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Media Monitoring Report

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Post-Referendum Watch

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Highlights

Presidency to discuss Abyei, resumption of talks between CPA partners

Al-Sahafa 7/03/11 – The Presidency is to hold a crucial meeting today in the presence of AUHIP Chair Thabo Mbeki to discuss Abyei and the recent developments that led to the SPLM's decision to halt talks with the NCP on post-referendum issues.

Informed sources said FVP Salva Kiir Mayardit arrived in Khartoum yesterday to attend meetings today of the Presidency and the Council of Ministers. The sources believe today's meeting of the Presidency may not achieve breakthrough on dispute over Abyei but may succeed in defusing current tension between the two parties.

However, *Al-Tayyar* 17/3/11 reports that the SPLM said the NCP must first apologize for the military and logistical support it provided to dissidents and the plot to overthrow Kiir before such meeting takes place.

According to *Sudan Vision* 17/3/11, President Al-Bashir, at a meeting with AUHIP Chairperson Thabo Mbeki yesterday in Khartoum, affirmed that there would be no preconditions for resuming dialogue with the SPLM on pending issues.

Mbeki called on the two partners to resume negotiations before July, adding that his meeting with Al-Bashir was positive as he received assurances from the President to resume negotiations.

"It is important that President Al-Bashir and GoSS President Salva Kiir hold a meeting" Mbeki told reporters, according to *Al-Rai Al-Aam* 17/3/11.

Meanwhile a spokesperson for the Dinka Ngok Youths' Union, Deng Bol, said the Dinka Ngok would not allow Misseriya nomads access to pasturelands in their area "... especially as they were the first to violate agreements on migration routes." He revealed that they seized a number of cattle from Misseriya nomads who were trying to forcefully cross those areas, adding the operation was carried out without casualties. "We would form a strong barricade and would only allow them passage over our dead bodies," he warned.

On the other hand, Bashtana Mohamed Salim, a prominent Misseriya figure confirmed that Dinka youths raided and took cattle from four Misseriya cattle-camps killing two people in the process. He said that a UN team is in the area in a bid to hold talks with the various stakeholders to help defuse the situation.

Al-Intibaha 17/3/11 reports the SPLA launched a fresh attack on the Misseriya in north Abyei yesterday killing three Misseriya amid fears of bloody clashes as a group of Misseriya are chasing the attackers to recover 650 heads of cattle looted by the SPLA after the attack.

Misseriya leader Ismail Nafie told the newspaper on telephone yesterday that the three Misseriya were killed at Um-Sajam area while grazing their cattle.

We want to have a secure southern Sudan – Defence Minister

Al-Sahafa 17/03/11 – At a press conference yesterday, Defence Minister Gen. Abdulrahim Mohamed Hussein, denied allegations by SPLM SG Pagan Amum to the effect that the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) is supporting militia groups to destabilize southern Sudan, saying SAF is committed to seeing a secure state emerges in the South.

He pointed out that the documents presented by Pagan Amum as evidence of SAF's support to the militias were fake.

For his party, the Acting Chief of Army Intelligence, Siddiq Amir, who co-chaired the press conference assured the people of Sudan that SAF correspondence and secret documents are in safe custody and hard to penetrate and have never been leaked. He said these reports of documented proof are not a new occurrence and was the topic of earlier discussions between the SAF and the SPLA as well as in talks with FVP Salva Kiir and before the Joint Defence Board. "All these parties are aware that these documents are fabricated and Pagan Amum has to ask FVP Kiir and the SPLA leadership about these documents," he said. He expressed confidence that the two armies would be able to sort out these issues if left alone.

Sudan Tribune website 16/3/11 reports SAF has strongly denied the authenticity of documents disclosed by South Sudan which allegedly prove the army's involvement in supporting armed groups in the south ahead of the region's independence in July, warning that its forces are ready for "Jihad" despite being keen on peace.

"All documents presented by Amum were forged and containing names, titles and ranks that do not exist in the armed forces' system", Sudan's Defence Minister Abdul Rahman Mohamed Hssein said.

The minister warned that the armed forces would not allow the south to use it as "a scapegoat" for its failure to enforce law and order in the region.

He further claimed that the person who fabricated the documents is "an ex-army sergeant" who sold the documents to the SPLM for "millions of pounds," adding that the armed forces would take appropriate action against him at the right time.

Hussian said that the army was still keen on peace but he later warned that if the "clock of Jihad ticks, the armed forces would not hesitate to defend the country and safety of its soil and people."

South Sudan suspended this weekend talks with north Sudan on issues related to post-secession arrangements, accusing the north of backing an attack last week by Athor's forces on Malakal town in the Upper Nile State.

Similarly, the ruling National Congress Party (NCP) in north Sudan on Monday circulated a press release in which it dismissed as "lies and slanders" claims by the SPLM that the party instructed its provincial branches to supply it with mobile phone numbers of SPLM leaders in order to tab them.

South Sudan army clashes with militias in Unity State

Sudan Tribune website 17/3/11 - heavy fighting broke out today morning around 7:00am (local time) at Mayom County between the former Sudan Army Forces (SAF) soldiers under the command of Bapiny Muonytuel Wijang and Gai Yoach and Sudan People Liberation Army (SPLA) in Riak Payam, Mayom county of Unity state.

SPLA receives another blow as senior officer defects the army

Al-Intibaha 17/3/11 – The SPLA received another blow as its senior officer Brig. Awad Jabo defected from the army. SPLA command and GoSS influential officials are busy trying to persuade the dissident not to join renegade general George Athor.

According to sources, the SPLA is worried over the officer's mutiny and the possibility of joining George Athor. The sources said the brigadier, who belongs to the Shiluk tribe, rebelled due to the policies pursued by his state government.

SAF JIUs to redeploy north as from Friday

Al-Khartoum 17/3/11 – SAF JIUs are to begin redeploying north as from Friday after they have been assembled in Raja and several other areas near Wau.

According to a source, some troops located in Aweil are exempted from the withdrawal because they are already on their way northward. The source added that all preparations have been completed for transporting these forces to the North by three trains from the town of Wau.

National Security Advisory body says PCP has agreed to talk

Al-Rai Al-Aam 17/03/11 – The National Security Advisory Council has revealed that the Popular Congress Party has accepted its invitation for talks on the country's political future. The Secretary-General of the advisory body, Hassaballa Omar Al-Amin, told reporters in parliament yesterday that they received assurances yesterday from Abdallah Hassan Ahmed, a senior PCP figure that his party would participate in the talks. "Only the Communist Party (among the key opposition parties) is yet to confirm participation in the talks," he said.

Other Highlights

Sudan security detain Darfuris arriving from Libya

Radio Dabanga 17/3/11 - The National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS) arrested dozens of Darfuris who arrived at Khartoum airport on suspicion grounds.

Sources at the Khartoum Airport said that men of Darfuri origin arriving from Libya were separated after arriving at airport gates. Security men separated Darfuris from non-Darfuris, inspecting passports. They allowed people from other states to leave the airport immediately while detaining those from Darfur.

Security forces made clear to the sources that they suspected elements of the Darfuri rebel movements to be among the passengers arriving in Khartoum. Most of those detained were from West Darfur. Sources also indicated that more returnees coming overland via Kufra may have been detained.

Sudanese president, Qatari minister discuss Darfur process

Sudan Tribune website 16/3/11 - Sudanese President Omer Al-Bashir today discussed Darfur peace process with the Qatari state minister for foreign affairs Ahmed bin Abdullah Al-Mahmoud who is also mediating the talks with the Joint chief Mediator Djibril Bassole.

The mediation is struggling to narrow the gaps between the Sudanese parties on the issue of power sharing particularly the issue of the administrative status of Darfur. However, the latest initiative undertaken by the presidential adviser entrusted with the file, Gahzi Salah Al-Deen — to call on Darfurians to arbitrate on the issue — infuriated the two rebel groups participating in the process.

The Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) and Liberation and Equality Movement (LJM) condemned the organization of a referendum on Darfur status and accused the government of violating the framework agreements signed last years. The rebels also asked the mediation to clarify the situation with Khartoum.

Some Khartoum based newspapers said the rebels decided to pull out of the talks, but the head of LJM negotiating team dismissed this information saying they just asked to transport some members of their big delegation to Darfur.

Speaking to the press following his meeting with the Sudanese president Omer Al-Bashir, Al-Mahmoud reaffirmed that JEM and LJM delegations are committed to the Doha forum and their delegations are still there.

"You heard the denial of withdrawal from the (rebel) movements, and none of them spoke with us about it. All of them are there besides the government delegation and we hope to finalize this issue at the earliest opportunity," Al-Mahmoud said.

He also expressed the hope to proceed according to the timetable approved by the mediation saying they are currently studying the responses received from the Sudanese parties.

On 22 February, the mediation asked the Sudanese parties to adopt six chapters of the peace agreement. But after failing to get their agreement on two chapters, the mediators on 11 March proposed to endorse four chapters. Also they said a timetable would be drawn out to discuss the pending issues including the administrative status.

The short visit by the Qatari minister to Khartoum comes two days after a meeting with the presidential adviser Ghazi Salah Al-Deen in Doha.

The Sudanese foreign ministry last week informed ambassadors in Khartoum from the UN Security Council five permanent members, African Union and Arab league about its intention to hold a referendum on the administrative status of Darfur region.

Undersecretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Ambassador Rahma Mohamed Osman said foreign observers are welcome to monitor the vote which he pledged would be free and fair. He also said it would be held before May as stipulated in Abuja peace agreement.

The rebel groups accused the Sudanese government of sabotaging the process. They say Ghazi refuses to discuss on their demands and continues to pose ultimatums and deadlines aiming to destroy efforts exerted by the mediation to restore confidences between the negotiating parties.

Student dies at protest in Sudan's Darfur - report

AFP 17/3/11 - A student was killed in North Darfur during clashes with Sudanese police, who fired tear gas to disperse protesters demonstrating against a ban on political activity, media reported on Thursday.

Jamal Adam Mustafa of El-Fasher University was killed after 12 police trucks blocked the campus, which the police then burst into, firing tear gas on students at Wednesday's demonstration, the independent *Al-Sahafa* daily reported, citing witnesses.

The pro-government newspaper *Al-Rai Al-Aam* said seven people were injured in the clashes.

The demonstration was prompted by the university's decision earlier in the week to prohibit cultural and political activities, according to *Al-Sahafa*.

The government of North Darfur accused the protesters of belonging to different factions of Darfur rebel group the Sudan Liberation Army and to southern former rebel Sudan People's Liberation Movement and said they had attacked a student member of the ruling National Congress Party.

Youth activists have called for peaceful, nationwide demonstrations on Monday to topple the government, which they accuse of mass killings in Darfur, corruption, failing to provide jobs or curb the high cost of living and allowing the security services to torture and rape those held in custody.

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