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Media Monitoring Report

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Highlights

AU chief criticizes genocide charges against Sudan president

Sudan Tribune website 17/7/10 – AU Commission Chairperson Jean Ping issued a statement on Friday criticizing the addition by the ICC of genocide charges against the Sudanese president Omer Al-Bashir.

"This decision which confirms AU's previous concerns, came at a particular time marked by progress in the democratic transformation of the Sudan, following the April 2010 general elections, and renewed efforts towards the completion of the implementation of the CPA, including the holding of the self-determination referendum in Southern Sudan and negotiations on post-referendum arrangement, as well as towards the search for a lasting and inclusive political solution to the crisis in Darfur" Ping said.

Ping noted that "neither the United Nations International Commission of Inquiry, nor the former AU Mission in Sudan (AMIS) and the AU/UN Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) upheld the accusation of genocide in Darfur".

"The Chairperson of the Commission notes that the AU is of the conviction that this new and untimely decision by the ICC and its action in general on Sudan are counterproductive, and will complicate the ongoing efforts and increase the risk of instability, with far-reaching consequences for Sudan, the region and Africa as a whole".

"It is against this background that the AU, once again, urges the United Nations Security Council to assume its responsibilities and act on the call for the deferral of the process initiated by the ICC against President Omar Hassan Al Bashir in the interest of peace, justice" ...

Sudan army: 300 rebels, 75 troops killed in Darfur

Reuters 17/7/10 - Sudan's army has killed more than 300 fighters from Darfur's rebel Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) in recent clashes and 75 of its own soldiers also died, state media reported on Saturday.

But JEM dismissed the statement as "cheap propaganda" saying it prevailed in the clashes.

Peacekeepers confirmed the Sudanese army had clashed with JEM forces two and possibly three times this week, part of a surge in violence since the insurgents suspended participation in peace talks in early May.

General Al-Tayeb al-Musbah Osman told the state Suna news agency the army had destroyed scores of JEM vehicles and recaptured fuel tankers seized by the rebels.

"They want to divert attention from their defeat," JEM spokesman Ahmed Hussein

Adam told Reuters, saying his movement had taken government prisoners in the clashes.

Darfur's joint U.N./African Union peacekeeping force said this week the army had clashed with JEM fighters near the Adola Mountains and near Kuma in north Darfur on Tuesday...

Sudanese president set to visit Chad next week - source

Sudan tribune website 16/7/10 - The Sudanese president Omer Al-Bashir will take part in the 12th Ordinary session of the conference of leaders and heads of state of Sahel-Saharan States which will convene in the Chadian capital next week, a diplomatic source told Sudan Tribune.

If the visit goes as planned, this will be the first time Bashir sets foot in a country that is a signatory to the Rome Statute which is the founding treaty of the International Criminal Court (ICC).

Today, the Sudanese foreign minister Ali Karti told the London-based Al-Sharq Al-Awsat that his boss can travel anywhere and that the ICC cannot hamper his travel. Sudanese officials however, may be wary of sending their president to Chad for fear that French forces stationed at a military base in N'djamena would attempt to apprehend him. France has been one of the main backers of the Hague tribunal.

An invitation by Uganda to the AU summit starting on Monday is also lined up for Bashir although there has been no confirmation on his attendance by Khartoum.

Khartoum asks Cairo to refer Halayeb for international arbitration

Dailies 18/7/10 – an anonymous source revealed that Khartoum has called on Cairo to resort to international arbitration to resolve the dispute over the Halayeb Triangle and Shalatain. According to *Al-Masri Al-Youm*, Khartoum has officially asked Cairo to refer the issue for international arbitration. Reportedly, Cairo did not respond to Khartoum's move which requires the agreement of both sides.

Split within the SPLM-DC

The Citizen 18/7/10 – A group led by former SPLM-DC Secretary-General Charles Kisanga announced that they have split from the movement and returned to the SPLM. SPLM-DC Secretary-General Sandra Bona accused the group of pursuing power not principles, pointing out that the party's Council, at its convention held last week, restructured its ranks and elected Charles Kisanga as deputy Chairman after ousting him from the general secretariat of the party which caused him to walk out of the party.

WHO confirms Red Eye disease outbreak in South Sudan

Sudan Tribune website 17/7/10 - The World Health Organization (WHO) surveillance team has confirmed an outbreak of Red Eye disease, also known as Conjunctivitis, in Juba the Southern Sudan capital.

The investigation team visited key health facilities, schools and local community centers

in Juba. In the last ten days, increased cases were reportedly recorded in Juba Teaching Hospital (JTH), with United Nations clinics (UNDP and UNMIS) also reporting red eye cases among its staff.

The disease, noted Dr. Abdinasir M. Abubakar, a Medical Officer with WHO's Communicable Disease Surveillance & Response department, can be prevented by observing good personal hygiene and infection control such as washing hands and face with soap and avoiding handshake.

"Anyone with symptoms of conjunctivitis should seek treatment from nearest health facilities," Dr. Abubakar said in a statement.

Meanwhile, Sudan Tribune has learnt that albeit the red eye disease outbreak had only been reported in Juba, investigations are still ongoing elsewhere, while WHO officials have advised any patient with red eye disease to stay at home for 2-3 days, in order to reduce its transmission and spread.

Darfur peace talks to continue for another week

Sudan Tribune website 17/7/10 - Following an assessment of the ongoing talks to end Darfur conflict, the mediation and the negotiating teams today decided to continue the talks for a week in order to achieve tangible progress in the process.

The Sudanese government and the rebel Liberation and Justice Movement have formed six committees to negotiate different issues they defined in a framework agreement.

These committees cover: Power Sharing and the Administrative Status of Darfur; Wealth Sharing, including Land Rights; Compensation and the Return of IDPs and Refugees; Security Arrangements; Justice and Reconciliation; and the Overall Agreement and the Resolution of Disputes.

In an assessment meeting held on Saturday evening in Doha "The Mediation reviewed the work of these committees, the points of agreement as well as of disagreement and considered how to find compromises to the latter," read a statement put out by the Qatari state minister for foreign affairs and the Joint Chief Mediator.

The mediator, the host country and the parties agreed to continue negotiations during the week and then the mediation will "announce a timetable of negotiations for the following period".

Minister Ahmed bin Abdullah Al Mahmoud and Mr. Djibril Bassole said, in the statement, they will continue to encourage the leader of the Sudan Liberation Movement Abdel Wahid Al Nur to join the talks and exert efforts to convince Khalil Ibrahim leader of the Justice and Equality Movement to end the suspension of JEM participation in the Doha talks.

Sudan denies targeting UNAMID peacekeepers in Darfur

Sudan Tribune website 17/7/10 - UNAMID said on Friday that they have exchanged fire with the Sudanese army but reported no casualties.

An official at the peacekeeping force said that a missile was fired at UNAMID patrol in West Darfur.

"A patrol in West Darfur has been the target of gunfire by the Sudanese armed forces. Our troops retaliated and got into an exchange of fire, but no casualties were reported" said a UNAMID official to AFP on condition of anonymity.

The UNAMID official said that the Sudanese armed forces said that this attack was a "misunderstanding", and that their soldiers were training on the demolition of unexploded ordnance.

"This clarification is no different, but why did they not take precautions?" he added.

The Sudanese army spokesman Al-Sawarmi Khalid Sa'ad told AFP that a UNAMID patrol was heading from El- Geniena to Salea'a in West Darfur and near Galgala where the soldiers were destroying ammunition and when they heard the explosions they thought they were being fired at "but that wasn't the case".

"Elements from peacekeeping force opened fire later, but no one was injured and they continued on their way" Sa'ad added...

Pre-referendum Watch

UN pledges to assist Sudan's referendum

SUNA 17/7/10 - UN Undersecretary General for Peacekeeping operations Mr. Alain Le Roy, addressing the opening session of the Sudan Consultative Forum Meeting held in Khartoum on Saturday, pointed out that the United Nations stands ready to provide all possible technical assistance and consultation for the successful conduct of the referendum and underlined the importance of the full implementation of the CPA besides the popular consultation for Southern Kordofan and the Blue Nile as they constitute important steps towards the conduct of the referendum. He said the Forum was a good and important opportunity to follow up the strategy for the support of the Sudan and for concerting efforts to help the Sudan implement the agreements and welcomed the formation of the referendum commission, expressing hope that it will find the needed support so as to carry out its work in the best possible manner.

He also welcomed the memorandum of understanding signed between the National Congress Party and the SPLM in Mekelle town in Ethiopia on the referendum arrangement and measures and urged the international community to provide the needed assistance to southern Sudan.

Mr. Le Roy stressed the importance of the ongoing Doha negotiations and called on the international community to cease every chance to push Abdul Wahid Nur to participate in the negotiations.

Reportedly, the meeting aims to provide a coordinated international support to the ongoing process within Sudan namely democratic transformation of the country, the

implementation of the remaining provision of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement and the search for an inclusive global political agreement to promote lasting peace, justice and reconciliation in Darfur.

The communiqué issued by the meeting said that the Forum reiterated its call to the NCP and the SPLM to strengthen their partnership and to work closely with other key Sudanese stakeholder to address urgently and diligently the key challenges that Sudan faces as it enters the critical phase of the interim period of the CPA recognizing that the time remaining is very short and that the stability and the security of the Sudan will depend upon the decision taken during this period.

The communiqué said the Forum recognizes the success of the implementation of the CPA depends on provision of required resources for the reconstruction and the fulfillment of the pledges made by the international community in this regard.

The Communiqué pointed out that the participants have renewed their commitment to fully support the efforts of the parties. They also renewed the commitment of their respective countries and organization to respect the outcome of the referendum on the self determination.

According to ***Al-Sahafa*** 18/7/10, the UN and AU have called on the NCP and the SPLM to overcome their differences and focus on post-referendum issues besides Abyei, popular consultation in the Southern Kordofan and the Blue Nile, border demarcation and the resolution of the Darfur issue. Reportedly, the UN Mission has agreed to deploy troops to secure the referendum process.

Al-Tayar 18/7/10 reports that Federal Cabinet Affairs Minister (SPLM) Luka Biong has warned of the serious consequences of delay of the referendum and called on the UN to facilitate the conduct of the process. He said if the NCP rejects UN assistance then it is up to the international community to ensure the conduct of the process.

“We are committed to conduct the referendum on schedule and we will respect its result if the process is fair and transparent,” state minister at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Kamal Ali Hassan said.

Sudan Tribune website 17/7/10, reported that the conference was attended by delegations from the United States, Norway, Qatar, regional and international organizations and representatives of the P-5 members in the UN Security Council (UNSC).

A statement by the conference stressed that the ruling National Congress Party (NCP) and Sudan People Liberation Movement (SPLM) must work together to meet the challenges facing the country and support the democratic transformation process.

The NCP & SPLM should make use of the recent elections held in the country and learn from it how to properly prepare for the 2011 referendum and popular consultation in Blue Nile and South Kordofan, the statement said.

The statement by the conference said that the two sides must iron the post-referendum details noting that success of the CPA depends on availing the necessary resources for development and reconstruction efforts as well as fulfilling the donors' pledges.

"We want the international community to exert pressure on the armed movements which reject negotiations. They must be persuaded that the peaceful settlement is the only way out of the Darfur crisis," said Kamal Hassan Ali, Sudanese state minister at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

"We want the international community to stress on Doha as the only forum that will lead to realization of peace and stability in Darfur and to set a timetable for the negotiations," he added.

Lack of time a challenge for South Sudan Referendum - Commission

Miraya FM 17/7/10 - The Referendum Commission has said that lack of time to prepare for the South Sudan Referendum is a major challenge but asserted it would exert necessary efforts to fulfill its task. The head of the commission, Mohamed Ibrahim, said that the constitution gives the commission twenty four months but it has only six months to prepare for the conduct of the process.

Southern Sudan speaker refutes comment on unity

Sudan Tribune website 17/7/10 - The Speaker of the regional Assembly of the Southern Sudan James Wani Igga, on Saturday denied comments attributed to him in the media about unity.

On Wednesday Igga was reportedly quoted as saying that unity between north and south is much more than possible.

"There's a moral responsibility to all the martyrs in all parts of Sudan who fought for the unity of the country on all bases," he was quoted as saying. But the Southern official said he had made no such remark.

"I do not remember having interacted with any journalist on 14th July nor did I participate in any political discussions apart from normal deliberations in the House which did not talk about unity let alone interview with a journalist from Khartoum on Wednesday," said Speaker Igga in an interview with Sudan Tribune on Saturday from the regional capital of Juba.

The media further quoted the third powerful man in the structural hierarchy of the SPLM as saying that the movement downplayed the significance of separatist voices within it and said that unity is still possible and it was still not too late to achieve it.

The report further claimed that Igga has distanced the ex-rebels from the ongoing processions calling for separation of Southern Sudan from the north by group of youth under the umbrella of South Sudan youth forum for referendum.

"The SPLM is not party to the ongoing processions and cheers demanding the separation of the south. These organizations express the views of individuals and not

the stand of the SPLM,” Igga reportedly said, adding that the bigger inclination inside the SPLM favors unity.

He also allegedly said that the SPLM leaders who talk about secession are just angry.

SPLM SG to lead negotiations on post-referendum arrangements

Sudan Tribune website 17/7/10 - SPLM Secretary-General and minister of Peace and CPA Implementation, Pagan Amum, will lead the upcoming negotiations on post-referendum issues.

A Southern Sudan Referendum Taskforce has been established under the chairmanship of the GoSS Vice President, Riek Machar, and mandated with the responsibility to prepare the region for the referendum as well as prepare GoSS for 2011 governance.

Amum’s working group, which is sub-committee number two in the Taskforce, will deal with the issues that include citizenship and what to do with the country’s debts, assets, international agreements, water, oil (production and transport), security in addition to export terminals, etc in case of separation.

This will also include the discussions on the future of Sudan should Southerners vote for unity.

The Taskforce has two other sub-committees; the first sub-committee that deals with the conduct of the referendum is headed by the minister of Legal Affairs and Constitutional Development, John Jok.

The first sub-committee will handle the conduct of the referendum itself which includes civic education, mobilization of voters, maintenance of security, etc, while the third sub-committee on post-2011 governance in Southern Sudan is headed by the minister of Cabinet Affairs, Kosti Manibe, and will work on system of governance, including review of the interim constitution, decentralization and restructuring of government institutions, among others, after the referendum.

The referendum body held a meeting on Friday to identify lead negotiators in various sub-committees and membership of their respective working groups. It has also established its secretariat to be headed by the Minister in the Office of the President, Cirino Ofuho, along with experts from different fields. Machar, who chaired the meeting, urged the lead negotiators and their respective working groups to get prepared for the task which will kick off on 18th July.

The meeting also resolved that the Taskforce shall be meeting once a week on Thursdays for weekly briefings and reporting by the working groups to the overall Taskforce.

An overwhelming majority of Southern Sudanese is expected to vote for secession though the ruling National Congress Party (NCP) pledged to work for unity in the time left to referendum.

If unity is not forthcoming, let it be a “peaceful divorce” – Foreign Minister

Local dailies 18/7/10 – In a lengthy interview, Foreign Minister Ali Ahmed Karti, reacted to the ICC genocide charge against President Al-Bashir by stating that the court is “political not legal”, adding that its decision would not affect President Al-Bashir or hamper his travels abroad. He said if unity is not forthcoming; let it be a “peaceful divorce”.

Asked about referendum in the South he said, “We have asked for regional and international observation of the referendum. We will do our utmost to ensure a credible and transparent result of the process”. Asked about confederation he said he does not think that it is on the table now, saying what is being discussed about confederation are just ideas.

Mr. Karti said the decision for closing the border with Libya was not politically-motivated. On relations with Iran he said “they are open” and the joint interests between the two countries do not exceed the economic area.

According to **Al-Rai Al-Aam**, Karti said the issue of oil requires a special agreement between the two CPA partners, pointing out that 70% of the oil is produced in the South and all the pipelines and refineries are located in the North.

SPLM to launch referendum campaign

The Citizen 18/7/10 - The SPLM is launching a 12-day Referendum Campaign covering the ten states of southern Sudan, SPLM deputy Secretary-General Ann Itto said. Reportedly, the campaign aims to inform the people about the referendum and is expected to kick off next week.

“The SPLM shall conduct a mass awareness-raising campaign in the ten states of southern Sudan with the slogan, ‘The March to the Promised Land’,” said Ann Itto. “This,” she said, “is in line with the 2011 Referendum Act of South Sudan.”