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Media Monitoring Report

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Highlights

Sudan, Chad agree "definitive end" to proxy wars

Reuters 9/2/10 - Sudan and Chad agreed on Tuesday to end their proxy wars and work together to rebuild their border areas, a move seen as aimed at bolstering security and credibility before impending polls in both nations.

Chadian President Idriss Deby made a surprise visit to Khartoum for talks with President Omar Al-Bashir after relations between the oil producers had hit rock bottom with each capital backing rebels fighting the other's government.

"I came with an open heart and hands outstretched to turn a new page in Sudanese-Chadian relations," Deby told a gathering of Chadian and Sudanese nationals in Khartoum.

He called on the armed Chadian opposition groups, who have camps in Sudan's Darfur region, to take part in elections and win power through the ballot box not with bullets. Chad will hold legislative polls this year and a presidential vote in May 2011.

"I will give you security guarantees so you can return to your country and ... rejoin civil society," Deby said of the Chadian "mercenaries", who in 2008 besieged the presidential palace in N'Djamena but have suffered heavy defeats since.

Deby, who has asked the United Nations not to renew the mandate of its MINURCAT border monitoring mission in the east, said on Tuesday the force had not fully deployed and was unable to fulfil its mandate and protect civilians.

"He is trying to undo the image of a belligerent," one diplomat said of Deby's move to improve ties with Sudan. "He is trying to establish some legitimacy ahead of the elections."

Deby invited Bashir to visit N'Djamena in the coming days.

"This visit has put a definitive end to all the problems between Sudan and Chad," Bashir told journalists after the talks. He said Sudanese and Chadian authorities and the presidents themselves would now be in regular direct contact.

Bashir is standing in Sudan's first democratic elections in 24 years in April, and analysts said the rapprochement would help reduce conflict in Darfur and silence critics who say a free election is impossible while Darfur's conflict continues.

Roland Marchal, senior research fellow and Chad-Sudan expert at France's CERI international research institute, said Bashir, like Deby, will be seeking recognition for easing regional tensions ahead of polls.

"He will need to get an international community that is not too critical. It makes sense, especially as Chad has committed itself to not supply equipment to the Darfur rebels."

Bashir's adviser, Ghazi Salaheddin, told reporters the two were working to get a joint border patrol force on the ground and would undertake joint development projects in the region.

Both sides agreed not to host the other's rebels and encouraged those insurgents to take part in

elections, he said.

Local dailies also reports that Ahmed Tugud, JEM's top negotiator warned in Doha yesterday that the continuation of the armed conflict in Darfur would not help to improve relations between the two countries.

Djibril Bassole, Joint Chief Mediator for Darfur peace process who was in Khartoum to meet the Chadian president, told **Reuters** that Deby's visit will help their efforts to end the conflict.

"This visit will help the Doha talks definitely," he said, adding the mediation will keep working with the parties who are all present in Doha to reach a framework agreement at this stage.

SUNA reports meanwhile that Presidential Advisor Mustafa Osman Ismail hailed President Deby's visit as the "opening of a new chapter in relations between the two countries".

Ismail said that President Deby declared support to his suggestions that included the resumption of Sudan Airways flights between Khartoum and N'djamena as of the next week, an immediate re-opening of the Sudanese institutions in N'djamena, including the Sudanese - Chadian Friendship School and the Sudanese Cultural Centre, immediate re-opening of the Sudanese and Chadian consulates in El-Geneina and Abache, the continued implementation of the twinship protocol between Khartoum and N'djamena, amongst others.

Chances for unity greater than those for separation – VP Taha

Addressing a joint press conference in Cairo with Arab League Secretary-General Amru Musa yesterday, Vice-President Ali Osman Mohamed Taha expressed confidence that chances Sudan would remain united are stronger than the chances for southern Sudanese separation, **Al-Ayyam** daily reports.

He pointed out that the government is committed to the right of self-determination for the people of southern Sudan but favour unity.

I would be worried if I were in Al-Bashir's place – Turabi

"The incumbent President Al-Bashir may not make it successfully to the second round of April polls," says Turabi.

Al-Ahdath reports that the Secretary-General of the Popular Congress Party (PCP) said following a meeting yesterday with former US President Jimmy Carter that the winner of the forthcoming presidential race would have a number of challenges. "I would be worried if I were in President Al-Bashir's shoes – not from the ICC but from an electorate who may not give me more than 50% of the votes," he said.

With elections observers expected to be deployed, Turabi said he rules out foul-play at the ballot box. He however pointed out that there has been "widespread fraud" on the voter registry. He expressed concerns over what he cited as an absence of people in some of the constituencies in Darfur.

Turabi proposed that the NEC support the electorate in some areas so that they "do not fall prey to the whims of those with money".

He also suggested that the Carter Centre provide equitable support to the political parties.

South Sudan may opt to continue oil sharing after secession: official

Sudantribune.com *Washington, 09/02/10* - The government of South Sudan (GoSS) is mulling continuing the oil sharing arrangement with the North in a post-secession world to prevent an economic collapse, a senior official in Juba said today.

Luka Biong, the GoSS Minister of Presidential Affairs suggested that the two sides may agree to extend the wealth sharing beyond the creation of the new state.

"Our concern is the economic viability ... and the unity of the north, which, I think, will make us even see whether we can continue with the same arrangement that we have," Biong told **Financial Times** in an interview. "For a certain period of time, one would go for that."

However, the GoSS official has acknowledged that many powers in the South would resist such an idea.

"Some people will say, 'we have been sharing with these people for a long time; the moment we decide to secede, that's it: we cannot share anything with them'," he said.

"For the time being, it is true oil can be used for a soft landing and making economic stability and co-operating with the north," he said. "But in the long run, this one may not be viable."

"It is in the interest of the south not to see the northern economy collapsing," he added.

Some 98 per cent of south Sudan's non-aid income comes from oil, while the corresponding figure for the north is 60-70 per cent.

Misseriya Association says SPLA preparing to raid on them

The General Association of the Misseriya has condemned an SPLA raid on their area that left tens of their tribesmen dead last week, reports **Akhir Lahza**. The Misseriya say the NCP and the SPLM are responsible for security and stability in the region.

The Association revealed also that the SPLA is building up troops in Dembalawiya, Abu-Kadma, Al-Dibeib, Al-Shagaga and other areas in preparation for raids on the innocent people.

In a related development, **Al-Rai Al-Aam** daily quotes SPLA Spokesperson Kuol Diem as saying that the SPLA is preparing its forces for any attack by Misseriya tribesmen in Unity State. "Our forces will not remain in the trenches as they did in the past when attacked by Misseriya raiders," he said.

The military spokesperson accused Misseriya leader Abdulrasoul Al-Nur of "beating the drums of war in the area."

The SPLA, he said, will not allow passage to herders unless they are stripped of their weapons.

South Sudan MPs to probe Human Rights abuses in W. Equatoria

Sudantribune.com Juba, 09/02/10 - Lawmakers in the southern Sudan parliament will investigate three senior government officials for what right groups say were "human right abuses" during anti-riot crackdown by security forces in Western Equatoria. Three senior officials are in for a grilling by the Southern Sudan Legislative Assembly for alleged human rights violations.

80 students were injured, harassed and beaten, after 5th anniversary celebrations of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in Yambio when Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) soldiers shot rounds of live bullets and riot police attacked unexpectedly. The badly wounded are recuperating from their wounds, thanks to Ugandan Army in the region treating the wounded, as the state run hospital lack basic medical supplies to cope with over 80 injuries.

The three senior officials charged are the Governor of Western Equatoria State, the Minister of SPLA Affairs and the GoSS Minister of Internal Affairs.

In an interview with **Miraya FM**, Acting Speaker of the Legislative Assembly Daniel Deng Monydit said that the three officials were in charge of security in the area and must appear before parliament to answer questions raised by the House.

Monydit further added that a seven-member committee has been formed to carry out investigations on the incident.

A similar committee was set in at State level Legislative Assembly in Western Equatoria State where, to date, no one has taken responsibility for the incident.

Tension reigns in South Darfur camp

Residents of three IDP camps near Kass in South Darfur fled their homes for dear life to the small town following the murder yesterday of a member of the Police Central Reserve Forces in one of the camps as friends of the deceased converged on the camps for reprisal raids, reports **Al-Ahdath**. The area was tense yesterday as the raiders killed at least four people (including two children) and injured others. A large part of the local market was set alight as about 1,000 horsemen besieged the area shooting at the air," says Ismail Abdullah, a local resident.

The small government detachment had to request reinforcements from the state capital (80kms away).

Acting State Governor Omar Abduljabbar and members of the state security committee went to the scene of the raids to ease the tensions and bring some normalcy to the situation. However, some residents still expressed fear of further reprisal attacks on the IDP camps or the town itself.

Abdulwahid Nur expected in Juba today

Sources intimate that SLM leader Abdulwahid Nur is expected in Juba sometime today for consultations with authorities there over the Darfur peace process and the forthcoming elections, reports **Akhir Lahza**.

SLM Spokesperson Ahmed Ibrahim Yusuf, who is currently in Juba, said SLM leader is expected any time. He pointed out that it would be difficult to conduct the elections in Darfur if the situation continues unabated.

In another development, SLA field commander Osman Ibrahim Musa told **SMC** that field commanders issued circular at a recent extraordinary conference east of Jebel Marra relieving Abdulwahid from responsibilities at the helm of the SLM leadership. The decision, he said, was taken following a recent spate of in-fighting within the movement.

Red Cross seeks Sudan's help in releasing kidnapped employee

AFP 9/2/10 — The Red Cross said on Tuesday it had requested Sudan President Omar Al-Bashir's help in obtaining the swift release of a French employee kidnapped in the Darfur region last year.

Red Cross president Jacob Kellenberger met Bashir in Khartoum "to discuss efforts to secure the prompt release of ICRC staff member Gauthier Lefevre, who has been held hostage in Darfur for 110 days," the organisation said.

"President al-Bashir has confirmed to me that his government is fully committed to do everything it can to ensure Mr. Lefevre's safety and to secure his speedy release," the International Committee of the Red Cross chief said.

Lefevre was captured on October 22 in Sudan's West Darfur state near the border with Chad, while travelling in a two-vehicle convoy clearly marked with the Red Cross.

Kellenberger also thanked the Sudanese Government for its efforts "to secure the release of (another) ICRC delegate Laurent Maurice, freed last Saturday after 89 days in captivity," first in Chad and then in Sudan's volatile Darfur region.

Maurice had been seized by armed men on November 9, 2009 in eastern Chad, where he was assessing the harvest, just 10 kilometres (six miles) from the Sudanese border.

The Frenchman's kidnapping was claimed by a little-known Darfuri group calling itself the Falcons for the Liberation of Africa.

Elections Special

Al-Bashir pledges to guarantee unimpeded electoral campaigns

Ex-US President Jimmy Carter currently on a visit to the Sudan held talks yesterday with President Al-Bashir and NEC officials on ongoing preparations for the forthcoming elections, **Al-Sahafa** reports.

Carter told reporters that he received guarantees from President Al-Bashir for unimpeded electoral campaigns scheduled to kick-off on Saturday, saying Al-Bashir assured him that the security law would not be used to restrict political rallies and activities.

"I asked Al-Bashir to allow total freedom during elections in Darfur because a state of emergency is imposed in the region," he said. "Al-Bashir pledged that the state of emergency will not hamper electoral campaigns and that freedoms will be guaranteed within the purview of the law," he added.

He said his Centre would provide technical support to the NEC including financial support if requested, adding he would report to the US President about the progress of Sudan's electoral process and would return to the Sudan soon to witness the final stage of the elections.

NEC rejects request for extension of nominations withdrawal period

The NEC has rejected a request by the Communist Party for the extension of the period given for the withdrawal of nominations, said Communist Party official Sidig Yousif.

Al-Ayyam reports that the party had sent a memorandum to the NEC protesting the "violation of the Elections Law" by the NEC with regards to withdrawal of nominations. The official noted that the NEC wrote in its response to the petition that it had a prerogative to transcend those laws.

Sidig said that his party will seek legal redress over the response.

SPLM-DC holds NEC responsible for neglecting appeal

The SPLM-DC says it holds the NEC responsible for neglecting its objection to the eligibility of the other contestant for GoSS president, the incumbent FVP Salva Kiir, **Khartoum Monitor** reports.

SPLM-DC leader Lam Akol told a press conference yesterday that the FVP is still an army officer and is prohibited by the 2007 Political Parties' Act from contesting. He pointed out that NEC Chairman Abel Alier did nothing but advised them to seek Supreme Court redress that last Sunday dismissed their appeal.

According to Akol, the NEC wrote a secret letter to the Southern Sudan High Elections Committee and leaders of high committees of the ten southern states telling them that Kiir was retired from the SPLA from 2007.

Disgruntled members walk out of SPLM-Northern Sector

Some 350 members of the SPLM-Northern Sector have tendered in their resignations protesting the party decision not to field anyone from the sector to contest in any electoral position in the north, reports **Akhir Lahza**. They have reportedly decided they will run as independents.

Mubarak Suleiman, one of the walk-out party members, lashed out on SPLM Secretary-General Pagan Amum and accused him of trying to split the party by intimidating members wishing to run as independents. He pointed out that these threats will make some of the independents and their supporters not to vote for Salva Kiir and Yassir Arman.

Suleiman noted that these walk-out members command the support of over one-third of the electorate registered in northern Sudan.

In a related development, **Akhir Lahza** reports also that some 340 (SPLM) independent candidates are on course to form a new party. They say the envisaged Genuine SPLM will be formed as a result of the fluctuation in the SPLM leadership's position over the issue of the independent candidates. They also said that the new party would seek to block those who have "changed the objectives of the SPLM and derailed it from Dr. John Garang's vision".

Amum admits "irregularities" in SPLM's system of nominations

Sudan Tribune website 9/2/10 — The Secretary General of the SPLM has acknowledged what he called "irregularities" in the system used by his party during the nomination process of candidates for the upcoming April elections.

Pagan Amum told journalists in a press conference that there were "shortcomings" in the selection process.

He said he discussed with a number of his party's independent candidates the issue of such irregularities in an attempt to convince them to withdraw their independent candidatures. "We discussed irregularities on selection of nominees. We have shortcomings in the systems," he admitted.

He however said the best way forward was not to come up with independent candidates, but to resolve such irregularities within the party system. "Choosing the best [candidate] can be done within the system and not by having independents. All those views were put into consideration," he said.

He however did not elaborate on how possible the best candidate could be chosen as a compromise in such a situation.

Amum however pointed out that the party's highest body, the Political Bureau, appealed to the independent candidates to reconsider their decision. "We call on them not to contest as independent candidates...so that the SPLM official candidates win seats. This is to avoid division of votes," he explained.

He further added that the Political Bureau was "engaging both the independents and the official candidates to build up on the success of the SPLM."

He added these independent candidates would not be dismissed or asked to resign; saying dismissing them would be unwise and would result to SPLM losing many seats and even endanger the elections of SPLM's presidential candidates for both Southern Sudan and Republic of Sudan.

Amum however said the independents should withdraw their decision to contest by 13th February or face final decision by the party's Political Bureau.

Darfur movements demand elections delay until crisis is ended

The Darfur armed movements have called on the JSR Ibrahim Gambari to push for delay of elections scheduled for April until the crisis in the region is resolved and civilian protection is ensured, **Al-Sahafa** reports.

The movements, at separate meetings with Gambari yesterday in Doha, stressed the need to end the crisis in Darfur through dialogue and to set up a joint mechanism between UNAMID and the movements to assist in delivery of humanitarian aid.

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