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Media Monitoring Report

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

Highlights

Post-Elections:

Jonglei State under SPLA siege

The SPLA has put the state of Jonglei under siege to prepare for a final push to uproot the forces of ex-independent gubernatorial candidate and ex- Deputy Chief of General Staff of the SPLA, George Athor, reports ***Al-Intibaha***. On his part, Gen. Athor has put his fighters in a state of high alert as reports filtered of the arrival of the arrival of 15,000 heavily armed SPLA reinforcements to the area.

I have not defected to Athor's forces, says senior police officer

Sudantribune.com Juba, 09/05/10 - A senior officer in the Southern Sudan Police Service has accused the local administrator in his home county for alleging his defection to the former Deputy Chief of General Staff of the SPLA.

Brg. Gen. John Jok Gai allegedly defected to Gen. George Athor Deng's forces that recently rebelled against the state government after he lost to the incumbent caretaker governor, Kuol Manyang Juuk, in the gubernatorial elections in Jonglei State.

Brg. Gen. John Jok Gai told ***Sudan Tribune*** at his residence in Juba on Sunday, three days after his arrival from Malakal, that the source of the allegation was the Commissioner of Nyirol County, James Chuol Diew, and called on the authorities to investigate him for the false accusation.

He said he has evidences of communications between the Commissioner and the state capital with the conspiracy to accuse him even before Gen. George Athor declared his rebellion.

He disclosed that James Chuol, who replaced him in 2007 as commissioner through a presidential decree, had political differences with him and therefore took advantage of his travel from the County through Khorfulus to Malakal in Upper Nile state and rushed to term it as defection.

PCP and DUP declare boycott of Southern Kordofan and Al-Gazira polls

The Popular Congress (PCP) and Democratic Unionist (DUP) parties have declared a boycott of the deferred polls of Southern Kordofan State and some constituencies in Al-Gazira State, ***Al-Intibaha*** reports. The Press Officer at the Democratic Unionist Party (Original) said that the party has decided to boycott the polls because it "lost its real weight" in its participation in the general elections.

The NEC has meanwhile announced that campaigning is not allowed in the deferred polls.

Khartoum State assembly starts new session following elections

MirayaFM.org 10/05/10 – New lawmakers elected to the Khartoum State Legislative Assembly took their oath of office yesterday and unanimously elected Mohammed Sheikh Medani as the speaker for the second time. The National Congress Party won 84 seats in the parliament and has a representation 90%.

The Democratic Unionist Party won a seat through the women's list.

However, two seats remain vacant after the NEC halted polling in one of the State's geographical constituencies.

Editor of *Ajras Al-Huriya* charged with publishing false news

MirayaFM.org 09/05/10 - The Editor of **Ajras Al-Huriya** newspaper, Alhaj Warraq was charged on Sunday with publishing false news and undermining the state dignity, an offence punishable by up to six months in jail. Faiz al-Silaik, Acting Editor-in-Chief of **Ajras Al-Huriya**, a newspaper alleged to be affiliated to Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), said he considers the charge an attack on press freedom.

Speaking to the press Silaik said that this charge is the fifth raised against the paper in the past three months. He added that proceedings have been postponed to June 15 as one of the two journalists accused, is out of the country

Waraq wrote an article earlier criticizing the President Al-Bashir and the NCP. The article urged readers to support the SPLM boycott of the vote in the north due to, as the article alleged, widespread electoral fraud.

Pre-Referenda Monitor:

South Sudan wants quick resumption of referendum talks

Sudantribune.com Juba, 09/05/10 - The SPLM has expressed concern over the limited time left to resolve the outstanding issues in the implementation of the 2005's North-South peace deal that ended the 21 years of brutal civil war.

In a meeting on Thursday with the visiting Norwegian Special Envoy to Sudan, Tom Vraalsen, the Deputy Chairperson of the SPLM and Vice President designate, Dr. Riek Machar, said time was running out and that the two parties should resume the negotiations on implementing several contentious issues before the referendum takes place seven months from now.

He explained that the negotiations were interrupted by the recent elections and have not yet resumed with the understanding that the government should be formed first.

Machar however added that since the formation of government in Khartoum has been delayed until the end of May or beginning of June, he would consult with GoSS President-elect Salva Kiir Mayardit in order to look for a way out so that negotiations resume even before the formation of government.

On the formation of referendum commission for the south he said the SPLM is well ahead in preparation and its four nominees are waiting for their NCP counterparts to be named. The ninth member who would then be the chairperson of the commission would be someone agreed upon by the two parties, he said.

Machar also said there are areas of disagreement on the North-South demarcation on the ground and potentially involves almost all the Southern Sudan states bordering the North. One of the disagreements, he said, emerged recently in northern part of Upper Nile state where an area of 5 miles (about 8 kilometres) long and 700 meters wide is being contested.

He also said that other contested areas including Higleig oil fields in Unity state are expected to generate some serious disagreement.

Such disagreements may either end up in the Presidency for resolution or may be referred back to the joint committee of the two parties for negotiations, he explained, hence demanding quick resumption of the talks instead of wasting time.

Dr. Machar also appealed to the Norwegian diplomat to assist the state of Southern Kordofan in order to speedily conduct its population census and parliamentary elections which were postponed earlier over the controversial census results.

He expressed the necessity for both Southern Blue Nile and Nuba Mountains to carry out their respective popular consultations just before the Southern Sudan referendum takes place as this, he added, would avail the needed "leverage" in the process.

Southern Sudan to continue oil sharing with north even after referendum

GoSS Ministry for Presidential Affairs, Luka Biong, told *The Financial Times* yesterday that southern Sudan would continue to share its oil wealth with the north even if it opts for secession, reports *Akhir Lahza*. He pointed out that his government is concerned with the economic stability and the unity of northern Sudan and such wealth-sharing would protect the northern Sudan economy from collapse.

"If asked to chose between shedding blood for independence or trading independence for part of the oil share, southerners would chose the latter," said Biong.

The issue of unity concerns all the Sudanese - Nafi

Sudantribune.com Khartoum, 09/05/10 - Sudanese Presidential Assistant said the issue of Sudan's unity does not only concern the NCP and SPLM but all the Sudanese political forces.

Nafi Ali Nafi was speaking to the press following a meeting with the visiting Eritrean delegation led by Osman Saleh, minister of foreign affairs who was in Khartoum to congratulate the Sudanese president for his re-election last April.

Nafi told reporters that the unity of Sudan is not an issue of the NCP and SPLM alone, but rather of all the Sudanese people through its various orientations and political parties. He also reiterated the NCP support and readiness to follow any action that would lead to the unity of Sudan in cooperation with the SPLM and the other political forces.

NCP demands formation of independent referendum committee

NCP Southern Sector is calling for the formation of an independent committee to monitor the referendum on self-determination for southern Sudan, report *local dailies*. Such a committee should include representatives from the UN and local and foreign experts to warrant fairness of the referendum.

The deputy head of NCP-South, Joseph Dueir, affirmed their adherence to the country's unity saying that the south has no future other than of unity with the north but said that such unity requires that more efforts be exerted ahead of the 2011 referendum. He expressed concern over what he termed "SPLA threats to steal the will of the citizens of southern Sudan.

Funds in place for the construction of airport, hospital in Abyei

The Press Secretary for the Abyei Area Administration has revealed that the Unity Support Fund has pledged financial towards the construction of a 25-room guest house in Abyei, the main road that links Abyei with Wau, four water reservoirs for rural Abyei, the Abyei airport and a specialised hospital and medical laboratory in the region, reports *The Citizen* daily. Funds have also been pledged for the purchase of two power generators and fuel reserves for six months, he said.

Juba Alliance parties to meet on Wednesday

Opposition parties of the Juba Alliance meet in Juba next Wednesday to chart their post-elections strategy, reports *Al-Ayyam*. Farouq Abu-Eissa, the head of the opposition alliance, warned against rigging the results of the 2011 polls saying that such rigging could plunge the country into civil war.

Abu-Eissa said that the Juba Alliance would make plans to back the push for voluntary unity.

Egypt says working to save unity of Sudan

Sudantribune.com Khartoum, 09/05/10 - Egyptian Foreign Minister Ahmed Aboul-Gheit and intelligence Chief Omer Suleiman met today with Sudanese president Omer Hassan Al-Bashir vowing that Cairo will do everything in its power to preserve the country's unity ahead of the 2011 referendum in South Sudan.

"Egypt is in favour of the unity of Sudan as a part of Africa and a member of the African Union. We will do everything in our power to save the unity of Sudan," Aboul-Gheit told reporters in Khartoum after talks with Al-Bashir.

The top Egyptian official said that his delegation held useful consultations on the implementation of the CPA and the referendum in the south.

He further said that Cairo will continue to support development projects in the South to encourage citizens there to support unity. Aboul-Gheit also revealed that his government proposed a conference in Cairo between the NCP and the SPLM "to support unity".

However, the Egyptian official reiterated that his country will respect the choice of the Southerners in the 2011 referendum.

"While Egyptian officials try to downplay the water concerns, some worry an independent South would soon join the groundswell of states objecting to the standing agreements," said a report by the International Crisis Group released on Thursday.

Some legal experts say that the water agreements will still be binding to the new state in line with International Law.

"Sudan and Egypt agree completely on the question of Nile waters. We are ready to continue discussions with other countries and to cooperate to build a bridge and reach a final agreement that will satisfy all the Nile Basin Initiative countries," Aboul-Gheit said.

ICG says AU must be prepared for the south's possible secession

"Attempts to delay or derail the conduct of the referendum are not out of the question," the International Crisis Group (ICG) said in a report published on Thursday, ***The Citizen*** reports. "If pushed into a corner, the possibility of unilateral declaration of independence is very real," the ICG report added.

The ICG said that regional players did not have a coordinated policy on such an outcome which could reignite Sudan's north-south conflict if not handled well. "If either side abrogates the north-south deal, a return to conflict is likely and would undoubtedly affect the region and draw in some of its militaries," the ICG said.

"Their preparations should include clear modalities for extending official recognition to the south if it votes for independence and developing policy response to alternative scenarios including unilateral declaration of independence," the ICG said in its report.

Other Highlights:

Rizeigat warn of SPLA build up near Bulbula

Rizeigat tribesmen said yesterday that there is an SPLA troop build-up in the Tumsaha area near Bulbula in preparation for an assault on Rizeigat territory. ***Al-Sahafa*** quotes Mohamed Omar, a Rizeigat elder in Bulbula, South Darfur, as saying that the SPLA has gathered some 3,000 heavily armed fighters in that area to carry out a raid on the tribe. About 1,950 have fled the areas of Raga and Tumsaha to Al-Surj and Al-Firdos in South Darfur as news filtered in of the SPLA build up, said the local leader.

Mohamed also pointed out that there are no SAF soldiers in the area but assured that the Rizeigat are capable of protecting themselves against SPLA attacks. He called upon the Presidency to intervene.

Runway potholes restrict traffic on Yei airfield

Yei Airfield, one of the major gateways into Central Equatoria State, has been restricted to both commercial and humanitarian traffic due to the sorry state of its runway, reports ***The Juba Post***. Yei Airfield Director, Willa Jackson, told a meeting with representatives of NGOs operating in Yei River County on 8 May that maintenance of the airstrip had become difficult as most of the flights were humanitarian and paid no landing charges. He noted that the airfield is not yet closed to traffic but remains risky as pilots have to struggle in dodging the eroded surface and huge potholes on the 1.2 km runway.

Representatives of NGOs attending the meeting were prompted to demand an investigation into the alleged misappropriation of SDG21,000 they connected for maintaining the facility which was reportedly used to slash the grass around the airfield. Other participants called for the formation of an airfield management committee that would include NGO representatives to monitor expenditure of such contribution and ensure proper maintenance of the airfield.

Legal battle rages on over the powers of the justice minister

The Constitutional Court is mulling over queries filed by a number of legal counsellors at the justice ministry and other legal bodies questioning the powers bestowed upon the Minister of Justice, reports ***Al-Rai Al-Am***. Among questions raised are whether the decisions issued by the justice minister are of a judicial nature and not subject to an appeal or of an administrative nature and could be appealed in the same vein as decisions of the other cabinet ministers.

ICRC suspends activities in Darfur

The ICRC has suspended its activities in Darfur indefinitely due to the deteriorating security conditions in the region and as a result of the arrest earlier of two ICRC members who were released recently, reports ***The Citizen***.

ICRC representative in Khartoum, Salih Debka, said yesterday that the ICRC is awaiting a decision from its headquarters to resume operations in conflict regions that are not accessible to the Sudanese Red Crescent Committee. He said that the agency rejects the protection provided by the SAF or any other forces because it contravenes ICRC laws.

Sudan arrests suspected killers of Egyptian peacekeepers

Sudantribune.com 09/05/10 - Sudanese authorities have arrested gunmen suspected of killing two Egyptian peacekeepers working with the hybrid peacekeeping mission in Darfur, the elected governor of South Darfur said today.

Elected governor, Abdel-Hamid Moussa Kasha announced on Sunday the arrest of the gunmen suspected of the ambush against the Egyptian peacekeepers in South Darfur.

Kasha added that those arrested are bandits, denying their affiliation to any party.

Sudanese police spokesperson, Mohamed Abdel Majid told ***SUNA*** the police is conducting investigations and collecting data. He pointed out that the regular forces were still hunting down the remaining members of the gang.

Yesterday the Egyptian foreign ministry said that the instructions given to the Egyptian mission's leadership and the Egyptian embassy in Khartoum were to have full coordination with the Sudanese authorities and the UN to search the region and capture the perpetrators.

SLM-MM condemns killing of Egyptian peacekeepers

The Minnawi faction of the Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM) says there are some parties that seek to rekindle the conflict in Darfur through inciting ethnic divisions, **Akhir Lahza** reports. The movement condemned the recent killing of two Egyptian peacekeepers in Darfur and blamed these same parties for the attack. SLM-MM called on authorities to apprehend the culprits and serve them the maximum penalties. SLM-MM further pointed out that such parties that target UNAMID peacekeepers want to prove to other parties that the region is insecure in order to push their own agenda.

SAF deploys border troops along Chad; denies attack on JEM strongholds

MirayaFM.org 10/05/10 - As the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) tightened border security with Chad in an effort to promote peaceful border co-existence, allegations of SAF attacks on JEM forces continue to surface. Director of the SAF Spokesperson's Office, Sawarmi Khalid Saeed, told **Radio Miraya** that the deployment is part of the security agreement reached between Khartoum and N'djamena, in an attempt to flush out opposition activities in both countries.

He pointed out that the military monitors any covert rebel activities whether inside or outside urban areas, adding that the SAF has two joint military camps in Adrei and Al-Geneina townships.

Sawarmi also denied JEM reports of having recently engaged the SAF in clashes in the region. He did admit that some JEM forces have penetrated certain areas in Kordofan, but downplayed their effect on the civilians.

He said citizens are used to seeing JEM troops passing through townships and have not been exposed to any clashes with the SAF. Sawarmi added that JEM merely intimidates and terrifies villagers with random shooting.

Split in US policy threatens peace in Sudan

The East African 10/05/10 - Sharp differences inside the Obama administration over Sudan are producing a weak US response to the intensifying threat of renewed north-south warfare, a coalition of advocacy groups and a leading US lawmaker charged last week.

President Obama and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton must take full control of a strengthened US policy toward Sudan, the critics urge, charging that the president's special envoy, Scott Gration, has been too soft in his dealings with Sudanese leaders in Khartoum. A tougher approach promised months ago by the Obama administration has failed to materialise, the advocacy groups noted in a report.

"There are virtually no indications that the administration has held any of the parties to account for their actions since the policy review was announced, and senior administration officials appear badly divided on their approach to Sudan," said the groups' assessment.

Representative Frank Wolf, one of the US Congress' leading voices on Sudan, added in a letter to President Obama that Mr Gration, "with your apparent blessing," has misjudged the nature of the Khartoum regime. Wolf echoed the activist groups in suggesting that Secretary Clinton should take the reins of the US-Sudan policy.

Clinton acknowledged during a television interview last week that she is "certainly not satisfied" with the Obama administration's record to date on Sudan.

A more muscular American stance could include a warning that the US will "take out chunks of the North's air force," if Khartoum begins bombing villages in the South, **New York Times** columnist Nicholas Kristof, a recent visitor to Sudan, wrote.

The US should strengthen Southern Sudan's military capabilities, Congressman Wolf added in a May 5 press conference on Capitol Hill. He also called on President Obama to reject the outcome of Sudan's recent presidential elections, which many observers say were not free or fair.

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