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Referendum Watch

Presidency Meeting Monday will review Abyei Issue - Gandour

SUNA 5/12/10 – NCP Political Affairs Secretary Ibrahim Gandour says the Presidency of the Republic would convene later today. He pointed out that the meeting and the mediatory efforts being carried out by the high-level African Union Panel on Sudan concerning Abyei come in the context of continuous efforts for the resolution of the issue of Abyei.

Gandour affirmed the National Congress' commitment to the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) and he also emphasized the capability of the government to provide protection to any citizen at the country's territories.

NCP, SPLM to hold talks under Austrian patronage in Khartoum tomorrow

Al-Ahram Al-Youm Khartoum, 06/12/10 - Under the patronage of the Government of Austria, the NCP and the SPLM will hold talks in Khartoum tomorrow to draw a roadmap for peaceful coexistence between the North and the South, regardless of the outcome of the referendum. An Austrian delegation headed by the country's Foreign Minister is due in Khartoum today.

Sudan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced that the two CPA partners will hold closed-door talks with the visiting Austrian delegation on pending CPA issues. Ministry Spokesperson Muawia Khalid said the talks were a continuation of early talks held in Austria last November.

Misseriya to hand the Presidency 3 proposals on Abyei

Al-Rai Al-Aam Khartoum, 06/12/10 – Leading Misseriya figures in the NCP are to table before the Presidency of the Republic a memorandum with three proposals on the Abyei issue. Musa Hamadein, a high ranking member of the Misseriya Association, said yesterday that NCP members of the tribe met with the Misseriya Association in Khartoum yesterday to seek endorsement for three proposals on Abyei. The proposals, he said, are that the parties either recognize the 1.1.56 borders or the south-western borders of the Bahr-el-Arab area or that Abyei be annexed to the western Bahr-el-Arab area (the last proposal has been rejected by the Association).

Hamadein has meanwhile requested the NCP to relieve the Deputy Head of the Abyei Area Administration, Rahama Abdelrahman Nour, of his duties on the grounds of "incompetence".

The Presidency is expected to meet today to discuss Abyei, among other outstanding issues on the CPA.

Misseriya figure criticizes recent statements on Abyei attributed to Deng Alor

Al-Rai Al-Aam Khartoum, 06/12/10 – Mohamed Abdallah Adam Wad-Abuk, a prominent Misseriya figure and member of its delegation to the Abyei talks in Addis, yesterday accused SPLM figure Deng Alor for "adopting a policy of barring the Misseriya from the Abyei issue". He described as "strange" recent statements attributed to Alor threatening that the SPLA would overrun Abyei. He warned the SPLM against following Alor's counsel that, he warned, would "plunge southern Sudan deep to the bottom of the Nile". The Misseriya figure however reiterated commitment to peaceful dialogue to resolve the issues of Abyei but pointed out that the Misseriya are prepared to fight for their rights should the talks for a peaceful resolution of those issues not bear fruit.

Winning bidder for printing referendum materials to be unveiled today

Al-Ayyam Khartoum, 06/12/10 – A committee in charge of the bids for the printing of referendum material for the SSRC has opened the bids and the winning bidder may be announced later today, sources say. The bidders include printing houses from Japan, the Republic of South Africa, the UK, the US and Sudan (the National Currency Printing Press), the source intimates.

VPs Taha and Machar to discuss oil security today

Al-Sudani Khartoum, 06/12/10 - VP Taha and GoSS VP Riek Machar are to chair a high-level meeting today at Faluj oilfield in the Upper Nile State to discuss means to secure various oil installations before, after and during the upcoming referendum process. These discussions are in a bid to ensure that the two sides continue to benefit from the oil projects regardless of the outcome of the referendum.

A statement by the oil ministry said that through this meeting, the two sides intend to send reassurances from the political and security leadership that the security of the oil companies and that of their employees is paramount. Other officials who are attending the meeting include the federal ministers for Defence, the Interior and Oil, NISS Director and his deputy, the GoSS ministers of Interior and Energy and Mining, and the governors of Southern Kordofan, Unity and Upper Nile states.

Constitutional case to be filed against SSRC

Al-Sudani Khartoum, 06/12/10 - A group of lawyers and human rights activists say they would seek legal redress from the Constitutional Court today against what they described as SSRC violations of the referendum law.

Ms Zainab Mohamed Ahmed who heads the group told the newspaper that the legal suits cite intent to hamper the registration process in the south including by death threats and prevention of *sultans* from serving as voter identifiers. The group has called for a halt of the ongoing registration process and dissolution of the SSRC. The same group will also file an administrative case to the Constitutional Court against the SSRC.

Meanwhile, *Al-Ayyam* reports that Arab groups in “Manj” County in Upper Nile State have filed a case with the Constitutional Court against the SSRC, the higher referendum committee in the state and heads of subcommittees at county level for having been prevented from registering for the referendum. Al-Sheikh Bir Al-Sheikh Al-Nur, a chief of the Arab groups, pointed out that they have been permanently residing in the county since 1827 and had not left the area even at times of war. He said they wanted to register but they were told that being Arabs they are not eligible to register for the vote.

Al-Wifaq also reports that southern *sultans*, civic networks, youths and women in the North are determined to file a case today with the Constitutional Court against the SSRC to demand postponement of the referendum and repeat of the registration citing by the SPLM and bias from the SSRC. Sultan Peter Majok told a meeting yesterday in Khartoum that identifiers in the North have been prevented from working at the registration centres in order to hamper the registration process.

Egyptian delegation to discuss referendum with officials in north and south

Al-Rai Al-Aam Khartoum, 06/12/10 – A high ranking Egyptian delegation held talks yesterday with presidential aide Nafei Ali Nafei on developments on the referendum. “Egypt is continuously conducting consultations to get appraised of the political situation with regards the referendum,”

said Nafei. On his part, Khaled Arabi who heads the visiting delegation, told reporters yesterday that the delegation would intensify consultations in the next two days with the political forces in the country within the contest of Egypt's concerns for stability in Sudan. "We are here to cooperate with all parties in the north and south of the Sudan on the implementation of the CPA ... the referenda are not the end of the process," he said.

"The referenda concerns Sudanese alone and Egypt could not interfere," he said, denying WikiLeaks' reports alleging that Egypt is pushing for a delay in the referendum.

Meanwhile, *Al-Sahafa* quotes SSRC Information Officer George Makuer, as saying that members of the visiting delegation met yesterday with SSRC Chair Mohamed Ibrahim Khalil. He said that the SSRC briefed the visiting delegation of progress in the referendum process.

Australia pledges \$ 3 million for referendum

Al-Sudani Khartoum, 06/12/10 - Cabinet Affairs Minister Luka Biong, said following a meeting with SSRC Chair Mohamed Ibrahim Khalil yesterday, that the Government of Australia has announced it would assist the implementation of all phases of the referendum process and has pledged to pay \$3 million to the SSRC, \$1 million to the IOM and \$5 million to women and child health programmes in the South. Biong said Khalil assured him that the referendum process would take place on time.

Other Highlights

Political parties' Council to convene in Juba, Thursday

Al-Sahafa Khartoum, 06/12/10 - The Political Parties' Council holds an extraordinary meeting in Juba next Thursday to "consult and exchange ideas with southern Sudanese political parties on the next stages of the referendum process".

The Council's Information Officer, Yousif Abdulrahman Bushra, said that this is their first ever meeting outside the Council headquarters. He said that Council members hope to be able to complete the body's membership and to discuss the higher authorities in Juba to enable them convey their message for good governance, peaceful political transition and a comprehensive and sustainable peace.

Minnawi removed from chairmanship of Darfur Transitional Authority

Sudantribune.com Khartoum, 05/12/10 - President Omar Al-Bashir has reportedly removed the head of the Sudan Liberation Army (SLA) Minni Arcua Minnawi from his position as head of the Transitional Darfur Regional Authority (TDRA), only a few days after the Sudanese army said that it considers his forces a military target.

The *Sudanese Media Centre (SMC)* reported on its website that Minnawi was replaced by West Darfur governor Al-Shertai Ga'far Abdel-Hakam pursuant to a decree from Al-Bashir.

Abdel-Hakam was quoted by *SMC* as saying that his appointment to this post is to support the DPA and to fill the constitutional void left by Minnawi since he chose Juba as his place of voluntary exile since a few months back. The governor said that the DPA states that in the event of the absence of the TDRA chief, the governors of Darfur shall meet and pick one of them to

run the body formed in the wake of the Abuja agreement signed more than six years ago.

The development is yet another setback to the DPA which was signed by Minnawi as head of the most powerful military faction at the time.

SMC quotes the North Darfur governor as calling on Minnawi to return and continue implementation of the DPA and particularly the security arrangements signed in October. The SLA chief has suggested that he does not endorse the deal signed by his aides.

South Darfur Governor calls on Presidency to organize Darfur referendum

Al-Wifaq Khartoum, 06/12/10 – A meeting of the Presidency and the governors of Darfur has agreed to appoint Jaffar Abdul Hakam, Governor of West Darfur state, Chairman of the Darfur Interim Authority, in accordance with article (151) of the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA).

Governor of North Darfur state Osman Yousuf Kibir told reporters yesterday that due to absence of Minni Minnawi, DPA provisions have been invoked and Abdul Hakam is appointed head of the Darfur Authority.

Kibir has also called on the Presidency to expedite holding of Darfur referendum whereby Darfuris would decide whether they want one region or three states.

Sudanese Islamist calls on president Bashir to resign

Sudan Tribune website Khartoum, 05/12/10 – President Al-Bashir should step down in light of the isolation imposed on him because of the charges levelled by the International Criminal Court (ICC), an Islamist political analyst said in an op-ed today.

Al-Tayeb Zain al-Abdeen, who is a professor of Political Sciences at the University of Khartoum, was reacting to Al-Bashir's cancelled appearances at two events this week in Libya and the Central African Republic (CAR).

"My belief is that Libya did not err at all and adopted a wise political position that was to be taken by any country that wants to co-exist with the major powers of our times and play a role in the international or regional arena. I do not think that there is one country in this world that wants to go into confrontation with the European Union for the sake of Sudan," Al-Abdeen said in his Op-ed published in Sunday's edition of the independent *Al-Sahafa* daily newspaper.

"What Libya has done was done before by Kenya when it declined to host the meeting of [Inter-Governmental Authority for Development] IGAD countries, in order to avoid inviting Bashir after being scolded [last August] by European countries for receiving al-Bashir in its celebration of the new Constitution and was moved to Addis Ababa. A few days ago the Central African Republic followed suit when it backed from inviting president Bashir to attend the celebration of National Day on the first of December after the arrival of Sudan's advance team to organize the reception," he added.

Al-Abdeen noted that Sudan itself has agreed to receive a delegation from the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) last October despite public statements made by its members that they do not wish to meet with Al-Bashir.

"It is better for the government of the Sudan to accustom itself with this bitter political reality which is that Western nations are determined to boycott President al-Bashir at all international forums and is capable of forcing most of the world nations to isolate Al-Bashir out of these platforms. This is a fact which is harmful to Sudan's political and economic interests," he wrote

in his daring assessment.

He called on Khartoum to seek a resolution of the Darfur war crimes issues by applying justice on suspects through the hybrid courts proposed by former South African president Thabo Mbeki or through truth and reconciliation commissions. The government should also work for a comprehensive resolution of the Darfur conflict with the participation of all political parties and civil society groups.

But the Sudanese president who held the post for over 21 years must take an extra step and call it quits for the sake of the country, al-Abdeen said. "President Al-Bashir must sacrifice himself for the sake of the nation to save it from existing and projected sanctions by stepping down from power and to establish a national transitional situation before holding new elections in the North that would be agreed upon between the political forces after a period of stabilized conditions" he concluded.

The statements by the veteran and widely respected Islamist figure will likely anger Bashir's National Congress Party (NCP) which has asserted that they have no intention of letting their leader resign.

Sudan's President invited to attend regional summit in Zambia

Sudan Tribune website Khartoum, 06/12/10 - President Omer Al-Bashir has been invited to attend a regional summit in the Zambian capital Lusaka slated for mid-December, as reported by state media on Sunday.

Sudan official news agency (*SUNA*) said that Al-Bashir had received an invitation from his Zambian counterpart Rupiah Banda to participate in the Special Summit of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGR) which is scheduled to take place in the Zambian capital Lusaka on December 15.

The invitation to the ICGR, whose sessions will be devoted to discussing illegal exploitation of natural resources in the Great Lakes region, was extended by Banda's special envoy and minister of labour and social security, Simon Kasimba, following his meeting with Al-Bashir on Monday at the republican palace in Khartoum.

Kasimba was cited as saying that Zambia is keen on Sudan's participation in the summit and added that Bashir has "responded positively" to the invitation.

Security authorities investigating a marine sneaked into Darfur from Chad

Al-Akhbar Khartoum, 06/12/10 - Security authorities in West Darfur state have arrested a man named "Davis" who claimed to be a US Marines officer. Official sources told the newspaper that the man admitted in his preliminary statements that he came to El-Geneina from Chad and that he is a US marine officer.

The man has been handed over to the state prosecutor for investigation.