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Media Monitoring Report

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Referendum Watch

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Highlights

CPA partners to sign deal on international issues today

Al-Akhbar 28/12/10 – The CPA partners, the NCP and the SPLM, are to sign an agreement in Juba today on post-referendum-related international issues.

According to GoSS Legal Affairs Minister, Michael Makwai, The signing ceremony was slated for yesterday but a delay was requested by the NCP delegation, adding that the agreement would be signed once the NCP delegation arrives in Juba.

Secret report reveals global corruption in South Sudan funds

Dailies 28/12/10 - A UN confidential report revealed by the German newspaper Der Tajstsaitong showed that 50 experts from the United Nations working in the United Nations Program for the development of southern Sudan, had received, during the current year high salaries valued at \$ 14 million indicating that a number of these experts received imaginary monthly salaries for functions do not exist in the documentation of the development program.

The report revealed the existence of large imbalances and deficiencies in the program, which sponsored by the UN organization to rehabilitate tens of thousands of ex-combatants in the ranks of the SPLM for their reintegration into civilian life.

”He” said that the UN allocated to this program a budget of up to \$ 430 million, but already the funds for development projects has not exceeded \$ 105 million only, while the rest of the amounts spent on salaries and bonuses of experts.

The report said that the UN program which faces various obstacles was supposed to start after the signing of the Naivasha peace agreement between North and South Sudan in 2005, but its implementation was delayed four years because of the loss of a list written by hand contains the names of ninety thousand former SPLM soldiers supposed to be covered by the program.

"It was supposed that every one of these ex-soldiers to get the amount of \$ 1500, but they only granted six hundred dollars only for every one while the UN experts got tens of thousands of dollars as monthly salaries," the report said.

The report recorded a non-implementation of many programs that were intended to meet the needs of life to former rebels, and concluded that the growing feelings of discontent and dissatisfaction among those demobilized soldiers of the service threaten to destabilize the situation in southern Sudan, after the self-determination referendum to be held on the ninth of next January.

Popular consultations in Blue Nile to kick off on January 5

Al-Rai Al-Aam 28/12/10 – the parliamentary commission for popular consultation in the Blue Nile state has set January 5th as the date for the kick-off of the process.

Commission information official Ms Siham Hashim told *SMC* yesterday that the Commission

had finalized all preparations for the process and specified 116 centres.

Russia to accept referendum outcome if north and south satisfied, envoy

Sudan Tribune website 27/12/10 - The Russian envoy to Sudan, Mikhail Margelov, has declared that his country would accept the outcome of south Sudan's referendum vote on independence if it is recognized by domestic partners and the international community, less than two weeks since he was reported to have held secret talks with South Sudanese officials in the Israeli capital Tel Aviv.

“Russia will accept the results of the south Sudan independence referendum if it is recognized by the sides themselves and by the international community,” Mikhail Margelov told a news conference in Moscow on Monday.

Margelov, who also serves as head of the International Affairs Committee at the Federation Council of Russia, said he wishes if north and south Sudan could preserve the unity of the country.

But if a decision is taken in favor of secession, Margelov said he hoped it would be “peaceful and civilized.”

SPLM expects victims in South, disappointment in North after secession

Al-Sahafa 28/12/10 –the UNSC will hold a special session on 6th January to review preparations for referendum which is just 13 days away, Cabinet Affairs Minister Luka Biong (SPLM), said.

Biong has anticipated fall of victims if referendum results confirm secession, citing excessive enthusiasm in the South which he described as a major challenge for the GoSS. He called on the central government to send a strong message on the need to calm a possible wave of anger or disappointment in the North expected to follow the declaration of secession.

Biong also expected President Al-Bashir and his FVP Salva Kiir to exchange visits between Khartoum and Juba to send strong messages on how the North and the South should react to the referendum results. He said preliminary results of referendum might be released from the SSRB in Juba on 22 January which he described as the most important announcement although it would not be the final result.

Government says will recognize referendum results, protect southerners

Al-Sahafa 28/12/10 – the Sudanese Government has reiterated that the upcoming referendum would take place on time and its results would be recognized if the process is conducted in a free and fair manner and reflective of the free will of the southern Sudanese.

Ambassador Rahamtullah Mohamed Osman, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, told Ambassadors of the UNSC permanent members that Sudan is committed to achieve security and stability. He also reminded them of President Al-Bashir's directive for protection of southerners and their property.

The Ambassador has called on the Security Council and the international community to honour their pledges to assist the Government to complete the peace process.

Jonglei governor says security improved in 2010 despite Athor's rebellion

Sudan Tribune website 27/12/10 - Jonglei state governor Kuol Manyang Juuk, has said that Jonglei state security has improved considerably in 2010 compared to 2009. Although he accepted recent clashes between the southern army – the SPLA - and the forces of former SPLA General, George Athor, who has rebelled against the southern government, has been a threat to stability in northern counties of Jonglei.

Governor Juuk noted that so far all efforts to resolve the conflict had so far been futile. He told registered voters for the January referendum that they should expect to vote in the self determination referendum in a peaceful atmosphere.

Speaking at Lieudier Cathedral, the seat of Bor diocese, the governor called on church leaders and south Sudanese to maintain peace ahead of referendum as well as during and after the plebiscite...

One man shot by men in SPLA uniform IN Unity state

Sudan Tribune website 25/12/10 - Two hundred members of a cattle raiding gang, suspected to be from the neighboring Lakes State raided 150 cows from Paliey Payinjar County, in Unity state on Friday.

Local residents and the county's commissioner have told Sudan Tribune that the cattle raiders were dressed in the uniform of Sudan's southern army – the SPLA. The Paliey Payinjar County Commissioner said that the raiders were not part of the southern army but a criminal group based on the border of Unity and Lakes states.

The raiders were pursued by around 20 civilians with only three guns between them but say they encountered around 200 men in army uniforms who exchange fire with them.

One civilian, Biel Machak Riang, was shot on the leg while trying to rescue the stolen told Sudan Tribune yesterday they had shot dead one of the cattle raiders and seriously wounded another of the gang members.

Riang said they managed to returned six cows after exchanging firing each other on Friday afternoon; however the gangs suspected to be soldiers not a merely civilian since all are carry heavy weapons.

Civilians said county authorities say they have complained to Lake state but nothing is being done to prevent or punish raids against their cattle in Payinjar...

Tens killed in clashes in Jonglei state

Ajras Al-Hurriya Jonglei, 28/12/10 –Tens of SPLA troops were reportedly killed in clashes with a group of young people who had refused to register for the referendum in Warol area on the north-eastern part of the state.

The SPLA reportedly launched a surprise raid on the Ngong area to apprehend these groups of young men and some SPLM figures in the area, sparking the clashes. SPLA wounded are said to have been evacuated to Bor hospital for treatment.

Other sources report that the SPLA has burnt down the villages of Yeng-joub and Geer and looted cattle in a show of anger over the refusal of some people there to register for the 2011 vote.

Arab League chief arrives in Khartoum

Xinhua 28/12/10 - Arab League (AL) Secretary- General Amr Moussa arrived in Khartoum today on a two-day visit during which he will hold talks with senior Sudanese government officials and representatives in south Sudan government.

Moussa, later in the day, is scheduled to meet Sudanese Vice- President Ali Osman Mohamed Taha and Sudanese Minister of Foreign Affairs Ahmed Ali Karti.

Moussa's talks in Khartoum are expected to focus on Sudan's current issues, in particular south Sudan referendum, scheduled for Jan. 9, 2011.

Opposition gives NCP ultimatum to hold constitutional talks

Sudan Tribune website 28/12/10 - Mainstream opposition parties in north Sudan have threatened to mobilize with the aim of removing the ruling National Congress Party (NCP) from power if the latter ignored their demand to hold a constitutional conference to address a host of issues related to the political situation in the country in view of the likely secession of south Sudan in January 2011.

Opposition forces said that the NCP is going to lose "political legitimacy" if south Sudan decided to secede, and chided the ruling party for curtailing public liberties and oppressing women in the name of Islamic laws.

Prominent opposition figures in north Sudan, including the Umma Party leader Al-Sadiq al-Mahdi, leader of the Popular Congress Party, Hassan Al-Turabi, and the secretary-general of the Sudanese Communist Party, Mohamed Ibrahim Nugud held a meeting on Sunday, 26 December, at the headquarters of the National Umma Party (NUP) in Khartoum's twin city of Omdurman.

The meeting issued a communique reiterating the opposition's demands to form a transitional government to organize a constitutional conference to address a number of issues.

The statement specified that these issues are "Darfur crisis, the rising cost of living, public liberties and establishment of strategic ties between north and south Sudan."

"In case the demand to hold a constitutional conference is rejected, the forces of national consensus will immediately embark on a political work aiming at removing the regime through tested methods of civil and peaceful struggle."

The statement went on to say that the proposed conference should also determine how north Sudan would be ruled if the south seceded, noting the "fierce assault" on public liberties as manifested in the recent speech in which president Al-Bashir declared that the north would transform into an Islamic state with Arabic as its only language if the south decided to vote for independence...

The opposition alliance also condemned last week's "brutal attack" on members of the Umma Party which occurred on Friday, December 24, when police forces clashed with Umma party

supporters as they were marching towards the headquarters of the party's religious sect known as Al-Ansar. The daughter of Al-Sadiq al-Mahdi was severely injured in the clashes and later hospitalized.

The attack on Umma party supporters is seen as a sign of the increasing vulnerability experienced by the NCP in the run-up to the referendum.

Opposition forces also condemned what they called as "the incitement of extremist religious currents," in an apparent reference to calls made two days ago by a group of radical Islamic clerics known as the Legitimate League of Muslim Preachers and Clerics to scrap the referendum and impose Islamic Shar'iah laws on south Sudan regardless of the will of its citizens.

The opposition parties took a hit on the ruling party for the recent Youtube video which showed a Sudanese girl being flogged mercilessly on the head and feet by policemen as she screams and pleads for help.

They further accused the NCP of using Islamic laws to "humiliate women" and "entrench totalitarianism which extended to include Darfur activists."

Moreover, the political parties vowed to work seriously to prevent a return to civil war and seek peaceful solution to Darfur crisis away from the NCP's methods of "military options and measures of repression." ...

Omar al-Bashir is no bogeyman

If southern Sudan votes for independence, the west must play its part in a peaceful transition

guardian.co.uk, Monday 27 December 2010 19.30 GMT

Article history

Simon Tisdall

Bashing Omar al-Bashir is a popular pastime in progressive circles, not least in the conscience-flaunting milieus favoured by actor George Clooney and other celebrity campaigners. Sudan's president, demonised by the UN over Darfur, pre-judged by the international criminal court's chief prosecutor and ostracised by western governments, makes an easy target. America always needs bogeymen and Bashir fits the bill: big, bothersome, bad-tempered, black, Arab and Muslim.

But as Sudan moves towards a 9 January referendum in which southerners are expected to vote overwhelmingly for secession from Khartoum, Bashir-bashers have fallen on lean times. Confounding his critics' predictions, Bashir has not purposefully obstructed the ballot, not fatally impeded voter registration, and not indulged in intimidation of southerners – an assessment shared by the UN and Britain. Bashir, so far, is behaving reasonably well. This is particularly impressive given the North (as the Khartoum-led portion of Sudan may soon be known) stands to lose 25% of its territory, substantial oil revenues and 20% of its population when the South secedes. Any leader might feel nervous in such a scenario. And Bashir, less the great dictator of western imagining and more the chief oligarch of the cut-throat National Congress party, is vulnerable. He has no inevitable hold on power.

"The post-referendum period is likely to be a period of considerable anxiety for the North, with concern about the durability of the regime and about the west's attitude," said Michael Ryder, UK special representative for Sudan. Other observers are more dramatic. Southern secession may encourage separatists in Darfur, in the Nuba mountains of South Kordofan, and in the east, hastening fragmentation of Africa's largest country, they say; predatory neighbours may exploit perceived weaknesses; and a newly independent, US-backed, oil-rich South may try to undermine Khartoum's influence, territory and wealth.

In these scenarios Bashir becomes the leader who "lost" the South for no return. Moderate opponents might see this as the moment to mend fences with the US, even to deliver the president to The Hague. But hard-line Islamists, decrying a great betrayal, might turn Sudan into a sharia-touting, revolution-exporting Islamic republic like Iran.

Little attention has been paid to how South Sudan might make its way in the world. The semi-autonomous government in power in Juba since the 2005 signing of the comprehensive peace agreement has been tainted by inefficiency and corruption, and obsessed with strengthening its armed forces (with US help). Southern Sudan, roughly the size of Nigeria, is one of the world's most undeveloped regions, with just 150km of paved roads and almost no infrastructure. And it is far from homogenous. Last week insurgent forces loyal to a renegade general killed or injured 70 southern soldiers.

Although oil could one day make South Sudan a stable country, that is a long way off. It will arrive only if disputes (with Kenya and Uganda as well as Khartoum) are resolved; if revenue sharing is agreed; if the status of oil-rich Abyei province is settled; if complex citizenship issues are overcome as tens of thousands (possibly hundreds of thousands) of displaced southerners return home with little or no means of support; and if it is ruled wisely and honestly.

These are huge "ifs". At present, the South Sudan project makes nation-building in penniless Kosovo look easy. It is an enormous gamble. And no one has any idea how the dice will fall.

There are things that can be done to keep Bashir onside and maximise the chances of a peaceful transition. Barack Obama recently gave written guarantees of non-interference – an important message to paranoid Khartoum. Western incentives are apparently on offer, including lifting sanctions, re-entry into the World Bank and IMF, debt relief and investment. If merited, they must be delivered. Britain currently allocates £140m a year in humanitarian and developmental aid, plus the same again for UN peacekeeping operations, and is pre-positioning food and shelter supplies as part of contingency planning. This aid should be ringfenced and if possible increased. Efforts to finalise a Darfur peace deal should be redoubled, especially given revived fighting there.

It would be refreshing, too, to recognise Bashir's role in holding things together even as his country falls apart – thereby encouraging him to continue to do so in the perilous months ahead. The ICC, Clooney and the celebrity crusaders should back off. Too many lives depend on getting both Sudan's right.

Other Headlines

Young ladies beaten for indecent clothing – South police

The Citizen 28/12/10 – Spokesperson of southern Sudan police, Biar Mading, has confirmed that young men and women were beaten in Juba on Christmas Day for wearing indecent clothing. Mading said that the police were there to maintain order during Christmas gatherings. He added that most of those arrested in the event were released.

Speaking to *Radio Miraya*, Edimon Yakani, a southern Sudanese human rights advocate, condemned the action as a violation of human rights.

Sudan, JEM start ceasefire talks

Al-Rai Al-Aam Khartoum, 28/12/10 – The Sudan Government and JEM delegations held their first direct talks recently in Doha with Al-Hadi Majzoub at the head of the Sudan delegation and Ahmed Tugud leading the JEM delegation.

Omar Adam Rahama, the Spokesperson of the Sudan delegation, said that ceasefire talks between the two sides started last Sunday with clear differences in views of the two sides.

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