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Media Monitoring Report

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Highlights

National Assembly passes press law

Local dailies report the National Assembly yesterday unanimously endorsed the new press and publication Act 2009. The new law authorizes courts to shut down newspapers, impose fine and revoke a journalist license. The law also empowers the Press and Publication Council to suspend newspapers for three days.

According to **Sudan Tribune website** 8/6/09, the new press law has removed heavy sanctions on journalists but maintained censorship. It removed the contested fine of 50,000 pounds on journalists and also restricts the power of Press Council to close newspapers.

Under the new press law, the court will fix the penalty if they found guilty of violating the law. Also, the press council is invested only to close down newspapers for three days. Otherwise, law courts decide penalties and can choose how long to suspend newspapers.

However, the new law does not remove the power from intelligence services who can censor papers ahead of publication under Sudan's National Security Act.

Reuters 9/6/09 reported the new version of the law failed to allay the fears of many Sudanese journalists.

Journalists said yesterday that they were pleased that legislators had removed a section from earlier drafts that would have allowed a powerful press council to fine journalists or newspapers up to 50,000 Sudanese Pounds (\$21,000).

But the new press bill leaves room for state interference on the grounds of national security or public order and it remains unclear if censorship will be reduced.

"National Security has incredible sweeping powers of arrest for ill-defined acts against the state. Without its reform the new act is not going to be enough to ensure freedom of the press," Selena Brewer from the U.S.-based Human Rights Watch said.

The council will have the power to suspend a newspaper for up to three days without the involvement of a law court and will also license press companies and lay conditions for the registration of journalists, distributors and printers.

"It will be like the law we have now," an editor who asked not to be named said, adding the role of the president in the council and its licensing powers meant the legislation fell short of what had been desired.

Fears of possible violence in Abyei over Kual killing

Al-Wifaq reports that there are fears that violence may erupt in Abyei in the wake of killing of a Muslim cleric and an education officer Maulana Alor Deng Kual by unknown persons. Abyei Administration spokesperson Chol Angwai said the Administration was doing its utmost to maintain security, adding the incident occurred at a time when the Administration was preparing to reconcile the Dinka and the Messeriya.

NCP reiterates keenness for elections on schedule

Al-Khartoum reports NCP Political Secretary Mohamed Mandour Al-Mahdi, speaking to reporters yesterday, reiterated his party's keenness to hold elections on schedule with the participation of all the political forces. Al-Mahdi made the remarks at a meeting yesterday with the visiting deputy chairman of the Humanitarian Affairs Committee at the German Parliament Christopher Stryses.

FVP Kiir, Al-Mirghani to meet in Juba today

Al-Khartoum reports FVP Salva Kiir and leader of the Democratic Unionist Party Mohamed Osman Al-Mirghani will meet today in Juba for consultation on a range of issues including Darfur and possible alliances in preparation for upcoming elections. According to sources, Kiir will also meet with the Umma Party leader Sadiq Al-Mahdi on 18 June in Juba for similar consultations.

35,000 SPLA soldiers to be demobilized

35,000 SPLA combatants will be demobilized tomorrow in Juba as well as eight other centres in southern Sudan, **Al-Khartoum** reports. UNMIS press release said the move targets 180,000 combatants who would be demobilized and gradually integrated over ten years.

DDR Commission disarms 70 combatants in Kordofan

Miraya FM 9/6/09 - The Commissioner of the Northern Sudan Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration Commission, Sulaf Al Din Saleh, said that about seventy combatants from the Popular Defense Forces have been demobilized in Southern Kordofan State.

Mr. Saleh said that the total number of eighteen-thousand (18,000) combatants from the Sudan Armed Forces, the SPLA and the Popular Defense Forces have been initially demobilized in the State.

Lam Akol to resign from Parliament

Al-Ahdath reports the leader of the newly-appointed SPLM-DC Lam Akol as saying that he has officially informed the National Assembly Speaker Ahmed Ibrahim Al-Tahir about the establishment of his party as well as his desire to tender his resignation from the membership of the SPLM bloc in Parliament during the next couple of days.

Sudan Tribune website 8/6/09 reported that prominent members of SPLM at a meeting of the SPLM Political Bureau in Juba said the party was not against formation of any new party by one of its breakaway members but that it would legally contest the use of its name by the rival wing.

Police Officer killed in South Sudan

A police officer, with rank of Brigadier, was gunned down in Bahr el Jebel State, **Al-Ahdath** reports. A source told the paper that the culprit, an armed guard serving at the residence of the officer, shot the Brigadier killing him on the spot and committed suicide by shooting himself. Source said family dispute could be the reason of the incident.

Chief negotiator Ghazi to begin exploratory visit to Darfur

Ajras Al-Hurriah reports Presidential Assistant and newly-tasked chief negotiator for Darfur Ghazi Salah Al Din will begin tomorrow a visit to the three Darfur states. Ghazi said his visit would be exploratory and his contacts would also include Darfurians within and without.

According to **Al-Intibaha**, Ghazi said the NCP would take part in the CPA conference in

Washington on 23 June which would also discuss preparations for upcoming elections.

GoSS Minister detained in Uganda

Akhir Lahza reports that the Minister of Information of Bahr el Ghazal state Kur Nyleucoth is presently in detention in Kampala in connection with a traffic accident that resulted in death of a Ugandan civilian.

Sudan rejects Arab League proposal – source

Akhir Lahza reports a judiciary source has rejected the Arab League Secretary General Amr Musa's call for amendment of the Sudanese criminal code to incorporate the Rome Statute. The source said Amr Musa has no right to interfere in the affairs of the Sudanese judiciary.

According to **Miraya FM** 8/6/09, the Sudanese government reiterated its refusal of the Arab League Secretary General's proposal for an amendment of the Sudanese criminal law by including the Rome Statute. It says current laws are adequate enough to criminalize offences in Darfur and there is no need for the adoption of the Rome Statute.

MFA spokesperon Ali Al Saddig told **Miraya FM** that Sudanese laws criminalize what is taking place in Darfur. He added that the laws do not need an amendment by including the Rome Statute which the Sudanese Government is not a signatory to.

COMESA urges ICC to suspend warrant of arrest for Bashir

Xinhua 8/6/09 - The Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) has urged the ICC to suspend its warrant of arrest for President Al-Bashir and promote dialogue between Sudan and Chad to address the crisis.

A communiqué released by African leaders at the end of the two-day COMESA summit read: "We express concern on the ICC indictment against Bashir and endorse the position of the AU Peace and Security Council for the UN to urge the ICC to suspend the indictment."

American judiciary suspends law banning investment in Sudan

Sudanese Media Centre 8/6/09 – US Supreme Court suspended the law banning investment in Sudan on allegation of genocide. Sudan's Ministry of investment welcomes the court decision. Minister of state for investment Salman Suleiman Al-Safi told the **SMC** that the ICC prosecutor Luis Ocampo fails to show evidence of alleged genocide in Darfur.

UN urges GoSS to halt demolishing houses in Juba

Sudanese Media centre 8/6/09 - UNMIS issues statement urging government of Central Equatoria in the south to stop demolition of houses in Juba. The statement also calls for undertaking urgent measures to guarantee citizens right of receiving humanitarian services and pay compensation for affected population. The statement highlights that UN feels anxiety for the way followed in demolition houses through three month ago where more than 30.000 displaced are now living in severe condition. UN statement stresses that Equatoria government does not observe international human right standards such as informed targeted citizens to evacuate site in ample time before starting demolition campaign, make consultations with affected communities and let them get involved in the operation besides availing reasonable alternative lands and guarantee respect to a citizen right to choose the place where he wants to live in. The statement stated that UN is ready to support government of the south to guarantee basis of respecting international human rights principles be applied across the region. It notes that central Equatoria government has forced evacuation of thousands of citizens out of their houses

including IDPs on allegation of preplanning Juba town without providing compensations and reasonable attentive to victims.

New fleet of vehicles shipped to UNAMID in Darfur

UN News Centre 8/6/09 – UNAMID in the Darfur region of western Sudan has received a new fleet of vehicles.

The convoy of 21 fuel tankers and 22 other vehicles arrived at the UNAMID headquarters in El Fasher, the capital of North Darfur, yesterday after a nine-day road trip across Sudan from the capital, Khartoum.

The Mission said that these convoys usually provide its police personnel a chance to establish closer contacts with Sudanese civilians along the route, UN spokesperson, Farhan Haq, told reporters in New York.

Foreign Minister begins 2-day Visit to Syria

SUNA 8/6/09 - The Syrian Foreign Minister, Walid Al-Mualim, yesterday noon received the visiting Foreign Minister, Deng Alor, and discussed progress of the relations between the two countries and ways to consolidate them further in different fields. They also discussed Darfur issue. The Syrian minister stressed the importance of achieving a political solution for Darfur issue on the basis of respect to the unity and sovereignty of Sudan. He asserted the readiness of Syria to help reaching a peaceful solution of Darfur issue. Al-Mualim reiterated the rejection of Syria to the ICC decision against the Sudanese President. Alor is on two-day official visit. He is expected to meet today with the Syrian President, Bashar Al-Assad.

Humanitarian Affairs Ministry pledges to remove obstacles

Sudanese Media Centre 9/6/09 - Ministry of humanitarian affairs affirmed readiness to cooperate on facilitating civil society organizations activities in humanitarian field in the country. The Ministry's Information officer Al-Samaoel Al-Siddiq said the minister of humanitarian affairs had urged all organizations and humanitarian partners to respect the state's sovereignty and laws organizing humanitarian activities. The Minister has warned against crossing the red line by any party working in humanitarian field. However, the Ministry pledged to remove all obstacles facing the humanitarian organizations particularly in Darfur since they are respecting laws and regulations of humanitarian work.

Sudan court sentences 12 Darfur rebels to death

Reuters reports a Sudanese court sentenced 12 JEM members to death Tuesday for taking part in a brazen 2008 assault on Khartoum in which more than 200 people were killed.

The ruling, thought to be the last in a series of court cases resulting from the attack, brings to 103 the number of Darfur rebels condemned to death over the advance on the Sudanese capital. None have been executed so far.

One of the men sentenced to death Tuesday is the half-brother of JEM leader Khalil Ibrahim. A thirteenth man was sentenced to a mental institution.

As the sentences were read out in court, the prisoners chanted "Welcome, welcome ICC".

Senior JEM official Al-Tahir al-Feki denounced the ruling, saying it would hamper already troubled on-off peace talks with Khartoum in the Gulf Arab state of Qatar where the two have yet to agree on a ceasefire.

"This shows the government is not serious about solving the problem of Darfur," he said. "While our team is negotiating in Doha, the Sudanese government continues to sentence our members to death, illegally, because they should be treated as prisoners of war."

"The more Sudan's government builds up its forces to find a military solution to the Darfur problem, the more JEM builds up its forces. It creates a vicious circle," Feki said.

Humanitarian State Minister Interview

In a lengthy interview to *Al-Sudani* 8/6/09, the State Minister for Humanitarian Affairs Abdul Bagi Al-Jailani, when asked about the Ministry's strategy to implement President Al-Bashir's decree to "Sudanize" humanitarian work in the country, he said, "The Ministry is now shouldering a heavy burden to implement the decision. The implementation is progressing in line with a certain plan and in coordination between the Ministry and the Sudanese Council for Voluntary Organizations (SCOVA). There are 1000 national NGOs that work under SCOVA. These organizations are working to hold specialized workshops on the possibility of "Sudanizing" humanitarian work. The Ministry will collect the recommendations of these workshops for assessment by an Ad hoc committee. The purpose of the assessment is to create "twin-ship" between the international, Islamic, Arab and African as well as friendly organizations. Through such partnership, we will build the capacity of the national NGOs to replace the international ones. The Ministry has observed the international day of voluntary work which represents a kickoff for "Sudanizing" humanitarian work in the Sudan".

Asked about the funds for such "Sudanization", he said "NGOs normally do not rely on the government for funding. Rather they depend on donations from philanthropists. So we can raise the funding needed for this work". Asked about the wide deployment of national NGOs without tangible activities on the ground, he said, "Yes, there are more than 1000 national NGOs but the number of those doing effective work do not exceed 100". He said the national NGOs have succeeded in filling the gap created by the INGOs ouster but the challenge is sustainability.