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Media Monitoring Report

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Referendum Monitor

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Highlights

“NCP can reap gains from NY conference” – SPLM

Al-Sahafa 21/9/10 – GoSS Cabinet Affairs Minister Luka Biong said that FVP Salva Kiir Mayardit and VP Ali Osman Taha would hold consultations tomorrow in NY in a bid to narrow gulf of their differences over pending CPA issues especially Abyei and the demarcation of the border ahead of the NY conference on Sudan on Friday, adding the consultations are also intended to send a strong message to the International Community.

Biong said the NCP could achieve gains in NY conference if it commits itself to the conduct of free, fair and transparent referenda, adding that the gains could be in the form of lifting Sudan from the list of countries sponsoring terrorism and the economic sanctions.

SPLM accuses NCP of using Misseriya to raise Abyei issue

Al-Tayar 21/9/10 – The SPLM has accused the NCP of using the Misseriya to raise the Abyei issue. National Assembly Deputy Speaker and SPLM leader Atem Garang said the NCP, after losing the case at the PCA, resorted to the use of the Misseriya tribe. Atem has downplayed the threats by the Misseriya, calling on the tribe to advise its youths to read Abyei Protocol to know that the phrase “other Sudanese” contained in the Protocol does not mean the Misseriya tribe.

Referendum and good governance are top SPLM priorities - official

Sudan Tribune website 20/9/10 – The SPLM policy framework 2010 has ranked the forthcoming referendum, good governance practices and security as top among its lists of priorities in the run-up to the post-referendum era, a party official told Sudan Tribune on Friday.

Achuil Malith Banggol, a Secretary at the Juba-based Secretariat for Popular and Syndicated Organization - Southern Sector - said the party’s policy framework, drawn in consultation with various stakeholders provided for pre and post-referendum guidelines, with specific focus on next-year’s referendum on self-determination of the Southern population.

“The SPLM has a clear plan for the referendum with a strategic focus already placed on the priority needs of the people of the South Sudan as part of the post-referendum arrangements,” he said.

Other key areas, he reiterated, were food security, health service provision, education, infrastructural development and institutional capacity building, justice and the rule of law, among others.

Achuil, however, emphasized the importance of maintaining adequate food security through agriculture, the backbone of rural economies. Nearly 80 percent of the populations, mainly women, are engaged in agricultural activities, with average productivity valued at merely 1.5 tons per household.

“Food security remains an essential element. How do you expect people to participate in all these referendum processes on empty stomachs?” he queried. Asked what his party was doing as part

of preparations for the forthcoming referendum, Achuil said it is the constitutional mandate of Southern Sudan Referendum Commission (SSRC) and its respective state organs to handle such processes, not the SPLM.

"What are the civil society activists and other stakeholders doing if they cannot engage the referendum commission in useful discussions? Matters pertaining to the referendum preparations are not handled by the SPLM, but the commission appointed to oversee the referendum," he said.

Dinka and Misseriya to hold conference in Abyei

Ajras Al-Hurriya 21/9/10 – The Abyei Area Administration has announced a prospective conference between the Misseriya and the Dinka under the auspices of VP Ali Osman Taha for consultation on the future of the area ahead of the referendum besides debating on ongoing efforts to complete the implementation of the Area's Protocol.

Abyei Deputy Chief Administrator Rahama Abdul Rahman said the situation in the area is stable and called on the residents to forget the bitterness of the past and open a new page of co-existence.

SPLM welcomes new US policy on Sudan

Ajras Al-Hurriya 21/9/10 – the SPLM has welcomed the new US policy towards Sudan, saying the policy contains incentives that could encourage the NCP to implement the remaining CPA benchmarks particularly the referenda.

SPLM SG Pagan Amum told the newspaper that his movement encourages the normalization of relations between Sudan and the US if the government implement the pending CPA provisions and find a solution to the Darfur issue.

NCP accuses SPLM of escaping responsibility by campaigning for secession

Akhir Lahza 21/9/10 – The NCP has directed harsh criticism to its partner the SPLM accusing it of escaping its responsibility by campaigning for secession.

NCP spokesperson Fathi Shilla said in a statement yesterday that his party would continue campaigning for unity and would not heed to the voices of the SPLM leaders who advocate secession, adding these are "desperate voices".

Obama to deliver "substantial remarks" at the UN meeting on Sudan

Sudan Tribune website 20/09/10 - US President Barack Obama intends to deliver "substantial remarks" at the meeting hosted by the United Nations on Friday to discuss issues in Sudan particularly the upcoming January 2011 referendum.

The Sudanese First Vice President and South Sudan president Salva Kiir as well as 2nd Vice President Ali Osman Taha will be present at the meeting called for by the UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon.

"The President decided to participate in this event, which was actually at one point originally intended as a ministerial, because this could not be a more critical time in the life of Sudan and also in the life of international efforts to ensure that these referenda go off on time and

peacefully," said senior director of multilateral affairs at the White House Samantha Power at a conference call on Monday.

"[T]he number one message [by Obama] is that these referenda must go off on time, that they must be peaceful, and they must reflect the will of the people of South Sudan," Power said.

Another referendum will take place simultaneously in the contested oil-rich region of Abyei, where residents will have to decide whether they want to be part of north or south Sudan. The composition of Abyei's referendum commission has not yet been revealed.

The international community is worried that both sides may resort to war should there be a delay in referendum which some observers described as a strong possibility given the tight timeframe. The registration of Southern voters is due to start in October.

Powers described the summit as an opportunity for the international community "to stand together again and send a very forceful message at a critical make-or-break time,"

The U.S. national security adviser further said that Obama will speak on the need for enhanced security and dignity for the people of Darfur and the need for accountability as well as emphasize the crucial nature of "humanitarian access and the importance of peacekeepers and aid workers being allowed the mobility, the security, and the access they need to do their jobs and to improve the welfare of the people both in Darfur and in South Sudan and beyond".

Church launches 101 days of referendum peace campaign

The Citizen 21/9/10 – The Catholic Church throughout Sudan is today launching 101 days of prayers for a peaceful referendum on southern Sudan self-determination, barely 109 days ahead of the highly valued vote on independence of the South.

The prayers will continue from the day of inception until the first of January next year, according to Nicholas Kiri Kiriba, the Palic Director, Catholic Archdiocese of Sudan.

The launch is distinctly marked by an ecumenical prayer at Nyakuron Cultural centre in the morning, beginning with a procession from Juba stadium, and is followed by Eucharistic Celebration at Saint Theresa's Cathedral Kator in the evening, all presided over by Archbishop Paulino Lokudu.

"This is a historical moment in which we, southern Sudanese, are called to realize that God is leading us, as he has led his people throughout the history of Salvation," said Cecilia Diera of bakhita Radio.

"God is inviting us to life, peace and love. Therefore, each of us must realize and play his or her role as southern Sudan advances towards the referendum" he added.

Under the theme "change your heart, change the world," the prayer is perceived as a religious means towards building peace and togetherness as the country moves towards a sensitive historic plebiscite. "As a post conflict country with an ongoing history of war, Sudan's familiarity with peace is quite limited," Cecilia said.

US warns of consequences if Sudan fails on referendum

Deutsche Presse-Agentur 20/9/10 - Sudan could face international consequences if it fails to follow through on a referendum to decide independence for the southern part of the country, a top US official said Monday.

The United States has intensified diplomatic efforts to resolve outstanding issues between the north and south ahead of January's referendum, including how oil revenue vital to the country's economy will be shared after the vote.

There have been concerns that insufficient resources have been dedicated to carrying out the vote and ensuring its result is legitimate.

The US ambassador to the United Nations, Susan Rice, told reporters in a conference call that Washington has assured the Sudanese government that it could have improved relations if the outcome is valid.

"We've also been clear that if they fail to follow through there will be ... consequences," Rice said, adding that the actions could be unilateral or multilateral but without being specific.

US President Barack Obama will be joining a meeting hosted by UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon on Friday as the UN General Assembly launches its new session.

The referendum stems from a 2005 peace agreement ending 20 years of civil war that left 2 million people dead. The conflict was between the largely Muslim north and separatist Christian rebels in the south, which has most of Sudan's lucrative oil fields.

Sudan's ruling National Congress Party and the Sudanese People's Liberation Movement, which now governs the south, have not been able to come to terms on sharing oil revenue and foreign debt, or to decide how to conduct the election and who should be allowed to vote.

It is widely expected that the referendum will result in southern independence.

Editorial: Can the Obama administration defuse "a time bomb" in Sudan?

The Washington Post, Tuesday, September 21, 2010

SECRETARY OF STATE Hillary Rodham Clinton recently blurted out a rather undiplomatic warning about "a ticking time bomb of enormous consequence." She was talking not about Afghanistan or Iran or Iraq, but Sudan -- a country that until recently has gotten relatively little attention from the Obama administration. She was right. In a matter of months Sudan could present the administration with a major new international crisis, one that has the potential to be even bloodier than the Darfur genocide.

At stake is one of the top diplomatic achievements of the Bush administration: a 2005 peace accord ending two decades of war between Sudan's Arab-controlled central government and its mainly Christian and animist south. The deal established an autonomous government in the south, and stipulated January 2011 as the date for a referendum on whether the region, which comprises about a third of the huge country, will become independent.

Ms. Clinton spelled out the problem succinctly: It is "inevitable" that the south will vote for independence in a free and fair referendum. That means the government of President Omar

Hassan al-Bashir -- who has been indicted for his crimes in Darfur by the International Criminal Court -- will be expected to peacefully give up a region that contains 80 percent of the country's oil reserves. The odds that Mr. Bashir will cooperate don't look good: The regime has been stalling on everything from the demarcation of the border and talks on the future division of oil revenue to preparations for the referendum, which are worryingly delayed.

Mr. Bashir, like the southern Sudanese leadership, does have reason to avoid a new war. The south has acquired tanks and other heavy weapons, and the Sudanese army can expect formidable military opposition if it attacks. A deal could ensure both sides continuing access to oil revenue that might otherwise be lost entirely. Both sides also need better relations with the rest of the world. Mr. Bashir wishes to escape from pariah status, while southern Sudan desperately needs international help in nation-building.

After allowing its diplomacy to be hamstrung by internal feuding and inattention, the Obama administration has mounted what looks like a vigorous effort. Mr. Bashir has been presented with tangible incentives to cooperate -- including, in the longer run, the normalization of relations -- and warnings of more punishment if the referendum is obstructed. The U.S. diplomatic presence in the country has been rapidly expanded, and a veteran ambassador has been dispatched to help in north-south negotiations. On Friday President Obama will sit down with senior Sudanese officials at a meeting convened in New York by U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-moon.

Administration officials have occasionally expressed pessimism about the ability of the United States to exert influence in Sudan. But Washington does have leverage -- and it also has an obligation to do its best to prevent a humanitarian catastrophe. In the same appearance at which she discussed Sudan, Ms. Clinton declared that "a new American moment" has arrived in international relations, "a moment when our global leadership is essential, even if we must often lead in new ways." Sudan would be an ideal place to prove that.

Other Highlights

AU's Mbeki and JEM leader discuss peace in Darfur

Sudan Tribune website 20/9/10 - The Chairman of African Union Panel on Darfur, Thabo Mbeki, held a series of meeting with the leader of the rebel Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) to discuss ways to end the seven year conflict in western Sudan.

"Mbeki met with JEM chairman three times on Saturday and Sunday," said JEM spokesperson Ahmed Hussein Adam who added that meetings, held in Tripoli where the rebel leader resides, were "transparent" and the two parties exchanged views on the different issues.

"They discussed the current situation in Darfur, the peace process, humanitarian situation, security, the internally displaced persons and JEM prisoners of war held in Khartoum," Ahmed said.

JEM leader criticized during the meeting Khartoum's new strategy in Darfur saying it is a new form of genocide. He urged Mbeki to mark his distance from the new strategy for peace in Darfur.

Mbeki met with president Omer Al-Bashir today in Khartoum and briefed him on his trip to Libya. He also discussed the implementation of the peace accords signed in 2005.

The rebel group suspended its participation in the Doha peace talks since last May to protest attacks by the Sudan Armed Forces despite a cessation of hostilities deal signed by the two parties. The peace process is expected to restart in Doha within nine days, the mediation announced today...

Darfur peace talks to resume on 29 September

Sudan Tribune website 20/9/10 - Darfur peace mediation announced Monday the restart of negotiations between the Sudanese government and rebel Liberation and Justice Movement (LJM) on 29 September.

"The Government of the Sudan and the Liberation and Justice Movement have agreed to resume their negotiations on 29 September 2010 in Doha," said a statement released today in Doha.

Ahmed Bin Abdullah Al-Mahmoud, Qatar's Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, and Djibril Bassole, the AU-UN Joint Chief Mediator for Darfur received today the preliminary draft peace document from the Drafting Committee formed recently by the mediation...

President Al-Bashir receives invitation to visit Côte d'Ivoire

SUNA 20/9/10 - President Al-Bashir has received an invitation from his counterpart Laurent Gbagbo to visit Cote d'Ivoire.

The invitation was conveyed to President Al-Bashir when he received at the Guest House yesterday the Advisor of the President of Côte d'Ivoire and the accompanying delegation.

In a press statement after the meeting, head of the Ivorian delegation said that their visit to Sudan is aimed to bolstering the political and economic relations between Sudan and Côte d'Ivoire, adding that an agreement was reached on formation of a joint committee to determine axes of cooperation between Sudan and Côte d'Ivoire.

UNSC trip to Sudan in jeopardy over meeting with Al-Bashir

Sudan Tribune website 20/9/10 - The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) is deadlocked in its plans to visit Sudan next month as some of the permanent members insist that they will not meet with president Omer Al-Bashir during the trip.

Multiple sources at the United Nations told Sudan Tribune that the U.S., U.K. and France missions insist that they cannot meet with Al-Bashir given his indictment.

Sudan is insisting however that the UNSC must meet with Al-Bashir for it to authorize the visit.

Ten of the fifteen UNSC members are signatories of the Rome Statute which is the founding treaty of ICC.