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Media Monitoring Report

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Address: UNMIS Headquarters, P.O. Box 69, Ibeid Khatim St, Khartoum 11111, SUDAN
Phone: (+249-1) 8708 6000 - Fax: (+249-1) 8708 6200

Highlights

ICC seeking to impede elections – Government

Sudan Government has criticized the ICC decision to review genocide charge against President Al-Bashir, saying the Court is seeking to impede elections and to block democratic transformation, *local dailies* report. According to *Al-Ahdath*, Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Muawia Khaled told reporters yesterday that his Government would not care about the ICC move which he described as a devastating political activity that aims at impeding efforts to bring about peace for Darfur in Doha. He reiterated the Government's firm position that it would not recognize the ICC, saying it's a "political and racist Court".

Al-Rai Al-Aam reports the Ministry of Foreign Affairs yesterday issued a statement saying the ICC has no competence over Sudan or its citizens and that the Sudanese Government would not recognize the Court. Sudanese Ambassador to UN Abdul Mahmoud Abdul Haleem described the ICC move as a desperate attempt.

According to *Akhbar Al-Youm*, the NCP Leadership Council issued a statement yesterday rejecting the ICC decision, reiterating a previous position that the NCP would not recognize the Court. The statement questioned the timing of move, saying it aims at hamper efforts to achieve peace in Darfur.

Radio Miraya website 3/2/10 reported that the Sudanese Government rejected the decision of the ICC Appeals Court to review the absence of genocide charges from the arrest warrant for President Al-Bashir. The State Minister for Information, Spokesperson of the Government, Kamal Obeid, described the decision as an attempt to impact the upcoming elections in Sudan and the ongoing Darfur peace negotiations in Doha.

JEM has welcomed the ICC decision. JEM Spokesperson, Ahmed Hussein, denied media reports claiming that JEM is reconsidering resuming the talks on Darfur peace in the aftermath of the ICC decision. Hussein reiterated JEM's commitment to a peaceful solution for the Darfur crisis.

Kenya supports Southern Sudan self- referendum – Odinga

Sudan Tribune website 4/2/10— The Kenyan Prime Minister Raila Odinga has urged the international community to support a referendum to be held next year on southern Sudan self-determination adding Kenya is committed to outcome of this popular consultation.

Odinga remarks supporting southern Sudan independence come following statements by the chiefs of the African Union, Jean Ping and the United Nations Ban Ki-Moon on the need to preserve Sudan's unity.

"I strongly urge the entire international community to pursue a similar course and offer maximum assistance in implementing the referendum's outcome, whatever it might be," said Raila on Wednesday.

He emphasized that Kenya was fully committed to and would respect the outcome of the self determination referendum, whether it favors maintaining unity or creation of an independent state in southern Sudan.

The Kenyan Prime Minister said the AU and UN stand would undermine the principle of peaceful resolution of disputes of which the CPA is an outstanding example globally. "Having done so much to advance this historic process of self-determination, it is preposterous that anyone would seek a pre-determined outcome in the referendum," he added.

Raila called on the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), which sponsored the peace process hosted at the time Kenyan government to take lead in the ensuring the implementation of the CPA.

"IGAD was familiar with all the issues concerning the CPA and was in a better position to resolve outstanding issues such border demarcations at the oil-rich Abyei region and the population census process."

SPLA head still in office – Spokesman

Gurtong 3/2/10 reported that the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) has denied reports that the army's Commander-In- Chief Lieutenant General Salva Kiir Mayardit and top army officials are set to retire. SPLA's spokesman Major General Kuol Diem Kuol said such reports had been written by "enemies of peace" who are out to create confusion in the South Sudan army and South Sudan in general.

"There is nothing like retirement being discussed by the SPLA. Indeed there was some re-organization in Divisions 2, 4 and 5 at the General headquarters, but that is normal in the military", he said. "We simply interchanged the Division Commanders internally but did not retire any of them", he added.

Col Joseph Bakosoro involved in fatal car crash in Juba

Sudan Tribune website 3/2/10– Western Equatoria independent candidate Col Joseph Bakosoro survived a fatal car accident early Wednesday morning in Juba.

There were two cars involved in the crash and the other persons in the car survived too.

Col Bakosoro was stable after treatment of pain on Wednesday afternoon, and his disclosed pains were not considered life threatening.

Al-Bashir and Qatari emir discuss how to push Darfur talks

Sudan Government reiterated its interest for an urgent solution to Darfur crisis at the upcoming round of talks in Doha, **local dailies** report. State Minister at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Ali Karti told reporters following a brief visit by President Al-Bashir to Qatar yesterday that the atmosphere was right to achieve an urgent solution to end the conflict in Darfur. He said President Al-Bashir discussed with Qatari emir how to push the upcoming talks in Doha, saying the visit was successful. According to **Al-Rai Al-Aam**, Karti said the period until elections is the only chance left to resolve the Darfur issue because after elections there would be a new government and a new negotiator.

Chad's Deby says will visit Sudan next week

AFP 3/2/10 - Chad's President Idriss Deby Itno said Wednesday he would travel to Khartoum next week to meet Sudan's President Omar Al-Bashir, amid a thaw in relations between the African neighbours.

"I am going to Khartoum on 8th of February to have talks with President al-Bashir," Deby said in

a speech to a conference of parliamentarians from around 20 Francophone countries in Chad.

"At the time I am talking to you, he has not yet been informed, so I'm giving you this scoop. He will be informed at the end of this meeting."

"I am a man of dialogue and openness. War has never settled things and I know what I'm talking about, dear parliamentarians. Chad wants to live in perfect harmony with all its neighbours."

UNAMID refutes Sudanese army accusations

UN News 3/2/10 – UNAMID in the war-torn Darfur region today strongly rejected “unfounded allegations” leveled by the Sudanese military’s spokesperson that it is collaborating with JEM.

The mission emphasized in a press release that it “does not and shall not deviate from its responsibility and mandated obligation to serve as an impartial and honest broker in the peace process.”

It also stressed that it “has never and will never collaborate in the form described with any parties to the conflict in Darfur.”

However, the accusations – which include not reporting acts of banditry in addition to collaborating with the rebels – will not negatively affect the “very good cooperation” UNAMID has and will continue to foster with all levels of Sudan’s Government, the mission noted.

Time running out for “powder Keg” – former diplomats

IRIN 1/2/10 - The peace agreement which ended years of war between north and south Sudan could unravel unless immediate steps are taken to salvage it, two key former diplomats say.

"Today, five years after the historic Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) was signed between North and South Sudan, there is a real threat of an all-out war returning to Sudan and still no permanent resolution to the Darfur conflict," Lt-Gen Lazarus Sumbeiywo and John Danforth warned.

Sumbeiywo was chief mediator at the peace talks between Sudanese parties in the central Kenyan town of Naivasha. Danforth was US envoy for peace in Sudan.

Five years after the signing of the CPA, the former diplomats wrote in Kenya's EastAfrican newspaper that crucial provisions have not been implemented. Conditions across the country had also deteriorated.

"Unless international support is dramatically increased to help North and South Sudan agree on the foundations of their future, we fear the [April 2010] elections and [2011] referendum may throw the country back into massive war," they said.

On Darfur, they said violence had increased yet the root causes of the conflict had not been addressed. "The situation in Eastern Sudan and the three transitional areas of Abyei, Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile remains volatile as well."

Last week, US ambassador to the UN Susan Rice said Washington was concerned about the flow of arms, including heavy weapons, into southern Sudan. Her government, Rice added, believed the arms were coming from northern Sudan and neighbouring countries. The

Sudanese government denied the allegations.

On 30 January, African Union (AU) Commission Chairman Jean Ping described the situation as a powder keg.

"Is the war between north and south at risk of resuming despite what has been said? Will the independence of Southern Sudan not lead other players in Darfur and in other places, which are currently not asking for independence, to seek independence as Southern Sudan will have done?" Ping asked on Radio France International. "We have a feeling that we are sitting on a powder keg," he added.

There has been a recent upsurge of violence in the south. For example, at least 140 people were killed and 90 wounded in a January attack on Wunchai Region of Warrap State. A separate report by the Small Arms Survey on 15 December said Sudan's future appeared increasingly precarious.

"Despite progress made in recent days, the peace process continues to lurch from one crisis to the next," it noted. "Just three months ago the head of the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) predicted a 50 percent chance of a return to war with President Omar al-Bashir's National Congress Party (NCP)."

It said obstacles to progress on talks on Darfur were many: Major armed groups remain splintered and the Arab militias were increasingly disenchanted.

"In parallel with these troubling developments, the demand for small arms and light weapons - and some larger conventional weapons systems - among government forces, insurgents, and unaligned groups in the country has grown considerably," the survey said.

130 European observers to monitor Sudan's elections

The NEC yesterday signed an agreement with the EU Mission on observation of Sudan's elections, *Al-Sahafa* reports. Based on the agreement, 130 European electoral observers will monitor the upcoming elections at all its levels. NEC Deputy Chairman Abdullah Ahmed Abdullah told reporters that NEC has so far endorsed AU, Arab League, Carter Centre, IGAD and EU to monitor Sudan's elections. Applications from China and Japan for the same purpose were referred to committee concerned for consideration.

SPLM to coordinate with opposition on elections

Al-Sahafa reports that the SPLM Political Bureau has decided on coordination between the SPLM and the opposition parties (Juba coalition) on elections. Meanwhile, SPLM SG Pagan Amum told the paper that the Bureau has summoned the SPLM functionaries who decided to contest elections independently for a meeting today for discussion on the issue.