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Media Monitoring Report

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Highlights

Census breakdown to be announced tomorrow

Al-Rai Al-Aam reports the Central Bureau of Statistics will announce tomorrow the basic results of the fifth population census. However, FVP Kiir told a graduation ceremony of 415 students in Bentiu yesterday that “the SPLM reserves the right to object to the population census results”. Meanwhile, the **Citizen** reports Southern Sudan Legislative Assembly member Sebit W. Abbe as saying that GoSS Cabinet should resign over census results because GoSS President Kiir has endorsed the results without consulting with the Cabinet members. “Kiir, while on his way to attend the new South African President Zuma a week ago did endorse the census results in Khartoum while some of his deputies were still contesting the same results,” he told the **Citizen** in an interview yesterday.

On the other hand, Mr. Ibrahim Ghandour, an NCP official in charge of elections, said electoral constituencies would be decided by the NEC based on population density. “The census results which are opposed by the SPLM have been supervised by southerners themselves. Any objection should be based on valid grounds not just on political suspicions,” he said.

According to **SUNA**, Census Supervisor General Yassin Al-Haj Abdeen has invited all the press and media to attend the release of the census basic results at the Friendship Hall Thursday.

SPLA, civilians Pibor clash entailed UNMIS intervention

Al-Intibaha reports SPLA troops clashed with civilians yesterday in the town of Pipor. They opened indiscriminate fire in the town, spreading panic and tension among civilians. UNMIS troops had to intervene to contain the clash. Sources in Pipor told the paper that there were wounded persons but their number was not confirmed until late in the night. According to the sources, the clash erupted when a group of 30 SPLM troops attempted to seize some catch of the civilians on the Pibor River, leaving one SPLA soldier wounded. The sources said SPLA in the area rushed a company of troops to the scene to contain the clashes. The paper has also learned about occurrence of clashes between SPLA and civilians in the area of “Malu”, in Lakes State.

Government expects SC to condemn Chad

Al-Rai Al-Aam reports MFA spokesperson Ali Al-Sadiq as saying that Sudan government expects the Security Council to condemn Chad’s aggression on Sudanese territory. Speaking to reports yesterday, Al-Sadiq said, “**SG Ban Ki-moon should have condemned Chad aircraft’s raids on Sudanese territory rather than calling on Sudan to exercise self restraint**”.

Kiir, Taha to take part in peace conference in US

The US Administration is determined to organize a conference on the Sudan’s CPA in Washington in June, **Al-Sahafa** reports. FVP Kiir and VP Taha will participate in the conference. The arrangements will be discussed by the US envoy Scott Gration during his visit to Khartoum on 29 May. According to the head of SPLM office in Washington Ezekiel Jatkoth, the conference will take place under the patronage of US Vice President John Badin and that President Barak Obama is likely to take part in some of the sessions. Meanwhile, a source said Washington is also likely to organize a meeting between the Sudan’s Vice Presidents and JEM leader Khalil Ibrahim to expedite the Darfur peace process.

Abu Garda case intended to support Ocampo –Ambassador

Al-Rai Al-Aam reports the Sudanese Ambassador to the Netherlands Abu al-Gasim Abdul Wahid as saying the appearance of Bahr Idriss Abu Garda before the ICC was intended to support the ICC Prosecutor Ocampo's report to the SC in June. He said his appearance before the court would not change Sudan government's position on the ICC. Meanwhile, the Ambassador described the Sudanese-Dutch relations as "normal"; pointing out that the Netherlands is a partner in the Sudan's peace process.

Libyan envoy in Khartoum to mediate between Sudan and Chad

Local dailies report the AU Chairman Kaddafi has sent an envoy to Khartoum as part of efforts to ease tension between Sudan and Chad. According to **Al-Raed**, the Libyan envoy told reporters yesterday that the AU Chairman was determined to do his utmost to normalize relations between the two neighbours.

NCP lambastes Darfur rebels' threat to shoot Al-Bashir's plane

NCP has lambasted threats by the Darfur rebel United Front to shoot down President Al-Bashir's aircraft should he visits Darfur, reports **Al-Wifaq**. "This is a worthless talk. It does not deserve even a comment" NCP official, Mohamed Mandour Al-Mahdi, said.

Sudan journalists protest against new press law

Sudan Tribune website 19/5/09 — More than 50 Sudanese journalists protested outside the National Assembly in Omdurman on Tuesday against a draft law of press largely criticized for repressive articles it includes.

The new press bill put the media and the media houses under the control of the Sudanese presidency which appoint 8 of the 21 members of the Press Council. No media house will be established or journalist authorized to exercise this activity without a licensing from the council.

Also the disputed bill allows the council to close newspapers and authorizes the judge to impose 50,000 new Sudanese pound fines for infractions.

"Sudanese Journalists Network", which includes hundreds of independent journalists said that it organized the protest against the new draft press law because it limits the freedom of the press and impose restrictions on journalists and frightens them by "an arsenal of sanctions."

The demonstration comes as the Sudanese parliament begun today to discuss the contested draft of the press law.

Some 150 legislators from the SPLM and opposition National Democratic Alliance boycotted the discussion to mark their position from this bill restrictive of press freedom.

Yasir Arman, the leader of the SPLM bloc at the federal parliament said they walked out of yesterday's session after their failure to agree with their partner le National Congress Party on the draft law.

The SPLM deputy secretary general, who asked to discard all the articles opposed to the press freedom, further dismissed statements made by NCP leaders that the draft law had been formulated by the SPLM.

The current press law of 2004 is still in force despite its incompatibility with the 2005 peace deal and the interim constitution as well as the international freedom of expression standards.

There is a consensus among the Sudanese journalists even the pro-government press council criticized the current draft law.

The Sudanese journalists have repeatedly complained about print-run seizures and other harassment that the security services exercise every day. Since the indictment of the Sudanese President by the prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) last July, Sudanese security intensified press censorship.

SPLM calls on supporters to prepare for popular consultation

Blue Nile State Governor Malik Aggar has called on SPLM figures at a rally in Ed-Damazin to mobilize the grassroots for the popular consultation stipulated in the CPA, reports **Al-Sahafa**.

New policies for IDP return to southern Sudan

The Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs has announced a new policy for voluntary returns of IDPs to southern Sudan that mainly focuses on reconstruction rather than return operations, reports **Al-Wifaq**.

JEM boycotts Doha talks

Miraya FM 19/5/09 - The Head of JEM's Legislative Council, Professor Al Tahir Al Fakki, told Miraya FM that the movements' negotiators would not resume the Doha peace talks with the government, as it have become a waste of time. He reiterated the movement's demands for release of its prisoners and readmission of the expelled INGOs, as condition to return to negotiations.

He further said that JEM has returned to the negotiation table earlier this month in response to American demands.

Chad readies forces to strike rebels in Sudan

Reuters 19/5/09 - Chad said its armed forces would enter Sudan "in the coming hours" to intercept what it said was a planned new rebel assault around its eastern border, its interim defence minister said on Tuesday.

Sudan denied Chadian rebels were gathering inside its borders for an assault and urged its neighbour not to go through with its threatened raid.

"This new situation will prompt us in the coming hours to pass across the border to deal with these pockets of mercenaries," Chad's Adoum Younousmi said in a statement.

"We have asked our troops to deploy and those units which are due to intervene are in the process of gathering around these sites ... The Chadian government will use its right of pursuit," Younousmi added.

"We would urge Chad to refrain from violating the sovereignty of the country and stop its aggression," Ali Youssef Ahmed, an official in Sudan's foreign ministry, told **Reuters**.

"Chad needs to come to its senses and respect the agreement which was signed in Doha. We hold them responsible for any repercussions that may arise from such actions," he said.

"After they (the Chadian rebels) were defeated, they came to Sudan, seeking refuge. N'Djamena has said they are gathering for another attack. This is not true." He added.

He added Sudan was still keen to seek a diplomatic resolution to the crisis and was hoping

France and the United States would intervene to stop any Chadian attack.

Local dailies report Sudan's army reacted strongly to statements by Chadian officials in which they said that they were preparing to pursue rebels on Sudanese territory.

According to **Al-Sudani**, SAF spokesperson Brig. Mohamed Al-Aghbash, has vowed to "crush" any Chadian forces crossing into Sudanese territory.

Sudanese IDPs more than 4 million, UN says

Miraya FM 19/5/09 - OCHA has said that Sudan tops its global report on Displaced Populations, as it has more than 4 million IDPs.

It also said that Sudan, among other countries in East and Central Africa, host the largest numbers of refugees, numbering 11 million.

The report attributed the increase in the number of displaced and refugees in the African continent to wars and natural disasters.

Meanwhile, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in south Sudan said it will reduce the repatriation of Sudanese refugees due to lack of funds caused by the global financial crisis in addition to the under population of refugees in the camps in neighboring countries.

The Assistant Representative of the UNHCR in south Sudan, Geoff Wordley, told **Miraya FM** that the population of Sudanese refugees in the camps has decreased since early this year, adding that about 80,000 refugees remain in the three countries namely, Uganda, Kenya, and Ethiopia.

However, Mr. Wordley said that the UNHCR's news strategy of reducing the transportation capacity will not halt the repatriation program of refugees to south Sudan.

INTERVIEW: Head of the NCP's Elections Committee Prof. Ibrahim Ghandour (Al-Akhbar)

What is the position of the NCP regarding preparations for the elections?

Preparations for the elections are part of our daily duties at the party's Political Mobilization Committee. The NCP started preparing for the elections earlier and has formed its relevant institutions at all levels. We were only waiting for the proclamation of the Elections Act and the formation of the NEC.

Why does NCP insist on holding elections despite objections from the political parties including the SPLM?

Anywhere in the world, the incumbent political force would try, if it can, to delay conducting the elections while opposition parties would be pushing for the elections. In Sudan, it is different. Some political parties are coming up with various reasons to defer the elections.

The NCP regards the elections as a covenant stipulated by the CPA and the Interim National Constitution. We are therefore committed that elections should take place on schedule. Anyone with a good judgment of the political situation in the country would realize that the opposition parties do stand a chance at the polls.

What if the elections have not taken place?

The NCP will remain in power as stipulated in the CPA if political forces including the SPLM refuse to contest the elections especially given that there still remain some CPA benchmarks such as the Referendum to be implemented under the supervision of the elected government. It is our hope that the political forces and the people of Sudan will join hands with the NCP in backing efforts by the National Elections Commission to hold free, fair and transparent elections.

Does the SPLM rejection of the census show a lack of trust in the NCP and will this affect the outcome of the elections?

The SPLM has not clearly stated it does not want to contest elections. While SPLM Secretary General Pagan Amum had rejected the census results, FVP Salva Kiir has accepted the results and witnessed the handing over of the results to the NEC. The census exercise was not supervised by the NCP. In the north, it was overseen by the NEC. In the south, the process was overseen by the Southern Sudan Census Commission headed by a person recommended by the SPLM.

Anyone who has doubts with regard to the technical aspects of the census should make them public rather than voicing unfounded doubts. Such doubt sends a wrong signal about the SPLM's political position.

There is a general feeling that NCP is delaying the CPA implementation for fear of outcome of the Referendum ...

The NCP is committed to the CPA. It also stands committed to see the referendum takes place.

The NCP used the ICC issue as leverage to mobilize its supporters and win supporters from the other parties ...

I think the NCP has succeeded in doing that to block attempts by the ICC supporters to weaken the NCP and minimize its chances in the forthcoming elections.

You are also the head of the Sudan Federation of Workers' Union. Does the NCP also count on support of trade unions for the elections?

No, there is no link. I came to this position not through appointment but through elections by the NCP *Shura* (Consultative) Council.

What happens if all the political forces collude against the NCP for elections?

What we fear is a coalition formed with the aim of stealing the limelight. Such a coalition is bound to cause a disaster whatever the outcome of the elections. We do not foresee such a coalition taking place and I believe that these parties are not serious. Would you expect a party that intends to implement the Sharia'a Law to form a successful coalition for the elections with another that is bent on denouncing the same law? Nevertheless, we are not afraid of such a coalition should it happen.

When would the NCP and the SPLM resolve their differences?

The realities on the ground do not reflect the serious divergence of views that the media report. The media report attempts by some to project themselves as defiant opponents of the NCP for the benefit of an internal or external audience. Our dialogue with the realistic SPLM figures does not reflect such a view.