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Referendum Monitor

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Highlights

Minister's remarks on citizenship after secession provoke reactions

Ajras Al-Hurriya 27/9/10 – The “national consensus forces” and civil society organizations have slammed Information Minister Kamal Obeid (NCP) for remarks that southerners would lose their citizenship and other benefits should they vote for separation in the upcoming referendum, describing the statement as “irrational”.

While the Communist Party said the minister should be sacked immediately and the NCP apologizes, the Umma Reform and Renewal Party called for an urgent meeting of the national consensus forces to come up with a joint vision with regard to the right of citizenship.

“The NCP should clarify its position with regard to its minister's remarks because they might cause tension and tribal conflict,” Siddiq Yousuf, Communist Party leading figure, said.

Al-Turabi-led Popular Congress Party (PCP) has described the minister's remark as “dangerous”, adding the parties' commitment to the CPA and the Constitution entails that the minister be removed from his post.

The Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) advised the parties to avoid such statements because they could lead to a violent separation.

SPLM is the one which is calling for transporting southerners – NCP official

Al-Sahafa 27/9/10 – NCP political secretary Ibrahim Ghandour has described the SPLM's rejection of the transportation of southerners to the South should they vote for secession as “strange”. He told reporters yesterday that it was the SPLM which is calling for transporting southerners to the South.

“The NCP did not say it will expel the southerners today or tomorrow. But if the country is partitioned then the issue of citizenship will be determined by the concerned state,” he said. “Sudanese are not in the habit of expelling or humiliating even the aliens let alone the southern Sudanese who will continue to enjoy full rights of citizenship until 9 January”.

Meanwhile, *The Citizen* 27/9/10 reports head of NCP Political Sector Ahmed Ibrahim Al-Tahir has said that the continued absence of the SPLM representatives from the meetings of the Border Demarcation Committee was delaying the Committee's work which is supposed to finish before the referendum otherwise the voting would take place on an specified land and would consequently cause tensions in the area. He urged the Committee to meet and also called on the SPLM representatives to attend the meetings so that the demarcation of the border is completed and the referendum process is conducted in a healthy atmosphere and its results are recognized by all the Sudanese people and the International Community.

On NY meeting, Al-Tahir said it had some positive aspects such as the international recognition of the Darfur peace strategy besides the agreement to hold the referendum on time.

SSLA decides to support secession

Al-Sahafa 27/9/10 - The Southern Sudan Legislative Assembly (SSLA) reportedly decided to support secession in the upcoming referendum on southern Sudan's self-determination. The SSLA set up higher specialized committees to mobilize southerners within and outside the country to vote for secession.

MP Bashir Bendi told the newspaper that the SSLA deliberated on referendum and noted that nothing has been done to make unity attractive so it decided to mobilize southerners to vote for secession as the best option.

"The majority MPs are convinced that secession is the choice of the southern Sudanese so, as an elected Assembly, we must reflect the will of the people," he said.

North Sudan party threatens to reject referendum

Reuters, 27/09/10 – the NCP has threatened to reject the results of the referendum unless the south withdrew its troops from disputed areas and allowed free campaigning in the vote.

"There is no freedom of (speech) in the south or for any movement to speak out for unity. Many people have been arrested and some of them were even killed," Haj Majid Suwar, Sudan's youth and sports minister and a senior NCP member, told reporters.

Asked what the NCP would do if the southerners did not allow open campaigning and move their troops, he answered: "Maybe we will talk to ... the USA and the U.N. and the AU (African Union) and say that the other side, they didn't fulfill the CPA, so we may not recognise the results."

The minister also called on international donors to fulfill promises to fund the referendum and said world powers needed to remain impartial about the outcome of the vote.

Abyei students warn Misseriya against participating in referendum

Ajras Al-Hurriya 27/9/10 – Abyei Student Forum for Referendum announced its categorical rejection of the proposal to convert Abyei into an "integration area" and also rejected the participation of the Misseriya in the upcoming process.

Head of the Association of Abyei students in universities and higher institutes Mr. Abyei Deng, addressing a press conference held yesterday to launch the forum, urged the two partners and the international community to expedite formation of the Abyei referendum commission and the demarcation of the border. Deng also criticized the NCP's rejection of both the experts' report and the PCA Award.

NCP and SPLM discuss Abyei in NY

The Citizen 27/9/10 – The NCP and the SPLM yesterday initiated negotiations on Abyei area, sources attending the negotiations said.

The sources expressed pessimism with regard to the talks currently going on in NY, saying "after

today's meeting, we do not know when will the other pending issues, for which we came here to find solutions, be discussed". "We hope this important round of talks will not be just for public relations because time is running out".

UNMIS troops to participate in securing referendum

Al-Sahafa 27/9/10 – UNMIS announced the start of military rehearsals for its troops to ready them to assist the Sudanese government in securing the upcoming referendum. The operation code-named "swift shield" will be conducted in the areas of Kadugli, Abyei, Duffra and Agok from today until the end of the month.

The Mission also stated that in order to assist the Government of Sudan to hold referenda it has initiated a number of preparatory steps to provide maximum support to the political process. The initiative which is planned by the UNMIS Military component is intended to conduct rehearsals to streamline necessary procedures. The rehearsals will include procedures to provide limited logistic support to the referenda, to protect civilians and to deploy military support for emergencies.

Sudan FM accuses SPLM of terrorizing pro-unity Southerners

Sudan tribune website (Washington) 23/9/10 - The Sudanese foreign minister Ali Karti accused the SPLA of intimidating the Southern voices which are supportive of the country's unity ahead of the January 2011 referendum.

"They [SPLM leaders] use terror to prevent Southerners from supporting unity. They allow demonstrations for separatists and ban demonstrations for unionists. They interrogate or fire Southern officials who oppose secession," Karti told the Saudi owned Al-Sharq Al-Awsat.

The top Sudanese diplomat noted the uproar that erupted following statements by the oil minister Lual Deng, who is also an SPLM figure, who said that separation is a betrayal of the vision put forth by the late SPLM leader John Garang.

He also slammed the Southern ex-rebels for turning down delegations from the North seeking to discuss developmental projects and accept only those from countries such as Uganda, Kenya, South Africa as well as U.S. organizations.

In a response to a question about demands from Southerners for apology, compensations, secular constitution and refrain from using the term "nigger", Karti expressed dismay suggesting that they are illogical.

The Sudanese foreign minister posed a question on whether the North should apologize over recognizing the South's right for self-determination or spending \$3 billion from the North's share in oil to inaugurate projects in the South. He also questioned why the South is concerned about having secular constitution in the North.

He described as "absurd" and "irresponsible" bringing up the issue of using the derogatory term "nigger" to refer to Southerners saying that people all around the word curse at each other.

Karti stressed that secession if it occurs will be the responsibility of the SPLM as well as the National Congress party (NCP) adding that unity under the intimidation environment will lead to

wars and conflicts.

Put more pressure on NCP, civil society coalition tells UN

Sudan Tribune website 26/9/10 - A coalition of civil society activists have appealed to the African Union (AU), United Nations and the international community in general to exert more pressure on the Khartoum-based National Congress Party (NCP), whom they accuse of sabotaging preparations for next year's referendum.

In a strongly-worded memo signed by Lukolenge Lole, the Acting Secretary General of Southern Sudan Civil Society Organizations for Referendum, delivered to the UN Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) headquarters in Juba, the coalition members urged guarantors of the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) to intervene and ensure that the referendum on self-determination of southerners is held on time.

“The UN and International Community must bring pressure to bear on the Khartoum (NCP) and its allies to respect the CPA implementation. Failure to meet the deadline for referendum means war in Sudan again and this time a regional one which all must work hard to avert it,” the memo, dated September 24, partly reads.

On the same day, members of the coalition, government representatives and other stakeholders staged a peaceful procession on the streets in show of solidarity and support for southern leader, Salva Kiir who later addressed the UN General Assembly's special summit on Sudan.

The memo, drafted by 10 civil society organizations, members called for the timely conduct of both the south Sudan referendum and that to be held in the oil-rich Abyei region.

The SPLM did nothing for unity; wants Islamic laws revoked – Al-Bashir

Al-Rai Al-Aam Khartoum, 27/09/10 – President Al-Bashir has reiterated government's commitment to make unity attractive as stipulated in the CPA. He told a delegation of the Ta'ayesha tribe (descendants of Abdullahi Al-Ta'ayishi of the Mahdiya era) that the SPLM has done nothing to make unity attractive and is insisting that the Islamic laws be abolished in order to work for unity. He said that this is a strange demand because southern Sudan is exempted from the application of Islamic laws. He challenged the SPLM to declare whether southerners have had their rights affected by the Islamic laws.

Al-Bashir revealed that the government would soon start an extensive campaign to inform the people of southern Sudan of the virtues of unity and the vices of separation in a bid to maintain the country's unity.

Other Highlights

Khartoum state to crack down on illegal possession of weapons

Sudan tribune website 26/9/10 - September 26, 2010 (KHARTOUM) – The governor of Khartoum state Abdel-Rahman Al-Khidir revealed that authorities in the capital has begun a campaign to collect illegal weapons in line with a presidential order in this regard.

According to Al-Khidir, who was quoted by the independent *Al-Sahafa* newspaper, all citizens

are encouraged to voluntarily hand over any unlicensed weapons they have by October 17 or else they will face severe penalties. The governor said that by December 20th he hopes to declare Khartoum an “arms free state”.

He further said that meetings were held with the Sudan People Liberation Movement (SPLM), Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM-Minnawi), Eastern Front and other armed groups which have signed agreements with the government to discuss the new rules.

However, the governor did not elaborate what the status of these armed groups in Khartoum would be. The presidential directive, he added would also apply to government militias such as the Popular Defense Forces (PDF) and popular police.

He warned that Khartoum state would not tolerate any violations to the new rules particularly regarding the presence of weapons in residential areas.

Separately, the governor stressed that the state is prepared for any violence that may erupt after the South Sudan referendum results are announced. He recalled the events in the capital that took place after the death of SPLM chairman John Garang in 2005 and said that the authorities have learned their lesson from these incidents.

Al-Khidir said he believes that even though SPLM leaders are in favor of secession, the majority of Southerners in Khartoum are in favor of unity.

Meanwhile, *Al-Akhbar* 27/9/10 reports that SAF Spokesperson Lt. Col. Al-Sawarmi Khaled has reacted to Khartoum state governor’s statement in which he predicted incidents during the referendum. Khaled said the army rules out such insecurity in Khartoum during the upcoming referendum.

Ex-Darfur rebel leader reportedly moves forces to south Sudan

Sudantribune.com Khartoum, 26/09/10 - Former Darfur rebel leader Minni Minnawi has relocated some 600 of his combatants to south Sudan, according to a local newspaper in Khartoum.

The daily newspaper *Al-Akhbar* Sunday claimed it had learned from sources that Minnawi had moved around 600 of his soldiers to south Sudan.

However, Minnawi told the pro-government *Al-Rai Al-Aam* that the reports were false and that he would be flying to Darfur next week with the purpose of brokering some tribal reconciliation agreements, particularly in Nyala, the provincial capital of South Darfur State.

JEM seeks UNSG, Obama assistance to end crisis in Darfur

Al-Ahdath/Agencies, 27/09/10 - The JEM has categorically rejected participation at the Doha talks because the forum has “disregarded the role of real civil society”.

In a letter yesterday to UNSG Ban Ki-Moon and US President Barack Obama, the JEM expressed support for the Libyan initiative seeking to reunite the armed groups of Darfur, citing Libya’s long track record in helping resolve African conflicts.