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Highlights

NCP General Convention wraps up

Local dailies report the NCP yesterday concluded its general convention and issued a final communiqué. According to **Al-Intibaha**, the convention endorsed Al-Bashir's candidacy for upcoming presidential elections. The final communiqué reiterated the NCP's commitment to conduct free and fair elections on schedule. It considered unity of Sudan a national obligation and called upon all the Sudanese people to preserve unity of the country.

The **Citizen** reports that the recommendations of the convention made no reference to administration of justice, trial of perpetrators of alleged violations in Darfur and compensations. It only stressed that more efforts were needed towards social reconciliation, voluntary return, and humanitarian work and care for the IDPs.

Al-Ayyam reports that President Al-Bashir, who addressed the closing session of the convention, said that the NPC would accept the outcome of the polls. The President also reiterated the NCP's commitment to resolve all national issues through dialogue. "Splitting Sudan is like splitting the African continent," Al-Bashir said, vowing to work with the people of southern Sudan to realize voluntary unity.

Reuters 3/10/09 reported Sudan's ruling party nominated President Omar al-Bashir for re-election on Saturday despite an International Criminal Court warrant to arrest him for war crimes.

"The NCP's General Conference has decided to support the nomination of Omar al-Bashir as (our) candidate for the presidential elections in 2010," the closing communiqué of the party conference, seen by **Reuters**, said.

In a related development, the London-based **Al-Sharq al-Awsat** 3/10/09 reported informed sources have revealed to Al-Sharq al-Awsat that there is a trend led by Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir to appoint a personality from Darfur as a Vice-President, one who has links with the Popular Congress Party (PCP) headed by his rival Dr Hasan al-Turabi. The sources said that Al-Bashir now has three names of PCP members in the Darfur region but that the expected changes would not be undertaken through the Third General Convention of the National Congress Party [NCP] headed by Al-Bashir which began its sessions 1 October but will come at a later time, after the conference ends. The sources spoke of a memorandum signed by a substantial number of leaders from Al-Bashir's party demanding an end to what they call hegemony by the security group on the party.

For his part, PCP Assistant Secretary-General Dr Ali al-Haj, in a statement to Al-Sharq al-Awsat, did not rule out the possibility that Al-Bashir would undertake a reshuffle because of the conflict going on between him and his Vice-President Ali Osman Mohammad Taha. He said that Al-Bashir might choose a vice-president to replace Taha or that Taha might continue in his post with another vice-president. "We heard that the vice-president will be from Darfur and would be affiliated to the PCP, and that personalities have been nominated but the idea did not succeed because there is no peace agreement in the Province," he said.

He said that it would be meaningless to appoint any person at the present time, whether from the PCP or any other party, adding that the position would be a puppet as is happening now with the positions of advisers to Al-Bashir. He said that the information he had from inside the

NCP says that Al-Bashir has a strong tendency to make a reshuffle because the splits inside his party are widening despite attempts to hide them by some NCP leaders. He said that the decisions of the General Convention might be issued today in a normal way but that the reshuffle would be carried out at a later time. "The split will not happen now from inside this conference that is in progress but will appear later," he said. "It is only a matter of time."

Al-Haj denied that there is a trend in favour of unity for the Islamic movement to bring the NCP and PCP together after their split in 1999 ...

Meanwhile informed sources in the NCP told Al-Sharq al-Awsat that the differences which are brewing inside the ruling NCP on the party's basic statutes indicate there is strong rivalry between two currents inside the party. The first seeks to "empower" Al-Bashir's presence in the party and the other seeks to separate the portfolio of the party's chief on all central and provincial levels on the one hand and the position of the President of the Republic or Provincial Governor on the other hand. The sources did not exclude the possibility that what is going on represents a competition between the supporters of President Omar al-Bashir in the ruling regime and those who support his Vice-President Ali Osman Mohammad Taha. They strongly discarded the possibility that this struggle would go beyond the boundaries of the party or the rules of legitimate rivalry in political organizations.

Fresh clashes erupt in Sudan's Unity state: sources

Sudan Tribune website 3/10/09 — heavy fighting erupted today afternoon in the capital of Unity State Bentiu between troops of southern Sudan army loyal to the General Paulino Matip and the forces led by Governor Taban Deng Gai.

The clashes broke out in the oil rich state when soldiers from the SPLA Division 4 under the command of the State Governor attempted to disarm the bodyguards of Lt. Gen Paulino Matib Nhial, Deputy SPLA Commander in Chief.

13 people were killed and some other 19 wounded. During the first round of attack, 8 soldiers from both sides and 3 civilians were killed and 17 of them were seriously wounded. Two soldiers were killed in the second attack and 2 persons were seriously wounded.

The conflict started as an argument between two bodyguards and escalated into confrontation between the two groups.

A statement issued by the office of the Southern Sudan Vice President, Dr. Riek Machar confirmed the fighting saying "soldiers at the headquarters of Gen. Paulino were attacked while the rest was out of the barrack taking pictures for military identifications cards."

Paulino Matib and his troops evacuated the town to nearby location "for re-organization for good protection" informed sources who requested anonymity told Sudan tribune

However, a delegation from Nuer elders are now seeking to mediate in order to scale down the tension and forestall further escalation

The influential Nuer leader, Gen. Paulino Matip, was integrated into the SPLA following the signature of Juba Declaration with the southern Sudan leader, Salva Kiir Mayardit on January 8, 2006. However his troops remain under his control despite their integration in the southern Sudan army.

General Matip was in favor of the removal of Governor Gai who is contested by many legislators

in the state. However, it seems that South Sudan President Salva Kiir declined a request from Gen Matip in this respect.

The deputy SPLA Commander in Chief also has been angered by the defection of two of his close aides who formed their own forces. Sources say Paulino suspects some generals in the southern Sudan army of instigating the moves.

Matip's nephew, Col. Maluk, who was commander of Matip forces in Juba, left his uncle's headquarters and formed his own camp within Juba. Again Maj. Gen. Taib Gatluak, also from Bull Nuer, left Matip's headquarters and formed his own.

Rivalry between Matip and Gai goes back to the 90's when Taban Deng Gai had been elected by the Unity assembly in accordance with a peace agreement signed in April 1997 between Sudanese government and the former rebel United Democratic Defense Forces (UDSF) but he had been expelled from the governorship of Unity State by Paulino Matip's militia.

Tribal clashes erupt between Dinka Bor and Mundari

Sudan Tribune 3/10/09 – Renewed deadly inter-tribal clashes involving Dinka Bor and Mundari communities have left unconfirmed number of people dead and wounded as casualties are expected to rise.

The violence which started on Friday in a place called Gut Makur which hosts Dinka Bor cattle camps, continues throughout Saturday between the two ethnic groups in Wuor-bar near Mugala, Central Equatoria state (CES) and about 47 miles on Juba – Bor road.

The military sources in Juba said the clash started when Mundari farmers protested against Dinka Bor cattle that they claimed were grazed on the Mundari peanut farms.

The argument resulted into shooting dead of a Mundari farmer by a Dinka Bor gunman and the violence ensued further.

Three people were reported dead with unknown number of wounded in the Friday's incidence.

The Mundari tribesmen retaliated with fresh attacks on Dinka Bor settlements on Saturday which resulted in more than ten people killed and some others wounded according to an unconfirmed report. As a result, the source revealed, Juba-Bor road has currently been closed.

“SPLA can not control all of southern Sudan” – Kiir

Al-Rai Al-Aam reports FVP Salva Kiir Mayardit has denied that the SPLM's efforts with regard to the referendum law has failed. “You can not say we have totally failed. We will continue dialogue to get the law approved,” he said. Kiir affirmed stability of the security situation after Friday's clashes in Bentiu. He said a high-ranking military committee was set up to probe the incidents and appropriate measures would be taken based on the findings.

On non-participation of the SPLM in the NCP's general convention, Kiir said, “We have received the invitation but GoSS VP Riek Machar could not fly due to bad weather” “we have tried to arrange a special flight but we were not successful. We expect the NCP to send a plane but that also did not happen,” he added. He said three SPLM Minister had been delegated to attend the NCP's convention.

Meanwhile, Kiir accused the NCP of continuing to maintain southern militias, saying the SPLA is committed to the security arrangements. He deplored the incidents between the Murle and the

Lou Nuer, which, he said, are receiving weapons from northern quarters.

Kiir affirmed that the SPLA can not control the entire South.

According to **Ray Al-Shaab**, Kiir accused the NCP of working to destabilize the south and to incite sedition among the tribes to give an impress to the international community that the South is unstable for the conduct of referendum. "All arms have been confiscated. We have no arms factories in the South or a close neighbourhood that supplies arms to the tribes. From where do they get the arms," he wondered. Kiir said that in the past the SPLA was playing the role of police but now the police would take over after they have been trained.

Al-Sahafa reports Kiir as saying that he would meet with President Al-Bashir shortly to brief him on the outcome of the political parties' conference hosted by the SPLM in Juba.

Nafie criticizes foreigners' participation in Juba conference

Presidential Assistant Nafie Ali Nafie has criticized the participation of UN representatives in Juba conference, saying they would not have taken part had it not been for instructions from the "big", adding the NCP was in the know about a plan to hold the conference in a foreign country, **Al-Sahafa** reports. Nafie, who was speaking at press conference yesterday, downplayed the Juba conference's recommendations, saying the conference was a mere gathering of the opposition, adding the only difference this time was the intensive presence of foreigners at the conference. He said the NCP has nothing to do with the conference and criticized the conference's call for investigation in historic grievances and reconciliation. "

Al-Rai Al-Aam reports Nafie rejected talk about accountability and apology for grievances, saying it was an idea imported from South Africa. He strongly criticized the participation of the UN in the conference. "It should not have participated in a conference of specific parties in which other parties are excluded. It is a response to the instructions of the superpowers," he said. He said the foreign presence in Juba was a negative development. Nafie added that the NCP would stick to the 75% as a minimum benchmark for self-determination of the South. According to the **Citizen**, Nafie has attacked SRSG Ashraf Qazi for participating in the political forces conference in Juba, pointing out that his party objects to Qazi's participation because the conference does not represent all the people of the Sudan.

He described the conference as another gathering of the opposition. "They have no right to set such conditions and we will see if we will receive their memo or not," he said, citing the 60-day ultimatum set by the participants for the NCP to introduce reform that can pave the way for the elections.

Abyei Boundary Committee arrives in the area

Abyei Boundary Demarcation Committee arrived in Abyei town yesterday after the Presidency intervened to restore the JIU escort for the team, **Al-Sahafa** reports. Sources informed the paper that the company tasked with protection of the committee arrived in Abyei yesterday to resume providing protection for the immediate recommencement of the demarcation on the ground; adding official commitments for free movement of force with the team were obtained. According to the source, the committee would hold a meeting with UN today to request some facilities including a plane to begin its work tomorrow.

In a related development, **Al-Ayyam** reports Abyei Chief Administrator Arop Moyak as saying that the Abyei Hospital from which all the people of the Area obtain medical care has two physicians only and is suffering from acute shortage of medical equipment, calling upon the Presidency to release the budget.

Meanwhile, **Ajras Al-Hurriya** reports that Moyak has summoned the Abyei Area Administration's (AAA) ministers for finance and infrastructure over road construction contracts they signed without his knowledge.

The Information Officer at the Office of the Chief Administrator, Chol Ngoi, described these measures as normal aimed at guaranteeing transparency in the AAA's financial and administrative transactions.

Southern Sudan to build oil refinery

Miraya FM, 3/10/09 - The Southern Sudan Minister of Information, Paul Mayom, has said that Council of Ministers has passed a resolution to build an oil refinery in Southern Sudan. Mayom said that the Government of Southern Sudan would sign an agreement with local or international companies to establish the refinery with a capital of 10 million US dollars.

He said the Government would be represented by the Southern Sudan-based Nilepet oil company with a bigger share.

Mayom told press after the Council of Ministers' meeting on Friday that the oil refinery would be built in Warrap State and that the project would take three years to complete.

GoSS takes over national NGOs' offices

Al-Intibaha reports the Sudanese Council of Voluntary Agencies (SCOVA) said the national NGOs operating in the South to contain the famine were facing obstacles, saying insecurity is to blame for disruption of humanitarian work, adding that offices of some NGOs have been confiscated and humanitarian workers detained.

Police steps up campaign to control unruly youth

Police authorities on Friday arrested eight unruly youths who spread panic in the heart of Khartoum, **Al-Rai Al-Aam** reports. Reportedly, the Interior Ministry will hold a meeting today to discuss the phenomenon of unruly youths who put on dress alien to the Sudanese society and carry white weapons (knives, machetes etc.). The authorities have stepped up an intensive campaign to contain the phenomenon.