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Media Monitoring Report

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Post-Referendum Watch

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Highlights

South Sudan Police to pull out of Abyei

Al-Akhabar 22/03/11 – Informed sources said that FVP Salva Kiir Mayardit has ordered the immediate withdrawal of the southern Sudanese police forces stationed around Abyei. Omar Al-Ansari, a prominent Misseriya figure, has also revealed that the joint committee formed in accordance with Kadugli Agreement has arrived in Abyei to monitor the withdrawal of the police forces and the redeployment of the JIUs to the area. Al-Ansari further noted that the proposals by Thabo Mbeki to resolve Abyei problem are “somewhat acceptable although the Misseriya are bound to lose some of their lands in the process”.

On reports of an informal meeting of the United Nations Security Council on Abyei and other issues, Al-Ansari downplayed the outcome of the meeting, saying that the United Nations Security Council had nothing to do with Abyei.

Machar advises Kiir to halt anti-North activity

Al-Rai Al-Aam 22/3/11 – Sources said GoSS VP Riek Machar has advised GoSS President Salva Kiir Mayardit to instruct stoppage of SPLM’s anti-North activities.

According to the sources, Machar sent a memo to Kiir on 5 March in which he accused the SPLM Northern Sector of seeking to create problems between the South and the North. The memorandum stated that the practices of the leadership of the Northern Sector will have negative impact on the interests of the South so it should be blocked and those responsible investigated.

Southern Sudan seeks peacekeeping border force

AP 21/3/11 - Pagan Amum, secretary-general of the south Sudan People's Liberation Movement, says he's asking the Security Council to deploy a peacekeeping force along the new border that will divide north and south Sudan.

Amum spoke Monday outside a council meeting requested by representatives of the new country of Southern Sudan, which plans to declare its independence on July 9.

Violence has overshadowed a peaceful independence referendum the south held in January. Amum is repeating allegations that the government in the north is funding militias to an attempt to destabilize Southern Sudan before it secedes.

Also outstanding is the fate of the oil-rich Abyei region, which is claimed by both sides.

SPLA arrests federal minister

Al-Intibaha 22/03/11 – SPLA military intelligence arrested in Rumbek yesterday the Federal Minister of Environment, Joseph Malwal, who was on a normal visit to Rumbek. Malwal, the chairman of Democratic Front Party, was summoned by the state governor who told him he had orders from Juba to arrest him on charges of allying with militia forces loyal to Abdulbagi and spying for the NCP. Sources said the minister was supposed to be flown to Juba yesterday but bad weather prevented the flight.

Abyei administration accuses pro-Khartoum militias of killing 5 civilians

Sudan Tribune website 21/3/11 - The administration of the oil producing region of Abyei on Monday accused Khartoum government sponsored militiamen of killing five civilians and injuring another in the village of Dungop, located north-east of Abyei town on 21 March 2011.

Speaking in an interview with Sudan Tribune in Abyei, Acuil Miyen Akol, minister for finance in the Abyei area administration accused the Khartoum backed Popular Defense Forces of having killed five civilians and wounding another in the village of Dungop on 21 March 2011.

"The so called Muharrelen and sometimes Popular Defense Force sneaked into the village of Dungop and killed five innocent civilians and wounding another today. The innocent civilians were shot dead while they were sleeping. This occurred between 1.30 and 2.00am this morning", said Acuil. He said one of the victims who survived identified the attackers as members of the Misseriya tribe.

Lieutenant Mabek Lual of the Joint Integrated Units in the village of Tajalei confirmed to Sudan Tribune the killing of five civilians on Monday.

"Yes, five people have been killed by groups whose footprints have been traced to the territory of Misseriya", said the military officer, adding that there were herders grazing cows in the area on 21 March. "Some armed groups identified as members of the Misseriya were sighted south-west of Tajalei on Sunday evening. They were following their cows coming into Tajalei from Todach. I did not see them myself but soldiers who went on reconnaissance reported having seen them around the south-west of Tajalei," said Lual.

Rahman Abdel Rahman, the NCP's deputy chief administrator of Abyei said he did not have any information about the incident and denied Misseriya involvement.

"I do not have any information of this incident. I also do not believe Misseriya entered the village you said because it is inside villages Misseriya have not been allowed access since the year began. Arabs with cows have not been allowed access to areas around this village since the year began, let alone entering now. It must be an isolated incident", said Rahaman.

UK upgrades diplomatic mission in South Sudan

Sudan Tribune website 21/3/11 - The United Kingdom (UK) has taken its diplomatic representation in South Sudan to the level of a Consulate General as the oil-producing region hurtles towards the declaration of its independence in less than five month.

A number of foreign countries, including China and the US, have already established general consulates in the south which is expected to gain worldwide recognition of its independence.

The transition of British embassy's office in South Sudan was marked on Wednesday, March 16, when the newly appointed Consul General Alastair McPhail, who served from 2000-2005 in Sudan-related diplomatic posts the most recent of which is his role as UK's Special Representative to Sudan, arrived in the region's capital, according to a press release issued by the Consulate.

“The United Kingdom is increasing its presence in Southern Sudan and the establishment of our Consulate General is a key step in strengthening the relationship between our two nations. I look forward to the years ahead,” McPhail said upon arrival in Juba.

NCP says president Al-Bashir will not seek re-election

Al-Khartoum 22/03/11 – Addressing a press conference at the NCP (Khartoum Chapter) yesterday, NCP leading figure Mandour Al-Mahdi said that President Al-Bashir has intimated his desire not to seek a further term in office. “I believe the party will accept his wish,” he said.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs names head of diplomatic liaisons office in Juba

Al-Sahafa 22/03/11 – The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has nominated Mouawiya Al-Tom AL-Amin (Minister Plenipotentiary) to head its Diplomatic Liaisons Office in Juba, says Foreign Minister Spokesperson Khaled Musa. He revealed that a high-level delegation from the GoSS Ministry of Regional Cooperation is expected in Khartoum today for further consultations with the foreign office over post-July 2011 diplomatic ties.

VP Taha urges political parties to join dialogue over constitution

Al-Ahram Al-Youm 22/3/11 – VP Ali Osman Taha has called on all the political forces in the country to join dialogue to build the new republic in Sudan, adding that the Islamic Laws would be an integral part of the new constitutional setup in the country.

Addressing a mass rally in Riheid Al-Birdi, South Darfur State, yesterday, Taha pledged commitment to the implementation of the CPA and the consolidation of security in Darfur.

According to *Al-Sahafa*, the VP also noted that the regime does not fear to guarantee freedom and has no concern over uprising in parts of the Arab world. “You will find President Al-Bashir and FVP Salva Kiir in the forefront in the fight against corruption and inequality; they would never shun away from their responsibilities nor would they plan to escape from the country,” he said.

Other Highlights

Security clampdown stifles Sudan protests

AFP 21/3/11 - Security fears and a heavy deployment of riot police in Khartoum and other northern Sudan cities on Monday prevented planned anti-regime protests from materialising, activists and witnesses said.

Police trucks were positioned in city centres and around university campuses from early in the day, after Facebook group Youth for Change called for peaceful, nationwide rallies against the regime of President Omar al-Bashir.

The organisers, encouraged by events in Tunisia and Egypt and seeking to build momentum after thousands took to the streets of north Sudan on January 30, accuse the government of a long list of failures.

These include rampant corruption, failing to prevent the secession of the south, rising prices and

the eight-year conflict in Darfur, as well as 40 percent youth unemployment and human rights abuses by the security forces.

In Wad Medani, a town 200 kilometres (125 miles) south of Khartoum, a group of around 200 students and civilians responded to the call, witnesses said, marching through the centre shouting: "We want freedom," and "We want regime change."

But riot police fired tear gas to disperse the demonstrators and made a number of arrests, the witnesses said.

In the capital, police vehicles surrounded the Islamic University of Omdurman, while pro-government Islamist students at a rally at Khartoum University labelled those trying to organise the demonstrations "atheists" and agents of the United States and Israel.

Witnesses also reported a large security deployment in the centre of El-Obeid, a city around 600 kilometres (370 miles) west of Khartoum, with police trucks surrounding the university.

Activists said protesters failed to mobilise because of security fears and the movement's lack of organisation.

"It is because of the police presence, and because people are afraid of the national security attacking them," said Mohammed, 24, an activist who was arrested at one of the protests in January.

"Also there is no leadership. It is not an organised group," he added.

Human rights observers accuse Sudan's feared national security officials, who have arrested scores of demonstrators since January, of sexually abusing and torturing activists detained in recent protests.

Zain eyes South Sudan growth with caution

Reuters Khartoum, 21/03/11 - Sudan's biggest mobile phone operator Zain is treading cautiously in the country's poor south, as it weighs up the prospect of a relatively untapped market with high costs and instability, a senior executive told Reuters.

Kuwait's Zain, which has a 60 percent market share in Sudan, has invested \$300 million -- or about 20 percent of total capital expenditure in Sudan -- over the past five years in the south, but the region still accounts for only a tiny share of revenues, said Hisham Mustafa Allam, chief operation officer for Zain in Sudan.

"There's potential for South Sudan, but there are big challenges," Allam said in an interview at his Khartoum office. "One of the problems we have right now is it costs lots of money to build sites and do rollout (of fibre) in the south."

Building a broadband network is particularly expensive in South Sudan because as a landlocked country it will have to rely on north Sudan or Kenya for access to undersea cables, he said.

Though he expected the company's mobile licence to be valid in South Sudan after July, Allam

said he could not be "100 percent sure" that would be the case either.

Allam acknowledges that Zain, which has expanded from just three or four cellular towers five years ago to about 150 in the south now, began expanding in the south mainly for network coverage reasons rather than profit.

"For Zain, the decision to rollout in South Sudan was purely a strategic decision; it was not a business decision, because at that time we had Zain Uganda and Zain Kenya and so to have one network you couldn't have it without South Sudan,"

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