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Media Monitoring Report

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Address: UNMIS Headquarters, P.O. Box 69, Ibeid Khatim St, Khartoum 11111, SUDAN
Phone: (+249-1) 8708 6000 - Fax: (+249-1) 8708 6200

Highlights

Post-election Watch

UN to convey to SPLM four proposals from Gen. Athor

Al-Akhbar 17/5/10 – the UN is likely to convey to the SPLM leadership today a proposal paper handed over yesterday by Gen. George Athor to DSRSG Jasbir Singh Liddar. Sources close to Athor in Juba said the move comes after the initiative launched by governor of Bahr el Ghazal Bol Malong proved unsuccessful. According to the sources, the paper contained four demands: general amnesty, reform of the SPLA structure, organization of a general conference on the southern Sudan to discuss referendum and removal of the elected Jonglei state governor.

Kiir casts doubts on negotiations with renegade general

Sudan Tribune website 16/5/10 – GoSS President Salva Kiir Mayardit has cast doubt on GoSS willingness to negotiate with George Athor Deng, the defeated Jonglei State gubernatorial candidate in April elections.

Many voices in southern Sudan called on the regional government to end the rebellion of General Athor by peaceful means in order to preserve peace and security in the semi-autonomous region which will hold a referendum on self determination next January.

The UN Mission in Sudan proposed to broker a negotiated settlement to the conflict. Athor welcomed the move but Southern Sudan government pledged to make further consultations and review the situation before giving its final decision to the UN body.

Speaking during the 27th Anniversary of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) in Juba on Sunday, Salva Kiir denounced Athor decision to address his grievances through violence.

Salva Kiir said no amount of threats can force him to accept war but pledged to defend security of civilians. He cited several attempts to return the country to war including Malakal incidents where SPLA had been attacked by militias groups affiliated to Khartoum "but we say no to war. Yes to peace," he repeated.

Commenting on George Athor's activities after wallowing to rebellion with SPLA after his defeat in Jonglei elections last month, Kiir said "What brother (George) Athor is doing is not good."

President Kiir, however, added that doors are open for Mr. Athor should he cease hostilities and return to the SPLA.

It remains unclear whether the Government of Southern Sudan will engage in talks or continue military action to quell insecurity in Jonglei which witnessed last year a series of cattle raids and tribal attacks.

South Sudan ruling party accuses NCP of backing Athor uprising

Sudan Tribune website 16/5/10 - Renegade General George Athor Deng's recent uprising against the Southern government should not be viewed as a post-election issue, but a plot by the Khartoum regime to disrupt South Sudan's preparations for the forthcoming referendum, Mr. Pagan Amum, the SPLM Secretary General has said.

At a media briefing held at the party's Southern Sector Secretariat on Saturday, Mr. Amum said his party had secured credible information that the National Congress Party (NCP) was fully backing Gen. Athor and forces loyal to him.

Asked to substantiate further on the NCP's alleged involvement, the SPLM Secretary General said the party's [SPLM] intelligence report strongly link the renegade General's rebellion to the Khartoum regime's continuous trends of providing logistical and financial support to "enemies" of Southern Sudan.

Mr. Amum's remarks comes just days after his involvement in an African Union consultative meeting, during which he reportedly told delegates in attendance that the Southern government would not accept any form of negotiations aimed at delaying the referendum date.

According to the SPLM Secretary General, the entire African continent as well as members of the international community have embarked on a coordinated effort to ensure that Sudan's referendum, a key requirement of the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement, is not only a peaceful, free and fair, but also a smooth transition that respects the right and interest of all concerned citizens.

Analysts, however, contend that for the 2011 referendum to succeed as planned, the Southern semi-autonomous government must find quick remedies towards resolving prevailing scores of post-election uprisings, discontent as well as tribal conflicts among citizens.

Pre-referendum Watch:

Border demarcation may lead to an all-out war – SPLM Edward Lino *Ajras Al-Hurriya* 17/5/10 – SPLM leader Edward Lino has anticipated an all-out war over the issue of border demarcation between the North and the South. He said the current regime lacks the political will to demarcate the border and accused the Border Demarcation Committee of deliberately escalating conflicts during their work. Lino pointed out that the commissioner of the Renk County rejected the manner in which the Committee demarcated the northern border of the Upper Nile state and the committee is also facing problems in Hufat Al-Nahas area between North Bahr el Ghazal and Darfur. Lino said the demarcation of the border would not materialize unless Khartoum changes its policies, adding that the conduct of referendum would be difficult in the absence of the border.

Other Headlines

NISS closes opposition party paper

Reuters 16/5/10 - Sudanese security agents arrested opposition leader Hassan al-Turabi and closed his party's newspaper a month after the country's first open elections in 24 years, supporters said on Sunday.

A security source told *Reuters* Turabi's detention may have been related to his alleged links to the JEM, which has clashed with Sudan's army over the past week. Turabi denies any link.

"They were armed - they came with at least three armed vehicles and other cars - we could not see them all," his daughter Salma Hassan said.

Early on Sunday, security officers raided Turabi's party newspaper *Rai Al-Shaab* and arrested

several journalists, senior officials from his Popular Congress Party (PCP) told reporters.

"They went into the printing press and confiscated all the copies of the newspapers," Turabi's son Siddiq al-Turabi said.

"I condemn the arrest. It shows we are not heading towards democratic transformation," PCP presidential candidate Abdallah Deng Nhial said. "The government will bear responsibility for any deterioration in his health."

"After he has answered some questions he will either be arrested (formally) or released," the security source said.

Meanwhile, ***Al-Rai Al-Aam*** 17/5/10 reports NCP leading figure Qutbi Al-Mahdi as saying that Al-Turabi's arrest was not politically-motivated and he would be freed as soon as the investigation was over. However, he added that his detention might have something to do with the current events in Darfur and the challenges the country is encountering.

Minister of Information and Communication Al-Zahawi Ibrahim Malik said security authorities have the right to detain anybody for investigation, adding that Al-Turabi's detention might have something to do with his statements about rigging of elections.

But ***Sudan Tribune website*** 16/5/10 reports the Sudanese government has said that the Islamist opposition leader Hassan Al-Turabi is accused of stirring up hatred, disseminating malicious lies and abuse of Sudan's foreign relations. The arrest of Turabi coincided with the closure of a daily newspaper close to the Popular Congress Party (PCP), *Rai Al-Shaab*, after the publication of a report alleging that Iran had constructed a weapon factory in Sudan aiming to supply Islamists insurgents in Somalia and Yemeni Shiite rebels as well as Islamist Palestinian movement Hamas.

In a related development, ***Ajras Al-Hurriya*** 17/5/10 reports that the PCP has threatened to resist what it described as restriction of freedoms. The PCP also threatened to organize demonstrations in Khartoum and states and to take up the issue with the human rights groups and the international community. PCP deputy Secretary-General Abdullah Hassan Ahmed said the party has not been informed about the reasons of the arrest of their leader.

According to ***Miraya FM*** 16/5/10, PCP supporters took to the streets on Sunday marching from the party's headquarters to the house of their Secretary-General in Manshiya, Khartoum; chanting anti-government slogans and protesting against an allegedly unwarranted arrest Al-Turabi.

A leading National Congress Party (NCP) member, Rebi Abdel Atti, said that the arrest of Al-Turabi is due to his links with the JEM and his involvement with the current clashes in Darfur.

Atti denied that Turabi was arrested after issuing statements about electoral rigging. He alleged that the relationship between JEM and PCP is undeniable.

Atti said that Turabi's arrest was made under the National Security Bill which allows security authorities to detain anyone who threatens peace and security in the country. He added that security authorities arrested him for further questioning and if he is not involved in the Darfur incidents, he will be released.

Meanwhile Al Turabis' family has demanded a trial if, according to the government, there is proof in the charges he has been accused of.

Ms Omama Al-Turabi assured that her father is not involved with JEM or the recent clashes in Darfur. She further said that her family has been unable to reach him and is unaware of his whereabouts.

She is worried about his health, saying she does not know if the authorities allow him to take his medicine on time.

Ms Turabi called on the government to release all evidence they have against her father, stating that the government has been alleging PCP links with JEM for over six years now. She called on Sudan's government to present their evidence to court and all Sudanese.

Our visit to Cairo has no link to Khalil's presence in Egypt –officials

Al-Khartoum 17/5/10 – Sudan's Presidential Assistant Nafie Ali Nafie and Presidential Adviser Mustafa Osman Ismail yesterday held talks in Cairo with Arab League Secretary General Umr Musa which focused on Sudanese issues particularly the upcoming referendum. "Referendum is crucial not only for Sudan but for the region and the whole Africa," Nafie told a press conference he held with Umr Musa. He said they discussed in Cairo what could be done to support Sudan's unity, adding Sudan is confident that the Arab League would do its best to support Sudan's voluntary unity.

Meanwhile, Presidential Adviser Mustafa Osman said their visit to Cairo has nothing to do with the recent visit to Cairo by JEM leader Khalil Ibrahim.

According to **Al-Akhbar**, the two Sudanese officials have submitted proposals to the Arab League requesting a greater role for the League during the forthcoming stage to support unity of the Sudan.

Bahrain agrees to host AL conference on reconstruction in South Sudan

Al-Khartoum 17/5/10 – Bahrain agreed to host an Arab League Conference under the theme "Juba -2" on reconstruction of South Sudan. The date of the conference is currently being discussed by the concerned parties. Bahraini state Minister for Foreign Affairs Nazar Al-Baharina said China is expected to be an active participant in the forum. According to a statement attributed to the Arab League Deputy Chairman Ahmed Ben Hili, the conference is intended to promote and encourage Arab investment in southern Sudan.

500 demobilized combatants in eastern Sudan threaten to return to war

Al-Akhbar 17/5/10 – 500 demobilized combatants from the Eastern Sudan Front have threatened to return to war because the DDR Commission is dragging its feet on the issue of payment of their entitlements. According to a source, DDR Commission Chairman Abdul Rahman Bilal has requested the ex-combatants to be patient and promised to resolve their problem very soon. However, Demobilization Committee Chairman Anwar Eissa Osheik said the Commission had neglected the demobilized soldiers and pointed out that their colleagues in Khartoum were paid 30,000 pounds but in eastern Sudan they were paid 1000 pounds only. He added that the Eastern Front leaders have also abandoned their soldiers because they joined the NCP and forgot about their ex-combatants.

SPLA set NCP HQs in Juba on fire

Al-Intibaha 17/5/10 – A group of SPLA soldiers yesterday set the NCP HQs in Juba on fire and seized a safe containing huge big amount of cash besides computers and furniture. NCP official Lutfi Ahmed Mursal told *SMC* that the burning of the HQs is part of a series of attacks by SPLA militias to terrorize the NCP.

LRA maneuvers cause panic in Sudan's Tambura town in W. Equatoria

Sudan Tribune website 16/5/10 - Panic on Sunday gripped Tambura Town and surrounding villages following LRA appearance in Nabaria village and speculation that pockets of Ugandan rebels have re-entered the Western Equatoria county. Nabaria village is situated in Agiara Boma, 6 miles from Tambura town.

"A group of LRA rebels reportedly abducted two children in Nabaria village in Agiara Boma and are proceeding towards River Yubu, small stream around Tambura County," Eye witness told Sudan Tribune.

Again, LRA rebels in the same clandestine attack have been reported to have chopped right hand of one old man and abandoned him.

However, Sudan Tribune could not verify this report of abductions independently. Failure to defeat LRA leaves many WES citizens fearful of rebel renewed threats.

Many residents in Tambura town, in northwest of Western Equatoria (DRC), have started to flee their homes after the Ugandan rebel Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) threats reached Tambura town.

The threats are reminiscent of the usual horrific atrocities when the rebels killed hundreds of civilians in the area and surrounding regions.

The vigilantes have urged residents to resist and defend themselves using poisoned arrows and spears. There is panic and the population has started to leave Tambura, Sudan Tribune learned.

Eye witness told Sudan Tribune by telephone that, "The LRA threats have turned Tambura into a ghost town, with some residents fleeing into the bush while others are stationed behind the airstrip."

The armies of Uganda, DRC, and Southern Sudan, that have been tracking down the LRA rebels since the end of 2008, continue to maintain that measures are in place to avoid a repeat of the past killings.

Darfur peace talks to resume before end of May – Qatari minister

Sudan Tribune website 16/5/10 - Darfur peace talks will resume during the last week of the current month of May, announced today the Qatari state foreign minister following a meeting held in Doha with the Sudanese government delegation.

Amin Hassan Omer, the head of the Sudanese government delegation arrived yesterday to the Qatari capital Doha. He met on Sunday with the state minister Ahmed bin Abdullah Al-Mahmud, and the African Union-United Nations Chief Mediator Djibril Bassole to discuss the resumption of the peace negotiations.

"Darfur peace negotiations will resume in Doha before the end of May, particularly in the last week of the current month," Al-Mahmud told reporters following the meeting. He further said that the Sudanese delegation had reaffirmed government's commitment to the peace process.

The minister said the mediation discussed with the Sudanese delegation, the agenda of the

forthcoming negotiations, and will issue an invitation to the concerned parties, including the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) to restart negotiations.

JEM has suspended its participation in the political process accusing Khartoum of breaching a truce agreed by the two parties last February. The Sudanese army and the rebel group clashed several times since last March. Yesterday the army said had captured a key stronghold area from the rebels but JEM said they had voluntarily evacuated Jebel Moon.

Al-Mahmud also echoed a call launched by the chief mediator urging the two parties to observe the cessation of hostilities agreement inked in Doha on February 23. He added that the political solution is the only possible option to end the seven year conflict.

Asked if the Egyptian government seeks to create an alternative venue for the peace process, the minister said Egypt is a member of a joint African Arab ministerial committee that had chosen Doha as venue for peace talks to achieve in Darfur .

He further said that JEM rebels also reiterated their commitment to Doha as host country for the peace process.