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Media Monitoring Report

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Highlights

Post-elections Watch:

Sudan court cancels results in Red Sea constituency

Sudan Tribune website 15/5/10 – A Sudanese court cancelled the results of election in an eastern Sudan constituency where the rigging had been proved by a widely circulated video posted to YouTube last month.

Last April, a video was posted to YouTube showing National Elections Commission (NEC) staff filling up the ballots and putting them inside the boxes leading opposition to slam the authorities and emphasize that is solid proof over the unfairness of the polls.

According to **Al-Rai Al-Aam** 16/5/10, the Supreme Court accepted the appeal against rigging in constituency (14) in the Red Sea and cancelled the result in which an NCP candidate was declared winner and also ordered that polling in the constituency should be rerun within 60 days.

SPLM debate priorities in new Government

The Citizen 16/5/10 – The SPLM held a policy framework conference in Juba recently in which all the party's stakeholders across the country participated. SPLM Secretary-General Pagan Amum said the conference ended successfully after having identified a host of tasks to be shouldered including the adoption of the party policies framework for southern Sudan and Abyei area. "Our position is crystal clear," Pagan said. "SPLM shall work to lead the people of southern Sudan to referendum or promised land which will be determined by their choice, either to opt for an independent and viable state or remain in entire Sudan,". He added that the SPLM would work to ensure the referendum takes place in a free atmosphere and on schedule as stipulated in the CPA, in both southern Sudan and Abyei area.

"According to our assessment as SPLM, we have read on the faces of southern Sudanese common citizens that in the referendum they will confirm separation and we are ready to defend their choice," he said. The NCP has not made "unity attractive as mentioned in the agreement". "Even though they think they can work a magic formula for the people of southern Sudan to change their minds about independence in the remaining seven months," he said.

Amum said the "second priority is the good governance to be provided across southern Sudan states,"

He ded that capacity of anti-corruption institution would be built, freedom of speech and accession to information would be enhanced, SPLM capacity would be built as a national army to defend southern Sudan from external attack and social services would also be provided.

Renegade general warns civilians to evacuate Bor town before attack

Sudan Tribune website 15/5/10 - The renegade general, George Athor Deng, has warned civilians living in Bor town to leave the town before he attacks it in the next few days.

Athor issued the warning through another interview he conducted with the Nairobi-based Sudan Radio Service (SRS). "I believe that within days, my attack will be against Bor town because I have learned that Salva is somebody who only likes fighting and he doesn't want to talk. So it is

for him to listen to what we are saying, I am organizing my forces for Bor town," he said.

When asked whether he was also concerned about the lives of the civilian residents currently in Bor town, he said he was warning them to leave the town. "Well, my warning to all citizens is that they should leave Bor immediately and any place with military bases, they should leave it, because our target is only the military."

GoSS President Kiir to be sworn in on 21 May

Akhir Lahza 16/5/10 – GoSS President-elect Salva Kiir Mayardit announced that he would take oath of office on 21 May 2010. Kiir's announcement came yesterday following a meeting with former South African President and Head of AU High-Level Implementation Committee Thabo Mbeki. Kiir also said that after the swearing-in he would immediately embark on forming a new Government.

SPLM says will not participate in central government if joined by Lam Akol

Al-Akhbar 16/5/10 – SPLM has officially informed the NCP that it would not participate in the federal Government if SPLM-DC Chairman Lam Akol is invited to join it. Reportedly, the NCP earlier hinted that Akol would participate in the government as Foreign Minister. SPLM influential source told the paper yesterday that the movement handed over an official letter to the NCP stating that it would not participate in the central government should Lam Akol join it. The source said the decision was unanimously endorsed by the SPLM members. According to the source, it was likely that the NCP ignores Akol in order preserve its partnership with the SPLM.

Al-Bashir rings up Kiir to enquire about security situation in the South

Al-Ahdath 16/5/10 – President Al-Bashir yesterday telephoned GoSS President to enquire about the security situation in the region. Kiir briefed the President on the security situation and ongoing efforts to contain tension in Jonglei state caused by Gen. George Athor's mutiny against the SPLA. Reportedly, Gen. Athor has threatened to continue fighting if Kiir's Government fails to meet his conditions including cancellation of election results in Jonglei state.

Pre-referendum Watch:

No negotiations for referendum date delay, says SPLM

Sudan Tribune website 14/5/10 - The SPLM will offer no room for negotiations aimed at delaying conduct of the much-hyped referendum for a possible Southern independence, a senior party member has warned.

Mr. Pagan Amum, the SPLM Secretary General made these remarks upon return from a consultative meeting organized by the African Union (AU), during which he tabled party issues on the forthcoming referendum in January 2011.

"Any attempts to delay the referendum shall threaten the enduring peace," Amum reportedly told the AU meeting.

According to the SPLM Secretary General, the entire African continent as well as members of the international community have embarked on a coordinated effort to ensure that Sudan's referendum, a key requirement of the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement, is not only a peaceful, free and fair, but also a smooth transition that respects the right and interest of all concerned citizens.

"In short, any delay in the referendum is nonnegotiable, and if all efforts are coordinated, then the referendum will go on well without incidences and Sudan will continue to move on its path to total democratic transformation," he said.

Old ills could dash a new southern Sudan's hopes

Los Angeles Times 16/5/10 - A January referendum is expected to create a country independent from the north. Then it would have to struggle with crushing poverty and tribal animosities.

The future of southern Sudan lies somewhere between the dreams of a man in striped pajamas and a woman dying of snakebite in a thatched hut.

Twelve miles separate Clement Samuel and Pita Wani, but the space between their lives is much wider. Samuel is a county commissioner, a loquacious politician seeking tribal peace upon which to build a new country. Wani is curled up in her village, a cobra gash on her ankle. She has no doctor; no ambulance is coming. Hers is the old world tugging at Samuel's modern-day ambitions.

"I just want to build the confidence of the people," said Samuel, holding court in his pajamas on a bed near a lake. "We need electricity and sewage. We need to build. The majority of people here are yearning for independence."

That is expected to happen in January, when the mostly Christian and animist south votes in a referendum on whether to secede from the mainly Islamic north. The fledgling country would instantly become one of the world's poorest, lacking roads, schools, hospitals and government institutions to improve the lives of Wani's family and millions of others scattered across hills and grasslands.

But the more pressing concern is preventing generations-old tribal animosities, which left more than 2,000 people dead over the last year, from sparking a wider conflict that could spoil independence and seep into neighboring nations. Much of the bloodshed stems from cattle raids.

The northern-led national government of President Omar Al-Bashir has been accused of exploiting tensions by funneling guns to rival tribes in the semiautonomous south. With secession poised to rob the north of the bulk of the country's oil reserves, there are also fears that Bashir's army will instigate a new conflict just five years after a civil war with the south ended with 2 million dead.

The US worries that an increasing flow of weapons could further upset countries in the terrorist-laden Horn of Africa. The south's government, controlled by the Sudan People's Liberation Movement and its army, known as the SPLA, is trying to disarm clans. That program is having limited success in Samuel's Terekeka region, home to the Bari, Mundari and Dinka tribes.

A weapons smuggler who gave his name only as James said guns collected by the SPLA's underpaid soldiers are often sold to dealers who resell them to tribesmen. Many of those arms, including machine guns, are hidden in sorghum bags brought in from Uganda and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

These caches give muscle to cattle raids. Cattle are the currency of the land; a man's wealth is measured not in cash but by the size of his herd. This has led to a cycle of attacks and reprisals that has deepened suspicions between tribes and left the issue of divvying grazing lands key to

a peaceful independence.

"We need reconciliation," said Samuel, a Mundari. "Between January and February, I had our tribesmen return 4,000 cattle to the Bari tribe. It was a gesture of goodwill. I have not done that yet with the Dinka. But I tell you, the Mundari handed over all their weapons. There are no guns in this county today."

In late 2009, Mundari clansmen armed with Kalashnikovs killed at least 10 Dinka in a raid. The Dinka, one of two tribes dominating the SPLM, responded by setting fire to a Mundari village and chasing families across a landscape of water holes and thicket. There have also been allegations of SPLM soldiers raping Mundari women.

Such an atmosphere keeps Bgusha Kayok close to his cattle as they graze over a 20-mile stretch along a clay-colored road beneath low rolling rain clouds.

"I can't cross that road or I'll fall into a trap and be shot," said Kayok, a Mundari, lifting his spear and pointing. "I have only this as a weapon. It's a dangerous time. The Dinka come with guns and take our cattle. My tribesmen and I had guns, but the government is taking them away because when the tribesmen get drunk they sometimes shoot one another."

Kayok drove his herd toward the village where Pita Wani lay in a dark hut with rags wrapped around her snakebite. The men and women here have three Vs etched into their foreheads, the mark of the Mundari. The village chief, Polino Dogale, said 101 of his tribe's cattle were stolen by armed marauders in October.

"I'm suspicious of who they might have been. It could be the Dinka or maybe southern soldiers," he said. "The SPLA troops came and took all our weapons, but they came back the next day and accused us of hiding more guns. My son argued with them. He was determined to protect our land. The soldiers shot my son and killed him. That was in December."

The chief, a willowy man, peeked into Wani's hut. He shook his head. Other tribesman gathered. They said she was collecting firewood when a cobra struck; they couldn't suck out all the poison and the wound was infected. There was no clinic, and the tribe didn't have money for a car or a bus to drive her to a doctor in the city. The chief said she would die in coming days. Wani listened.

"We have no hospitals, no schools," the chief said. "Our children are dying of malaria and other diseases. We need education so we can think for ourselves and have open minds. I'm illiterate. My children are illiterate. How can we ever improve ourselves?"

Miles away, past tin-roofed shops on a roadside, a light breeze riffled Samuel's pajamas. He said that for years the Mundari have been misunderstood, relegated to a warrior status that has kept them from political power. The tribe's enemies, he said, want to keep "us down, paint us as savages and primitive."

That will change, he said, now that he's county commissioner.

While he spoke of arranging a peace conference with neighboring tribes, men and women balancing jugs of water on their heads walked toward a broken-down electric plant. The county has no sewage, no paved roads, either. Samuel can see all that his land lacks through the tinted windows of his SUV.

But when asked what he would build first, he said, "A new home for the country commissioner,

new offices for the commissioner and a new guesthouse so visitors will have a place to stay when they come to our county."

Other Headlines:

Sudanese security arrests opposition Hassan Turabi

Reuters 15/5/10 - Sudanese security service arrested Saturday PCP leader Hassan Al-Turabi.

"At around midnight, a group of security officers arrived in three cars, took Hassan al-Turabi from his home," his secretary Awad Babakir told *AFP*.

His family said ignoring the cause of the arrest but his son Sidiq said it might be related to an interview with a Sudanese daily newspaper where he accused the ruling National Congress Party (NCP) of rigging the elections.

Al-Rai Al-Aam 16/5/10 reports PCP deputy chairman Abdullah Hassan Ahmed as saying that the security authorities gave no reason for the arrest. Ahmed denied that other PCP leading figures were also detained.

Deadly cholera outbreak hits Northern Bahr el Ghazal

Sudan Tribune website 15/5/10 - Peth Lou, one of the local administrative units situated east of Wanyjok, headquarters of Aweil East County, Northern Bahr el Ghazal State, is again on the verge of a severe cholera outbreak.

Peth is to the south of Malual Baai Payam where there is a health center reportedly run by International Rescue Committee , it is also to the East of Madhol and west of Tokyep village from where 10 people mostly children are reportedly caught by watery diarrhea.

The outbreak is entering its second week and shows little sign of slowing down. It has quickly spread into surrounding villages of Mabil, Dhok, Rumrit, and Baai chok, Wunyiik, Maluil, Majak, Warkou, Halkou and Riangkou, Marial Ngap, killing 2 people and infecting the entire village.

The village, located 20 miles from the main Aweil Civil Hospital, is home to over ten thousand residents. Health authorities say the disease first struck towards the end of April last year, killing three people at a go before its confirmation by the local ministry of health.

It is believed another 21 villages surrounding Ameth Lou, east of Malual Baai Payam, have also registered cholera cases in the last one week with records showing that 12 suspected patients were admitted at Malual health center before being discharged Tuesday.

Some of the villages that are worst hit in Ameth include; Wunyor, Warapac, Mayom, Akong, Akuac and Majak Paluiel. Mathiangdit and Areng have also been reported to have the highest number of infections.

South Sudan exempts food commodities from taxation as hunger looms

Sudan Tribune website 14/5/10 — The semi-autonomous government of Southern Sudan has resolved to exempt from taxes all food commodities as one of immediate measures taken in response to the looming hunger in the region.

The decision was taken on Friday in the Council of Ministers' meeting chaired by the Vice President-designate, Dr. Riek Machar Teny.

About 80% of population in Southern Sudan is currently said to be at risk of hunger resulting from food deficit as the region's 8 million or more people are in need of 225 metric tones of food to fill the gap, according to an assessment reported by the ministry of Agriculture and Forestry.

The huge food deficit was also due to poor harvest last year and unpromising yields this year, coupled with lack of food strategic reserves. The caretaker minister of Agriculture and Forestry, Dr. Samson Kwaje, presented a memo alerting the Council about the magnitude of the situation. The chunks of the food commodities consumed on daily basis in the urban settlements are imported from the neighboring countries such as Uganda and Kenya and also from northern Sudan.

Market prices are usually high while these consumables do not reach wider markets in rural areas. "The urban communities have better access to food through markets. However, the situation has not improved especially for most rural pastoral and agricultural communities," the assessment report has indicated.

This is mainly because of merchants compensating for their losses incurred due to ferrying and high taxes imposed on the food items at border points in addition to some other multiple inter and intra-state taxes when inside Southern Sudan.

According to the resolution, foreign and local merchants dealing with locally produced and imported food should not be taxed when importing from outside Southern Sudan and/or transporting them to various markets across the region.

This is to make food available in all the markets with affordable prices to the population, explained the government's spokesperson, Paul Mayom Akech, in a press statement shortly after the meeting.

The estimated food locally produced in the states could only feed between 2% to 15% of their respective populations, leaving the rest vulnerable to acute hunger.

The ministry of Finance and Economic Planning was therefore directed by the Council of Ministers for immediate implementation of the resolution in coordination with all the relevant institutions of the state governments.

Mayom further explained that merchants who are importing food commodities to Southern Sudan are therefore encouraged to increase importation and should also begin to drop market prices as soon as the resolution comes into effect through the ministry of finance.

Market prices for food commodities are expected to be monitored for conformity by the relevant institutions after the resolution comes into effect on the ground. Mayom, who is currently the caretaker minister of Information and Broadcasting, said the market prices must drop because merchants would now mainly worry about their spending on transporting food commodities to the markets and not about the taxes any more.

Another resolution reducing taxes levied on livestock and fisheries, destined for markets, was also passed by the cabinet.

The Council also resolved to avail 70 million Sudanese pounds to the ministry of Agriculture and Forestry in order to respond to the situation. Mayom added that the government has also appealed to the international community to help raise another 35 million, in order to make a total of 35 million.

Meanwhile the Southern Sudan Food Security Council, a body formed earlier to monitor the food security situation, is directed by the cabinet to devise long term solutions through development of mechanized farming and other methods.

Sudan army says killed 108 Darfur rebels

Reuters 15/5/10 - Sudan's army said it seized a key rebel stronghold in Darfur and killed 108 insurgents late on Friday, dealing a heavy blow to already floundering peace talks in the remote western region.

The rebel Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) dismissed the report, saying it had withdrawn from the Jabel Moun area voluntarily days earlier to spare the population government bombing raids and shelling.

But it said other recent clashes showed Sudan's government had chosen to go back to war and the chances of finding a negotiated solution were "very remote."

JEM said last week it was suspending peace talks with the government, accusing it of breaking a ceasefire and failing to honor an initial peace deal signed in Qatari capital Doha in February.

"There was a battle between Sudan's Armed Forces and JEM yesterday," army spokesman Al-Sawarmi Khaled told Reuters on Saturday. "There were about 108 killed from JEM and we took about 61 prisoners alive."

He said government soldiers were also killed in the attack near Chad's border but did not have numbers.

JEM said its troops already had moved out to different areas in North and South Darfur states, as well as the neighboring oil-producing South Kordofan.

Senior JEM official al-Tahir al-Feki said JEM was still prepared to return to talks if Khartoum and international mediators agreed to a list of demands.

"But I don't see any real prospect of negotiations or a peaceful settlement. Because the other side does not want it ... Sudan has chosen war against peace and we are up for it ... This is a reality. It is a state of war," he said, adding that JEM's main negotiator had left Doha earlier on Friday.

Fouad Hikmat, an analyst from the International Crisis Group, said Khartoum was trying to contain JEM as government officials pushed to reach a settlement with other rebels.

"The policy is to hit (JEM) very hard so they either come to the peace talks themselves or scatter them so they can not come together again as a credible force," he said.

JEM told Reuters its troops came across Sudanese army forces guarding a convoy of military vehicles and ammunition trucks and said the soldiers fired the first shots. JEM said its forces were victorious.

Peace talks that started with JEM in February stalled when JEM objected to Khartoum's decision to start separate discussions with Liberation and Justice Movement rebels.

Sudan's Darfur negotiator Amin Hassan Omar told state media he would travel to Doha on

Saturday to prepare for talks with the LJM, saying JEM was no longer serious about negotiations.

Qatari mediation suspends Darfur peace talks

Al-Ayyam 16/5/10 – the Qatari mediation yesterday announced the temporary suspension of the Darfur peace talks but did not set a new date for their resumption. Reportedly, the decision of suspension surprised the Darfur Liberation and Justice Movement which finalized preparations to resume talks with the government. Observers in Khartoum said the military escalation on the ground in Darfur makes continuation of talks difficult and that any agreement with the Liberation and Justice Movement will further complicates the situation.