to separation.

President of the High Council for Peace and Unity in Khartoum State, Paul Lily addressed the march saying that the southern unionist citizens have to express their desire strongly for unity, adding that unity needs sacrifice and described the voices which call for separation as emotional.

On his part, General Secretary of the Youth Organization for Peace and Development, Peter Yei said that the slogans raised in the process confirm that the unity is the best option, adding that young people who participated in the march, sent a message to all the world that young people support unity and there are only a few who have been used by certain parties to influence the Sudanese people and to enhance the voice of separation. He stressed that the referendum will result in unity of the country.

Blue Nile State Governor laments delay in support for popular consultation

Al-Ahdath 26/10/10 – Blue Nile Governor Malik Aggar has strongly criticised the federal government and donors over what he perceived as their failure to meet their pledges of support for popular consultation in the area. He pointed out that some preparations have to be concluded ahead of the process.

Khartoum beefs up security in key areas

Al-Sudani Khartoum, 26/10/10 – Sudan's regular forces (SAF, Police, NISS, PDF, People's Police) have been heavily deployed at strategic areas in Khartoum state. SAF Spokesperson Lt. Col. Al-Sawarmi Khaled said the deployment is a normal exercise by the central military zone,

adding the operation would continue for one night and would end Tuesday morning.

Other Highlights

Russian and Sudanese presidents discuss referendum, bilateral relations

Sudan Tribune website 25/10/10 - Russia has shown today its interest to play a role in the resolution of the outstanding issues between the two Sudanese peace partners and organize a peaceful referendum that might affect the regional stability.

Russian President Dmitry Medvedev discussed Monday in a telephone conversation with his Sudanese counterpart Omer Al-Bashir the ongoing efforts to settle the row between the National Congress Party and the Sudan people's Liberation Movement.

President Al-Bashir briefed Medvedev on the preparations to hold the southern Sudan referendum and stressed Khartoum commitment to hold it as scheduled next January.

For his part, Medvedev reaffirmed Russia readiness to continue its active efforts in cooperation with the international community to facilitate it. He further stressed that these efforts should be "unbiased and balanced, in order to facilitate constructive interaction with Khartoum", the Kremlin said in a press statement.

The official SUNA in Khartoum said the Russian President called to write off Sudan's debit.

Sudan demands to cancel its debit as this issue is one of the outstanding issues the two partners of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement failed to settle.

The two presidents also agreed to develop trade and economic relations between the two countries. Medvedev further pledged to increase Russian investments in agriculture, mining and oil.

The Russian special envoy to Sudan, Mikhail Margelov, will visit Sudan next December to follow up the implementation of the issue discussed today by the two presents.

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