



Referendum Watch

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Highlights

Presidency to hold a meeting today

Al-Ahdath 27/1/11 – The Presidency is to hold a crucial meeting today to discuss post-referendum arrangements including Abyei.

FVP Salva Kiir Mayardit is due in Khartoum today in a first visit after referendum on self-determination for the South which is widely expected to confirm secession.

SPLM advance delegation including SPLM SG Pagan Amum and GoSS International Cooperation Minister Deng Alor arrived in Khartoum for the meeting.

Government denies UNSG charges

The Citizen 27/1/11 – the Sudanese Government vehemently dismissed as baseless the UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon's statement that the government was denying UNAMID visas and blocking the distribution of relief in Jebel Marra area.

Sudan Foreign Ministry spokesperson Khalid Musa told reporters yesterday that understandings were underway between the government and the UNAMID around facilitation of its mission as per its mandate, indicating that the allegations cited in the report of the UNSG were untrue and baseless, adding that the Mission applied for some visas but were still under processing due to unsatisfied procedures and lack of the required information besides the duality in applying.

“It is necessary to unify the visas application to prevent any conflict” he said, adding that the applications did not show the nature of the task and the place of work, stressing that such issues were intensively discussed by the Sudanese government and the UN and wondered why the UNSG preceded the tripartite mechanism which he said would convene in Addis Ababa on 3rd of February to discuss such issues to reach an agreement and understanding on them.

Khalid also denied the existence of any impediments facing the deployment of relief teams or relief distribution in Jebel Mara area, saying we only asked for advance coordination and asserted that the government is favorably responding to all requests forwarded by the UNAMID for getting the relief to all the affected areas in Darfur.

Three SPLA generals slaughtered, GoSS-Athor accord collapses

Al-Intibaha 27/1/11 – The SPLA has executed three senior army generals in Jonglei who were on a visit as part of the agreement signed recently between the GoSS and renegade Gen. George Athor.

Meanwhile, Gen. George Athor has announced the collapse of the recent agreement signed between his faction and the GoSS. Athor told the newspaper yesterday that the GoSS had breached the agreement seven times, adding that his forces are prepared to wage war on the GoSS and the SPLA.

He revealed that the SPLA had executed three senior officers in Jonglei. He said that the three

officers were on a goodwill visit as part of the agreement but were slaughtered by the SPLA and their bodyguards were also murdered. “The agreement between us and GoSS is over,” he said.

According to *Al-Ahram Al-Youm* 27/1/11, George Athor is rallying dissident groups in preparation for war on the SPLA. Athor told the newspaper yesterday that SPLA killed three senior generals from Gen. David Yau Yau’s faction in Fertit area, 10 miles from Pibor (Jonglei state). He said the three generals went to the area within the framework of exchange of visits between the two sides after the recent conclusion of a cease-fire agreement. Athor further explained that the SPLA first killed the bodyguards and detained the generals who were also slaughtered yesterday.

Athor said the incident of killing of the generals means collapse of the ceasefire agreement signed between the two sides, adding all the groups which defected from the SPLA are ready for war.

Renegade soldier calls for wide consultations

Gurtong.org (Bentiu) 24/01/11 - The renegade militia leader in Unity State Colonel James Gatluak Gai has called for the involvement of key Government of Southern Sudan leaders and the UN to solve the political impasse with the state authorities.

Colonel Gai told Bentiu Radio that the move would mark a milestone towards attaining peace in the state.

“Peace negotiations will only be successful if the GoSS and the United Nations are involved. I would appreciate the involvement of the GoSS Minister of SPLA and Veteran Nhial Deng Nhial, the GOSS Minister of Peace and CPA Implementation Pagan Amum, the GoSS Minister of Interior Affairs Gier Chuong Aluong, the Governor of Unity State Lieutenant General Taban Deng Gai, the Chief of General Staff of the SPLA General James Hoth Mai, the United Nations Mission in Sudan and other international bodies”, he said.

He, however, expressed his dismay at the approach pursued by the GoSS Vice President Dr Riek Machar.

“I want peace to be negotiated but I am unhappy with the GoSS vice Present Dr Riek Machar who is trying to force me into the peace negotiations”, said Colonel Gai.

He affirmed his support for the secession of South Sudan, saying he voted for the same.

“Those who were thinking that my group is standing with the North on unity are wrong. If I was not with the rest of South Sudanese, something would have happened during the referendum poll because my people are scattered in Southern states like Unity and Western Bahr el Ghazal among others”, he said.

Colonel Gai, who did not divulge the location of his troops, however, commended the State Governor Lieutenant General Taban Deng Gai for his efforts to settle the differences peacefully.

Clooney's satellite project shows troops near Sudan's border

GlobalPost (Boston) - The Sudan army has deployed troops, light armor and artillery along the volatile Abyei border area between North and South Sudan, according to the Satellite Sentinel

Project, co-founded by George Clooney.

An estimated 55,000 Sudan army troops have been deployed along the disputed border areas, according to the Small Arms Survey, an organization based in Switzerland that monitors the situation in Sudan. The satellite images corroborate that army troops are in three areas near the border, but it is not known when they were deployed.

Satellite images of the disputed border area show signs of hundreds of Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) soldiers spread across the disputed border area of Southern Kordofan.

The Sudan army troops do not appear prepared to attack South Sudan, according to the first report by the satellite project.

Because there are no signs of an imminent attack, there is an opportunity to negotiate a resolution to the outstanding issues between the North and South that, if left unresolved, could trigger renewed conflict in Sudan.

"These first images and analysis have deepened our understanding of the evolving situation following Southern Sudan's historic vote on independence," said Clooney who started the satellite project with the anti-genocide group, Enough Project.

"Although the SAF in South Kordofan apparently remains a force largely in hiding, we showed they are field-deployed, and they are controlling major roads by running checkpoints," said Clooney, who visited the tense border area earlier this month.

"Though they are not showing signs of advancing, we confirmed that they're equipped with helicopter transport, artillery, armored personnel carriers and trucks," said the Hollywood actor who has campaigned for peace in Sudan for several years. "Our first report represents the best recent information on the military situation in Sudan publicly available."

The images, combined with the Enough Project's field reports, show what's happening in Sudan's flashpoint border areas, where the combination of large numbers of security forces and high levels of tension could cause localized incidents to escalate, drawing both sides into a wider conflict.

The report shows that the Sudan army deployments near Muglad, Kadugli, Kharassana and other areas appear to be deployed in camps of 75 to 225 troops, equipped with helicopter transport, light armor and artillery.

The Satellite Project emphasizes that these troops do not appear to be preparing to move in the near future. The project has documented roadwork near known and suspected military bases, but the images do not show major movement of fuel trucks, supply convoys and troop transports that suggest imminent forward operations.

Sudan possesses deterrent might – President Al-Bashir

Al-Ahdath 27/1/11 – Addressing SAF officers and non-commissioned officers of the artillery command in the town of Atbara yesterday, President Al-Bashir, the C-in-C of the Sudanese armed forces, said his country possesses deterrent might to secure stability of the land and to

strike whoever attempts to undermine the dignity or sovereignty of the Sudanese people. "Sudan has made great strides in war industry including missiles, drones and all types of ammunitions," he said. The President indicated that the Sudanese armed forces have witnessed great advancement and the Sudanese people should be proud of their army.

He said Sudan would cooperate with the southern state, citing southerners' contribution to nation-building.

South Sudan launches air force

Sudan Tribune website 26/1/11 - The nearly independent region of South Sudan on Tuesday launched the air forces of its official army Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) in the region's capital Juba.

The air force was launched by the region's President Salva Kiir in the presence of senior officials of the Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS) and foreign diplomats.

President Kiir, who is also the SPLA's commander-in-chief, addressed the occasion and reaffirmed GoSS' commitment to protect the region as it prepares to become independent. The SPLA reportedly purchased its first batch of 10 Mi-17 helicopters from Kazan, a Russian supplier, and ordered unarmed aircraft for transport purposes.

Southern Sudanese in SAF to be demobilized on separation

Al-Rai Al-Aam 27/1/11 – Official spokesperson of the Sudanese armed forces (SAF) Lt. Col. Al-Sawarmi Khalid Sa'd said SAF southern members would be demobilized once separation takes place and their entitlements would be settled. He told the newspaper yesterday that "dual allegiance" is not acceptable for SAF so its southern members would go.

Meanwhile, Sa'd confirmed that SAF received 32 POWs from JEM through the ICRC in El Fashir yesterday but indicated that those released by JEM are SAF southern members, adding that JEM released them to improve its relations with the GoSS.

Sudan's FM presses US on normalizing ties as promised

Sudan Tribune.com 26/1/11 - The United States must follow through on its promises to Sudan after it allowed the referendum in the South to proceed smoothly and after the North said it will recognize its results, the Sudanese top diplomat said today.

The U.S. pledged to ease sanctions on Sudan and de-list it from terrorism-sponsoring countries if the vote goes peacefully and uninterrupted.

Washington made it clear however that full normalization is contingent upon resolution of a separate conflict on Darfur.

But the Sudanese foreign minister Ali Karti urged the U.S. to drop its demands on Darfur. "Normalization of relations should not be held hostage by Darfur," Karti told a Washington think-tank audience before his meeting with U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton.

In Karti's meeting with Clinton, the latter reaffirmed U.S. willingness to move toward normalizing relations but outlined several steps which must take place before this can happen,

the State Department said.

State Department spokesman Phillip Crowley said the United States could begin the legal process of dropping Sudan from the list in the next couple of weeks if northern and southern Sudanese leaders agree on how to work out several key issues unresolved by the January poll including citizenship, borders and division of oil revenues.

Crowley's inclusion of post-referendum items for delisting appeared to contradict what other U.S. officials promised Khartoum this month.

"Should the referendum be carried out successfully and the results are recognized by the government, President Obama would indicate his intention to begin the process of removing them," Ambassador Princeton Lyman, the lead US negotiator to Sudan, told Agence France Presse (AFP) in early January.

"It is a process that takes some time, but by beginning the process in the wake of the referendum, the hope is if they meet all the conditions it can be done by July," Lyman added.

Karti said Khartoum had delivered on its promise to allow southern Sudan to vote for independence, and that was "high time" the United States put relations back on track.

"Whenever there was a call for talks, the government was available. We are open for any talks. So the challenge and the obstacle lie in the other side," he said, referring to factional splits among Darfuri rebel groups.

Karti added that the United States and Sudan both stood to gain from normalized relations, noting cooperation on counter-terrorism as one benefit.

"Rather than moving the goals let us stick to the goals now and work together to get to those goals," the Sudanese official said.

Sudan's NCP rejects opposition's preconditions for dialogue

Sudan Tribune.com 26/1/11 - The dominant National Congress Party (NCP) in north Sudan has reiterated rejections to preconditions set by the opposition to engage in dialogue, saying that opposition parties have no right to dictate any terms.

Senior NCP member Mandur al-Mahdi told reporters in Khartoum on Thursday that the opposition can either accept unconditional talks or be ignored.

"If the opposition decided to satisfy the government's invitation to engage in dialogue and sit down to deliberate on the future of the situations and the possibility of participating in a broad-based government...this would be a positive attitude and we welcome them anytime. But if the opposition chooses to dictate preconditions, we will not accept any preconditions" he said.

"We are currently engaged in dialogue with certain parties and not with an entity called the opposition alliance which comprises many parties" Mandur Al-Mahdi confirmed.

He added that the NCP meeting with the NUP would be followed soon by a meeting with the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) led by Mohamed Osman al-Mirghani.

Separately, the NCP has also dismissed as “illogical” threats attributed to Atim Garang, a member of the ruling Sudan People’s Liberation Movement (SPLM) in South Sudan, to halt pumping of oil and repeal wealth-sharing agreement with the north.

Mandur al-Mahdi said that the issue of revoking the membership of SPLM MPs in the national parliament following the declaration of independence is within the discretion of the president.

In a related development, the Sudanese former prime minister and leader of the opposition Umma Party Sadiq Al-Mahdi said that the ruling National Congress Party is facing two choices: to stand besides demands for freedom or to face popular protests.

The leader of the Umma party was speaking on the occasion of the Liberation of Khartoum by his great grandfather Mohamed Ahmed Al-Madi in 1885. The event was attended by thousands of his supporters but also broadcasted by the official radio and a private TV channel.

The governing regime in Sudan has two options: to consider the wills of the people and respond to the demand of a new constitution for the Sudan or retreat on the narrow partisan interests and use repressive methods to curb the protests, said Al-Mahdi on Wednesday.

The opposition leader went to say that Sudanese are eager for freedom. In addition, he stressed that if the ruling party accepts the demands of the Sudanese street, the opposition parties would cooperate with them to implement it.

He said that a transitional government involving all the opposition parties can be formed to enforce a national programme.

Al-Madi praised the government for not obstructing the meeting, but said additional measures are needed to create suitable atmosphere including the release of political detainees, refrain from hostile political statements, and not expel Southern Sudanese from the north after secession.

The leader of the Umma party met with the Sudanese President Omer Al-Bashir last week, but his allies in the opposition criticized the meeting considering that the ruling party has no right to select with whom he deals.

AU should swiftly recognise south Sudan -chairman

Reuters (Juba) 26/01/11 - The African Union must be the first body to recognise an independent south Sudan, its chairman said on Wednesday after the region voted in a referendum this month to secede from the north.

The African Union strongly supported Sudanese unity, fearing secession would create a precedent and spark similar calls from marginalised populations elsewhere in the continent.

Malawian President Bingu wa Mutharika, current AU chairman, said during a visit to the south that the pan-African body would respect the choice of the people of the south.

"Surely it would be useful for us to be the first one to recognise the existence of southern Sudan and then let the others follow," he told reporters in the south's capital, Juba.

"Southern Sudan is a baby of the African Union ... I would be very sad if we came in way, way after everyone else."

Secessionist movements from Somaliland to Cameroon have expressed the hope that south Sudan's independence would give weight to their calls for autonomy.

Political analysts have said the AU would treat Sudan as an exception -- as it did Ethiopia and Eritrea's split in 1993 -- and would not tolerate a domino effect across the continent.

Early, state-owned Radio Omdurman reported that the Malawian leader held talks in Khartoum with his Sudanese counterpart centred on relations between the two countries and developments in the situation in Sudan in addition to the special arrangements being made for the African Union summit which will take place in Addis Ababa.

The visiting leader lauded the positive steps which were taken in making the recent elections and the south Sudan referendum successful.

Dinka Ngok are northern Sudanese and would not be relieved of duties

Al-Sahafa 27/01/11 – Al-Dirderi Mohamed Ahmed, the Sudan Government's point-man on Abyei, says the Dinka Ngok are northern Sudanese and the measures to relieve southern Sudanese of their duties at the federal government institutions should not affect them should the referendum result confirms separation.

In a separate development, *Al-Rai Al-Aam* reports that Misseriya and Dinka Ngok tribesmen would receive next Monday the first installment (10%) of the blood money agreed upon at the recent Kadugli Agreement. Rahama Abdulrahman Al-Nur, the Deputy Chief Administrator for the Abyei area, said that the Joint Integrated Units (JIUs) have started deploying to Abyei also as per provisions of the agreement. He said that the federal and GoSS interior ministries have instructed the joint high committee following up on implementation of the said deal to finalise arrangements for the status of the police currently in the area.

Popular Consultation Monitor

Blue Nile does not rule out international arbitration on Popular Consultations

Al-Ayyam (Damazin) 27/01/11 – Governor Malik Aggar of Blue Nile State says he does not rule out the possibility of seeking international arbitration should there be obstacles to the conduct of popular consultations in his state.

Speaking to a visiting high-level US delegation at the state capital yesterday, the Governor expressed concern over the flow of arms into the state pointing out that the arms in the state are enough to destroy the state capital, Damazin. He pointed out however that authorities have so far managed to keep matters under control

Other Highlights

PDF commander killed in South Darfur

Al-Rai Al-Aam 27/1/11 – Commander of Popular Defence Forces (PDF) in South Darfur state, Adam Daoud Fahalain, was killed yesterday in Al-Roos area located between Yasin and Asalaya localities in the state.

MP Abdul Jabar Abdallah confirmed killing and a hunt was launched to arrest the killers.

Turabi is facing the worst kind of confinement – family says

Al-Sahafa 27/01/11 – Dr. Hassan Turabi is facing the worst kind of confinement he has ever been subjected too since he first entered prison in 1969, family members say.

In a statement circulated yesterday, family members expressed concern over the conditions of his confinement, adding he is currently confined to a narrow and inappropriate cell and is subjected to physical search.

The statement further said his captors would stand responsible for any ill that may befall him “especially given the fact his doctor is barred from seeing him.”

Kill the criminals – South Darfur Governor says

Al-Sudani 27/01/11 – South Darfur Governor Abdelhameed Musa Kasha has instructed the military apparatus to kill any criminal who obstruct the security organs. “We do not want any criminal alive now that we have reinforcements coming in from Khartoum,” he reportedly said.

Noting that there is no governance without some bloodshed, the governor said that they have indeed started “shooting criminals in Nyala on the head”.

Speaking at a mass rally in Assalaya locality yesterday, the governor warned that his government would not show leniency in enforcing the rule of law and would soon clear the state of criminals. He also warned people near the borders with southern Sudan not to cause instability in southern Sudan because “we have mutual interests” with the South.

Sudanese official admits Darfur war crimes probe a fiasco

Sudantribune.com 26/01/11 - The Sudanese government has not conducted serious investigations into the alleged war crimes committed in the western region of Darfur despite assertions by Khartoum to the contrary, a senior official in the justice ministry said today.

During the course of the last few years and as a result of regional and international pressure, Sudan announced establishment of special courts and appointment of a prosecutor with the hope of stalling ICC investigations.

Last October, Sudanese justice minister sacked the former special prosecutor Nimr Ibrahim Mohamed and appointed a new one without an explanation.

Mohamed was known for an attempt to investigate Haroun before being blocked by his boss. Kushayb was also reportedly to be brought to court after the former prosecutor said he compiled enough evidence against him but nothing emerged on his case.

"The prosecutor may find some difficulties taking procedures against them [Haroun & Kushayb] because they are being protected by the government," the state minister for Justice Bol Lul Wang told Reuters in an interview today.

When asked whether Sudan was currently pursuing active cases against the two men Wang answered: "Not at all."

Wang is a member of south Sudan's dominant Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), former southern rebels who joined a coalition government with the north after a 2005 peace deal ended decades of civil war.

He is expected to leave his post with other Southern members of the cabinet following the official announcement of referendum results in favor of independence.

"These people are high figures in the government. The government has no will to pursue or even investigate those people ... It is not serious. Because if it was serious they would not let a man like Haroun hold a ministerial post."

The SPLM figure said that Sudan's special prosecutor was investigating allegations of atrocities carried out by Darfur insurgents.

"There are some people who are working on it ... From time to time they go to Darfur. But [the suspects] have escaped to areas beyond the control of the government."

There were also some investigations into members of Arab militias in Darfur, he added. "It seems like the government is not serious about taking a very immediate measure against them. It is very reluctant."

Today's remarks will cause a huge embarrassment to the ruling National Congress Party (NCP) in light of Wang's senior role within the justice ministry.

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