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Media Monitoring Report

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Highlights

Darfur rebel leader 19-hour standoff ends

Reuters 19/5/10 - Chad refused entry to a Darfur rebel leader on his way back to the battlefield on Wednesday, ordering him to return to Libya after a 19-hour diplomatic standoff at the country's main airport.

Chadian officials had stopped Khalil Ibrahim, the head of the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), when he flew into the Chadian capital N'Djamena from Libya.

They destroyed the passports of everyone in his delegation and ordered him to return to Tripoli, Ibrahim said.

The showdown was a major setback for the rebel group which in the past had strong links with Chad's leadership and regularly used the country as a base for its troops and a transit point for its officials.

"He is in the air," top JEM official al-Tahir al-Feki told Reuters, adding he was returning to Tripoli after 19 hours on board a Libyan Afriqiyah airlines plane. "We are still hopeful he will be able to return to the field," he added. Libya also shares a border with Darfur.

Ibrahim said there was a "conspiracy" between the Chadian government and international mediators to force JEM to return to floundering Qatar-hosted peace talks with Sudan's government.

Chad's Interior Minister Ahmat Mahamat Bachir said his country did not want JEM passing through: "We have re-established relations with Sudan so we cannot allow these undesirable people to pass through Chad," he said.

In a statement, Sudan praised the Chadian move against Ibrahim and said it showed Deby's commitment to the agreement not to allow any armed rebel movement to use its territory to launch attacks on Sudan.

"(Khalil Ibrahim) headed toward N'Djamena with no prior arrangements with the Chadian government," the statement added.

Ibrahim said that he refused to be flown to Qatar as proposed by the UN-African Union mediation of the faltering Darfur talks.

"They are trying to hijack me and force me to fly back to," Ibrahim said. "But we already signed two agreements and the government breached both those agreements and they are fighting us."

No one was immediately available to comment from the mediation team.

Sudan Tribune website 19/5/10 reported sources close to the Chadian presidency as saying that the rebel group snubbed proposals brokered by President Idriss Deby to facilitate the conclusion of a peace deal.

Khalil Ibrahim has arrived to Tripoli after receiving a call from the Libyan officials, said Ahmed Hussein Adam the spokesperson of the rebel Justice and Equality Movement. "But his final destination remains to reach the grounds," he further said.

He stressed the mediation has the responsibility to secure his return inside Darfur to the movement's bases. If he does not return this will jeopardize our participation in the peace talks, he warned.

In Khartoum, the Sudanese government praised today the position the Chadian authorities for preventing Khalil from entering into N'djamena and ordered his return to Libya.

The official *SUNA* said President Omer Al-Bashir talked by telephone on Wednesday with his Chadian counterpart President Deby who reiterated his support to the peace process. Bashir, for his part, stressed the desire of the Sudanese government to promote and develop joint cooperation in the interests of the two brotherly peoples.

Deby is expected to visit Sudan next week to attend the swearing-in ceremony of the President Omer Al-Bashir.

Kamal Obeid, state minister for information, said this decision to refuse Khalil's entry to N'djamena confirms the strong commitment of the Chadian government to the signed agreements between the two countries, adding it "represents a new dimension in bilateral relations between the two countries".

JEM officials today condemned the decision of the Chadian government and spoke about conspiracy against the people of Darfur involving Sudan, Chad, the host country Qatar and the Joint Chief Mediator.

Ahmed Hussein Adam said the Chadian President and the Joint Chief Mediator Djibril Bassole are responsible for Khalil return to Darfur because he left his troops to join the peace talks in Doha.

"(JEM) is calling on the United Nations and other competent international bodies to work to facilitate the passage of the President of the movement into leadership positions in the liberated territories in Darfur" the rebel group said in a statement issued today.

The group further said the non-return of JEM leader would establish a precedent that would impede the participation of rebel commanders in future talks for peace in Darfur.

In a separate military statement, JEM said its troops clashed today with Sudanese army and government militias at a crossroad between Umsaouna, Sheariya and Muhajariyya, South Darfur.

"The defunct government force consisted of three mobile units coming from El Fashir, Nyala and Babanousa of Kordofan and was mounted on 271 vehicles."

"JEM forces destroyed 63 of the vehicles and captured the rest," said Ali Alwafi, the military spokesperson of the movement.

Athor refuses to talk, moving 39,000 soldiers towards Jonglei, Unity states

Akhir Lahza 20/5/10 – George Athor has threatened to wage an all-out war on Jonglei, Unity and North Bahr el Ghazal states during the coming days. Athor yesterday accused SPLM

leaders of “stealing power” in the South by way of rigging elections, corruption and confiscation of freedoms. He refused to engage in talks with SPLA, saying the movement is trying to lure him to Juba to assassinate him. He has called on what he described as “thieves” to return to SPLM principles, adding that his movement is seeking to restore democracy and justice. Ator claimed that now he has 39,000 freedom fighters under his command. He also criticized GoSS President Salva Kiir Mayardit, saying in Khartoum Kiir appears unionist but in Juba he talks about secession.

Jonglei governor dismisses allegations of probable attack on Bor

Sudan Tribune website 19/5/10– Jonglei Gov. Kuol Manyang Juuk has dismissed as “spread allegations” that defeated gubernatorial candidate George Athor Deng may attack the State capital, Bor.

Speaking to the *Sudan Tribune* by phone on Tuesday after taking the oath of office in Bor, Mr. Manyang said the “unity of our people” is paramount to attaining peace and “attract investors”.

“In order for us to stabilize and develop our state we need to promote security,” he said. “Security is above everything and we should not listen to allegations being broadcasted over radio about the advancement of Athor (Deng) to Bor and that he has heavy arms.” “He has no arms,” he reaffirmed.

Mr. Manyang observed that Athor threats to attack Bor do not amount to causing panic among the town residents “because I can sit in my house and speak in my house that I will attack such a place and (media) broadcast”.

The governor calls for what he describes as “the unity of our people to maintain peace and prepare for referendum on self-determination due next January. On job creation, Kuol says “unemployment is insecurity. When we make peace, we make (our state) attractive for (foreign) investors.”

Athor waging guerrilla war – SPLA

Al-Ahdath 20/5/10 - The SPLA has advised the dissident general George Athor to take refuge to the UN Mission or the ICRC to talk to the GoSS to end the crisis. SPLA spokesperson Kuol Deim Kuol dismissed claims of mutiny within the SPLA ranks in the Upper Nile and Jonglei states, saying these are mere “lies” spread by the NCP to destabilize the South.

Meanwhile, SPLA assistant spokesperson Col. Malak Ayuen told the paper yesterday that Athor is avoiding confrontation with the SPLA and is waging guerrilla war.

SPLM Atem Garang rules out outbreak of North-South war

Al-Intibaha 20/5/10 – SPLM leading figure Atem Garang has ruled out an outbreak of war between the North and the South over result of the upcoming referendum. With regards to tribal conflicts in the South, he said these problems “can be resolved by development, disarmament and raising awareness about the importance of peaceful coexistence”.

Sudan resumes pre-publication censorship of newspapers

Sudan Tribune website 19/5/10 - Agents from the National Intelligence and Security Services (NISS) stormed two newspapers in Sudan today confiscating and tearing down articles prepared for publication in Thursday editions.

Ajras AL-Hurriya which is close to the Sudan People Liberation Movement (SPLM) and *Al-*

Sahafa were both impacted by today's raids.

"At 8:00 pm, three security officers came to the newspaper and tore up some material and opinion columns that were ready to go to print," the deputy editor of *Ajras al-Hurriya*, Fayeze al-Silaik, told AFP.

"We cannot have an issue tomorrow because they removed six pages and the paper is 12 pages long," he told Reuters in separate statements.

NISS officers also went to the offices of the independent *Al-Sahafa* daily and demanded to see editorial material and opinion columns, an employee said.

Its editor-in-chief Al-Nur Ahmed Al-Nur told Reuters that three full pages were removed as well as other articles.

"I don't see any reason for this," he said. "We are an independent and objective paper and we expect to be dealt with in an objective manner."

Al-Nur called the censorship a "step backwards in the democratic transformation of the country". Al-Silaik said it was the biggest crisis to face Sudan's press since a 2005 north-south peace deal ended decades of civil war, shared power and wealth and outlined a plan for democratic change in Africa's largest country.

Poor roads infrastructure in E. Equatoria hamper development

Sudan Tribune website 19/5/10 - Bad roads and poor infrastructure are the main obstacle to the development in Magwi County, Eastern Equatoria State says elected Member of Parliament Hon. Peter Otim.

The development activities being hindered including key agriculture services. This is the assessment of Magwi Payam a Member of Parliament elect, Peter Otim, speaking to the press in Torit today.

Most feeder roads in Eastern Equatoria are full of potholes.

Mr. Otim said Magwi could be the food basket of Eastern Equatoria, Southern Sudan and Sudan at large but it lacks roads linking the area to towns like the state capital Torit or to the Southern Sudan capital Juba to help the farmers transport their products to market their agricultural inputs.

The MP added that better roads would bridge the gap between farmers and consumers and open up means to rapidly boost the development of the state.

Otim calls upon the state government to do more to help the county inhabitants to let them exploit its God given resources as a means to fight poverty in the state.

Eastern Equatoria is under hunger threats since last year and Magwi County produces enough food to feed the state, but farmers lack good to transport their produce to the market due to the deplorable condition of the roads' network in the region since the CPA.

Mr. Otim stressed that, farmers need adequate seeds and tools in order to foster food production; he asked the state ministry of agriculture to join hands with the County authority in order to aid the community out of the situation they are undergoing.

He noted that Magwi County would rise to full development if the government improved roads and established health facilities in the area to improve the lives of its residents.

Columnist accuses Sudan of harboring Iran Revolutionary Guard units

Sudan Tribune website 19/5/10 - A Saudi columnist today lashed out at the Sudanese government accusing it of hosting members of the Iran Revolutionary Guard along with secret weapon manufacturing factories.

This week Sudanese authorities arrested Islamist opposition leader Hassan Al-Turabi and closed down his party's newspaper after publishing a report alleging that Iran had constructed a weapon factory in the country aiming at supplying Islamic insurgents in Somalia and Yemeni Shiite rebels as well as Islamist Palestinian movement Hamas.

The Sudanese ministry of information said the publication of this report comes as the international community considers new sanctions against Iran over the nuclear file and tries to create a link between Sudan and Iran.

Today the managing director of the Dubai based *Al-Arabiya TV* Abdel-Rahman Al-Rashid suggested that the report in the newspaper is true.

"If Al-Bashir thinks that others do not know the truth of his dealings with the Iranians, the Revolutionary Guard camps, and their arms plant and their covert activity using Khartoum to infiltrate the states of the [Arabian] Peninsula and Egypt, he is wrong" Al-Rashid wrote today in the London-based *Al-Sharq Al-Awsat* newspaper.

"The presence of the [Iran] Revolutionary Guards in the Sudan no longer a secret, although Al-Bashir's insistence on trying to conceal it is a bizarre thing," said Al-Rashid who is close to the Saudi Royal family and government in Riyadh.

Over 3 million people get free primary education in south Sudan

Sudan Tribune website 19/5/10 - Five years after the launched of "Go to School initiative" by president of the regional government of Southern Sudan, Salva Kiir Mayardit, authorities at the ministry of education, say at least over three million students across the region get free primary education under the Universal primary Education.

Professor Job Dhoruai, caretaker minister of education, science and technology, in report extended to *Sudan Tribune* said the latest headcount which shows a growing number of students joining every year, is rapidly encouraging.

He said in 2006 when the programme started, only a figure recorded as 161,396 students were enrolled across the semi-autonomous region. The following year, 2007, 145, 23 joined; another 160, 11 got on in both 2008 and 2009, while 201,990 students joined this year.

According to professor Job Dhoruai, headcounts in all school including privates in the region both primary and secondary schools are carried out annually to provide data which is used in the allocation of capitation grants. It also helps rule out ghost teachers, absenteeism, and drop-out and repetition rates.