

27 May 2009

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Media Monitoring Report

United Nations Mission in Sudan/ Public Information Office

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Highlights

Plotters should come and try us – Al-Bashir challenges

President Omar Al-Bashir said that the government will go ahead with development projects as a way to foil conspiracies against Sudan, **local dailies** report. Addressing the inauguration of the Ruffa- Hassahissa Bridge in Gazira State, Al-Bashir pointed out that Sudan is being targeted because of its Islamic orientation. He challenged those who are plotting against the country to “Come and try us”.

FVP Kiir warns of endangered peace

Local dailies/ Sudan Tribune website - "The CPA that we concluded as a result of our enormous sacrifices is seriously threatened by enemies of peace from within our realm and without," warned FVP Salva Kiir in Juba yesterday while addressing a mass rally to celebrate the 26th Anniversary of the SPLM/A. The FVP pointed out that southern Sudanese are now fighting among themselves after they had fought the Khartoum government as a united force led by SPLM/A with a common slogan and as comrades not divided by tribal, regional or religious affiliations.

He suggested that ongoing insecurity is part of a well-designed strategy to discredit southerners internationally as people who could not govern themselves particularly with the elections and the referendum approaching. SPLA is now transforming into a modern army capable to protect southern territories and its people, he said, while condemning those posing in SPLA uniform to terrorize people.

"We will soon affect a comprehensive disarmament of all civilian populations in south Sudan," **Reuters** quotes FVP Kiir as saying. He said the scale of this year's fighting was unusual and part of a strategy by what he called "enemies of peace" to discredit the semi-autonomous south's ability to run its own affairs.

The spokesman for the south's army, Malaak Ayuen, told **Reuters** Kiir had this time secured the agreement of tribal chiefs across the region.

"All of the leaders agreed that disarmament should not be delayed anymore," Ayuen said.

“Go to Constitutional Court,” Nafei tells opposition

Presidential Assistant Nafei Ali Nafei has challenged parties who have doubts about the current government's legitimacy beyond July next year to seek redress before the Constitutional Court, reports **Al-Rai Al-Aam**. The Parties to the CPA would sit to decide, on the basis of the Constitution, should the National Elections Commission (NEC) deem it necessary to defer the elections further, he added. Dr. Nafei also slammed opposition parties that say the elections would not be free and fair and those that liken the forthcoming elections to the Kenyan experience, **Al-Sahafa** adds.

Dr. Nafei also commended the SPLM for rejecting calls for the formation of a national government. He also said the NCP sees no harm in the calls by the SPLM for a meeting of political parties in Juba.

Meanwhile, NCP Secretary for Political Mobilization Ibrahim Gandour said yesterday that the NCP sees no excuse for the SPLM invitation for a meeting of political parties in Juba since the party already has committees set up for bilateral talks with different parties, the paper reports in a separate story. Gandour added that ongoing rhetoric on a coalition of opposition parties for the elections is an “attempt by some to exert pressures here and there”.

Some 18,000 to demobilize in Southern Kordofan

Some 18,000 combatants from the SAF, SPLA and the PDF will be demobilized in Southern Kordofan as the state officially kicks off its DDR program on 1st June, **Al-Raed** reports. The event is under the supervision of the head of the DDR Coordination Committee, Bakri Hassan Saleh, and will take place in the presence of national, local and international representatives.

Tribesmen kill government forces in Southern Kordofan

Police has revealed that members of the Central Reserve Forces sent to prevent clashes between Rizeigat and Misseiriya in Shagaddi, Southern Kordofan State, were killed and injured by some 3,000 Rizeigat tribesmen yesterday, reports **Al-Rai Al-Aam**.

Reuters further reports that scores of people were killed when 3,000 armed Arab tribesmen on horseback attacked security forces in Meiram, Southern Kordofan, tribal sources and officials said.

Sudan's Interior Ministry said the security forces were attacked close to the town of Meiram soon after arriving to try to prevent a fresh outbreak of fighting between warring Misseiriya and Rizeigat nomads.

"While our forces were making administrative and security arrangements (on Tuesday morning) to prevent the parties from fighting, the Rizeigat started heavy firing and attacked," said the ministry's statement.

"It is estimated the attackers were made up of 3,000 fighters on horseback and 35 vehicles."

One tribal source, who asked not to be named, said more than 100 tribesmen, security officers and civilians may have been killed in Tuesday's clashes and other skirmishes between the tribes in recent days.

It was impossible to verify the figures. The ministry statement said there had been deaths and injuries among the security forces and civilians, but gave no figures and no reason for the attack.

"They were armed to the teeth, both the Misseiriya and the Rizeigat. There were heavy losses on both sides over the past few days," said one senior member of the Misseiriya tribe who asked not to be named.

"There were also deaths among the police who were also caught up in it all."

Wrong court for Abyei Arbitration, says Deputy Speaker Atem Garang

Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly, Atem Garang, said that it was wrong to seek arbitration on Abyei at the Permanent Court of Arbitration, reports **Al-Akhbar**. In an interview, Atem is quoted as saying that the initial SPLM proposal that the IGAD arbitrate over the issue was turned down by the NCP.

Pagan, Al-Fadhil hold talks

SPLM SG Pagan Amum and Umma-Reform leader Mubarak Al-Fadhil held talks in Khartoum yesterday, **Al-Rai Al-Aam** reports. The two sides mulled the key issues that would be discussed at the juba meeting of political parties called for by the SPLM. Mubarak Al-Fadhil said that he would heed the invitation to participate at the meeting.

Ministry brands some vehicle registration plates illegal

Interior Minister Ibrahim Mahmoud Hamid told parliament that vehicle registration numbers that carry symbols of political parties such as the SPLM, the Beja Congress and others are illegal. He said that these plates were earlier allowed as a temporary measure, **Al-Rai Al-Aam** reports.

Thousands homeless as shelters demolished in Juba

IRIN 26/05/09 - The large-scale demolition of poor housing in the southern Sudanese capital, which has left thousands homeless, was inconsistent with Southern Sudanese law and international human rights standards, the UN said.

International standards include reasonable prior notification and the possibility for the affected to challenge the decision. They also include provision of alternative land and compensation. "Most of these standards recognised in Southern Sudan's laws have not been met," UNMIS said. "With the rainy season approaching, the UN is worried that there may be a sharp deterioration in the living conditions of these populations."

The forced demolition of several small settlements in the Southern capital has been going on for four months, with bulldozers - supported by large numbers of armed police and soldiers - knocking flat thatched or tin shelters.

There was no immediate comment from the Central Equatoria State authorities that organised the exercise. They have, however, previously said they were only bulldozing houses built by squatters without permission.

Those affected said they had been left homeless with their livelihoods destroyed. "My shop was destroyed with my goods inside," said Selim Lado Carlos, who claimed he received no warning of the clearances. "Many people, not only me, lost their property. We lost what we were hoping could improve our lives."

Many of the tightly packed settlements were settled during Sudan's long civil war. At that time, Juba was a garrison town for northern government forces, surrounded by the then southern rebels.

Other areas were settled more recently, as former refugees returned home to try to rebuild their lives with the end of Sudan's civil war in 2005. When they settled in the area during the chaotic years following the peace deal, locals said, there was little formal system to land ownership. Some said they had documents proving ownership, but were ignored by soldiers and forced to leave anyway.

Since the demolitions began, many of those affected have moved to Gudelle area on the very edge of Juba, some 6km from the town centre. The original settlements had few services, but the new areas being settled lack any at all, the locals said. Many cannot afford the higher transport costs to reach their work in central Juba.

"Everywhere there are now houses being built in Gudelle, every day you see 10 new houses," said Emmanuel Ayon, who works in a school in the rapidly growing area. "You hardly find a pit latrine - even at the school here - and yet the people still come because of the destruction."

Ayon helped run the Mother and Children NGO, which supported school construction in Juba's suburbs. Its office was destroyed in the demolitions - despite Ayon claiming the group had legal papers.

In recent months, the number of pupils at the school in Gudelle has doubled. "We have received no support from the authorities," Ayon added. "Many people here are suffering very badly indeed."

Demanding that the demolitions stop, UNMIS criticised the lack of alternatives that authorities should have provided to those forced to move, warning of the humanitarian impact. The authorities, it said, should "take prompt and necessary steps to provide alternative land, adequate housing, access to basic services, and compensation to the large numbers of families who have been suddenly uprooted from their homes in the past four months".

Dr. Ghazi Salahuddin may take over Darfur portfolio

Presidential Advisor Dr. Ghazi Salahuddin may be handed the Darfur portfolio, sources at **Al-Rai Al-Aam** intimate. The sources added that government is considering this step in order to enable Presidential Assistant Nafei Ali Nafei (also NCP Vice Chairman) have more time to handle his party's preparations for the forthcoming elections.

Government mulls deployment of more police to Darfur

In his briefing before parliament yesterday, Interior Minister Ibrahim Mahmoud Hamid described the security situation in Darfur as calm, **Al-Sahafa** reports. The Minister said however that incidents of attacks targeting foreign organizations operating in Darfur have risen. He attributed this to attempts by the armed groups to get more resources.

He added that the Ministry, together with the UNAMID, has plans in place to safeguard UNAMID property and those of other international aid agencies but added some of these agencies do not like the plan. The Minister further revealed that it has plans to increase the number of its forces in Darfur through enlisting people from the local communities to the police forces.

Gap left by agencies has been filled – VP Taha

"The gap left behind by the INGOs expelled from Darfur has now fully been covered," said VP Taha while addressing a meeting on voluntary returns yesterday, reports **SMC**. Addressing a meeting on voluntary repatriation of IDPs, VP Taha called for more coordination and concerted efforts to boost the voluntary repatriation programs and to help provide the basic needs to the IDPs.

North Darfur Governor welcomes US aid agencies

Al-Sahafa reports that North Darfur Governor Osman Kibir met in El-Fasher yesterday members of a delegation of the US Congress. He welcomed US aid agencies that will soon be operating in Darfur and briefed them on the humanitarian situation in Darfur and described it as stable.

On its part, the US delegation highlighted US commitments to the implementation of the Darfur Peace Agreement. The delegation pointed out that the US has paid millions of dollars to improve the conditions of Sudanese in the IDP camps.

Samar lauds Sudan legislative developments

The Rapporteur for the Sudan Human Rights Advisory Council, Abdelmoneim Osman, said that UN Special Rapporteur Sima Samar said she was pleased about the legislative reforms Sudan has achieved since her last visit, reports **Al-Rai Al-Aam**. She reportedly expressed confidence that these legislative development will lead to democratic transformation.

Abdelmoneim Osman said that Special Rapporteur Sima Samar attended the regular meeting held between the Human Rights Advisory Council holds with UNMIS where human rights related legislative reforms were among issues discussed.

Sudan summons UNAMID on statements about army movements

Local dailies/ Sudan Tribune website - Sudan summoned the hybrid peacekeeping force on Tuesday to demand it refrain from issuing statements about the movements of the army in Darfur.

Sudan's Foreign Ministry called the representative of the AU-UN peacekeeping mission (UNAMID) in Khartoum, Mr. Ahmed Anty, and asked him to refrain from statements concerning the movements of the Sudan Armed Forces and their operations against the rebels.

Acting Undersecretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ali Youssef, said today he had asked UNAMID officials to stop such statements. The Sudanese official added he requested the

peacekeepers to get information from the appropriate source, the SAF Spokesperson. He also said that the UNAMID official agreed to respect the Sudanese government's demand.

Hundreds still sheltering at UN-AU camp as Darfur fighting lulls

Local dailies/ Sudan Tribune website - More than 210 civilians were still seeking shelter near the UN-African Union military camp in a small town in North Darfur that was temporarily overrun by rebels following an attack Sunday, peacekeepers said Tuesday.

According to UNAMID, relative calm has returned to Um Baru with SAF and allied SLA-MM soldiers in control of their military positions near the town but added that the situation remains unpredictable

The displaced require humanitarian assistance, including food, water and tents, said UNAMID, though the peacekeepers are able to provide medical assistance. At least seven people – including three civilians – still need to be evacuated for further medical treatment, said the peacekeepers.

INTERVIEW – Luka Biong (continued from yesterday's MMR)

... No decision was reached on the census? Does this mean that they used the atmosphere to announce that agreement was reached over the results?

I do not want to say that. FVP voiced his reservations over the results and said there was lack of credibility in the results but the results could be used for development indicators.

How about the SPLM position on the draft press laws?

I do not know. But democratic change has been stipulated in the CPA and is in the spirit of the Interim National Constitution. Democratic change does not only concern the Government of Sudan but also the Government of Southern Sudan.

Your comrades in arms in the Nuba Mountains and the Nuba Mountains areas have expressed disappointment towards the SPLM leadership and FVP Kiir is yet to visit the region since he was sworn in.

Despite his busy schedule he did manage to visit all states of southern Sudan and has plans to visit these areas definitely before the elections.

Don't you fear the NCP would strengthen its hold in these areas if the SPLM continues to ignore those people?

The presence of Abdelaziz Al-Hilu and Malik Aggar in the Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile states respectively is a good thing and somehow compensates for FVP Kiir's absence there. Throughout the Northern Sector, SPLM leaders are doing a great job but they need a visit from FVP Kiir to give them impetus.

You said that FVP Kiir is among the most qualified leaders who can lead the country. Why hasn't the SPLM named its nominee for the elections?

The SPLM has formed an elections committee responsible for coming up with a clear elections strategy. This committee would raise its recommendations to the SPLM leadership that would then decide a course of action.

What can you comment on accusations of SPLA support to some tribes in the ongoing tribal conflicts in southern Sudan?

The SPLA has a statute and the army leadership is totally different from the party's political leadership. Orders are issued at the SPLA through its military institutions. These tribal conflicts are part of the larger social issues. No part of the SPLA could participate in any conflict without

referring to the military leadership. Some elements might have joined the conflict but not through directives of the SPLM Chairman.

The Bari and Mundari tribes have a long history of peaceful co-existence and these developments are a new phenomena introduced to cause sedition. Time will come when people will know who benefits from these incidents.

With disregard to who is responsible for this incitement to violence, I want to say that the problems that existed with some militias somehow cooled down when we took over the government of the region. These problems have started flaring up again now that we are heading towards elections and may increase as we get closer to elections day, then cool down and then increase again as we get closer to the Referendum. I personally expected this to happen. The aim is to show that southern Sudanese are incapable of governing themselves. The SPLM has managed to govern the people during wartime and will be able to not only govern the south but the whole of Sudan during peacetime.

On allegations of corruption and reports that international and local media have expressed disappointment over the SPLM.

They talk about the amount of \$60 million. This sum constitutes only 10% of national revenue.

We had a meeting with the President of the World Bank who commended the GoSS and its performance. We also met the head of UNICEF in New York who said that the rate of development happening in southern Sudan is unprecedented in states emerging from wars.

What is your position on the unity question?

Our position is clear and that is to work towards building a new Sudan and to guarantee the right to self-determination. Our responsibility is to make unity based on the interests of southern Sudan an attractive option.