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Media Monitoring Report

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Highlights

US says South Sudan independence “inevitable”, warns of “time bomb”

Sudan Tribune website 8/9/10- The US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton on Wednesday said that her country is working hard with international partners to defuse “a ticking time bomb” in Sudan ahead of a vote in January 2011 on what she termed the “inevitable” independence of south Sudan.

South Sudan’s referendum on self-determination is the culmination of a floundering peace deal which in 2005 ended two decades of civil war between the Arab-dominated north and the mainly Christian and animist south. Southern Sudanese are widely expected to vote in favor of their own independent state.

The signatories of the agreement, the National Congress Party (NCP) in the north and the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement (SPLM) in the south, are currently engaged in talks with little progress over post-referendum issues, including oil wealth, borders, citizenship as well as foreign debts.

However, preparations for the plebiscite itself are seriously behind schedule due to bickering between the two parties over appointment of the commission tasked to organize the exercise.

Clinton’s remarks come in the run-up to a US-organized meeting due to be held on the margins of the UN’s general assembly session on 24 September to garner international support for the referendum and discuss the situation in Sudan’s troubled western region of Darfur. The US invited delegations of the NCP and the SPLM to attend the meeting.

The meeting’s profile has been raised by US confirmation that US president Barack Obama will attend the meeting.

“The situation north/south is a ticking time-bomb of enormous consequence,” Clinton told audience after a speech on U.S. foreign policy at the Council on Foreign Relations.

She further said that the time remaining for referendum date, which is in January 2011, is “very short” and later added that “the real problem is what happens when the inevitable happens and the referendum is passed and the south declares independence.”

Clinton declared that the US had put “all hands on deck” to assist referendum preparations, adding that her country had recently sent the former senior U.S. diplomat Princeton Lyman to help the SPLM and the NCP to iron out post-referendum issues.

But she said that despite international efforts, north and south Sudan will have to make concessions on secession arrangements in order to avoid setback to violence.

“Even if we did everything perfectly ... the reality is that this is going to be a very hard decision for the north to accept,” Clinton said.

"So we've got to figure out some ways to make it worth their while to peacefully accept an independent south and for the south to recognize that unless they want more years of warfare and no chance to build their own new state they've got to make some accommodations with the north as well" she added.

"What happens to the oil revenues?" she said. "And if you're in the north and all of a sudden you think a line's going to be drawn and you're going to lose 80 percent of the oil revenues, you're not a very enthusiastic participant. What are the deals that can possibly be made that will limit the potential of violence?"

"Even if we did everything perfectly and everyone else — the Norwegians, the Brits, everybody who is weighing in on this — did all that they could, the reality is that this is going to be a very hard decision for the north to accept," she said.

Clinton acknowledged that the chief US focus has shifted from Darfur region to ensuring a smooth secession for the south. However, she said that the situation in Darfur was "dangerous, difficult, and not stable."

Meanwhile in Khartoum, Sudan's official news agency, SUNA, reported yesterday that Clinton had made a phone call to Vice-President Ali Osman Taha and expressed "gratitude" for the efforts exerted by the Sudanese authorities in securing the safe release of an American aid worker who was kidnapped in Darfur region.

According to SUNA, Clinton also expressed "relief over the progress made on the referendum issues" and her country's support for "ongoing efforts to realize peace and stability in Darfur."

In response, SUNA said that Taha had reiterated the government's commitment to hold the referendum and achieve peace in Darfur.

The U.S. state department spokesman P.J. Crowley said that Clinton also called South Sudan president Salva Kiir "encourage them to continue everything they can do in the coming weeks and months to promote full implementation of the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement and make preparations for the referendum in early January,"

Obama to attend Sudan referendum meeting at UN - US official

AFP 8/9/10 - US President Barack Obama will attend a meeting on Sudan at the UN headquarters on September 24 to show the importance the United States places in a looming referendum on independence for southern Sudan, US ambassador Susan Rice said Wednesday.

Rice said the United States wanted the meeting to put international focus on a peace agreement which ended a civil war in Sudan and the referendum in what she said would be a "critical last 100 days before the vote" which is scheduled to be held in January.

Rice said that "the international community has to be prepared for whatever outcome is chosen by the people of south Sudan."

Other heads of state and foreign ministers are also expected to attend the New York meeting

called by UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon.

Rice said the meeting would send "an important signal to the people of Sudan, in the north and south, and Darfur and beyond" about the international commitment to the Sudan peace agreement.

AEC urges International Community to support referendum

Al-Ahdath 9/9/10- The Assessment and Evaluation Commission (AEC) has called on the AU, Arab League and IGAD to support the implementation of the last phase of Sudan's CPA. The AEC stated in its report that referendum is a key benchmark in the CPA implementation which requires logistical and administrative support, stressing the importance of support from the International Community to the Referendum Commission to enable it to carry out its task.

SPLM Parliamentary bloc may summon Referendum Commission chief over slow work

Al-Tayar 9/9/10 – The SPLM Parliamentary Bloc has called on the Referendum Commission to expedite measures to organize the referendum on time. The Bloc Secretary-General Thomas Wani said the Head of the Referendum Commission might be summoned if the Commission is seen dragging its feet on the process.

Other Highlights

VP Taha to lead Sudan delegation to UNGA

Al-Ahram 9/9/10 –A Presidency source confirmed that VP Ali Osman Taha would lead Sudan delegation to UNGA meetings on 27 September in NY.

The source revealed to the newspaper yesterday that official correspondence exchanged between the Sudanese Foreign Ministry and UN indicated that Taha would lead the delegation which will comprise a number of advisors and ministers.

GoSS VP Machar refutes rumours of differences between him and Kiir

Al-Akhbar 9/9/10- GoSS VP Riek Machar has dismissed rumours floated by some circles claiming differences between him and GoSS President Salva Kiir Mayardit. In statements to the newspaper yesterday, Machar said the circles spreading such rumours intend to sow seeds of discord within the SPLM but they would fail. "All of us are working harmoniously under Kiir leadership," he said, adding that the SPLM Liberation Council will meet this month to discuss key issues concerning the Movement.

Meanwhile, Machar said that the referendum budget which would be discussed by the South Sudan Legislative Assembly today ranges between SDG 150-200 million.

ICC Prosecutor funding preparation of false testimony

Al-Raed 9/9/10- JEM's Relief and Rehabilitation Organization which is headed by JEM member Ms Meriam Suleiman has received \$250,000 from ICC Prosecutor Louis Moreno-Ocampo to arrange false witnesses from IDP camps in eastern Chad to testify against the Sudanese Government.

Tripartite Mechanism welcomes improvement of Government-UNAMID relations

Al-Ahdath 9/9/10- The Tripartite mechanism between the Sudanese Government, UN and AU said in statement yesterday that the greater part of the burden to address the security situation in Darfur rest with the Government and UNAMID. According to the statement, the mechanism meeting yesterday discussed UNAMID deployment, Darfur security strategy, the situation in IDP camps and ongoing preparations to convene a meeting of the mechanism on 27 September in New York on the sidelines of the UNGA. The meeting also welcomed the improvement in coordination and cooperation between the Sudanese Government and UNAMID.

Ban asks Rwanda not to pull out Sudan peacekeepers

Reuters 8/9/10 - U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-moon urged Rwanda on Wednesday not to end its peacekeeping operations in Sudan as he sought to defuse rising tensions over a leaked U.N report.

Ban said the report, which in its draft form said Rwandan soldiers may have committed genocide in Democratic Republic of the Congo in the 1990s, would be released after U.N. members and interested parties had an opportunity to respond.

"I commend Rwanda's support of the whole U.N. agenda and peacekeeping in the Sudan. I have asked President (Paul) Kagame to continue with that contribution around the world and in particular when we are going to see a referendum in Sudan in January next year," Ban told reporters at Kigali's airport.

Ban arrived in Rwanda on Tuesday and left on Wednesday after meeting Kagame and Foreign Minister Louise Mushikiwabo.

Rwanda says the allegations are "malicious" and "ridiculous" and Mushikiwabo reiterated on Wednesday that the central African country would take "strong action" if the report were not amended.

Ban said the United Nations was interested in establishing the facts relating to what happened in neighboring Congo during the 1990s.

The U.N. report covers more than 600 serious crimes committed by various forces during the 1993-2003 period in which tens of thousands of people were killed, U.N. officials say...

South Sudan appeals for humanitarian assistances for flood victims

Sudan Tribune website 7/9/10 - The regional government of southern Sudan on Tuesday reiterated its appeal for humanitarian assistances for victims of the floods swamping of Northern Bahr el Ghazal state.

James Kok Ruea, Minister of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management made the appeal on Tuesday after visiting flood-hit areas in Aweil town, capital of Northern Bahr el Ghazal State.

Ruea said the visit was meant to obtain first-hand information about areas affected by the floods

as well as putting emergency plans in place as part of efforts to respond to the affected individuals.

"The loss of infrastructures has been seen as well the destruction of house. Many families have been evacuated and people are living in swamps and waterways," he said, adding that solutions to alleviate the situation were being sought.

A representative from International Rescue Committee (ICRC) also told Sudan Tribune that he was impressed by authorities, after inspecting the different areas and talking to affected individuals.

"I was very much impressed when I saw a high level government delegation arriving straight to the flood affected areas. This gives the victims courage to cope with the disaster."

"We are here as partners in development and we are very pleased to be included on the tour to look at the effects of flash floods that hit these areas in the past few days. We are here to assist in whatever we can in that process. We worked closely with officials both at regional and national level," said the ICRC representative.

Aweil South County is one of the counties with the heaviest floods in the area. Gar Gar Adim, a director with South Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Commission told Sudan Tribune on Monday that an assessment committee visited the affected areas and is still working on the report.

"The assessment committee which visited Aweil South, one of the most affected counties in the state, is still working on the report. We received a report from county commissioner, Major Jel Mangok, stating that in the county headquarters alone, a total of 250 families covering 2470 people were affected by the flash floods. It is also reported that 176 families in Panthou have been displaced during the 24 hour torrential downpour that hit part of greater Aweil South County," explained Adim.

Expressing his sympathy for the victims, Adim said he and his team are working hard to ensure that they receive assistance.

He described Sunday's rain as the heaviest recorded so far in the state this year, while attributing the catastrophic results of the incident to the fact that some of the affected individuals are occupying waterways.

He said it is predicted that there will be more rainfall in the coming days, and advised people to settle in suitable areas to avoid floods.

Darfur rebels say LRA attacked their positions near CAR

Sudan Tribune website 8/9/10 - The rebel Liberation and Justice Movement (LJM), a signatory of a ceasefire agreement and currently negotiating peace deal with Khartoum in Doha, said today their troops were attacked in South Darfur by the notorious Ugandan rebels of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA).

The attack took place in the remote area of South Darfur, Davaq, which also borders West Bahr El-Gazal state and Central African Republic (CAR) in the morning of Thursday 2 September.

"The assailants came from the border with the Central African Republic but we successfully repelled them. They ran away and returned into the CAR," said Abdel-Aziz Abu-Nummosha LJM deputy chairman who was speaking to Sudan Tribune from Doha.

Abu-Nummosha revealed that they lost one soldier in this attack. He also added they identified the LRA elements from their belongings that they left behind.

"We found LRA badges and also they were speaking unknown language in the area," he stressed.

Uganda, the Southern Sudan army SPLA, and the US based Enough Project signaled the presence of LRA fighters in South Darfur state and accused Khartoum of supporting the rebel Ugandan group.

Abu-Nummosha accused the Sudanese army of directing the Ugandan rebels to attack their positions.

"We believe they [LRA elements] were instigated by the government and that is a clear violation of the ceasefire agreement signed between LJM and the government on March 18, 2010."

He further said that this attack means that "the government is not serious in a political settlement", pointing out that it comes in the context of "the new government strategy and conspiracy on the Darfur issue".

The rebel official further said the LRA attack comes simultaneously with the recent raids on the IDPs camps and civilians in the region by the government militias.

"What is going on currently in Tawila area, Omm Buraida, Jabal Marra, and Kateila, reflects the continuation of the Government's approach based on giving free reign to the Janjaweed and supporting the LRA," he said.

Abu-Nummosha cautioned the Joint Chief Mediator and the Darfur peacekeeping mission UNAMID saying the violence by the government aims to "shatter the Doha negotiating process; and hence leaving the movement's options open".

South Darfur warns UNAMID against smuggling wanted IDPs

Al-Raed 9/9/10 – South Darfur state Government has called on UNAMID to hand over the IDPs wanted for involvement in Kalma camp incidents, saying they would face a fair trial.

South Darfur Deputy Governor Abdul Karim Musa stressed to *SMC* the need for UNAMID to keep its official promise to the Government to hand over the suspects, warning against any attempt to smuggle them, saying the Mission would be held responsible if they exit from the country.

Sudan army blocks UNAMID from accessing scene of recent attack

Sudan Tribune website 8/9/10 - UNAMID said today that it has been prevented from reaching a village in North Darfur where more than seventy people were reportedly killed by pro-government militias.

The attack took place last Thursday at a market in the Tabra village which is inhabited by farmers who cultivate the fertile area in Jebel Marra. Rebels from the Sudan Liberation Army (SLA) said that the assault was led by a militia leader under the name of Al-Nur Ahmed.

They further said that the grave cases among the 79 wounded civilians were transported to MSF dispensary in Tawila, and Al-Fasher.

Today UNAMID said in its daily briefing that on its way to the village they were stopped by an SAF convoy and were informed by the commanding officer not to return before two days due to ongoing SAF operations in the area.

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