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Highlights

FVP accuses NCP of hindering Abyei boundary demarcation

Local dailies report FVP Salva Kiir Mayardit, in an interview to Al-Jazeera TV, has accused elements from the NCP of impeding work of the Abyei Boundary Demarcation Committee. According to **Al-Ahdath**, he ruled out a progress in the committee's work due to the presence of armed groups and the army in the area. On the pending CPA issues, he said the two sides would resume their dialogue within two days to resolve them. On unity, he said it is the job of the federal government to make it attractive, adding that unity has now become unattractive for the southern Sudanese and that secession looks their favourite choice.

Meanwhile, **Sudan Tribune website** 2/12/09 reported that the ruling NCP slammed statements by the FVP Salva Kiir Mayardit who has accused his peace partner of impeding the demarcation of Abyei boundary.

He told AlJazeera TV, that there had been no progress in the work of the demarcation commission because of armed groups that he did not identify. He added they threaten the work of demarcation technical team.

Ambassador Dirdeiry Mohammed Ahmed, head of the government delegation for the issue of Abyei directed fierce criticism against Kiir, urging him to work within the Presidency to resolve the encountered problems instead of making public statements.

"We were waiting for the FVP to direct, as it deems, to activate the work of the Committee within the institution of the Presidency and not from the media and website of the opposition," he said.

Dirdeiry further disclosed that Salva Kiir encouraged the Misseriya to hold arms against the government to take their rights during a meeting he had held with them in Juba following the announcement of the arbitration rule.

"Rise like the people of the south, Darfur and the east, this is the only way to take your rights," said Kiir according to Dirdeiry.

"So Salva Kiir should not be bothered if the Misseriya take his advice and took up arms," he commented.

In a related development, the **Citizen** reports that the Abyei Border Demarcation Committee is jobless in Khartoum after the Misseriya threatened its members, a senior official said Wednesday. The committee has spent at least one month jobless in Khartoum since its formation, and more than two months in the field at the border site, and went back to Khartoum with too little work done on the ground, Abyei officials said Wednesday. Out of 28 poles expected to be fixed at the border extending North of Abyei area, only four border poles have been fixed.

Abyei Chief Administrator Arop Moyak said yesterday the border Demarcation Committee has made their way back to Khartoum because the team is facing threats from Misseriya. Speaking in Juba yesterday, Moyak said lack of protection has led the Misseriya to threaten the team. He said it is now up to the Presidency to take full responsibility of implementing the outcome of the court ruling on Abyei.

US Congress to discuss Sudan's situation today

The US Congress will devote an exceptional session today on the Sudanese situation in order to review the US policy towards Khartoum, *Al-Sahafa* reports. The Congress will listen to briefings from US envoy Scott Gration on the security and humanitarian situations as well as briefing from the representatives of the NCP and the SPLM on the strategy, CPA and the situation in Darfur.

Sudan's NCP rejects calls for IGAD intervention in CPA wrangles

Sudan Tribune website 2/12/09 — Sudan's dominant party has rejected call by its junior partner to bring the ongoing difference between them on the implementation of the CPA to the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD)

SPLM Secretary General Pagan Amum told reporters on Tuesday following a meeting with Sudanese opposition parties' members of Juba conference that they might lodge a complaint to the IGAD, which mediated the CPA talks, on NCP slow implementation of the remaining issues related to the democratic transition and the referendum.

"This is totally unacceptable for us because the Agreement is very clear and has mechanisms for arbitration when there is a dispute," said Ibrahim Gandour, head of the NCP political secretariat on Wednesday.

He also downplayed Pagan's statement about the deadlock at the joint political committee on the referendum issue describing the remarks of the SPLM official as "talk for media consumption". He further confirmed the continuity of dialogue between the two parties to the peace agreement.

80% of electorate registered – NEC

Al-Ayyam reports NEC Registration Unit Chairman Gen. Al-Hadi Mohamed Ahmed has rejected claims by the Carter Centre that millions of voters could be missed out. He said that 12 million voters have so far been registered across the country, about 80% of the target electorate which is comparatively unprecedented.

In another development, **Sudan Tribune website** 2/12/09 reported that Commissioner of the National Elections Commission, Abel Alier, arrived in North Darfur on Wednesday afternoon as part of a tour of western states. He said that there would be no delay of the elections, due to take place in April 2010 before the rainy season makes much of Southern Sudan impassable by road.

His position runs counter to that of some outspoken Darfuris who would prefer to delay the election until more progress is made in the Darfur peace process.

Alier said that their visit to North Darfur State was aimed at informing people about the voter registration, especially those living in the displaced people camps. This was reported by the official Sudan News Agency (SUNA). In a press statement upon arrival at El Fasher Airport, the commissioner called on all the citizens to register their names for voting in the coming elections.

As the registration period winds down, some have expressed concerns about voter education. The main international monitoring body in Sudan, the Carter Center, on Monday released a statement saying that "civic awareness of the process remains low and is contributing to the comparatively low rate of participation in registration in Eastern Sudan, North and South

Kordofan, Darfur, and most states of Southern Sudan."

Carter Center's statement also reported that agents of the National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS) were possibly keeping people away from the registration centers because their mere presence there was cause for fear for some.

Commissioner Alier, who was formerly vice president of Sudan before the Second Civil War, said that the election is part of implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) and Sudan's Interim Constitution.

Another official responsible for media outreach at the Elections High Commission in West Darfur, Mohamed Effendi Manzul, said that the total registration reached was 263,000 voters in the state, the SUNA reported.

Possibly in response to Carter Center's statement about NISS agents, he "further reaffirmed the absence of any security imbalance in the Registration process, stressing that the response of voters to register and their motivation forced the Committee to increase the number of centers and the staff of the registry," according to SUNA.

"There is full coordination with the Sheikhs and Umdas of the displaced in all phases of the electoral process, which reflects positively on the operations of the registry," he added.

Leaflets urge "overthrow" of NCP as voters register for next poll

Al-Khartoum 2/12/09 - A campaign of another type has been spotted on the sidelines of the voter registration exercise that has been going on in the last two days. The campaign, carried out in the form of unknown pamphlets printed in cardboard and not bigger than 15 by 10 centimeters marked with the address of Grifina [as published] (name of a campaign calling for the overthrow of the ruling NCP [National Congress Party] in the next general elections).

The tracts also contain phrases written in non-classical Arabic language saying that everything in the era of the ruling NCP government was "disgusting" because of education and health services that have become commercialized in addition to growing unemployment and the increasing gaps between salary levels and high cost of living.

NCP rejects planned demonstration by the opposition

Al-Ahdath reports that the NCP has rejected the opposition political forces move to stage a peaceful demonstration and expressed grave concern over the partisan coalition which it described as "exclusionary". NCP official Ibrahim Ghandour said that a coalition of Islamic and secular parties will harm the country's future, urging them to take part in the upcoming elections. Meanwhile, NCP secretary for organizations Qutbi Al-Mahdi told reporters yesterday that those demanding democratic transition should behave democratically, saying the SPLA is kidnapping, torturing and killing civilians in the South as well as denying them freedoms for democratic work.

Sudan opposition mulls united challenge to Bashir

AFP 2/12/09 - Sudanese opposition parties and former rebel groups from the south could field a single challenger to Omar al-Bashir in next year's presidential elections, senior politicians said on Wednesday.

"If we decide to participate in the elections it is most likely that we will have one person," said Mariam al-Mahdi, the daughter of former Prime Minister Sadiq al-Mahdi of the Umma party, one of the two historically dominant parties in the north.

Mahdi stressed that "no decision has been taken yet" about who to back against Bashir in the election due in April next year.

SPLM SG Pagan Amum said the principle of fielding a joint opposition candidate had been agreed at a congress in September.

"Yes, it is an idea that has been proposed by the secretariat of the Juba conference," Amum said.

Another leading Umma party official, Mubarak al-Fadil, said the idea of joint candidates could be extended to the parliamentary and regional elections that are to be held at the same time as the presidential one." A rainbow coalition would be in the making at all levels," he said.

However, Khartoum's newspapers today report an opposition official has denied an agreement on one candidate to run against Al-Bashir in the upcoming elections. "The coalition has not yet discussed this matter," coalition official, Abdul Qayoom Awad, told ***Al-Akhbar***.

ICC prosecutor hails states cooperation in isolating Sudan president

Sudan Tribune website 2/12/09 – The ICC Prosecutor Luis Moreno-Ocampo has lauded actions taken by states to isolate Sudanese president Omer Al-Bashir who faces an arrest warrant for his alleged roles in the crimes committed in Darfur.

"The Prosecution has encouraged states to maintain and express public and diplomatic support to such an approach. It has asked states to refrain from offering political support or financial aid to any of the three individuals subject of an arrest warrant or to those protecting them. It has also invited UN member States to sever all non-essential contacts with those subject to ICC warrants. The Prosecutor is grateful for the actions taken by States to respect their legal obligations and follow those guidelines" Ocampo said in an advance copy of the report obtained by Sudan Tribune due to the UN Security Council (UNSC) report on Friday.

"Al-Bashir, at risk of arrest as he is the object of an arrest warrant, has not traveled to the territory of States Parties, whether South Africa, Uganda, Nigeria, or Venezuela. He cannot attend the UN Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen, where the Danish Foreign Ministry pointed out that Denmark will comply with UNSCR 1593. He has not attended the UN General Assembly or a Summit meeting of the OIC Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation (COMCEC)" the report says.

UN, Sudan Government discuss 2010 plan

HAC Commissioner Hassabo Mohamed Abdul Rahman and UN Humanitarian Coordinator Ameerah Haq held bilateral talks yesterday on the outcome of donors meeting in Geneva and the joint plan for 2010, ***Al-Ahdath*** reports. They praised the donor meeting and the role by the Netherlands which took the initiative to convene the meeting.

Umma Party leader paints a "hellish" scenario in the country

Umma Party leader Sadiq Al-Mahdi has anticipated a tough year for Sudanese due to drought, low level of the River Nile waters and price-hike of agricultural products, ***Al-Sahafa*** reports. Al-Mahdi also painted a grim picture of the country's future, saying he expects a "hellish" scenario should differences between the NCP and the SPLM continue.

Organizers of CPA 5th anniversary celebration threaten to go on strike

Radio Miraya 3/12/09 - Workers in Western Equatoria State participating in preparation for the celebration of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement's 5th anniversary threatened to go on strike if the government fails to pay their delayed wages. The workers gave the State Government a five-day ultimatum to fulfill their demands.

Meanwhile, Deputy Governor, Joseph Ngere, pointed out that the government has only received ten million Sudanese Pounds out of the sixty million allocated by the South Sudan Government for the celebrations.

In January 2010, Yambio town of Western Equatoria State will host the 5th anniversary celebrations of the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement.

More LRA rebels surrender in Sudan

The **New Vision website** 2/12/09 - Two more Lord's Resistance Army rebels have surrendered to the UPDF [Uganda People's Defence Force] intelligence squad in Nzara in Southern Sudan's Western Equatoria State.

"Sergeant" Onen Alex and Moses Kabo turned themselves in last week, an anonymous source told the Sudan Tribune.

The two fighters said they hailed from Gulu and were part of the LRA group that was operating in the Faradje area in eastern Congo.

The group's overall commanders, "Col" Charles Arop and Charles Ukuti, surrendered earlier this month after most of their men had either defected or been killed.

The unit of originally 71 rebels had been operating around Faradje since late last year and was responsible for the Christmas massacre of at least 143 people.

Military sources estimate the total number of LRA rebels left in the Democratic Republic of Congo at 80. The rest crossed to the Central African Republic, together with their leader, Joseph Kony.

Kabo told journalists at the UPDF military base in Nzara that he was captured in 1995 in Lira district.

"Conditions in the bush have become inhuman. Torrential rains and constant movements in the wilderness have forced many to surrender," Kabo stated.

Nigerian to head Darfur peacekeeping mission – UN

Reuters 2/12/09 - Nigerian diplomat Ibrahim Gambari will become the new head of the joint U.N.-African Union peacekeeping mission in Sudan's conflict-torn western Darfur region, the United Nations said on Wednesday.

U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon informed the Security Council about the appointment in a letter to Burkina Faso's U.N. Ambassador Michel Kafando, the current council president, Ban's spokeswoman Marie Okabe said.

Gambari, a former Nigerian foreign minister and current U.N. special envoy to Myanmar, will take up his new post on Jan. 1, 2010, Ban said in the letter. Gambari, 65, is replacing Rodolphe Adada, a former foreign minister of the Republic of Congo, who resigned in August.

African Union Darfur Panel shifts focus to Sudanese elections

VOANews.com 2.12.09 - AU panel on Darfur takes on new mission to foster a transition to democracy in Sudan; the panel's first task will be to ensure credible national elections in April.

"There is an immediate objective in front of us, Sudan is going to have elections in April 2010, what we must do is to assist everybody involved in that to ensure they actually have democratic elections, successful democratic elections."

The African Union panel on Darfur led by former South African president Thabo Mbeki is taking on a new mission: trying to foster a transition to democracy in Sudan. The panel's first order of business will be to ensure credible national elections next April.

The nine-member Mbeki panel got down to work meeting officials representing military and diplomatic organizations hoping to help Sudan through a difficult period ahead.

In addition to the ongoing troubles in Darfur, the country faces the challenge of holding general elections next April to choose a president and parliament. That vote, Sudan's first democratic election in 24 years, is to be followed nine months later by a referendum on southern secession.

A former southern rebel group has said it plans to field a candidate in the April election to oppose President Omar al-Bashir, who has been indicted for war crimes by the International Criminal Court.

Panel Chairman Thabo Mbeki says the panel's first hurdle will be a big one. "There is an immediate objective in front of us, Sudan is going to have elections in April 2010, what we must do is to assist everybody involved in that to ensure they actually have democratic elections. Successful democratic elections," he said.

An international election observer organization this week criticized Sudan's government for doing too little to publicize the April election. In a statement, the U.S. based Carter Center said voters in some regions are apparently unaware of the election. With the deadline looming, the Carter Center warned that fewer than half the eligible voters had registered in some states.

Mr. Mbeki said one of the biggest challenges will be persuading the people of Darfur to participate, and to have faith in the electoral process.

"It is important that the people of Darfur are involved in those elections," he said "Otherwise you this sense of exclusion and marginalization if the whole country goes to election to choose a president, a national parliament and so on, and the people of Darfur are not part of that process," he said.

The national election was envisioned as part of a 2005 comprehensive peace agreement that ended more than two decades of war between northern and southern Sudan. That vote is to be followed by a referendum in January, 2011, giving southerners a chance to decide whether to remain part of Sudan or secede.

Indications are the south will vote for independence, a prospect many fear could lead to a resumption of war.

But diplomats attending Wednesday's meeting expressed concern that a failed April election would ruin any chance of a peaceful referendum.

Panel Chairman Mbeki avoided questions about how he might go about promoting reconciliation in a country ravaged by wars for decades. Speaking to a roomful of mediators, experts and peacekeeping officials, he appealed for fresh ideas.

Asked afterward how he saw his role in the process, the former South African leader quipped, 'the task for the panel is to make sure things happen'.