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Elections Special

- NEC representatives hold talks with southern Sudanese information ministers (*Al-Ayyam*)
- NCP candidate “will emerge victorious from the first round” – Nafei (*Al-Ayyam*)
- The elections campaign is a chance to strengthen unity – Arman (*Al-Sudani*)
- SPLM Political Bureau disowns independent candidates (*Sudantribune.com*)
- Al-Mahdi seeks to engage NCP candidate in public debate (*Al-Ahdath*)
- Broad alliance in Meroe to rout NCP candidate Salah Goush (*The Citizen*)

Other Highlights

- UN calls on Sudan to probe attack on peacekeepers (*Reuters*)
- US Senate delegation expected in Sudan today (*Al-Sudani*)
- S. Sudan army attacks press report alleging it raided into Kenya (*Sudantribune.com*)
- SPLM-DC leader Lam Akol reportedly stalked by unidentified persons (*Al-Raed*)
- Sudan arrests two assailants of Darfur peacekeepers (*Sudantribune.com*)
- AU-Darfur Panel-sponsored political symposium postponed (*Al-Khartoum*)
- Darfur peace mediator denies reports about his resignation (*Sudantribune.com*)
- Regular force fires on civilian vehicle in Al-Nuhud (*Al-Raed*)
- Khartoum International Airport partially closed for maintenance (*Al-Ayyam*)

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Highlights

Elections Special

NEC representatives hold talks with southern Sudanese information ministers

Plans are underway for meetings in Juba between the NEC and southern Sudanese information ministers, reports **Al-Ayyam**.

The paper quotes an informed source within the NEC as saying that the meeting slotted for 24th February is within the framework of the coordinative conference organised by the GoSS Ministry of Information for information ministers of the southern Sudanese states.

NCP candidate “will emerge victorious from the first round” – Nafei

Nafei Ali Nafei, the Assistant to the head of the NCP, says the NCP candidate will win the polls from the first round, reports **Al-Ayyam**.

Nafei who launched yesterday his own campaign for the River Nile State constituency polls in Atbara said that even those who have been trying to spread the votes have acknowledged NCP's Al-Bashir would emerge victorious at the polls. He pointed out that the opposition could not ignore the achievements of the NCP regime.

Energy Minister Al-Zubeir Ahmed Hassan told the same rally that the NCP has been patient with the SPLM for a long time and “must sweep the votes if it is to get rid of the SPLM.” He also pointed out that an NCP poll victory is necessary in order to help the country face the challenges of those states that target Sudan.

The elections campaign is a chance to strengthen unity - Arman

SPLM candidate for president, Yassir Arman, has downplayed recent statements by NCP deputy chairman for Khartoum State, Mohamed Mandour Mahdi, in which the latter blamed the SPLM for the death of a Khartoum University student, reports **Al-Sudani**.

Arman said that the Janjaweed are around in Khartoum “and Mandour is one of them”. He renewed his calls for a suspension of the emergency laws in Darfur.

Speaking on the campaign trail in Khartoum North yesterday, Arman said that the SPLM wants the elections campaigning to be a broad-based campaign in which all Sudanese would participate to bring about change and a transition to democracy.

SPLM Political Bureau disowns independent candidates

Sudantribune.com Juba, 18/02/10 - The SPLM Political Bureau has finally resolved to disown its officials who have declared themselves as independent candidates in the forthcoming elections.

The decision to distance the party from independent candidates has been taken after failing to convince the officials to reconsider their candidacy and equally endorse the ones nominated by the Political Bureau. The independent candidates were earlier given an ultimatum by the party's Secretary General Pagan Amum to either reconsider their decision by the 13th February or face a decision by the party's highest organ.

The decision was made public over television by SPLM Deputy Secretary-General for Southern Sector, Anne Itto, after an extraordinary meeting of the SPLM Political Bureau called for by the Chairman of the SPLM, Salva Kiir Mayardit from 15-16th February 2010. The meeting was

attended by 14 members of the Political Bureau and 6 other members invited by the leadership. Itto said the independent candidates were no longer part of SPLM and should no longer use the party slogans and logo during their election campaigns, saying they have already dismissed themselves.

However, independent candidates and their supporters have remained defiant of the threat with many of them calling upon the Political Bureau to instead admit its mistake and allow for mixed inter-party and intra-party primary elections against their “handpicked” colleagues on the polling day.

Among the 340-plus independent candidates, seven of them are running for governorship positions in Jonglei, Upper Nile, Eastern Equatoria, Western Equatoria, Central Equatoria, Unity and Northern Bahr el Ghazal states, respectively.

Senior members of the Political Bureau were initially divided over what to do, with some of them considering dismissing the officials while others warning of negative consequences.

Though the party’s chairman Salva Kiir Mayardit has been publicly silent about the issue, his deputy and the party’s Secretary General have voiced contradictory remarks on how to resolve it.

Pagan Amum earlier admitted that there were “irregularities” in the process of nominations by the Political Bureau and “shortcomings” in the system used. However, he called on the independent candidates to step down in order not to divide the votes with the officially nominated candidates.

This prompted calls on Amum to resign from his party position by some of the senior party officials who are independent candidates.

The party’s deputy chairman Riek Machar, on the other hand said it would be unwise to dismiss the independent officials, warning that it would result to splitting the over three million voters in the South with SPLM losing many seats.

He added that it might as well affect the votes for the party’s presidential candidates if the situation was not harmonized.

The seemingly final decision to disown the independent candidates prompted mixed reaction from members of the public who are SPLM and non-SPLM members.

“There is no party with official candidates and independent candidates at the same time. It would have been a violation of the SPLM regulations if such independent candidates were allowed to contest using SPLM tickets against their colleagues,” said the party member who preferred anonymity.

“They are either SPLM members and should therefore abide by the party’s regulations or quit the party,” he continued.

However the decision was disputed by Khamis Samuel who said the Political Bureau was the first to break the party regulations during their selection process.

“They [members of the Political Bureau] deceived us that the nomination system was a bottom-up approach where they would only endorse the nominees who attained highest rates of recommendation from the grassroots, yet the Political Bureau ended up breaking the rules by imposing a top-bottom process,” he said.

“This is undemocratic because they deleted the names of most popular candidates and replaced them with their own choices. Why didn’t they respect the system of nominations and abide by the results of nominations from the grassroots and through electoral colleges?” Khamis continued.

"Instead of getting disappointed with the independent candidates and dismissing them, the Political Bureau should have reversed its unpopular selection by withdrawing all the handpicked candidates and replacing them with the originally nominated candidates at the grassroots," he further suggested.

Many people fear that with the current situation out of control the SPLM as a party with such internal rivalry will first have to worry about the disowned independent candidates that it is going to battle with over constituencies before it could find a breathing space that can allow it to contest against candidates from other political parties.

A commentator who said was member of the United Democratic Front (UDF) party said "if I were the most influential decision maker in the SPLM, I would have opted to play it cool by silently allowing independent candidates to hunt for constituencies and assuring them that whatever wild meat they will get out of their unlicensed hunting should be brought home to the overall SPLM family and feast on it."

"Who knows, the independents might be the sharp shooters and know where to get the animals but the licences and bullets might have been given to wrong hunters," he jokingly said.

Al-Mahdi seeks to engage NCP candidate in public debate

The Umma Party candidate for president wants to engage the other presidential candidates, especially the NCP and SPLM flag bearers, to an open debate, reports *Al-Ahdath*. Sadiq Al-Mahdi said that the idea had been touted at a recent encounter between him and the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Khartoum who told him that the campus would be happy to host such a debate.

Al-Mahdi went on to criticise the policies of the current regime on a number of issues.

Broad alliance in Meroe to rout NCP candidate Salah Gosh

Popular and political groups in the Merowe constituency say they have formed a broad alliance to rout NCP party candidate and National Security Advisor Salah Gosh.

The Citizen reports that Ali Abdulrahim, the Secretary of the Media Committee at the National Campaign to Oust Gosh, has called on popular, student and political groups to join their campaign against the NCP candidate. A student member of the committee said that Gosh's defeat will serve the interest of the transition to democracy but his elections victory will send a negative signal to the Sudanese people.

Other Highlights

UN calls on Sudan to probe attack on peacekeepers

Reuters UN, 17/02/10 - UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon called on Wednesday for the Sudanese government to investigate an attack on peacekeepers in Darfur, a UN Spokesperson said.

"The secretary-general calls on the government of Sudan to launch an immediate investigation into this incident and to ensure that the perpetrators are swiftly identified and brought to justice," spokeswoman Marie Okabe told reporters.

Unidentified gunmen opened fire on Pakistani peacekeepers in Sudan's Darfur region on Tuesday, wounding seven, two of them seriously, in the latest in a string of attacks on the U.N./African Union force, or UNAMID, officials said.

The ambush of the unarmed police patrol near Nyala, capital of South Darfur, followed reports of a resurgence of fighting in Sudan's violent west that has forced thousands to flee, according to UNAMID.

Sudan arrests two suspected assailants of Darfur peacekeepers

Sudantribune.com Khartoum, 18/02/10 - Sudanese army arrested today two persons suspected of attacking Pakistani peacekeepers near Nyala, South Darfur State, two days ago, according to UNAMID Spokesperson, Nourredine Mezni.

The assailant wounded seven soldiers one of them in critical condition transported to Khartoum.

The head of UNAMID, Ibrahim Gambari, traveled yesterday to Nyala to visit the wounded police officers at the UNAMID hospital. He was accompanied by the Mission Force Commander Lt Gen Patrick Nyambvumba.

US Senate delegation expected in Sudan today

US Senator Richard Durbin (Dem) heads a delegation of US Senators that arrives in Khartoum later today via Juba, **Al-Sudani** reports.

The Deputy Director of the US Desk at Sudan's Foreign Ministry, Tarig Abu-Saleh, revealed that the visiting delegation plans to hold talks while in Juba with FVP Salva Kiir and a number of GoSS officials and visit the Kator Water Purification Project. In Khartoum, he said, the delegation plans to hold talks with Presidential Advisor Ghazi Salahuddin focusing on a series of issues including the political situation, CPA implementation, Sudan's efforts to resolve the Darfur crisis and the general elections in the country.

S. Sudan army attacks press report alleging it raided into Kenya

Sudantribune.com Juba, 18/02/10 – SPLA Spokesperson Kuol Deim has dismissed an **Al Intibaha'** Tuesday edition that SPLA raided into Nadapal area in Kenya and killed two soldiers. He said that the paper "deliberately misquoted Reuters" on the details of the event.

On Sunday, two Kenyan soldiers were shot dead and six others were seriously injured in the Nadapal area, Nairobi's **Daily Nation** reported. The paper noted that there have been frequent shootouts between Kenyan security forces and Toposa militia who resent the presence of the government forces.

Likewise, **Reuters** reported Monday from Isiolo, Kenya that raiders from Sudan were responsible for the bloodshed. The news agency cited defence department spokesman Bogita Ogeri, who pledged that Kenya is working with Sudan "to arrest the gang responsible for the killings."

SPLA Spokesman Maj. Gen. Kuol Deim Kuol provided additional details based on information from SPLA forces. He said that Turkana rustlers raided Toposa cattle camps inside Southern Sudan near the Toposa village of Nadapal on February 4. The attack heightened tension between the tribes and left six Toposa and two Turkana dead.

Then on Sunday, February 14, the Toposa youth ambushed a vehicle inside Kenyan territory between Nadapal and Lokichoggio, killing two and wounding an unspecified number. Presumably this is the attack reported by Reuters.

Nadapal has pastures and watering points that are shared by Turkana and Toposa pastoralists. The border region was used as an SPLA staging area during parts of the war. The spokesman said, however, "SPLA was not and can not be involved in the tribal clashes between Toposa of Sudan and Turkana of Kenya."

The spokesman stated that "It is shame on **Al Intibaha** to twist what was reported by **Reuters** with the malicious aim of misleading the Sudanese people and the world at large."

SPLM-DC leader Lam Akol reportedly stalked by unidentified persons

SPLM-DC leader and GoSS presidential aspirant Lam Akol was stalked by unidentified persons on a vehicle with GoSS registration numbers yesterday, reports **Al-Raed**. Akol was on his way to express condolences to Presidential Advisor Musa Tamim Fartak over the death of his sister.

Fartak said over telephone yesterday that the SPLM-DC candidate noticed he was being stalked by a black car with tinted glasses and GoSS registration plates. The candidate had to request a police escort on his way back as a result.

AU-Darfur Panel-sponsored political symposium postponed

The African Union High Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP) has continued its consultations in Khartoum with the Sudanese Political Parties in preparation for the proposed Summit Meeting of Sudanese Political Parties, reports **Al-Khartoum**.

At the request of the Political Parties forming the Juba Alliance, the Panel has agreed to postpone to a later date, the Summit which was scheduled to begin in Khartoum on 18th February 2010, for further consultations, the Panel said in a statement yesterday. A new date for the Summit will be communicated soon.

Darfur peace mediator denies reports about his resignation

Sudantribune.com Khartoum, 17/02/10 – Darfur joint AU, UN Chief Mediator, Djibril Bassole, has rebuffed recent reports that he had requested to resign from his position asking to not renew his mandate.

"My resignation is not on the agenda," said Djibril Bassole who was talking to **Sudan Tribune** from the Qatari capital. He said it was not advisable to cease laying the groundwork of peace at this stage.

The reports were published while he was attempting since last January in Doha to convince three rebel groups to agree on common political ground and to form one delegation before starting direct talks with the government.

Regular force fires on civilian vehicle in Al-Nuhud

Gunshots from a vehicle carrying members of the regular forces on a civilian vehicle in Al-Nuhud, Northern Kordofan, caused chaos in the local market yesterday. **Al-Raed** quotes eye-witnesses as saying that soldiers on board the vehicle opened fire while the civilian vehicle was traveling on the main road near the local branch of the Neilein Bank near the market before fleeing. Occupants of the civilian vehicle escaped unscathed and reported the case to the local police.

A police official described the incident as "individual and isolated".

Khartoum International Airport partially closed for maintenance

Some parts of Khartoum International Airport will be closed for repairs from late February this year, airport authorities say. According to **Al-Ayyam**, authorities said that the electric system within the airport buildings, the runway lights and the taxi-way lights will be overhauled and the airport closed between 09:00 to 12:00 hours.

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