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Media Monitoring Report

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Referendum Monitor:

- CPA partners request UN security and logistical assistance (*Al-Rai Al-Aam*)
- Referendum commission Secretary-General sets to work (*Al-Akhbar*)
- Ban convenes high-level meeting on Sudan ahead of referenda (*UN News Centre*)
- U.S. Steps Up Efforts on Sudan Vote (*New York Times*)
- NCP should put in place constitutional setup to back unity – Arman (*Ajras Al-Hurriya*)
- UNMIS and Norwegian police start training southern police (*Radio Miraya website*)
- Southern Parliament approves ad hoc committee for referendum Radio (*Radio Miraya website*)
- South Sudan minister warns of war if referendum delayed (*Sudantribune.com*)
- Israel proposes support for GoSS in the event of separation (*Al-Rai Al-Aam*)
- Representatives of 224 tribes to hold comprehensive unity support conference (*Al-Rai Al-Aam*)

Other Highlights:

- South Sudan president travelling to US for high-level meetings on CPA (*Sudantribune.com*)
- Kiir cautions South Sudan armed forces over involvement in politics (*Sudantribune.com*)
- SPLM calls on Presidency to expedite formation of the Rights Commission (*Akhir Lahza*)
- SPLM Liberation Council meeting deferred (*Akhbar Al-Youm*)
- MPs press for increased pay to the SPLA (*The Citizen*)
- Kenya invites tenders to build new port (*AFP*)
- UN could not transport Dr. Khalil to Darfur without consent – Sudan (*Al-Khartoum*)
- Doha talks to resume next Sunday – Mediation (*Al-Sahafa*)
- UNAMID constructs houses for 300 households at new Kalma IDP site (*Al-Ahram Al-Youm*)

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Referendum Monitor

CPA partners request UN security and logistical assistance

Al-Rai Al-Aam Khartoum, 14/09/10 – UNMIS regional head for southern Sudan has revealed that the NCP and the SPLM have requested UNMIS assistance for the formation of a monitoring committee for monitoring the 2011 referendum. David Gressly told reporters in Juba yesterday that the two parties requested security and logistical assistance for the plebiscite.

Referendum commission Secretary-General sets to work

Al-Akhbar Khartoum, 14/09/10 – The Chairman of the Southern Sudan Referendum Commission Mohamed Ibrahim Khalil intimates that the Mohamed Osman Al-Nigoumi who has been tipped for the position of the Commission's Secretary-General has set out to work. He says Al-Nigoumi's accreditation papers have been tabled before the Presidency. He said that they are awaiting endorsement from the Presidency but the Secretary-General had to set to work immediately before the endorsement due to the short time remaining.

Khalil also noted that the committee charged with drawing up the budget for the referendum should conclude its work by early next week and then table the draft budget for endorsement by the Presidency. He said that the budget would be shared between the federal and regional southern governments, the international community and UN agencies.

Ban convenes high-level meeting on Sudan ahead of referenda

UN News Centre UN, 13/09/10 - Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said today he has convened a high-level meeting at the United Nations to discuss the situation in Sudan as it prepares for a vote on the self-determination of the south of the country.

The meeting will be held on 24 September on the sidelines of the annual high-level segment of the General Assembly, Mr. Ban told reporters in New York.

“We have to ensure that the two referenda, regardless of what the results may be, should be conducted in a transparent and peaceful manner. This will have larger regional implications,” the Secretary-General said. “This is almost the last opportunity for world leaders to discuss how we can make sure that this referendum will be successfully and transparently conducted.”

In response to a reporter's question, Mr. Ban said he was happy that United States President Barack Obama “has made it clear publicly that he's going to participate in the high-level meeting on Sudan.”

In a related development, David Gressly, the Regional Coordinator for Southern Sudan for the UN Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) has concluded a two-day visit to Warrap and Western Bahr El-Ghazal states by inaugurating the peacekeeping mission's office in Kuajok, the capital of Warrap.

During his trip, Mr. Gressly met with Warrap Governor Nyandeng Malek and Western Bahr El-Ghazal Governor Riziq Zakaria Hassan, as well as members of the two states' referendum high committees and assured them that UNMIS will provide robust logistical support and technical advice on the referenda.

“In an effort to strengthen UNMIS presence before the conduct of referendum, I am happy today to open officially the Warrap Team Site,” said Mr. Gressly, adding that the facility in

Kuajok will work closely with the referenda support bases that the mission plans to establish in all of the state's seven counties.

U.S. Steps Up Efforts on Sudan Vote

New York Times Washington, 13/09/10 - With Sudan barely 100 days away from a referendum that is likely to split the country and that could even reignite a war, the Obama administration has begun a multi-front diplomatic offensive built around incentives to keep Sudan from obstructing the vote.

On Sunday, the administration's special envoy to Sudan, Maj. Gen. Scott Gration, met with Sudanese officials in the north and south, laying out a timetable for steps the United States is willing to take, starting with the approval of the sale of irrigation and other agricultural equipment to Sudan.

"We are really now down to make or break," General Gration said in a telephone interview from Juba, the regional capital of southern Sudan. "We've reached a point where progress is critical. Without significant progress in the next days and weeks, things could be at risk."

The package of American incentives goes all the way to normalization of relations, debt relief, the lifting of sanctions and the removal of Sudan from the United States' list of state sponsors of terrorism — though these steps would require an end to the violence in Darfur and full acceptance of an independent southern Sudan, which many experts say is wishful thinking.

Indeed, many fear that the referendum — if it happens as planned — would tip Sudan back into the strife that afflicted it for more than two decades and that left two million people dead. Just the logistical challenges of holding the vote are daunting, given the dire poverty and lack of roads in the south.

On Sept. 24, President Obama plans to attend a high-level meeting on Sudan at the United Nations, convened by Secretary General Ban Ki-moon. The White House took the unusual step of publicizing Mr. Obama's attendance two weeks in advance, an administration official said, to attract other influential participants and to shine a spotlight on the precarious situation.

Susan E. Rice, the American ambassador to the United Nations and an advocate of a tough approach toward the Sudanese government, said Mr. Obama would try to mobilize international support and send a message that "we are with the people of southern Sudan, if they make the choice" to break away.

The administration's heightened concern was dramatized last week by Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, who described the referendum as a "ticking time bomb of enormous consequence."

Mrs. Clinton said that it was inevitable that the southern Sudanese would vote to secede and that this would raise "intractable problems," because the bulk of Sudan's oil reserves are in the south.

"If you're in the north, and all of a sudden you think a line's going to be drawn and you're going to lose 80 percent of the oil revenues, you're not a very enthusiastic participant," Mrs. Clinton said. "What are the deals that can possibly be made that will limit the potential of violence?"

There is no simple answer to that question, the experts said. And even if there were, the United States has limited leverage to press either side, given that the Obama administration, preoccupied by Afghanistan and domestic issues, is reluctant to intervene directly in Sudan.

"Our ability to direct the parties is just an illusion," said Andrew S. Natsios, a special envoy to

Sudan during the Bush administration who teaches at Georgetown University. “But we can facilitate the process by proposing different or alternative ways of approaching things.”

Advocacy groups, which have harshly criticized the administration’s policy and especially the role of General Gration, seem cheered by the activity, the most since the Bush administration helped broker the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement that ended the civil war. Mr. Lyman’s arrival, some said, reflects a realistic approach to avoiding another war.

“The hope of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement was to really transform Sudan as a state,” said John Norris, the executive director of enough, an anti-genocide project. “Now they’re focusing on the most base, backroom deals that can keep the elites on both sides well fed.”

NCP should put in place constitutional setup to back unity - Arman

Ajras Al-Hurriya Khartoum, 14/09/10 – A press release distributed yesterday from the office of SPLM Deputy Secretary-General Yassir Arman says the NCP has to “abandon its old habits” in the forthcoming meeting of the CPA partners in the US. The statement said that the NCP should come up with a strategic vision and to propose a roadmap for the conduct of the referendum and the outstanding issues of the CPA such as the Protocol on Abyei and border demarcation as well as the Darfur issue. The SPLM said that the NCP is also required to come up with a proposal that would have the backing of the international community on the way towards a sustainable peace in the country whatever the outcome of the referendum.

In its statement, the SPLM also pointed out that there are more and new challenges in the event of separation. It however pointed out that the country’s unity could only be preserved through a new constitutional setup that would address the root causes of the problems of southern Sudan which, in essence, are the problems of Sudan as a whole. “Unity on a new basis is the best option if the reasons for such unity are put in place and if the southern Sudanese voters are convinced,” said the SPLM.

UNMIS and Norwegian police start training southern police

Radio Miraya FM Juba, 13/09/10 - UNMIS and Norwegian police have started training the second batch of Southern Sudan police in Juba on Monday. The purpose of the training is to prepare Southern Sudan police for the coming referendum exercise.

Addressing the participants during the opening of the training, the Deputy Inspector of Police, Gordon Micheal Kur, hailed the efforts of the international community in building the capacity of southern Sudan police. He assured people that police will be more organized during referendum than the previous elections.

Meanwhile, the Norwegian Consul in Southern Sudan, Ivan Peterson, said that this training is particularly to empower the Southern Sudan Police force for the referendum. Peterson further added that his country has provided over US\$ 250,000 for the exercise.

Southern Parliament approves ad hoc committee for referendum

Radio MirayaFM 13/09/10 - The Southern Sudan Legislative Assembly passed on Monday a report by a specialized committee of legal affairs on the establishment of an ad hoc committee for the Southern Sudan referendum. The Committee is tasked with coordinating and facilitating referendum activities and ensuring that the referendum is organized on January 9, 2011 as scheduled.

South Sudan minister warns of war if referendum delayed

Sudantribune.com 13/09/10 - A senior south Sudan official has warned citizens in the semi-autonomous region to brace themselves for all possibilities, including war, if the referendum on the region's possible independence from the north does not go ahead as planned in January 2011.

Michael Makuei Lueth, Minister of Parliamentary Affairs at the GoSS, yesterday told stakeholders attending a half-day referendum meeting that southerners want to see the referendum take place successfully but warned that if the exercise failed to take place, "southerners should prepare themselves for anything, including war."

Makuei, who was flanked by his under-secretary Dr. Julia Duany Aker, emphasized the importance of civic education on the two referendum options, saying that voters need to be enlightened on the existing laws, citing the Referendum Act.

The minister further disclosed that the much-awaited voters' registration is likely to get underway next month. However, no specific date has been fixed so far.

"Many of you are very excited about the referendum and when registration begins, they will hurry and register. Those who think they will not be able to vote in next year's referendum should not register," Makuei said.

He further said that advocates involved in the referendum work should not be harassed by any party, warning that any form of interference in their work would be contrary to constitutional provisions.

"If you are an advocate for unity or separation, you need to go and talk to the people and persuade them on why they should buy your idea. No one has the right to harass you in your work," Makuei said.

Sudantribune.com has learned that the Southern Sudan Referendum Commission (SSRC) is already in the process of establishing an information team committee to liaise with the media fraternity during pre and post-referendum period. Similarly, the GoSS is reportedly in the process of setting up a security committee, comprising of trained personnel who will be required to observe standards of fairness and impartiality.

Israel proposes support for GoSS in the event of separation

Al-Rai Al-Aam Khartoum, 14/09/10 - A high-level Israeli military delegation that recently visited southern Sudan has offered assistance to the GoSS on the post-referendum arrangements, according to an informed source. The source said yesterday that the Israeli delegation that was made up of a number of Mossad agents toured a number of SPLA military installations and was requested to provide the SPLA with "advanced communications and spying equipment".

Representatives of 224 tribes to hold comprehensive unity support conference

Al-Rai Al-Aam Khartoum, 14/09/10 - A meeting of representatives of the local administration in Sudan has resolved to organise a comprehensive conference that would bring representatives of some 224 tribes to support the unity option. The meeting is slated for the first week of October and is organised under the auspices of Vice-President Ali Osman Mohamed Taha.

Other Highlights

South Sudan president travelling to US for high-level meetings on CPA

Sudantribune.com 13/09/10 - The First Vice president of Sudan and South Sudan Salva Kiir will head to the United States to attend a meeting organized by the United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon next week on referendum that will be attended by President Barack Obama and other senior world officials.

A statement issued by the head of the Government of South Sudan (GoSS) mission in the U.S. Ezekiel Gatkuoth said that Kiir will also meet with senior members of the U.S. administration and will also address the Congressional Black Caucus as a keynote speaker.

He also will meet Sudanese Community organizations, Church leaders, and activists to brief them about the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) with focus on the referendum scheduled to take place early next year which is likely to create the world's newest state.

Kiir cautions South Sudan armed forces over involvement in politics

Sudantribune.com 13/09/10 – GoSS President Salva Kiir Mayardit who is also the Commander –in Chief of the Sudanese People's Liberation Army (SPLA), has cautioned the military against indulging in partisan politics.

"Your most sacred obligation is to protect and defend the constitution, the sovereignty and the territorial integrity of South Sudan," he said in his speech at a military meeting attended by high ranking officers at the SPLA general headquarters on Saturday

Kiir's statements come four months after April elections which witnessed the participation of former SPLA high ranking officers in the polls as independent candidates. One of them, the general George Athor, who contested the outcome of the vote, is now tracked by SPLA forces after his rebellion

He said the armed forces, be it police, or any other, must uphold their reputations. He said it was the military's sacred duty to continue its pursuit of high standards in professionalism and to dedicate themselves to the protection of the constitution.

"Even though you are in a regimented profession and must command, you will be better commanders when you care about the welfare of the men and women under your command," urged Kiir.

Kiir said the government was committed to expanding and strengthening the force to transform it into a professional army which will make South Sudan inhospitable for criminals.

He promised the government's resolve to support military training and collaboration with other African countries in order to work with the African Standby Force - a new international military force working under the African Union.

"The government had taken steps towards resolving the challenges facing men and officers of the military and those measures will yield dividends in the not too distant future," said Kiir.

SPLM calls on Presidency to expedite formation of the Rights Commission

Akhir Lahza Khartoum, 14/09/10 - The SPLM has called on the Presidency to expedite the formation of the Human Rights Commission.

Thomas Wani, Head of SPLM Parliamentary Bloc, stressed the need for formation of the commission so that it could be endorsed by the Parliament during the current session. He said the Commission's top task would be to address all human rights-related problems.

With regard to a proposal reportedly adopted by the UN to postpone referendum, he denied any trend to that end.

SPLM Liberation Council meeting deferred

Akhbar Al-Youm Juba, 14/09/10 – The SPLM has deferred a meeting of its Liberation Council to early next month. The meeting was scheduled to take place this Thursday but sources report that it had to be deferred because of the political developments in the country. The source said that the meeting is expected to witness heated debate between separatists and unionists within the SPLM as they seek to come up with strategies to back what they would decide is the better option for the people of southern Sudan come the 2011 referendum.

Al-Sahafa meanwhile quotes SPLM Secretary-General Pagan Amum as saying that the meeting has been deferred to the 14 of October and would discuss the current political situation in the country. The meeting, he said, would also seek to come up with resolutions on the forthcoming referendum and on the future of the SPLM whatever way the referendum swings.

MPs press for increased pay to the SPLA

The Citizen Juba, 14/09/10 - Members of the Southern Sudan Legislative Assembly yesterday noted with utmost concern that the pay-scale of the SPLA soldiers was grossly not commensurate with their responsibilities and that part of the referendum funding should be used to upgrade military salaries.

Construction of security roads was cited as one of the leading aids for the army and southern Sudan organized forces to efficiently provide security during the vote. "It is disturbing that whatever the SPLA receives does not equate to any grades of the public services," Twich East representative Deng Dau Deng said.

The members noted that if the NCP delays or denies the referendum for the people of southern Sudan, the House will have to decide the fate of southerners with defence of the army.

"But how do we ensure that this particular army will help during the referendum," said Deng, former Chairperson of War and Veterans Commission. "The Assembly should establish a committee to set up a structure if we are to have an army that will protect the referendum".

The Minister of Finance & Economic Planning David Deng Athorbei asked the Assembly to approve about 319,546,000 pounds for the SPLA and Veterans Affairs in supplementary budget 2010.

Kenya invites tenders to build new port

AFP Nairobi, 13/09/10 - Kenya has invited tenders Monday for the building of phase one of a new port in the coastal town of Lamu, which is part of a huge infrastructure project to link the port with Ethiopia and south Sudan.

The first phase will see the construction of three berths to accommodate 100,000 dwt (deadweight tonnes) container ships, 30,000-dwt general cargo ships and 100,000-dwt bulk cargo carriers, according to a newspaper advertisement. Other infrastructure will include access roads, railway sidings, warehouses and other buildings at Lamu's Manda Bay.

China is to help finance the construction of the port set to become Kenya's second along the Indian Ocean coast after Mombassa.

The development of the new port is part of massive project which includes a transport corridor traversing eastern Kenya and to neighbouring Ethiopia and south Sudan.

The road could provide a route to export Chinese oil from southern Sudan, which is to vote in a referendum in January whether to secede or remain part of Sudan.

UN could not transport Dr. Khalil to Darfur without consent – Sudan

Al-Khartoum Khartoum, 14/03/10 - The Office of Presidential Adviser Ghazi Salahuddin who is also in charge of Darfur dossier clarified that the news circulated by the media to the effect that UN is arranging to transport JEM leader Khalil to Darfur was not true because it was not stated by a UN official, adding the Government was not officially informed about any such arrangement. He said the UN could not take such a measure without the Sudanese Government's knowledge and consent.

Doha talks to resume next Sunday – Mediation

Al-Sahafa Khartoum, 14/09/10 - The Qatari mediation has informed the Sudanese government and the Darfur Liberation and Justice Movement that Doha talks would be resumed next Sunday 19 September 2010 to address the pending issues to sign a final agreement before October.

While the movement rules out that the talks would resume on the specified date, the Sudanese government has expressed its readiness for the talks. Deputy Secretary General of the Movement Mr. Hashim Hamad has accused the Sudanese government and LRA of coordinating attacks of the movement's positions in South Darfur.

UNAMID constructs houses for 300 households at new Kalma IDP site

Al-Ahram Al-Youm Nyala, 14/09/10 – Authorities in South Darfur were handed over yesterday more than 100 houses from UNAMID in support for plan to relocate Kalma IDP camp.

Adviser to the state Government for humanitarian affairs Suleiman Ahmed Omer said the UNAMID engineers would assemble housing units to accommodate some 300 households.

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