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Media Monitoring Report

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Referendum Watch

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Highlights

NCP leaders tour registration centres in Khartoum

Several NCP leading figures visited yesterday some registration centres in Khartoum where southern Sudanese are registering to vote during the upcoming referendum.

Al-Raed 1811/10 reports Presidential Assistant and NCP Deputy Chairman Nafie Ali Nafie, who visited registration centres in Khartoum, criticized obstacles created for the voter registration process in the North despite the large turnout of voters willing to register to exercise their constitutional rights. He dismissed rumours that any southerner who registers in the North might be subjected to risk. He urged the southern Sudanese to go to registration centres to outweigh the unity choice but pointed out that either choice would be accepted if the process is conducted in a transparent manner.

Governor of Khartoum state Abdul Rahman Ahmed Al-Khidir who visited registration centres in Khartoum also spoke about obstacles being created for registration in those centres and the suffering of the southern Sudanese who are willing to register.

Sudan TV 17/11/10 reported that National Security Adviser Gen. Salah Abdullah Gosh who paid visits to registration centres in Khartoum accused unnamed quarters of trying to influence the outcome of the vote by preventing southern Sudanese from registering their names.

In the Blue Nile state, an SSRC official revealed that some southern quarters in the area continue to hamper registration operations by asking southern Sudanese not to register their names. Choti Nhial Deng said there was little increase in the voter turnout for registration.

Al-Tayyar 18/11/10 reports the government of Senar state accused the SPLM of direct intervention in the registration process by preventing southern Sudanese from registering their names. Minister of Information and Culture in the state Ms Buthayna said southern elements are preventing southern Sudanese from entering the centres to register their names and that was the reason for the low turnout.

Sudan Tribune website 16/11/10 reported that southern Sudanese in the national capital blamed the low turnout for voter registration on poor media coverage and badly promoted registration centers.

In Southern Sudan, *The Juba Post* 18/11/10 reports that voters queued to register despite the high temperature, knowing well that the process will pave the way for their independence.

South Sudan registration peaceful but Diaspora concerns grow

AFP 16/11/10 - Registration centres for a referendum on potential south Sudanese independence have opened peacefully, officials said on Tuesday, but warned that some outside the South are staying away due to fears of intimidation or risk of fraud.

"All the 2,625 registration centres in the south except two were operational, and those will open

in coming days," Aleu Garang Aleu, spokesman for the Southern Sudanese Referendum Bureau, which is running the vote in the south, said.

"There were no reports of violence, no complaints of interference and there was a high turnout in the south," he said, adding that exact figures were still being gathered from remote centres.

In the north, however, turnout in the 165 centers was far lower however, Aleu said. "They have a fear of intimidation there; they do not want to be identified," he said. "We got a report that in one centre, there was just one person registered."

In addition, Aleu said there was a growing concern amongst Diaspora populations, who are able to register in neighbouring Uganda, Kenya, Ethiopia and Egypt, as well as in Australia, Britain, the United States and Canada.

"We have got reports that there is a lot of chaos emerging," said Aleu, referring to southerners voting outside Sudan.

"In Canada, for example, southern Sudanese are boycotting to register simply because they are not sure they will cast their vote when the time for referendum comes," he added.

Some were concerned at the expense of traveling long distances to register and then vote.

In addition, while the intergovernmental International Organisation for Migration (IOM) is assisting the registration process, Aleu said some were concerned it was not able to correctly identify who is eligible to vote.

Many are fearful the IOM "does not have the ability to determine who southern Sudanese are, so people can claim to be southern Sudanese when they are not," said Aleu.

Long queues and huge turnout at start of voter registration in Sudan

Sudan Tribune website 15/11/10 - Hundreds of people on Monday thronged at the various registration centers in Juba to officially register, marking the official commencement of the much delayed voter registration process for the region's independence referendum in January...

Leading by example, Southern Sudan President, Salva Kiir Mayardit, visited a center located at Dr. John Garang de Mabior mausoleum and officially registered at about 9:15am local time, amidst cheers and jubilations from over a hundred people present to witness the event.

In a short media briefing, Kiir appealed to the population to register in large numbers so that the January referendum, which he said will come once in a lifetime, can be conducted successfully...

S. Sudan begins registration for January freedom vote

AP 15/11/10 - Voter registration began in Southern Sudan on Monday in preparation for a January independence referendum that could see Africa's largest country split in two.

Voters lined up at more than 2,600 registration centers around the country. In the capital, Juba, Southern Sudan President Salva Kiir showed off an ink-stained finger after registering.

Most observers expect the south to vote for independence, an outcome even the U.S. government has labeled "inevitable."

In the elementary school in the Nile River town of Melut, a gathering of young voters lined up to register said they hope to help create a new country.

"We are going to vote for separation. All of us," said 20-year-old Deng Juach, who showed off his laminated registration card to friends...

UN chief worries about "wider conflict" in Sudan

AFP 16/11/10 - The UN Security Council on Tuesday expressed worries about South Sudan's self-determination referendum in January while UN leader Ban Ki-moon raised fears of "wider conflict" inside Sudan.

The Security Council held a ministerial meeting on Sudan less than two months ahead of the vote, with many governments questioning whether the January 9 deadline can be met or whether simmering tensions can be doused.

In addition to concerns about delays by the Khartoum government in releasing funds for the referendum in South Sudan and nearby oil rich region of Abyei, the Security Council also raised fears over renewed violence in the Darfur conflict.

The Council called for renewed efforts to make sure the self-determination votes are held on time and are peaceful.

UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon said the United Nations had made contingency plans for violence after January 9, and had positioned emergency food and other supplies in potential "hot spots".

He said there had been "hostile statements" and accusations of ceasefire violations on the North-South border which risked provoking security incidents "that can escalate into a wider conflict."

"The potential for unintentional conflict is especially high" in Abyei, where there are the strongest fears that the referendum will not be held on time, the UN leader said.

"Emotions are running high and little progress has been made in finding a solution to the political impasse," Ban said of the talks between Abyei leaders and Khartoum.

The UN chief said the vote in Sudan and the risk of conflict has the "potential to change the future of the country and send shock waves throughout the region." ...

UN says preparing possible troop increase in Sudan

Reuters 16/11/10 - Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said on Tuesday that the United Nations hopes to boost the number of peacekeepers in Sudan amid fears that Africa's largest country by area could be headed for a new civil war.

"We are working with both parties (north and south) on options for a possible augmentation of additional U.N. troops to increase referendum and post-referendum security," Ban told a special

U.N. Security Council debate on Sudan chaired by British Foreign Secretary William Hague.

Ban said the increase in the 10,000-strong force that monitors compliance with the 2005 peace deal would also be to increase its capacity to "verify and monitor possible ceasefire violations and to protect civilians."

It was not immediately clear how many troops the world body could muster ahead of the Jan. 9 referendum. But Ban made clear that no increase in U.N. troops could stop a new civil war in the event of renewed bloodshed on a massive scale.

"It will not be enough to prevent the return to war should widespread hostilities erupt," he said...

South Sudan maintains demand for UN buffer zone

Sudan Tribune website 16/11/10 - The government of the semi autonomous regional government of south Sudan has repeated its demands that additional United Nations forces be deployed at buffer zones either side of the north-south border.

Barnaba Marial Benjamin, minister of information and broadcasting service in the government of south Sudan, in an interview with Sudan Tribune, from the regional capital of Juba on Tuesday, said an earlier request made by his government remains one of the best choices to avoid provocation at the border resulting in war.

"The request made by our president of the government of south Sudan, General Salva Kiir Mayardit, when members of the security council visited Juba early October, to deploy more troops at the buffer zone remains one of our choices," said minister Marial.

"We are asking deployment of more external forces especially UN troops at buffer zones because these are the areas which have already raised concerns," he said.

Minister Marial who doubles up as official spokesman of the regional government said areas of priority included Abyei, Heglig, Renk and north western part of Upper Nile state.

"We are seeking deployment of additional UN troops to Abyei, Renk, Heglig and western part of Upper Nile state. We also need them at the borderlines in western and northern Bahr el Ghazal states," said Marial. The senior official of the regional government said they will continue to push for deployment of additional forces even though the request has been rejected by their partner. "We will continue to dialogue for deployment of additional forces at the buffer zones with our partners. They need to accept it because this is good for peace and stability in Sudan unless they have intention to return the country back to war," said Marial.

The minister's statement coincided with a statement from the United Nations' Secretary-General Expression on Tuesday, UN that United Nations hopes to increase the number of peacekeepers in south Sudan and border areas as the referendum approaches...

Addressing a special UN Security Council debate on Sudan, chaired British foreign Secretary William Hague, the UN's told diplomat Ban Ki-moon said they are working with the SPLM and NCP to see whether additional troops can be sent ahead of the southern referendum.

UN officials told Reuters that additional troop numbers would be in the hundreds. The UN chief said that no increase in U.N. troops could stop a new civil war in the event of renewed bloodshed on a massive scale. "It will not be enough to prevent the return to war should widespread hostilities erupt," he said.

Six government accountants killed and five injured by bandits in Unity state

Sudan Tribune website 17/11/10 - Six accountants from the State Ministry of Education Science and Technology were killed by a group of bandits in on their way back to Unity state's capital Bentui from a trip to Koch county on Tuesday. Five others were injured.

Lumba said that before they took off from the Koch county headquarter on Tuesday about one kilometer from the town, the group attacked them and killed six and seriously wounded five including him shot on his hand, he said.

On Wednesday the state authorities organized commemorative prayer service to bury the six accountants in Bentiu town.

It is feared that the violence will hinder voter registration in Koch County for the south's referendum on independence...

NCP, SPLM agree on framework document to resolve pending issues – Taha

Al-Sudani 18/11/10 – VP Ali Osman Taha has revealed that the two CPA parties reached a framework agreement to resolve pending issues with the exclusion of the two issues of Abyei and citizenship. He said the Presidency would meet next week to discuss AUHIP's proposal on Abyei, adding that the issue of nationality had been referred to a subcommittee which is expected to submit a proposal to the Presidency on how to address it. Reportedly, Taha appeared optimistic that the two parties would overcome all obstacles and reach understandings. He reiterated the Sudanese government's commitment to continue implementing the CPA regardless of the referendum outcome.

Sudan Tribune website 17/11/10 reported that Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union (AU), Jean Ping, has welcomed a framework agreement reached between north and south Sudan, an AU press release said on Tuesday.

Convened by the African Union High Level Implementation Panel on Sudan (AUHIP), the National Congress Party (NCP) and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) met in Khartoum to address and negotiate on the most key issues ahead of a vote on south Sudan's independence.

According to AU, the meeting was concluded successfully on November 13 with an agreement on a "Framework for Resolving Outstanding Issues Relating to the Implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement and the Future Relations of North and South Sudan".

Accordingly, the Sudanese parties have committed themselves to 'find peaceful solutions to all outstanding matters, determined never to resort to war again. In the case of separation as a consequence of the South Sudan referendum, they undertook to construct two viable states which would cooperate for the mutual benefit and live in peace and harmony with each other' the press release said.

The AU boss, who expressed satisfaction on the successful conclusion of the negotiations, congratulated the leaderships of the NCP and the SPLM for the progress they have made toward resolving CPA implementation process and the post-referendum arrangements.

Ping called on both sides to further continue to display the same resolve and commitment in addressing the issue of Abyei.

He welcomed the agreement to resume negotiations on the future of Abyei on 22 November, under the auspices of the AUHIP at the level of the tripartite Sudanese Presidency, which includes President Omar Hassan Al Bashir (NCP), First Vice President Salva Kiir Mayardit (SPLM) and Second Vice President Ali Osman Taha (NCP).

The Chairperson of the Commission reiterated the AU's confidence in the capacity of the Sudanese parties to reach agreements on the outstanding issues and overcome the challenges facing their country.

In this respect, he stressed the need to ensure that all citizens of Sudan, wherever they reside, are afforded the protection of the state and respect for human rights, in accordance with African and international standards.

According to the latest agreement, both sides have agreed to demarcate the north-south border while allowing northern nomads to graze in the south.

The framework also includes commitments to allow Sudanese citizens the right to live in either North or South Sudan.

However, the issue of the border region of Abyei remained unresolved and was referred to the presidency for consideration.

Following the agreement, The African Union High Level Implementation Panel on Sudan (AUHIP) has also commended the agreement as "highly encouraging".

"The Panel is greatly encouraged by the determination of the Sudanese Parties to apply themselves diligently to address all the challenges ahead, at all times working to resolve all outstanding matters through peaceful negotiations" it said.

Ping lauded Former Presidents Thabo Mbeki, Abdulsalami Abubakar and Pierre Buyoya, as well as the team of experts supporting the panel, for their tremendous role and relentless efforts they have collectively exerted to attain the latest historic juncture.

South Sudan president says Abyei belongs to Dinka Ngok

Sudan Tribune website 17/11/10 - General Salva Kiir Mayardit, President of the semi autonomous regional Government of South Sudan on Wednesday said that the oil producing region of Abyei belongs to the nine Dinka Ngok chiefdoms.

Kiir's Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) which governs the south and Sudan's ruling National Congress Party (NCP) have so far failed to agree on who is eligible to vote in

Abyei's referendum to decide whether the region will remain in the north or join what could be a newly independent south Sudan.

Addressing the closing session of a two day conference on the "urgent popular demand for implementation of the Abyei referendum" in the south's capital Juba Salva Kiir said that "Abyei belongs to the Ngok Dinka". He further said the SPLM would not ink an agreement on outstanding issues related to Sudan's assets, water or oil without concluding a deal on Abyei with the National Congress Party (NCP)...

Speaking to Sudan Tribune from Juba, Charles Abyei Jok, speaker of the Abyei Area legislative Council described the Dinka Nogk conference as very successful and helped bring together both traditional and political leaders from Abyei to consult over the future the region.

"The conference ended successfully today. It brought different leaders from the area. It also saw attendance of our neighboring community leaders. We consulted widely with them," said Jok.

Referendum outcome will not affect DDR program in South Sudan - VP Machar

Sudan Tribune website 17/11/10 - Implementation of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) program in Sudan will continue regardless of the outcome of next year's referendum on southern independence according to Riek Machar Teny the region's Vice President.

Machar the second most powerful politician in the south said the region, made the remarks while officially opening a two-day DDR review conference held in Juba, the Southern capital.

The conference, which was organized by the Southern Sudan DDR Commission (SSDDRC) aimed to inform the public and allow key stakeholders to hold collaborative discussions on the challenges for the future of the DDR in the semi-autonomous region.

According to Machar, the current DDR program will have to undergo another process, regardless of the final outcome of the January referendum on the self-determination of southern Sudan.

"If it is unity, we will have to create Sudan national armed forces from the current three armies, JIUs [Joint Integrated Units], SPLA and SAF [Sudan Armed Forces]. There are also paramilitary units such as the Popular Defense Forces, particularly in the north. This is going to be a big challenge," Machar said.

He further added that, "If the outcome is secession, then the north will have to deal with the problem of how to implement DDR in the south, the JIUs, popular defense forces and any other paramilitary units. In the same way, the south will have to deal with the SPLA, JIUs and any other units like the police, and wildlife. All these forces will be affected by a review of the DDR program."

Lise Grande, the Deputy Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Southern Sudan said there is a gap between demobilizing and reintegrating former soldiers into society. She said remains a serious risk to the program.

“There have been several incidences where staffs working on the DDR program have been threatened, for example in Rumbek. There have also been increasing cases of community violence resulting from incidences of demobilizing soldiers. I know that the SPLA and the Government of Southern Sudan are doing a lot to improve the situation but security guarantee for those working on the DDR program should be a priority”, Grande said.

According to William Deng Deng, SSDDRC Chairperson, the current system of providing vocational, and other training, after demobilization should be replaced with a new approach by which training activities take place for a minimum of six months, while the soldiers are still with their military units.

“During this period, the soldiers would continue to draw their military salary, allowing them to focus on the training without worry about feeding their families,” Deng said.

The two-day review conference, which brought together various members of the diplomatic community, alongside representatives from both the north and south DDR Commissions, and South Sudan DDR state coordinators was based on the theme, “DDR in Southern Sudan: Lessons learned and challenges ahead of the referendum.”

Peace for Darfur is top priority and urgent strategic goal - FM

SUNA 17/11/10 - Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ali Ahmed Karti, pointed out that realization of peace for Darfur is a top priority and urgent strategic goal of the government of Sudan in the current stage.

In his address at a sitting of the Security Council to follow up on the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) and the situation in Darfur, Kari stressed that achievement of peace and the signing of a lasting peace deal necessitates existence of a party that negotiates with honesty, seriousness and clear vision.

The minister called on the Security Council to direct a serious and decisive message to the parties refusing to sit at the negotiation table in Doha for reaching peace in Darfur.

He referred to the unwise violations and military acts being done by elements of the rebel movements in Darfur as well as their aggressions against the humanitarian aid convoys, abduction of aid and peace-keeping employees, looting of vehicles and other subversive acts.

Karti pointed to the new strategy on Darfur for realizing security, stability and development in Darfur, indicating that the government is adopting this strategy in coordination with the UN and African Union Mission for Darfur (UNAMID).

He announced that the government has assigned a budget of 1.9 billion dollars for the purpose of implementing development projects throughout the coming four years, referring to the current stability and security at 90% of Darfur area.

He explained that concentration will be given for implementing infrastructural projects in Darfur such as roads, bridges and public utilities, calling on the international donors to contribute to the implementation of the development projects in Darfur.

Karti said that the government, in collaboration with the international community, is preparing to

hold the International Donors Conference for Development of Eastern Sudan in Kuwait in next December, calling on the member states in the Security Council and the international funding organizations to make this conference a success.

Karti said that the government accepted holding the referendum toward completing the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), stressing that the referendum shall be a step for boosting the peace and stability in Sudan.

He said that it was agreed upon that the funding of the referendum shall be by 40% from the two partners of the CPA, the National Congress and Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), and 60% from the international community, adding that the government has fulfilled its commitment in this connection.

Karti called on the international community to fulfill its financial commitment in boosting the Commission for the Referendum of South Sudan with the aim to help it carry out its task.

He called on the Security Council to adopt a comprehensive method in dealing with the issue of Abyei which guarantees prevalence of the stability and the inherited peaceful co-existence between the citizens at this area.

The minister said that the government is pressing ahead in handling the issue of the post referendum arrangements, including the aspects of resources, citizenship, security and the international legal agreements and conventions. The Foreign Minister said that great progress has been achieved lately with regard to the accomplishment of the framework agreement which is organizing the relation between the north and the south, referring to efforts that were done during the past week by the two partners and the African Union Panel on Sudan which is headed by the former president of South Africa, Thabo Mbeki.

He disclosed that the historic agreement, which was signed Tuesday evening, has underscored the common strategic options of the north and the south, top of them is the refrain from return to war, the special and unique ties between south and north Sudan which are characterized by mutual understanding and co-existence

Meanwhile, State Minister for Foreign Affairs, Kamal Hassan Ali, said that the government is committed to fulfill its obligations toward implementation of the peace agreement (CPA) and will not give attention to the claims on incentives and sanctions for holding the referendum.

Interviewed by SUNA on outcome of the session of the UN Security Council about the situation in Sudan, especially the issues regarding the implementation of the peace agreement and the referendum, the minister said that the meeting affirmed the support to peace in Sudan, adding that the government is strongly committed to the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) and realizing peace and stability all over the country.

He said that the state is working to implement the referendum as scheduled, as the voters' registration process has started. He said that the referendum is a means to guarantee comprehensive and durable peace, adding that there are basic issues that shall be solved before carrying out the referendum because leaving them unsolved after the result of the referendum will lead to major problems.

The minister reiterated the government call on the international community, the Security Council, the United States, and the countries concerned with the peace process in Sudan to live up to their commitments that they have declared at Oslo conference after the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA).

Indications are that secession will be the choice – Amum

Al-Ahdath 18/11/10 – SPLM SG Pagan Amum said all indications were that power-sharing with Khartoum would come to an end and that the South would vote for secession. He urged Khartoum to accept the results. He also urged the Security Council to work for the full implementation of the Abyei Protocol in accordance with the PCA Award.

Other Highlights

U.N. peacekeeper says no build-up on Sudan border

Reuters 15/11/10 - The United Nations' chief peacekeeper in Sudan said on Monday there had been no major new build-ups of troops near the north-south border, dousing rumours of military escalation.

The force commander of the 10,000-strong U.N. peacekeeping mission in Sudan, Moses Obi, said he had stepped up patrols in hotspots and flights over border areas to check the accusations.

"We are aware that we are at a very critical moment as we get nearer the referendum. We have strengthened our monitoring mechanisms," he told reporters in Khartoum.

Obi said they had found a greater alertness among troops in pre-existing military bases north and south of the border and signs of some small adjustments in military positions, but no major escalation.

"We are convinced that there has been no significant build-up along the common boundary line," he said.

Obi said peacekeepers had looked into the October clash and found there had been an exchange of fire between northern and southern troops following a misunderstanding over the position of the border.

A southern patrol had approached a body of northern soldiers it thought had entered its territory, he said.

"Both sides agreed that this was an incident that was an accident. That occurred because on the ground the boundary is not clear. The troops on the ground would not know where the boundary actually is ... We are confident that this was not an incident that was intended to lead to a clash," said Obi.