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By: Steve Paterno, the author of The Rev. Fr. Saturnino Lohure, A Roman Catholic Priest Turned Rebel.
<http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article33777>

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Highlights

“I feel defaulted because the people deserve more” – Al-Bashir

Local dailies report President Al-Bashir yesterday addressed a rally in Khartoum marking the kickoff of his election campaign. According to **Al-Rai Al-Aam**, Al-Bashir promised free and fair elections. “We will allow the exercise of a credible democracy,” he said. The President reiterated the importance of unity of the country, hoping that it would be retained in January next year. He pointed out that the country is facing tremendous challenges. “I feel I have not done enough for the people. They deserve more,” he added.

NEC sets up committee to clear election monitors

Al-Ahdath reports that the National Elections Commission has set up a committee charged with the task of looking into applications from local and international bodies desirous of monitoring Sudan’s upcoming elections. According to the NEC, the committee will process the application within one week from its reception and will intimate its acceptance or rejection to the NEC to be conveyed to the boy concerned.

Meanwhile, the NEC announced that today 14 January is the closing date for reception of parties’ electoral symbols.

Britain halts arms shipment for the South

Reliable sources revealed to **Akhir Lahza** that the British Government has stopped the dispatch of military equipment to southern Sudan, citing new developments on the Sudanese political arena.

Meanwhile, sources said there were acute differences between FVP Kiir and GoSS VP Machar after the SPLA intelligence unearthed that the Nuer tribe has been armed by Machar.

In another development, sources claimed that FVP Kiir has rejected a proposal by the northern political parties to overthrow Al-Bashir’s government by military force as such gamble would cause the SPLM to lose gains brought about by the CPA.

Sudan’s ruling partners try to resolve census results and elections

Sudan Tribune website 13/1/10 – The two major partners in the Sudan’s Government of National Unity are discussing the possibility of increasing the number of national parliamentary seats for Southern Sudan as the deadline nears for submission of final lists bearing the names of candidates to the National Elections Commission.

This comes in the context of a rumoured electoral partnership possibly being forged between the NCP and the SPLM. The presidential assistant and deputy NCP chairman Nafi Ali Nafi, on Tuesday had indicated a possibility of his party forming an alliance for the elections with its peace and government partner, the SPLM.

The co-chairs of the Joint Executive Political committee between the two parties on Tuesday resumed dialogue in Khartoum to try to resolve the issue through possibly making an incremental increase in the number of seats for the South.

GoSS VP Dr. Riek Machar Teny, traveled to Khartoum on Tuesday ahead of the SPLM Political

Bureau's meeting on Thursday to meet with GoNU VP Ali Osman Mohamed Taha.

Senior members of the National Congress Party confirmed the ongoing dialogue. Ahmed Ibrahim Al-Tahir, Speaker of the National Assembly and Chairman of the party's Political Sector described the issues as complicated and the time as short ahead of the deadline for nominations, according to the official SUNA.

Dr. Machar is also expected to discuss with the NCP partner the way forward for the upcoming general elections pending the final decision by the SPLM Political Bureau in its meeting scheduled to take place on Thursday.

The party's Secretary General Pagan Amum on Monday said the Political Bureau would declare the party's candidates for presidency in both national and Southern Sudan seats "if the party decides to contest" for such positions.

Interim Constitution allows Kiir to remain as SPLA Commander

Miraya FM 13/1/10 -The SPLM has ruled out the possibility of Salva Kiir Mayardit resigning from the army to run as a presidential candidate for the southern Sudan government in the 2010 general elections. Southern Sudan's Minister of Presidential Affairs, Luka Biong, said that the interim Constitution of the Government of Southern Sudan allows the President to retain the title of Commander-in-Chief of the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA).

Biong confirmed that presently the SPLA Act does state that no member of the SPLA can participate in political activities but said there will be decisions made within the regulations of southern Sudan. However, the Minister of Presidential Affairs was firm in reiterating that the President of Southern Sudan will not need to relinquish his position as Commander-in-Chief of SPLA.

Abyei residents reject SPLM nominees for chief administrator

The nomination by the SPLM of Eduward Lino and Deng Ar to contest upcoming elections for the Abyei Interim Administration's top post provoked angry reactions from the sons of the Area who claimed that the former had earlier failed to run the Administration and the latter's integrity is questionable, **Al-Sahafa** reports.

Meanwhile, sources said members of the SPLM Political Bureau were conducting intensive consultations on the nominations of SPLM candidates to contest in 25 states.

In another development, **Al-Wifaq** reports that hundreds of Misseriya staged a demonstration two days ago in the town of Seteit to protest the endorsement of the Abyei referendum bill by the National Assembly. A source told the paper that there was a widespread fear among residents over potential violence but the security forces which are conducting regular patrols since two days downplayed the Misseriya threat to launch an attack.

Report on border demarcation to be submitted to Presidency

Al-Raed reports that the North-South Border Demarcation Committee will hold an important meeting today to put the final touches to its report for submission to the Presidency. Reportedly, the committee has finished drawing the line on paper. Sources said the committee is doing its best to overcome differences over three areas.

SAF denies bombing areas in Darfur

SAF source has denied Reuters' report that the army has bombed Jabel Moun and Jabel Marra

in west Darfur, **Akhir Lahza** report. "This information is incorrect. There is no evidence of bombing," the source said.

According to **Reuters** 13/1/10, Darfur rebels said they attacked a government-held town in the Jabel Marra area of western Sudan on Wednesday in retaliation for army bombardment of their areas, a move likely to hinder peace talks set to open this month.

The SLA loyal to founder Abdel Wahed Mohamed el-Nur said they attacked Golo in Jabel Marra in retaliation for government bombings of rebel-controlled areas there and in the Jabel Moun area on the border with Chad.

"The government started this with bombing in Jabel Moun and in Jabel Marra," said SLA commander Ibrahim el-Helwu.

"We attacked Golo this morning -- we have casualties and the government has many casualties," he added.

The joint U.N.-African union peacekeeping mission in Darfur (UNAMID) does not have troops in the area but said aid workers caught in the crossfire had sought refuge in their compound.

"For the time being they (aid workers) are safe," said Balla Keita, UNAMID commander for West Darfur.

A government intelligence source said fighting was still going on, but Sudan's army was not immediately available to comment.

Darfur peace talks, which have faltered for the past three years, are due to reopen this month in Qatar, but the fighting is likely to fuel mistrust between the rebels and Khartoum.

Keita said the government had bombed JEM positions in the Jabel Moun area. "They have confirmed that they bombed JEM positions because they say JEM is running operations in Jabel Moun," he said.

A JEM commander in the Jabel Moun area said the attacks had been going on for several days.

"For the past week there has been heavy bombing of our people," al-Tijani Kharshome told Reuters by telephone.

"There are hundreds of families who have fled their homes and are hungry and thirsty," said Kharshome, who is from a large Arab tribe in Darfur.

SLM leader Abdul Wahid arrives in Juba

Informed sources told **Al-Intibaha** that SLM leader Abdul Wahid Mohamed Al-Nur arrived yesterday in Juba accompanied by 17 people including four Israeli intelligence agents besides an Israeli diplomat. The sources said the delegation embarked on a series of consultations with GoSS officials on a range of issues including the upcoming elections.

Regional groups must play growing role with UN in today's crises - SC

UN News 13/1/10 – The Security Council today discussed ways of further enhancing cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations in tackling global crises, with Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon calling for greater flexibility in facing the "new landscape" of ever more complex problems.

“Hardly a crisis confronts us that does not require actors to cooperate at multiple levels in the search for solutions,” Mr. Ban said in an opening speech, fresh from a two-day retreat exploring “new avenues for cooperation” with leaders of more than a dozen regional groups, ranging from the African Union (AU) and Arab League to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), Organization of American States (OAS) and Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC).

“That is why the relationship between the United Nations and regional organizations is so important. They are part of a new landscape, one in which the problems we face are so complex and interlinked that no one can work in isolation, and no one can afford to do without the benefits of cooperation and burden-sharing.”

Many of the regional group leaders attended the Council session at which Mr. Ban cited already existing cooperation such as UN support for the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), the AU-UN peacekeeping mission in Darfur (UNAMID) in Sudan, a wide-ranging relationship with the European Union (EU) and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in the Balkans, and other operations from Honduras to Iraq.

“Yet we can and must go further still,” he said. “The United Nations continues to bolster its capacity to prevent conflicts and mediate solutions. We continue to improve our ability to deploy more effective peacekeeping, peace building and humanitarian presences. These investments have positioned us to be a better partner to our regional counterparts.”

In a presidential statement, the Council promised further steps to promote closer cooperation with regional and sub-regional organizations in the fields of conflict early warning, prevention, peacemaking, peacekeeping and peace building.

“The Security Council is resolved to strengthen United Nations support for the peaceful settlement of disputes through improved interaction and cooperation with regional and sub-regional organizations,” said the statement, read by Ambassador Zhang Yesui of China, which holds the Council’s rotating presidency for January.

It stressed the role that regional and sub-regional organizations can play in post-conflict situations in peace building, recovery, reconstruction and development, and called for cooperation between the UN Peace building Commission and the organizations.