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Media Monitoring Report

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Referendum Monitor

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Highlights

UN Panel arrives in Sudan to monitor referendum

Al-Sahafa 11/10/10 – A UN Panel, formed by UNSG Ban Ki-moon to Monitor Sudan’s vote, arrived yesterday in Khartoum, headed by former Tanzanian President Benjamin Mkapato, to hold meetings with officials and to familiarize themselves with the technical preparations for upcoming referendum.

Sudan Foreign Ministry spokesperson Muawia Khalid said the Panel would begin its meetings with the Foreign Minister Ali Karti and would head for Juba on a seven-day visit for meetings with GoSS officials.

Sudan Tribune website 10/10/10 reported that a UN panel, recently appointed to monitor southern Sudan referendum, arrived in Khartoum on Sunday in a four-day visit to Sudan.

Chaired by former Tanzanian president Benjamin Mkapato, the three-member panel is expected to hold talks with Sudanese government officials in Khartoum, Juba and Abyei.

The panel will seek to strengthen confidence between the two peace partners in the referendum process and encouraging them to resolve disputes or divergences related to the vote process.

“I am looking forward to this visit and the opportunity to meet with all the people who can help ensure that these referenda in Southern Sudan and the Abyei Area are successful,” Mkapato said. “There are many challenges ahead of us in the next few months but we are determined to do our utmost to help the people of Sudan.”

The other members are António Monteiro, former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Portugal, and Bhojraj Pokharel, former Chairman of the Election Commission of Nepal.

According to *SUNA* 10/10/10, Mkapato hoped that his team would be able to play its role and to realize its objective of monitoring the referendum neutrally and with full honesty and independence. Meanwhile, SRSG and Head of UNMIS Haile Menkerios has welcomed the arrival of the international monitoring delegation.

The representative of the Foreign Ministry, Ambassador Hassan Al-Amin, also welcomed the international team for monitoring the referendum, affirming the government commitment to the Referendum Act.

SUNA learned that the delegation would hold meetings with officials of the Commission for the Referendum and a number of other government officials.

Government delegation rejects new proposal by Gration on Abyei

Al-Sahafa 11/10/10 – the delegation of the Sudanese Government for talks on Abyei in Addis Ababa rejected a new proposal tabled by US envoy Scott Gration to annex the Abyei territory to the South by a presidential decree to be issued by President Al-Bashir.

The newspaper has learned that Gration made the proposal and requested head of AUHIP Thabo Mbeki and Ethiopian Prime Minister Melez Zenawi to convince President Al-Bashir to accept the suggestion. Gration proposal is intended to overcome the Abyei referendum hurdle.

Similarly, sources said the NCP also presented new proposals which were rejected by the SPLM. The NCP proposed that a presidential decree should be issued to annex the northern part of the territory to the North and the southern part to the South.

Reportedly, the SPLM delegation to Abyei talks in Addis Ababa decided to declare the failure of the talks and return home but Gration requested a chance for another attempt.

According to *Sudan Tribune website* 10/10/10, mediators in Addis Ababa have tabled new proposals for Sudan's ruling National Congress Party (NCP) and Sudan People Liberation Movement (SPLM) to break the deadlock over the disputed border region of Abyei.

The U.S. sponsored talks on Abyei started since early October but both sides have stuck to their positions primarily due to pressure from the Misseriya and Dinka Ngok tribes who are the main inhabitants of Abyei.

The government sponsored Sudanese Media Centre (SMC) website reported that the two proposals include one that provide for the immediate subordination of Abyei to South Sudan and grant the Misseriya grazing rights. The other states that Abyei is to be divided into two zones, north and south.

Sources told SMC that the NCP delegation flatly rejected the first proposal and that discussions on the second one are underway. The sources denied any withdrawal by the SPLM delegation from the talks adding that both sides formed specialized committees to discuss all the outstanding issues.

Assembly Speakers says Abyei referendum depends on an agreement

Al-Sahafa 10/10/10 – National Assembly Speaker Ahmed Ibrahim Al-Tahir, at press conference yesterday, accused the SPLM of seek to reignite war between the North and the South, warning that “there will be no permanent peace under threat of war”. He said the conduct of the referendum in Abyei depends on reaching an agreement”. Al-Tahir said the SPLM has discontinued all contacts with the NCP and all its leaders are in the South.

According to *The Citizen* 11/10/10, Al-Tahir has threatened to impede Abyei referendum if the SPLM insisted on its position on the Misseriya vote at the referendum, voicing his rejection of the amendment of the referendum law by adding 40 seats for southerners, a step that he described as unconstitutional and a reaction by SPLM to the domination of the National Congress Party of the National Assembly.

Al-Tahir accused SPLM of violating the Abyei Protocol and the PCA ruling that granted the Misseriya the right to vote. “The referendum will not be held without the Misseriya whatever the case,” he said.

SPLA orders moving of artillery to Abyei

Al-Rai Al-Aam 11/10/10 – The SPLA has reportedly begun deploying troops at the border between the North and the South and also directed its cadres to leave the North for the South.

A source revealed to the newspaper yesterday that the artillery unit in Yei received orders from the SPLA last week to move to the border areas with the North particularly the Abyei territory, adding the SPLA moved 20 armoured vehicles from “Bania” area in eastern Equatoria towards Abyei.

The Misseriya also accused the SPLA of deploying 700 troops at Abu Ghazala area and at Abu Kharit north of Abyei.

According to the sources, the SPLM also directed its southern cadres in the North to travel to the South. SPLA soldiers hailing from the Nuba and the Blue Nile areas have also been instructed to report to their military units.

Minister says authorities in the South destroyed border equipment

Juba Post 11/10/10 – Foreign Minister Ali Ahmed Karti has accused the authorities in southern Sudan of destroying all equipments meant for demarcating the North-South border.

Karti made the remarks while addressing a visiting UN Security Council delegation in Khartoum. He said the border demarcation team deployed the equipments at the North-South border but they were dismantled.

Karti claimed that the equipments were deployed on the ground along the border but they were unfortunately destroyed by the county commissioners along the border lines who happen to be representatives of the SPLM. He said both the SPLM and the NCP reached an agreement on 80% of the border line and were pushing for negotiations to settle the remaining 20%, but the incident that saw the destruction of the border demarcation equipments has made it difficult to practically demarcate the line.

NCP condemns harassment of unity rally by secession supporters

Sudan Tribune website 10/10/10 - The National Congress Party Sunday condemned the harassment by a pro-separation group during a rally organized yesterday in support of Sudan's unity.

A small number of pro-independence southerners disturbed Saturday a pro-unity march held by the National Organization for the Support of Unity and Referendum, a group supported by the northern Sudan ruling party.

The 30 to 40 southerners held placards supporting southern Sudan independence and shouted slogans calling for secession. Seen as troublemakers, they were asked to leave by the members of the rally and clashed with the riot police.

Ibrahim Ghandour, NCP political secretary described the incident as an attempt to obstruct the rally saying "it confirms that some of those with whom we are dealing know very well that the mood of southern citizens is with the unity, he said. "This is why they try to intimidate them to relinquish their option for unity".

The NCP official, who made his remarks after a meeting for the political sector of the party, said yesterday's rally confirmed that southerners are absolutely supportive to the unity if they have freedom of choice.

Sudanese police arrested the pro-separation protesters but they were released later during the night after the intervention of the SPLM federal state minister for justice.

The move highlights tension between the two partners of the 2005 peace agreement, as they disagree on different issues related to the referendum process while it should take place in less than three months.

Speaking before the Agro-Arab summit in Libya yesterday, Sudanese president vigorously criticized his first deputy and southern Sudan government president, Salva Kiir, for his support to the independence of the semi-autonomous region considering it as a breach of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement.

General Athor declares ceasefire

Al-Ayyam 11/10/10 –The defected SPLA general, George Athor, said that he had accepted the amnesty decreed by GoSS President Salva Kiir Mayardit.

In an interview to *Radio Miraya*, Athor declared a unilateral ceasefire and cessation of hostilities, affirming that negotiation between him and the Government of Southern Sudan would start soon.

According to *Sudan Tribune website* 10/10/10, Gen. George Athor Deng, a former chief of staff to the southern army, who rebelled against the southern government, after losing a bid to become governor of Jonglei state, has welcomed Wednesday's presidential amnesty directed at him and other rebels.

Speaking to United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) sponsored Miraya FM on Sunday; Gen. Athor said he will respect President Salva Kiir Mayardit's call for peaceful return and reintegration of his forces into the south's army, the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA).

Gen. Athor contested for Jonglei state gubernatorial post but lost to incumbent governor Kuol Manyang Juuk of the Sudan People Liberation Movement (SPLM)- the political wing of the SPLA.

Athor alleged that the SPLM, which has governed the southern region since a 2005 peace deal rigged April's elections against him and chose to start an armed uprising in protest.

Since his forces first attacked Dollib Hills in Upper Nile state in May 2010, which the SPLA blame on Athor forces, the regional army made several attempts to demolish his forces but in vain.

The government of southern Sudan (GoSS) initially rejected peace talks proposed by UNMIS and turned down several efforts by local community leaders for peaceful resolution.

Last week, President Kiir released a decree pardoning Gen. Athor, Gen. Gabriel Tenginyang and

others who rebelled against his government to rejoin after disarming their forces. Details from Athor's acceptance are still sketchy.

The amnesty was welcomed on Saturday by John Kong Nyuon, a security adviser to the president of the government of southern Sudan.

On Wednesday, Salva Kiir Mayardit, president of the government of southern Sudan and a commander in chief and the Sudan People's Liberation Army issued an executive order pardoning the four military officers, Lieutenant General George Athor Deng, Major General Gabriel Tanginye, Robert Gwang and Colonel Gatluak Gai.

The executive order urged the officers to immediately join ranks and files of the SPLA forces and assured them they would be able to move freely in the region without any fear.

The pardon will not come into effect unless the officers lay down their arms without condition and return to rank and files of the regional army.

Speaking to Sudan Tribune on Saturday, Nyuon commended the decision of the president and urged the officers to return.

"The decision taken by the president is excellent, wise and unifying decision," said Nyuon.

The BBC noted that the report coincided with the visit of the United Nations Security Council and that the move could be seen as a way to show visiting diplomats the south's seriousness to provide security ahead of the January's referendum on southern independence.

Kiir issued the order following a meeting between the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) and representatives from other political parties to prepare for South-South dialogue conference, scheduled to take place on 13 October 2010.

The agenda of the conference is believed to include discussion about ways to reach consensus on the conduct of the referendum on self-determination for the people of the region. It will also touch on post-referendum governance.

No National Unity without southern unity – Lam Akol

Khartoum Monitor 11/10/10 – SPLM-DC chairman Lam Akol has described his meeting with GoSS President Salva Kiir as friendly, adding that the meeting was not intended to change our position and our advice to the SPLM. He pointed out that the unity and separation issue would be discussed at the south-south dialogue to be held in Juba on 23rd this month.

Akol told reporters after returning to Khartoum from Juba that his meeting with Salva Kiir comes within preparations for the south-south dialogue conference.

The meeting was friendly and expressed mutual respect and an agreement was reached on the troubles caused to the SPLM-DC, he said.

He denied news that he concluded a deal with the SPLM. "There is no logic for a deal as we are ahead of a conference in which everything could be discussed.

“He who believes that there could be unity of Sudan without unity of southerners is mistaken in his belief,” he said. “In order to unify the whole country, you must first unify the parts; you can not call for unity while you are working towards dividing southerners”.

NCP says displeased by the UNSC visit

Al-Sudani 11/10/10 – The NCP has expressed its displeasure over the UNSC delegation’s recent visit because it focused on the need for conducting the referendum on time rather than the need for the process to be free, fair and peaceful. The NCP also rejected the recent remarks by GoSS President Salva Kiir Mayardit calling on the UN to deploy international troops along the border between the North and the South, describing the statement as “strange”.

NCP Political Secretary Ibrahim Ghandour, speaking to the newspaper yesterday, expressed astonishment over Kiir’s remarks, saying the country is still one, ruling out that the UN would agree to the request.

Ghandour also deplored the incidents of clashes between pro-unity and separation supporters in Khartoum, describing them as subversive attempts by anti-unity elements.

We will recognize Israel if it recognizes us – GoSS official

Al-Rai Al-Aam 11/10/10 – GoSS Information Minister B. Benjamin has welcomed the establishment of good relations with all countries of the world after secession including Israel, stressing the need to hold the vote on time.

The Minister has described South Sudan’s relations with the USA as “excellent”, saying it has granted Sudan billions of dollars after the CPA was signed to ensure that the referendum is conducted on time.

Afro-Arab summit may send five leaders to defuse NCP, SPLM tension

Al-Ahdath 11/10/10 – Presidential adviser Mustafa Osman Ismail has revealed that the Afro-Arab summit currently on in Libya is determined to send a delegation comprising five Arab and African leaders to Sudan in an attempt to defuse tension between the North and the South over upcoming referendum.

Ismail, who was speaking to AFP yesterday, said the proposal was made by the Senegalese President Abdulah Wa’d.

Meanwhile, *Sudan Tribune website* 10/10/10 reported that Libyan leader Muammar Al-Gaddafi today warned that the secession of South Sudan will encourage similar tendencies in other parts of the continent but acknowledged that the split is inevitable.

Addressing the one-day Arab-African summit held in Sirte, Gaddafi described Sudan’s likely breakup as a "fever" that will spread throughout Africa.

"Ethnicities [in Africa] will demand independence, linguists [in Africa] will demand independence, tribes [in Africa] will demand independence, this is a dangerous matter. The final word is for the people of the South [Sudan] and the whole world is awaiting this," the Libyan leader was quoted by the state agency (JANA).

"This is a foregone conclusion that Sudan might become divided but this is not the important thing. It is imperative that we remain vigilant and keep in mind that this is not the end, this is the beginning... the beginning of the crack in Africa's map," he told the gathering, which was attended by Sudan's President Omer Hassan al-Bashir.

"We expect what happens to Sudan will happen to Arabs and Sudan will be looked upon as an Arab state that became two countries.....then what prevents the rest of the Arab League States, that each group decides its fate on religious basis or ethnic basis or on a geographical basis?" Gaddafi posed the question.

Ugandan president Yoweri Museveni told a visiting United Nations Security Council (UNSC) delegation last week that Kampala is willing to pay any price, including the possibility of a flare-up of insurgency and poor diplomatic relations, to ensure the secession of South Sudan.

According to the "East African" online media website Museveni told the envoys that "Uganda will cope with the fallout from the referendum the way it has coped since 1955 but for a brief 10-year lull."

In his speech Gaddafi added a qualifier saying that the breakup of states within Africa does not matter as long as it is part of a "United States of Africa".

"But in general, in terms of ideology, I say that Africa is now [comprised of] 53 state, even if they cracked and became 1,000 states; as long as it is within the African Union or United States of Africa, for me this does not mean anything," he said.

"Just like the United States of America is now [comprised of] 50 states, if they divided and became 100 states; it remains the United States of America with the same strength, same borders and the same status, although if they merged and became 30 states it remains the United States of America," Gaddafi added.

He further added that African principle of preserving the pre-existing borders would be annulled if South Sudan chooses to secede.

“I will remain in the North after secession” – SPLM Atem Garang

Al-Sahafa 11/10/10 – National Assembly deputy Speaker Atem Garang (SPLM) said he would remain in the North after secession which, he said, has become the choice of the majority southern Sudanese because of feet-dragging on the part of the NCP on the CPA implementation.

“I will stay in the North whether Information Minister Kamal Obeid (NCP) likes it or not”, he told participants at a symposium in Khartoum yesterday.

Garang rejected what he called blackmailing of southerners in the North by the NCP and stressed the need for full implementation of the CPA.

Other Highlights

Arms collection well underway – Khartoum police

Al-Ayyam 11/10/10 – Khartoum state police announced that the campaign for collecting arms in Khartoum state is progressing, adding that the arms which were inherited by civilians have also been legalized either by issuing new licenses or renewing the existing ones. Acting Director of Police Maj. Gen. Mohamed Ahmed Ali urged civilians to surrender their arms before the end of the deadline.

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