

20 Jan 2010

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Media Monitoring Report

United Nations Mission in Sudan/ Public Information Office

Headlines

- SRSG Ashraf Qazi's tenure ends (**Dailies**)
- NEC considering request to extend nomination period (**Dailies**)
- Khartoum court sentenced two JEM fighters to death (**Dailies**)
- SPLA accuses NCP of providing LRA safe haven (**Al-Sahafa**)
- Khartoum will be the first to recognize South independence – Al-Bashir (**Dailies**)
- Sudan arrests Europeans over asteroid fragments (**Reuters**)
- 11 people killed in tribal fight in Upper Nile (**Al-Intibaha**)
- Two people killed in renewed pastoralist clashes in Yirol (**ST**)
- GoSS to seek centre's help to redress food gap (**Al-Intibaha**)
- Minister says South Sudan is an enemy of herself (**ST**)
- Gen. Salva Kiir should relinquish his military position - SPLM's Amum (**ST**)
- Angry demonstrators reject NCP nominee in Kassala (**Ajras Al-Hurriah**)
- Bashir-Mubarak relationship stronger than enemies think – Egypt (**Al-Rai Al-Aam**)

Links

- UN to boost Haiti quake relief force *The Guardian (UK)*.19/01/2010.
<http://unhq-apps-01.un.org/dpi/nmu.nsf/ac/2010-01-19RRGA-7ZUQSU>
- A Turbulent Year in Sudan [Op-Ed] By Ali Ibrahim. *Asharq Al-Awsat (UK)*.19/01/2010.
<http://unhq-apps-01.un.org/dpi/nmu.nsf/ac/2010-01-19EEFI-7ZURV5>
- Tension Builds as Peace Agreement in Sudan Marks Anniversary. <http://unhq-apps-01.un.org/dpi/nmu.nsf/ac/2010-0119EEFI-7ZUNT>

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Highlights

SRSG Ashraf Qazi's tenure ends

Local dailies report that SRSG Ashraf Qazi will depart Sudan in February ending a challenging but fulfilling assignment. Meanwhile, ***Al-Rai Al-Aam*** reports a diplomatic source as saying that Sudan Government has rejected a request by UN for the return of former SRSG Jan Pronk to assume the Mission's leadership. The sources said Sudan Government would not agree to the reassignment of an expelled person.

UN News 19/1/10 - The top United Nations envoy in Sudan has announced he will step down from the post at the end of next month after more than two years in the African nation.

Ashraf Jehangir Qazi, the Secretary-General's Special Representative and the head of the UN Mission in Sudan (UNMIS), issued a statement yesterday announcing the end of his tenure. A successor will be named soon.

The former Pakistani ambassador has served as head of UNMIS since late 2007 and before that had been the Secretary-General's Special Representative for Iraq.

In a statement a spokesperson for UNMIS said Mr. Qazi was stepping down "after more than two years of a challenging but fulfilling and productive assignment."

The statement noted that Mr. Qazi was leaving at a time when the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), which ended the long-running north-south civil war in early 2005, was "firmly moving forward towards elections and the referendum."

National elections are scheduled to take place in April and a referendum is expected to be held next year to determine whether the south secedes or remains as part of Sudan.

UNMIS added that its "support and technical expertise have played a vital role in keeping the agreement on track thanks to Mr. Qazi's leadership that kept the mission focused on the mandate."

Reuters 19/1/10, reported that Qazi was appointed on September 4, 2007 to replace Jan Pronk, who was expelled in October 2006 after angering Khartoum for "openly intruding in the armed forces" by reporting army defeats in troubled Darfur on his personal website.

During the two years, Qazi succeeded to calm relations between the Mission and the Sudanese Government despite some frictions with the federal and the semi-autonomous Governments in Khartoum and Juba.

"UNMIS' support and technical expertise have played a vital role in keeping the Agreement on track thanks to Mr. Qazi's leadership that kept the Mission focused on the mandate," the Khartoum-based Mission said in a statement today.

He leaves the mission at a time when the CPA implementation is firmly moving forward towards elections and the referendum.

Prior to his appointment as SRSG in Sudan in late 2007, Mr. Qazi served as the UN Secretary General's Special representative for Iraq.

NEC considering request to extend nomination period

The National Elections Commission will hold a meeting today to look into requests for extension of nomination period, **Al-Ahdath** reports. NEC member Mukhtar Al-Assam told the paper that the meeting would also discuss a proposal to reduce voting duration to just one instead of three days.

Khartoum court sentenced two JEM fighters to death

Local dailies report that amid tight security measures, Khartoum North Court yesterday sentence two JEM fighters, Abdullah Ali Adam and Al-Mardi Bakheit to death by hanging on charges of participation in an attack on Omdurman in May 2008.

Sudan according to **Sudan Tribune website** 19/1/10, a Sudanese court today handed death sentences against two Darfur rebels who took part in a surprise attack on the capital in 2008 attack, raising to 105 the number of Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) fighters ordered hanged for the raid.

Five men were cleared of all charges and released. Two other men were convicted of helping a JEM leader escape from Khartoum after the raid. One was jailed for three years, and the judge ordered the other to be released as he was aged over 70.

Under Sudanese law, any death sentence must be ratified by both an appeals' court and the high court. Then all death warrants must be signed and approved by President Omar al-Beshir. No executions have been carried out against JEM fighters.

The United Nations, as well as human rights groups, expressed concern over the trials in Sudanese courts especially created for the case and urged Khartoum to abolish capital punishment.

Defence lawyers have argued that the special courts are unconstitutional and have not guaranteed their clients' legal rights.

SPLA accuses NCP of providing LRA safe haven

SPLA has accused the NCP and SAF of protecting the LRA by providing them safe haven in South Darfur and called for their expulsion, **Al-Sahafa** reports. The SPLA also warned of a possible LRA attack on Raja area.

Khartoum will be the first to recognize South independence – Al-Bashir

Addressing celebrations marking 5th CPA Anniversary in Yambio yesterday, President Al-Bashir said Khartoum would be the first Capital to recognize independence of the South should it chooses to secede, **local dailies** report. However, according to **Ajras Al-Hurriah**, both President Al-Bashir and his FVP Salva Kiir Mayardit pledged to work together to keep the country united. While Al-Bashir said Khartoum would be the first to recognize independence, Kiir called on the international community to support newly-born state if southerners vote for independence.

AFP 19/1/10 - Sudan will recognize the south's independence if it chooses to break away from the rest of Africa's largest country in a January 2011 referendum, President Omar al-Bashir said on Tuesday.

"The (ruling) National Congress Party favours unity," Bashir said in a speech to mark the fifth anniversary of the end of Sudan's north-south civil war.

"But if the result of the referendum is separation, then we in the NCP will be the first to take note of this decision and to support it. We will be good neighbours," Sudan's president said.

The speech, delivered at the stadium in Yambio, capital of Western Equatoria state, was broadcast on national television.

"Khartoum will be the first capital to recognize the new state and to support it," said the president, who is due to stand for re-election in April.

Reuters 19/1/10 reported that Sudan's president on Tuesday said he would support the country's oil-producing south if it chose independence in a looming referendum, in his closest acknowledgement of the possibility of separation.

The unusually conciliatory speech from President Omar al-Bashir came as Sudan marked the fifth anniversary of a 2005 peace deal that ended more than two decades of north-south civil war and promised the referendum.

Southerners are widely expected to choose independence in the ballot, scheduled for January 2011, although analysts have up to now warned Bashir's northern supporters would resist any loss of control over southern oil fields.

Bashir told dignitaries gathered in the remote southern town of Yambio that his northern National Congress Party (NCP) still wanted to keep Sudan unified.

"But if the result of the referendum is separation ... the Khartoum Government will be the first to recognize this decision. We will support the new-born government in the south," he said.

Security was tight as Bashir spoke in a newly-constructed stadium in Yambio, close to the border with the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

Analysts and activists have released a series of reports in recent weeks, warning Sudan's northern and southern armies were re-arming and the country could slide back to war in the run-up to the southern referendum.

South Sudan's President Salva Kiir, speaking at the same event, played down fears that the 2011 vote would lead to a confrontation with the north.

"Let me be clear ... that even if the south decides to separate from the north in 2011, it is not going to split into the Indian Ocean or the Atlantic Ocean ... Let us prepare ourselves to embrace the outcome of the referendum peacefully," he told the crowd.

"The (River) Nile will continue to flow from south to north ... Arab nomads will continue to look for pastures and water in south Sudan and no one would think of denying those rights. Before appropriate oil infrastructure is developed in south Sudan, the oil will continue to flow south to north," he added.

Most of Sudan's proven oil reserves lie in the south, but the crude is funneled north to the Red Sea, through pipelines and refineries to Port Sudan.

There have been fears a separation would spark clashes between heavily-armed nomadic

groups who regularly move their livestock over the north-south border looking for fodder.

Sudan arrests Europeans over asteroid fragments

Reuters 19/1/10 - Sudanese police said on Tuesday they had arrested two European tourists for collecting fragments of an asteroid from the country's northern desert without permission.

The tourists, from France and Belgium, found pieces of an asteroid that crashed to earth in the Abu-Hamad area of Sudan's remote Northern state, said a statement published by Sudan's interior ministry.

"This was a clear violation and an illegal act because they didn't get the right permission from the geological or other relevant authorities," a police spokesman told Reuters.

The statement did not say what charges the Europeans might face. Scientists tracked a car-sized asteroid as it entered the Earth's atmosphere and exploded over northern Sudan's Nubian Desert in October 2008.

Experts from NASA and the University of Khartoum collected fragments from the site soon afterwards.

They described the find as extremely rare as fragile asteroids usually explode high in the atmosphere and because it was the first time scientists had been able to predict an object was heading to earth and follow it to its final destination.

Sudan has very few tourists, largely thanks to its insecurity, cumbersome visa regulations and the restrictions on visitors' movements imposed when they arrive.

11 people killed in tribal fight in Upper Nile

More than 11 Nuer have been killed in a tribal clash between them and the Dinka in Funjak area in the Upper Nile State, **Al-Intibaha** reports. SPLA has rushed troops to the area to prevent the fighting from spilling over into Malakal. A source told the paper that the fighting, reportedly over cattle, broke out since three days and was continuing until yesterday.

Two people killed in renewed pastoralist clashes in Yirol

Sudan Tribune website 19/1/10 — The Lakes state pastoralists have again resumed clashes over cattle, engaging in a deadly fight in Pandit at Cuijuona cattle camp on Sunday morning. Two pastoralists were killed and an unidentified number of cattle were looted by attackers, said a county official.

The fight took place between Yirol East County and Yirol West County. The attackers reportedly were aiming only to take cattle, resulting in a fewer number of casualties than have occurred in incidents elsewhere.

A few cows were rescued by SPLA soldiers and now the county authorities are investigating to identify how many cows were looted.

Yirol West County Commissioner Agok Manyiel Dhieu commented, "I really don't understand why these youth are fighting themselves over cattle issues – we are pushing the election and more voters are slipping away just by killing one another – people are disappointed everywhere in Lakes state because of these youth who make the state an unhealthy one."

On Saturday, unknown armed men had attacked a government official's car between Aluakluak and Akot. The armed man opened fire on the car wounding the minister's bodyguard.

Another similar incident happened between Aluakluak Gadim and Adu on the same date. In a hold-up, commodities were looted from a businessman's truck. One soldier on leave was at gunpoint of a hijacker and was set free after paying 2000 pounds to the hijacker. SPLA soldiers on leave are not allowed to carry guns.

Minister says South Sudan is an enemy of herself

Sudan Tribune website 19/1/10 – Interior minister in the semi autonomous regional government of South Sudan, General Chier Chuang Aluong, said that Southerners are enemies of their own and urged reconciliation.

The minister has made his stern statement during a graduation of 513 police forces in Yambio, the Western Equatoria State capital.

General Gier said our enemies are not those we know but ourselves and must clean our hearts from evil deeds in order to achieve desired goals and objectives needed for South Sudan to prosper.

He was referring to statement made by SPLM broke away party headed by Lam Akol who voiced opposition to south Sudan secession from the north at a self-determination referendum scheduled for January 2011, describing it as suicidal attempt ever made by southern Sudanese.

The remark angered and generated heated discussions in most southern Sudanese forums with majority including members of his own break away party, warning him to stop betraying southern interest for personal survival. South Sudan is bigger than individuals, they said.

Jacob Bol, a southern Student at Juba university campus in Kodoro, east of Khartoum, said this call signifies and defines the clear intention/mission of the SPLM-DC.

"It has now revealed its real colors opposed to Southern thinking," he said, adding "if Lam who intends to run for South Sudan presidential chair can say this before being elected, so what do southerners think about fate of the South if he is elected president of the semi-autonomous region.

"Without mercy he will cancel the CPA making it possible for north to secure unity of the country after having displaced and lost millions of our people. Let them make no such mistake to betray interest of the rural poor majority," he warned

Earlier, General Gier Chuang said "we took up arms and fought against nothing than injustices, social segregation based on identities and rights to bring desperately needed changes not only in South Sudan but to all marginalized areas in the country."

The SPLM vision and mission were to bring liberty, equality and unification of all Sudanese without subjugation or coercion related to how their affairs should be managed, he further said.

In a speech to hundreds of attendees including 513 graduates, General Gier, who was speaking on behalf of the President of South Sudan Salva Kiir Mayardit, said happy to attend graduation of composite huge number of committed young policemen and women at one occasion.

Gen. Salva Kiir should relinquish his military position - SPLM's Amum

Sudan Tribune website 20/1/10 – A senior official of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) has said that the incumbent president of southern Sudan and the party's candidate for presidency in the South, Gen. Salva Kiir Mayardit, will have to relinquish his military position in order to run for the elections.

The SPLM Secretary General Pagan Amum was quoted by a local newspaper, The Juba Post, as saying that his party's chairman will step down from being the army chief as the law requires.

Amum also added that the party's candidate for the position of the President at the national level, Yasir Saeed Arman, will also resign from his current position as party's Deputy Secretary General for Northern Sector and focus on the presidential campaigns.

This statement by the party's Secretary General on Kiir's military status came after two contradicting statements issued by the minister for presidential affairs, Luka Biong Deng.

Biong in his initial reaction to law requirement defended his boss' position by saying Kiir would not relinquish his army position because the constitution allowed him to maintain it, but later on said that Kiir had already retired from the army since 2005.

He did not however explain the reason why Kiir continued to publicly appear in military uniform and use military title even up to 2010.

However, a military source revealed that Kiir, who was actually retired by late Dr. John Garang in 2005 at the rank of Lt. General, silently reinstated himself in the military in 2007 and promoted himself to the rank of 1st Lt. General.

He currently heads the recently formed SPLA Command Council and he is also the Commander-in-Chief of the army by the virtue of being the President of the semi-autonomous Southern Sudan.

Biong earlier criticized a letter sent to Salva Kiir from the National Elections Commission (NEC), warning that they would not accept his candidature unless he resigns from military positions.

He described the letter as "premature" because the SPLM had not yet presented Kiir's nomination and supporting documents to the NEC.

NEC has set January 22 as the deadline to receive the nomination by Friday this week.

Anonymous voices among the government officials defend the law saying Kiir should completely retire from the army and step down from heading the military Command Council.

Angry demonstrators took to streets in Kassala

Police detained about 100 people in Port Sudan who took to streets yesterday to demonstrate against the NCP nominee Mohamed Tahir Eila, **Ajras Al-Hurriah** reports. Meanwhile, sources said Interior Minister Ibrahim Mahmoud Hamid is on a secret visit to the area to convince a local leader to reverse decision to vie with the NCP nominee for the state governor post.

Bashir-Mubarak relationship is stronger than enemies think – Egypt

Al-Rai Al-Aam reports Egypt's Ruling Party SG Safwat Al-Sherif as saying that Egypt considers Sudan a significant strategic depth and that his country would spare no effort to maintain a united, strong, secure and stable Sudan. Al-Sherif told a visiting Sudanese media delegation in Cairo yesterday that the relationship between the two peoples and between Presidents Mubarak and Al-Bahsir is stronger than enemies might think to be.

GoSS to seek centre's help to redress food gap

Al-Intibaha reports GoSS has announced that it would request an urgent food relief from the federal government to meet food needs of five states in the south. Meanwhile, HAC in the south has admitted the misuse of food stocks in Warrap and Aweil.