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Highlights

Kiir tells Ethiopian Premier he rejects census results

FVP Salva Kiir has discussed with the Ethiopian Prime Minister Melez Zenawi the CPA pending issues, *Al-Sahafa* reports. He informed Zenawi about the SPLM's rejection of the census results. Kiir told reporters yesterday in Juba upon return from Ethiopia that he also discussed with the Ethiopian Prime Minister the referendum bill for southern Sudan and Abyei. According to *Akhbar Al-Youm*, Kiir told the Sudanese community yesterday in Ethiopia that SPLM would support President Al-Bashir against the ICC. He added that SPLM would neither name a presidential candidate to compete with Al-Bashir nor oppose Al-Bashir running for another term.

SPLM sticks to elections on schedule

Al-Khartoum reports SPLM spokesperson Yen Mathew has reiterated the movement's categorical rejection of any move to postpone upcoming elections. He told the paper that SPLM sticks to elections on schedule and emphasized the need to change all restrictive laws.

“Abyei arbitration decision final and binding” – Plumbly

Local dailies report AEC Chairman Derek Plumbly told reporters yesterday in Khartoum that the Hague-based court arbitration decision on Abyei would be final and binding. According to *Khartoum Monitor*, he emphasized that the two partners should accept the decision by the panel, adding the two partners must reassure people in Abyei about the respect of human rights and peaceful coexistence regardless of the outcome of the arbitration.

Al-Bashir addresses rally in the River Nile

Local dailies report President Al-Bashir addressed yesterday a rally in the River Nile State. According to *Al-Ahdath*, the President downplayed the moves by some circles to mobilize residents to resist Dam construction projects in the north. He said while the government would not relocate communities by force, it would not also cease construction of the projects which are likely to submerge lands. However, he pledged a fair compensation.

Aid for Abyei victims looted

Al-Ahdath reports that a group of civilians have broken into a school in Mujlad and looted relief materials stored for victims of Abyei incidents. The police used teargas but could not stop them from looting the warehouses. Reportedly, the group looted 100 sacks of sorghum, 67 sacks of sugar, 152 cartons of edible oil as well as quantities of lentils and dates.

US wants world to 'rekindle' passion for southern Sudan peace

AFP 17/6/09 - The US envoy to Sudan yesterday urged the international community to "rekindle" its passion behind a 2005 north-south peace deal in Sudan threatened by renewed violence.

Scott Gration said a test of international commitment to the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), signed in the Kenyan town of Naivasha, will come on June 23 when 30 countries and organizations attend a meeting in Washington.

He said China, which has invested billions of dollars in Sudan's budding oil industry and is accused of supplying weapons to Khartoum, will be represented at the meeting by envoy Liu Guijin, whom Gration met last month in Beijing.

The meeting can help "restore that international commitment and to rekindle the passion that we had in Naivasha in 2005," the special US envoy said in his first news briefing in Washington since his appointment in March.

Gration, who has also traveled to Sudan, Qatar and Europe to buttress the CPA and end fighting in the western Darfur region, said "we have a lot of work to do" ahead of a referendum on the south's future in January 2011.

"We have to secure agreements on border demarcations, wealth-sharing, power-sharing," he said. "We have to make sure that all parties are involved to ensure that places like Abyei do not become the next war zone in Sudan."

The contested oil-rich Abyei region along the north-south border lies at the heart of the fragile CPA.

"We've seen an uptick in the violence in the south. It's very difficult at this time to exactly attribute it to (oil and other) resources, but it is very concerning to us," Gration said.

Chad ready to reconcile with Sudan – Chadian Minister

Miraya FM 17/6/09 reported the Chadian Minister of Information, Muhammad Hussein Mursal, has downplayed the mediation led by Libya to normalize the Sudanese-Chadian relations. Speaking to *Miraya FM*, Mursal said that the Chadian government has not been notified about this mediation, however Chad is ready to reconcile with Sudan.

Oil companies do not abide by agreements

GoSS Energy Minister John Luke said that people exert pressure on the oil companies operating in southern Sudan because these companies are failing in their commitments to the development of the oil producing regions, among other things, *Al-Ayyam* reports.

US bill to disarm LRA

The US Senate is debating over a bill that would allow the US to support efforts for the disarmament of the LRA and the reconstruction in southern Sudan and Uganda, *Al-Ayyam* reports.

Health workers report rise in HIV

IRIN 17/6/09 - Healthcare workers in Yambio, capital of Sudan's Western Equatoria State, have warned that the number of HIV-positive people receiving treatment has risen, and they cannot keep up with the demand for medication.

About 700 HIV-positive people are being treated by a local faith-based group, the Christian Brothers. "The issue of HIV in Yambio is getting bigger and bigger every day; we even find difficulty to provide services due the big numbers of people who are infected with HIV and AIDS," said Brother Daniel Pius.

The centre they run receives funding, powdered milk and non-food items for mothers and children from the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), but still struggles to cope with demand. Staffs say the number of HIV-positive people coming for medicines has doubled in the past two years.

"One reason there is an increase is because more people are going to be tested, so more people are finding out that they are HIV-positive," Pius said. "But the cases are also getting bigger because men are not protecting themselves."

A 2006 household health survey found that only 45 percent of women aged 15-49 had ever heard of HIV, while only 9.8 percent knew the three main ways of preventing HIV. According to a more recent survey, fewer than one in four men in Juba, capital of southern Sudan, reported consistent condom use every time they had sex with a casual partner.

But prevention efforts are underway, according to Patrick Wambua, HIV/AIDS officer for the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) in southern Sudan. "Condoms are only one part of the package to prevent HIV; awareness, education and training are also key."

Statistics on HIV in southern Sudan are hard to come by; overall prevalence is estimated at 3.1 percent but survey results vary widely, from as low as 0.8 in one sentinel site to 11.5 percent in another.

A university professor killed

Akhir Lahza reports Police issued a statement yesterday saying a university professor, Obeid Abdul Wahab, was killed when he attempted to escape. The statement explained that the professor, wanted in connection with extremist activities and a long time absconder, attempted to escape when spotted but a passerby hit him with a stone.