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Highlights

NEC releases new electoral schedule

Local dailies report that the National Elections Commission (NEC) has released a new election schedule. According to the new timetable, campaigns for all levels of elections shall take place within 57 days, from 13 February to 9 April 2010 and that final lists of candidates would be released on 10 February. Voting, vote count and release of results will be done within 8 days starting from 11 April 2010.

11 million voters registered

Local dailies report nearly 11 million voters have so far been registered across the country but **Khartoum Monitor** put the figure at 10,434,268 voters, excluding the figures expected to arrive from some States in southern Sudan and the figures from voter registration centres abroad.

According to **Sudan Tribune website** 30/11/09, Sudan's Unity state ranks first among the country's 25 states during the ongoing turnout for voter registration, the NEC has announced.

The Sudanese electoral board has also announced that it has so far registered more than 11 million voters in the 15 Northern states and 2.6 million voters in the 10 Southern states.

The announced finding by the NEC headquarters in Khartoum came after 30 days assessment in the success of the voter registration which started on the 1st of November and was initially scheduled to end on Monday, November 30, but extended for another 7 days until December 7.

Western Bahr el Ghazal state, another Southern state, is named in the second position while Kassala state in the North ranks in the third position.

Khartoum state, the seat of the national government, is said to be in the fourth position, followed in the fifth position by Central Equatoria state, the seat of the semi-autonomous Government of Southern Sudan.

The states in which the registration turnout has failed and ranked the least are Jonglei and Eastern Equatoria.

NEC is the national body established by law to oversee the process and conduct of the upcoming elections in 2010.

Kiir criticizes selling of registration slips, calls for deadline extension

Al-Sahafa reports FVP Salva Kiir Mayardit, after registering his name in Juba, has urged civilians to turn out for the exercise but has condemned the reported selling of voter registration slips. Kiir has also called for extension of the registration duration to enable residents of remote areas to register.

According to **Sudan Tribune website** 30/11/09, Kiir said he was disturbed by reports reaching him indicating that there were people buying and selling voter registration slips in Southern Sudan. He explained that some sell their voter slips at just 200 Sudanese pounds, and added that in Bahr el Ghazal region the selling of voter slips has even gone up to thousands of

Sudanese pounds.

However, **Radio Miraya** 30/11/09 reported the NEC said that it has not yet received any official complaints concerning unknown persons buying voting cards from registered voters. The head of elections technical committee, Al Hadi Mohamed Ahmed, told Miraya FM that allegations of violations in the voter registration process are only rumors. Meanwhile, The South Sudan High National Electoral Committee stated that approximately two million and six hundred thousand citizens have so far registered for the upcoming general elections on April 2010. The committee registration official, Mac Maika, confirmed that the current statistics is not final, and that the number is expected to increase in the coming days. Meanwhile, Maika praised South Sudan's Minister of Interior for tightening security at voter registration centers, after complaints were made about unknown persons buying voting cards from citizens who had completed their registration.

Opposition parties to meet today to discuss upcoming elections

The opposition political parties, known as "Juba Coalition" will hold a broad meeting today at the Umma Party HQs in Khartoum to discuss a unified position on the upcoming elections, **Al-Rai Al-Aam** reports. Reportedly, the coalition will hold a press conference on the outcome of the meeting.

Millions could miss Sudan elections - observers

New York Times 1/12/09, By Reuters Khartoum - Millions of voters could be left out of Sudan's first elections in 24 years because of a failure of authorities to persuade more people to register for the poll, international observers said on Tuesday. The elections, scheduled for April next year, have already been marred by accusations of fraud and opposition parties have threatened to boycott them if democratic reforms are not passed before they take place.

International observers from The Carter Centre said they were concerned poor publicity over the process had already hit the number of people registering to vote, warning some states might sign up fewer than half of eligible voters.

"Without civic education millions may effectively be disenfranchised by a combination of ignorance of the electoral process, mistrust of central authorities, and poor publicity of registration activities," a Carter Centre statement said.

"Without specific attention to reaching those most distant from the process, the registration exercise will be undermined."

The ballot was set up under a 2005 peace agreement that ended more than two decades of north-south civil war in the oil-producing nation. But leaders from both sides remain at loggerheads over preparations.

The Carter Centre urged Sudan's National Elections Commission (NEC) to increase publicity and funding for teams signing up voters across Africa's largest country, saying current figures showed most states might miss registration targets. It said there were concerns over the turnout for registration in western Darfur territory as well as the east, south and the central Kordofan regions.

Registration was due to end after a 30-day period on November 30 but was extended for one week following concerns about low turnout and public awareness.

The presence of government intelligence agents at registration centres in Darfur might

intimidate voters there, it said. It also said agents from some political parties were gathering outside centres to take down voters' personal details and persuade them to hand over their registration receipts.

The Carter Centre also said it was concerned that military and security personnel had been allowed to register where they work, rather than where they live, which might allow for double registration.

Kiir urges Ugandans to lead recognition of South Sudan independence

The *Citizen* reports FVP Salva Kiir Mayardit on Wednesday Nov 24 in Uganda urged the Ugandans to lead the recognition of the independent state of southern Sudan if referendum votes favour secession. "If referendum favours southern Sudan secession from the North to become an independent state, Southern Sudanese in Uganda expects Uganda to take the lead in recognizing the South Sudan as an independent country if south Sudanese voted for secession in the 2011 referendum," Kiir said.

Abyei issue has been politicized – FM

Al-Ahdath reports that Foreign Minister Deng Alor and SPLM leader Edward Lino began a three-day visit to Abyei for briefings. In one of his briefings in the area, Alor described the NCP-SPLM relationship as "bad" and revealed that the Abyei issue has been highly politicized. Alor was also critical of the civil service system in the Sudan, saying it has also been politicized, citing his own ministry as an example. He said the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is the worst because employment is not based on merit system.

Meanwhile, *Sudan Tribune website* 30/11/09 reported that Deng Alor Kuol, the Sudanese foreign minister and leading SPLM member, warned citizens of his native home area of Abyei against compromising identity for personal benefits.

Alor who represents Abyei in the SPLM as prominent and influential figure in the region affairs, said anyone who represents Abyei in any given political parties, can play politics on various issues which matches interest of that particular party, but should not make mistake that may lead into compromising identity for personal interests.

"There are instances individuals find themselves regretting after used against their own identity," he said reiterating that do not "make a mistake that forced you to forget who you are."

The minister who did not want to point blaming finger to specific people, further said, there are "certain people who seems to be forgetting even their being sons and daughters simply because their interests identify with interests of their political parties."

"Although people support different games just as it is normal to find a father and a son supporting different matches albeit being the same family members, we should make no mistake that denies our identity, after all, home is home," he said.

Commenting on United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) performances in the area, the Sudanese minister said reports about the action of the mission in Abyei are encouraging.

"Reports about UNMIS in collaboration with UN agencies on developmental projects particularly quick recovery plans and programs are outstanding," he said, adding that local people always go to him appreciating work being done by UNDP, UNICEF, WHO, and other agencies in the area.

However, he also requested UNMIS to increase supports to local administration under Brigadier General Arop Mayak Monyoc. "Abyei needs supports in areas of priorities such as training for joint Integrated Units, both Police and army and other training in recovery plans and programs," he stressed.

“I was sacked without my service been recognized,” – Governor

Upper Nile Governor Gatluak Deng has announced his resignation from the NCP, *Al-Sahafa* reports. Deng, in press release yesterday, said he was thrown out on 14 November after twenty years of service without his long service been recognized or appreciated. He called on his fellow citizens and friends who are members of the NCP to defect, saying he has never thought his services would be terminated in this way. However, Deng has thanked President Al-Bashir and his FVP Salva Kiir Mayardit for their support.

According to *Al-Rai Al-Aam*, the NCP downplayed Deng's defection, saying he may join the SPLM.

Sudan Tribune website 30/11/09 reported that the newly appointed Governor of Upper Nile state, Dr. William Othon has officially assumed office. The former governor of Upper Nile state, Major General Gatluak Deng, who refused to step down for the last two weeks after his removal, has finally accepted to handover governorship following the intervention of the Vice President of the Government of Southern Sudan, Dr. Riek Machar Teny.

Dr. Machar earlier over the weekend talked by phone to both President Omar al-Bashir in Khartoum and Maj. Gen. Gatluak Deng in Malakal and convinced them to resolve the matter by handing over office to the new governor through his deputy until the governor avails himself.

President al-Bashir earlier denied having recommended the removal of Maj. Gen. Gatluak to the President of the Government of Southern Sudan.

Gatluak was since two weeks ago removed by a Presidential Decree signed by the President of the Government of Southern Sudan, Gen. Salva Kiir Mayardit.

He refused to handover power and continued to chair the state Council of Ministers meetings.

The new governor stayed away from the office for two weeks despite being sworn in by President Salva Kiir in Juba.

It was not clear who in the leadership of the National Congress Party (NCP) recommended to Salva Kiir the removal of Maj. Gen. Gatluak.

According to the CPA arrangements, Upper Nile state governor has always been the nominee of the NCP's chairman, President Omer al-Bashir. Both Maj. Gen. Gatluak Deng and Dr. William Othon are members of the NCP.

NCP Deputy Chairman killed in Melut

Al-Intibaha reports NCP leaders in Upper Nile State have accused Melut County Commissioner Ton Luaj of liquidating NCP Deputy chairman Al-Dao Al-Nur Jubara on 27 November. Meanwhile, the paper's sources said NCP chairman in the state was also detained yesterday by SPLA intelligence agents from his residence after violent clashes and he was taken to an SPLM jail in Khur Adar.

Report urges sanctions against Sudan ruling party

Reuters 30/11/09 - The United States and other world powers should impose sanctions on key members of the Sudanese Government for refusing to end violence in Darfur and south Sudan, a report by an anti-genocide group said on Monday.

Sudan's UN Ambassador Abdalmahmoud Abdalhaleem reacted angrily to the report, calling the Enough Project, a Washington-based anti-genocide group, "war mongers."

The Enough Project's report said there was a risk of a new civil war and warned that nationwide elections next year and a 2011 referendum on whether the oil-rich and semi-autonomous south should secede from the Khartoum-led north would not be free and fair.

The report placed the bulk of the blame on the ruling National Congress Party (NCP) of Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir, who was indicted in March by the ICC for suspected war crimes in Sudan's remote western region of Darfur. The report called for sanctions.

"Without a firm response from the international community, led by the United States, full-scale nationwide war is inevitable," said the report, written by Enough Project co-founder and former U.S. State Department and National Security Council official John Prendergast.

"This should involve a special outreach effort to China because of the vulnerability of its oil investments should war resume in the South," the report said. "The United States must, then, organize and lead a multilateral diplomatic surge in Sudan aimed at negotiating and consolidating national peace."

It recommended "multilateral asset freezes aimed at key members of the NCP who have enriched themselves as a result of the oil boom of the last decade in Sudan." The report also supported travel bans and denying Khartoum access to the debt relief it has been lobbying for.

Sudan's UN envoy Abdalhaleem rejected the report. "Those war mongers and war traders are in a race with time to stop the peace train which is already moving to its destination," he told **Reuters**. "Their report exposes their bankruptcy and the fact that realities on the ground defeated their sick mentality."

The head of Save Darfur, a separate coalition of more than 180 religious, political, and human rights organizations, backed the main conclusions of the Enough Project report.

"Coordinated multilateral action is crucial to promoting peace in Sudan, and that action has to deal with the reality that the core of the problem is the ruling National Congress Party's seeking to maintain its domination of power and wealth," Save Darfur president Jerry Fowler told Reuters.

"It is difficult for me to see how a strategy that doesn't include pressure could succeed," he said.

Russian envoy due in Khartoum on Thursday

Local dailies report that Russian Mikhail Margelov is due in Khartoum on Thursday on six-day official visit. According to **Al-Ahdath**, Margelov will hold talks with government officials including President Al-Bashir and his FVP Salva Kiir Mayardit on bilateral relations, Darfur issue and the CPA.

US blasts Sudan over Darfur peacekeeper harassment

Reuters 30/11/09 - The US envoy to the United Nations sharply criticized Khartoum on Monday over a UN report that accused the Sudanese army of harassing and threatening international

peacekeepers in Darfur.

U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said in his latest report on the U.N.-African Union peacekeeping mission in Darfur, known as UNAMID that limits on the freedom of movement of UNAMID personnel violated an agreement with Khartoum on their deployment and made it difficult to protect civilians.

"The United States is particularly concerned about ... the secretary-general's report of some 42 instances in which UNAMID personnel and patrols have been denied freedom of movement and access," U.S. Ambassador Susan Rice told reporters after a meeting of the Security Council on Sudan.

"These quite directly and seriously contravene the terms of the Status of Forces Agreement the government of Sudan has committed to," she said.

"It impedes UNAMID's ability to protect civilians and do its vital work. It is utterly unacceptable, as are the threats by the government of Sudan against UNAMID."

Kidnappers threaten to kill French hostages-group

Reuters 30/11/09 - A group purporting to have kidnapped three French aid workers in Chad and the Central African Republic (CAR) threatened to kill them unless Paris negotiated with them directly, a spokesman said on Monday.

"We will kill the hostages if France does not negotiate with us directly," Mohamed al-Rizeigi, who said he was the group spokesman, told Reuters.

One of the aid workers was taken in Chad and the other two in the CAR in two separate incidents a few weeks apart.

UN concerned over staff abductions and regional stability in Darfur

UN News 30/11/09 – A senior United Nations peacekeeping official today voiced "extreme" concern over the fate of two abducted staff members of the joint UN-African Union mission in Darfur (UNAMID), warning that the security situation on the war-ravaged western flank of Sudan continues to be unstable.

"Carjacking and attacks on humanitarian workers have continued," Assistant-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Edmond Mulet told the Security Council, reminding the 15-member body that the international staff members, who were kidnapped over three months ago, are still in captivity.

Mr. Mulet noted that the opening of a new round of UN-backed talks on 17 November in the Qatari capital of Doha, aimed at bringing peace to Darfur, coincided with an escalation of armed clashes involving rebel militia in the region. In southern Darfur, armed Sudanese Liberation Army rebels from the Minni Minnawi faction (SLA/MM) attacked two villages, killing 11 people, and a few days later on 19 November 29 Sudanese soldiers were ambushed and killed, with both SLA/Abdul Shafie and SLA/Abdul Wahid fighters claiming responsibility.

"These attacks are unacceptable and illustrate the extent to which the fragmentation of the Darfurian rebel movements continues to be a reality – with obvious implications for the mediation and peace process," Mr. Mulet said in the briefing on UNAMID.

The Assistant-Secretary-General told the Council that a number of groups in Darfur, including the rebel Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) and SLA/AW continue to express concern over

the holding of national elections, slated for April 2010, before a peace agreement is reached.

In this connection, Mr. Mulet said that the “start of elections registration on 1 November led to heightened tensions in some areas of Darfur,” which he characterized as an unacceptable threat to the electoral process in Sudan.

Al-Jazeera TV to interview FVP Kiir today

Al-Ahdath reports that Al-Jazeera TV channel will conduct a live interview with FVP Salva Kiir Mayardit today at 9:00 pm on a range of issues, with a focus on tribal conflicts in southern Sudan {the paper does not say whether it is Al-Jazeera Arabic or English}.