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# Media Monitoring Report

United Nations Mission in Sudan/ Public Information Office

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# Highlights

## Opposition parties' final position on elections after Presidency meeting

The Sudanese opposition parties met yesterday and decided to adopt a final position on elections after the Presidency meeting scheduled for Tuesday, *local dailies* report. The opposition parties, at the meeting which was also attended by the SPLM, said that they no longer have confidence in the NEC. According to *Al-Sahafa*, the SPLM delegation at the meeting argued that elections postponement does not necessarily mean delay of the referendum, pointing out that the CPA does not say referendum depends on elections. However, NCP official Mohamed Mandour Al-Mahdi insisted that referendum and population consultation would not take place unless elections are held. "The elections process is a constitutional requirement. Elections postponement will mean delay of the referendum and the popular consultation," he said. "If some parties boycott elections, the process will not be cancelled because there are 60 political parties," Mandour Al-Mahdi said, according to *Al-Rai Al-Aam*. "The Presidency has no right to postpone elections, it is the responsibility of the NEC," *Al-Khartoum* quotes an NCP official as saying.

Meanwhile, *Al-Intibaha* reports that the SPLM has supported the opposition parties' demand for elections postponement and the formation of an interim government as well as the other demands contained in the opposition's memorandum submitted to the Presidency. The newspaper said the Presidency meeting scheduled for Tuesday is called by the FVP Salva Kiir Mayardit for discussion on the opposition's demands including elections postponement and other alleged electoral excesses.

## Elections boycott possible with SPLM approval - PCP

*Sudan Tribune website* 26/3/10 — The Sudanese opposition parties may consider boycotting the April elections if the SPLM takes the lead, Turabi-led PCP senior official said today. Turabi's party said it want to run in the elections despite the flaws. The SPLM may possibly boycott elections in the North but run in the South, sources say.

"In the event that the NCP refuses the postponement of elections.....the Political forces will meet to consider: (i) withdrawing their confidence from the National Election Commission; (ii) undertake a decisive stance as regards conducting partial elections in April that are distorted and that lack the minimum fundamental requirements for conducting them freely and fairly. Such a stance will be considered by the Political Forces so as not to participate in the falsification of the will of the Sudanese people and to distance themselves from threats to the stability of Sudan structure by a continuation of the war in Darfur and a return to war in south Sudan" the memo said...

## Sudan opposition party joins pro-reform coalition

*AFP* 27/3/10 - A prominent Sudanese political party on Saturday joined an opposition coalition seeking democratic reforms, ahead of the first multi-party elections in a quarter of a century.

The Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) lead by Mohammed Osman al-Mirghani has joined the "National Consensus" which groups several opposition parties and the SPLM, coalition spokesman Faruk Abu Issa said.

"We have changed the name, it is no longer the "Juba Conference", it is now called the 'National Consensus'. We make up the majority of the political class, except for the NCP led by Al-Bashir,

said Yasser Arman, the SPLM's presidential candidate.

### **Sudan Government welcomes Gration's statement**

**Al-Wifaq** reports that the Sudanese Government has welcomed US envoy Scott Gration's statements which supported the conduct of elections on schedule. NCP official Ibrahim Ghandour said the elections, which Washington wants them to be held on schedule, represent an important CPA benchmark.

### **Sudan electoral body dismisses resignation of its chairman**

**Sudan Tribune website** 27/3/10 — The NEC has dismissed the resignation of its chairman Abel Alier stressing that Alier presided over the Commission's meeting Saturday and the Commission follows its activities as usual.

The denial comes after strong rumours in Khartoum yesterday about Alier resignation which could lead to the delay of electoral process until the Parliament is called to appoint a new chairman.

NEC Deputy Chairman Abdallah Ahmed Abdallah denied in statements to **SUNA** the resignation of NEC chairman Abel Alier saying the Commission, in a meeting chaired by Alier, discussed on Saturday the latest preparation ahead of the critical phase of polling process.

Such resignation if happened would force to postpone the electoral process until the call of two chambers of the parliament by presidential decree in order to approve a new chairman of the Commission after discussion between the two peace partners.

### **Abel Alier presides over an emergency NEC meeting**

**Al-Khartoum** reports NEC Deputy Chairman Abdullah Ahmed Abdullah as saying that all preparations have been finalized to transport material (ballot cards and boxes) to the states, adding the material would be available to the state higher committees before 8 April so that the process takes place on schedule. With regard to Carter Centre's report, he said it would be studied thoroughly and a comprehensive response would be sent.

### **South Sudan Radio and TV staff threaten to go on strike**

**Sudan Tribune website** 26/3/10 – Staff of the two major and only GoSS-owned broadcasting media have threatened to go on strike beginning on Monday over non-payment of 12 months arrears of their housing allowances.

The staff of the two state-owned broadcasting media, which are under the administration of the GoSS Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, were supposed to be paid their allowances since last year.

The two broadcasting state-owned media are currently a very effective tool during the elections as political parties, particularly the SPLM, are airing their campaign rallies and speeches across the nation and beyond international borders.

Observers assessing the situation said any continuous failure by the ministry of Information and Broadcasting to resolve the issue would prove to be a very big blow to the elections process if the strikes occur next week and result in shutting down of the only two broadcasting media in the region.

## **Ansar Al-Sunna calls for “Jihad” against SPLM candidate Arman**

Followers of the Ansar Al-Sunna Religious Sect, at a rally organized yesterday in support for an NCP candidate for governor of Khartoum state, have called for declaration of Jihad against the presidential candidates who call for the establishment of a secular state in Sudan especially Yasir Arman, *Al-Intibaha* reports. According to *Alrakoba website* 28/3/10, Sect Secretary General Ismail Osman Al-Amin said that election of a communist candidate to the presidency is against the Islamic faith.

## **90% of South budget goes to GoSS, 10% for ten States**

*Sudan Vision* 28/3/10 - SPLM-DC candidate for the South presidency Lam Akol said that his manifesto contains many of the issues that concern the citizen of the South in order to build a safe and stable homeland and the fight against corruption. He pointed out that 90% of the South's budget goes to the Government of Juba, and 10% of the budget for the rest of the southern states.

Akol, who launched his elections campaign in Bor town, said that the objectives of his party are to stop the war between tribes and to implement the CPA pointing out that there are seven states in the South which do not enjoy security and stability and rejected calls for elections delay.

## **W. Equatoria is likely to see harsher crackdown and intimidation**

*Sudantribune.com Yambio, 25/03/10* - The apparent arrest of supporters of independent candidates in Western Equatoria State, there are fears that state authorities may intensify the crackdown on the Independents in the next few weeks prior to elections.

According to orders from the president, no body is supposed to be arrested without orders from Juba.

In Press Release from the campaign team of Bakosoro, Mr. Gimi James Waraga was arrested last Thursday for campaigning for Mr. Bakosoro.

The Press Release also reported that the security personnel have ordered him to take out his clothes and not be given any food. We are worried about the live of Mr. Waraga because anything can happen to him anytime.

The press release confirmed the arrest of 17 supporters (3 female and 14 males) and agents of both Adel Sandrai (independent candidate in Maridi) and Mr. Bakosoro are reported to have been arrested.

In another development, supporters of Mr. Adel Sandrai in Maridi reported that T-shirts with the photo of Mr. Adel were burnt down near Sug Ammal and more than 70 Bakosoro posters were confiscated on Friday by JIU soldiers. Maridi seems to be the centre of intimidation in WES. Mr. Adel said; "we are used to intimidation and we are living with it here in Maridi. There is no other place in the South where people are intimidated and being threatened like in Maridi"

However reliable sources told Sudan Tribune about the release of the detained people, after spending one night with the security forces

The case of James Waraga was reported to NEC last week.

W. Equatoria Independent candidates have appealed to the international community, UNMIS (human rights division) and other observers for the immediate release of all those who are arrested.

However, political analysts in the region say, despite the intimidation, Independents are gaining more support and popularity among the registered voters.

## CFPA to deploy 50 election observers in South Sudna

Director of the Centre for Foreign Policy Analysis (CFPA) Paul Moorcraft yesterday told a press conference in Khartoum that CFPA would deploy 50 election observers in the South, adding that some of them would work in the North to observe what is going on in the process of the coming elections, *Khartoum Monitor* reports.

## Public media institutions add half hour for presidential candidates

*Radio Miraya* 28/3/10 - The Joint Technical Mechanism for public media institutions headed by Ms Mahasin Al Haj Al Safi has decided Saturday to add half an hour to the time dedicated to presidential candidates in public media and ten minutes to political parties. In a statement to *SUNA*, Ms Al Safi said that the decision was taken as election is nearing.

## Other Highlights

### No meetings with Sudan President unless necessary - UNSG

*Sudan Tribune website* 25/3/10 — The UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon said he would not hold talks with Sudanese President Omer Al-Bashir during the Arab League summit in Libya stressing that he would meet him only under limited circumstances.

"The court charged him [Bashir] with crimes against humanity; therefore I must respect the ICC decision. My role is to preserve justice" Ban told the London based *Al-Hayat* newspaper in an interview published Friday.

The UN chief has been advised by the legal department in 2008 to distance himself politically from the Sudanese president and since the warrant he only met him twice.

Asked whether he is sticking to the advice, Ban said that he has to discuss with his legal adviser "to discuss any exceptions".

On elections, Ban criticized Al-Bashir's vow to expel and mutilate foreign elections observers who call for delaying elections. "I do not want to comment on this type of undesirable speech particularly at this time in. It is up to the Sudanese Government to decide whether they will hold these elections as scheduled or postpone it" he said. But Ban appeared to be opposed to the idea of postponing the elections even though he recognized "enormous logistical challenges".

"I understand that elections could be postponed or delayed for a short period of time, but why should be made to postpone the month of November? I am not sure it can be properly arranged at that time" he said.

Ban's statements pour cold shower over opposition parties' demand for a postponement. They have submitted a memo in this regard to the Sudanese presidency threatening that they would boycott elections if no rescheduling occurs.

UN relations with opposition parties are already tense over accusations that their mission in Sudan was complicit in an improper switching an award to print the ballots from a Slovenian company to a local one belonging to the NCP, opening the door for fraud.

### US mulls options for South Sudan secession vote – Gration

*Reuters* 25/3/10 - The United States hopes next month's presidential election in Sudan will set

the stage for a "civil divorce, not a civil war" over moves by the oil-rich South to secede, the Obama Administration's special envoy said on Thursday.

Scott Gration acknowledged problems with preparations for the April vote. But he said it should still occur on time so democratic structures are put in place to deal with the looming issue of the status of Southern Sudan, which will be decided by a referendum next January.

He said the United States was prepared for any eventual secession vote and was working to resolve contentious issues in hopes of avoiding a reprise of the two-decade civil war that ended five years ago.

"I don't see that the north has to reinvade the south and start the war again," Gration said. "If we can resolve these issues, I think there is a fairly good chance that ... the South can have a civil divorce, not a civil war."

Gration said next month's elections, even if flawed, would mark a step toward establishing a democratic framework of voter rolls, electoral authorities and monitors that will underpin political decision-making.

"It is important that the election takes place on time, and is done in a way that the people themselves see as credible," Gration told Reuters in an interview.

"What we are trying to do is get as much done as we can now and then make adjustments that we need to."

Accusations of fraud have mounted before the vote, Sudan's first multiparty election in more than two decades, and many opposition parties have called for a delay, saying more democratic reforms are needed.

The only long-term international observer mission in Sudan, the Carter Center, has said the election remains "at risk on multiple fronts" and urged Sudan to lift harsh restrictions on rallies and end fighting in Darfur before the ballot.

Gration said Washington was already factoring in projections the south will secede.

"Looking at the realities on the ground, it is highly likely that the South will chose independence," Gration said.

He added Washington was "looking at all options" on how it might support a future independent South Sudan, but was focused for now on trying to ensure a peaceful transition.

Gration said the issues being addressed included the question of citizenship, border demarcation and how to apportion profits from Sudan's oil wealth, much of which is pumped in the south but shipped out through the north.

"It is a win-win situation that we are trying to get," Gration said.

He added that would be hard to achieve unless the Khartoum Government was willing to discuss better deals for the South as well as for Darfur and other restive parts of the country - something he said was starting to happen.

"While the progress is slow, we are making it," he said.

## **No right to abuse civilians during disarmament - official**

**Sudan Tribune website** 26/3/10— The Lakes state caretaker governor, Telar Ring Deng, has condemned the ruthless manner in which army officers carried out the disarmament activity.

In an exclusive interview with the Catholic Church's Good News Radio FM89, Mr. Telar explained that the use of force by the army officers can only be understood in the context of self defence, namely, "if the Army is confronted by civilians with arms."

The governor equally condemned the hijacking of vehicles by army officers who have had a reputation for taking over vehicles that cross their way during their disarmament operation.

He explained that although the disarmament operation was ill-equipped logistically, any use of private vehicles can only be done in agreement with the owner of the vehicle in terms of hiring with financial implications.

He further said that there is no timeframe for the disarmament operation, explaining that it is a process that will go on "as long as we feel that firearms have all been collected from the civil population."

In another development, Government of Southern Sudan President Salva Kiir's arrival to Rumbek was postponed on Friday. State level authorities declined to disclose to local media the reason for this. A source told Sudan Tribune that Salva Kiir was attending an SPLM Political Bureau meeting in Juba and he will continue on Sunday to attend another meeting with the presidency in Khartoum.

## **SPLM members call for urgent meeting over post-referendum status**

SPLM members from Southern Kordofan are calling for an "emergency meeting" of the SPLM/A leadership to discuss issues pertaining to the post-referendum status of their area, reports **Akhir Lahza**.

A recent meeting in Yei, Central Equatoria State, of leading SPLM/A figures from the Nuba Mountains area culminated in the call for reconciliation among the leaders of the SPLM/A. The meeting was attended by Ismail Khamis Jallab (State Minister for Animal Resources), Mjr. Gen. Daniel Kodi, Mjr. Gen. Telefon Kuku, over 3,000 army personnel and representatives of the native administration.

## **Independent human rights expert's report in June**

Independent Human Rights Expert Osman Mohamed Chande will submit his final report on the over all human rights situation in the Sudan to the Human Rights Council in Geneva in June, **Al-Rai Al-Aam** reports. Deputy Rapporteur of the Advisory Council of Human Rights Ahmed Idriss told **SMC** that there was a coordination to ensure that a copy of the report is shown to the Advisory Council before it is submitted in its final form. He said the Expert has compiled his report based on the findings of his field visits to several areas and in total cooperation with and assistance of the Sudanese Government.

## **JEM leader arrives in Doha amid deadlocked peace talks**

**Sudan Tribune website** 26/3/10 — JEM chairman arrived Friday in Doha, venue of the peace process, as the negotiations with the Government have stalled over JEM demand for election postponement and power sharing issues.

Khalil Ibrahim arrived today in Doha accompanied by a big delegation including military commanders and representatives of women, student sectors. Following his arrival, JEM leadership council began a meeting to discuss the different issues related to the peace process.

Khalil ended a two day meeting with the Sudanese presidential adviser, Ghazi Salah Al-Deen over the ceasefire agreement and the power sharing. During the latest meeting in N'djamena, Khalil refused to finalize a ceasefire agreement unless he reaches an agreement on the power sharing with the Government. Khartoum rejects to give his group a vice-presidency and to postpone elections.

**SMR** reported that JEM violated twenty times the truce signed on February 23. Omer Adam Rahama, spokesperson of the Sudanese Government delegation in Doha told the SMC that ceasefire violations by JEM in the region would not lead to peace in Darfur. He further said that JEM does not want to commit itself to the framework agreement which includes the temporary ceasefire agreement.

### **SDG 3.5 million for Abyei power plant**

**Khartoum Monitor** reports Abyei Chief Administrator Deng Arop Kuol as saying that the National Unity Support Fund and Adroit Electricity Company yesterday signed a contract towards the implementation of Abyei Power Plant at the cost of SDG 3.5 million. The project will be implemented in two years.