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Highlights

Local Arabic and English Language Press

President Bashir endorses appointment of Sudan electoral board

Local dailies reports President Bashir yesterday issued a presidential decree endorsing appointment of Elections Commission's chairman and members, an independent electoral board responsible for the administration, conduct and supervision of national and regional elections in the country.

The decree appointed Ex-Vice President Abel Alier as chairman and Abdallah Ahmed Abdallah as deputy chairman. The members of the commission include 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 also sworn in yesterday in front of President Bashir and Chief Justice Jalal-Eddin Mohamed Osman. FVP Kiir and VP Taha attended the ceremony. Members of the Parties Council have also been sworn in.

According to **Sudan TV**, President Bashir, addressing the swearing-in ceremony yesterday, pledged to hold free and fair elections on schedule. The President said laws on national security, press and publication and commissions of land and human rights would also be passed during the coming days.

Meanwhile, **Al-Rai Al-Aam** reports USA welcomed the Presidency's endorsement of members of the elections commission and parties' council. "It is a positive but slow step," says US Charge d'Affaires Alberto Fernandez.

GoSS Presidency Minister Luka Biong told **Al-Sahafa** that donors would meet in Juba next Saturday to discuss the issue of elections funding.

ICC responsible for igniting strife, impeding peace in Africa -Gosh

Sudan Vision reports the workshop of the Committee of Intelligence and Security Services in Africa opened yesterday in Khartoum with the participation of 150 security and strategic experts. The inaugural session was addressed by the Presidency Minister Lt. Gen. Bakr Hassan Salih and NISS DG Lt. Gen. Salah Abdallah Gosh. "Peoples of Africa are looking forward to this workshop to come up with recommendations that endorse political and legal stances to counter domination in the name of justice," Bakri said.

Gosh has reiterated Sudan Government's rejection to the ICC and urged participants for backing. He held the ICC responsible for igniting strike and impeding efforts to achieve peace in Africa.

The workshop called on the African Group in UN to amend the principles of the ICC. Rwandan security and intelligence expert, Miza Mandi stated that if the article (27) of the ICC convention is not deleted, other countries will suffer from chasing their heads of state who have immunity.

USG Holmes visits Kalma cam;

Local dailies report USG Holmes started his visit to Darfur yesterday by a meeting with IDPs of

the largest camp in Darfur. The Sheikhs told the UN official about the need to reinforce protection in the camp. Hussein Abu Sharati, the IDP spokesperson, blamed unidentified assailants of repeated attacks against some centres inside the camp; he also spoke about arbitrary arrest of the IPDs by the local authorities.

Mr. Holmes is visiting West Darfur today to assess the situation before proceeding to southern Sudan on Thursday.

Meanwhile, ***Al-Rai Al-Aam*** reports that Kalma IDPs refused to allow Holmes to take journalists along with him in his tour of the camp to which he agreed. "The situation in Darfur is deteriorating due to continued displacement and violence," says Holmes, according to ***Al-Ahdath*** newspaper.

Differences within border demarcation committee

Al-Ahdath reports the N-S Border Demarcation Committee is to hold a meeting today to listen to legal views on differences between the committee members on border between the White Nile and Upper Nile areas.

Abyei Area arbitration decision in July

Al-Sahafa reports GoSS Presidency Minister Luka Biong as saying that according to the ICJ in The Hague, Abyei Area arbitration process will cost a million Euros. He said the court promised to pay 400,000 Euro provided the balance is paid by the Sudan Government. Parties to the arbitration agreed to make their written arguments available to media and the internet. Luka said the final arbitration decision is expected by July.

"Niggers" backed by western bodies to destabilize southern Sudan – GoSS

Akhir Lahza reports GoSS says efforts underway to contain the "niggers phenomenon" and accused western bodies of backing the gangs to advance hidden agenda to destabilize southern Sudan. GoSS Culture and Youths Ministry Undersecretary Peter Batista said the niggers' phenomenon was dangerously spreading and could destabilize southern Sudan. He said containing the phenomenon is the responsibility of the state and GoSS.

Websites/International News Coverage

Senior UN humanitarian official begins visit to Darfur

(UN News Service) , 25/11/08 - The top United Nations relief official kicked off a six-day visit to the war-torn Sudanese region of Darfur yesterday by stopping at a camp sheltering nearly 90,000 people uprooted by conflict, with security issues featuring prominently in his meetings with IDPs, authorities and aid workers.

Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, John Holmes, visited the Kalma camp in Nyala, one of the largest sites for IDPs in South Darfur, where he saw first-hand the work of aid organizations, met with schoolchildren and saw a women's handicraft project.

He listened to the concerns of the site's sheikhs, including an August incident where 33 IDPs were killed and 108 others injured after Kalma was surrounded by Government security forces.

Reinforced protection is needed, the sheikhs told Mr. Holmes, but they expressed their appreciation for the work of aid groups and for UNAMID.

The mission's police are patrolling the camp at all hours which has helped residents to feel safer, Mr. Holmes, who also serves as UN Emergency Relief Coordinator, said. "But we still need to do more, not least to ensure women can feel safe as they move in and out of the camp."

Security was also one of the main issues he discussed with UN agencies and NGOs, who spoke of increasingly frequent carjacking and break-ins, as well as of bureaucratic and other obstacles, particularly in sensitive areas such as protection of civilians.

These issues were also part of talks Mr. Holmes held with the Wali of South Darfur, who offered bolstered cooperation among UN agencies, NGOs and the Government.

Later in the afternoon, the Coordinator visited UNAMID's headquarters in El Fasher, where he met with Rodolphe Adada, the head of UNAMID and the Joint Special Representative of the UN and the AU in the region, among other senior officials.

Today, he will travel to West Darfur to assess the humanitarian situation there before moving on to southern Sudan on Thursday.

Mr. Holmes arrived in Sudan after a four-day visit to Chad, where he called for stronger action to restore stability and rein in criminal activity besetting nearly half a million refugees and IDPs in the strife-torn east.

African Union urges Sudan to implement peace deal

ADDIS ABABA, Nov 25 (**Reuters**) - The African Union urged Sudan's northern and southern leaders yesterday to stop dragging their feet over implementing a peace deal to end Africa's longest civil war.

"The AU notes with concern the delay in the implementation of the crucial Comprehensive Peace Agreement that includes among others, the demarcation of the north-south border, the release of census and full deployment of forces," the AU Peace and Security Council said in a statement.

It urged the parties to move swiftly to resolve the issues through continuing dialogue.

The accord gave southerners a share in Sudan's oil revenues and their own semi-autonomous government. They will also hold an independence referendum in 2011.

The deal's implementation has been largely neglected by the international community, which has focused on a separate conflict in Sudan's western Darfur region.

But fighting between northern and southern troops over a contested oil-producing area has raised fears that Sudan could be heading back to civil war.

Analysts say demarcating the north-south border where much of Sudan's oil lies is crucial. The AU also urged the international community to increase assistance and to cancel debts owed by Sudan.

South Sudan sets cash ceiling for investors

(**Daily Monitor Kampala**) A draft law sets a threshold of a half-million dollars before foreign investors seeking a foothold in the mineral-rich Southern Sudan are granted a certificate.

The Investment Promotion Bill, approved by Parliament Monday, only awaiting the signature of the President of the Government of Southern Sudan to become law, also lists ten priority areas for investment. "The amount to be invested by a foreign investor is at least \$500,000 USD or the equivalent in any freely convertible currency deposited in the Bank of Southern Sudan," reads the Act.

The priority areas for investment are listed as agriculture, including agro-business; physical infrastructure; mining; research on and mapping natural resources; forestry; and heavy industries such as cement, construction, electric and domestic appliances.

Priority areas also include Transport, Telecommunications, print and electronic media, and information and communications technology; commercial banking, insurance, and property management; pharmaceuticals; and tourism and hotel development.

Under the proposed law, a Southern Sudan Investment Authority will be set up.

Before an investment certificate is issued to a foreign investor, the Authorities would consider the business's contribution to employment of and skills transfer to Sudanese, taxes, and uses domestic raw materials.

Officials would also consider value addition to local resources, and contribution to reconstruction, for instance, by building health centers, schools, feeder roads and schools. But the Authority could also revoke the investment certificate with a 30-day notice in case the investor breaches the terms of the licence.

The investment certificate would entitle investors to a renewable two-year Sudanese government entry permit. Under the peace agreement, Sudan's ex-rebels have authority over commerce, trade and commercial regulations in the region, but immigration is under the national government.

According to the draft law, the investment certificate is not transferable, except with the permission of an Investment Authority yet to be formed. "All along we have been hearing that there's no law to promote investment in southern Sudan," James Wani Igga, Speaker of the regional Parliament and deputy chairperson of the ruling Sudan People's Liberation Movement said Monday. "This law is going to attract investment to come to southern Sudan."

Three years after the Comprehensive Peace Agreement that ended the north-south civil war, Southern Sudan has been operating largely on archaic investment guidelines passed under a presidential decree.

US official accuse Sudan of violating Darfur ceasefire pledges

(Sudan Tribune website), 25/11/08 (DOHA) — The US special envoy to Sudan Richard Williamson decried the "humanitarian tragedy" in the Darfur region and accused Khartoum of violating ceasefire pledges. Williamson who was speaking to reporters during his visit to the Gulf state of Qatar said that Sudanese president Omer Hassan Al-Bashir did not honor the ceasefire promise he made, that the Sudanese military launched an offensive in Darfur hours after the ceasefire.

Williamson lauded the Qatari mediation efforts on Darfur but warned that progress is only possible if Sudan "commits to compensating refugees, ceasefire, power and wealth sharing". "It is time the international community senses that [efforts] because talk is not enough and it is important to have rebels participate in dialogue to achieve progress" he said.

The US diplomat said he has been in talks with Darfur rebel leaders in the last few months and stressed that their positions have to be united.

The top US diplomat for African affairs Jendayi Frazer is believed to have conveyed this message during her meetings with Sudanese officials in Khartoum earlier this month.

“We have always, from the beginning, supported Bassole,” a US diplomat who requested not to be identified by name told Sudan Tribune. “That has not changed at all, and certainly that will be Jendayi Frazer’s message to him too, reaffirming that support.” “We don’t want these competing initiatives, which is why Bassole is there in the first place. Everything should fall under his authority—that’s what he was appointed to do,” added the diplomat. “From our perspective the most important thing is that Bassole is at the helm,” said the official.

Asked about the Al-Bashir’s indictment by the ICC, Williamson reiterated his country’s position that the US will not support a suspension of the move and “will use veto [in UN Security Council (UNSC)] if necessary”. The US envoy said that there are only seven votes in the UNSC supporting deferring the indictment which falls short of the required nine votes to adopt a resolution in the council. He also linked any support by Washington to a deferral to progress on the ground in Darfur.

Sudanese leader Al-Bashir appears in public after illness rumour

President Al-Bashir appeared on Sudan TV at 0930 gmt on 25 November. The broadcast was aired live and took place in Soba, in the outskirts of Khartoum, during the occasion to mark the centenary anniversary of the formation of the country's police force. The president's appearance came a few hours after the Paris-based Sudan Tribune web site claimed on 25 November that Al-Bashir had been admitted to a police hospital in the capital "for unknown reasons".

Three Human rights activists arrested in Sudan

(*Sudan Tribune website*) The Sudanese authorities detained three human right activists yesterday and interrogated them on their links with the ICC. Those arrested by NISS include Osman Humaida, Moniem El-Gak and Amir Suleiman. El-Gak and Suleiman were subsequently released but Humaida remains in the custody of the security bureau and his whereabouts are unknown.

A statement sent by El-Gak via email to Sudan Tribune said that they “regret the return by regime to square one of arbitrary arrest and harassing rights activists”.

“This is culmination for several attempts with the purpose of hampering human right movement, handicapping its members and Sudanese civil rights activists”.

El-Gak accused Sudanese authorities of using the ICC issue “as an excuse to target human rights activists, international and human right experts”.

No views in support of the ICC have been allowed inside Sudan following Al-Bashir’s indictment.

The statement called for the immediate release of Humaida and for international organizations to press Khartoum in that direction.

Ugandan rebel 'ready for peace'

(**BBC**) Ugandan LRA rebel leader Joseph Kony is on his way to sign a peace deal to end Uganda's 20-year rebellion, the UN mediator says. "Every indication is that there will be signing on 29th [November]," Joachim Chissano told the BBC.

The LRA refused to sign an agreement in April because of international arrest warrants against its leaders. Earlier, Uganda's government said it was considering asking the UN Security Council to suspend the warrants.

But Ugandan Foreign Minister Sam Kutesa made it clear that Mr. Kony must sign the deal first before the issue of the International Criminal Court (ICC) was addressed. "We were only prepared to talk to the ICC about an alternative method of resolving that dispute, and also of justice in the country, only if peace is going to come to the people of northern Uganda," he told the BBC's World Today programme.

He added that as far as the government was concerned Mr. Kony was the only serious obstacle to a final peace agreement being signed by the two sides. "Our people are ready to sign any time, but Kony is the one who has been eluding us," he said.

But Mr Chissano, Mozambique's former president, told the BBC's Focus on Africa programme that he understood Mr. Kony was heading to the signing ceremony in Ri Kwangba in South Sudan from his jungle hideout in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Other signatories from northern Uganda were also on their way to Ri Kwangba, just north of Sudan's border with DR Congo.

The UN special envoy said he could not guarantee that Mr Kony would sign this time, but he was optimistic. "I don't have reasons to doubt that he'll not show up, because all the indications which he gave coming up to now are encouraging so I'm more confident than a few weeks ago," he said.

A one-year suspension by UN Security Council of the arrest warrants would give the government time to prove that it was able to deal with the matter, Mr Chissano said. "I think that the UN Security Council would facilitate because the alternative is to have Kony forever in the jungles of Congo."

Sudanese Bashir will not meet Chadian Deby next week

(**Sudan Tribune website**) Presidential adviser Mustafa Osman Ismail has dismissed reports about a meeting between Sudanese and Chadian presidents in the Qatari capital Doha next week on the sideline of a UN summit.

Ismail, who is responsible of relations with Chad, reiterated that the two parties agreed to hold a summit between Omer Al-Bashir and Idriss Deby "the date and the venue of the meeting have not yet been fixed.

These statements come in reaction to reports that Al-Bashir should meet with the Chadian president Idriss Deby Itno on the sideline of a UN sponsored summit to be held in Doha, Qatar on November 29.

CMDC destroys 50 tones of ammunitions in Malakal

(**Miraya FM website**) Following months of negotiations, the UNMIS Cambodian Military De-

mining Company destroyed yesterday over 50 tones of ammunitions which have been stockpiled in the Joint Integrated Units compound in Malakal.

According to UNMIS Cambodian Military De-mining Company Commander Lt. Col May Soheya, the ammunitions include a number of anti-personnel mines, adding that UNMIS will be helping the government to fulfill its Ottawa Treaty obligations to destroy all known stockpiles of Anti Personnel mines in Sudan.

Officials calls to end violence against women

(**Miraya FM website**) The state minister for social development in the government of western Bahr el Ghazal Mary rose mariano called on families to end violence against women and children in the state. Speaking to miraya fm on the celebration of international day for the elimination of violence against women yesterday, rose said that in western bahr el ghazal like the rest of south Sudan which has just come out of war, violence is still being practiced in families, stressing that time has come for citizens to stop violence against women at home and work places.

Rose also called on the community based organizations and the international NGOs working in the area to increase awareness activities to the local communities so as to help in minimizing the spread of violence against both women and children.

In Lakes State, government officials were absent from the celebrations which were held in Rumbek to mark the occasion.

The government of South Sudan had requested the Central Government to ratify the CEDAW treaty in order to include it in the transitional constitution.

Earlier, the UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon said in his message on the day that despite there are no true estimates of the number of violence victims, the UN pledges to strengthen its efforts to raise public awareness, increase political will and resources in order to eradicate this phenomenon.

General says Darfur peacekeepers short of men and gear

EL FASHER, Sudan (**Reuters**) 25 Nov - Overstretched peacekeepers in Darfur lack vehicles, helicopters and other equipment and could be in trouble if seriously attacked, the force's deputy commander said on Tuesday.

The joint U.N.-African Union force now has about 12,000 soldiers and police, less than half of a promised 26,000, almost a year after it arrived in Sudan's violent west.

Major General Emmanuel Karenzi told reporters the mission was severely short of equipment, including a total lack of transport and attack helicopters.

"I wouldn't say we are helpless," he said at UNAMID headquarters in El Fasher, capital of North Darfur.

"If you are talking about a fully-fledged attack on UNAMID with big weapons we may find ourselves in a difficult position to defend ourselves."

Karenzi said officers were still hoping to build up the international force to 60 per cent of its

promised deployment by the end of the year. But he said the impact of a simple increase in troop numbers would be minimal.

"We will be better of than where we are today but there will still be big gaps in terms of what we are expected to do."

The force still needed transport and logistics units, together with the vehicles and equipment. It was also still waiting for 24 transport and attack helicopters. Most of the units lacked night-vision equipment, he said.

Civil service accepts first batch of Southerners

(Miraya Fm website) 25 Nov - The civil service commission has accepted the first batch of southern Sudanese applicants for the civil service posts in accordance with the 20 percent allocated by the CPA. The interviewing board will hold a meeting with the under secretaries of ministries, managers of national corporations and institutes to inform them of the interviews results. The number of applicants for the Southern Sudanese vacancies has reached 1885, of whom 98 were chosen as candidates based on their qualifications and skills.