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Media Monitoring Report

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Headlines

- Khartoum hopeful Gration's report becomes official policy (**dailies/Reuters**)
- UN Ban Ki-Moon says deeply concerned by Sudan trousers trial (**ST**)
- NCP, SPLM and US envoy meet in Juba 17 Aug (**al-Ayyam**)
- Sudan's Kiir warned Uganda of possible war over Bashir's arrest (**ST**)
- South Sudan cabinet approves Abyei ruling (**ST**)
- SPLM preparing for secession, SAF beefs up presence in Higlig (**Al-Wifaq**)
- Fate of kidnapped aid workers unknown (**IRIN**)
- Funding gap could ground UN service for aid workers in Africa (**UN News**)
- Central Bank exempts Egyptians from stay and work permit (**Dailies**)

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Highlights

Khartoum hopeful Gration's report becomes official policy

Local dailies report Khartoum has welcomed the report presented by US envoy to the Sudan Scott Gration to the US Congress Foreign Relations Committee. According to **Al-Sahafa**, Khartoum is hopeful that the report becomes official policy for the US Administration. MFA spokesperson Ali Al-Sadaq said Gration's report reflects his vision on the way forward for settling the Darfur conflict and for normalizing relations between the two countries.

Reuters 30/7/09 reported Scott Gration as telling lawmakers that there was no evidence to justify Sudan's presence on a US terrorism blacklist.

"There is no evidence in our intelligence community that supports (Sudan) being on the state sponsors of terrorism list," Gration said. "It's a political decision."

However, US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said on Friday no decision had been taken to ease some sanctions against Sudan. She referred to an "intensive" review being done by the Obama administration on its policy towards Sudan. "But no decisions have been made," she stressed in a joint news conference with Saudi Arabia's foreign minister.

The same hopes were cautiously expressed by Sudan Presidential Adviser Mustafa Osman Ismail in Al-Jazeera's topical commentary programme yesterday.

UN Ban Ki-Moon says deeply concerned by Sudan trousers trial

Sudan Tribune website 1/8/09 — UNSG Ban Ki-Moon said on Wednesday that he was deeply concerned by the situation of a UN staff member working in Sudan who faces 40 lashes for wearing "indecent" trousers in public.

"The flogging is against international human rights standards," said Ban during his monthly press conference at the UN headquarters. "I call on parties to live up to their obligations under all relevant international instruments," he added.

Meanwhile, Mr. Abdul Mahmoud Nur Al-Daiem Al-Kurunki, Editor-in-Chief of **Al-Raed** newspaper, writes a commentary on the Luba Hussein issue captioned "Lubna Ahmed Hussein is not against Sharia" in which he reacted to SG Ki-moon's statement.

"The SG Ban Ki-moon who has been silent since the "Guantanamo" was in place is suddenly on the line of Lubna Hussein. He has violated the Organization's Charter for respect to religions by saying that the flogging is against international human rights standards," he writes. "Whether Lubna will be flogged or not, all those concerned should await the court decision. The decision of the court should be respected. More importantly, the Sharia should be respected," he adds.

NCP, SPLM and US envoy meet in Juba 17 Aug.

GoSS Presidency Minister Luka Biong told reporters that the Tripartite Mechanism between the NCP, the SPLM and the US Envoy Scott Gration will meet in Juba on 17 August to resume the dialogue on the CPA pending issues, reports **Al-Ayyam**. Reportedly, a range of issues would be discussed including the fifth census results, border demarcation and the PCA ruling on Abyei.

Sudan's Kiir warned Uganda of possible war over Bashir's arrest

Sudan Tribune website 1/8/09 — The Sudanese First Vice president and president of Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS) Salva Kiir Mayardit urgently dispatched an envoy to Kampala recently to warn over threatening to arrest president Omer Al-Bashir, according to a news report.

The 'Daily Monitor' Ugandan newspaper said that Gier Chuang Aluong, GoSS minister of interior flew to Uganda in mid-July and met with President Yoweri Museveni conveying a letter from Kiir asserting the danger of even "threatening to arrest" Bashir.

Sources told the newspaper that Kiir cautioned that such a situation may cause Uganda to turn into "Somalia with suicide bombers making security difficult and there was risk of war if Bashir was facing arrest".

Gier said that Kiir "was very concerned and insisted that the matter be resolved quickly" the source told the Daily Monitor noting that after years of SPLA fighting Khartoum, Kiir as a former intelligence chief "knew how dangerous an enemy Khartoum could be".

"The Sudanese were very mad. They were threatening severe action against Uganda including war," the Daily Monitor quoted a Ugandan delegate to the Non-Aligned States meeting which was taking place in the Egyptian resort of Sharm El Sheik at the time.

The newspaper said that Museveni "is sensitive" to the perception of Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi who intensively lobbied his African peers to endorse the resolution.

South Sudan cabinet approves Abyei ruling

Sudan Tribune website 31/7/09 - The recently announced award on Abyei tribunal in The Hague was approved on Friday by the Council of Ministers of the Government of the Southern Sudan.

The Council dismissed the claim over Heglig oilfield as part of North Sudan by the NCP-led Government of National Unity.

The Acting minister of Information and Broadcasting, Gabriel Changson Chang said the issue of Heglig remained a contested area which would be dealt with in the North-South border demarcation process.

The Council established that Heglig, which is a foreign name but constituted the three South Sudanese villages of Aliny, Kuer Yaani and Panthou, is part of Unity state.

The Council also reaffirmed that only nine Ngok-Dinka chiefdoms in the redefined Abyei area will vote in the Abyei referendum.

Meanwhile, FVP Salva Kiir Mayardit has invited leaders from both Dinka Ngok and Misseriya tribes to Juba for a briefing on the Abyei ruling.

"Some groups in the South as well as in the North are not happy with the decision of the Court," said Salva Kiir in a speech delivered on the occasion of Martyrs Day in Juba on July 30. "This is normal. Court decisions are not always accepted by all the sides to any litigation," he stressed.

"Because of all flying allegations in the media soon after the court issued its decision, I invite the leaders of the Misseriya and the Dinka Ngok to come to Juba for a meeting to thrash out their fears and misgivings on this historic decision," he said.

Meanwhile, **Miraya FM** 1/8/09 reported the Abyei Legislative Council has requested the Presidency to speed up approving the area's budget for the year 2009 and paying the compensation for the May 2008 victims. The Head of the Finance and Economic Committee in the assembly, Piol Mathiang Amiok said the Council's delegation would meet with the Presidency to request the approval of the region's budget as well as establishment of developmental projects through the Unity Support Fund. Mathiang pointed out that the workers in the region did not receive their salaries for nine months.

In a related development, **Al-Wifaq** reports that about 20 Dinka and 15 Misseriya native administrators began a two-day meeting yesterday in Abyei where they threatened to use force to prevent politicians from interfering in the affairs of the two tribes, saying only President Al-Bashir and FVP Kiir would address the two tribes on any matter. The conference, which deliberated on peaceful co-existence and mutual respect, will issue its recommendations today.

Sudan Tribune website 1/8/09 reported the War Affected areas for Relief, Reconstruction and Development (WAARRD), an indigenous non-governmental organization in Abyei today started a week-long peace and Reconciliation Conference between the Dinka Ngok and the Misseriya communities.

Speaking at the conference, Kabashi Tom Kabashi, member of the Abyei Legislative council, told participants that "he sleeps and wakes up" thinking of what should be done to bring lasting peace and reconciliation between Dinka and Misseriya tribes.

"I really do not understand how the Misseriya and the Dinka Ngok come into conflict that explodes and extends into North and South issue, when illiterate people from both Dinka and Misseriya tribes had lived peacefully for years without such extended tribal conflict," Kabashi said.

Kabashi Tom, who had lived in Abyei for years trying to reconcile both tribes, further added that peace comes "with a lot of developmental activities than war".

"Through peace the Misseriya and the Dinka Ngok are able to travel far south and north without any repressive measures other than war times when both tribes were confined to their areas," he said.

SPLM preparing for secession, SAF beefs up presence in Higlig

An informed diplomatic source has revealed that the recent SPLM SG Pagan Amum's visit to Washington aimed at discussing a post-independence South Sudan, support for SPLA as well as referendum and Abyei, **Al-Wifaq** reports. The source, speaking on condition of anonymity, said Amum discussed with the US Administration officials the CPA pending issues.

However, Abyei Chief Administrator Arop Moyak has ruled out that Amum has discussed the question of secession with the US Administration officials, saying separation would be decided by the people of the South and the Abyei area not by an individual.

Sudan Tribune website 30/7/09 reported Amum has urged the United States not to normalize bilateral relations with Sudan and to maintain sanctions till the full implementation of a peace deal the former rebels signed with the government in 2005.

Pagan Amum was speaking before the US House Committee for Foreign Affairs on Wednesday July 29. His call comes at a time where the US envoy to Sudan recommended before US Senators today to ease economic sanctions and to remove Sudan from terrorism list.

Mr. Scott Gration said sanctions on Sudan are hampering efforts to bring peace to the country, including giving South Sudan the economic help to promote its autonomy.

Amum who opposed the lift of sanctions, said the "normalization of relations with Sudan should come as a result of the full implementation of the CPA, the achievement of Democratic transformation, through the conduct of a fair and free elections, and after the ending of the war in Darfur through a negotiated peace settlement."

Meanwhile, *Al-Wifaq* also reports that the Higlig area is witnessing military buildup as SAF has sent military reinforcements to the area two days ago. Reportedly, the military reinforcement is a precautionary measure by SAF for any PCA ruling repercussion.

Fate of kidnapped aid workers unknown

IRIN 31/7/09 - The fate of two female aid workers kidnapped by gunmen four weeks ago remains unknown. Armed men kidnapped Irish national Sharon Commins and Ugandan Hilda Kawuki from the offices of the Irish aid group GOAL in the north Darfur city of Kutum on 3 July.

Senior officials say efforts to secure their release "are ongoing". "We will continue to be unsparing in our efforts," John O'Shea, GOAL's president, said on 24 July.

The kidnapping was the third such act directed at foreign aid workers since the ICC arrest warrant.

However, officials have said the kidnapers are bandits wanting money, and previous cases ended with the hostages being released. But it has raised concerns.

"We are worried for them – and for others in the future in Darfur," said an aid worker. "Are they really bandits, or is this one more way to intimidate aid workers?"

Funding gap could ground UN air service for aid workers in Africa

UN News Centre 31/7/09 - the United Nations air service, shuttling aid workers to remote locations to provide life-saving assistance to vulnerable people in Africa, is in danger of being shut down due to a funding shortage, according to the World Food Programme (WFP) which operates the flights.

Flights to Chad, where 4,000 humanitarian workers fly monthly to help 250,000 refugees from the war-torn Sudanese region of Darfur as well as 180,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs), could be grounded as early as 15 August. The Chad flights need an infusion of \$6.7 million to stay in the air until the end of the year.

Meanwhile, the service to Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea could grind to a halt by 30 August, if it does not receive the required \$3.3 million to remain in operation until the end of 2009.

With WFP flying thousands of relief workers to assist the needy, many of whom have been driven from their homes by conflict, "how will they reach people if they have no planes?" asked Pierre Carrasse, the agency's Aviation Branch Chief.

"How will WFP reach the hungry? How will doctors reach their patients?" he added.

This February, the UN Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS) was forced to shut down its operations in Côte d'Ivoire due to lack of funds. In the same month, Niger also saw flights come to an end, but they could resume next month thanks to an injection of funds from the UN Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF).

With a 2009 budget of \$160 million, the vital air service operates in Chad, Sudan, Somalia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Ethiopia, the Central African Republic (CAR), West Africa and Afghanistan.

To date, UNHAS has received less than \$40 million in contributions and expects to receive an additional \$50 million from organizations whose personnel utilize the service.

Central Bank exempts Egyptians from stay and work permit

Local dailies report the Bank of Sudan has decided to allow foreign nationals to transfer money within the limit of 300 Euros or the equivalent in other currencies without asking them to produce documents. According to ***Al-Khartoum***, the Bank of Sudan's circular also exempted Egyptian nationals working in the Sudan from the stay visa and work permit needed to transfer their salaries and other entitlements. They are now allowed to make such transfers by producing their work contract and a valid passport provided the amount does not exceed the monthly salary and other entitlement contained in the contract.