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Media Monitoring Report

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Referendum Watch

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Highlights

Presidency, NRC consultations ongoing to name secretary-general

Al-Akhbar 1/9/10 – The Presidency and the Southern Sudan Referendum Commission are reportedly holding secret consultations to appoint a secretary-general for the Commission. Head of the Commission Mohamed Ibrahim Khalil has confirmed the consultations but declined to mention names.

SPLM SG Pagan Amum said the issue of appointment of a secretary general for the Commission had been referred to the Presidency and the Referendum Commission. “The Presidency and the Commission are responsible for the appointment of the secretary-general,” he said.

However, *Al-Sudani* 1/9/10 reports informed sources as saying that the crisis between the two partners over the secretary-general persists because they failed to agree on names.

Joint NCP-SPLM Political Committee to meet on Abyei today

Al-Sudani 1/9/10 – SPLM SG Pagan Amum has said that the Joint NCP-SPLM Political Committee set up by the Presidency to resolve contentious issues would hold a meeting today to discuss the partners’ disagreements over formation of Abyei referendum commission and the demarcation of the border.

Meanwhile, *the Citizen* 1/9/10 reports that Abyei civil society organizations in Khartoum have called on the two partners to expedite formation of the referendum commission and the demarcation of the borders, accusing the two partners of premeditatedly neglecting the region’s file as the date of the process approaches.

Head of the civil society organizations, Carlo Ayweil told the newspaper yesterday that the two partners have set the Abyei file aside and engaged in other talks, warning that lag in announcing formation of the commission and failure to demarcate the borders could lead to disastrous results.

In a related development, *Khartoum Monitor* 1/9/10 reports that participants at a conference on referendum and popular consultations convened yesterday stressed that Abyei needs an extra effort to stabilize the area in accordance with the peace agreement and the PCA ruling. “Abyei is set to witness a new kind of conflict due to tribal polarization irrespective of whether the referendum would result in unity or separation” says a paper presented to the conference by Maj. Gen. Abdul-Rahaman Arabab, who also has suggested the formation of a wise men council to address the problems. Ajang Bior Dot, a participant, warned of recent migration of tribes to Abyei. “The migration of these tribes will complicate the problem as the peace agreement provides for participation of the people already residing in the area,” he said.

However, Messeriya leading figure Lt. Gen. (retd.) Mahdi Babu Nimir, in an interview to *Al-Sudani* 1/9/10 said no referendum would take place in Abyei without the involvement of the Messeriya, adding that the Messeriya are not warmongers, they are defending their rights. On PCA ruling, he said it was a purely political settlement so it does not mean anything to the

Messeriya tribe.

Other Highlights

Referendum, Darfur and ICC are Sudan's major challenges - Adviser

Al-Sahafa 1/9/10 – Presidential Adviser Mustafa Osman Ismail said Sudan faces six main challenges: Darfur crisis, referendum, sustainable development, wealth-sharing, security and stability, democracy and the ICC. Ismail, who made the remarks while addressing a meeting of NCP leaders in Gedaref, called on the political forces to adopt unity option and also urged southerners to vote for unity.

Rwandan troops in Sudan preparing for possible withdrawal

Sudan Tribune website 31/8/10 - The Rwandan government announced that it has ordered its troops in Darfur and South Sudan to be on standby and prepare for the possibility of withdrawing immediately should the United Nations go ahead and release a report that accuses Rwanda's army of possible genocide in the 1990s.

The Rwandan Defence Force (RDF) spokesman Lt. Col. Jill Rutaremara said on Tuesday that the country has finalized a contingency withdrawal plan from Darfur and Southern Sudan if the U.N. publishes its "outrageous and damaging report."

"The withdrawal will apply to the RDF peacekeepers serving under the United Nations African Union Mission in Darfur [UNAMID] and the United Nations Mission in Sudan [UNMIS]," he added.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs and Government Spokesperson, Louise Mushikiwabo said that her government is in a waiting mode at the moment.

"We are waiting to see what the United Nations does with this report, but we are very seriously considering pulling out our troops," Mushikiwabo said

"Our troops are on standby; it is up to the United Nations," the Minister said, adding that the government is not happy about the imminent troop withdrawal, but was being forced to.

"The U.N. can't have it both ways. You can't have a force serving as peace keepers and it is the same force you are accusing of genocide," Mushikiwabo added.

The draft U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights report details some 600 serious crimes committed by various forces from a number of nations in Congo between 1994 and 2003 but singles out Rwanda for the worst pattern of crimes that may amount to genocide.

The report which has yet to be released was first leaked by the Paris-based Le Monde prompting allegations of conspiracy by Rwanda.

"The leaking of such a report was not an isolated act, but rather part of a larger pattern aimed at discrediting Rwanda's achievements. It is a report with an agenda," Mushikiwabo said.

She further blasted the former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan and accused him of standing behind the report.

Mushikiwabo said that the yet to be published report started and was funded during his tenure and described Annan as a man whose record, as far as Rwanda is concerned, is pitiful.

"He failed miserably," she said. "I am not surprised and my Government is not surprised that he [Annan] would be the one making sure that there is funding for this kind of report to ensure that it was an important gesture he would pose before he leaves office," Mushikiwabo stressed, adding that the involvement of Annan in the making of the report is unquestionable.

Rwanda has 3,556 personnel serving in the UN African Union Mission in Darfur as well as the UN Mission in Sudan, Rutaremara said in a phone interview. All of Rwanda's forces will be withdrawn if the UN's "outrageous and damaging" report is published, Rutaremara said.

Sudan summons EU envoy over Bashir's Kenya visit

Reuters, Khartoum, 31/8/10 - Sudan summoned the EU ambassador on Tuesday to protest against a European Union statement criticizing Kenya for hosting President Omar al-Bashir last week, Sudanese state media said.

Sudan's foreign ministry said a statement by the EU's high representative for foreign affairs, Catherine Ashton, raising concern at Bashir's Kenya visit was "totally unacceptable".

"The Ministry of Foreign Affairs called on the EU to end its double standard of giving immunity from legal proceedings to certain nationalities while targeting African countries alone," state news agency SUNA said.

Floods in south Sudan leave nearly 60,000 homeless

Reuters 31/8/10 - Floods have displaced nearly 60,000 people in the last month in southern Sudan with many at risk of malaria and other diseases, the semi-autonomous region's government said on Tuesday.

The crisis is another hurdle for the war-ravaged south ahead of a referendum on independence in January, which some analysts fear will be hindered by a worsening humanitarian situation with almost half the region's 8 million population short of food.

"In the last one month 57,135 people have been displaced by the floods," said the south's undersecretary for health Olivia Lomoro, adding that many were at risk of malaria and water-borne diseases.

She said Aweil, the capital of Northern Bahr El-Ghazal state, was ground zero for the crisis. The area was one of the hardest hit in a two-decade long civil war and is already heavily reliant on international food aid.

The south's health minister, Luka Monoja, told a news conference that rains were expected to continue until October, meaning the worst may be yet to come.

Northern Bahr El-Ghazal is due to receive some of the 1.5 million people the government plans

to bring home from the north before the January vote.

The United Nations says it has already helped feed some 4 million southerners in 2010 and warns voting preparations may heap more stress on the region.

Analysts fear the mounting humanitarian crisis will add to problems of insecurity ahead of the Jan. 9 vote and destabilise a newly independent state should the referendum pass.

South Sudan army accused of hindering humanitarian aid

Sudan Tribune website 31/8/10 - Southern Sudan soldiers have been looting convoys of humanitarian assistance, aid workers said in statements published by the Associated Press on Monday.

"Officials from four aid groups said in recent days that their work is becoming increasingly dangerous. They said they could not speak out publicly because of fears of reprisals from the government and military" the AP reported.

Aid groups said they documented some 80 cases of obstruction, vehicle hijackings or harassment of aid workers by SPLA soldiers since February.

The spokesperson of Sudan People's Liberation Army Kuol Deim Kuol admitted that aid workers from Tearfund, an organization that used to work with local churches, had been beaten and detained by SPLA soldiers in Upper Nile last June.

The southern Sudan army is accused by opposition parties of intimidating their members and preventing them from conducting their political activities.

As the semi-autonomous region is preparing for a referendum on self-determination, Southern Sudan officials accuse northern Sudan ruling party of working to destabilize the south and supporting rebel and opposition militias.

SPLA official spokesperson denied hindering the activities of aid groups but says the beaten humanitarian workers were supplying food and medication to hostile militias.

The U.N. Deputy Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Southern Sudan, confirmed some "interference" but said the SPLA is working to redress their grievances.

"We know that this is a matter of concern of the SPLA and we're very pleased that steps are being taken to address that," Lise said at a news conference.

However, SPLA chief of staff, Gen. James Hoth Mai, told AP they might expel aid workers if they criticize the army in a ruggedly tough manner.

"I said please don't be harsh to us like that because tomorrow we can tell you to quit this country and you can go," Mai said. "But now, for you to continue with your work, you come tell us your problems in a polite way so that you continue with us."

South Sudan failed to demobilize 84,000 soldiers since peace deal

Sudan Tribune website 31/8/10 - Out of 90,000 soldiers targeted to be demobilized by the SPLA

since a 2005 peace deal with the Khartoum government, only 6,000 have been reintegrated back into society, says the Vice President of the semi-autonomous region.

Riek Machar, said that the national Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) programme for ex-combatants in southern Sudan would be reviewed following the difficulties faced during schemes implementation over the last five years.

DDR is a process by which former fighters are removed from the army and assisted to reintegrate into civilian communities.

Since the north-south civil war ended in 2005 the southern government has only managed to demobilize 7% (6,000) of the 90,000 they originally targeted.

The first soldiers targeted for demobilization were categorized as a 'Special Needs Group', including elderly combatants, women soldiers below the rank of officer, disabled fighters, the sick and non-combat support personnel who are on the payroll of the army, the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA).

In remarks during the inauguration of the new building for the DDR Commission, Riek Machar said it was not an easy exercise to tell someone who has fought for 22 years to leave the army and go home now there is peace. He added the issue is a dilemma for policy makers and should be reviewed so that the process can be done faster.

The Vice President said that this group needed to receive support and training so that they become self-reliant instead of reintegrating them into the poverty that exists in many parts of south Sudan. He said in the Sudanese law, any person who has served for 12 years can be given a pension.

Machar said that he hoped the DDR Commission will give ex-combatants the skills they require to make a success of civilian life and to help support themselves and their families in the future.

The programme, the Vice President said, "provides short-term support to ex-combatants as they make the transition from soldier to civilian life. This takes the form of food rations for a family of five for 3 months, a basic kit of non-food items, plus a grant of just 860 SDG to help with transportation home."

Second group of Chadian opposition leaves for N'Djamena

SUNA 31/8/10 - The Second group of the Chadian Justice and Social Change Movement – 150 people - left Tuesday for the Chadian capital, N'Djamena via Al-Fasher Airport.

The group was composed of 150 persons accompanied the Chadian Minister and head of the government delegation, Abdal-Rahman Musa, and the Chairman of the movement, Al-Amin Al-Doud.

The Wali (governor) of North Darfur State, Osman Yousif Kibir, described in statement to *SUNA* the return of the second group of the Chadian opposition as an important step reflecting the strong will of the peoples of Sudan and Chad to overcome all the challenges and to implement what was agreed upon between the Presidents of the two countries during the visits

that they exchanged in the past few months.

Kibir affirmed the full commitment of the government of Sudan to boost the bilateral relations between the two countries.

Prosecution muzzles media over Khartoum water crisis

Al-Sahafa Khartoum, 01/09/10 – The Office of the Prosecutor for the Protection of Consumers has ordered a ban on media reports of a suit currently under consideration on alleged water pollution in Khartoum state. The Court stated that media coverage of the ongoing consideration of a technical report on alleged pollution of drinking water in Khartoum may “prejudice the course of the investigation” and could cause panic to the people.

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