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# Media Monitoring Report

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## Referendum Watch

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# Highlights

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## **Resigned SSRC Spokesperson proposes referendum delay by 5 months**

*Al-Sahafa* 3/11/10 – The South Sudan Referendum Commission has decided to print referendum ballots of the two choices of unity and separation inside Sudan. The SSRC has already received several suggestions for symbols of the two choices including a complete map of Sudan as a symbol for unity and South Sudan map as a symbol for secession.

Meanwhile, SSRC Spokesperson Ambassador Jamal Mohamed Ibrahim who has submitted his resignation said it would be impossible to conduct the vote on time and proposed a delay until April or May 2011.

The SSRC has proposed 165 registration centres in northern states, 77 centres abroad and 2500 centres in the South.

A reliable source revealed that the SSRC would not print cards of the two choices abroad due to the tight time, saying they would be printed inside Sudan under tight observation of monitors, adding the SSRC would endorse the symbols it received in the coming meeting.

The source said the SSRC is currently considering the issue of registration of southerners abroad and the challenges facing the process of registration. The SSRC said registration within and abroad would be done simultaneously in the middle of the coming month.

The source added that campaign for the two choices would kickoff next Sunday and would continue for two months. The source said the SSRC, at a meeting yesterday, endorsed “Observers Act” which contains conditions for monitoring especially neutrality, need for the monitors not to show any sign that could suggest they favour either choice, respect to laws and submission of applications for observation to the SSRC in Khartoum and Juba which will be examined by an SSRC committee.

Meanwhile, SSRC Spokesperson Jamal Ibrahim who has submitted his resignation said he had done so due to deep differences within the Commission but SSRC member Tariq Osman Al-Tahir denied any differences within the Commission.

Mr. Ibrahim said there was a misunderstanding that the UN would deposit money in the treasury. “This is not right. UN will provide technical and logistical support and it has actually done it,” he said. He added that the SSRC members have no political affiliations, adding “there is no interference from the NCP or the SPLM in the work of the Commission and there is no plan that other members will resign”.

Head of the SSRC, Mohamed Ibrahim Khalil, said preparations for the referendum were proceeding despite obstacles.

## **SSRC Chief accused of nepotism**

*Al-Sudani* 3/11/10 – SSRC Chief Mohamed Ibrahim Khalil has reacted to those whom he

described as “skeptics” and “people of vested interests”, saying they should consider his long and spotless record of public service. However, Khalil admitted that he had recruited his daughter in the SSRC’s post of executive director. Khalil dismissed charges of nepotism, saying he repeatedly requested to be relieved from the post but the two CPA partners insisted that he should continue and accused the resigned SSRC Spokesperson Jamal Ibrahim of floating such rumours. “These are old information so why they have been raised now. The former spokesperson, whom we have dismissed for poor performance, is behind these claims,” he said.

### **SSRC Spokesperson sacked not resigned - SSRC Chief**

*The Citizen* 3/11/10 – SSRC said its former spokesperson, Jamal Mohamed Ibrahim, was sacked on performance concerns, refuting his announcement yesterday that he had resigned.

SSRC Chairman, Professor Mohamed Ibrahim Khalil told *the Citizen* that the SSRC has sacked Jamal before completing the probation period, noting “we, myself and the SSRC Secretary General notified him of the decision of his dismissal, so it is not true that he has resigned as he was self-proclaimed spokesperson for he was not and has never been the SSRC official spokesperson”.

Khalil said the official SSRC spokesperson is Su’ad Ibrahim Eissa, while Jamal was the director of the SSRC Information and “not the spokesperson but he kept talking to the press,” indicating that the sacked official was at odds with his deputy Mr. George Maker, besides he had launched an SSRC website full of spelling mistake.

Khalil said the press made a big fuss around the issue, saying “even if the SSRC Chief resigned that would never mean the end of the world or a big deal” and slammed the press categorization of SSRC members on political or elitist affiliation, saying they are just citizens.

Meanwhile, the SSRC elucidated that the time left before the fixed date for conducting the referendum on the 9<sup>th</sup> of January is too short and needs to be delayed by at least three months, unveiling that it had submitted a request to the Presidency of the Republic to amend the Referendum Act through the Parliament to mend for the missed three months between voters resignation and the voting process, whereas, the SSRC Chairman admitted the time constraint, saying “time is too short besides there are some hurdles and big difficulties facing the process, but we have a national responsibility which we must accomplish by exerting our utmost efforts” adding “we said the schedule is too tight and entails infringement of the law, which requires three months between the start of voters registration and voting process so we have asked the Presidency to amend the law through the Parliament for the CPA and the Constitution end the transitional period in July 2011 but every procedure is behind schedule for the political reasons and differences”.

Khalil said the hurdles are created by several quarters including the international organizations by directly dealing with SSRC Juba branch as an independent commission disregarding its head the main SSRC in Khartoum, noting “such dealings are not acceptable from these organizations”. Khalil though vowed to exert the best efforts to accomplish the mission, otherwise “I will say I could not, as I have reported the too short time”.

### **SSRC denies receiving \$ 300,000 from donors**

*Al-Rai Al-Aam* 3/11/10 – SSRC Chairman Mohamed Ibrahim Khalil has denounced statement

by UNIRED Chief Denis Kadima that donors have pledged \$ 63 million for the referendum. "Only \$100,000 has been received from donors not \$300, 000," Khalil said, adding the amount is used for rent of SSRC premises and stationary.

### **AEC urges international community, CPA parties to fund referendum**

*Al-Rai Al-Aam* 3/11/10 – AEC Chairman Derek Plumbly has called on the international community and the two partners to provide necessary funding for the conduct of the referendum and to resolve issues that might hamper its organization.

Plumbly told reporters after meeting with SSRC Chief yesterday that he was optimistic that efforts by AUHIP chairman would succeed in overcoming difficulties and the vote would take place on time.

He said AEC role is limited to monitoring the referendum individually not as part of international observers.

### **Kiir calls on southerners to donate funds for the referendum**

*Al-Khartoum* 3/11/10 – FVP and GoSS President Salva Kiir Mayardit revealed that the Presidency has failed to sanction a budget for the referendum, calling on southerners to donate one-month salary to assist GoSS to meet its pledge towards the conduct of the vote.

According to the London-based *Al-Sharq Al-Awsat*, Kiir made the remarks at the governors' conference in Juba, where he mentioned that the two partners have failed to approve a budget, charging the central government of being hesitant to fund the SSRC's activities.

### **South Africa foreign minister calls for on-time Sudan referendum**

*AFP* 2/11/10 - South Africa's foreign minister called Tuesday for the upcoming referendum on independence for south Sudan to go ahead as scheduled, saying outstanding issues could be resolved after the vote.

"We support the decision of the Sudanese leadership that the north and south should go ahead with implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement and to ensure the referendum takes place on time," Maite Nkoana-Mashabane told journalists.

"Issues that cannot be agreed on now can be agreed post the referendum."...

### **SPLA denies attacking SAF area in Sennar**

*Radio Miraya* 2/11/10 - The Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) has denied that it carried out attacks on the areas of the Sudan Armed Forces in Sennar. Speaking to Radio Miraya, the SPLA Spokesman, Kuol Diem Kuol, said that militias affiliated to the Sudan Armed Forces headed by Michael Newcol is behind the looting of civilians in the area.

Earlier, the Spokesman of the Sudan Armed Forces, Al Swarmi Khalid Saad, accused the SPLA of attacking the area of Zalami, north of the 1/1/1956 borderline, five kilometers in Sennar State. Saad said that the attackers used three Land Cruisers.

## **UN to hold ministerial meeting on Sudan**

*AFP* 2/11/10 - A ministerial meeting on Sudan will be held at the UN headquarters this month, just two days after registration starts on a referendum that could lead to the break-up of Africa's biggest nation, officials said Tuesday.

Despite major delays, which have led to fears of new conflict in Sudan, the UN Security Council is still hoping that the votes in southern Sudan and Abyei region will go ahead on January 9, said Britain's UN ambassador Mark Lyall Grant.

Britain's Foreign Secretary William Hague will chair the November 16 meeting, added Lyall Grant who is president of the Security Council for November.

"We believe it is critical that the Security Council retains a very close focus on Sudan in these critical months," Lyall Grant told a press conference.

He added that the international community would want to "reassert" the importance of the referendums being held on time and being peaceful and credible. The ambassador said the Darfur conflict would probably also be discussed at the ministerial meeting.

## **NCP downplays extension of US sanctions on Sudan**

*Radio Miraya* 2/11/10 - The National Congress Party said that the extension of the US economic sanctions on Sudan for one more year will not have any impact on the country's activities. The Foreign Relations Secretary in the Party, Rabei Abdal Ati, said that the extension is aimed at shaking the 2011 referendum process.

Meanwhile, the spokesman of the Sudanese Foreign Affairs, Mauweia Khalid, said that the decision taken by the US is not a surprise. Addressing the press in Khartoum, Khalid said that Sudan has survived without the US for years now and will continue to exist without them.

On Monday, President Barack Obama renewed the US economic embargo on Sudan. The sanctions restrict trade and investment in Sudan and also block the assets of the Sudanese government and certain officials, among other things.

## **UN chief Ban urges China help on Myanmar, Sudan**

*AP* 3/11/10 - UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon called on Security Council member China to help with contentious polls in Sudan and Myanmar, but skirted the issue of Beijing's human rights record.

Ban said China, a close ally of Khartoum, could help ensure a peaceful outcome to Sudan's January referendum over whether the south will secede from Africa's largest country.

"I asked your government's help in assisting the two sides find their way to a peaceful future, recognizing their shared interests," Ban said in a speech Tuesday at the ruling Communist Party's central training institute. A text of the speech was viewed on the website of the U.N. mission to China on Wednesday.

In addition to diplomatic engagement, Ban said China, which has a substantial peacekeeping mission in Sudan, could help with logistical tasks of transport and technical support in the

voting.

He also asked that China to use its influence with its southern neighbor Myanmar to ensure it moves in a positive direction following the military-run government's staging of the country's first elections in two decades on Sunday...

### **Intensive contacts to hold popular consultation in Blue Nile**

*Al-Sahafa* 3/11/10 – The Blue Nile state held a political meeting, in coordination with UN Mission, for discussion on a range of issues concerning the state.

Blue Nile Governor Malik Aqar stressed the need to complete necessary arrangements to implement the remaining CPA benchmarks.

A representative of UN Mission told the meeting that the Mission's efforts are focused on creating an atmosphere conducive to the implementation of the popular consultation in the state.

### **Kiir and Gration discuss referendum preparations**

*Al-Rai Al-Aam* 3/11/10 – GoSS President Salva Kiir Mayardit and US envoy Scott Gration discussed in Juba yesterday the situation in the South and ongoing preparations to conduct the referendum.

According to SPLM SG Pagan Amum, the meeting also touched on contentious issues between the two CPA Partners and the need to conduct the vote on time and to accept its results. He denied any move on the part of the SPLM or the international community to defer the vote.

### **“The North stands on South's legs” – SPLM**

*Akhir Lahza* 3/11/10 – The SPLM has said that the North “walks on the South's legs”, adding that the North would suffer if it continues to rely on oil after secession. Chairman of the Parliament's Economic Committee Guech Makuej told reporters yesterday that all oil revenues would be ownership of the South and the North would suffer if it continues to rely on oil.

### **Reaching agreement on Abyei faces challenges – Luka Biong**

*The Citizen* 3/11/10 – Cabinet Minister Luka Biong said on Sunday in an interview on Sudan TV that reaching an agreement with the NCP on Abyei region seems to be impossible.

Luka added in the interview that the issue on who is eligible to vote is very important because it determines the outcome of the referendum.

“It is very important to know who is eligible to vote,” Luka said, adding “you can not allow anyone to vote, because this mess up the vote”.

### **Kiir calls for meeting of leaders all southern Sudan political parties**

*Sudan Tribune website* 2/11/10 - The President of the semi-autonomous Government of Southern Sudan and chairman of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), Salva Kiir Mayardit, has called for a meeting of the southern political leaders on 13 November 2010.

A recent “All Southern Sudan Political Parties Conference” held in Juba, agreed that two

meetings of the “Leadership Council” – consisting of the leaders of all the south’s political parties – will meet twice before the region holds a self-determination referendum in January.

The first meeting will take place on 13 Nov. before registration begins on 14 Nov. while the other one will take place on 8 Jan. 2011 before voting takes place on 9 Jan.

In a preparatory meeting held on Tuesday under the chairmanship of the Vice President and Deputy Chairman of SPLM, Riek Machar Teny, the meeting also agreed to identify in the resolutions and recommendations of the recent conference issues that were of immediate priority before the conduct of the referendum.

In a press statement after the meeting, the SPLM Deputy Secretary General for Southern Sector, Ann Itto, said the committee would come up with a matrix and timetable outlining the priority areas that need to be discussed by the upcoming meeting of the Leadership Council.

All the leaders of the southern political parties are expected to attend the leadership meeting.

### **SPLM northern leaders to form a new political party**

*Al-Rai Al-Aam* 3/11/10 - A group of SPLM leaders (northern Sector) notified the Political Parties Registrar that they were intending to register a political party under the name the “The Movement of the Marginalized”. An informed source revealed to the newspaper yesterday that the group was of the opinion that the SPLM had overlooked its northern sector since April elections and is now guided by separatist tendencies. The source added that secession of the south was inevitable, therefore the northern sector of the SPLM should think of forming a new party to operate in the north.

## **Other Highlights**

### **US to press Sudan on closure of Darfur radio and rights groups offices**

*Sudan Tribune website* 2/11/10 - The United States has asked its special envoy to Sudan Scott Gration to press officials in Khartoum to reverse their recent crackdown on Darfur activists which occurred over the weekend.

Abdel-Mageed Salih, head of Human Rights and Advocacy Network for Democracy (HAND), told Reuters nine journalists and four HAND activists were detained during the raids.

"They also raided and closed our office and took all the things inside like the computers and documents and Radio Dabanga equipment," he said from the United States where he now lives.

Radio Dabanga, registered in Holland, is one of few media outlets still reporting on the Darfur conflict. It is not licensed in Sudan and the government continually writes to the Dutch government asking them to close the station, Salih said.

HAND also has no legal status in Sudan. The government cracked down on rights groups following a 2009 International Criminal Court arrest warrant for President Omar al-Bashir for war crimes in Darfur. Many activists fled the country fearing for their lives.

"The United States is deeply concerned by the reported arrests of several human rights activists and the closure of the Darfuri radio station's offices in Khartoum," U.S. State Department spokesman Philip Crowley said.

"Radio Dabanga is a very important source of information, real time information in Darfur. Special Envoy Gration will express these concerns directly with senior Sudanese officials during his meetings tomorrow" Crowley said.

Separately, the US ambassador to the United Nations, Susan Rice, said Washington "strongly condemns" the arrests and the reported shutdown of the Khartoum office of Radio Dabanga.

"These arrests indicate an emerging pattern of harassment and intimidation by the government of Sudan against civil society in advance of the scheduled January 9 referenda," Rice said.

Human Rights Watch (HRW) called on the Sudanese government Tuesday either to charge or immediately release the activists detained.

"The government appears to be targeting this group of people for their important work on Darfur, not because they committed any crime," said Rona Peligal, Africa director at Human Rights Watch. "It should immediately charge these individuals or release them."

"These arrests are clearly part of a wider pattern of stifling expression about ongoing human rights abuses in Darfur," Peligal said. "The government continues to clash with rebels and attack civilians, in violation of international humanitarian laws, and these activists are among the very few speaking out about it."

### **Sudan and LJM rebels to sign peace agreement before 19 December**

*Sudan Tribune website* 3/11/10 - Sudanese stakeholders participating in the Doha peace talks on Darfur conflict will sign a peace agreement before the 19th December, said a press statement released by the mediation on Monday.

Sudanese government and rebel Liberation and Justice Movement (LJM) ended direct negotiations and concluded discussions at the level of the steering committee over political agreement to end the seven-year conflict in Darfur.

The outcome of the negotiations is now delivered to the mediation which will seek to reconcile the positions of the two parties on the outstanding issues including the power sharing and justice and reconciliation files.

Before to sign the peace agreement in the period between the 14th and the 19th December, the mediation will conduct wide consultations with the "all stakeholders" including the rebel groups who are not part of the negotiations and the regional and international partners.

The mediation then will submit to the two parties "a synthesis of the negotiations containing consensus proposals on the outstanding issues," said a statement released Monday by Qatar State Minister for foreign affairs, Ahmed bin Abdullah Al-Mahmoud and the Joint Chief Mediator, Djibril Bassole.

Asked to react to this timetable, the head of LJM negotiating team Tadjadine Bechir Niam said much have been achieved on all the files and they are keen to sign the peace agreement.

However he stressed that "the signing of a peace agreement depends on the concessions that Khartoum will make on the power sharing and justice".

LJM rebels demand a vice-presidency for Darfur region and the establishment of one region in Darfur.

Presidential adviser Ghazi Salah Eddin Attabani arrived today to Doha where he is expected to discuss with the mediation and LJM rebels a number of proposals dealing with the outstanding issues.

Unconfirmed reports say the ruling National Congress Party might accept to concede the position of vice-president to the rebels but will seek to keep the three states in Darfur.

On the justice and reconciliation file, the rebels ask to amend the existing laws in a way to enable the Sudanese justice to try those accused of war crimes and crimes against humanity committed during the past years in Darfur.

They also want Khartoum to evacuate all the government militias from the region in order to avoid any troubles in the future by the same groups who are more and more uncontrollable.

The mediation announced it will prepare the final peace agreement after the end of the first week of December.

It will also hold two meetings, one for Afro Arab ministerial committee and the other for Sudan's special envoys from USA, Russia, China, France, Britain and the EU.

### **Kiir conducts wide transfers within SPLA**

*Al-Sahafa* 3/11/10 - SPLA Commander, President of GoSS has conducted wide transfers within SPLA chief of staff office described as routine. According to Kiir's decision, the SPLA spokesperson Kuol Deim Kuol has been moved to the position of Deputy Chief of Staff for supplies. Lieutenant General Deim said that President Kiir issued an order to all SPLA units on October 28th on transfers with the SPLA chief of staff. He said that deputy chief of staff for operations Agooto Mameer is transferred to the position of deputy chief of staff for orientation and guidance; Bayar Atem, deputy chief of staff for supplies is moved to the office of the SPLA General Inspector and Lieutenant General Ayoyen Aleer is transferred from the office of deputy chief of staff for orientation to the position of deputy chief of staff for operations. Lieutenant General Deim added that a number of high ranking officers have been moved from the SPLA HQ to the field and vice versa. Lieutenant General Deim further stated that Colonel Philip Agweer Fanjak has been appointed as SPLA spokesperson.

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