

Date 18 Nov 2008

www.unmis.org



Media Monitoring Report

United Nations Mission in Sudan/ Public Information Office

Local News Headlines

- Parliament approves Electoral Commission (**local dailies**)
- CPA partners extend Parliament session to pass laws (**Al-Rai Al-Aam**)
- Ministerial decree issues to facilitate delivery of humanitarian aid in Darfur (**Al-Rai Al-Aam**)
- "Conspiracies" against Sudan will continue – Bashir (**SUNA**)
- MFA hopeful for Washington support to ICC deferment (**Al-Rai Al-Aam**)
- Arrangements underway to repatriate 3000 IDPs to villages in South Darfur (**SMC**)
- Sudan will stay united only under secularism – Pagan Amum (**Akhir Lahza**)

Websites/International Headlines

- Eleven political newspapers suspend publication (**Miraya FM**)
- Sudanese parliament endorses members of electoral board (**ST**)
- Sudanese police release detained journalists (**ST**)
- European delegation visits south Sudan for political dialogue (**Miraya FM**)
- Sudan ready to offer benefits for Russian oil companies (**ST**)
- Southern women march for end to GBV (**IRIN**)

NOTE: *Reproduction here does not mean that the UNMIS PIO can vouch for the accuracy or veracity of the contents, nor does this report reflect the views of the United Nations Mission in Sudan. Furthermore, international copyright exists on some materials and this summary should not be disseminated beyond the intended list of recipients.*

Address: UNMIS Headquarters, P.O. Box 69, Ibeid Khatim St, Khartoum 11111, SUDAN
Phone: (+249-1) 8708 6000 - Fax: (+249-1) 8708 6200

Highlights

Local Arabic and English Language Press

Parliament approves Electoral Commission

Local dailies report Sudan's Parliament yesterday approved an independent electoral commission. The Commission will be headed by Abel Alier and Abdullah Ahmed will be his deputy. The members are Abdullah Al-Hardallo, Mahasin Haj Al-Safi, Mukhtar Alasam, Al-Hadi Mohammed Ahmed, James Wol, Mohammed Tahir Abu Samra and Philster Baya .

The National Assembly also approved the Parties' Council members. The Council membership comprises Mohammed Bushara Dosa, Khalil Ishag, Ajwel Parmena, Hassan Abdin, Hassan Khartoum Darfur, Daniel Cod and Saeedna Saeed Hamid, Ceasar Salman and Osman Mohammed Nur.

CPA partners extend Parliament session to pass laws

Al-Rai Al-Aam reports NCP and SPLM have resolved ongoing controversy over some laws and legislations. The two partners' joint political committee issued a statement saying NCP and SPLM agreed to speed up completion of laws to be submitted to the National Assembly's current session for approval. The statement said the two partners also agreed to extend current Parliament session to approve the laws. The two partners also decided to engage political parties in the process of approving these laws.

Ministerial decree issued to facilitate delivery of humanitarian aid in Darfur

Al-Rai Al-Aam reports Government yesterday issued a decree extending humanitarian aid fast track in Darfur till 30 January 2010 in accordance with President Bashir's directives for facilitating the flow of the humanitarian aid. The decree affirmed government commitment to facilitate all procedures and flow of humanitarian aid to enable UN, NNGOs and INGOs to carry out their activities.

"Conspiracies" against Sudan will continue - Bashir

SUNA reports President Bashir affirmed Sudan's readiness to deal with all agents and infiltrators. He said "we fear only God and we will bow or prostrate ourselves only to Him."

Addressing celebrations marking 19th PDF Anniversary Bashir said that Sudan has been under economic, military and security siege ever since the advent of the Salvation Revolution. "We have not been broken and we have not been defeated" he said. "Conspiracies against us from tyrannical countries will continue and the war against us will not stop" He added. "Our response to them will be through development programmes and providing new services" he told the rally. He went on to say that "we have a mission, a cause and a responsibility" and that "Islam is coming despite the machinations and the conspiracies."

He mentioned what he called moral decadence of Western society and indicated that it had led to economic collapse, saying "we are the ones to save the world with Islam." He hailed the PDF, the people of Eastern Sudan, the Palestinian struggle against Zionism and praised all freedom fighters in all countries.

"I repeat for the third time that Ocampo and those behind him are under my shoes. I am

repeating this because some people say such words are inappropriate. We fear no body but Allah. Sudan is the first Third World country that said No to SC resolution (1706),” President Bashir told the crowd, according to **Al-Wifaq** newspaper.

Al-Intibaha says President Bashir declared that any anti-Sudan resolution from the Security Council would meet the same fate as that of resolution (1706). “We will tear up any anti-Sudan SC resolution. I would like to say to USA, Britain and France that we are free in our country. ICC and those backing it are under my shoes,” the President told the rally.

MFA hopeful for Washington support to ICC deferment

Al-Rai Al-Aam reports MFA spokesperson Ali Al-Sadiq said Sudan government received no official notification to the effect that France and Britain support efforts to suspend ICC indictment of President Bashir. However, the spokesperson hoped that French and British Foreign Ministers would reach an agreement in their meeting next week to support Sudan stance. He also hoped that USA would support efforts to overcome the ICC indictment.

Arrangements underway to repatriate 3000 IDPs to villages in South Darfur

SMC reports South Darfur state embarks on arrangements for the return of 3000 IDPs to their original villages in Kas Bilal and Unity localities in the context of voluntary repatriation program. Humanitarian commissioner in the state Al Hadi Ahmed told **SMC** that his commission held a meeting with IDP leaders and chiefs in Kas Locality. He said an agreement was reached to evacuate IDPs from schools and main squares in the town to be repatriated to their villages. Ahmed said the government pledged to provide basic needs such as health, water, and educational services, besides food materials. IDPs expressed desire to return to their villages but them demanded security and basic needs.

Sudan will stay united only under secularism

“Current opinion polls indicate the majority southern Sudanese are for separation of the South from the North. 90% will vote for separation if referendum is held now,” said SPLM Secretary General, Pagan Amum, at symposium organized yesterday by Al-Ahram Strategic Centre in Cairo, according to **Akhir Lahza** newspaper. “The majority feel that unity is not being made attractive. Unity can not persist under injustice. If southerners do not enjoy full freedom they will declare their state,” he said. “If Sudan is secular and democratic unity will be attractive. But if it is an Islamic state I will personally prefer to be out of it. If the part where I am living does not gain independence for me to have a state, I will migrate,” Amum added.

With regard to the ICC, Amum said the solution lies in addressing Darfur crisis by signing a comprehensive peace agreement. He said SPLM advised NCP to cooperate legally with the ICC.

Amum declined to comment on reports that the CPA may collapse if President Bashir is indicted by the ICC. However, he explained, “The CPA will not be affected. We should have the will to prevent any negative impact on the agreement,” “We have lost our leader John Garang who signed the CPA but we were able to overcome the tragedy. SPLM insisted on completion of the CPA,” he said. Amum emphasized that national reconciliation involving all Sudanese political forces would be the way out from crises in Sudan.

Akhbar Al Youm reports Amum has commended the Sudan Peoples Initiative launched by President Bashir and called on Darfur movements to benefit from the concessions made by the Government. With regard to elections, Amum has confirmed SPLM preparedness to contest.

Reacting to Amum’s statements, Cairo-based NCP representative Kamal Hassan said he was

not concerned about SPLM's position on the ICC issue. He said efforts are continuing to address the ICC. With regard to Amum's call for secularism, he said CPA addressed this issue.

Websites/International News Coverage

Eleven political newspapers suspend publication

(Miraya FM) Eleven daily newspapers have announced suspending publication today in protest against detention of journalists and censorship by security organs.

Sixty-four journalists were released yesterday after a brief detention following their protest against censorship before the parliament.

Advocate Almu'iz Hadhra told Miraya FM that the journalists were released on personal bail as cases were registered against them.

Hadhra said it was a peaceful demonstration, near the National assembly, where journalists were holding up banners. They wanted to raise their issue to the MPs, but the police attempted to beat them, then they were detained. We consider what happened as a violation of the law and constitution, because the constitution has stipulated the freedoms and the freedom to assemble.

Now the journalists have been released from custody to face trial and we as lawyers will come to explain the abuse and violation that happen for the constitution.

Sudanese parliament endorses members of electoral board

(Sudan Tribune website) The Sudanese parliament endorsed the members of an independent electoral board which is responsible for the administration, conduct and supervision of national and regional elections in the country.

The nine members of the Sudan Electoral Commission are nominated by the presidency and submitted to parliament for approval. Their appointment was approved by 298 votes to 12 objections.

The presidency nominated Abel Alier as Chairman of electoral board, and Abdallah Ahmed Abdallah as Deputy Chairma. The members of the commission are: Ms Fillister Baya, Ms Mahassin Haj Al-Saffi, James Bol Kajmal, Abdallah Ballah Al-Hardalou, Mohamed Taha Abu Samrah, Mukhtar Al-Asam and Al-Hadi Mohamed Ahmed Hassabou.

The members were mainly chosen by the two partners of the national unity government. Last July when the elections bill was adopted it had been agreed that the members should be nominated after wide consultations with the other political parties, due to the pivotal role of the commission in the elections of next year.

Three years after the signing of the peace accord, many laws crucial for the democratic transition are not yet reviewed. Last week the SPLM and southern Sudanese parties reminded that the following laws need to be revised before the end of current session next month: National Security Law, Press and Media Law, Code of Criminal Procedure Law, Code of Civil Procedure, Penal Code and Workers and Trade Union Act.

Also the possible indictment of the Sudanese president by the ICC judges in the coming months could lead Omer Al-Bashir to suspend the current transitional period and impose martial law in

the country.

Bashir repeated his commitment to hold the elections on time, but may agree that once the arrest warrant is issued, he could do everything possible to strengthen his grasp on power. The South-South consultations last week was seen as an attempt from the SPLM to prepare its self for such probability.

Sudanese police release detained journalists

(Sudan Tribune website) Sudanese police released more than 70 journalists who were arrested today after staging a protest against press censorship out side the federal parliament.

More than one hundred journalists rallied outside the National Assembly to protest against the increasing censorship which flouts the freedom of expression and also intended to submit a letter to the lawmakers urging the revision of press and media bill.

The police arrested 77 journalists who refused to disperse and drove them to a police station in Omdurman, where is the parliament before to transfer them to Khartoum. The local police released the detained journalists on yesterday afternoon after instructing them to come to court for illegal demonstration against censorship. Every journalist signed a commitment to appear before the court tomorrow.

Al-Jazeera TV correspondent said that security officers confiscated a tape from his camera that had recorded the arrests outside parliament and that he had been summoned by national security.

Sudanese Journalists are subjected on daily basis to increased harassment, arrest, detention and interrogation; and their printed newspapers are confiscated, say rights activists.

The head of SPLM caucus at the parliament condemned the arrest and urged the release of journalists "This is a clear violation of the CPA and the constitution. The SPLM condemns this act of aggression against the journalists. This indicates how the democratic transformation is lagging behind," Arman stressed.

The pro-ruling National Congress Party union of journalists said it disapproved of censorship but did not condone Monday's protest.

Al-Fatih Al-Sayed, the secretary general of the union spoke about political agenda behind the protest. However he said they intervined to secure the release of the arrested journalists.

Dubai-based Al-Arabiya TV reported Sudanese security forces arrested its correspondent in Khartoum Sa'd-al-Din Hasan for interrogation this evening while he was preparing a news report on journalists arrest by Sudanese security forces."

NCP official Rabi Abd-al-Ati who handles NCP foreign media Desk said these journalists did not have legal licenses to cover events in Sudan. He adds: "If journalists want to exercise the freedom of press, they should do so in accordance with the law. These journalists did not abide by the law and did not ask to obtain licenses," expecting that they will not remain in detention for a long time.

European delegation visits south Sudan for political dialogue

(Miraya FM) An EU delegation arrived to south Sudan for a three day visit to hold political dialogue with officials of southern officials on a number of outstanding issues in the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement.

France's ambassador to Sudan, Christine Robichon, who heads the team said at Juba Airport the visit aims at discussing democratic transformation, human rights and good governance in south Sudan.

Sudan ready to offer benefits for Russian oil companies

(Sudan Tribune website) Sudan is ready to offer Russian companies working in the oil sector and railway construction in Sudan benefits to develop bilateral economic cooperation, a Sudanese official said on yesterday.

"Sudan must become the gate for Russia into Africa as a country, which borders nine countries, has a varied climate and ample natural resources," Osman Mudawi, chairman of foreign affairs committee of the Sudanese parliament, said at a meeting with his counterpart Mikhail Margelov in Moscow.

Mudawi further said that Sudan does not see Russia's economic partner only and, but an ally to security. He pointed out that there are some areas on the African continent in which Russian soldiers take part in peacekeeping operations, including Darfur.

The Russian official, Margelov, stressed that Russia sees that all the problems in Sudan and African countries that suffering from internal conflicts should be solved with the help of the international community but without direct intervention.

Southern women march for end to GBV

(IRIN) Women marched through the Southern Sudanese town of Bor recently to highlight an important message: "Treat women with respect".

"Bring an end to violence against women, and let women contribute to develop the nation," said some 100 women parading through the capital of the vast and swampy eastern Jonglei state. The march was a rare message of hope for women in South Sudan - a severely underdeveloped region slowly recovering from a 21-year war that ended with the 2005 peace deal. About 90 percent of the people in the region live on less than US\$1 a day, but it is especially tough for women.

Women in Southern Sudan face a wide range of problems. With some 60 percent of households headed by women, many face daily sexual harassment and unequal treatment.

"Gender based violence includes underage marriage and domestic violence," said Silje Heitmann, gender officer for the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) in Southern Sudan, which helped fund the conference.

"It hinders [the] economic and social development of Southern Sudan."

Many cases of violence against women are settled by traditional courts, but these are male-dominated and closely tied to traditional values, which rarely promote the best interests of women.

"The poor situation of women ... and marginalization are caused by our customary law and culture, where the power in society is the men," said Rachael Nyadek Paul, Jonglei state minister for social development.

"But these laws are man-made things: we can decide on something new for a law." Any change is a major challenge, but is backed by the southern leadership. The semi-

autonomous region's interim constitution guarantees that at least a quarter of posts in office will be held by women.

"Understand, when I talk of women's employment, do not think I mean just the ladies who make your tea or carry your documents from office to office, or of the pretty girl who sits at your reception desk," Southern President Salva Kiir told political leaders this month.

"No, we must promote able, educated and mature women to positions of responsibility and influence if we are to ensure that we will meet the needs of the mothers and sisters and daughters in our community."

"In the past women were treated like property, with less value than cows," said demonstrator Akerwo Bol. "Today, because of this government, women are to come out and do what men do. They are equal."

But in a region where men must pay large numbers of cattle as part of a marriage deal – the traditional basis of the economy - others were not so impressed.

"If you pay cows for a woman, then of course you can beat her," said Akoch John, an elder. "If you want to give me your daughter for free, maybe we can talk."