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Media Monitoring Report

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Post-Referendum Watch

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Highlights

Government set up committee to look into future of UNMIS

Al-Sahafa 31/3/11 – The Sudanese Government announced the formation of a committee to consult with competent ministries and institutions to come up with a decision on the future of UNMIS in the Sudan after 9 July.

Rahamtallah Mohamed Osman, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, speaking to reporters following a meeting with DPKO official Margaret Carey, underlined the importance of continuation of UN's support and assistance to Sudan to bolster stability.

For her part, the DPKO official said UN would welcome any decision taken by the Sudanese government with regard to the future of the Mission.

Al-Ahram Al-Youm 31/3/11 reports Osman as telling reporters that the prospective decision on the future of the Mission would be taken after a tripartite meeting between the Sudanese government, UNMIS and UNAMID in April.

“The government's decision on UNMIS will take into consideration Sudan's interest and the situation on the ground,” Osman said, according to *Al-Rai Al-Aam* 31/3/11.

SPLA figures did not demand dissolution of GoSS – Luka Biong

Al-Rai Al-Aam 31/03/11 –Luka Biong, SPLM leading figure and Cabinet Affairs Minister, has rebuffed media reports that high-ranking SPLM/A figures have written a memorandum to GoSS President Salva Kiir Mayardit demanding the dissolution of the Government of Southern Sudan. He said he had direct contact with Paulino Matip, Alfred Ladu Gore and Ismail Konye who had reportedly signed the memorandum and all have denied sending such a memorandum.

Meanwhile, *Al-Sahafa* 31/3/11 reports that Matip denied on a telephone yesterday claims regarding the memorandum. He said he is sick and is currently in Nairobi and he would not send such memos to Kiir as his present focus is on preparations for the birth of a new state in the South.

Sudan's Bashir says no Abyei vote without Misseriya

AFP 31/3/11 - Sudan's President Omar al-Bashir has insisted the problem of Abyei cannot be solved without the Arab Misseriya nomads participating in a referendum on the status of the disputed border region.

"We are saying, loud and clear, that there will be no referendum on Abyei without the Misseriya," Bashir said in Doha late on Wednesday.

"The Abyei protocol states clearly that the inhabitants of the region, the Ngok Dinka and the other citizens, have the right to participate in the referendum.

"We refuse this division between first and second class citizens, between settled and nomadic.

They are all Sudanese and they have the same rights," the Sudanese leader added.

The Sudanese president flew to Doha for talks with the emir, Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani, on the foundering Darfur peace process, which is being mediated in the Qatari capital.

Bashir again accused Darfur rebel groups of fighting alongside the forces of Libyan leader Moamer Kadhafi.

"They have given weapons to our brothers in Libya, who are part of the Darfur rebel groups, they are (fighting) side by side," he said on Wednesday.

Juba to host meeting on Abyei today

Al-Ahdath 31/03/11 – The NCP and SPLM are set to hold talks on Abyei in the southern Sudanese capital of Juba tomorrow, sources said. According to the sources, the meeting was supposed to take place yesterday but was delayed because some delegates from the SPLM side were still out of Juba.

Reports also indicated that the Joint Defence Board will hold a meeting in Juba today.

North, south Sudan militarising Abyei, warns UN general

AFP 30/3/11 - A build-up of military weapons in Abyei by forces from both north and south Sudan is raising fears of further violence in the flashpoint border region, the UN mission in Sudan's chief commander warned on Wednesday.

"We have evidence that both sides have militarised Abyei," Major General Moses Obi told reporters in Khartoum.

"We have seen all sorts of armed elements that ordinarily are not supposed to be there.

"The weapons they are holding are higher than the scale that we would expect from the police. Some of them are rocket-propelled (grenade) launchers, some of them are multi-barrel rocket launchers, some are machine-guns mounted on wheels.

"Both sides have these weapons, and we think they should abide by their own agreement and get them out of Abyei," added the force commander of UNMIS, which monitors the implementation of a 2006 peace accord between Khartoum and Juba that ended a 22-year civil war...

Obi warned that, with the northern and southern armies deploying extra troops near the volatile region, and in the absence of a political solution, the situation in Abyei could quickly deteriorate.

"Both sides have their formations not too far from Abyei. They are all within their rights to deploy. But if the Abyei situation is not addressed, those deployments are near enough to influence Abyei at short notice," he said...

SAF spokesperson dismisses UNMIS FC's statement

Akhbar Al-Youm 31/3/11 – Spokesperson of the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) Col. Al-Sawarmi Khaled has dismissed "allegations" by UNMIS Force Commander Gen. Moses Obi to the effect that Khartoum is building up troops around Abyei, adding what Obi said was a mere unsubstantiated charge.

Khaled, however, confirmed that the SPLA maintains intensive presence in Abyei and the whole world knows about that.

Unity state condemns “defection” of SPLA Maj. General Peter Gatdet

Sudan Tribune website 30/3/11 - Unity state’s spokesman for state government Gideon Gatpan Thaor confirmed to the state citizens on Wednesday that Maj. General Peter Gatdet has left South Sudan’s official army (SPLA) in an apparent rebellion against the southern government.

The state official condemned the move saying that resorting to violence is not the right way to resolve South Sudan’s differences.

The defection of Peter Gatdet Yaka from the southern Sudan army is added to the growing list of rebels taking up arms against Juba government ahead of independence in July.

Thaor said that the Unity state government condemned Gatdet’s saying that the South should be looking to embrace peace and harmony ahead of the regions secession after the overwhelming vote for separation in January.

The spokesmen said that any grievances should be achieved through a negotiated settlement.

Peter Gatdet was the deputy SPLA divisional commander in Northern Bahr el Ghazal before his defection but has a long history of switching sides.

According to SPLA spokesman Philip Aguer, Peter Gatdet took an official leave to Nairobi for medical treatment, but once arrived there, he took a plane to Khartoum. Since then he did not respond to SPLA attempts to contact him.

The SPLA accuses the Sudanese Armed Forces of being responsible for his flight to Khartoum, but SAF Spokesman Al Sawarmi Khalid has denied General Gatdet is in the northern capital. It is assumed that the renegade commander will try to mobilize forces in his home area of Unity state, where he fought throughout the war.

It is not clear if he will join hands with other rebels in the state – Gatluak Gai, Bapiny Monytuel and Gai Yaoch, all of whom also fought under Paulino Matip during the war.

Thaor said that the Unity state’s security organs have established contact with Gatdet’s close allies, who acknowledged their defection but have refused to disclose the intentions of their rebellion.

Thaor added that General Gatdet is known as a charismatic leader and talented mobilizer, and the state hopes he chooses other means to express his discontent. The state spokesman said that these issues should be addressed through national consensus and constitutional means instead of violence.

The political situation remains tense in Unity state since April 2010. Many citizens rejected the election of Governor Taban Deng Gai, believing that the vote was rigged against his main rival Angelina Teny the wife of South Sudan vice president Riek Machar.

Gadet joins a growing group of rebels across South Sudan, which appears to be forming a coalition under the leadership of former SPLA deputy chief of staff George Athor, who accuses the government of rigging last year's elections.

UN voices concern over fighting between Militias and GoSS

Sudan Vision 31/3/11 - A senior United Nations official has voiced "significant concern" at conflicts involving at least four separate militia groups in areas of Southern Sudan, which earlier this year voted to secede and become a separate nation.

"While the Government of Southern Sudan has a responsibility to address a security threat within its territory, we urge it to do so in accordance with international humanitarian law," UN Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) Regional Coordinator for Southern Sudan David Gressly told a news conference yesterday in Juba, the capital, referring to the violence in the Upper Nile region.

"I am pleased to report that we have gained access to many of those areas in northern Jonglei State where the movement of our personnel and humanitarian agencies had recently been curtailed by these ongoing operations," he added of the conflicts affecting Jonglei, Upper Nile and Unity states.

"The ongoing violence in the greater Upper Nile region continues to be a source of significant concern for the mission," Mr. Gressly said. "Pockets of conflict involving at least four separate militia groups dot the maps of Jonglei, Upper Nile and Unity states, and the SPLA has launched offensives aimed at containing those groups."

Referring to continuing inter-communal violence in Western Equatoria state between Dingka Atuot and Beli tribesmen, he noted that UNMIS military contingents have provided "a strong response" with ongoing patrols to deter violence and support humanitarian relief efforts. UNMIS is also looking actively at mediation support options through the Government and state governments concerned.

Mr. Gressly reported that as of a week ago some 261,000 southerners had moved back to the country's 10 southern states since the end of October last year, but the flow had decreased significantly in recent weeks, apparently due to the exhaustion of Government funds to assist returnees.

He paid tribute to "one of the good success stories" of UNMIS, "the outstanding de-mining work" by the Mine Action Office, and most recently clearing more than 5.6 million square metres of land with their implementing partners.

"Over 18,000 kilometres of road have been surveyed and then cleared of any mines that have been found. So the bulk of all of the roads in Southern Sudan have been cleared. What remains is a great deal of work to clear unexploded ordnance," he said, calling the clearance of landmines freshly laid by militias in a pattern that can take out convoys of vehicles in northern Jonglei state "the next big challenge." ..

Jonglei: Gadiang shooting leaves Eyat driver dead and one soldier injured

Sudan Tribune website 29/3/11 - A driver working for Eyat a road building company was killed

and a soldier seriously injured in an ambush in the Gadiang area of Jonglei state in South Sudan on Friday March 25.

An Eyat engineer, Ibrahim Abdala, told Sudan Tribune that his team that left Gadiang to a work on an area of the Yuai road when encountered an armed group, he believed were loyal to rebel leader David Yauyau, at 10am local time, around 50 km north of Gadiang, where they shot his driver dead after warning them to stop the moving car.

He said that he was taken by the militia to meet a man who claimed to be Yauyau. The man warned him and his company to stop working on the road.

David Yau Yau is one of the three men who rebelled against the government of South Sudan after failing to win positions in last year's April elections. Yauyau failed to become a representative in his home county of Pibor.

Unlike the other two rebel leaders, Yauyau is not a former member of the South Sudan army (SPLA).

Since their rebellions began in May last year Yauyau and Gatluk Gai in Unity state increasingly operated under the umbrella of former SPLA general and South Sudan minister George Athor Deng, from his base in Khorfulus in Jonglei state.

Abdala said they were forced to drive the car off road and hide it far from the road where they were investigated by David Yauyau but he declined to say what he was asked.

According to Abdala, a grader vehicle that was following them approached the scene of incident 10 minutes later carrying an Eyat driver and a SPLA soldier. He said the driver stopped as he was ordered but the militia started shooting killing the driver.

Mr. Abdala said two of them were captured by militias and were released by their leader, David Yauyau, who was with the armed men.

"They took us to their leader who declared himself as David Yau yau", he said. Abdala said Yauyau told him that he has nothing to do with Northern Sudanese living in the south and apologized for the death of driver.

"He set us free and warn us not to work on that road anymore", he said. Abdala said their telephones were taken by the armed group and his company has now left the area after Yauyau's threats. He acknowledged that although the militias were few in number, they were heavily armed.

Political parties censure GoSS

Al-Tayyar 31/03/11 – Southern Sudanese opposition parties are lamenting what they described as the "total collapse of government structures in southern Sudan." David Jal, the Secretary-General of the United Democratic Salvation Front (USDF), also deplored the increase in tensions and differences between the leaders, corruption and the security problems in the region.

David also accused the GoSS of sponsoring the drafting of a law that would marginalize

southern Sudanese parties in the registration process for the next elections. He said that the SPLM intends to create a single-party state.

Presidency to hold a meeting on controversy over southern MPs

Al-Ahram Al-Youm 31/3/11 – National Assembly Deputy Speaker, Atem Garang, has revealed that the Presidency and the GoSS would hold a meeting within four days to resolve ongoing controversy over the issue of continuation of the southern MPs as members of the House.

Garang has declined to comment on the statement by the Speaker Ahmed Ibrahim Al-Tahir to the effect that the southern MPs would be allowed to attend the inaugural meeting of the third session of the Parliament, saying the status of the MPs would be decided by the upcoming Presidency meeting not the Speaker.

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