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# Media Monitoring Report

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# Highlights

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## **SPLM threatens unilateral declaration of independence**

**Sudan Tribune website** 10/8/09 reported the former Southern rebels in Sudan warned today that they may resort to unilateral declaration of independence if no agreement is reached with the NCP on the referendum law.

The SPLM Secretary General Pagan Amum speaking at the party's headquarters in the Sudanese capital said that the choice of unity versus independence is contingent upon the realization of the "true interests" of Southerners.

Amum accused the NCP of placing "unrealistic" conditions for the referendum to take place.

Among the key sticking points is the percentage of votes required in the referendum to declare it favoring independence, the population allowed to vote, determining the post-referendum process and the share of Sudan's debts the South would carry with it if it secedes.

The NCP is pushing for a 75% 'Yes' vote for South Sudan to be allowed to secede, something the SPLM rejects.

Furthermore, the SPLM rejects the participation of Southerners living outside the South in the referendum.

## **Experts call for termination of UN mandate in Sudan**

Politicians and strategists, who participated in a workshop held by the National Assembly's Peace Committee yesterday, accused some political parties of threatening national security, **Al-Intibaha** reports. Other participants urged that Darfurians should be given a vice president post. Dr. Rabie Abdul Atti, a Counsellor at the Ministry of Information, told the workshop that some foreign organizations had made suspicious transfers to the Darfur armed movements and called for termination of mandates of UNMIS and UNAMID troops for the threat they pose to the country's national security.

## **Sudan's Bashir says no backing from Islamic Shari'a law**

**Sudan Tribune website** 10/8/09 — The Sudanese president Omer Al-Bashir pledged conformance to the Islamic Shari'a law in his country.

"Whoever thinks that the Ingaz [1989 Salvation revolution] will forsake religion is disillusioned" Al-Bashir told a rally in Ed-Damer town, South of Khartoum.

Al-Bashir said that his government's oath to its martyrs is to "preserve the Shari'a law". "We will not break our oath," he said.

The remarks by the Sudanese president come at a time when international attention is turned to the case of a female journalist in Khartoum who faces up to 40 lashes as punishment under Islamic law for wearing "clothing causing harassment to the public sentiments,"

## **Sudanese authorities bar female journalist from traveling abroad**

**Sudan Tribune website** 10/8/09 — A Sudanese female journalist who has recently stirred a row following charges of “indecent” clothing, has been placed on a travel ban list by authorities.

Lubna Ahmed Hussein told Sudan Tribune by phone from Khartoum that she was notified of the ban as she was at the airport yesterday night to board a Lebanon-bound plane in response to an invitation by Middle East Broadcasting Channel (MBC).

Hussein said that the airport security officers took her passport and pulled her aside informing her that she is on a list of individuals not allowed to leave the country.

The Sudanese journalist was given no explanation and her request for a written notification of the travel ban was turned down.

## **Darfur talks venue likely to shift to Libya**

JEM leader Khalil Ibrahim, Presidential adviser Ghazi Salah Al-Din and AU-UN chief mediator D’jibril Bassole arrived yesterday in Libya for consultation with the Libyan government on the Darfur crisis and Sudan-Chad relations, **Al-Sahafa** reports. Qatari State Minister for Foreign Affairs Ahmed Ben Abdullah and US envoy Scott Gration are also expected to arrive today in Tripoli to take part in the consultation. The meeting is part of efforts by Libya and Egypt which has also proposed that Tripoli should become the venue of the upcoming round of Darfur peace talks.

Meanwhile, **Al-Ahdath** reports unnamed government sources has slammed JEM leader Khalil Ibrahim’s call to Darfur IDPs to organize demonstrations to protest US envoy Scott Gration’s call for easing sanctions imposed on the Sudan. Reportedly, Khalil described Gration as “Bashir’s Foreign Minister”. Gration is due in Sudan on Friday where he will begin his mission by consultations with GoSS President Salva Kiir Mayardit in Juba on the CPA and PCA ruling on Abyei. He will also conduct similar consultations in Khartoum on a range of issue especially on the need to free JEM POWs.

## **Kiir warns against ignoring SPLM’s reservations on census**

**Al-Sahafa** reports that GoSS President Salva Kiir Mayardit has warned that the SPLM’s reservations on the census results should not be ignored. Mr. Kiir, who was addressing Southern Sudan governors’ 7<sup>th</sup> conference yesterday, pledged to stamp out the phenomenon of fake names in the southern states’ payrolls.

According to **Al-Rai Al-Aam**, Kiir reiterated the SPLM’s stand that elections and referendum should take place on schedule. “A US official told me last Friday that referendum may be delayed until after 2011. I told him that if you have come to prevent a bloodbath in the Sudan then you should respect your mission because we will not accept delay of referendum,” Kiir said.

Meanwhile, **Al Akhbar** reports Kiir has invited members of the SPLM political office for an extraordinary meeting in Juba in mid August to come up with a new strategy on a range of challenges facing the country.

## **UN buys wheat for Sudan**

**Al-Ayyam** reports UN has bought 93,000 tons of wheat at \$169 per ton for delivery to the needy people in the Sudan and Ethiopia. Sources said the wheat would be shipped next month.

## **NEC complains of weak women participation in elections committees**

The National Elections Commission (NEC) has said the participation of women in the high elections committees is weak, *Al-Intibaha* reports. NEC member Al-Hadi Mohamed Ahmed attributed this to the limited number of women political activists. Mr. Al-Hadi made the remarks while addressing a forum on "opportunities for women in the elections through geographic constituencies.

## **HAC, UN assess needs in West Darfur**

A joint committee from the Humanitarian Aid Commission (West Darfur) and UN agencies will carry out a survey to determine needs of the returnees, reports *Al-Watan*. West Darfur Humanitarian Aids Commissioner Mohamed Khowad said that the state government is rehabilitating villages for IDP returns.

## **Hunger drives civilians back to south Sudan killing fields**

**AFP** 11/8/09 - A massacre in April sent thousands of residents of this south Sudan district fleeing into the swampy wastes of the upper Nile. Last week, hunger drove them back into the clutches of the gunmen.

"What else could we do?" asked pregnant 20-year-old Nyakong Gatwech. "The food the United Nations gave us is too little for all the family." She was shot in the arm and slashed with a spear when she returned to her village but survived. Others were not so lucky.

Officials estimate at least 185 people, mostly women, were killed in a second raid on August 2 by a militia force of dozens of fighters. The massacre was one of the deadliest single outbreaks of violence in the still largely lawless south of Sudan since a 2005 peace agreement ended two decades of civil war.

But it was not the first in Jonglei state, an ethnically divided region that was one of the worst hit by the long conflict with northern forces that left an estimated 1.5 million people dead and four million more homeless.

There have been repeated outbreaks of deadly fighting this year between the Lou Nuer and Murele ethnic groups which have left more than 1,000 people dead and many thousands more homeless.

Traditional rivalries over cattle and pasture were further poisoned by opposing allegiances during the 1983-2005 civil war, with the Lou Nuer mainly siding with the rebel Sudan People's Liberation Movement that now heads the autonomous regional government in the south and the Murele mainly supporting pro-government militias.

Gatwech said she had been escorted back to her village by former rebel fighters of the southern army but that there were not enough troops to ward off the Murele militiamen.

"We thought the soldiers could protect us, but they killed them too," she said, adding that 11 troops had died and several more had been wounded.

Namach Duk, 12, was attacked by the militiamen in a small fishing camp outside the small Jonglei town of Akobo.

"They shot me in the leg as I ran towards the river. Then they stabbed me in the back with a spear and left me for dead," she said, turning to show a jagged hole in her arm.

UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon condemned the attack as "heinous," and the World Food Programme has warned that an escalation in violence will hamper efforts to deliver aid.

"It was a clear massacre -- women and children were lying in the river and shot at close range," said Akobo district commissioner Goi Jooyul Yol. "Tribal conflict has taken on a new dimension," he added.

Lou Nuer village elder Chot Rom agreed that the traditional conflict with the Murele had taken a turn for the worse. "In the past we have fought over cattle, but this is something different," he said. "The Murele also abducted our children -- we don't know if we will ever get them back, and we expect more attacks in the future," he added, lying on a thin bed in a simple hospital ward where he was being treated for a gunshot wound to the groin.

The years of civil war have left the region awash with weapons, something that the regional government has tried to tackle through a disarmament programme. But some charge that a heavy-handed yet uneven implementation of the programme has left communities who have surrendered their weapons prey to others that have refused to reciprocate. Others accuse civil war foe Khartoum of continuing to arm one community against the others as it did during the long years of conflict.

"People have guns from the war, but where are they getting the fresh ammunition they are using to kill civilians?" asked Yol. "The north supported militias here during the civil war, and that support has not wound down," he said.

Akobo is isolated. Heavy rains force the closure of roads until December, and the main river route is blocked by enemies upstream.

The UN is flying food in, but it is a costly method and can only deliver limited supplies for the region's more than 19,000 homeless.

At a feeding station in Akobo run by aid agency Medair, mothers patiently queue to have their children assessed by medical staff. "Many children are suffering from malnutrition," said Eunice Kavoi, a Medair nurse heading a special feeding programme for children. "We fear the situation in terms of nutrition will get worse if nothing is done to fly in more food for the community."

Officials promise the river will open soon, with some small boats arriving in Akobo from neighbouring Ethiopia carrying flour and beer, the first to do so in months. "We are cut off like an island with enemies all around," said trader Peter Tut, selling bundles of firewood in the quiet market, where basic food supplies have run out.

## **Sudan: End Violence in Jonglei State**

**Human Rights Watch** 11/8/09 - The government of Southern Sudan should increase the numbers of police and security forces in volatile areas of Jonglei state, where brutal inter-ethnic violence killed at least 185 civilians last week, Human Rights Watch said today. The southern government should thoroughly investigate the violence and prosecute those responsible. The United Nations peacekeeping mission should support these efforts and take preventive action to protect civilians.

In the latest in a series of violent incidents between the Lou Nuer and Murle ethnic groups, armed Murle youth attacked a group of Lou Nuer civilians on August 2, 2009, killing at least 185 men, women, and children, and seriously wounding scores more. Witnesses told UN peacekeepers and Jonglei state authorities who visited the site on August 5 that the attackers used automatic rifles, knives, and spears. Most of the victims were women and children, their bodies buried in shallow graves on the banks of the Geni river.

"Last week's attack is the latest in a deadly cycle of violence that has already taken more than 1,000 lives this year," said Georgette Gagnon, Africa director at Human Rights Watch. "The Southern Sudanese government and the United Nations need to step up their efforts to protect civilians."

Too few Sudanese security forces are in the area to effectively protect civilians. An estimated 90 police officers cover all of Akobo county, an area the size of Switzerland and Austria combined - more than 122,000 square kilometers - most of it inaccessible by road. Although approximately two dozen soldiers and a handful of police had accompanied the civilians, reportedly to protect them in the hostile terrain and fish with them, the security forces lacked equipment to call for back-up and helicopters to provide reinforcements. The hundreds of armed Murle attackers quickly overran the group. More than 10 soldiers were also killed in the attack. The attack was at a remote spot along the Geni river, at a contentious border area between Lou Nuer and Murle lands. The group of several hundred Lou Nuer had been living and fishing in the area for several weeks, driven there by hunger. They had walked from Akobo, where they were living after being displaced from smaller villages by intense fighting between Lou Nuer and Murle armed youth in March and April that killed an estimated 1,000 civilians. Their food supply was interrupted in June, when a separate conflict between two Nuer groups in Upper Nile state spurred attacks on boats transporting urgently needed food supplies down the Sobat river to Akobo.

"Right now, attackers know they won't be brought to justice," Gagnon said. "The government should immediately deploy properly resourced and enough security forces to contentious areas, not only in Jonglei state, but wherever civilians are vulnerable. The police should also start building a culture of accountability, working with local authorities to investigate and punish crimes."

The attack also underscores an urgent need to improve peace-building efforts by the Southern Sudan government and state authorities to prevent more revenge attacks following the March and April violence. The efforts included a series of visits by a government committee to the two communities and plans for a reconciliation conference, which has yet to take place. The UN mission has supported those efforts, but they have not been sufficient to prevent further violence.

"To protect civilians, the southern government needs to engage over a sustained period with state and local authorities from the communities involved, and with youth leaders in the cattle camps who carry out the attacks, to address the root causes of the conflict," Gagnon said. "They also need to track warning signs of revenge attacks, and deploy security forces accordingly."

UN peacekeepers were not in the area that was attacked. They had set up temporary bases in Akobo and Pibor in May, following the March and April violence. But they withdrew all forces and civilian staff from both towns in late July, with the onset of the rainy season. It is not clear whether the UN peacekeepers would have prevented the attack if they had remained, though. The attack site, 40 km southeast of Akobo, is not accessible by road, and the UN forces had not patrolled that far outside the town.

Following the attack, UN peacekeepers stepped up flights to Akobo and the attack site, transporting UN staff, and Southern Sudan and state authorities to assess the situation. While these steps were helpful, Human Rights Watch urged the peacekeepers to take additional steps to protect civilians.

"UN peacekeepers need to consider all the options to protect people in remote and hostile terrain, including foot patrols and frequent over-flights," said Gagnon. "They should work closely with the state and local authorities to develop strategies for effectively protecting civilians from more attacks."

Human Rights Watch also urged UN human rights officers to conduct a thorough and public investigation into the attacks and the government's response, and to work with the local authorities to promote accountability for all crimes committed.

### **EDITORIAL: How can we have free and fair elections?**

**Al-Midan** 11/8/09 -Political parties continue to note that no free and fair elections can take place under the prevailing laws. The question is how you can have free and fair elections if you are needed to obtain a permit, which is impossible to get from the NCP-controlled institutions, to hold a public rally. Such permission is also necessary for publishing an article in a newspaper, to circulate a statement or to launch an election campaign.

How could we ensure free and fair elections if political parties are denied equal access to state-owned media such as the Radio and TV which have become the mouthpieces of the NCP and are exclusively used by it? How can we have free and fair elections if you are not allowed to criticize the policies and positions of the NCP-controlled government? How can the political parties in the opposition advocate for changes if they are not free to address the electorate to convince them about the need for a change? Ironically, the government joins the opposition in its call for the need for a transition to democracy. We know that the NCP leaders are well aware about the prerequisites for a democratic transition. That is why they continue to block all routes leading to such a transition. But our people are stubborn and hardheaded. They will never cease pursuing a goal they have set to achieve.