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Media Monitoring Report

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Elections Watch

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Highlights

Rally for Kiir disrupted at Bentiu stadium

Sudan Tribune website 16/3/10 – A rally of thousands of supporters of the incumbent South Sudanese presidential contender was disrupted in Unity State on Monday. Due to the disruption, SPLM Chairman Salva Kiir Mayardit cancelled his appearance and flew back to Juba.

Kiir, the incumbent president of the Government of South Sudan (GOSS), arrived in Unity state from Malakal to conduct a rally at Bentiu stadium. Thousands of people gathered waiting for the presidential candidate to address the rally.

Anti-SPLM elements sabotaged the event, according to Luk Riek, a member of the state secretariat and reporter for the Gurtong website.

Kiir's sole rival in the contest for the presidency is SPLM-"Democratic Change" leader Dr. Lam Akol. As the crowd builds on Monday, some elements began countering the chants of 'SPLM oyee' with 'Change oyee'.

Supporters of independent candidates were also chanting "independency oyee" while waiting to welcome the SPLM presidential candidate to stadium. They also carried their parties' symbols and candidates' pictures

After a short period of time while the organizers were trying to sort out this confusion, hand-to-hand fighting occurred between two SPLM candidates when State Minister of Education William Daud Riek ordered independent candidates and others political parties' supporters to leave Bentiu Stadium.

Eyewitnesses said that the SPLM presidential candidate decided to go back to Juba without briefing his supporters in Bentiu.

Salva Kiir Mayardit's state campaign manager Dr. Joseph Nguen Manytuil, who is also contesting for Southern Sudan Legislative Assembly (SSLA), affirmed that "all people should not be dismissed whether they are from other parties provided that they all here to listen to the SPLM presidential candidate's words". He added that belligerence, however, would be grounds for removal from the stadium.

Dr. Joseph Manytuil, along with Madam Angelina Jany, were adversaries to the leadership of Governor Taban Deng. When neither was nominated as the candidate for the governorship, Angelina decided to stand as an independent candidate.

Unity State has seven candidates seeking for the governorship which include incumbent caretaker governor Taban Deng Gai from SPLM, Bol Liyliy Mathot from NCP, Andrea Kuong Rwei from Forum party, James Mabor Gatkuoth from United Democratic Front Main Stream UDSF/MS party, Thomson Thoan Teny from SPLM-DC and two independent candidates being Madam Angelina Jany Teny and James Kuong Nirew.

Opposition to submit petition to the Presidency Thursday

Akhir Lahza reports the opposition political parties have decided to submit a petition to the Presidency on Thursday to demand elections postponement, warning that the process could

face boycott should the Presidency fail to respond within a week. Spokesperson of the Baathist Party Mohamed Diauldin said there was a considerable consensus among the political parties on the need to delay elections, adding the petition will include steps needed to be taken to ensure free and fair elections.

Juba Alliance demand investigation in donors' funds

Al-Rai Al-Aam reports that the political parties (Juba Alliance) have decided to send a memorandum to the UNSG to ask for an investigation in the fate of the donors' funds allocated in support for Sudan's elections. Alliance leading figure Farouk Abu Eissa told the newspaper yesterday that the NEC's financial integrity is questionable, adding the Commission has switched the printing of elections cards from Slovenia to a Government-owned printing press inside Sudan. He said the Alliance members will hold a meeting early next week to adopt a final position on the upcoming elections.

URRP complains against UNMIS Electoral Officer

Sudan Tribune website 15/3/10— URRP leader Mubarak Al-Fadil sent a formal letter of protest to UNSG Ban Ki-Moon against Ray Kennedy, UNMIS Chief Electoral Affairs Officer.

A row has erupted over the process of awarding the bid for printing the executive posts ballots for the April elections which Al-Fadil says it opens the door for fraud since it was supposed to be printed abroad but a last minute decision assigned it to a local print house belonging to the ruling NCP. Below is text of the petition:

*H.E. Ban Ki-moon, United Nations Secretary General
C/O H.E. Haile Menkerios, SRSG United Nations Mission in Sudan*

Sudan is at a critical juncture, elections are being conducted under a police state where all organs of the state are controlled by the ruling National Congress Party. This situation is in contravention to the Comprehensive Peace Agreement and the Interim National Constitution founded under an agreement that was endorsed by the Security Council and guaranteed by the United States and European Union. Thus under these circumstances we have always welcomed the positive contribution of the international community and United Nations at large and specifically United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) who are providing 47% of the financing and technical assistance for the elections.

The opposition parties and Sudan Peoples' Liberation Movement (SPLM) have been struggling hard with the National Election Commission (NEC) to ensure competence and impartiality in its conduct of the electoral process. Recently we discovered however that the ballot tickets of the executive posts have been printed locally at a government-owned printing house controlled by the ruling National Congress Party at an exorbitant cost of four million United States Dollars.

When we wrote to the National Election Commission complaining, the Commission wrote back to us in a letter dated March 10, 2010 justifying their action and confirming that these actions had been approved by the Chief of the Electoral Assistance Division of UNMIS, Mr. Ray Kennedy (All tender vetting and evaluation had been undertaken in participation of the UNMIS Electoral Assistance Division and that the National Election Commission had not received any complaint regarding the award of tenders) .

Mr. Ray Kennedy has been quoted consistently in the local press commenting on political issues, criticizing opposition parties' demands. These demands include conditions needed to hold a free and fair election. This action supported by your staff member has left the door open for the duplication of ballot tickets and thus manipulating and forging the electoral process. Mr.

Kennedy has shown ignorance and incompetence in comprehending the legal and political set up in which the elections are being conducted.

The Electoral Assistance Division of UNMIS has failed to stop the National Election Commission or alert the monitors and political parties that the printing of the ballot tickets has been diverted from the legitimate winner of the tender to be printed in a printing house controlled by the ruling National Congress Party and its security apparatus at five times the cost of the original award. This has serious implications on the elections.

We call for an immediate investigation and transparency in dispensing with international funds directed to the National Election Commission for training, voter and civic education and technical assistance.

Yours sincerely,

Mubarak Elmahdi Chairman - Umma Party Sudan Presidential Candidate

NCP elections win means separation of the South – SPLM official

SPLM Secretary General Pagan Amum, addressing an elections rally in El Fashir yesterday, warned that separation of the South could be inevitable if NCP candidate Omer Al-Bashir wins **Al-Rai Al-Aam** reports. Amum accused the NCP of preventing employees and IDPs from participation in an SPLM election rally. SPLM presidential candidate Yasir Arman urged the local political forces to push for lifting of the state of emergency in the region before elections, saying he would not have faith in any ballot boxes brought by the NCP from Darfur Localities.

Sudan board partially delays election in South Kordofan

Sudan Tribune website 15/3/10 — the NEC has partially postponed the electoral process in Southern Kordofan state following an accord reached by the two peace partners.

The postponement concern mainly the elections for governor and the state legislative assembly while the election for the president of the republic and the national parliament will take place as scheduled.

Commenting the decision the governor Ahmed Haroun said the NEC decision to partially postpone the elections in the state comes in line with the need to maintain security and political stability in the state.

Two Sudanese newspapers questioned over insults to President Bashir

Sudan Tribune website 15/3/10 — The Sudanese authorities have summoned editors from two pro-opposition papers, accusing them of insulting President Omar al-Bashir, who is running in April's first multi-party polls in 24 years, the publications told Reuters on Monday.

The chief editors from the pro-Sudan People Liberation Movement (SPLM) Ajas al-Hurriya and Rai al-Sha'ab newspapers were both questioned by the National Press Council, which accused them of breaking the law and insulting the president, which could carry a penalty of a temporary closure — financially crippling for papers heavily dependent on corporate advertising for revenue.

"They asked us: how can you criticize the president?" said Fayez Al-Sheik Al-Silaik, acting editor in chief of Ajas al-Hurriya, said today.

"They asked us where was our evidence that Al-Bashir had killed 10,000 people in Darfur," he added. Bashir has been quoted several times putting the Darfur death toll at 10,000 compared

to the U.N. estimate of 300,000 dead.

The pro-Popular Congress Party (PCP) Rai Al-Sha'ab newspaper was questioned over two articles including one saying Bashir should hand himself over to the International Criminal Court (ICC), which last year indicted him for war crimes in Darfur.

The National Press Council said investigations were ongoing after which they will make a decision on the appropriate penalty to be imposed.

"This is a procedure. The committee will first see if there is a violation and after that they will issue a decision," El-Obeid Marawih, Secretary-General of the press council, said.

Sudan clerics say voting for secularists is “haram”

Sudan's Muslim Clerics Council announced that voting for a non-Muslim or a secular candidate is “haram”, *Al-Sudani* reports. The Council has also criticized Umma Party leader Sadiq Al-Mahdi for rejecting Islamic legislation and for calling for a secular capital city.

Al-Bashir pledges to “trample on” SC and ICC resolutions

NCP presidential candidate Omer Al-Bashir, addressing a ceremony held by a Sufi Sect in his honour in Khartoum yesterday, accused unnamed foreign quarters of hatching conspiracies against Sudan, *Al-Ahdath* report. “We will trample on the false resolutions of the Security Council and the ICC,” he said.

Former US official rules out free and fair elections in Sudan

Former US Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Jendayi Frazer, addressing a conference of Sudanese organizations in Washington ruled out the conduct of free and fair elections in Sudan, *Ajras Al-Hurriya* reports. Frazer said SPLM candidate Yasir Arman would score decisive victory in the upcoming elections, adding the US looks forward to Arman's victory since he is the only person capable of keeping Sudan united on new bases. She said Al-Bashir's winning will give him the legitimacy he lacks. Frazer revealed a high-level cooperation between Sudan's NISS and the CIA, saying NISS provided the CIA with valued files on terrorism and Islamic groups. “Former NISS DG Salah Gosh was America's man in Sudan,” she said.

Other highlights

Power blackout in Khartoum

Local dailies report that Khartoum state yesterday witnessed a complete power cut. According to *Al-Rai Al-Aam* source, the blackout was caused by grid overload.

Mediators postpone Darfur talks in Doha

Al-Ahdath reports that mediators for Darfur peace talks in Doha have decided to postpone direct talks between the Sudanese Government and JEM but did not fix a new date. According to sources, the postponement was requested by JEM for consultation.

According to *AP* 15/3/10, Sudanese presidential adviser Mustafa Osman Ismail has said the Government would hold more talks with the rebel Justice and Equality Movement in the capitals of Chad and Qatar to try to reach a final deal.