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Media Monitoring Report

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Highlights

Local News Headlines

SPLM: Agreement with NCP to extend Parliament until elections

Al Sahafa reports that the SPLM and NCP agreed to extend the National Assembly until the elections. The head of SPLM Parliamentary group, Yasir Arman, stated that “the Parliament will remain until the Elections Commission decides on elections”.

A high level French Presidential delegation visits Khartoum today

Al Sahafa reports a high level French Presidential delegation led by the Presidential Secretary General, Claude Gueant and the Special Adviser for African Affairs, Alain Joubert will visit Khartoum today to discuss with government officials the latest developments regarding Darfur crisis.

According to Al-Sahafa, the delegation will also meet with President Al-Bashir in order to brief him about the French and the EU views with regards to Darfur and normalization of relations between Sudan and Tchad.

GoSS closes borders with Congo

Dailies reports GoSS announced closure of its borders with Congo in order to put pressure on Joseph Kony and to oblige him to sign a peace deal with the Ugandan government. GoSS Vice President, Riek Machar, told reporters yesterday in Khartoum airport that the Ugandan government has officially informed him of his determination to fight Kony following four failures to sign peace deal.

Abyei Commissioner: Formation of area's Police is unfair

Al Ray al Aam reports the Abyei Administration described the situation in the area as calm. Commissioner of Abyei locality Mohamed Al Doreik disclosed that efforts were ongoing in villages and neighborhoods to convince residents not to return to war once more. He pointed out that Misseriya and Dinka tribes agreed yesterday to hold a reconciliation conference shortly. Al Doreik told Al Ray Al Aam yesterday that the investigation is under process. He also pointed out that 90 % of the police forces are from Dinka Ngok tribe and that more understanding between the two partners in the Abyei administration is highly needed.

Abyei Administration denies pull out of JIUs from Abyei

Al Intibaha The Abyei Deputy Administrator, Rahma Al Nour Abdel Rahman said that voluntary return of the residents who were affected by the recent incidents was on going smoothly particularly after the Administration assured calm in the area. However, in a statement revealed by the Sudanese Media Center (SMC), the Abyei Deputy Administrator has denied reports confirming the pull-out of the JIUs from Abyei, saying that the forces have moved to their barracks in the peripheries and not outside the town.

JlUs pulled-out of Abyei

In another development, *Ajras al Huriyya* has confirmed the JIUs pull-out from Abyei to three Kms to the north. Chief Abyei Administrator, Arop Moyak told *Ajras Alhuriyya* that the units have completed the pull-out in line with the security committee's decisions.

Authorities restore Order in Abyei

(Sudan Vision and dailies) Abyei area regained calmness following the recent frictions between the Integrated Police and the military Joint Integrated Unit (JIU). Abyei Interim Administration Deputy Chief, Rahama Abdallah Al nour, told *Sudan Vision* that his Administration counseled the two conflicting parties on the remits of their respective jurisdictions so as to avoid such regrettable incidents.

He further revealed that two committees were set up, one under his chairmanship and the second presided over by the Administration Chief, Arop Mayak, for urging the people who fled the conflict to return home, adding that many displaced, satisfied with measures taken by the Administration, started their move back.

Al nour added that precautionary security measures have been put in place to deter reoccurrence of such incidents

Qazi says Naivasha is the “mother of peace”

Ajras al Huriyya / Akhir Lahza reports SRSG Ashraf Qazi said the CPA is the “mother agreement” to achieve peace in Sudan despite the international focus on Darfur crisis. Addressing a conference held yesterday in Al Ahram Centre for Political and Strategic Studies, Qazi said a comprehensive peace agreement in Sudan would not be reached unless peace was achieved in Darfur. The SRSG pointed out the developments that were achieved since the signing of the CPA. On Abyei, Qazi said the two parties still need mutual confidence. He pointed out that the ICC move is undoubtedly one of the major external factors.

JEM welcomes new members from SLA-Minnawi's faction

Al Ray al Aam reports the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) announced yesterday that a number of military leaders, including Bakhit Karima Second Commander for operation and Arku Suleiman Dahiyya Chief Commander, have joined the movement after they had defected from SLA-Minnawi's faction. JEM's Deputy Commander, Suleiman Sandal told *Al Ray Al Aam* that these forces came with 25 vehicles and 400 soldiers.

SAF carries out military maneuvers west of Omdurman

Dailies report Sudanese Armed Forces announced that it would carry out military maneuvers in west Omdurman starting from 20 December as part of the preparations for the independence celebration.

Websites / International Headlines

All government forces in Abyei should pull out: UNMIS office

(Miraya FM) According to the head of UNMIS office in Abyei, Chris Johnson, all government forces located in the area should pull out. This came during a meeting between the leaderships of the Joint Integrated Units, the Joint Integrated Police Units and the United Nations.

Speaking to Miraya FM Ms. Johnson described the return of citizens who fled Abyei following the recent violent incident on Friday as slow, attributing the reason to the lack of trust between the citizens and the security authorities in the area.

Sudan's NCP and SPLM discuss Referendum and Security Laws

(*Sudan Tribune*) The two parties to the Sudan's Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) have resumed dialogue to implement the remaining outstanding issues in the peace deal that ended 21 years of war in 2005.

The National Congress Party (NCP) and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) are expected to discuss in Khartoum beginning on Monday both the Referendum Act and Security Law among others.

Shortly before his departure to Khartoum on Monday, the Vice President of the Government of Southern Sudan and Chairman of the SPLM's High Executive Political Committee, Dr. Riek Machar Teny, said he was leading his delegation to the national capital to workout the Referendum Act with their counter-part.

Machar who will co-chair the meeting with the Vice President of the Republic, Ali Osman Mohamed Taha added that they will also discuss the structure for administration of the National Security, particularly on how many deputies should the Director General for Security have and powers for arrest.

United Sudan People's Liberation Movement declares rejection of Qatari initiative

(**Miraya FM**) The movement's Spokesperson Issam Al Haj said Qatar is not eligible to mediate between the disputing parties in the region. He further criticized Qatar's position on Darfur in the Security Council saying it is biased in the interest of the Sudanese government.

The Political Advisor of the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), Althahir el Faqi, confirmed that a delegation of the movement met with the AU/UN Joint Chief Mediator for Darfur Jibril Bassole yesterday in the British capital, London, to discuss ways to accelerate holding of the upcoming negotiations on Darfur peace.

Alfaki clarified that Bassole informed the delegation about the results of the recent meeting held between the European Union, United States and Canada in Brussels.

He said the movement did not adopt a final stance concerning its participation in the upcoming negotiations in the Qatari capital, Doha declining to give further details on the meeting's outcome with Bassole.

Ministerial Committee Meetings of Qatar Initiative Begins Tomorrow

(Sudan Vision) Meetings of ministerial committee of Arab-African Initiative will begin tomorrow in Qatar to review the efforts exerted in the past including contacts conducted with all parties concerned with the Darfur issue. The committee includes foreign ministers of some Arab and African countries in addition to representatives of the Arab League, AU, UN and AU/UN joint mediator.

For his part, presidential advisor Dr. Mustafa Osman Ismael has demanded a mechanism that enables Arab and African to increase participation with Qatar to settle the Darfur problem.

Dr. Ismael expressed relief on preparations by Qatar to hold the talks.

"I believe that the Qatari steps are well planned and they bring some African countries to this initiative which is good," said Dr. Ismael.

He assured that Qatar began contacts with Sudanese level and succeeded in getting support from different factions.

The Presidential advisor expects success for the talks as Qatar has good relations with all parties including the opposition. The country also enjoys good relations with international parties such as USA, France and Britain.

Dr. Ismael described Darfur problem as the biggest threat not only to Sudanese national security but also for the regional security as well.

In the symposium of People of Sudan and Darfur peace organized by Future studies center, Dr. Mustafa Osman Ismael revealed that the next step for the people of Sudan is to complement with two axis: Darfuri –Darfuri and the Arab-African initiative.

He pointed out that the National accord has formed the basis for the forum of the people of Sudan.

For his part, the minister of justice, Abdelbasit Sabdarat appreciates the efforts exerted by Qatar in solving the problem of Darfur.

He is confident that Qatar would find out a settlement to be favored by all Sudanese parties.

Criminal Procedures, Human Rights Bill before Parliament

(Sudan Vision) Some debatable bills have been tabled yesterday before Parliament that included the bills of National Commission for Lands, Criminal Law, 2008 Amendment

for Human Rights, National Committee for Education, Sciences and Technology, 2008 Amendment for Foreign Trade Organization and Market Dumping Control.

Today, the Parliament will listen to the Foreign Affairs Committee report on the statement presented by Foreign Minister, Deng Alor, during the last parliamentary session.

The Audit report revealed that abuse of public money in the federal system during the year 2008 amounted to SDG 2.4 million excluding the banking sector. The figure was said to have been below of that of 2006 by SDG 3.2 million.

According to the report, the Final Accounts for 2007 recorded a total public liability of SDG 6.3 billion, hence outweighing 2006 figure by SDG 1.6 billion.

Furthermore, the report stated that 96 Government Units have not submitted their final accounts for over five years, thus violating Article (12/1) of the National Interim constitution.

It is worth mentioning that the Auditor General's report has been transferred to the parliament Legal Committee for study and feed back.

Ugandan soldiers move on rebel bases - army

(Reuters) Ugandan ground forces closed in on Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) bases in northeastern Congo after bombarding the rebels' camps, the army said on Monday, in a new push to end one of Africa's longest-running conflicts.

The offensive agreed by Uganda, Democratic Republic of Congo and southern Sudan began on Sunday with an aerial attack against the camps in the remote Garamba National Park in eastern Congo.

Analysts say regional governments had lost patience with LRA leader Joseph Kony who has repeatedly failed to sign a final peace deal to end fighting that has killed thousands of people.

"We can confirm that most of (Kony's) camps have been set on fire," said Ugandan army spokesman Major Paddy Ankunda. "It was an air-led operation, then the ground forces were inserted."

"We had reliable intelligence that they were preparing to attack Uganda ... and also we had the ICC warrants," he said, referring to indictments by the International Criminal Court for Kony and two of his deputies for war crimes.

With details still sketchy, it was not yet clear whether Kony had been captured, killed or escaped. Ugandan government ministers were due to hold a news conference on Tuesday morning about the offensive.

The self-proclaimed mystic Kony has repeatedly demanded the ICC arrest warrants be dropped before the rebels leave their camps, but analysts said patience was wearing thin.

"Over the last three years Kony has received a lot of carrots but no sticks," said Julia Spiegel at Enough Project, a U.S.-based group campaigning against genocide and war crimes.

"Kony proved repeatedly that he was not ready to sign a peace deal and given his attempts boost his military strength he left the governments with little recourse than to use sticks."

Analysts and diplomats in the region said the offensive involved helicopter gunships, jets, ground troops and special forces -- guided by intelligence from the Congolese army and U.S. electronic monitoring.

"This was a Ugandan-led mission. The SPLA were on the border and the Congolese had about 2,000 soldiers deployed to the south but it was a couple of hundred Ugandan Special Forces who went in," said an analyst who is following the situation closely.

"They don't yet know if they got him. If it worked, this could be a good thing," he said.

Kony's fighters have waged a two-decade war against Uganda's government, mutilating victims, displacing nearly two million and destabilising a vast swathe of central Africa.

After initial euphoria when a peace process started in mid-2006, LRA rebels have since run amok in the porous borders of Congo, Sudan and Central African Republic, opening a new front in a region racked by insecurity.

Operating from camps in Garamba, the LRA has attacked several Congolese villages and towns in recent months. The rebels have killed dozens of civilians and abducted several hundred, including many children.

Kinshasa, Kampala and Juba agreed earlier this year to launch joint military operations against the insurgents.

South Sudan's army spokesman, Peter Parnyang, said its soldiers would not cross into Congo to chase the LRA but would block any fleeing rebels.

The 17,000-strong U.N. peacekeeping force in the Congo (MONUC) said no decision had been taken on what role U.N. peacekeepers would play in the new offensive against Kony

Uganda's LRA Rebels Call for Halt to Regional Military Offensive

(VOA) Uganda's Lord's Resistances Army (LRA) rebels spokesman David Matsanga is making a passionate plea to three regional countries to halt their military offensive against LRA hideouts in eastern Congo.

The appeal came as Uganda, Southern Sudan, and the Democratic Republic of Congo have carried out their second day of military operations against LRA camps.

Matsanga told VOA the LRA wants peace but would defend itself if the military operations do not stop.

"First of all I would like to tell the whole international community that this afternoon Vice President Dr. Riek Machar (of South Sudan) announced over the BBC that his border is closed. At the same time, Ri-Kwangba, which the President of Uganda is saying that the LRA should assemble is in Ri-Kwangba and near the border post. The radius of assembly point is 15 kilometers around the Ri-Kwangba area, which includes Congo territory. The Congolese government has announced that they will fight the LRA to throw them out of Congo. I would like to appeal to the world. How do you expect the LRA to assemble in Ri-Kwangba area when the Congolese army has vowed to wipe out the LRA in Ri-Kwangba," he said.

Matsanga appealed to the international community to help in calling on the Ugandan President Museveni, President Kabila of the DRC and President Salva Kiir of South Sudan to halt their attack to allow LRA negotiators to talk to their fighters.

He rejected comments by Ugandan army spokesman Paddy Nkunda that the attacks against would continue until LRA leader Joseph Kony and his rebels were completely destroyed.

"Why do you want to finish the people at the same time you say you want to open peace. This is something that I cannot understand. I cannot be a party to a place which breaks confidence. If the Ugandan government is determined for a military operation, some of us will also tell the LRA that it is up to them to defend themselves," Matsanga said.

Matsanga would not say whether he had talked with LRA leader Kony since the military campaign began.

"I am not going to disclose what I have contact with and what I can do as LRA chief negotiator. The situation which has moved is more of a military situation, and I am not capable to discuss a military situation over international radio station," Matsanga said.

The U.S State Department said Monday it welcomed the military offensive against the LRA. Spokesman Robert Wood criticized the LRA of wreaking havoc on the people in northern people in Uganda.

Matsanga likened the LRA's 22 year-old struggle to that of the struggle of former South African president Nelson Mandela against apartheid.

"As I told you, Mandela was in jail for 28 years, but Mandela never hop to fight apartheid. This conflict has taken 22 years; we have only negotiated for two years, and we have only failed to sign an agreement two times. Palestinians, Israelis negotiate and they failed and they come back. But they don't take military operation which is contrary to destroying the whole process. Why have we rushed into military operation. The people of northern Uganda at the moment are not certain of what is going to happen to their lives because there is nobody in northern Uganda who is going to be happy with this military operation," Matsanga said.

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