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# Media Monitoring Report

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# Highlights

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## On the Campaign Trail

### **NCP's Al-Bashir launches campaign in Aweil**

Omar Al-Bashir, the NCP candidate for president, is due to campaign in the Northern Bahr-el-Ghazal town of Aweil later today, reports **Al-Raed**. This is the second time he hits the campaign trail in southern Sudan.

NCP candidate for the State Governor's post, Joseph Ajwang, revealed that Al-Bashir will address a huge rally drawn from all over the five counties of the state.

### **NEC reviewing opposition protest memo**

**Sudantribune.com** Khartoum, 07/03/10 - The National Elections Commission (NEC) has announced that it has started reviewing a memorandum of protest submitted to it by opposition parties demanding reforms to rules set by the Commission to govern elections campaigning.

"It seems the NEC is working very closely with the NCP and is issuing circulars that infringe on the rights of political parties," said SPLM candidate for president, Yassir Arman.

The NEC Deputy Chairman and Spokesperson Abdullah Ahmed Abdullah said Sunday in a press statement that the NEC held its first meeting to review the opposition parties memorandum prior to responding to it.

Abdullah dismissed the deadline set by the opposition parties to respond saying that they will reply as soon as possible.

The NCP criticized the step taken by the Sudanese opposition parties saying they are seeking to find an exit from participation in the April elections adding that they have no right to question NEC's impartiality.

### **SPLM in Al-Gazira State demand Al-Bashir posters off government buildings**

The SPLM in Al-Gezira State has demanded that NCP candidate Al-Bashir's posters be pulled off government buildings in the state, reports **Al-Ayyam**. They especially protested his pictures in military attire hung on some government buildings in Al-Gazira State, arguing that public premises do not belong to a particular political party.

### **National Umma Party accuses government of not protecting candidates**

The National Umma Party has accused the Governor of South Darfur State of failing to carry out its duties towards the protection of elections candidates, **Al-Ayyam** reports.

The party was referring to a recent attack by unidentified gunmen on its Secretary-General for South Darfur, Sidig Mohamed Ismail.

The party pointed out that the state did not carry out its responsibilities to secure the roads and was thus acting like a "partisan competitor". The party further revealed that Sidig and a posse from the Beni Halba tribe took to their horses in pursuit of the attackers and managed to seize the stolen vehicle.

The party further noted that the incident is proof that government's claim of security in Darfur is a "farce meant for domestic consumption".

A delegation from the National Umma Party led by the party's local Secretary-General, Sidig,

was on a tour of South Darfur last Saturday when unidentified gunmen opened fire on them near Kass injuring a member of the delegation. The attackers eventually took off with Sidig's vehicle.

### **Juba Alliance mulls fielding single candidate for Khartoum State Governor**

Opposition parties (the Juba Alliance) are considering fielding a single candidate for Khartoum State Governor, says Sidig Mohamed, a member of the Sudan Communist Party. According to *Al-Rai Al-Aam*, Al-Sidig said that the parties are mulling throwing their collective weight behind the SPLM candidate for Khartoum State Governor, Edward Lino. He said, however, that the issue is still on the drawing board.

Al-Sidig further revealed that Communist Party candidate for president, Mohamed Ibrahim Nugud, will be campaigning in a number of towns in central Sudan next week.

### **JEM renews demands for poll delay**

The JEM has renewed its calls for a delay of the April polls until the "legislative environment and tribal reconciliation processes are complete in Darfur," reports *Al-Ayyam*. JEM Spokesperson Ahmed Hussein called upon all political forces in the country to elect a southern Sudanese president in the event the polls are conducted on schedule. He noted that this is important because political forces have to show goodwill to the people of southern Sudan to convince them that the country has changed.

"Such a move would help guarantee Sudanese unity when southerners head for the 2011 referendum," he said.

## **Other Highlights**

### **Sudan marks International Women's Day**

Khartoum State Minister for Social Welfare Amira Al-Fadhil has called for legislative reforms to combat gender-based violence, *Al-Ayyam* reports.

Speaking at a joint press conference with the UN at the *SUNA* officers yesterday, Amira said that plans are underway to eliminate challenges facing women.

The UNIFEM Representative underlined the need for the participation of women in the forthcoming polls. She welcomed the minister's calls for legislative reforms.

### **President Al-Bashir to chair extraordinary cabinet meeting in Al-Geneina**

The Council of Ministers will be holding an extraordinary session chaired by President Al-Bashir in Al-Geneina, West Darfur, on the 21<sup>st</sup> of this month, *Al-Ayyam* reports.

Deputy Governor for West Darfur State, Al-Sanousi Bashar, said that the President will also inaugurate a number of development projects in the states.

### **Al-Bashir and Minnawi discuss Darfur peace**

Talks held yesterday between President Al-Bashir and Senior Presidential Advisor Mini Minnawi focused on a number of issues related to Darfur, *Al-Rai Al-Aam* reports.

Minnawi reportedly said that issued discusses included the framework agreement reached with the JEM and means to bring the other armed movements on board. The meeting, he said, also covered the issue of the normalisation of ties between Sudan and Chad.

### **Taha and Kiir to represent NCP and SPLM at IGAD summit in Nairobi**

*Sudantribune.com Khartoum, 07/03/10* – FVP Salva Kiir Mayardit and VP Ali Osman Taha fly to Nairobi next week to take part in an extraordinary summit of the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) in Nairobi that starts on Tuesday, state media reported today.

The conference is held primarily with the purpose of bridging differences between the NCP and the SPLM on the implementation of the CPA.

President Omer Hassan Al-Bashir was invited to represent NCP but Khartoum said he is occupied with preparations for the elections. However, Bashir who returned from a one day visit to neighbouring Eritrea on Friday likely stayed away to avoid the risk of apprehension in Kenya as he is wanted by the International Criminal Court.

Sudan has sought to delay the summit till after the elections but the Sudanese foreign minister Deng Alor who is also an SPLM official said that NCP boycott of the conference will cause it to fail adding that it "takes two to dance tango".

Furthermore, unlike the SPLM, the NCP has been reluctant to have IGAD involved in the dispute with the SPLM. Last December, the political Secretary-General of NCP Ibrahim Gandour rejected SPLM's call for IGAD intervention saying that the CPA has its own mechanisms for arbitration when there is a dispute.

### **VP Taha in anti-secularism drive**

"It is imperative that we prove logically and ideologically that Islam unites and does not divide the people of one nation," *Al-Raed* quotes VP Taha as saying at a symposium in Khartoum on Renaissance. The VP called upon the people to advocate against the establishment of a secular Sudanese state.

Taha said youths have to be guided and encouraged to adhere to the preaching of religion especially against the background of the external factors.

The symposium drew participants from ministries, diplomatic corps, scholars and academia.

### **Japan contributes \$40 million to aid in Sudan**

*Sudantribune.com Khartoum, 07/03/10* - Japan has decided to contribute US \$40 million to international humanitarian programmes in Sudan, the country's embassy in Khartoum announced today.

The Japanese Embassy issued a press release disclosing that the budget includes \$15 million for WFP food aid and cash/voucher projects, \$11 million for the UN agency for children (\$4.5 million for Darfur, \$6.5 million for Southern Sudan), \$6 million for the UN refugee agency (\$2 million for Darfur, \$4 million for Southern Sudan), \$3.5 million for emergency mine action activities such as mine clearance in Southern Sudan and mine risk education in South Kordofan State, and \$4.5 million for International Committee of the Red Cross projects to improve economic security in Darfur.

The Association for Aid and Relief, a Japanese NGO, will implement some of the mine action activities.

### **Russian envoy to visit Sudan with businessmen, MPs**

*Sudantribune.com Khartoum, 07/03/10* - Russia's Special Envoy to Sudan Mikhail Margelov will begin a four-day visit to Sudan on Tuesday, March 9. He will be heading a delegation that includes businessmen and parliamentarians.

Moscow last year signalled its desire to boost private sector relations between the two countries. During the upcoming visit, the Russian envoy will be holding talks with state officials on bilateral relations between the two countries as well as the latest developments in Sudan, according to the state Sudan News Agency.

He will also be holding talks with the head of the National Elections Commission, political leaders and leaders of civil society organizations.

## Misseriya reject payment of southern Sudanese tax

The Misseriya Association has called for a review of the recommendations of the recently-concluded tribal coexistence conference held in Bentiu that requires Misseriya herders to pay an amount of SDG500 per cow taken to pasture in the south. **Al-Raed** reports that Musa Hamadein, a prominent member of the Misseriya Association, pointed out that the CPA allows them the right to pasture. He pointed out that the GoSS seeks to pay the salaries of their local chiefs through the imposition of these taxes.

## Two missing peacekeepers return safe to their base in Darfur

**Sudantribune.com** *El-Fasher, 07/03/10* - Two missing peacekeepers in South Darfur have returned safely to their base with the assistance of the local population, UNAMID announced today.

The two soldiers were part of a 60-strong patrol dispatched to Deribat to assess humanitarian and security situation following reports about clashes between the SAF and SLA-AW forces in the mountainous area of Jebel Marra that displaced thousands of civilians.

The assessment team composed of protection elements; UNAMID police and military observers had been ambushed on Friday March 5 by a big number of unknown armed men and released on Saturday. The assailants robbed the vehicles, equipment, personal belongings and money.

A peacekeeper was shot in the head by the attackers during the ambush but was saved by his helmet and only suffered a minor injury, UNAMID further disclosed today.

"The two UNAMID soldiers were able to evade capture at the time of the ambush and escaped, trekking over long distances at night in the desert, attempting to return to their team site," the peacekeeping mission said in a statement.

The mission also said that the two missing peacekeepers were helped by locals in Jebel Marra, stressing they also facilitated them to contact a UNAMID team at Kass, South Darfur, at midday.

The two peacekeepers, which had been collected by a Search and Rescue patrol, were found suffering from dehydration.

However the mission remains discreet over the identity of the unidentified men.

## 21 killed in tribal clashes in West Darfur

**Sudantribune.com** *Khartoum, 07/03/10* - About 21 people were killed in tribal fighting last week between the Abdulla Maharia and Misseriya groups, in Khaur Ramla west of Nertiti, West Darfur, a local official told the **AFP** today.

Darfur rebels said last Friday that 15 people were killed and accused Khartoum government of instigating the clashes, but Governor Abu Al-Gassim Imam Al-Haj stated today the death toll rose to 21.

The Governor said 11 people died in fighting between the Misseriya and Abdulla Maharia clan known as Umda Aldawai tribes that broke out on Wednesday and 10 others were killed in renewed clashes on Saturday.

He said the fighting started due to the death of a Sudanese army soldier from the Misseriya tribe in an ambush last February. The Misseriya tribe blamed the rival Abdulla Maharia clan tribe for the soldier's death and demanded financial compensation, he added.

"We have dispatched security forces and a reconciliation team, but we also need support from the humanitarian affairs commission in Khartoum and from aid groups" to resolve the conflict, he stressed.

## **SLM-Abdel Sahfi terms Doha framework as reconciliation between Islamists**

**Sudantribune.com** Khartoum, 07/03/10 - A Darfur rebel group rejected the Doha framework agreement signed by the Sudanese government and the JEM describing it as an attempt to reconcile Sudanese Islamists ahead of the general elections in the country.

The framework agreement "is an attempt to reconcile and reunite the factions of Sudan Islamic movement "from the fallout of the late 1990s," said Ahmed Abdel Shafi.

He further said that the deal reflects the dilemma of the two parties as they both need each other.

"JEM on the one hand has no presence in Darfur (either militarily or at the grassroots level) to use either as a bargaining chip, and the NCP on the other hand is faced with indictments and arrest warrants from the ICC against Al-Bashir (...), economic embargos, strained relations with the west and the US, general elections are fast approaching, etc."

Ahmed Abdel Shafi was twice in Doha for talks with the host country Qatar and the Joint Chief Mediator respectively. The rebel chief asked the mediation to deal on "equal footing" with all the rebel groups and not to practice "favouritism" among them.

Ahmed was a close friend to Abdel Wahid Al-Nur and the head of his military structure before his break away in Asmara after the SLM rejection to sign the Abuja peace agreement in May 2006.

However, he told Sudan Tribune he continues to dialogue with him stressing that "The issues that differentiate us collectively with the NCP, for sure, and are by all means greater than the issues that differ between us."

Asked about the newly formed LJM, Ahmed termed it as mistake made by the mediation. He also pointed out that the members of this new group have no common ground between them.

Ahmed said his group is consulting with all like-minded forces in the country to create a mechanism to allow us to work together and achieve the common goal.