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Media Monitoring Report

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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

UN/Agencies

US firm work in Darfur to be terminated mid-July: UN

(Sudan Tribune) – The contract for a US firm building infrastructure for peacekeeping forces in Darfur will be terminated mid-July, a UN official confirmed.

The new head for the UN Department of Field Support Susana Malcorra told Inner City Press website that the contract will be “broken up into smaller pieces for a broader range of vendors including from Sudan”.

The controversial no-bid contract was awarded to Lockheed Martin’s PA&E subsidiary by the UN Secretariat drawing fire from UN members.

The UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon defended the contract at the time saying that under the time constraint to build bases for peacekeepers in Darfur.

“You don’t have many vendors who are readily available to provide such service at a limited time. And that is why, in accordance with the necessary rules and regulations bestowed upon me as the Secretary-General, I have taken an exceptional decision. I am allowed to do that” he said last January.

SPLA soldiers open fire on UN observer and Sudanese officer in Abyei, SAF criticizes UN silence

(Sudan Tribune/ all dailies) — Soldiers from the Sudan People’s Liberation Army today shot and wounded a U.N. military observer and a northern Sudanese army monitor at Agor area, south of Abyei.

The Sudanese army and the U.N. envoy for Sudan Ashraf Qazi condemned today the SPLA shooting .Qazi called upon the SPLA to identify the responsible for wounding of the two officers and bring them to justice.

The SAF spokesperson, Osman Mohamed Al-Aghbash, said the observer who is from Benin is seriously wounded. He also underlined that two attacked military were accompanied by a SLPA

officer who was not targeted by the assailants.

According to **Al-Khartoum** newspaper, SAF Spokesperson has strongly criticized UN silence on SPLA repeated violations latest was the denial of access to UNMOs to do their work. He said UN makes itself heard only when it comes to SAF which is double standards approach.

The UN envoy called for the shooting not to impede implementation of a roadmap agreement on Abyei between former warring north and south Sudan that he called “vital” to maintain the three-year peace process.

Al-Sahafa newspaper quoted SPLA spokesperson as saying that one of the wounded died, the culprit was arrested but the motives were not known.

However, **Al-Wifaq** newspaper said “UNMO Office” did not react to the incident. It said it had become a practice, over the last two years that UN would not comment on SPLA actions. The newspaper said 200 JEM armed vehicles crossed Wau yesterday from Rumbek en route to western Sudan but when the newspaper asked UNMO Office about the movement of JEM troops, they replied that UNMO Office does not work after five o’clock.

Activity of five INGOs in Darfur suspended

(Al-Sahafa) Sudanese Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs suspended work of five INGOs in Darfur accused of missionary work and pressurizing GoS in the human rights area besides that four of those NGOs receive their funding from Jewish bodies. According to the Ministry’s sources the suspended INGOs are: Dutch MSF, International Relief Committee, US Refugees Committee, “Faylaq International”, and Norwegian Aid Organization.

GoNU

Sudan paves way for vote by approving electoral law

(AFP) - Sudan’s parliament on Monday approved a new electoral law, a crucial step toward scheduled national elections and a democratic transition laid out in peace arrangements after a 21-year civil war.

For the first time in Sudan, the law grants women

25 percent of seats in the national assembly and introduces proportional representation into the biggest country in Africa by enshrining quotas for political parties.

The 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement, signed by north and south after a devastating two-decade civil war, calls for elections no later than 2009, although efforts to implement the accord have hit major delays.

The legislation spent months being debated by the electoral commission before being presented to parliament, where appointed members on Monday approved the bill by crying out their assent or dissent, said an AFP reporter.

In keeping with the new law, 60 percent of MPs will be elected directly by voters in local constituencies.

The other 40 percent will be shared out by the winners of different electoral lists that will guarantee women a 25 percent quota and political parties 15 percent.

Under the interim national constitution, set up after the 2005 peace agreement, all current MPs are appointed.

President Omar al-Beshir's National Congress Party (NCP) occupies 52 percent of the 450 seats and his former southern foes, the Sudan People's Liberation Movement which joined national government as part of the peace deal, holds 28 percent.

Other political groups classified as northern have 14 percent representation and other "southerners" six percent.

Beshir seized power in a 1989 Islamist-backed coup that overthrew the democratically-elected government. He won a new five-year term as president during Sudan's last national election in December 2000.

Those elections were boycotted by the opposition, both in the north and south. Beshir was first declared elected president in a 1996 poll that was widely denounced as fraudulent.

Sudan population estimated at 38 millions

(Al-Sahafa) The newspaper has learnt of estimates with regard to population census conducted recently. According to the report Sudan population is estimated at 38 millions. Khartoum State 6,450,000; Al Jazeera State 4,244,000; South Darfur 3,634,000; South Kordofan 2,102,000; North Kordofan 2,102,000; Bahr el Ghazal 2,796,000; West Darfur 1,906,000; North

Darfur 1,878,000; Gedaref 1,902,000; White Nile State 1,805,000; Kassala 1,796,000; Sennar 1,430,000; Equatoria States 450,000; Nahr el Nil 1,045,000; Blue Nile State 850,000 and Red Sea 743000.

Khartoum and Jazeera States are the most populous while and northern State is the least.

Sudan peace partners Abyei arbitration court deal

(Sudan Tribune) — Ali Osman Mohamed Taha, Vice-President of the Republic and Riek Machar, Vice President of the southern Sudan government today signed the Convention on the arbitration on the Abyei area. The text will be submitted within a week to the Hague International Court of Arbitration

According to the roadmap for the implementation of Abyei protocol signed on June 8, the international arbitration court is designated to settle the NCP-SPLM dispute over the finding of the Abyei Boundaries Commission.

The road map also calls for The Hague's tribunal to decide whether or not the Abyei boundary commission exceeded its mandate in its 2005 ruling.

The Convention, which exceeded ten pages, identified points of conflict, the laws and mechanisms that should be applied in the selection of arbitrators, and mechanisms for enforcement of the arbitration decision.

In addition, it encompasses the technical details regulating the work of arbitrators' commission that will begin immediately in accordance with the steps adopted by the Convention. The first of these steps is to deposit the convention within one week to the Hague International Court of Arbitration

During a month of the filing of the Convention, the parties should choose four arbitrators, each one of them will select two, those four arbitrators will select the fifth one.

These procedures are expected to take about a month; thereafter the tribunal meets to begin the work of the arbitration. The court will start by receiving the filing of pleadings from the two parties to conflict. The statements should cover all aspects of the dispute form and content.

While the SPLM has already appointed the Public International Law and Policy Group (PILPG) to represent it in the International Court of Arbitration, the National Congress Party is expected to assign

its legal representative in the coming days.

"The entire arbitration process including the issuance of the final award shall be done within a period not exceeding six months from the date of the formation of the arbitration tribunal, and subject to an extension for a period not exceeding three months," the roadmap stated.

Tension grows along Sudan-Ethiopian border

(Sudan Tribune) – A row has erupted between the Khartoum and Addis Ababa following the defection of an Ethiopian official to Sudan.

The governor of Asosa town in Western Ethiopia Ahmed Khalifa fled to the capital city of Damazin in the Blue Nile state for unknown reasons, according to the daily Al-Hayat published in London.

The newspaper said that Khalifa was accused by the Ethiopian authorities of offering concessions to Sudan on border issues. Sudan has turned down a request by its Eastern neighbor to hand over Khalifa.

The report quoting unidentified Sudanese officials said that Ethiopian forces have been chasing Bani Shangol armed opposition members inside Sudan near the towns of Kurmuk and Gaissan.

But Atem Garang, a senior southern official and deputy national parliament speaker said that Bani Shangol opposition movements are supported by Eritrea and denied any involvement by the Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS).

Some observers speaking to Al-Hayat expressed fears that Addis Ababa could retaliate to what it perceives as support to its dissident by arming Darfur rebels.

The Sudanese army today issued a statement accusing Ethiopian forces of attacking Hantoub Mountains and killing one policeman.

The Sudanese army spokesperson Osman Al-Agbash said the attack "represents another cycle of international conspiracy on our natural resources and economic gains".

Al-Agbash said Ethiopia violated an agreement that allows Sudanese troops to be stationed in the area. He further said a joint committee with Ethiopia will commence to discuss the incident.

The semi-autonomous South Sudan has long borderline with Ethiopia and the two sides have signed several agreements last month to promote transport, education and economic development in

the border areas.

Khartoum State Legislature passes traffic Act, authorizing imprisonment for violations

(Al-Rai Al-Aam) Khartoum State Legislative Assembly passed yesterday an interim traffic law intended to control movement of vehicles and protect road users. The law considers some traffic infractions as crime such as crossing a red light the punishment for which will be imprisonment and fine.

JDB to visit Abyei

(Al-Sahafa) JDB spokesperson Maj. Gen. Pior Ajang said the Board would hold its coming meeting on July 28 in Khartoum adding that JDB members would visit, immediately after the meeting, Abyei and Kadugli to view JDB new buildings in those areas.

With regard to brigade 31, he said it had actually begun withdrawing but some soldiers have not withdrawn for logistical reasons but efforts underway to relocate them north of Abyei.

Presidency to receive AEC biannual CPA assessment today or tomorrow

(Akhbar Al Yom) The Presidency is expected to receive today or tomorrow the AEC assessment of the CPA implementation. The report was endorsed by the Commission in Juba last Thursday.

Darfur

Britain lifts ban on deportation of Darfuri to Sudan

(Sudan Tribune) — British government has lifted the ban on deporting Darfur asylum seekers to the Sudan despite efforts by rights activists to draw the risks that they are facing there.

The Home Office announced on 10 December 2007 that it had halted all deportations of Darfuri asylum seekers, pending an investigation into growing evidence that Darfuris are being tortured when they are returned to Khartoum.

One Darfuri asylum seeker has already been sent back to Sudan by the Home Office. A second Darfuri, Abubaker Yousef Mohamed, is due to be deported on Sunday 13 July, a British rights group, Waging Peace, said today.

Mohamed is alleged to have been detained for two months and beaten the last time he was deported. Other Darfuri asylum-seekers have been told to expect deportation.

He was also among a number of refugees who Waging Peace revealed had been illegally interviewed by Sudanese Embassy officials in Home Office facilities last year.

The Home Office has given the go-ahead for the deportation despite the position of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees opposed to the return of Darfuris to Khartoum, saying they face torture or death.

Miscellaneous

Al Qaeda groups 'leaving Iraq for Sudan, Somalia'

(gulfnews.com) Baghdad - Some groups of Al Qaeda terror network in Iraq have started leaving the country towards other hot spots in Africa like Sudan and Somalia, security sources tell Gulf News.

A key reason behind the change in strategy by the so-called Al Qaeda Organization in Mesopotamia is the intensity of the latest military strikes launched by Iraqi and US forces against the network, which has been the major challenge to restoring the stability of Iraq, the sources said.

"Our intelligence information indicates the withdrawal of certain groups of Al Qaeda from Iraq because of the military strikes. Many of them have escaped through the borders with Syria and Iran to hotter zones such as Somalia and Sudan," Major General Hussain Ali Kamal, head of the Investigation and Information Agency at the Interior Ministry, told Gulf News.

"I believe this is the beginning of the complete withdrawal of Al Qaeda from Iraqi territory."

A source at Iraqi Ministry of National Security said that documents and letters found in hideouts of "some elements of Al Qaeda" during search operations in Sunni suburbs in Baghdad, which were previously under the control of Al Qaeda, "prove these elements left Iraq for Somalia and Sudan".

The information, which could not be confirmed by independent sources, could represent a victory for the Iraqi government, headed by Nouri Al Maliki.

The number of bloody attacks by Al Qaeda has declined remarkably in Baghdad in the past 12 months; an indication the terror network faces a difficult situation on the ground, said Major General Abdul Jalil Khalaf, former police commander in Basra province.

"This also highlights the increasingly improving performance of the Iraqi armed forces and the speed by which they can operate in different places," Khalaf told Gulf News.

Khalaf, who is said to be considered for a top post at the Ministry of Defence, said the recent campaign against the Shiite militias in Basra negatively affected Al Qaeda.

"Al Qaeda began to lose a lot of sympathy on the Sunni streets after realizing that Al Maliki government launched a war against the Shiites fighters, believed to be backed by Iran."

The latest political rapprochement between Iraq and other Arab states has also led to the weakening Al Qaeda and "its gradual withdrawal from Iraq", he explained. But Khalaf warned that Al Qaeda will not withdraw fully from Iraq. "This will take years," he said.