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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

Southern minister survives attempt on his life, bodyguards killed

Local dailies report that Dr. Samson Kwaje, SPLM leader and GoSS Minister of Agriculture, yesterday survived an assassination attempt when his convoy was ambushed in the South, six of his bodyguards were killed. According to **Al-Khartoum**, Kwaje sustained serious arm injuries.

According to **Sudan Tribune website** 16/11/09, A minister in the Government of Southern Sudan narrowly escaped with gunshot wound on Sunday as his convoy was ambushed by unknown gunmen.

Four were killed and five others wounded, two in critical condition, as the vehicle carrying minister Dr. Samson Kwaje of Agriculture and Forestry was riddled with more than twenty bullets by assailants.

The attack took place as the minister was returning on road from Wonduruba to Lanya County in Central Equatoria state.

Among the dead were the minister's driver and bodyguard.

Dr. Kwaje who was shot on his right arm said the attackers opened fire on his vehicle from both sides of the road.

The minister and other survivors were scattered into the forest and hunted down by the attackers.

He was rescued after a force of the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) was sent from Lanya to the scene. A helicopter was sent in by the United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) which flew the minister to Juba.

More than twenty suspects are reported to have been arrested in the area for investigations.

Minister of Internal Affairs, Gier Chuang Aluong condemned the attack.

He said such a violent act was not the right way to address any issues that might have arisen and led to the criminal act.

President Salva Kiir Mayardit of the Government of Southern Sudan had declared seven days public holiday from November 11th to 17th for constitutional post holders to enable them to travel to their respective areas and enlighten the potential voters to register.

Dr. Kwaje was on the enlightenment tour of his home areas where he mobilized the citizens to turnout for the voter registration.

He is also member of the SPLM Political Bureau, the highest leadership structure of the party.

Increasing hunger could fuel conflict in south

IRIN 16/11/09 - An increasing number of people in Southern Sudan cannot find enough to eat or adequate pasture and water for their livestock, raising fears of conflict between communities over grazing lands, local leaders warned.

"Where there was peace, there was no rain and then where there were good rains, there was insecurity," Kuol Manyang, governor of Jonglei State, said.

His counterpart from Upper Nile State, Gutlaurk Deng Garang, warned that hunger would force pastoralist cattle herders to move their animals, sharply increasing the likelihood of clashes with rival ethnic groups.

"We expect the cattle herders to start moving soon, and then it is expected [that there will] be conflict between the Lou and the Jikany Nuer," Garang told IRIN recently. Conflict between the Shilluk and Dinka communities had added to food insecurity, he said.

The warning came at a tense time for Southern Sudan, which is struggling to recover from a 22-year civil war that ended less than five years ago. Elections are due in April, followed by a referendum on the south's potential full independence in 2011.

Southern parties want SPLA out of cities before elections

The Southern political parties which are participating in the south-south conference in Khartoum have said they want a guarantee that SPLA soldiers would move out of cities before elections takes place, adding that SPLA has become a source of instability in the South, ***Al-Intibaha*** reports. The political parties also accused the GoSS of using the SPLA for purposes inconsistent with its military mission. The political parties, in their final communiqué yesterday, called for a total separation between the SPLA and the SPLM, the establishment of a representative security apparatus in the South and the strengthening of the police force to take over the security task. The statement said the southern parties agreed to form a broad alliance to contest upcoming elections.

Governor refuses to leave office for newcomer

Khartoum Monitor reports outgoing Governor of Upper Nile state Galwak Deng refused to leave office for the new governor, who is his deputy Dok Jok Dok on the account that he had not been officially notified by his party (NCP) about the replacement. A source in Malakal who told Khartoum monitor said Galwak was seen in military uniform and under tight security on Malakal streets. He ordered the inspection of houses of three members of the National Congress Party whom he suspected of plotting his deposition.

Security forces in Malakal sealed the premises of the government to prevent Galwak from entering. The deposed governor attempted to force his way to his office but was held off.

Voter registration/elections

Voter registration irregularities early start of rigging – SPLM

Al-Khartoum reports the political parties which participated in Juba conference have accused the NEC of taking the side of the NCP by producing publications inconsistent with the electoral law as well as ignoring numerous appeals. The representatives of the SPLM, PCP, Umma Party and the Communist party told a press conference yesterday that there were violations occurring in the voter registration exercise which they described as an early stage of elections rigging. SPLM Deputy SG Yassir Arman said a final stand on the upcoming elections would be made public by the end of November.

The **Citizen** reports that registration forms have run out in some registration centres in the South, causing panic among officials and the people that they might miss out on the process. The registration cards have run out in northern Bahr el Ghazal state following one week of registration in the area.

According to **Reuters** 16/11/09, Sudan's opposition parties on Monday called for a nationwide two-week extension to register voters for the first multi-party elections in 24 years, accusing elections officials of being ill-prepared for the vote.

The Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) and 20 opposition parties said information black out and last-minute preparations by the election commission was preventing Sudanese from registering to vote.

"We are asking the National Elections Commission (NEC) to extend the registration period for two weeks," Abdel Gayoum Awad from the Sudanese Congress Party said in a joint news conference.

The opposition parties have previously said they would boycott the elections if a package of democratic laws they see as necessary for the vote was not drafted and passed by Nov. 30.

And on Monday they accused President Omar Hassan al-Bashir's National Congress Party (NCP) of widespread registration fraud.

The NCP has denied any irregularities and accused the SPLM of arresting its members in southern Sudan.

Many Sudanese have said that NCP officials have either taken their registration slips or recorded the numbers, as well as calling with offers to buy their votes.

"The NCP is also using Government resources," said Mariam al-Mahdi from the opposition Umma Party.

"These problems ... are because of the lack of democratic transformation," said Yasir Arman from the SPLM.

The parties also complained the Diaspora registration was not being monitored by elections officials and that very few centres were opened, with only one in Asia.

In a related development, the **Daily Nation** (Kenya) reports the Government of Sudan has now opened voter registration centres in three Sub-Saharan countries previously left out by the National Elections Commission.

Sudanese nationals in Diaspora will now be able to register and participate in the 2010 elections from South Africa, Kenya and Uganda. Another centre has also opened in Malaysia bringing the countries identified by NEC for the exercise to 14.

And on Monday, hundreds of Sudanese nationals living in Kenya thronged to the country's embassy in Nairobi to beat the November 30 deadline set by the National Elections Commission.

Speaking after launching the exercise, Sudan ambassador Mr Majok Guandong denied the opening of the centres was a response to the pressure from the South.

"The Sudanese in Diaspora have a right to take part in the elections which the Government and NEC recognize," said Mr Guandong.

Mr Guandong explained the opening of new centres was due to the Government's all-inclusive policy. "Since the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, many Sudanese have acquired identification and travel documents, which makes them eligible to vote," he said.

NCP, SPLM consultation on pending issues stall

Gulf of differences between the NCP and the SPLM over pending issues reportedly widened at a meeting yesterday between GoNU VP Taha and GoSS VP Machar, **Al-Akhbar** reports. Reliable sources said that the NCP presented new proposals with regard to the contentious issues particularly referendum, Abyei and popular consultation but the SPLM rejected. However, sources said the SPLM would hold a meeting today to discuss the NCP's new vision.

Sudan president pledges fair and free elections

Sudan Tribune website 16/11/09 – The Sudanese President Omer Al-Bashir vowed today that his Government would facilitate conducting the April 2010 presidential and parliamentary elections in a fair and free manner.

“We will not get closer to God through deceit and forgery” Al-Bashir told a crowd at the Red Sea city of Port Sudan along side with his Eritrean counterpart Isaias Afewerki.

Bashir urged the residents of Port Sudan to be diligent in registering for voting saying it is a “certificate and an obligation”. He also said that his visit is not for election purposes adding that his Government has prioritized the needs of the people of Eastern Sudan.

The Sudanese president inaugurated a number of projects including an industrial complex and a bridge by his name.

He hailed the positions of Eritrea and its president noting that his first visit after being indicted by the ICC was to Asmara.” This was the nail in the tomb of the court [ICC]” Bashir said.

Afewerki for his part said he returns to Port Sudan 42 years after leading from it the resistance against Ethiopia to liberate Eritrea.

Bashir and Afewerki held bilateral talks after which they issued instructions to their border provinces to bolster cooperation and speed up linking the road between Massawa and Port Sudan.

Parliament endorses budget in SPLM absence

The National Assembly yesterday passed the general budget 2010 by majority vote in the absence of SPLM MPs, **Al-Rai Al-Aam** reports. Reportedly, only eight MPs voted against.

Meanwhile, the Assembly Speaker Ahmed Ibrahim Al-Tahir has suspended the entitlement of more than 30 MPs including Deputy Speaker Atem Garang (SPLM) because of absence from 12 parliamentary sessions. The MPs have reportedly received official notification about the suspension of their entitlement but spokesperson of the SPLM parliamentary bloc Ammar Daldoom said the step would further complicate matters.

US special envoy starts a new tour of Sudan

Sudan Tribune website 16/11/09 – The US special envoy to Sudan Scott Gration started today a new visit to the country weeks after he left without succeeding in resolving dispute between the ruling National Congress Party (NCP) and Sudan People Liberation Movement (SPLM) centered around census results and referendum.

The US state department said in a statement that Gration would visit Khartoum, Abyei, and

Darfur. It said that in Abyei the US special envoy would review progress in implementing the border demarcation decision made last July by the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA).

Gration will also fly to "El Fasher and Jebel Marra in Darfur to continue to support Darfuri armed movement unification and the Darfur peace process".

It is not clear if Gration's stop in Jebel Marra is a new bid to host a unification conference for commanders that have defected from Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM) led by Abdel-Wahid Al-Nur who resides in France.

The SLM has warned Gration that he would bear responsibility if he insists on venturing into areas controlled by their fighters without prior permission.

Sudan state media also reported that during the week-long visit Gration would discuss the preparations to resume the Doha peace talks between Darfur rebels and Khartoum.

He will meet with Sudan 2nd Vice president Ali Osman Taha, presidential adviser Ghazi Salah Al-Deen Attabani and foreign minister Deng Alor.

Tripartite meeting highlights concern for security of peacekeepers

Sudan Tribune website 16/11/09 — The Tripartite Mechanism, made up of African Union, United Nations, and the Government of Sudan, today highlighted concern over the security of Darfur peacekeepers as two of the UNAMID personnel are abducted since two months.

The three delegations held a meeting on Tuesday in Khartoum on the deployment of the hybrid AU-UN peacekeeping mission which replaced the African mission in Darfur since last year but still working to reach its full strength.

The seventh meeting was co-chaired by UN under Secretary-General for Field Support, Susana Malcorra, African Union Commissioner for Peace and Security, Ramtane Lamamra and Sudan's Under-Secretary of Foreign Affairs while UNAMID delegation will be led by the Acting Joint Special Representative Henry Anyidoho.

All the participants expressed, in their opening speeches, concern over the prolonged abduction of the two UNAMID personnel who have been in captivity for 80 days since 29 August 2009. They stressed the importance of continuing efforts to ensure their safe release.

Dr. Siddiq reiterated the full commitment of the Sudanese Government to the protection of UNAMID personnel. "This remained a top priority," he said.

The kidnapping of UNAMID personnel occurred in Zalingei, 100 km southeast of El-Geneina the capital of West Darfur state, on Saturday August 29. The two staff members, one woman and one man, were taken at gunpoint by four or five gunmen from their residence to an unknown destination.

The meeting also reviewed deployment of troops, including the ongoing preparations for the impending arrival of the five Ethiopian tactical helicopters, which will be based at Nyala airport in South Darfur.

With regard to the Radio UNAMID, Sudan gave assurances that action would be taken in the next week to allow broadcasting of radio programmes.

The meeting also discussed issues, such as staff security as well as water supply for Darfur local communities.

"The meeting went well and all the participants reiterated the need to maintain the spirit of partnership and cooperation, which has so far led to significant progress in the Mission's deployment. They also expressed the determination to address all kind of issues relevant to the facilitation of UNAMID deployment for the benefit of Sudanese in general, and Darfurians in particular, who have suffered as a consequence of the conflict," said UNAMID spokesperson Nouredine Mezni.

Mezni pointed out the positive economic impact resulting from the presence of the hybrid mission in Darfur. He said two third of UNAMID staff are Sudanese, and more than three thousand local individual contractors.

The hybrid mission has 1054 Sudanese vendors registered in its Vendor Registration Database and has awarded 174 purchase orders to Sudanese vendors between 01 July2009 and 13 November 2009,totaling 46,658,011.86 US Dollars.

"This brings the grand total of orders awarded to Sudanese vendors to 375,585,283.50 US Dollars since the beginning of the Hybrid Operation. This shows the significant contribution of UNAMID to the development of the economy of the country in general and Darfur in particular," stressed the UNAMID official spokesperson.

The next meeting of the Tripartite Mechanism is scheduled to take place in Addis Ababa in February 2010.

JEM rebels have reservation on civil society participation in peace talks

Sudan Tribune website 16/11/09 – The rebel Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) said it has reservation on the participation of many civil society organizations in the Doha peace talks saying they are dominated by followers of the ruling party in Khartoum.

Civil society groups arrived in the Qatari capital where they are expected to start a consultative meeting on Tuesday. The UN organizations particularly the hybrid mission in Darfur (UNAMID) supervised the selection of civil society representatives amid the boycott of internally displaced people who are hostile to the process at the current stage.

"Despite our support to the civil society participation in the peace process, we are strongly opposed to the presence of most of these groups that arrived here in Doha because most of them are composed of members of the National Congress Party," said JEM spokesperson Ahmed Hussein Adam.

Speaking from Doha, Ahmed said the mediation and the UNAMID selected these groups without any consultation with them. He further said that Darfur IDPs and refugees are not represented among these groups.

JEM, despite the boycott of the peace talks, dispatched last week a delegation to the Qatari capital to hold talks with the mediation on the strategy of the Doha process. The rebel official also said there is confusion over the role of local civil society groups saying some think they should take part in the peace talks.

"The role of civil society groups is purely consultative and in any case they are not a substitute

to the warring parties," JEM official spokesperson said.

He further urged the mediation to take into consideration the absent majority of Darfur civil society and to work for its inclusion in the process.

On Wednesday, the mediation is expected to open another session of talks attended by the Government and rebel delegations.

JEM leader's half brother declines to testify before court

Al-Rai Al-Aam reports that Abdul Aziz Ushar, half brother of JEM leader Khalil Ibrahim, who is being tried for participation in an attack on Omdurman, refused to testify before a Khartoum Court.

Khartoum witnesses unprecedented security measures as match nears

Local dailies report security authorities have stepped up security measures and preparations for a decisive match between Egypt and Algeria. According to **Al-Intibaha**, Khartoum State police announced that 16,000 police personnel have been mobilized to secure the event, with Algeria's security authorities also having rushed hundreds of security personnel to Khartoum to assist in providing protection to Algeria's fans and team. Local authorities have reversed an earlier decision to issue entry visa for all fans, saying only 35,000 spectators, 18,000 from Algeria and Egypt and 17,000 Sudanese would be allowed to witness the event. Governor of Khartoum State Abdel Rahman Al-Khedir told a meeting that 48 flights from Algeria and 18 from Egypt are expected to bring in their fans as well as other spectators who are likely to come by land.

Meanwhile, **Al-Akhbar** reports the Presidency will host a reception today where President Al-Bashir will meet the two teams. A Presidency source said the reception is intended to ease tension between the two teams and to confirm Khartoum's neutrality in the event.