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# Media Monitoring Report

United Nations Mission in Sudan/ Public Information Office

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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

## **Voter registration kicks off today**

Voter registration kicks off today from 08:00 to 17:00 hours nationwide. Deputy Secretary-General of the National Elections Commission, Abdullah Ahmed Abdullah, said that the process will be carried out by the state electoral committees, *local dailies* report. He said that Sudanese nationals aged 18 and above and who are residing in a geographic constituency for over three months are eligible to vote in that constituency provided he/ she shows proof of identity. Both pro-government and opposition parties are encouraging voter registration but opposition parties complain that the registration period that ends on the 30th of this month is insufficient.

In a related development, *The Citizen* also reports that the NEC has deferred the voter registration exercise for Sudanese living abroad, according to instructions sent out to Sudan's diplomatic missions abroad.

## **UN bodies in Sudan start largest-ever delivery of voter registration materials**

The United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) and the UN Development Programme (UNDP) have started the largest-ever delivery of registration materials with the delivery of at least 117,880 kilos of materials including registration kits, forms and training supplies to locations identified by the National Elections Commission (NEC), *local dailies* report.

Also 26 generators, office furniture and communications equipment will also be delivered to complete the establishment of 25 NEC State High Committee offices.

UNMIS, UNDP and UNAMID would contribute to achieve this important operation to ensure the success of the electoral process expected to start in April 2010. UNDP will fund the transportation to 25 state capitals while the UNMIS will deliver materials to 43 inaccessible and remote locations in Southern Sudan and Southern Kordofan.

These flights will also transport NEC officers to remote constituencies to train staff on the basic rules and procedures of voter registration.

The hybrid peacekeeping mission in Darfur is tasked with the delivery of materials to 10 isolated areas in Northern and Western Darfur.

"We're hopeful that this logistical assistance to NEC will enable the Commission to establish registration centres that enable more people to register and later to vote," said Ray Kennedy, Chief Electoral Affairs Officer with UNMIS. "This will bring the country one step closer to a large-scale democratic polling exercise in 2010."

NEC requested UNMIS – which is mandated to provide technical assistance and support for elections – to assist with logistics and operational planning, electoral materials, training and capacity building of staff in support of the upcoming general elections.

## **UN says S. Kordofan's Wise Men Council good for popular participation**

UN Coordinator for Humanitarian Affairs in Sudan, Ameera Haq, has affirmed her organisation's support to the efforts of Southern Kordofan State for realising stability and development, *The Citizen* reports. Ameera Haq said that she and her accompanying delegation of UN agencies visited Southern Kordofan State and were briefed by the Governor and his Deputy on the state's plans. UNMIS' Civil Affairs' Director for Southern Kordofan, Mohamed Ali, said that UN appreciates the formation of a Council of Wise Men in Southern Kordofan State for boosting security, peace, stability and development in the state. He pointed out that the formation of the Council is a good idea for population participation in government.

## **Lack of sustained commitment to peaceful agreement in Darfur – UN**

**UN Radio New York, 30/10/09** - The head of UN Peacekeeping Operations says there is lack of a sustained commitment from all the parties in the Darfur conflict in Sudan to achieve a political agreement. Alain Le Roy sees the lack of commitment to reach a political settlement as a major challenge to bring peace and stability to Darfur.

UN spokesperson Michele Montas says this is one of the key messages that Mr. Le Roy delivered when he addressed a summit of the African Union Peace and Security Council in the Nigerian capital, Abuja, on Thursday.

"Le Roy stressed that a political agreement for Darfur is also necessary in view of the national elections scheduled for April 2010. But Le Roy warns that a political solution cannot be imposed. It must be negotiated with serious concessions from all sides in order to achieve concrete solutions to concrete problems."

Mr. Le Roy stated that the UN would be reviewing the report of the African Union's High Level Panel on Darfur, chaired by former South African president, Thabo Mbeki.

## **GoSS President makes first call for independence**

**Reuters Juba, 31/10/09** –GoSS President Salva Kiir Mayardit on Saturday urged southerners to vote for independence in a referendum if they wanted to be free, the closest he has come to calling publicly for the separation of the oil-producing region.

The south secured a vote on whether to break away from Sudan as part of a peace deal that ended more than two decades of war with the north. But until now, southern President Salva Kiir has stuck to the official line of building support for unity.

"When you reach your ballot boxes the choice is yours: you want to vote for unity so that you become a second class in your own country, that is your choice," he told a congregation in a cathedral in the capital Juba during a service to launch a prayer campaign for elections in 2010 and a referendum in 2011.

"If you want to vote for independence so that you are a free person in your independent state, that will be your own choice and we will respect the choice of the people."

The comments will add pressure to the already troubled relationship between Kiir's Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) and the north's dominant National Congress Party (NCP).

Both sides promised to build up a campaign to make the unity of Sudan attractive to voters when they signed the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement that settled the civil war.

No one from the NCP was immediately available to comment.

## **Speaker says SPLM has intentions to sabotage parliamentary business**

National Assembly Speaker Ahmed Ibrahim Al-Tahir told the press yesterday that parliament will continue in its business as usual without regard to the SPLM walkout as long as there is a quorum, **Al-Wifaq** reports. He said that the SPLM has resorted to boycotting parliament because it fears the outcome of the forthcoming elections and wants to derail the referendum.

"The SPLM has boycotted the current parliamentary sessions even before it started. This shows that the SPLM has covert intentions to sabotage parliamentary business," he said.

## **SPLM and opposition parties draft memo on restrictive laws**

The SPLM and opposition parties meeting at the headquarters of the Communist Party of Sudan yesterday have resolved to present a memorandum to the Presidency of the Republic

seeking a suspension of all restrictive laws and on endorsement of the Security Bill, *Al-Wattan*. They also agreed to draft a memorandum to US Special Envoy Scott Gration on their views about the current political situation in the country.

Participants also resolved to implement the resolutions of the Juba Conference of Political Parties and agreed to start with a “grand political symposium” in Omdurman next week.

Farouq Abu-Eisa, an MP and prominent member of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA), told a press conference following the meeting yesterday that the opposition parties and SPLM intend to inform Special Envoy Scott Gration about the obstacles they face as a result of NCP domination of the political scene.

### **Nafi slams SPLM on failure to reach agreement it could honour**

*Al-Ayyam* quotes Nafi Ali Nafi, Assistant to the President of the Republic, of saying that the SPLM is not only renegeing on agreements it has reached but is now unable to reach any agreement that it could honour.

“We now do not know who in the SPLM is making the decisions,” he said. He further pointed out that nobody now knows what the SPLM wants.

### **Legislative reforms needed to save CPA, SPLM warns**

Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly, Atem Garang, has criticised the NCP saying that it is not committed to the implementation of the CPA, reports *Akhir Lahza*. He said that legislative reforms have to be in place in order to save the CPA.

The Deputy Speaker also pointed out that the SPLM would only return to parliament if it receives response to its demands. He said that the SPLM would not recognize those laws that would be passed during its boycott of parliament.

Garang also renewed the SPLM intentions to boycott cabinet deliberations over the fiscal budget, *Al-Khartoum* reports.

### **Bahr-el-Ghazal Government and UNMIS assess security situation in Bor town**

*Miraya FM 31/10/09* - A team from Western Bahr-el-Ghazal State Government and UN Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) visited Bor town on Friday to assess the security situation following a recent attack suspected to have been carried out by the Ugandan Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). During the incident, three policemen and two civilians were killed while a number of people were abducted by the LRA.

Deputy Governor of Western Bahr el Ghazal State, Awad Juma Aman, praised efforts of Sudan People's Liberation Army in freeing 49 abductees.

Meanwhile Ali Mohammed Sayed, a tribal chief in Bor town, attributed the occurrence of the attack to the lack of enough police forces in the area.

### **PCP official says Dr. Turabi will hold talks armed groups**

Kamal Omar, the Political Secretary for the Popular Congress Party (PCP), intimates that party leader Dr. Hassan Turabi who is currently undergoing treatment in Doha may hold talks with all parties involved in the Darfur peace process, reports *Ajras Al-Hurriya*. Turabi may hold talks with leaders of Darfur armed groups including SLM's Abdul Wahid while in Doha, he said.

## Ministry of Foreign Affairs expects breakthrough in Sudan-US relations

State Minister for Foreign Affairs, Al-Waseela Al-Sammani, has reiterated Sudan government appreciation to the efforts of US Special Envoy Scott Gration to create a climate for the realisation of peace in Sudan, reports *Akhir Lahza*. Al-Sammani however renewed Sudan's reservations over the new US policy on Sudan but said he does expect a breakthrough in relations between the two sides.

## Sudan 'politely' rejects hybrid court proposal for Darfur

*Sudantribune.com* Washington, 29/10/09 - The Sudanese government today formally expressed reservations on the proposal for a hybrid court in Darfur made by the African Union (AU) high level panel earlier this month.

The Sudanese delegation headed by 2nd Vice president Ali Osman Taha addressed the Peace and Security Council (PSC) session in Abuja, Nigeria that focused mainly on the Darfur report compiled by a commission headed by former South African president Thabo Mbeki.

"What is mentioned in the report on a new justice mechanism in the form of hybrid courts requires satisfying and accurate definition on the extent of conformity of the principle of establishing it with the constitution and the principle of independent judiciary, jurisdiction and determining its workings and specifics. This requires close cooperation between us and the mechanism that we recommend the AU to establish," Taha said.

"On the other hand we must remember that establishing these courts is important to us as Africans because it establishes a precedence to be used in the future in other cases in Africa," he added.

Taha also stressed that Sudan has established special courts and appointed a special prosecutor saying that the Sudanese law and competence of judiciary "provides the necessary framework to achieve justice".

Mbeki's report has stated that "the criminal justice response to Darfur is ineffective and confusing and has also failed to obtain the confidence of the people of Darfur".

The panel also countered an argument frequently made by Khartoum on its laws not allowing participation of non-Sudanese in the judiciary saying that there is no explicit verbiage to that effect but acknowledged that changes will still need to be made.

"In order to facilitate the establishment of a Hybrid Court, the Government of Sudan should take immediate steps to introduce legislation to allow legally qualified non-nationals to serve on the judiciary of Sudan (c.f. section 23, National Judiciary Act, 1986). In this connection, the Panel notes that the Constitution of Sudan does not expressly prohibit non-Sudanese nationals from being appointed to the judiciary of Sudan, and would not therefore need to be amended".

The AU PSC adopted the report as a roadmap for solution in Darfur but it is not clear if their statement incorporated specific mechanisms or benchmarks for implementation particularly in light of Sudan's objections.

The summit set up another team of experts — including Mbeki, former president of Burundi Pierre Nkuruziza and ex-leader of Nigeria Abdulsalam Abu-Bakr — to help in the implementation of the recommendations. The team has a one year mandate.

The details of the PSC declaration have not been made available but Nigerian media reported that it underlined that "the search for justice should be pursued in a way that does not impede or jeopardize the promotion of peace, the PSC reiterated its strong condemnation of the gross violations of human rights in Darfur and the AU's unflinching commitment to combating impunity, in line with the relevant provisions of the Constitutive Act".

## **South Sudan establishes news agency**

**Sudantribune.com** Juba, 29/10/09 – GoSS will soon establish an electronic and print news agency, says GoSS Spokesperson and Information Minister Paul Mayom. He told the press that the News Agency of Southern Sudan (NASS) would cover stories from the rural and remote areas not normally covered by the mainstream press.

A cabinet meeting held last Friday under the chairmanship of GoSS President Salva Kiir Mayardit endorsed the proposed structures of the NASS. The Agency will support news and information programming at public and private domestic media outlets throughout Southern Sudan and convey news about Southern Sudan to the international press.

NASS will initially be developed within the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, utilizing the skills of staff trained through the ministry's capacity building initiatives.

Mayom also added that a Public Information Center (PIC) will be established as a venue to disseminate information about the government activities and policies to the general public as well as a resource and documentation center for researchers and academics.

## **Dialogue helps set stage for Abyei Boundary Ruling**

**Reliefweb.int** USAID, 31/10/09 - In an effort to build a foundation for peaceful acceptance of the Permanent Court of Arbitration's ruling on Abyei's boundaries, USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) helped bring together 30 influential Dinka Ngok and Misseriya leaders to discuss cross-border relations.

The three-day workshop, organized by Concordis International with support from the European Commission, provided an opportunity for the region's two main ethnic groups to look to the future and consider what kind of border management system would satisfy the development and security needs of both communities. International experts shared examples of innovative border relations in Africa and Europe, helping participants see that borders do not have to act as barriers, and that 'soft' borders can enable the movement of people and goods.

Leaders from the communities expressed their aspirations for peaceful coexistence, as well as their concerns regarding tensions associated with border demarcation and the potential danger of renewed conflict. In the informal environment of the workshop, participants developed common understandings of the challenges they face and produced joint proposals for initiatives that could be undertaken to improve security and humanitarian, economic, political, and social relations across the border.

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