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Referendum Watch

Conference on post-referendum issues to take place on Sudan

Khartoum Monitor Khartoum, 29/11/10 – A conference on post-referendum issues organized by the Sudanese Political Sciences Association and sponsored by Presidential Adviser Mustafa Osman Ismail will begin in Khartoum on Sunday. The Head of the Association for Political Science, Prof. Mahmud Hassan Ahmed, said that the two-day conference will tackle 22 papers on economic, political, legal and security issues.

He said the papers were prepared by scientists and academic experts in and out of Sudan.

NCP hints at filing constitutional challenge to referendum registration

Al-Intibaha Khartoum, 29/11/10 – The head of the NCP (Khartoum Chapter) Justice and Parliamentary Committee has warned that the NCP may consider filing a constitutional challenge to repeal the ongoing registration for the 2011 referendum on the grounds of “gross irregularities” by the SSRC. Majdi Sarhan pointed out that the SSRC has appointed members to the SSRC below the age of 40 in clear violation of the provisions of the Referendum Act. He also pointed out that registration has been denied some people.

NCP blames SPLM, referendum commission for low turnout in north Sudan

Sudantribune.com Khartoum, 28/11/10 - The NCP has once again blamed the SPLM for the low turnout in referendum registration centres in the northern states.

The party has also expressed dissatisfaction with the performance of the Southern Sudan Referendum Commission (SSRC), the body organizing the process, saying it has allowed SPLM members to control voter-registration centres in north Sudan whereas the south is left fully controlled by intelligence agents of the SPLA, the military wing of the SPLM.

The NCP said that its members had been in a state of “constant meetings” with SSRC officials in order to find solutions to the “irregularities that marred the beginning of the process.”

“However,” the statement added, “the SPLM has managed through its members to paralyze the will of the commission and dominate decision-making, thus derailing all the solutions reached by repealing the administrative order that helped to raise the number of registrants in the north.”

According to the NCP, 32% of southerners who reached registration centres in the north had been sent back to the south by the SPLM under “flimsy excuses.” The party demanded that the SSRC “intervenes strongly in order to correct the mistakes that marred the beginning of the process.”

The NCP went on to condemn what it termed as “steps taken by the SPLM to prevent southern citizens from expressing their opinions freely through acts of intimidation and terrorization.”

Last week, the NCP submitted a complaint to the SSRC against what it said were “several irregularities occurring inside and outside registration centres.” The party alleged that the SPLM was blocking people with mixed south-north parents from registering amid other anomalies.

On the other hand, the SPLM accuses the NCP of intimidating southerners to vote in favour of unity, for which the NCP is campaigning.

Senior SPLM member Atim Garang said earlier this month that southerners were facing an

intimidation campaign to vote for unity.

President has the prerogative to revoke citizenship - workshop

Al-Raed Parliament, 29/11/10 – The Human Rights Section of UNMIS recommended at a parliamentary workshop recently that the Sudanese parliament focus on legislative reforms in the coming stages especially with regards the issues of citizenship. UNMIS human rights representatives who attended a parliamentary workshop also underlined the need to consider the issue of nationality and dual citizenship in the event of southern Sudanese secession and the need to avert the repercussions that may occur as a result of a revocation of citizenship and the creation of what is known as the “Bidoun” in International conventions. The Human Rights Section, UNMIS, asserted however that it is the prerogative of the President of the Republic to revoke citizenship from any person should his/ her allegiance to the state be held questionable.

In a related development, *Al-Intibaha* quotes NCP kingpin Mandour Al-Mahdi as having reiterated that there would be no dual citizenship for southern Sudanese should the south choose to secede. “We said it before and I repeat: there would be no dual citizenship. A southerner would be a southerner and a northern would be a northerner,” he told *Al-Intibaha*. He accused the SPLM of falsely assuring southern Sudanese that they would still be able to maintain their citizenship even should the south vote for secession.

Arabic names complicate referendum registration in the north

Al-Rai Al-Aam Khartoum, 29/11/10 – A tour by reporters of the newspaper of some registration centres around Khartoum has shown that the process is proceeding well and in fact picking up with more and more people coming in to register. One notary stationed at a Khartoum North registration centre lauded the high levels of cooperation they enjoy with the SSRC staff. He pointed out that the notaries do face complications with the Arabic names of some registrants making it difficult to ascertain whether or not they are eligible for registration. He said however that he did not notice any violation of the law.

The Citizen reports in a separate yet related story that the NCP (Khartoum State) Secretary for Peace and Security toured a number of registration centres around the state in the company of some representatives from southern Sudan and noted that some 146 southern Sudanese citizens had been barred from registering. He said that the decisions were based on “untenable reasons” such as being below the eligible voting age, lack of identification documents and having Arabic names. He described those procedures as “illogical”.

Tensions on high between NCP’s Cairo bureau and referendum committee

Al-Ayyam/ Agencies 29/1/10 – Registration of southern Sudanese residents in Egypt at Al-Mu’adi registration centre is reportedly increasing.

The Director of the NCP’s bureau in Cairo, Waleed Al-Sayed, has criticized the committee supervising the registration, saying 61 of the southerners selected to work as referendum staff are SPLM members which bring neutrality of the committee into question. He said he had submitted a report to the Sudanese Ambassador in Cairo and the SSRC requesting review of the formation of this committee. Al-Sayed said the registration centres have been relocated more than once, adding his party and the Sudanese embassy are not aware about the locations of the registration centres.

Reportedly, the members of the committee representing the SSRC in Egypt had barred Al-Sayed and ten other members of the unity-support higher committee from entering the registration centre, saying they had no permission from the SSRC in Khartoum to do so.

Over 2,500 civilians flee aerial attacks in Sudan's Northern Bahr el Ghazal

Sudantribune.com Abyei, 28/11/10 - Locals and officials from Northern Bahr el Ghazal on Sunday reported that 2,500 civilians have fled areas at the north-south borders fearing aerial attack on the area by the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF).

Garang Kuot Kuot, the Secretary-General of the state government, in an interview with *Sudan Tribune* on Sunday from the capital town of Aweil town, said that many people living along the border area in the state have deserted their homes fearing renewed aerial attacks.

"The previous bombardments which seriously violated the [Comprehensive Peace Agreement] CPA and referendum law, led to the displacement of 2,500 people in the area. This displacement at a time of voter registration has prompted the state high executive committee for referendum to relocate registration centres formerly located at Kiir Adem to Malek Miir," said Kuot.

Kuol Athuai Hal, commissioner of the area in a separate telephone interview with *Sudan Tribune* from Gokmachar, the administrative headquarters of Aweil North County, also confirmed the displacement, saying recent attacks have encouraged people to leave.

"People are moving toward middle and low land areas now. Everything is being moved. Children and elderly people are being sent out. They are leaving their original homes because they fear other attacks," Athuai said.

Asked on the number of the people leaving on a daily basis, he said he does not have exact figures but believes the figures might have gone beyond 3,000. He also said he would consult with the local authorities including staff of South Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Commission working in the area to confirm based on the numbers they registered.

Colonel Deng Thiep Akok, a former lawmaker in Juba, also said that they have received reports from relatives and authorities in the area on similar displacements.

"The information I have from communications and daily contacts with relatives and local authorities indicate that a lot of people started moving out of their homes at the extreme north of the area. This started on Thursday after the area was attacked again," said Akok.

The *Khartoum Monitor* meanwhile reveals that a delegation of the referendum committee in Northern Bahr-el-Ghazal State toured the site of the bombardment last Saturday to assess progress in registration for the referendum. A member of the committee reports that registration has continued in the region in spite of the bombardments.

North, south Sudan reach "preliminary" deal to share Nile water - minister

Sudantribune.com Khartoum, 28/11/10 - Sudan's State Minister for Irrigation and Water Resources, Salah Yousif, told the privately owned *Al-Akhbar* daily newspaper on Sunday that the National Congress Party (NCP) in north Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) in the south had reached a "preliminary" agreement to continue sharing Nile Waters in the case of south Sudan secession.

According to the minister, continued cooperation on water sharing would be governed by the agreed quotas in the permanent body of the Nile Basin Initiative, which was established in 1999 to enhance cooperation between the countries in the Nile Basin. The minister further disclosed that the shares would be used to carry out mutually agreed projects.

Other Highlights

Sudan outraged after Libya asks Bashir to skip Africa-EU summit

Sudantribune.com Khartoum, 28/11/10 - The Sudanese government on Sunday issued a strongly worded statement after President Omer Al-Bashir was forced to cancel his attendance at the 3rd Africa-European Union (EU) summit that starts Monday in the Libyan capital.

Yesterday, the former South African president Thabo Mbeki who also heads an African Union panel on Sudan told reporters on Saturday that Al-Bashir would leave for Libya in order to participate in the summit but Libyan foreign minister Moussa Koussa later revealed that they have asked Bashir to skip the summit despite inviting him last July.

"We have asked President al-Bashir not to attend the EU-African summit because of the tremendous efforts exerted by Libya to host the summit and not to ruin it because of the Europeans threat not to attend if President Al-Bashir showed up," Koussa told the *Associated Press (AP)* in an interview.

A Spanish official had earlier told *AP* that the 27 members of the EU had agreed to stand up and walk out if the Sudanese president appeared at the joint summit.

The pragmatic and unusual stance by Libya, a strong backer of Bashir, caused uproar in Khartoum where the government directed explicit criticism at the EU and subtle one at the host of the summit.

"Three days before the summit, a senior Libyan official contacted the Minister of the Presidency [Bakri Hassan Salih] to convey European reservations about the participation of Mr. President at the summit" the Sudanese Presidency said in a statement released late Sunday.

"The Minister of the Presidency communicated to the Libyan official the decision of the Government of Sudan to participate in the summit at the presidential level as long as Libya has formally invited him and as long as such participation comes within the framework of Sudan's membership in the African Union [which is] the core party in this summit and that Sudan is not concerned with any position taken by the EU side".

"At the same day of the scheduled travel by Mr. President to participate in the summit, the Minister in charge of the Presidency received a call from the senior Libyan official saying that Libya welcomes Mr. President on 30/11/2010 which is after the end of the summit of the Africa-EU summit".

Earlier today, the Sudanese foreign minister Ali Karti arrived in Tripoli for the ministerial level meeting of the summit. Halfway into the meeting he received instructions to head back home.

"Bashir will not attend" the summit being held in Tripoli on Monday and Tuesday, Karti said. "We are therefore pulling out and will not be represented at any level," he told reporters following a meeting of African foreign ministers preparing for the summit.

The minister, who walked out of the closed-door meeting after announcing Khartoum's decision, added that Bashir's no-show was "to avoid embarrassment to Libya," which is hosting the gathering of 80 nations. The Sudanese top diplomat said the decision was taken "under pressure from Europe" and that he had received instructions to pull out of the pre-summit ministerial talks.

African Union commission president Jean Ping said at the close of the talks that the Sudanese

minister had been "absolutely limpid and clear". "He deplored certain attitudes and notified us that President Bashir will not come" Ping added. EU diplomats told *Agence France Presse (AFP)* in the weeks leading up to the summit that they had asked for assurances that Bashir would not attend.

But reports on Saturday that he planned to fly to Tripoli caused a diplomatic flurry on both continents.

The Sudanese presidency chided the EU accusing the bloc of hypocrisy for urging Bashir to implement Sudan's 2005 north-south peace accord while at the same time trying to "undermine" his legitimacy. It also threatened unspecified measures in response "to preserve its rights and sovereignty".

"Sudan considers the EU position on the president's participation in this summit as representative of the colonial mentality with which Europe still views Africa. Europe's stance was "an attack on the African Union and Sudan while also undermining the idea of real dialogue and cooperation between Africa and Europe".

NCP, SPLM relations to thaw in the coming days - Pagan

Al-Akhbar Khartoum, 29/11/10 – SPLM Secretary-General and GoSS Minister for Peace, Pagan Amum, says relations between the NCP and the SPLM are headed to major improvement in the coming days. He pointed out that the forthcoming meeting of the Presidency would resolve all outstanding issues including the Abyei issue. In an interview, the SPLM Secretary-General also expressed his conviction that the referendum would take place calmly and that all the ongoing tensions would disappear.

Amum admitted that the partners did fail to implement the CPA in spirit. He also denied reports that the SPLM was hosting the armed groups of Darfur noting that the SPLM's in peace in southern Sudan and not war. He accused the NCP of trying to renege on the CPA and the referendum by falsely accusing the SPLM of warming up with the Darfur armed groups.

GoSS VP assures oil companies

Al-Akhbar Khartoum, 29/11/10 – Touring the Hagleig and other oilfields yesterday, GoSS Vice-President Riek Machar assured oil companies that they and their employees would not be affected by the outcome of the 2011 referendum. Machar, who was accompanied by the federal and GoSS oil ministers as well as representatives from the SAF and the SPLA, said that the north and south would continue to cooperate in providing security to the oil fields. He revealed that an emergency unit has been formed in Unity State and should be able to act quickly to curb any referendum-related emergency that may occur.

Machar also said that he would hold talks with Vice-President Ali Osman Mohamed Taha in Khartoum next week in a bid to rejuvenate dialogue between the partners on the outstanding issues.

SPLM denies fanning the Darfur conflict

The SPLM has affirmed its ability to contribute to the realisation of a peaceful solution to the Darfur issue but denies charges that it is fanning the conflict. Speaking to *The Citizen* yesterday, SPLM Secretary-General Pagan Amum denied accusations of SPLM support for the armed groups in Darfur pointing out that members of the armed groups are citizens of the country and have the right to move anywhere within its territories. He denied NCP accusations that his party was accommodating the Darfur rebel movements but added that as a partner in the government, the SPLM has the right to contribute to solutions to the Darfur problem.

Coordinating with movements within the DPA framework – SLM-MM

Al-Ayyam Khartoum, 29/11/10 – The Minnawi faction of the Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM-MM) says it is coordinating with the non-signatory armed movements of Darfur within the framework of the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) and denies speculation that it has declared war against Khartoum. The head of the SLM Information Committee, Seif-el-din Haroun, says his movement has long-running relations with the SPLM that they expect to continue even should the south secede.

“Contrary to speculations from the weak spirited, Minnawi’s presence in southern Sudan is not a declaration of war against Khartoum,” he said. He pointed out that Juba is a Sudanese city and every Sudanese has the right to reside there. He accused the Sudan Government of seeking to implement the DPA from the last stage in the timeline (disarmament) in order to strip the movement of guarantees for implementation of the agreement.

Abyei returns committee report of 12,000 returns from the North

Al-Sahafa Khartoum, 29/11/10 – Abyei voluntary return committee has admitted facing financial constraints with regard to return operations, saying over 12,000 of a total of 35,000 Dinka Ngok residing in the North have returned while 23,000 others are likely to be transported within days. The cost of returns of IDPs to Abyei is estimated at SDG 5 million.

Abyei IDPs Voluntary Return Committee official Ms Nyaku Nagor Chol said the initial plan which targeted 8,000 had been implemented by 100% besides 4,000 IDPs who returned on their own, adding they have the capacity to transport the remaining number within days.

45,000 IDPs leave the North for Upper Nile

Khartoum Monitor Khartoum, 29/11/10 - At least “45,000” former IDPs have started the return trip to Upper Nile in southern Sudan from Khartoum and other towns in northern Sudan yesterday, a Cholo chief has revealed.

The returnees who hail from Upper Nile State are now heading back home in order to meet the deadline for the voter registration for referendum on the right to self-determination for the people of southern Sudan, which has been extended for another one week up to the 8th of December 2010.

Gold diggers uncover mass grave in Northern State

Al-Ayyam Khartoum, 29/11/10 – A group of local gold prospectors uncovered have reported the discovery of a 4 square meter by 3 meter deep mass grave in West Argo, Northern State. The prospectors told *Radio Dabanga* that 25 bodies were buried in the mass grave that was covered with a concrete slab. The bodies, they said, had bullet wounds and showed signs of bleeding.

Northern State Governor Fathi Khalil has vehemently denied the reports saying that only one body was uncovered in that area. He said that the local police has investigated the issue and is taking the necessary steps.

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