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Media Monitoring Report

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Highlights

Southerners dismiss Sudan pre-poll census count

Reuters - Sudan today released the first detailed results of a census vital to elections due next year, but the figures were dismissed by former southern rebels who said the southerners' total was too low.

Any lengthy dispute over the census count risks delaying Sudan's first democratic election for more than 20 years, as well as a referendum on southern independence -- both centerpieces in a frayed north-south peace deal.

The census figures showed a total population of 39.15 million, with 30.89 million or 79 percent living in the mainly Muslim north, and 8.26 million or 21 per cent living in the predominantly Christian and animist south.

The south's dominant Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) accused northern politicians of manipulating the figures and under-counting the number of southerners both in the south and Khartoum.

"We believe in many ways this census is politically motivated and designed," senior SPLM official Yasir Arman told **Reuters** in comments critical of the north's dominant National Congress Party (NCP). "It is clear the only elections the NCP are ready for are unfair and not free elections."

Arman said earlier counts had shown southerners made up a third of Sudan's total population, not the fifth recorded in Thursday's figures. He said there was also a suspiciously sharp jump in the population of South Darfur state, part of northern Sudan.

Arman said Sudan would now have to find another, fairer way to work out the borders of constituencies and power-sharing between the two sides, in the run up to the election.

"We have to have a new voter registration. The constituencies should be divided according to the voter registration," he said.

No one was immediately available to comment from the NCP, led by Sudanese president Omar Hassan al-Bashir.

Census row has no impact on constituency delimitation - NEC

The NEC said the ongoing controversy on census results would not affect the constituency delimitation process, saying more time should be allowed for discussion on the population census issue, **Al-Wifaq** reports. NEC Deputy Chairman Prof. Abdullah Ahmed Abdullah said the Commission would continue its work as per the timetable. However, he said, the NEC would take into consideration the delay caused by the release of the census results. According to **Al-Akhbar**, Prof. Abdullah said so far the NEC did not receive official objection against the use of the census results for elections.

Sudan sentences more 9 rebels to death over Khartoum attack

Local dailies report nine JEM rebels were sentenced to death yesterday for participation in an attack on Khartoum in May10, 2008.

According to **Sudan Tribune website**, today's verdict brings to 91 the number of the rebels condemned to death. The judges pronounced their decisions after declaring the rebel guilty under Sudanese criminal and counter-terrorism legislation of involvement in the unprecedented attack.

Al-Bashir calls on Southern Kordofanians to renounce tribalism

Local dailies report President Al-Bashir has called on the residents of the southern Kordofan state to renounce tribalism, regionalism and to sit together to sort out their problems. According to **Al-Sahafa**, President Al-Bashir, who addressed a mass rally in the town of Mujlad yesterday, reiterated his rejection of the ICC, saying "It is just a mosquito buzz".

Meanwhile, Governor of Southern Kordofan State, Ahmed Mohamed Haroun, said his government would continue pushing NCP-SPLM partnership towards its desired ends, adding his government would also work for promoting unity and implementing developmental projects.

Parliament passes Criminal Procedures Bill

Local dailies report the National Assembly yesterday endorsed the Criminal Procedures Bill. According to **Sudan Vision**, one hundred and fifty three MPs voted for the law, 69 voted against, while 5 members abstained. Article 127 of the amended law as well as other articles sparked wide controversy within the Parliament even after their amendment. The controversial Article, prior to amendment, authorizes governors to prohibit gatherings or demonstrations that may cause insecurity, in coordination with the Attorney-General.

Article on applying the Islamic Sharia Law on non-Muslims living in the capital had also stirred up controversy during the parliamentary deliberations. The Press and Publications bill was also unanimously endorsed yesterday at general features stage.

Army will be strengthened – Defence Minister

Al-Ayyam reports Defence Minister Gen. Abdul Rahim Mohamed Hussein as saying efforts would continue to boost Sudan's army capacity to deal with challenges of upcoming stage. Gen. Hussein who is taking part in a military exhibition in Byelorussia yesterday affirmed Sudan's keenness to develop the Sudanese army by equipping it with the most modern military technology.

US Senators to visit Khartoum

Sudan Tribune website 20/5/09– Two US Senators will visit the Sudanese capital as part of the newly energized bi-partisan policy of engagement with the Government of Sudan.

Senator Johnny Isakson and Senator Bob Corker announced at a congressional hearing on May 13 that they were planning to visit in about 10 days.

The two Republican Senators will meet with the senior figures of the Sudanese government including Ali Osman Taha and NISS Director Gen. Salah Abdalla Gosh.

25 Misseriya killed

Al-Ahdath reports bloody conflict erupted yesterday between the Nuba and the Messeriya over pastures and water in Fait Beni Saeed, 50 km east of Abu Junuk of the Lagawa Locality of southern Kordofan, leaving 25 Messeriya killed and 11 injured while one killed and nine

wounded on the side of the Nuba. Southern Kordofan Legislature member Hamid Al-Samani told the paper yesterday that the Messeriya were attacked by Land Cruisers mounted with machine guns.

MFA astonished by French request to Libya for mediation

Al-Wifaq reports MFA State Minister Ali Karti has expressed astonishment over France's request to Libya to mediate to end tension between Sudan and Chad. He said since France is spearheading the ICC issue, it doesn't want to get involved in such mediation." There is nothing new in the Libya's mediation between the two countries. Libya is already engaged in Sudan-Chad matters," Karti said.

27 people die in cattle rustling in Jonglei – officials

Sudan Tribune website 20/5/09 – At least 27 people died and 34 injured on Tuesday when raiders attacked 3 cattle camps in Uror County, Jonglei State, officials say.

Tut Nyang, Uror County SPLM Secretary told reporters yesterday here in Bor town that Murle attackers raided Chual, Juat and Payai cattle camps there early Tuesday killing 17 people and wounding 34 others. 10 bodies of the raiders were later discovered as the fighting continue toward Pibor's territory - Murle area, he claimed.

Uror Commissioner Gatluak Reath Kuily, who also confirmed the attack in his County, is due to address a press conference late Wednesday in Juba where he will plead government intervention to end the crisis.

Tuesday attack in Uror comes 4 days after similar incidents claimed lives of 4 children in Thol, Nyirol County. Murle tribesmen were also blamed for the children's abduction which ended horribly when the abductors slaughtered them in the bush. Their bodies were founded with knife scars.

UN fears the IDPs face isolation as rainy season might cut-off relief items.

Jailed Sudanese Islamists on hunger strike – lawyer

AFP - Six leading members of Sudan's opposition Popular Congress Party led by Islamist Hassan al-Turabi are on hunger strike after being held for 10 months without charge, their lawyer said yesterday.

The six "were held by intelligence services and placed in detention 10 months ago without any reason given for their arrest," Kamal Omar told **AFP**. On May 12, they were released only to be rearrested 10 minutes later. "They then went on hunger strike," Omar said. Five of the detained men come from the western Sudanese region of Darfur.

AU Panel wraps up visit today

Al-Rai Al-Aam reports the AU Panel on Darfur headed by the former South African President Thabo Mbeki will wrap up its mission today by a meeting with President Al-Bashir.

Unidentified group attack pig farm in Suba

Al-Watan reports an unidentified group has attacked a pig farm at Suba in Khartoum, killing about 51 pigs. Apparently, the group was frustrated by the authorities' lack of response to their demand to remove the farm from their residential area.