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Highlights

South-south Dialogue kicks off

Under the theme: "Towards Unity of Purpose and Democracy," the South-South Dialogue Conference kicked off in Khartoum yesterday at the Friendship Hall. The Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS) came under heavy fire as participants accused it of "spreading corruption, looting some \$8bln in development support funding and failing to set up a constitutional system in southern Sudan, report **local dailies**.

Addressing the session, NCP Deputy Chairman Nafie Ali Nafie said that rigging of the 2011 referendum results by the SPLM would be tantamount to a violation of the CPA. He reiterated the NCP's readiness to dialogue with all southern Sudanese political parties.

The NCP stalwart called on participants to come together in dialogue and suggested a coalition to end corruption in southern Sudan.

Sudantribune.com also reports that Gissmalla Abdullah Rassas, a prominent southern Sudanese political figure, said that it is imperative for the conference to produce resolutions "that benefit all Sudanese citizens".

SPLM-DC's Lam Akol said that southerners are yet to see the fruits of the CPA. He accused the SPLM of cracking down on opposition parties in the South including his SPLM-DC adding that the referendum process "requires good governance".

Bona Malwal, another prominent figure, called upon southern Sudanese to "free themselves politically and economically from the SPLM rule".

He added that the Juba conference hosted by the SPLM last summer "had a hidden agenda". It included twenty Sudanese parties mainly the Northern opposition parties and issued an ultimatum to the NCP saying they would boycott the elections if the Sudanese parliament does not pass, before November 30, a number of laws aiming at creating an appropriate environment for the multi-party elections.

Malwal said that the NCP "has satisfied all its obligations under the CPA," and deserves credit for that.

The conference that closes on 16 November 2009 is a continuation of the Kenana Forum held last April in which participants blamed the SPLM for "the continuously deteriorating administrative, security and political situation in Southern Sudan". It has drawn participants from the SANU, UDSF, United Democratic Party, SPLM-DC, Sudan National Labour Party, USAP-2, South Sudan Democratic Forum, and the South-Sudan Democratic Front – all of them major political players in southern Sudan.

Sudan, UN and AU joint mechanism convenes today

Sudantribune.com Khartoum, 14/11/09 - Officials of the African Union, United Nations and Sudanese government will meet Monday to discuss issues related to the deployment and functioning of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation (UNAMID).

In its seventh meeting to take place in Khartoum next Monday, the tripartite panel will continue to discuss the deployment of peacekeepers, the launch of UNAMID radio in Darfur and recruitment of Sudanese staff, said Nourredine Mezni today.

UNAMID's current military strength stands at around 15,000 peacekeepers (about 75% projected strength) and more than 2,000 troops are expected on the ground in the coming two months from-Tanzania, Burkina Faso, Sierra Leone, Nepal, Ethiopia and South Africa.

During the coming weeks the largest UN peacekeeping mission will receive five tactical helicopters from Ethiopia for the first time but is still in dire need of 19 aircraft including Medium Utility Helicopters and fixed wing surveillance units in order to have efficient mobility in Darfur.

The Spokesperson for UNAMID said that the mechanism will also review the UNAMID contributions to improve the infrastructure in Darfur.

"We have embarked on outreach activities to attract wider and more diverse candidates, said Mezni who spoke about ongoing efforts to diversify local staff and achieve gender balance.

"We have received about 16,000 applications from diverse groups" he added.

UN envoy for children, armed conflict to visit Sudan

Xinhua UN, 13/11/09 - A top UN official on children and armed conflict will visit Sudan on November 15-23 to ensure greater protection for children affected by conflicts.

Radhika Coomaraswamy, Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, will pay the visit at the invitation of the Government of Sudan, the envoy's office said Friday.

The objective of this field mission is to follow up on her previous visit in January 2007 and to ascertain first hand the situation with a view to collaborating with all the stakeholders.

During her stay in Khartoum, Coomaraswamy will pay particular attention to issues such as recruitment and use of children by armed groups and forces as well as their demobilization and reintegration into communities; sexual violence particularly against girls in Darfur and killing; maiming of children as well as the targeting and kidnapping of humanitarian workers, her office said in a press release.

The UN envoy will also seek to meet with children and their affected communities in order to listen to their views, the press release said.

Coomaraswamy will engage in a constructive dialogue with National Authorities from North and South Sudan on these important issues. Moreover, she will meet with relevant non-state parties to the conflict in the effort to address grave violations against children.

SPLM calls on parliamentarians to remain steadfast in their boycott

Al-Sahafa reports that a two-day emergency meeting of the SPLM Political Bureau held in Juba concluded yesterday with calls on lawmakers on the SPLM ticket to remain steadfast in their "heroic" boycott of sessions of the National Assembly until agreement is reached on a clear programme to implement outstanding provisions of the CPA.

Participants at the session discussed issues pertaining to obstacles facing the implementation of the CPA. In its final communiqué, the SPLM politburo accused the NCP for delaying implementation of the CPA and called on parliament to set a programme for deliberations on the referendum bill, the Popular Consultation for the Two Areas of Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile. The SPLM politburo also praised the agreement reached with the NCP to halt hostile media campaigns and called on all parties to continue dialogue towards solutions.

NEC will mull requests to extend the voter registration period

NEC Chairman Abel Alier said that the Commission would look into requests for an extension of the voter registration period, reports **Al-Ahdath**. He pointed out however that such a registration would affect the whole elections schedule set by the NEC.

SPLM requests two-week extension of voter registration period

An emergency meeting of the SPLM politburo concluded yesterday with calls for an extension of the period for voter registration for at least two weeks to allow those who have not registered to do so, reports ***Al-Khartoum***. Participants blamed lack of voter education for the low voter registration turnout.

SPLM notes irregularities in voter registration in at least 17 states

SPLM Secretary-General Pagan Amum has revealed that they have noted irregularities in voter registration in at least 17 states in the country – 13 in the north and four in the south, reports ***Al-Ahdath***. Speaking to reporters in Juba yesterday, Amum pointed out that the SPLM has noted that some polling agents were in fact members of the NCP. He also slammed the decision by the NEC to allow for the registration the regular forces at their duty station.

SPLM-DC's Lam Akol to run for GoSS Presidency

SPLM-DC has announced that it has nominated its leader Lam Akol as its Presidential candidate at GoSS levels and for the FVP slot for the forthcoming elections, ***Al-Wifaq*** reports. Party Spokesperson Jamal Al-Sarah said that the party believes that their candidate can compete and win the elections against the incumbent FVP Salva Kiir.

Sudan ex-PM warns of the impact of an NCP re-election on Sudan's future

Sudantribune.com Khartoum, 13/11/09 - The people of South Sudan should be expected to vote for independence in the event the NCP wins the April 2010 elections, former Prime Minister and head of Umma Party Sadiq El-Mahdi said.

"The election of the NCP would carry the hostile spirit in its confrontation with the SPLM into the future and the situation in Darfur would deteriorate further," he said in an interview with the London based ***Al-Sharq Al-Awsat*** newspaper.

"I believe southern public opinion would reject unity if it thought that it would be a continuation of what is happening in the south at present, especially as security is deteriorating and there are major tribal conflicts in the south" he added.

He cautioned that more needs to be done to ensure the integrity of the pre and post election process.

He also lamented the short period for voter registration and said it coincides with the harvest months, the Haj and the eid-al-Adha festive season and underlined the need for an extension until the end of December.

LRA kill 4 civilians in South Sudan's Nzara - official

Sudantribune.com Nzara (WES), 14/11/09 - Ugandan rebels have killed at least 4 civilians in their latest devastating attack in the far southwest of Southern Sudan Nzara County, the County Commissioner Col Sentina Ndefu confirmed on Saturday.

LRA rebels stormed Buremanga village in a region about 8km southwest of Nzara County, killing four people, the Office for the Commissioner said in Kinshasa.

The "notorious" rebels stormed the village on Friday November 13, 2009 at 10:00AM.

"Unknown numbers of civilians have been abducted in the latest horrendous attack," stated Sentina.

The civilians had converged to Buremanga Boma to take part in the ongoing voter registration process. It turned to mourning. "The LRA attack will have adverse effect on the voter registration in Nzara, after the scene the voter registrations have come to a standstill in some parts of Nzara County," worries the commissioner.

The rebels also kidnapped many other civilians, including children, according to a shot-survived escapee's statement, while a source from the mourners said food and non-food products were looted in raids that "led to the displacement of many people".

Some 56 LRA combatants surrender to SPLA, says SPLA spokesman

Sudantribune.com Rumbek, 12/11/09 - Fifty-six fighters of the Ugandan Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) have surrendered to the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), according to SPLA spokesman Maj-Gen. Kuol Diem Kuol.

First a small group of five LRA rebels surrendered, later followed by a larger group composed of 41 people. Most of the surrenders took place in Western Equatoria State, said Maj-Gen. Kuol.

The news follows a spate of other LRA surrenders across a vast region – from south of Garamba National Park in DR Congo to the Central African Republic – where the scattered LRA is being pursued. Provoked by an internationally coordinated attack on their bases in December 2008, LRA this year carried out massacres and displaced tens of thousands in north-eastern Uganda and Sudan.

However, Kuol said the Ugandan rebels are reorganizing their forces in the border areas between South Darfur, Western Bahr-EI-Ghazal State as well as in the Central African Republic.

Kuol noted that whenever LRA rebel fighters surrender themselves to SPLA in Yambio, they are transported to a SPLA barracks in Yei, from whence a Kenyan bus transports them surely to Uganda. A few of LRA are being airlifted by plane to Uganda, he added. The Ugandan army are receiving them in their country, where typically they are rehabilitated and then sent home or integrated into the army.

Kuol concluded that "they are now enjoying themselves in Acholi village land with their relatives from whom they have been separated for a long time."

Kuol also dismissed recent reports of an SPLA incursion in Moyo District in northern Uganda, calling the report an "unhealthy rumour which was being created by the Khartoum Government to destroy our relationship with the Ugandan government and international world opinion."

"There is no such attack we did in Moyo district – we crosschecked the story and actually we found nothing done by SPLA in Moyo district," he affirmed.

The Ugandan daily Monitor had reported that SPLA soldiers pursued across the border a Ugandan man who was supposedly carrying out research on chimpanzees in the area. The SPLA soldiers believed that he was a spy and searched for him in Gmberi village, the Monitor reported. A Khartoum newspaper, the Arabic *Al-Intibaha*, subsequently carried a report of an SPLA incursion in the area.

Kuol called the story "a rumour that came up" in *Al-intibaha*. "It is a mad person in *Al-Intibaha* newspaper spreading this story. We never made any attack there – how can we attack our friendly sisterly country?"

Party calls for northern Sudan separation from south

Chairman of the Just Peace Forum Party El-Tayeb Mustafa has disclosed for the first time that his party's call for separation from southern Sudan was the result of dialogue with political and military experts, ***Al-Intibaha*** reports. Mustafa, who was speaking to Blue Nile TV yesterday, called on the Government to expedite making necessary preparations for secession and demanded that southerners should be given the choice of moving to their new country or living as refugees in the north. He said that separation has become inevitable, adding the CPA has given the South more than what it deserves.

SPLM vows no concessions in South Sudan referendum

Sudantribune.com Juba, 13/11/09 - The Leadership of the Sudan People Liberation Movement, (SPLM), at an extraordinary political bureau meeting has unanimously agreed not to make any concessions on the going talks with dominant National Congress Party (NCP) over the referendum.

Following his return to Juba after twelve days in Khartoum since October 31 to discuss outstanding issues on CPA implementation, GoSS Vice-President Riek Machar told the press on Thursday he would brief the party on the progress made at the level of the joint political committee that he co-chairs with Sudanese Vice-President Ali Osman Taha.

He said that the NCP's latest proposal has come down from the two-third turnout demand but declined to state the exact figure until the party's politburo discusses it.

The SPLM position is that the turnout be 50%. The NCP came down "a little bit from two-third but we will discuss this in the Politburo, and after that you will be informed," Machar said.

The NCP leadership "are showing signals towards reducing their initial positions on required percentage for voter turnout but it is still long way to concede," said Paul Mayom Akech, the official spokesperson of the government of Southern Sudan and minister of information and broadcasting service.

Paul Mayom further added other people, he declined to name, are not giving complete attention to the referendum to allow focus on other national matters.

Governor of Jonglei State requests GoSS' intervention to restore calm

Governor of Jonglei state Kuol Manyang has called on the GoSS to intervene to end conflicts between the Shiluk and the Dinka tribes, ***Al-Intibaha*** reports. Manyang said his Government was coordinating with authorities in the neighbouring state of Upper Nile in order to contain tribal conflicts. County Commissioner Santino Riyang told Radio Miraya that the security situation in his state was stable following the recent tribal clashes.

Government calls on all stakeholders to participate in Doha talks

Al-Sahafa reports Presidential Adviser Ghazi Salahuddin, at press conference in Paris yesterday called on all the parties to the Darfur conflict to participate in the forthcoming Darfur peace talks in Doha. "We encourage all the parties to go to Qatar to attend the talks," he said. He said that in Paris he had discussion with French officials, diplomats and politicians on efforts to improve and strengthen relations between the two countries.

Iranian company denies UN report on arms dealings with Sudan

Sudantribune.com Washington, 14/11/09 - An Iranian businessman has denied a UN report accusing his company of supplying sophisticated military equipment to the Sudanese government.

A UN panel of experts established to monitor compliance with UN Security Council resolutions relating to the Darfur region has found that that unmanned aerial vehicles used in Darfur were equipped with video surveillance technology ordered by a company based in the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

After investigating the source of video recorders it turned out to be sold by Millennium Product Company LLC, with a sales manager the report named as Mojtaba Sadegbi and managing director Saeid Mousaei, both Iranian nationals.

The report said the UN monitors visited the company in June. A few hours later Sadegbi and Mousaei left the country.

However, none of the individuals were accused of having links to the Iranian government.

In an interview with Asre Iran news website the head of the Millennium Product Company LLC expressed "astonishment" over the UN report

"Our company has not provided any economic deal not only with Sudan but not with any other African country so far" Mousaei said.

"What the report has identified as UK-made binoculars were 60 professional flash memory cards to fix the traffic. We bought the cards from the UK and sold to Iran through a completely legal procedure which was completely civil" he added.

But the panel has stated that the video surveillance technology originated in Britain and is "not used for civilian purposes".

For this reason, the panel said, the Iranian behind the sale of the video devices to Sudan had to know their ultimate purpose.

Regarding the attempts by the panel to meet them, Mousaei said that after seeking advice that "UN officials have no rights in the [United Arab] Emirates to visit the companies and ask for documents wilfully, and that this process should be carried out by the police".

"Therefore, pursuing the law, we did not respond them and handed over our documents to the Dubai police so that they could investigate the matter. After the completion of the investigation on the documents, the Dubai authorities admitted that no illegal measure had been carried out and no commodity had been exported to Sudan and the case was closed" he added.

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