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Media Monitoring Report

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- UN News: Help Needed for Displaced Following Referendum, Says UN Agency - <http://allafrica.com/stories/201102220084.html>

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Post-Referendum Monitor

Parliament blesses southern Sudan secession vote

Al-Sahafa Khartoum, 22/02/11 – The National Assembly has blessed the outcome of the southern Sudan referendum on self-determination and described it as a “major achievement.” Lawmakers say the international community has to reward Sudan for this achievement by lifting Sudan off the state-sponsors of terrorism list and lifting sanctions imposed on the country.

Speaker Ibrahim Al-Tahir says the international community should “be fair” and award President Omar Al-Bashir and First Vice-President Salva Kiir Mayardit the Nobel Peace Prize for this achievement.

The opposition leader in parliament, Ismail Fadhul, pointed out however that the outcome of the referendum is a sure sign of the total despair southern Sudanese feel over possibilities of living together with the north and is proof of the failure of the people of Sudan to create a diverse state. “It is also a message to all those who shed blood since independence to date for the sake of the country’s unity that they shed their blood in vain,” Fadhul told the House.

Southern lawmakers to leave parliament before 9th July 2011 - Speaker

Local dailies Khartoum, 22/02/11 – The National Assembly was the scene of heated argument yesterday between Speaker Ahmed Ibrahim Al-Tahir on the one hand and NCP and SPLM representatives on the other. The argument was sparked by a draft constitution tabled before the House by Justice Minister Mohamed Dousa that was accepted by the Speaker. The draft dropped some 58 articles in the Interim Constitution related to southern Sudan. SPLM representatives rejected the amendments outright and some NCP representatives pointed out that such a move would violate Article 67 of the Referendum Act that stipulates that southern Sudanese lawmakers continue in their duties until 9th July 2011. They also called for a continuation of the current institutions of government until 9th July. In response, the Speaker noted that the Constitution prevails over the Referendum Act.

The session was called off without endorsement or even deliberations on of the deliberations and some prominent NCP members say it is likely that parliament may not deliberate on the amendments to the constitution until after 9th July.

“Some articles of the Constitution are void and it there is no need to keep them in the document. We are only dropping dead articles from the Constitution” the Speaker told the press following the meeting. He further pointed out that these measures are in line with Articles 118 and 226 of the Interim Constitution that stipulate that parliamentary seats held by southern Sudanese would be rendered vacant should southern Sudanese vote for secession from the north and that articles specific to southern Sudan in the National Constitution would be revoked and those institutions related to the south dissolved in the event of a secession vote at the southern Sudan referendum. He pointed out that the constitution backs this step and it does no decision from the government is required to effect the changes.

Al-Tahir further noted that southern Sudanese lawmakers in the national legislative body would no longer be members of the House when parliament returns from recess in April this year, meaning that southern MPs would lose their parliamentary seats even before the region declares independence in July this year.

Asked on whether or not southern Sudanese holding executive positions in the national government would maintain their position until July 2011, the Speaker said that this is left to the judgement of the President of the Republic.

Commenting on statements during the session by Deputy Speaker Atem Garang (SPLM) who said southern Sudan would stop the north's 50% share in the region's oil revenue, Speaker Ahmed Ibrahim Al-Tahir warned that this would be a "big mistake" by the SPLM. He said that the constitution has to be respected and underlined the need to maintain the spirit of cooperation until the end of the Interim Period.

Governor Aggar has President Al-Bashir's confidence

Al-Ahram Al-Youm Damazine, 22/02/11 – Vice-President Ali Osman Mohamed Taha is currently touring Blue Nile State where he opened yesterday a number of education and health projects in three localities in the state yesterday.

He told a session of the state legislative body yesterday that President Al-Bashir has trust in Blue Nile State Governor Malik Agar whom he regards as a political partner. VP Taha revealed that discussions between him and Governor Aggar also covered security issues related to the SPLA forces in the region.

Abyei "is northern and will remain northern" – NCP official says

Sudantribune.com Khartoum, 21/02/11 – The *Sudan Media Centre (SMC)*, on Monday carried statements in which the country's Presidential Adviser for Security Affairs Salah Gosh declared that the Abyei region is "northern and will remain northern" because "it lies within the northern side of the 1956's border strip."

Salah Gosh, who heads the NCP's side of the north-south committee conducting negotiations on post-referendum issues, said that the joint committee had reached an understanding that the referendum on Abyei would not resolve the dispute.

Therefore, he added, they had agreed to negotiate on the basis of the sixth option proposed by the AU High-Level Panel on Sudan led by former South African President Thabo Mbeki.

The sixth option, which forms part of a package proposed by Mbeki's committee, suggests that the area be divided between Misseriya and Dinka Ngok. According to Gosh, the SPLM was resisting all solutions proposed to break the deadlock.

"We had proposed solutions that could have solved the problem but the SPLM complicated the problem and rejected the proposals," he said. The SPLM has long accused the NCP of procrastinating over Abyei in order to win concessions from the south in other areas of post-referendum issues.

Abyei Area Administrator Deng Arop insists however that the referendum on Abyei must take place, reports *Ajras Al-Hurriya*. With political will on the side of the NCP, he said, a political solution could be reached on the Abyei issue before March this year.

Briefing an open meeting with the people of Abyei on the recent violent events that left 3 people dead in the local market, Arop said that the Abyei Referendum is a right that could not be taken away by anyone. The Area Administrator said the Abyei Protocol stipulates that only the Dinka Ngok and residents of the area – not the nomads – are allowed to vote at the region's referendum.

GoSS called upon to help transport thousands of returnees back south

Akhir Lahza Kosti, 22/02/11 – The Government of Blue Nile State has called on the GoSS to expedite the transportation of some 6,800 returnees to southern Sudan who are currently stuck at the Kosti inland port. The state is worried this large number of returnees may cause a health problem in the area, pointing out that the local dispensaries set up for the returnees register an average 150 cases of disease among the returnee populations.

White Nile State Governor Yusuf Al-Shunbuli said following a tour of the areas the returnees are camped in that the state provides certain services to these returnees but their increasing numbers are now beyond the capacity of the state. He expressed fears the health situation in the area may worsen if the rainy season set in while these returnees remain in the area.

Juba chosen to be the venue for declaration of South Sudan independence

Sudantribune.com Juba, 21/02/11 – Juba has been chosen as the venue for declaration and celebrations of independence of the region in July this year.

Following the overwhelming vote for secession by the people of southern Sudan from the rest of Sudan in January, the region is preparing to launch full independence by 9 July in accordance with the provisions of the 2005 peace deal.

During its first meeting on Monday, chaired by the region's vice president - Riek Machar, the high level committee charged with the responsibility of organising the celebrations resolved that Juba shall be the venue for the declaration of independence.

All the ten states will organise their respective celebrations and will be supported financially by the GoSS in order to make their celebrations a success. SDG1,000 000 (US\$380,000) was earmarked for each of the ten states. The committee's terms of reference also include preparing the budget for the ceremony and inviting foreign dignitaries that will attend the celebrations.

Other Highlights

Al-Bashir calls for more press freedoms

Al-Khartoum Khartoum, 22/02/11 – President Al-Bashir has called for a restructuring of the media regulatory bodies in the country in a manner that would allow for more freedom to “meet the requirements of the next stages”.

Following a meeting with Al-Bashir, Information Minister Kamal Obeid said that he had briefed the president on the challenges facing the media in Sudan and ongoing efforts to resolve those challenges. The president has promised to help resolve those problems in order that it may better carry out its service to the different sectors of society.

Southern Kordofan supplementary election results out by May

Al-Khartoum Khartoum, 22/02/11 – The National Elections Commission (NEC) would release starting tomorrow the preliminary electoral register for the supplementary elections for Southern Kordofan while the final register would be out by March 4th this year.

The NEC says the process is expected to run as schedule with the results of expected out by the

first week of May. The NEC puts the number of registered voters at 658,085 from a total 1,172,406 eligible voters.

South Sudanese newspaper office raided

Sudantribune.com Juba, 21/02/11 - *The Citizen* newspaper claims its Juba office was raided in Sunday night by four security men in plain clothes according to its Monday edition. The security operatives also arrested a driver, identified as Madeng Kout, on Sunday - he is still missing.

“There is nothing that may have provoked the disapproval of the security,” says Nhial Bol, *The Citizen* Editor-in-Chief in his paper.

“The incident is a direct attack on freedom of expression,” said Nhial.

It remains unclear what warranted the raids on *The Citizen* office, Sources within the paper suggest that an editorial column attracted attention of the ministry of internal affairs last week.

It is alleged that a team of advisors from the ministry was unhappy about the column’s critique of the police service which suggested they were not capable of keeping order.

Sudan investigates reports of Darfur rebel support against Libyan protestors

Al-Sudani Khartoum, 22/02/11 – The Sudan Government says it is not ruling out involvement of some elements from some rebel groups of Darfur in the violence against anti-government protestors in Libya and said it is investigating such reports. Khaled Musa, a spokesperson for Sudan’s foreign ministry, warned that any involvement by such groups in Libya would only jeopardise the lives and property of Sudanese currently in Libya.

He said that the ministry is taking the necessary measures to follow up on the situation of Sudanese nationals in that country.

NCP downplays South Darfur, Foreign Ministry differences

The Citizen Khartoum, 22/02/11 – The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has declined to comment on statements by South Darfur Governor threatening to initiate legal action against the Ministry and accusing the ministry of threatening the interest of the state and failing to undertake its assigned role.

Meanwhile *Al-Sahafa* reports that the NCP has revealed it is exerting efforts to resolve the differences between the governor and the foreign ministry that were sparked by the governor’s decision last week to expel a French aid agency.

“In my view, these are not major differences and could be resolved through the mechanisms in place,” said NCP’s Mandour Al-Mahdi.

UNAMID voices concern at rebel warning against using Darfur airports

UN News New York, 21/02/11 - The United Nations-African Union peacekeeping mission in Darfur today voiced grave concern after a rebel leader warned that airports in Darfur, as well as the rest of Sudan, have been designated as military targets and could be vulnerable to attacks by his group.

Minni Minawi, the leader of the Sudan Liberation Army/Minni Minnawi faction (SLA/MM), also warned the UN-AU mission (UNAMID) and international organizations not to use any Sudanese airport lest they also be targeted.

Relations have deteriorated between the Government and the SLA/MM in recent months, leading to heavy military confrontations, despite an ongoing process to resolve the conflict in Darfur.

In a news release, UNAMID reminded all parties of its mandate of protection of civilians and ensuring unfettered access for humanitarian assistance.

“The mission should like to emphasize that, owing to the region's geographic conditions and lack of infrastructure, most humanitarian relief such as food, water, shelter and medical supplies is transported by air,” it stated. “Moreover, aid workers and UNAMID peacekeepers rely heavily on air transport to reach, protect and supply those living in remote locations.”

It noted that any threats or hostile acts against UN and humanitarian personnel would have a devastating impact on innocent civilians. Moreover, any attack against UNAMID peacekeepers, given their role in Darfur, would be a war crime under international law.

In a separate story, *Al-Sahafa* daily reports today that the SAF has downplayed the SLA threat on the airports in the region. “The SLA’s threats are but for media consumption because the movement does not have the weapons required to put these installations in jeopardy,” said Sudan Armed Forces Al-Suwarimi Khaled.

Special envoys express concern over Darfur

Al-Sahafa Khartoum, 22/02/11 – The final communiqué of the recently-concluded meeting of special envoys to Sudan has called on parties to the Darfur conflict to immediately end hostilities and allow UNAMID and humanitarian actors unhindered access to vulnerable civilians in the area. They highlighted the role played by the rebel movements to cause instability in the region and urged the armed movements to cooperate with UNAMID and the humanitarian organizations. They pointed out however that the government has the primary role of providing security in its territories.

The envoys who met in Nyala last Friday also deplored the continued violent crimes and abductions targeting UNAMID and humanitarian personnel in the area and called for the safe return of all abductees. The envoys called on the Sudan government to put measures to bring the perpetrators of such crimes to book and to put an end to the “culture of impunity” in the region.

The envoys welcomed UNAMID’s new approach to civilian protection and to the government’s recent positive statements on access for UNAMID and reiterated the need for a comprehensive peace and an immediate cessation of hostilities in the region.

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