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Media Monitoring Report

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Highlights

NCP, SPLM agreement on pending issues imminent – Mbeki

Al-Sudani 15/11/10 – AUHIP Chairman Thabo Mbeki announced an imminent agreement between the two CPA parties on all the pending issues particularly the demarcation of the border, referendum, security, Abyei and post-referendum arrangements. Mbeki made the remarks after a meeting with FVP Salva Kiir Mayardit and VP Ali Osman Taha.

“We are about to finalize a document on pending issues and we hope we will be able to do it today,” FVP Salva Kiir told reporters after a meeting with Mbeki, according to *Al-Khartoum* 15/11/10. Kiir said the framework agreement would cover a range of issues related to the demarcation of the border, security and post-referendum issues, adding that the Abyei issue would be resolved at the Presidency level.

Sudan Tribune website 14/11/10 reported that Mbeki declared today that the ruling National Congress Party (NCP) and the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement (SPLM) are inching closer to resolving outstanding items of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) as the country walks steadily towards the likely breakup of the country.

The AU High Level Panel on Sudan led by Thabo Mbeki told reporters on Sunday that both sides are working on a framework agreement detailing resolution to issues such as border demarcation, security, post-referendum arrangements and Abyei.

The former South African made the announcement following his meeting with Sudanese First Vice-President Salva Kiir and 2nd Vice-President Ali Osman Mohamed Taha.

Mbeki said that the NCP and SPLM are currently negotiating the terms of the accord and will be completed as early as Sunday. He further said that the Abyei issue will be referred to the presidency.

"It has been agreed that the Abyei file be referred to the Presidency. We at the AU panel will immediately meet with the Presidency after President al-Bashir returns from Saudi Arabia [from pilgrimage]," he said.

"The [Sudanese] leaders are very sensitive and committed to the fact that indeed all interests and aspirations of the people of Abyei are addressed. So we would really like to assure the people of Abyei that even as the process of voter registration for the south referendum takes place, that indeed the matter of the people of Abyei is being attended to and will be attended to," he added...

Reuters (Khartoum) 15/11/10 reports that African Union mediators said northern and southern leaders signed a framework agreement on Sunday setting out the terms of negotiations to resolve a list of disputes including how to share out oil revenues and national debt after a split.

In the agreement both sides vowed not to return to war, to give people the right to choose their

citizenship after any split and to start the demarcation of their disputed border immediately.

"In the event of secession, this will be the longest inter- state border in Africa ... The Parties have committed themselves to maintaining a 'soft-border', which will permit unhindered economic and social activity and interaction," read an AU statement.

It did not go into details on the location of the border which is disputed and said a bitter row over the ownership of the central oil-producing Abyei region still needed to be resolved.

BBC News website 15/11/10 reports that north and south Sudan have agreed a framework to resolve most outstanding issues ahead of a vote on southern independence, the African Union says.

Both sides have agreed to demarcate the north-south border while allowing northern nomads to graze in the south.

The framework also includes commitments to allow Sudanese citizens the right to live in either north or south Sudan.

Observers say the move will reduce some tension ahead of January's referendum, for which voter registration has begun.

The AU statement said both parties "committed themselves to the immediate demarcation of the north-south border".

"In the event of secession, this will be the longest inter-state border in Africa, hosting in its immediate vicinity on both sides a significant proportion of Sudan's population," the statement said.

"The parties have committed themselves to maintaining a "soft border", which will permit unhindered economic and social activity and interaction, which will be essential for economic prosperity and harmony between the north and the south."

Under the new framework, the disputed border area of Abyei will be addressed directly by the presidents of Sudan and the semi-autonomous south, the statement said.

The BBC's James Copnall in Khartoum says the announcement from the AU's High Level Implementation Panel on Sudan, led by South Africa's former President Thabo Mbeki, will reduce some of the tension that has been growing in the build-up to the vote in January.

AFP 15/11/10 reports that North and south Sudan have agreed to settle key issues such as border demarcation and trade barriers ahead of a January referendum on southern independence, the African Union said on Monday.

Negotiations "concluded successfully" between the ruling National Congress Party of Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir and former southern rebel Sudan People's Liberation Movement said an AU statement.

Under the deal, the two sides "committed themselves to the immediate demarcation of the north-south border" and to lift barriers on trade and the movement of people, regardless of the vote's outcome.

"Regardless of the outcome of the referendum, the parties undertook that neither would take any action, nor support any group, that would undermine the security of the other.

"Instead, the north and the south would continue to cooperate and share information that would enhance their capacity to deal with internal and external threats as well as trans-border crime."

SSRC announces readiness for referendum registration today

Al-Sudani 15/11/10 – The southern Sudanese across the country will go to registration centres today to register for the upcoming referendum. SSRC Chairman Mohamed Ibrahim Khalil has confirmed the readiness for the registration although he complained of insufficient centres in the North.

Sudan Tribune website 14/11/10 reported Khalil voiced frustration on Sunday with foreign donors saying they are unwilling to disburse cash directly to his group.

"They give us finished goods, materials just as you cater for a minor. You don't give a minor cash in case they should misuse it but give them finished goods and services which, incidentally, we resent," Khalil was quoted as saying by Reuters.

"The party which has not availed us of any usable money so far is the international donors," he added.

The statements by Khalil come one day ahead of the kickoff of voter registration for those eligible to decide the fate of Southern Sudan on whether it would remain united with the North or establish its own state.

Khalil also blasted hiring foreign contractors and experts which in one situation complicated the process rather than facilitate it without seeing if there were competent Sudanese to do the same job. He said they had appointed a U.S. law firm which made incomprehensible regulations based on the referendum law. The commission finally had to find a Sudanese firm to do the job.

"This is an utter waste of money," he said, adding the commission had been delayed by six weeks in moving into its offices because of the delay in funds from the donors.

The national government had paid the commission 9 million Sudanese pounds (\$3.8 million) and the semi-autonomous southern government 10 million pounds. But he said international partners were not even consulting the body on much of their work.

Khalil also underscored the very tight timetable for the referendum process which starts with the registration process which will end in 17 days and the voter lists will only be completed just before voting begins on January 9. He revealed that the commission had asked the presidency to make a decision on whether to stick to the tight timetable.

"We said to them that the schedule is very, very tight, pushed to the maximum and it does not

have any margin for error, like trucks (carrying voting materials) crashing," Khalil said. "We are working night and day."

Khalil said last month that it would be a "miracle" to hold the plebiscite as scheduled on January 9, 2011.

The commission chief also announced that registration would be delayed a few days in Egypt because of a communication breakdown with the government. It would also be delayed in the United States and Australia because southerners there had asked for more registration centers.

S. Sudan queues to register for independence vote

Reuters 15/11/10 - Hundreds of south Sudanese queued to start registering for their long-awaited independence referendum on Monday, their first concrete step towards a vote that could split Africa's largest country in two.

The move came as northern and southern leaders agreed they would form a "soft border" allowing the free movement of trade and nomads between their territories in the event of a separation, as part of a framework agreement to resolve a list of disputes between the two sides.

Officials with megaphones ranged the streets of the southern capital Juba in the morning calling on people to register. Queues built up in the city as people waited for southern president Salva Kiir to cast his vote and start the process.

One unofficial vehicle blared out a pro-independence song: "It's the Promised Land and the Promised Land is coming".

The pro-independence mood came in the face of a campaign led by Sudan's Khartoum-based President Omar Hassan al-Bashir for southerners to choose to stay united with the north.

Southern leaders have accused the north of trying to delay and disrupt the plebiscite to keep control of the south's oil reserves, and warned there is a risk of a return to conflict.

Bashir has dismissed the accusations and promised to accept the result of the referendum.

"The country is facing a crucial stage of its history," the head of the referendum's organising commission Mohamed Ibrahim Khalil told reporters ahead of the start of registration.

Khalil acknowledged the commission had not done a good enough job in publicising the location of registration centres. A day ahead of the vote lists of centres were available only on the commission's website and in schools and many southerners have complained they do not know where to register.

Southerners also will be able to register in the north and eight countries outside Sudan.

The mood in Khartoum on Monday morning was subdued. No voters had turned up at one registration centre seen by Reuters just after the 8 a.m. (0500 GMT) deadline for the start of registration.

BBC News website 15/11/10 reports that the much-delayed voter registration for the referendum began on Monday. Registration has started late, in part because of a number of political disagreements between north and south.

An estimated five million people are eligible to vote, and officials now have a shortened period of 17 days in which to register them.

Getting material to all the centres, in one of the least developed places on earth, has been a real challenge, our correspondent says.

The United Nations has warned logistical problems are likely in some places on the first day.

Denis Kadima, director of the UN's Integrated Referendum and Electoral Division, said most of the materials should be in place, despite the huge logistical challenges, particularly in the South.

But in the Khartoum suburb of Gereif, things did not begin well, says our correspondent, who is at a registration centre there.

The location of the registration centre was changed at the last minute, leaving domestic observers waiting outside the locked gate of the old venue.

At the new place, posters encouraged every southerner to register; but initially, there were more posters than people, our correspondent says.

AFP 15/11/10 reports that South Sudan president Salva Kiir appealed to southerners to sign up en masse as registration kicked off Monday for a January referendum that may lead to the partition of Africa's largest country.

After a three-month delay, the registration process began with an air of celebration in the south, while it was marked with indifference in the mainly Muslim north, where stores were closed for the Eid Al-Adha holiday.

Kiir appeared early at a Juba registration centre outside a memorial to John Garang, who led the mostly Christian south to a 2005 peace deal that ended a 22-year war with the north before he died in a helicopter crash.

"A referendum happens only once. People must come out en masse otherwise it would mean people fought and died for nothing," the leader of the autonomous south said, as hundreds lined up outside the office.

Loudspeakers fitted on cars that were driven around the southern capital's streets blared appeals to voters against the backdrop of a song with the refrain: "We are heading towards the promised land."

"This is a historic moment for south Sudan. I cannot wait to get on the voting list and vote in the referendum," said Gabriel Aleu, a 20-year-old.

Anneno Faith, who runs a clothing stall in Juba, said: "I have registered and I am looking

forward to voting. We are looking forward to freedom, to go forward to be independent." Philip Maboir, a student who held up his ink-stained finger, said he was "excited that I am taking part in something to decide not only my future, but also of so many other southern Sudanese to come."

In Khartoum, registration centres were empty as many southerners who live in the Sudanese capital made the trip south to enroll.

"We expect the process to start very slowly but they will catch up and they will build the momentum after a couple of days and things should run more smoothly," said Denis Kadima, director of the UN Integrated Referendum and Electoral Division.

"The government of southern Sudan is absolutely confident that we are able to have our people register on time," southern information minister Barnaba Marial Benjamin told AFP.

Registration offices will remain open until December 1 for the vote, which is to be held on the same day as a referendum in the oil-rich Abyei region, with voters there choosing to stay with the north or go with the south.

Conflicting reports on readiness for voter registration in Jonglei state

Sudan Tribune website 14/11/10 - Preparations for voter registration for South Sudan's self-determination referendum are complete according to Jonglei state high committee. Registration for the referendum is due to begin Monday 15 November.

"People have already started transporting registration kits from counties headquarters [voter] registration centers," said John Boloc, a member of the State High Committee (SHC).

On Saturday November 13, a voter registration awareness rally was conducted in Bor town, the capital of Jonglei state. Similar addresses were expected to have been conducted at county headquarters according to SHC.

The event was attended by politicians including the Deputy Governor Hussein Mar Nyuot, was organized rally by civil society organizations, as well as the 'Referendum Task Force'.

Vehicles and motorcycles meant to assist in movement of referendum materials and personnel from counties headquarters to registration centers are assembled at SHC office in Bor displaying that the process is on course, according to officials.

"The state of Jonglei is ready," said Mr. Boloc on Friday in interview with UN sponsored Miraya FM.

But with only hours remaining until voter registration is due to commence registration staffs have told Sudan Tribune that they are not ready.

In Bor County, an official said that some registration material had not been delivered due to flooding and poor roads.

"We are not ready to start registration on Monday," said a registration officer who prefers anonymity.

“We don’t have money for feeding leave alone the whole contract which we [staffs] have which is not yet signed,” the officer added.

The officer nevertheless expressed commitment to the process.

“This is a national duty but realities ought to be said,” the officer noted...

Sudanese shun registration for referendum

The New Vision (Uganda) 14/11/10 - The Southern Sudanese community in Uganda has boycotted the country’s voter registration exercise in Uganda ahead of a referendum on January 9, 2011.

Southern Sudanese will next year vote whether to stay as part of the Sudan or secede; the process of registering them for the vote starts today in Sudan and Kampala.

But representatives of the community, under their umbrella organisation, Community Referendum Coordination Committee, announced on Thursday that they would not participate in the referendum, citing irregularities in the process.

Addressing a press conference at Hotel Africana in Kampala, the chairperson of the organisation, Nathaniel Oyet, said they were concerned that non-Southern Sudanese would be allowed to vote.

“The question of eligibility of voters creates a lot of suspicion since the referendum criteria empowers any person without a Sudanese national identity to be registered upon backing by any eligible voter,” he said.

The organization also complained about the delay in delivery of voting materials and sensitization of voters, a process which they said should have started in July. They said the delay was a deliberate attempt by the Khartoum government to rig the polls.

The group also expressed fear about their security, saying the exercise had been scheduled at a critical time of Uganda’s campaign period.

Sudan Tribune website 14/11/10 reported that Southern Sudanese residing in the neighboring country of Uganda are being advised by the regions ruling party not to register to vote in the regions referendum on independence due to take place in January.

Moses Larco Duku Lomayat, an information officer in the office of President of South Sudan, in an email message seen by Sudan Tribune, said that he had traveled to northern Uganda to tell southern Sudanese living there not to register amid fears of pro-unity vote rigging.

He accused officials from north Sudan of issuing national identification cards and other documents required for voter registration to people who were not Southern Sudanese.

If over 40% of registered voters do not turn out when polling begins on January 9 then the result will be declared invalid under the referendum laws passed by the Sudanese parliament.

Lomayat said that the northern officials were hoping to register people who would then not cast a vote, increasing the likelihood that the threshold of 60% participation by registered voters required by referendum law would not be met.

I had an urgent Mission Trip to Northern Uganda this morning. I left Nairobi very early this morning to Kampala and proceeded to Northern Uganda and back to Kampala few minutes ago. The Mission was to assess and to enlighten our people NOT TO REGISTER. The idea was overwhelmingly accepted by all South Sudanese.

Lomayat wrote that the decision to boycott registration in Uganda by southerners living there was appreciated.

Our entire people of South Sudan who are in Uganda have decided to boycott the Referendum Registration Process; in which they have made a right decision at the right time which is much accepted and appreciated by many people in South Sudan. Once again; their decision is very much appreciated by the all our people across the globe, especially those in Juba.

The Sudanese government in Khartoum is campaigning for a vote against separation, whereas the southern government in Juba led by the former rebels the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) is largely seen as in favor of separation.

Acuil Malith Banggol, SPLM Secretary, for Popular and Syndicated Organizations in southern Sudan in another email seen by Sudan Tribune, on Sunday suggested that south Sudanese in the Diaspora should not register...

SPLM starts campaign to prevent reprisal attacks on southerners in the North

Sudan Tribune website 14/11/10 - The SPLM branch in north Sudan has launched a campaign to promote values of coexistence and prevent reprisal attacks against southern citizens if their region decided to split in 2011.

A host of SPLM supporters and leaders of civil society groups gathered on Sunday at the SPLM's headquarters in Al-Mugran area in Khartoum to attend the inauguration of the campaign, which is dubbed "the campaign for coexistence and peace."

The inauguration of the campaign was attended by the SPLM's deputy secretary-general Yasir Arman.

The head of the campaign's organizing committee and member of the SPLM's parliamentary bloc in the federal government, Gorge Andrea, told Sudan Tribune that the campaign aims to prevent possible violence during and after the referendum period by promoting values of coexistence and social peace.

Andrea blamed NCP officials for causing southern citizens to flee north Sudan in large numbers because of their assertions that southerners in the north would lose citizenship rights if the region decided to split from the north.

Concern has been growing over the status of southern citizens in the north if the south decided to break away in a referendum vote set to take place in January 2011.

South Sudan Youth Forum for Referendum rejects unity

Sudan Tribune website 14/11/10 - The South Sudan Youth Forum for Referendum on Sunday rejected voting for unity in the south's self-determination referendum in January.

Speaking to Sudan Tribune from the regional capital of Juba on Sunday, Benjamin Bol Mel, chairperson of the South Sudan Youth Forum for Referendum said voter registration, which begins on Monday 15 Nov. will mark an importance era in the history of south Sudan. He said that the region had never enjoyed peace and development.

“Our people will on Monday start voter registration. This will be the start of important era in their history. It will be the important day because it will be the day on which they will register for the forthcoming vote on the self-determination for them,” said Mel.

Mel said south Sudanese who will have an opportunity to register for the forthcoming vote should ensure they vote for separation on polling day.

“Our people have seen us calling and holding rallies to enlighten them on the importance of separation option. They have been attending in big numbers and this is the time to translate their commitments by turning out for registration and vote without waiving .This is because we have living experiences from unity. The unity has killed many of our people and displaced many others to different parts of the world. This is why we reject it because we have tried it twice. Our people must, therefore, register and vote for separation,” explained Mel.

SSYFR is a body composed of senior government officials and members of southern political parties that conduct regular processions across the region against voting for unity.

Mel, whose staff members organized a procession against unity on Tuesday 9 November in Aweil town, capital of northern Bahr el Ghazal State, said that secession from the north was “imminent” going by the numbers who attend the pro-separation rallies in the south.

“Such high turning out shows that referendum for our people means freedom and access to equal rights without considering certain circles or cliques being more equal than the others as repeatedly appears to be the case with successive Khartoum based governments,” he said.

Speaking to Sudan Tribune from Aweil town, Bona Makuac Mawien, minister of information and communications said the gathering on Tuesday was the largest he had witnessed in the town.

“It was every big rally as civil society organizations in coordination with churches, schools and community activists marched through corridors of Aweil town campaigning for the independence of southern Sudan before congregating at freedom square where by Governor and other high level profiles,” Mawien said.

North-south Sudan tension could spill into Darfur - UNAMID

AFP 14/11/10 – Head of UNAMID warned on Sunday that tensions on the borders between north and south Sudan could spill over into the restive western region.

Ibrahim Gambari also said that UNAMID and the United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNAMIS)

have contingency plans to fend off any possible north-south clashes ahead of January's referendum on southern independence.

"We in Darfur, that is UNAMID and the people of Darfur, we have enough security problems... without the complication arising from the clashes across the border with south Sudan," he told a Khartoum news conference.

"We are also concerned about the spillover effect of the north-south border and the armed incidents occurring there, particularly in the no man's land between south of Sudan and south of Darfur," he said.

"That's why UNMIS and UNAMID have developed contingency plans," he added. The Sudanese army on Saturday accused the armed forces of southern Sudan of aiding Darfuri rebels, a day after clashes in a region between the country's north and south close to Darfur.

On Friday, the Sudanese army clashed with fighters of the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) near Al-Meirem, a sector bordering the south's North Bahr al-Ghazal and the north's South Kordofan, an army spokesman said.

South Kordofan is a state in central Sudan strategically located between the south of the country and Darfur.

Gambari said the JEM was a force to be reckoned with and expressed fears that alliances between some Darfuri groups and the former rebel Sudan People's Liberation Movement could be "rekindled as a result."

"Before the end of the rains there was a feeling in some quarters that JEM was finished... Now, there is a feeling on their part, I think, because I met (exiled JEM leader) Khalil Ibrahim, to say 'We're still here'," Gambari said.

"Sadly the Darfuris are witnessing this new military build-up, movement of troops and clashes as the date of the referendum approaches," Gambari said.

UN Panel arrives in Khartoum to monitor voters' registration

Miraya FM 14/11/10 - The United Nations Secretary-General's panel tasked with monitoring the 2011 referenda on self-determination of southern Sudan arrived in Khartoum on Saturday. The three-member Panel is scheduled to travel around the country over the coming days as it visits voter registration sites in both the north and the south.

It is expected to meet with key officials from the Government of the Sudan and the Southern Sudan. The chairman of the Panel and former President of Tanzania, Benjamin Mkapa, said that voter registration represents a critical phase in the referenda process, adding that they will be watching the process very closely.

However, he hoped that all Southern Sudanese, wherever they live, will be able to turn out in peace and register for the referendum.

Voters are not aware of referendum schedules

Ajras Al-Hurriya 15/11/2010 – a survey carried out by the newspaper at a number of voter registration centers discovered that civilians in the said centers were not aware of the schedules of the referendum including registration period. Interviews with many people revealed absence of voter and civic education. SSRC spokesperson stated that responsibility of failure to inform Center Officers about registration timing rests with the operations department of the SSRC.

Presidential decree on formation of a national body for unity support

Local dailies 15/11/2010 – President Al-Bashir issued a presidential decree yesterday forming a national body for support to referendum and unity under his chairmanship. The decree appointed FVP Salva Kiir Mayardit, VP Ali Osman Taha, DUP leader Mohamed Osman Al-Mirhgani, Ex-Sudan President Abelrahman Siwaraddahab, Bona Malwal, Fatima Abdelmahmoud as deputies for the chair. A general secretariat headed by Attayib Haj Attia was also formed.

Other Highlights

Fighting resumed between SPLA and Galwak Gai

Al-Intibaha 15/11/10- fierce fighting between the SPLA and forces of dissident Gen. Galwak Gai in “Fushoor” area in “Kuj” County left 40 soldiers dead on both sides. Reportedly, Gai forces captured 50 rifles, 5 machine guns and 4 howitzers.

Gen. Gai told *Al-Intibaha* that a battalion of SPLA soldiers attacked his forces in “Fushoor” area yesterday evening, saying 18 SPLA soldiers were killed and 20 wounded in the fighting while his forces suffered 2 dead and 5 wounded.

According to *Akhir Lahza* 15/11/10, the fighting took place yesterday at Fashoda area in Bentinu (Unity state). Reportedly, Gai threatened a long war against GoSS because it did not honor its agreement with him and attacked his forces.

SAF says SPLA support to Darfur rebels a violation of CPA

Al-Ahram Al-Youm 15/11/10 – SAF announced that SPLA support to Darfur rebel movements might affect the conduct of the referendum on schedule particularly the implementation of the security arrangements. However, it pointed out that SPLA support to the movements does not mean return to war.

SAF spokesperson Lt. Col. Al-Sawarmi Khaled said evacuation of JEM’s wounded soldiers by the SPLA is a violation of the CPA, adding the matter would be referred to the JDB.

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