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Highlights

Sudan parliament briefed on census results

Sudan Tribune website 22/6/09 – The Sudanese government yesterday officially informed the national assembly of the census results weeks after they were released.

The Sudanese minister for presidential affairs Bakri Hassan Saleh told the parliament that the fifth census is a “unique” undertaking performed “with complete transparency and under international supervision”.

The total of Sudan’s population is 39,154,490, with 8,260,490 living in the south. Khartoum’s population is estimated at 5,074,321 followed by South Darfur state at 4,039,594; Al-Jazeera state is in the third place with 3,575,280 followed by North Kordofan with 2,920,992.

Saleh acknowledged that some areas including the South, Darfur and Halayeb (Egyptian borders) were not covered by the census but stressed that the coverage rate was 94%.

Abdeen revealed that 54% of the population is between the ages of 15-64 while those over 65 years account for 3.5%.

According to **Al-Ahdath**, the National Assembly approved the census report by an overwhelming majority. **Al-Watan** reports the Presidency Affairs Minister told the Parliament that GoSS was given \$3.5 million as additional funding for the census conducted last April but the amount did not appear in the SPLM statements.

NCP, SPLM differ as Washington official sessions near

US envoy Gration held intensive consultations yesterday with SPLM delegation on the border demarcation and census issues, reports **Al-Ahdath**. Official sessions of the conference are expected to kick off today and will be addressed by US Secretary of State Clinton and other influential US Administration officials. Head of the SPLM delegation Malik Agar has lashed out against the NCP delegation, saying they are preoccupied with normalizing their relations with Washington rather than focusing on the CPA pending issues for which the two delegations have come to Washington. “We have brought our partner to the Whitehouse on our back and we also have the capability to block its way to achieve its goals and agenda,” Agar warned. “Secession will ignite more fierce wars that may extend to the Nuba Mountains and the southern Blue Nile areas,” he said. Agar added that the NCP has only implemented 60% of the CPA, saying that a unity which was not achieved in fifty years will not materialize in just eighteen months.

Al-Sahafa reports Gration has failed to narrow the NCP and SPLM gulf of differences over the census results. The two partners decided to resume their consultations on the census results and border demarcation in mid July in Khartoum. Presidential adviser Mustafa Osman Ismail described the meeting as “very important”.

Ajras Al-Hurriah reports SPLM SG Pagan Amum as saying that the gap of differences between the NCP and SPLM in the ongoing talks in Washington was still wide, hoping they could surmount the hurdles by the end of the meeting.

Mbeki's panel conducts public hearings in Darfur

Sudan Tribune website 22/6/09 – AU Panel on Darfur (AUPD) which arrived last week in Sudan conducted a series of public hearings across Darfur to examine the root causes of the conflict in Sudan's war-torn Darfur region. The panel aims to determine how best to quickly end the conflict and expedite the peace process to create conditions conducive to promote justice, healing, and reconciliation.

Sudan said would abide by Mbeki's recommendations adding that it would allow it to avoid international pressure on non-cooperation with the ICC. The panel will hold a press conference in Khartoum Thursday June 25. The panel is expected to propose the establishment of a "Truth and Reconciliation commission".

Salva Kiir in Libya to discuss South Sudan development

Sudan Tribune website 22/6/09 — FVP Salva Kiir arrived yesterday in Libya for a series of meetings on Libyan contribution to southern Sudan development.

Mr. Kiir is accompanied by FM Deng Alor and Southern Sudan ministers for economy and transport. He is meeting with the Libyan leader Muammar Gadhafi on Tuesday.

According to **Akhir Lahza**, Kiir talks in Libya focused on Darfur and Sudan-Chad relations and that several agreements for development in the south are expected to be signed.

Efforts underway to resolve dispute over referendum bill

Al-Ahdath reports a sub-committee emanating from the National Constitution Review Commission (NCRC) is currently reviewing contentious points in the referendum bill. Legal Committee co-chair (SPLM) Michael Makwai told the paper yesterday that the subcommittee would submit its reports on Saturday.

Haroun calls on civilians not to heed to Ocampo's allegations

Southern Kordofan governor, Ahmed Haroun, addressing a rally in Abu Jubaiha has called on the people not to heed to ICC Prosecutor Ocampo's allegations about President Al-Bashir; rather they should focus on the interests of the country, **Al-Rai Al-Aam** reports. He has called on residents of the area to renounce tribalism and affirmed that his government would continue efforts to implement the CPA by strengthening partnership.

Upper Nile authorities prevent NCP from visiting "Fuluj"

Al-Intibaha reports that Upper Nile security authorities have prevented NCP delegation from proceeding to the town of "Fuluj" as part of its elections campaign. The paper claimed that the delegation was in Malakal until yesterday evening. An unnamed source criticized continued harassment and restrictions faced by the NCP members. Meanwhile, about 147 women in north Bahr el Ghazal state have defected from the SPLM and joined the NCP.

Meningitis case reported in Khartoum

Akhir Lahza learned from medical source yesterday that a meningitis case was diagnosed in a hospital in Khartoum. The source said the victim had been quarantined and precautionary measures were taken to prevent spread of the disease.

Government, JEM trade charges over Doha talks' breakdown

Al-Ahdath reports Presidential Adviser Mustafa Osman Ismail has blamed JEM for failure of talks in Doha, saying JEM has gone to Doha just to secure the release of prisoners rather than to achieve a peace agreement. "They are not POWs; these are Sudanese nationals who had

participated in violence and terrorism. They will not be released until a peace agreement is reached," he said. Ismail made the remarks in Syria. Meanwhile, JEM spokesperson Ahmed Hussein Adam said the government delegation to Doha talks was buying time for outcome of Washington conference, saying normalization between Washington and Khartoum would complicate the situation in the region.

Committee recommends increase of Darfur States

Al-Akhbar reports the committee set up to review proposals for increasing Darfur states will submit its final report to the Presidency today. The committee has recommended that a new state can be created in any part of the greater Darfur if it meets the requirements.

New INGOs in Darfur

Al-Intibaha reports Director of the NGO Desk at the Humanitarian Affairs Ministry Ahmed Adam as saying that a plan is in place to bridge the gap left by the INGO ouster in collaboration with UN agencies and national NGOs. He said the plan aims at providing medicine, medical and technical practitioners as well as funding to carry out humanitarian activities. Adam dismissed claims of existence of a gap left by the expelled INGOs, citing UN statements as prove, adding that the government was not singling out any particular NGO. He added that new NGOs from Libya, China, Indonesia, Malaysia and Scotland have actually joined and the door was still open to receive more NGOs.

North Darfur governor appoints Humanitarian Commissioner

Ajras Al-Hurriah reports governor of north Darfur Osman Yousuf Kibir has appointed Mr. Ibrahim Ahmed Hamid as secretary general of the state's Humanitarian Aid Commission.

Q+A: Can north and south Sudan reach a deal in Washington?

Reuters 22/6/09 - Former foes from Sudan's north-south civil war are due to meet in Washington on Tuesday to try to pump new life into their troubled peace deal.

The conference, organized by the U.S. envoy to Sudan, could provide a chance for north and south Sudan to settle disputes over the roll-out of the 2005 CPA - disputes that if left unresolved could drag Africa's biggest country and the surrounding region back into conflict.

But time for settlements is running out ahead of a number of deadlines, including a ruling on a disputed oil region in July, national elections and a referendum on southern secession.

How important is the summit?

Any return to civil war in Sudan would have a disastrous effect on the country, its oil industry -- which involves Total of France (TOTF.PA), CNPC of China, Petronas of Malaysia and other leading operators -- and surrounding states.

Sudan's two-decade civil war between its Muslim north and its mostly Christian south dwarfed the more prominent Darfur conflict in terms of bloodshed and regional impact.

The summit will achieve a lot if it can persuade northern and southern leaders to meet halfway over their disputes, or to at least lay out how they are planning to deal with flashpoints.

Who will attend?

One of the most important things about the meeting is its high-profile venue, Washington, as well as the prominence of its participants.

Many in Sudan feel the international community has neglected the north-south conflict, focusing its attention and funding instead on the separate fighting in Darfur.

The conference -- called by U.S. Sudan envoy Scott Gration, who reports directly to U.S. President Barack Obama -- pushes the issue back up the global agenda.

The NCP is led by Ghazi Salaheddin, a powerful adviser to President Omar al-Bashir. SPLM is represented by deputy chairman Malik Agar.

Other scheduled attendees include China's Sudan envoy Liu Guijin and representatives of the countries and bodies that witnessed the signing of the CPA, including the United Nations, the Arab League, Britain, Italy and Egypt.

What are the main flashpoints?

* **Abyei** -- Both north and south Sudan claim large parts of the central region that includes oilfields and a key pipeline and their troops have clashed there since the 2005 deal. The Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague is due to rule on the dispute in July. It will be next to impossible to find an arrangement that pleases both sides.

* **Elections** -- The SPLM is deeply unhappy about the arrangements for February's elections. It says a census under-counted the number of southerners and is demanding a re-drawing of constituencies. Further delays, and even boycotts by some parties, remain a possibility.

* **Southern secession** -- The biggest potential flashpoint is the vote on southern independence in January 2011. Most commentators expect southerners to choose secession. But there is next to no activity within Sudanese government or U.N. circles to prepare the country for such a traumatic breakup. The opportunities for conflict are legion if Sudan sleepwalks its way into separation, not least over control of oilfields and the land rights of heavily armed tribal groups who regularly move over the border.

What is the chance of success?

The Washington summit could be seen as a test of what appears to be a more open approach to Sudan's government from the Obama administration.

The Sudanese delegations will be hoping for more support and funding from the West for expensive parts of the peace deal, such as the election. The United States and other governments at the talks will be looking for signs that Sudan has plans to get through the next 18 months until the referendum, and to secure some sort of stability afterwards.

But any clear settlements will still be difficult to secure. Sudan's politicians are masters at delaying difficult decisions by endlessly stretching out negotiating processes and meetings. And many efforts to solve issues such as Abyei have failed in the past, simply because northerners and southerners will not budge an inch over what they see as their border.

Obama, adrift on Sudan

By Andrew S. Natsios
Tuesday, June 23, 2009

Washington Post 23/6/09 - Thirty Sudanese political leaders will meet in Washington today with 170 observers from 32 countries and international organizations, as well as four African

former prime ministers, to confront the issues that are slowly pushing Sudan over a cliff. The United States ought to be in a commanding position to mediate in these negotiations, as it did in the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement that ended 22 years of civil war between Sudan's North and South. But disputes within the Obama administration are inhibiting U.S. efforts to stop Sudan's slide toward civil war at a time when unified American leadership is essential.

First, let's consider the situation. Some policymakers continue to call Darfur an ongoing "genocide," but in fact, the conflict has descended into anarchy. "Darfur today is a conflict of all against all," Rodolphe Adada, the joint African Union-United Nations special representative, told the U.N. Security Council in April. Between Jan. 1, 2008, and March 31, 2009, he found some 2,000 fatalities from violence, one third of them civilian. The death of some 700 innocent civilians over a 15-month period, while morally repugnant, is not genocide. It is a low-level insurgency. More civilians died in southern Sudan during the past six months than in Darfur over the past 15 months. Despite such facts and extensive U.N. Security Office reports showing that genocide is not an accurate description, President Obama continues to use that weighted term.

Advocacy groups motivate their financial supporters and volunteers by associating today's low-level insurgency with the Sudanese government's massive atrocities of 2003 and 2004. This amounts to leading supporters through a time warp. Evidence shows that the deaths are less than half the 500,000 that is often cited, and that 96 percent of deaths took place during the first two years of the conflict. John Prendergast, co-founder of the Enough campaign to end crimes against humanity, said recently, "Most of these figures are wild estimates. They are simply crazily wild estimates." Well, such wild estimates are compromising American diplomacy.

The Obama administration should consider reducing sanctions on Sudan only in exchange for concrete Northern government concessions on critical issues. The North, of course, has a mixed history in carrying out its commitments, but its cooperation is key to securing peace. Yet U.S. use of the term "genocide" is reducing our diplomatic options. In the face of genocide, the United States could hardly act as a neutral mediator. No politician wants to explain why he or she remained complacent in the face of slaughter.

What Sudan needs is a set of political deals to stitch the country back together before the state collapses. Advocacy groups that claim continuing genocide are under assault by respected scholars of Africa, such as Mahmood Mamdani and Alex de Waal, and they are retreating from their insistence during the Bush administration on military intervention in Darfur. But while many now claim to support a negotiated political settlement, they simultaneously undermine efforts to talk.

In addition, the overuse use of a term such as genocide risks anesthetizing the American public and media; if the Sudanese government does one day unleash new atrocities on southern Sudan, no one will be listening.

The administration is focused more on a dated view of Darfur than on the risks of future atrocities that are likely to come from a new war between the North and South. Two events required under the 2005 peace agreement -- national multiparty elections to be held in February 2010 and a referendum the following year on the secession of southern Sudan -- will determine whether Sudan constructively addresses its internal political problems or descends into Somalia-like anarchy or Rwanda-scale atrocities. The risk of war rises exponentially without resolution of these issues: the status of oil-rich Abyei, preparation for the referendum on southern secession, and, after the referendum, the disposition of revenue from oil production (most of which is in southern Sudan, while the pipelines go through the North) between the

North and South.

Using the term "genocide" feeds the International Criminal Court's indictment of President Omar Hassan al-Bashir -- which has made meeting with him politically explosive. Some advocates insist that no American diplomat talk with him. How do you mediate a peace agreement if you can't speak to one side's leader? At this crucial moment, the long-suffering Sudanese people need unified American leadership behind a pragmatic policy of engagement. Instead, they have campaign rhetoric and diplomatic paralysis. We, and they, are headed toward disaster if we do not change course.

The writer, a professor of diplomacy in Georgetown University's Walsh School of Foreign Service, was special envoy to Sudan from 2006 to 2007 and served as administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development from 2001 to 2005.

OP-ED – Open up discussions on the Referendum Bill

(Al-Ayyam 21/06/09 – Mahjoub Mohamed Saleh) Discussions over the Referendum Bill should not be confined to the NCP and the SPLM. The draft should be widely circulated to ensure national consensus on this crucial issue facing the country.

The CPA obliges the NCP and the SPLM to make unity an attractive option. They entered this obligation without bringing the other political forces on board and now, years after the signing of the CPA, there is nothing on the ground that reflects efforts by the two sides aimed at making unity attractive. On the contrary, some of their practices appear not supportive of unity. Now that the Interim Period is ending, this crucial issue of the Referendum should not be left to be handled by the parties to the CPA alone.

All southern Sudanese across the country, regardless of their political orientations, should participate in open and serious discussions on the Referendum to decide who should vote and who should not. Such discussions should also include southern Sudanese in the Diaspora.

Other key issues related to the Referendum that require open and transparent discussions include the fate of southern Sudanese in northern Sudan and that of northern Sudanese residing in southern Sudan should the south opt for secession.

It is true that the Referendum Bill may not cover this and other related issues such as post-secession north-south relations, for example, but these are issues that all require early preparation. The Parties to the CPA are required to discuss these issues through a comprehensive and inclusive north-south dialogue.

OPINION – Why not post-referendum elections?

(Al-Sahafa 22/06/09 – Sidig Al-Badi) Southern Sudanese will be taking part in Referendum on self-determination about two years from now. With the date for the Referendum closing in, elections rhetoric has totally eclipsed talk on the Referendum. Whatever the date the elections will take place, results are likely to be announced less than a year before the Referendum. True that the CPA stipulates for elections to precede the referendum but the CPA itself is not scripture. The international community that witnessed the signing of the CPA could be requested to consider a deferment. We could also rightfully ask why the pledges they made in Oslo turn out to be a big lie.

The incumbent political forces would not allow for a deferment of the elections unless they are sure to maintain the current quotas in government as stipulated in the CPA. On the other hand, the other political parties have been outside power for twenty years or so. What is the harm if the elections are deferred given the fact that most of them are not yet technically prepared for the process.

The Referendum should be given more prominence not only by the southern Sudanese who will be participating but also by all the people of Sudan. This is because the exercise will affect all of us including present and future generations who have suffered a great deal from the civil war and who deserve some rest after this long suffering.