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Media Monitoring Report

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Highlights

Post-elections Watch

Renegade South Sudan general clashes with army

Reuters 12/5/10 - A renegade south Sudanese army commander said his forces clashed with government troops for the third time in a week on Wednesday but said he still wanted to negotiate an end to his revolt.

General George Athor rebelled along with an unknown number of soldiers after losing in elections last month for the governorship of the oil-producing south's Jonglei state, stoking tensions in a region already hit by drought, ethnic violence and civil war.

Athor accused the SPLM of rigging the vote, demanded the removal of the winner and later threatened to attack state capital Bor.

"This morning at 7.10 (0410 GMT) the forces of Salva Kiir attacked our position ... Four people were killed on our side and five were wounded. On their side 83 are dead," Athor told Reuters on Wednesday.

Speaking by satellite telephone Athor said he was "still looking forward to negotiation" and had spoken with un-named representatives from the United Nations who he hoped would oversee a deal to end the stand-off.

The southern army (SPLA) said there had been a confrontation with Athor's men in Jongeli's Thouiak area but disputed the death count.

"A (reconnaissance) squad of SPLA soldiers accidentally found where he was hiding ... They fired at our squad killing two soldiers and wounding two. We did not kill any from his side," said SPLA spokesman Kuol Diem Kuol.

"We had it in our minds that he wanted to negotiate, but now we don't know if he has abandoned the negotiations. We have the means to fight him."

Athor was one of a number of high-profile SPLM members who decided to run as independents after failing to get the party nomination, sparking internal divisions.

UN to mediate peace between Gen. Athor and South Sudan

Sudan Tribune website 12/5/10 - UNMIS has pledged to mediate peace between the GoSS and the renegade Lt. General George Athor Deng.

In a statement to *Reuters* today, Gen. Athor said he had been contacted by a UN official offering him to broker a deal with southern Sudan government.

A delegation from UNMIS, headed by the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary General, Jasbir Lidder, on Wednesday met with the Vice President-designate of the government, Dr. Riek Machar Teny, to explore ways to initiate the process.

The meeting discussed the possibility of halting the crisis by reaching a peaceful settlement to the ongoing clashes in the troubled Jonglei state through negotiations with Athor.

The UN team briefed the Vice President about their ongoing phone contacts with Gen. George Athor whom they said was expressing willingness to negotiate with the government. The delegation expressed UN's readiness to provide logistical support for the process.

Dr. Machar appreciated the efforts the UN team has exerted in their direct contacts with Gen. Athor, but however said the government would first make further consultations and review the situation before he could promise a decision to the UN body.

A follow up joint meeting between the government and UNMIS representatives is expected to take place in the next few days in order to try to agree on the way forward.

Nobody knows the exact location of Gen. Athor who is generally known to be hiding in thick forests somewhere in the north-western part of Jonglei state.

Gen. George Athor was formerly the SPLA Deputy Chief of General Staff for Political and Moral Orientation. He has been accused by the government of carrying out deadly attacks on SPLA forces after losing the gubernatorial contest as an independent candidate in Jonglei state.

South Sudan minister rejects negotiation with Gen. turned rebel

Sudan Tribune website 12/5/10 — South Sudan minister of legal affairs has rejected a demand by a renegade general for negotiations to end a rebellion that takes place in the semi autonomous region after his defeat in gubernatorial election in Jonglei state since April 30.

Up to Wednesday, the General George Athor clashed three times with the Southern Sudan Army, SPLA, which deployed troops in the region to surround the rebellion forces.

Athor who denied his participation in a first attack on SPLA base in Doleib Hills said he wants amnesty for his supporters and the removal of his rival Jonglei elected governor. He also suggests some names of high ranking SPLM members to mediate talks with the government.

On Wednesday, Michael Makuei Lueth, caretaker minister of legal affairs and constitution development, in the government of southern Sudan, said his government has tried to persuade General Athor but failed to consider listening to advice and suggestions from senior members of the government and his comrades at arms.

All government officials including his immediate boss, Chief of General staff, 1st lieutenant General James Hoth Mai and commander in chief of the SPLA, President of the Government of Southern Sudan, Salva Kiir Mayardit have tried persuading him but failed to accept their advice.

"If he has no intention as he does deny in the media why he refused coming to Juba," the minister asked, adding that government of southern Sudan did not decide to negotiate with Athor.

"The government has not yet decided negotiating with General Athor. There is nothing like that. No such decision has been reached at the council of ministers and I do not think there are plans to negotiate with him soon," Makuei told Sudan Tribune from Juba.

Minister Makuei also said the cabinet has reached an understanding allowing SPLA forces to

deploy around his base so as to limit his movement in case of intending to launch offensive or attacks on local population.

He said the army would remain around keeping close eye on his base but if he carries out hostile action, the security forces on the ground will have to protect civilians as per their mandate, Makuei explained stressing military options are determined by the situations.

The need to fight Athor as rebel will be determined by the situation and it is result of the circumstances that may allow the government considering military option, he said adding that Athor's behaviors are that a of rebel and must be dealt with accordingly.

"He is now threatening to attack. He has twice been quoted wanting to attack Bor. Such behaviors will be one of the reasons pushing government for military options, the official said.

"If he executes his threats he must be dealt with. After all he killed people," Makuei said.

President of UNGA congratulates Al-Bashir on his election

SUNA 12/5/10 - President of the UN General Assembly, Dr. Ali Abdul-Salam Al-Teraiki, has sent a congratulatory cable to Sudan's President Omer Al-Bashir on his election.

President of Benin, Thomas Yayi Boni, has also sent a congratulatory cable to President Al-Bashir on his election.

NEC to organize polling in southern Kordofan before referendum

Al-Sudani 13/5/10 –NEC deputy chairman Abdullah Ahmed Abdullah has said that elections in southern Kordofan state will be held during the dry season before the referendum takes place.

Meanwhile, the NEC has decided that by-elections in 33 constituencies where polling was postponed would be conducted on 5 and 6 of June.

SPLM reveals GoSS priorities

Al-Ayyam 13/5/10 – The SPLM has announced that GoSS priorities during the forthcoming stage will be to ensure the conduct of the referendum on schedule, improve security including food security and other essential services, build the capacity of the SPLA and other organized forces and to eliminate militias in the region.

According to the SPLM Secretary-General Pagan Amum, a workshop for the elected southern governors will devise strategies and priorities for Kiir's government during the period from May 2010 to 9 July 2011.

Pre-referendum Watch:

US says South Sudan referendum running behind schedule

Sudan Tribune website 12/5/10 - The US special envoy to Sudan Scott Gration warned today that the preparations for the 2011 self-determination referendum are running well behind schedule and that logistics are compounding the challenges towards accomplishing the key part of the peace deal.

"There has to be better voter education. There has to be a better system of logistics and procedures, administration," Gration told the Foreign Relations Committee.

"The referendum commission has to be appointed by the [Sudanese] national assembly, they have to be financed, and they have to be given the training," he said.

"I think it's possible to get done everything we have to get done, but we can't waste another minute. The time is now," the US official said.

He highlighted a number of outstanding issues between the North and the South that require resolution for the referendum to take place including the demarcation of the borders and splitting oil revenues. He further expressed concern over registration of southern Sudanese voters abroad many of who are unable to produce birth certificates needed to show they are from the south.

"They have to register people outside, in 14 different nations, and they don't have a system achieved to do that," he said.

Graton said lessons need to be learned from the shortcomings of last month's elections that were marred by allegations of fraud and boycott by several major political parties.

"We have to take the lessons from the elections and turn them into solutions for the referendum," he said.

Graton responded that Rice is already "working the issue very hard" and that Clinton "has been superb." He added: "She continues to help in every way she can."

Committee Chairman John F. Kerry (D-Mass.) echoed Wicker's concerns. Kerry told Graton: "I think you ought to get a little more leverage on this effort, because I don't think it's going to happen at the current pace."

Several U.S. advocacy groups welcomed Graton assessment of the situation in Sudan but cautioned that without pressuring Khartoum any strategy aimed at resolving the conflicts would be bound to fail.

According to **VoA.News.com** 13/5/10, several leading US lawmakers say this is a critical moment for Sudan. They called on their congressional colleagues Wednesday to refocus on the country's instability and help shape the Obama administration's policy on Sudan.

Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman, Democrat John Kerry chaired a hearing on US policy in Sudan, the comprehensive peace agreement and the ongoing crisis in Darfur.

Kerry noted that the people of southern Sudan are scheduled to vote in a referendum on independence next January, and said every "credible" public opinion survey indicates that they will vote for independence.

Kerry said the stakes for the war-torn country are clear. "According to [US] Director of National Intelligence Dennis Blair, while a number of countries in Asia and Africa are at significant risk of a new outbreak of mass killing over the next five years, southern Sudan is the place where "a new mass killing or genocide is most likely to occur," he said.

President Barack Obama's special envoy for Sudan, Retired Air Force General Scott Graton, testified before the Senate committee. He faced numerous questions about why violence, particularly against women, is still raging in Sudan -- five years after the comprehensive peace agreement was implemented.

Gration called on United Nations forces to step up their efforts. "The UN forces, the UN aid forces, have to provide an umbrella of security, more than they are doing right now. In most areas, they do not patrol past 10 o'clock at night," he explained. "And they do not patrol where the women have to go out and collect firewood, and those kinds of places. I believe in the short term, there has to be more security that is put on there."

Recently, Gration has been criticized by a senior Republican lawmaker and several advocacy groups. In a letter to President Obama last week, Representative Frank Wolf of Virginia asked Mr. Obama to put Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and UN Ambassador Susan Rice in control of what he termed a "languishing" US policy toward Sudan.

"What we're asking is that Secretary Clinton and Ambassador Rice take this policy back into the head office. Rice knows this policy. I worked with Susan Rice when she was in the Clinton administration. She is tough, pragmatic and understands the whole issue of Darfur, the north-south agreement. But the Secretary has got to start engaging," Wolf said.

Wolf criticized Gration's efforts to engage the Sudanese government of President Omar al-Bashir. He said Gration has failed to recognize the true nature of the Sudanese leader, who is accused of crimes against humanity in Darfur.

Gration answered the criticism briefly at the Senate committee hearing, saying that Ambassador Rice is taking action and that Secretary Clinton is in charge on Sudan. "I think Ambassador Rice is already working in her job as [US] Ambassador in the UN to highlight these issues. She has called for hearings; she is working the issue very hard. And we are in constant communication. Secretary Clinton has been superb and continues to help in every way she can to raise this level," he said.

A coalition of 25 Sudan and Darfur activist groups have endorsed Representative Wolf's appeal, voicing concern about what they call the Obama administration's weak implementation of its declared Sudan policy.

Decree imminent on formation of Abyei referendum commission

Al-Raed 13/5/10 – Abyei Chief Administrator Arop Moyak has urged the two partners to speed up the formation of the Abyei referendum commission to enable them to make the technical and logistic preparations. Moyak expects the SPLM and the NCP to engage in wide consultations on this matter, saying the major challenge is how to define Abyei residents.

UNMIS says it has no mandate to monitor Southern Sudan referendum

Miraya FM 12/5/10 - The United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) said that it has no mandate to monitor the Southern Sudan referendum for self determination scheduled for 2011. UNMIS Spokesperson, Ashraf Eissa, told Miraya that the mission is only tasked with providing logistical and technical assistance to support the preparations and conduct of the referendum.

This comes after the SPLM Secretary General, Pagan Amum, had said in press statements that the party will request the international community to intervene if NCP decides to postpone the conduct of the referendum, threatening to call on the United Nations to supervise the referendum.

However, UNMIS Spokesperson Ashraf Eissa said that UNMIS will be ready to take on a monitoring role if requested by the two partners of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, National Congress Party (NCP) and Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM). He added

that the decision would require a new resolution from the UN Security Council.

Meanwhile, speaking to Miraya, a senior member in the NCP, Amin Hassan Omer, described SPLM statements as hostile and further reiterated party's commitment to hold the referendum under the supervision of a commission that both parties agree on.

Amin Hassan Omer said that NCP has confirmed many times that it is committed to the CPA, and to holding the referendum on time and to accept its outcome.

Other Headlines

Police say rate of crime dropped by 50% during elections

SUNA 12/5/10 - The General Director of Police Forces, Gen. Hashim Osman, has announced the decrease of the rate of crime across the country by more than 50% during the period of the recent elections. Gen. Osman made the remarks at a press conference Wednesday at the Ministry of Interior, saying crimes of robbery in Darfur have decreased by more than 60%.

Gen. Osman explained that the Ministry has sought the arrest of JEM leader Khalil Ibrahim through the Interpol after he committed 300 violations to the cease-fire agreement that he had signed with the government. Gen. Osman explained that the forces of Khalil are looting fuel and food stuff from the unarmed people around the water-pump areas, describing these activities as terrorist and inhuman acts.

Ministry of Education and DDR delegation review educational issues

SUNA 12/5/10 - Officials of the Ministry of Education in the Blue Nile State Wednesday reviewed with the visiting delegation of the Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR), the United Nations Developmental Programme (UNDP), headed by Maha Hussein Feraijoun, educational opinions, visions, issues and programmes concerning the Blue Nile region.

The acting General Director of the Ministry of Education, Bashir Al-Radhi, underscored the importance of healthy school environment for the demobilized persons as well as giving concern to the educational rehabilitation and enhancing the conditions of teachers.

The Director of the Planning Administration at the Ministry of Education, Azhari Madani, reviewed the efforts being exerted to attract the demobilized persons to education.

JEM rebels say Qatar favouring Sudanese government

Sudan Tribune website 12/5/10 - JEM leader has criticized the Qatari role in the peace process saying Doha is favouring the Sudanese government side in the talks.

Speaking in a public meeting held yesterday in Cairo, Khalil Ibrahim said Doha venue has turned into something like chaos in the negotiation, because there are a large number of individuals who claim to be rebel movements and find recognition and allure from many quarters.

JEM recently decided to suspend its participation in the peace talks after signing a framework agreement last February with the Sudanese government including a truce to end hostilities in the restive region. The two parties however traded accusations of breaching the ceasefire as the talks failed to achieve progress.

In statements to the *London-based Asharq Alawsat*, Khalil Ibrahim however said he does not seek an alternative to Doha venue but wants Egypt, with its expertise and knowledge about Sudan to help the Qatari to better deal with the conflict.

"We made this request because our Qatari brothers are favoring the Sudanese government," Khalil further said.

Khalil Ibrahim scoffed at the request of his arrest by the Sudanese government saying his demand to reform the peace process worried them because "we refused their behavior and plots in Doha".

"The government in Khartoum does not want peace and does not want Egypt to play any role because if we reach any agreement with them Egypt would tell (Khartoum) to implement it seriously," he said.

“We will not resume talks until Doha forum is improved” – JEM leader

Al-Watan 13/5/10 – JEM leader Khalil Ibrahim has said his movement would not resume talks in Doha unless several conditions are met including the reformation of the Doha forum with Egypt’s assistance. Speaking at a symposium organized by his movement in Cairo, Khalil said Doha forum is chaotic and UN-AU mediator’s mandate is limited.

With regard to southern Sudan, he said, “the South can be the first region to secede but it will not be the last”. “He who allows his region to secede should also permit others to do so,” he added. Khalil said unity of Sudan requires cooperation between the GoSS, the NCP and the Sudanese people, pointing out that unity needs concessions and a credible democratic transformation. He advised the NCP to form a national government and confirmed his movement’s commitment to unity of the country.