

20 April 2010

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Media Monitoring Report

United Nations Mission in Sudan/ Public Information Office

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Mon, 19 April 2010
By: George Semaan
<http://www.daralhayat.com/print/132262>

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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

Elections results on Thursday

The NEC has announced that final results of the polls would be released on Thursday instead of today, citing non-completion of vote counting as the reason for the delay, **Al-Intibaha** reports.

However, according to **Sudan Radio**, the NEC has announced that it would not be able set a deadline for the release of the final results due to the complexity and massiveness of the process.

Taban Deng seizes NEC office in Bentiu, refuses to accept defeat

Sudantribune.com Bentiu, 20/04/10 - The incumbent caretaker governor of Unity State has refused to accept defeat in the gubernatorial elections, threatening the State High Elections Committee to declare him the winner irrespective of results.

The overall results received by the electoral body in the state have shown that his main challenger, Angelina Teny, is far ahead of him by more than 24,000 extra votes.

An official close to the NEC's office in Bentiu who spoke on condition of anonymity told **Sudan Tribune** that the governor's security officers had seized control of the NEC's branch office and were ordering them to declare Taban as winner.

He said senior officials in the state were consulting with the President of the Government of Southern Sudan, Salva Kiir Mayardit to intervene and allow for the free and fair announcement of the gubernatorial results in the state.

"Taban Deng Gai should be told to accept defeat in a democratic and peaceful atmosphere," the official added.

The gubernatorial candidates were scheduled to sign for the elections results today (Tuesday) in the NEC's office during which losers were expected to accept defeat before announcement of the winner.

State officials across the country were also making consultations to respond to the situation and avoid any resort to violence until the issue is resolved peacefully.

SPLM says Sudan regime deployed army in tense region

AFP Khartoum, 20/04/10 - The SPLM on Monday accused Khartoum of sending extra forces to tense north-south border areas and of rigging elections there.

"The information we have is that there is a build up" in Blue Nile state, said Yassir Arman, the SPLM's presidential candidate who boycotted the country's first multi-party election since 1986 that ended last Thursday.

The NCP "is sending forces... military forces. We are cautious," Arman told reporters in Khartoum. The Sudanese army was not immediately available for comment.

Arman accused Al-Bashir of preparing to rig the result of the election for the post of governor in Blue Nile state and in key constituencies in neighbouring Southern Kordofan state. "This is a red line," he said referring to violations under the terms of the CPA.

Election results are particularly sensitive in Blue Nile state, where the former southern rebels hope to maintain control of the governor's position, currently held by Malik Aggar. The National Election Commission has yet to announce results for the state, but some newspapers in Khartoum reported the NCP candidate had won.

"If (the election) is rigged, the SPLM leadership will have to meet and assess the situation to determine what type of step to take," said Arman.

The electoral authorities said on Monday that results from the landmark polls, originally expected on Tuesday, would be delayed.

"We cannot set a definite date to announce the results because (the counting) is a very complicated process," the head of the commission's technical committee, Hadi Mohammed Ahmed, told AFP.

Authorities deny Blue Nile military build-up, SPLM says Agar winning

SPLM has warned against rigging of elections results in the Blue Nile state, saying it is a "red line" and confirmed that its candidate for gubernatorial post Malik Agar is ahead of his rival by a margin of 13,000 votes, **Al-Sahafa** reports.

SPLM deputy Secretary General Yassir Arman affirmed the party leadership's solidarity with and support to Malik Agar, warning that rigging in Blue Nile state "will have serious consequences". "If the SPLM wins the gubernatorial post in a free and fair manner we will have no problem but if there is fraud the result will never be accepted," he said.

Elections Securing Higher Committee chairman Maj. Gen. Ahmed Imam dismissed reports of a build-up of government troops, saying there is no need for additional troops.

According to **Al-Rai Al-Aam**, Blue Nile Elections Committee Chairman Ahmed Mahgoub said the committee so far did not announce any contestant as winner of the gubernatorial post in the region, warning that the SPLM statement about the victory of Malik Agar could incite sedition.

Al-Intibaha reports that Malik Agar lost in two constituencies the results of which are so far released, with results of four constituencies yet to be announced. Sources told the paper that SPLM Chairman Salva Kiir has blamed Agar for the SPLM's defeat in the Blue Nile state, saying Agar should have asked for elections delay as was the case in southern Kordofan.

SPLM says NCP tries to rig Blue Nile results by troop build-up

Sudan Tribune website 19/4/10 - The SPLM accused today its peace partner, the National Congress Party of troop building in the Blue Nile Stat ahead of results there.

The Blue Nile and the Southern Kordofan states are supposed to have a special statue in accordance of the CPA allowing them to have more autonomy after popular consultations that should take place there.

The SPLM agents in the region say the withdrawn candidate, Yassir Arman, has won the majority of the votes in the Blue Nile however they fear that the NCP may manipulate the results during the counting operation to declare its candidate winner in the state.

"The information we have is that there is a build-up" in the state, said Arman during a press conference held in Khartoum today. The NCP "is sending military forces and we are cautious" he added.

The SPLM top official in northern Sudan also accused president Omer Al-Bashir of preparing to rig the results of the electoral process for the post of governor in Blue Nile State where the incumbent Malik Aggar is the SPLM candidate.

"This is a red line," he said; adding "If the election is rigged, the SPLM leadership will have to meet and assess the situation to determine what type of step to take".

A Sudanese police source justified the increasing presence of security forces in the Blue Nile by saying these forces are part of a security plan to prevent troubles in the different part of the country. "These are ordinary measures" he told Reuters.

Also Senior NCP member Rabie Abdelati said: "The early figures show that the NCP will get the victory in Blue Nile. Yassir Arman knows this and that is why he is making these falsehoods."

Blue Nile increases security before announcement of final voting results

Radio Miraya 19/4/10 - As vote counting progresses to the final stage in Blue Nile State and with results for all 294 polling stations expected on Tuesday, state officials have secured roads with heavy police presence in anticipation for reactions to the results might turn violent. Since Sunday, the State's High Elections Committee has been releasing results from polling stations that have completed ballot counting in the presence of party agents, candidates, polling centre supervisors and journalists.

US says Sudan elections "not free and fair" shifts focus to referendum

Sudan Tribune 19/4/10 — The United States said today that the elections held in Sudan's over the last week were "neither free nor fair" and suggested that it has now shifted its focus on the 2011 referendum for the South in accordance with the CPA signed between the North and the South.

"This was not a free and fair election," said State Department spokesman P.J. Crowley. "It did not, broadly speaking, meet international standards."

"That said, I think we recognize that the election is a very important step" toward carrying out a 2005 peace deal that gave the south autonomy, a share of oil revenues and a route to independence via referendum by January 2011, he told reporters.

Crowley said many of those elected in the Sudanese poll, however flawed it may have been, would play important roles in whether "we have a credible referenda process that, quite honestly, is likely to yield the emergence of a new country."

His comment was an allusion to the widely held expectation that southern Sudan will choose to secede from the north.

"So while we understand that there were flaws and failures in terms of this electoral process, we will recognize that there is a lot of work to be done," he said. "The United States will continue to work with the government in the north, the government in the south, as we move forward with ... the vitally important referenda that'll happen in January of next year."

Crowley's mark offered a more downbeat assessment of the elections than the US special envoy to Sudan Scott Gration who hailed the electoral commission and expressed confidence that the polls would be held in a fair and free manner.

Gration met this afternoon with US president Obama at the White House for the first time since his return from Sudan. The White House spokesperson Robert Gibbs has told reporters that a statement would be released on the meeting.

In a separate statement, the United States, Britain and Norway said Sudan's elections were marred by poor preparation and other suspected irregularities and they called on Sudanese officials to take to fully implement the 2005 peace accord.

"We note initial assessments of the electoral process from independent observers, including the judgment that the elections failed to meet international standards," the three countries, guarantors of the peace deal, said in a statement.

"We are reassured that voting passed reasonably peacefully, reportedly with significant participation, but share their serious concerns about weak logistical and technical preparations and reported irregularities in many parts of Sudan," the statement said.

The three countries noted the limited access of observer missions in Darfur and voiced regret

that electoral officials did not do more to address such problems before the voting.

"It is essential to build upon the progress made so far to expand democratic space in Sudan," the statement said, adding that Sudanese officials should "draw lessons" to ensure future polls and a referendum due next year on independence for South Sudan do not suffer from the same flaws.

NEC suspends elections in Unity state's County as Angelina leads

Sudan Tribune website 20/4/10 - The electoral body overseeing the conduct of the Sudan's general elections has issued a decision to partially suspend the electoral process in one of Unity state's nine counties following some serious irregularities in some of its constituencies.

The National Elections Commission (NEC) on Monday afternoon announced the decision to exclude a number of areas in Parieng County from the ongoing process for executive and parliamentary elections, pending investigations into such irregularities.

Earlier, a number of candidates contesting for the gubernatorial position in the state, led by Angelina Teny, and other parties' agents filed a petition to the electoral body, accusing the county officials of blocking their agents from participating in the monitoring of the polling and during the sorting and counting of votes at the polling stations.

According to an official source close to NEC, it was also discovered that the county's electoral staff illegally continued with polling for extra two days.

He said the illegal process continued even after the polling was officially closed on Thursday last week, making the county's polling days seven in number.

As a result, the process was detected to have involved massive fraud in the county which was seen as the last battle ground for the two main rivals, incumbent governor Taban Deng Gai and independent candidate, Angelina Teny.

The State High Elections Committee has received the overall results from the rest of the eight counties, showing Teny leading the gubernatorial race by a wide margin.

The county officials were also suspected of manipulating the process in favour of the incumbent state governor, though the votes from the least populated Parieng, estimated to have less than 10,000 registered voters, would not narrow the wide gap as results from the other eight counties revealed that Teny was ahead of Gai by more than 24,000 votes cast.

NEC's decision for partial suspension of the electoral process in the area was publicly announced over Radio Omdurman on Monday after communicating the decision to its branch office in Southern Sudan.

The official further added that the next move would be for all parties' agents to participate in verification of figures on Tuesday during which results from the eight counties would be entered into computer system before submitting them to NEC office for official announcement.

After completion of the verification of the figures, the candidates or their agents would then sign for the final results as an approval for official declaration.

Angelina Teny, the wife of Southern Sudan's Vice President, Dr. Riek Machar Teny, has also been the state minister of Energy and Mining in the Khartoum-based Government of National Unity for the last five years.

Disowned by her party, the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) after declaring her independent candidature, Teny in her manifesto explained that she was responding to "public outcry for a new leader in the state...and to save the office from falling into the hands of a different political party as the popularity of the current governor severely dwindled throughout the state."

Educated in Great Britain after completing her secondary school in Khartoum, the 40+ years old gubernatorial contestant criticized the current state administration for failure to provide development services to the people for the last five years despite the presence of resources, which she described as "astonishing experience to every citizen of Unity state."

Five candidates including Teny are contesting for the position of governor in the Sudan's oil-rich state.

SPLM relieves spokesperson for the north

In a surprise move, the SPLM leadership has relieved Yien Matthew from his post as party Spokesperson for northern Sudan, *Al-Intibaha* reports. Sources said that the decision was taken against the background of allegations that Mathew paid SDG2 billion to fund Yassir Arman's presidential campaign bid and also had been making public statements without consulting with the SPLM leadership.

East Sudan parties concede defeat, cry fraud

Reuters Khartoum, 20/04/10 - Two political parties in Sudan's east on Tuesday accused the president's party of using fraud and intimidation to secure sweeping election victories across their region.

East Sudan's Beja Congress party, which is formally allied with the NCP, told *Reuters* it had only managed to win one seat in a local assembly in Red Sea state, but none in the national parliament.

"We caught them (the NCP) emptying ballot boxes and they expelled our monitors from the voting centres during voting and counting," Abdullah Moussa, a senior Beja Congress official in Port Sudan, told *Reuters*.

"We won this one (state assembly seat) only because it is a small area -- one family and the young boys managed to guard many voting centres with small weapons at night," he said.

According to official results from another Red Sea state constituency, the NCP candidate won almost 18,000 votes compared to just 839 for the eastern party.

The NCP has repeatedly denied taking part in any irregularities.

Taher Ali, a candidate from the Democratic Congress for East Sudan, told *Reuters* he had travelled to Khartoum to complain about numerous irregularities.

"In one voting centre, the box with my votes had 600 ballot papers less than the other boxes and of those 485 were spoiled ... only 17 of the NCP's were spoiled," said Ali who was beaten to a seat in the national assembly by the NCP's current interior minister."

"Our people are furious - they want to go out onto the streets," he said. "We are trying to calm them."

Warrap sets to celebrate victory of the SPLM gubernatorial candidate

Sudan Tribune website 19/4/10 - Votes sorting and counting operations entered its last day in the southern state of Warrap as preliminary results in five strong and most populated polling stations show SPLM gubernatorial candidate, Nyandeng Malek Deliech leading the race.

Bol Madut Ring, poll officer at Wunrok station told Sudan Tribune that votes sorting and counting process started late in the morning at ten o'clock saying they were waiting for agents representing other political contenders to participate in the operation.

"It took us four hours from waiting for agents representing their parties and candidates. They reluctantly showed up late at ten o'clock after sending them vehicles to collect them at their

individual accommodations." "We had to collect them one by one because majority of them were reluctant and did not want to participate in the counting," he added.

Similarly, in Turalei constituency number 8, sorting and votes counting also started late yesterday with poll officials interviewed citing late arrival of agents representing other political parties.

The votes sorting and counting which started all over the country yesterday on Friday 16, finished today in all polling stations of Warrap. Others have already released their results. Although we started late at ten o'clock this morning, we remained in the counting room up to 7:30 PM when just finished, said Ms. Nyandeng Achuil Malek, agent representing SPLM in the polling Station.

Bol Ayuel Kuol, a poll officer at Turalei station also confirmed completion of the counting by phone to Sudan Tribune. We have finished the counting and results have made known to agents representing individual parties and their candidates, he said.

"General results will be made public by the National Election Commission head office at Kuajok tomorrow, our responsibilities are limited to polling stations," he adds.

With results being announced in favour of the SPLM in some polling centres, Allesio Makuc Ngongdit, SPLM Secretary in Warrap State, who paid a brief visit to the area, said votes sorting and counting has already started without any problem in other counties and constituencies.

It has started very well in Gogrial West County, Tonj East, South and North counties and reports we have from our agents and other credible sources at those polling stations show our candidate, comrade Nyandeng Malek Deliech, is ahead of other contenders by large margin.

In all polling centres of Warrap state, SPLM candidates have never dropped from leading their rivals. Arman has been leading Bashir in most centres including those did not vote for Bashir, Makuc adding there are centres whose electorate have failed completely to vote for president Bashir. The same applies to Dr. Lam Akol against Salva Kiir Mayardit. Sometimes, in some centres, people vote for Lam by mistake, he adds.

Russia says Sudan elections fair by “African standards”

Sudan Tribune website 19/4/10 - The elections that were concluded in Sudan last week should be judged by African standards and not European ones, a senior Russian official said.

The Russian special envoy to Sudan Mikhail Margelov said that only technical flaws occurred at the polls but did not impact the integrity of the process as a whole and criticized Western monitors over their assessments made over the weekend.

"In particular, voting papers were delivered late to polling stations. And polling stations themselves did not open on time. The names of some candidates on the lists were distorted or had the wrong symbols," Margelov told Intertass agency.

"This country is just emerging from a state of war. Moreover, it seems European experts shouldn't be applying their observations to the whole country - there is information that for security reasons they did not go to Darfur," he added.

Margelov also said that the opinion of the EU's observers to the effect that the elections "did not meet the key requirements of the electoral process" were too categorical.

Margelov said the elections in Sudan should be judged by African and not European standards.

Arman, Mubarak prepare to establish a new political party

Informed sources said intensive consultations are continuing between URRP leader Mubarak Al-Fadil Al-Mahdi and SPLM deputy Secretary General Yassir Arman to announce the formation

of a new political party in the North, **Al-Wifaq** reports. According to the unnamed sources, both leaders have suffered disagreements within their political parties.

DUP leader rejects election results, leaves for Egypt

Sudan Tribune website 19/4/10— DUP leader Mohamed Osman Al-Mirghani today issued a strong statement calling for holding of new elections at all levels saying that the current process "is exposed to fraud and rigging".

Al-Mirghani said that the elections held in the country "did not reflect the [will of] the Sudanese people, and it is far from being free and fair elections".

In his statement today, Al-Mirghani said that the DUP was aware of the difficulties and impediments facing the elections but that it believed that its participation would be a step towards democratic transformation and peaceful exchange of power.

He said that his party monitored and documented "all forms of fraud" in the elections, which prompted the DUP leadership to refrain from voting.

The DUP failed to make any gains in areas considered to be its strongholds with large populations of the Al-Khatmiya religious sect who are followers of Al-Mirghani fuelling suspicions that the votes were rigged.

"The fears of the party were confirmed over the non-readiness and partiality of the NEC and its branches in the different states.... the electoral commission is not neutral," Al-Mirghani said.

The religious figure called for a national dialogue between all political parties to agree on the major issues such as the unity of the country ahead of the 2011 referenda in South Sudan and resolving the crisis in Sudan's Western region of Darfur.

Shortly after Al-Mirghani issued his statements, he left for Egypt and will also head to Saudi Arabia from there. His office denied that he has gone to a voluntary exile over the electoral dispute.

Other Highlights

Limited cases of meningitis reported in five states

Undersecretary of the Federal Ministry of Health Kamal Obeid told journalists yesterday that limited cases of meningitis were reported in the three Darfur states as well as in Al-Gezira and Kassala states and that residents of those areas are being vaccinated, **Local dailies** report.

Violence hampering aid deliveries in mountainous part of Darfur-UN

UN News 19/4/10 - Increasing violence has cut off aid deliveries to the mountainous area of Darfur and the living situation for the estimated 100,000 people there will worsen as the dry season comes to an end, the top United Nations humanitarian official in Sudan warned today.

"Our operations have been on hold for some weeks while we have been trying to reach civilians in the highlands to assess the humanitarian situation and provide any relief that might be necessary," said Georg Charpentier, the UN Humanitarian Coordinator for Sudan.

"As we approach the end of the dry season and water becomes scarcer, it becomes more urgent to gain access to all civilians who are living in difficult circumstances," Mr. Charpentier added.

Families of USS Cole victims sue Sudan again

AP 19/4/10 - Relatives of the 17 sailors killed in the attack on the USS Cole are suing Sudan for emotional damages they were denied in a previous lawsuit.

Sixty-one family members filed the new lawsuit late last week in US District Court in Norfolk, the Cole's homeport and home of the US Atlantic Fleet. They are seeking \$282.5 million in damages for pain and suffering.

Three years ago, 33 family members were awarded \$8 million in compensatory damages after US District Judge Robert Doumar found Sudan liable for assisting the terrorists who attacked the destroyer at a Yemeni port in 2000. Doumar ruled that the federal Death on the High Seas Act allowed him to award compensation only for lost wages and earning potential, not for pain and suffering.

Congress changed the law in 2008, allowing families of terrorism victims to seek pain and suffering damages.

Sudan, which has denied any responsibility for the attack, did not fight the original lawsuit but also refused to pay the damages. Interest drove the amount owed to \$13.4 million, which eventually was paid from Sudanese assets frozen by the US government.

Individual awards ranged from \$200,000 to \$1.2 million but were limited to spouses and children.

The new lawsuit lists 24 parents as plaintiffs, along with eight spouses or permanent companions, 20 siblings and nine children. They seek individual awards of up to \$10 million.

Attorneys for the families did not immediately return phone messages.

Military aircraft crashes at Sudan-Chad border

The joint Sudan-Chad border monitoring force has reported that one of its aircraft crashed at the Adre border airfield, reports **Al-Ahdath**. A crew member was killed but three others survived the crash, reports commander Bushara Mohamed Adam who heads the Chadian contingent of the joint force. The crash was reportedly caused by a technical fault suffered by the aircraft while landing.

Three SPLA soldiers killed in clash with police in the South

Three SPLA soldiers were killed yesterday in clashes with police at Makal area, 20 km east of Wau, **Al-Sahafa** reports. SPLA spokesperson Kuol Diem Kuol confirmed to the newspaper the incident which he said was triggered by refusal of a force to obey an order to participate in disarming process in Murle and Jonglei Counties. He said the situation was under control.