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Media Monitoring Report

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Post-Referendum Watch

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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

SPLA evicts Athor's forces from base in Jonglei

Al-Sahafa 9/03/11 – The SPLA has renewed accusations that the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) is backing renegade General George Athor's rebellion following an SPLA raid on Athor's main base in Jonglei that left at least 34 killed and 25 injured from both sides. The SAF has denied the charges.

SPLA Spokesperson Philip Aguer described the attacks last Monday on Athor's bases as "preemptive" and says the SPLA seized large quantities of arms and munitions including anti-tank and anti-aircraft guns. Aguer further said that Athor had surrounded one of his bases with anti-tank landmines of which the SPLA managed to clear 90. De-mining operations are continuing and the SPLA is pursuing Athor's forces, he said.

SAF Spokesperson Al-Suwarimi Khaled meanwhile denied allegations that the armed forces are supporting Athor's forces, saying it is not in their interest to support those forces.

South Sudan rebel ousted from base, 20 Killed: Army

Reuters 8/3/11 - More than 20 people were killed when south Sudan's army attacked renegade militia fighters Monday, forcing them to abandon one of their bases, the military said.

South Sudan's army has started a new offensive against forces loyal to rebel leader George Athor hiding out in the south's Jonglei oil state, a diplomatic source told Reuters on Monday.

Analysts say there are fears the region's bitter divisions may be re-emerging. Southern leaders have regularly accused Khartoum of backing Athor and other militias to destabilize the region ahead of its split, an accusation dismissed by Khartoum.

"He (Athor) was planning another attack. So the SPLA (the southern army) launched a preemptive attack on three places," said SPLA spokesman Philip Aguer.

Aguer said 14 of Athor's men and seven southern soldiers were killed in one attack and he was still waiting for details from the other two. He added Athor's men were forced to abandon one base in Korwac.

Athor, speaking over satellite phone, told Reuters 176 southern soldiers died in the fighting and he lost just 19 men. He said he had been forced out of one base. There was no independent confirmation of any of the figures.

The former senior officer in south Sudan's army rebelled last year after saying he was cheated out of the governorship of Jonglei in national elections.

Athor said he was keen to negotiate a settlement with the southern army but "they keep attacking us. In their mind they want to crush us. But I don't think a guerrilla force can be crushed."

The southern army accused Athor of breaking an earlier ceasefire by massacring more than 200 people in the Fangak area of Jonglei mid February.

French oil group Total leads a consortium controlling a largely unexplored oil concession in Jonglei.

51 reported dead in new fighting in Southern Sudan

AP 8/3/11 - Fighting between Southern Sudan's military and forces loyal to a southern rebel leader has killed 51 troops and dislodged the renegade army commander from his bush outpost, officials said Tuesday.

The evicted rebel leader, George Athor, told The Associated Press by satellite phone that his forces withdrew from their base in the village of Korwai in the southern state of Jonglei.

"We withdrew after it was dark because we ran out of ammunition and we could not expose our people without ammunition," said Athor, a former deputy chief of staff in the southern military who resigned from the military to run for state governor but lost the election and rebelled against the government.

Col. Philip Aguer, the spokesman for the southern military, said the military took Athor's headquarters in Korwai as well as weapons and equipment.

Asked about his location and if he was personally involved in the fighting, Athor replied: "I'm not hiding. The (southern army) knows my place very well."

The southern army spokesman told the AP that the army did not know where Athor had withdrawn to, but said that the army had "stabilized the region" and was now conducting a "mop-up operation" and will soon provide casualty figures.

An international official said 35 of Athor's men and 16 troops in the southern military died in the fighting Monday. Aguer said he did not have a death toll, and an aide to Athor offered only what appeared to be a wildly exaggerated toll. The international official spoke on condition of anonymity because the southern military hadn't made any death tolls public.

The spokeswoman for the U.N. peacekeeping mission to Sudan, Hua Jiang, said U.N. personnel are not able to access the area of the fighting, so she said she couldn't comment on the violence or the death toll.

The U.N. has a mandate to observe and monitor armed groups and protect civilians under imminent threat of physical violence, but its troops have not always been able to fulfill that mission since the independence referendum, when a series of violent attacks began.

Last month fighting between the southern army and Athor's forces killed more than 200 people, mostly civilians. U.N. troops did not visit the scene of the attack until several days after it was over.

Days before the referendum, Athor's forces accepted a cease-fire with the southern army, but less than a week after the official results of the vote were announced, fighting resumed between the

two sides.

Monday's fighting comes on the heels of violence in Upper Nile state on Sunday that killed more than 50 people. That fighting involved the southern army and another militia force which Athor has claimed is loyal to him.

Jonglei governor denies accusation of organising attack on Athor's forces.

Sudan Tribune website 8/3/11 - Jonglei state governor Kuol Manyang Juuk rejected the claims made by his political rival, George Athor Deng of attacking his forces on February 9th at Pangak, Door and Koliet, saying the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) is an independent entity and not under his command as the governor.

Kuol's statement comes as a result of a report released by a former SPLA Lt. Gen. George Athor Deng, naming Kuol, Jonglei's law enforcement minister Gabriel Duop Lam, and Government of South Sudan (GoSS) interior minister Gier Chuang and others as organising SPLA forces and attacking his forces at Koliet, Door and Pangak on 9 February, through the commissioner of Ayod county.

"The report by Lt. Gen. George Athor that I, Kuol Manyang mobilised the SPLA to attack his forces is not true. I have not mobilised forces, the SPLA forces are not under my command. They are independent body charged with responsibilities of defending the constitution and securing the borders of South Sudan governed by their own mandate," Kuol said.

The state minister of law enforcement, Gabriel Duop Lam, who was accused with Kuol, also denied the claim.

Duop also said they have moved to northern counties to convince the elders to call back their sons and to encourage them not to fight against the government. The minister told Sudan Tribune that the conflict between renegade forces and SPLA continues.

"I heard that SPLA has destroyed one headquarters of George Athor yesterday but we were not told the casualties," he said.

He also explained that Athor and his forces get military support from an unknown source, which military intelligence has to discover.

"People in those areas said some planes landed at night with military support, but we don't know where from. The military intelligence has to sit and find out the source," Lam asserted.

Abyei youths accuse SAF of using chemical weapons

Al-Ahdath 9/03/11 – The SAF has denied charges by the Dinka Ngok Revolutionary Group that internationally-banned chemical weapons were used against their people in Todaj and Makier some 12 km north of Abyei. SAF Spokesperson Al-Suwarni Khaled said that the army has never used chemical weapons since inception. The SAF, he said, does not wage war on tribes.

The Abyei youth group said earlier that it had made a complaint to UNMIS on the use of chemical weapons against their people in Abyei. It also said that bodies of some victims were handed over to the WHO offices for check to prove the charges.

Group Spokesperson Bol Deng said the Abyei youth reject the deployment of JIUs in the area. He accused UN forces of failing to keep the peace and protect civilians in Abyei. The Abyei youths' group, he said, would exert efforts to politically and militarily safeguard the people of the area.

Deng underlined the need to implement the Abyei Protocols, the PCA ruling on Abyei and to immediately embark on demarcating the region's boundaries. They also call for a dismissal of the current Area Administration and to expel NCP representatives.

Kiir's visit to Khartoum postponed

Al-Akhabar 9/3/11 – FVP Salva Kiir Mayardit's visit to Khartoum, scheduled for yesterday, was postponed due to the absence of President Al-Bashir who is on a visit to Egypt for talks with Egyptian officials.

Kiir's office announced the visit was postponed indefinitely, adding the meeting was supposed to discuss developments in Abyei.

However, *Al-Ahdath* 9/3/11 reports GoSS minister of regional cooperation Deng Alor as saying upon arrival in Khartoum that the joint political committee between the two parties will hold a meeting today to prepare for the Presidency meeting.

Police crack down on demonstrators

Al-Rai Al-Aam 9/03/11 – Police in Omdurman arrested yesterday 29 people, mostly women, for protesting violence against women in Sudanese society. The police said the arrested protesters face charges of public disturbance but they were released later on bail.

Two daughters of opposition National Umma Party leader Sadig Al-Mahdi were among those arrested.

The NCP has meanwhile downplayed the opposition's calls for demonstrations and has accused the opposition parties of using demonstrations as a cover for acts of sabotage.

Sudan Tribune website 8/3/11 reported that Sudanese anti-riot police on Tuesday arrested and beat dozens of women activists shortly after they attempted to stage a protest in Khartoum's twin city of Omdurman against alleged rape of a young female activist last month and right abuses, manifesting Khartoum's growing anxiety over dissent.

Women protestors gathered in a public square in central Omdurman on Tuesday and lifted banners demanding the authorities to cease "violence against women," citing the case Saffiya Ishaq, a young female activist who appeared in a Youtube video last month accusing members of Sudan's National Intelligence and Security Services of gang-raping her after she participated in anti-government protests late in January.

But policemen swiftly moved to break up the protest, arresting and beating with batons over forty activists, eye witnesses told Sudan Tribune and added that the police even confiscated cameras of journalists who came to cover the protest.

The protest was planned by the "No to violence against women initiative" to mark International

Women's Day and denounce right abuses against women in Sudan.

"The arrests debunk claims of democratic transformation and reveal the miserable conditions of freedoms in Sudan" Gala Al-Azhari, a member of the opposition Democratic Unionist Party told Sudan Tribune, demanding that the authorities release all detainees "immediately". Some protestors were released on bail hours later while others still under arrest.

Other Highlights

Al-Bashir arrives in Cairo for talks with Egyptian officials

Sudan Vision 9/3/11 - President Omer Al-Bashir arrived in Cairo yesterday, marking the first post-Mubarak visit to Egypt by an Arab head of state.

President Al-Bashir together with a high-ranking delegation was received by the Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces and Chairman of the Supreme Council of the Egyptian Armed Forces, Field Marshal Hussein Tantawi.

During the visit, which lasted several hours, Al-Bashir was accompanied by the Presidential Affairs Minister Lieutenant General Bakri Hassan Salih, Foreign Minister Ali Ahmed Karti and Director of National Security and Intelligence Service Lieutenant General Atta.

The visit was aimed at discussing ways to strengthen economic and political bilateral ties under the current conditions in Egypt and the successive regional implications.

Al-Bashir encouraged Egypt to overcome the current situation and restore its Arab and regional role, after uprising forced resignation of former president Hosni Mubarak on February 11.

Field Marshal Tantawi praised Egyptian-Sudanese relations and the cooperation in many fields between the two brotherly peoples.

On the Egyptian side, the meeting was attended by the Egyptian Armed Forces Chief of Staff, Sami Anan and the leaders of the main branches, members of the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces, and some ministers.

Foreign Minister, Ali Ahmed Karti affirmed Sudan's readiness for furthering cooperation with Egypt in the political, economic and security fields until Egypt resumes its role as leader in the Arab world. Karti said that Al-Bashir's visit to Egypt, after the change, is considered a supportive stance for the Egyptians as Sudan is a friend and will continue to be a friend of Egypt.

"We offer our congratulations to the people of Egypt," Karti said in a press statement at Khartoum Airport yesterday calling all Arab countries to interact with the new situation in Egypt and to assist the Egyptians in the upcoming period.

Egypt's ambassador to Sudan, Abdul Ghaffar Al-Deeb said that the visit is very important and reflects the cooperation and solidarity of the Sudanese with their Egyptians brothers. "This is always our hope in the political leadership in Sudan."

The ambassador affirmed that the future of relations between the two countries will include further cooperation and coordination in all fields.” I expect the visit to come out with tangible results and things will actively progress in the coming period” he said.

ICC confirms charges against suspects in attack on Darfur peacekeepers

UN News 8/3/11 - The International Criminal Court has confirmed war crimes charges against two rebel leaders accused in the September 2007 attack that resulted in the death of 12 peacekeepers in Darfur, and committed them to trial.

The decision concerning Abdallah Banda Abakaer Nourain (Abdallah Banda) and Saleh Mohammed Jerbo Jamus (Saleh Jerbo) was announced on Monday by the Court, which is based in The Hague.

The Pre-Trial Chamber found “substantial grounds” to believe that both men are criminally responsible as co-perpetrators for three war crimes allegedly committed during the attack on the Haskanita camp in South Darfur state, according to a news release issued by the Court.

These are violence to life and attempted violence to life; intentionally directing attacks against personnel, installations, material, units and vehicles involved in a peacekeeping mission; and pillaging.

The attack resulted in the killing of 12 peacekeepers and the wounding of eight others serving with the African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS) – a predecessor to the joint UN-African Union peacekeeping mission, known as UNAMID.

It was allegedly carried out by the troops belonging to the Sudanese Liberation Army-Unity (SLA-Unity), which had broken away from the Sudanese Liberation Movement-Army (SLA/M), under the command of Jerbo, jointly with splinter forces of the rebel Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), under the command of Banda.

Human Rights Expert discusses Darfur humanitarian, security situation

Al-Sahafa 09/03/11 – Independent Human Rights Expert for Sudan, Mohamed Chande, is in El-Fasher, North Darfur, to assess the progress made in the different government programmes on defence and the protection of human rights, according to a UNAMID press release yesterday.

Justice Chande was briefed by the UNAMID leadership yesterday on the security and humanitarian situation in the Darfur region and he also met with representatives of the Abu-Shouk IDP camp.

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