

22nd May 2011

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Media Monitoring Report

United Nations Mission in Sudan/ Public Information Office

Post-Referendum Watch

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Highlights

UNSC delegation arrives in Khartoum

Sudan Radio 22/5/11 – A delegation from the UNSC arrived yesterday in Khartoum. The Radio reports Foreign Office spokesperson Khaled Musa as saying that the delegation's talks with Government officials would focus on a range of issues including the future of UNMIS and outstanding issues between the two CPA parties particularly Abyei.

President Al-Bashir dissolves Abyei Administration

Dailies 22/5/11 – President Al-Bashir yesterday issued two presidential decrees. In one decree, the President dissolved the Abyei Area Administration and in the second decree the President sacked the Chief Administrator, his deputy as well as five Administration officers.

SAF controls Abyei town

Dailies/Sudan TV/Sudan Radio 22/5/11 – The Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) yesterday took control of the Abyei territory. According to a military source, the SAF yesterday evening entered Abyei Area, saying the army kicked out the enemy forces, inflicted on them heavy casualties, captured two tanks and detained two enemy soldiers. SAF declared Abyei Area a war zone.

AUHIP Chair Thabo Mbeki is due in Khartoum today in a bid to calm the situation between Khartoum and Juba to prevent further aggravation of the situation.

The Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS) held an emergency meeting yesterday to discuss the situation.

While the UNSG has condemned the attack on the UN troops and the North's army in Abyei, the USA calls on the GoSS for immediate explanation as to why UN troops and North's army were attacked in the territory. But Sudan's Foreign Ministry spokesperson Khaled Musa pointed out that the attacked should be condemned first and then explanation sought later. He urged the UN and all the international bodies for clear condemnation of the SPLA attack.

Governor of Southern Kordofan state, Ahmed Haroun, in statements to *Akhbar Al-Youm* 22/5/11 said the Abyei Area is now under the full control of the SAF, saying the army took over the territory without a bloodshed, adding the security situation all over the region is stable and under full control. NCP leader in Abyei Zakaria Atem told the newspaper that SAF is in full control of the territory and life in the town is normal.

Misseriya leader Mukhtar Babo Nimir has congratulated the Sudanese people, saying SAF has taken the right step.

Ajras Al-Hurriya 22/5/11 reports the UNSC cancelled its visit to Abyei due to security developments in the territory where military operations are continuing.

SPLA has accused SAF of attacking villages north of Abyei and anticipated perpetration of crimes against humanity. GoSS spokesperson Barbaba Benjamin said SAF intends to escalate

the situation to force the population to vacate.

“The situation in Abyei is open to all eventualities” Defence Minister, Gen. Abdul Rahim Mohamed Hussein said, according to *Al-Akhbar* 22/5/11. “The war is forced on us” he added. However, Presidential Adviser, Mustafa Osman Ismail, speaking to the same newspaper yesterday ruled out an outbreak of North-South war over Abyei but warned that SPLM’s policies might lead to an eruption of tribal conflict and civil war between population of the Area, the Misseriya and the Dinka.

Sources close to Abyei dossier blamed the Area Chief Administrator Deng Arop Kuol for the incidents in the territory, saying he has been hindering all efforts to resolve the problem, according to *Al-Ahdath* 22/5/11.

Rebel leader Sultan Abdul Bagi said that his forces entered Abyei yesterday after fierce fighting with the SPLA that left 197 dead on both sides, *Al-Intibaha* 22/5/11 reports. Two SPLA battalions have reportedly disobeyed orders to move from Juba to Abyei. Sources said the territory is now empty as residents fled to Bahr el Arab. Meanwhile, the Misseriya tribe has threatened to overrun the South within five days should the SPLA fail to withdraw from Abyei outskirts within a week.

Al-Ayyam 22/5/11 reports that hundreds of households in Abyei are moving southward and UNMIS has begun evacuating its staff in anticipation for an all-out war between SAF and SPLA. According to spokesperson of Nygok Dinka youths, clashes in the area left 32 killed, 35 wounded and 176 missing.

Southern Sudan: North's seizure of Abyei is “war”

AP 22/5/11 - Northern Sudan's seizure of a contested border region is an act of war, a spokesman for the Southern Sudanese army said today.

Southern forces have completely withdrawn from the town of Abyei after northern troops occupied the town with tanks on Saturday night, said army spokesman Col. Philip Aguer. Both sides claim the fertile region, which is near several important oil fields.

"We didn't declare war," said Aguer. "The (Sudanese ruling party) National Congress Party and the Sudan Armed Forces declared war on us."

Aguer said the southern army stationed in Abyei was overrun and scattered after the north had conducted two days of aerial bombardments, focusing on a bridge where southern reinforcements would have entered. The southern army "will maintain the status quo," he said, while it waits for the decision of the southern government on how best to respond.

Aguer called for the United Nations Mission in Sudan "to protect the people of Abyei," saying that the northern government intends to "displace civilians and commit human rights violations as they did in Darfur."

Several members of the Abyei government were missing, he said.

Aid group Doctors Without Borders said in a statement the entire population of Abyei fled

Saturday morning after the bombing raids, gunfights and mortaring. One mortar exploded in a U.N. compound but there were no casualties.

The massive escalation in the most volatile spot along Sudan's contested north-south border came as the United Nations Security Council began a four-day visit to Sudan. The Council's scheduled visit to Abyei has been canceled because of the violence but they are due to make a public statement later on Sunday.

North Sudan takes control of key town in Abyei

Reuters 21/5/11 - North Sudanese army forces took control of the main town in the disputed Abyei region on Saturday after fighting with southern forces, both sides said, in further violence ahead of southern secession.

“Enemy forces” had been expelled to the south, Khartoum-based Sudanese state television said in a news bulletin after fighting was reported throughout the day in Abyei.

The southern army acknowledged northern forces controlled the main town. “Abyei town is now under control of the SAF. They came with tanks” said SPLA spokesman Philip Aguer.

He said northern aircraft had also bombed from the air and shelled at least four villages, among them Todach and Tagalei, which he said had been already hit on Friday.

SAF criticizes UNMIS statement on military escalation in Abyei

Akhbar Al-Youm 22/5/11 – SAF has directed harsh criticism against UNMIS statement on the attack on SAF in Abyei. SAF spokesperson Al-Sawarmi Khaled said UNMIS statement failed to identify the attackers although the mission was present in “Dakra” on Thursday evening. He said UNMIS is an observer and it should be aware about what it is observing. He said the statement called on both sides to exercise self-restraint despite the fact that the SPLA violations are known to everybody.

Sudan raps UN over Abyei attack

Sudan Tribune website 21/5/11 - North Sudan on Saturday leveled criticism at the UN Mission in the country, saying it has failed to assign blame to south Sudan over an attack which reportedly killed 22 soldiers in the north-south hotly contested region of Abyei.

The spokesperson of Sudan’s foreign ministry, Khalid Musa, told reporters in the capital Khartoum that the UN’s “state of partiality and lack of clarity” in this case gives the SPLM, the ruling party in South Sudan, “more justifications to commit repeated violations of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement” (CPA), the 2005’s peace deal which ended north-south civil wars and paved the way for South Sudan secession in a referendum held in January.

Musa, whose statement was reported by the country’s official news agency SUNA on Saturday, was keen to note that UNMIS forces were also subjected to the attack, calling on the mission to have the courage to “name things as they truly are.”

The Sudanese diplomat urged the UN and stakeholders in the international community to issue a “patent condemnation” against the SPLM and take immediate measures to hold it responsible for the breach of its political responsibility and the CPA.

He went on to say that Sudan had given international bodies an ample opportunity to denounce the SPLM and force it to bring the perpetrators to account. But the SPLM, Musa added, had been attempting to wriggle out of its political responsibility.

Editorial: Investigation should include UN

Summary of editorial by *Al-Ayyam* daily 22/5/2011 – We have the right to ask about the role of the UN troops in the Sudan. Incidents in Abyei have disclosed the confusion surrounding the work of these troops. UNMIS has brokered the Kadugli agreement and took the responsibility to guarantee the safety of the military convoy which was attacked in Abyei. UN should have taken sufficient precautionary measures and should have conducted wider contacts in the area to ensure the security of the convoy. SAF elements in the convoy did not take adequate precautionary measures on the assumption that the same would be taken by UN peacekeepers.

The role of the UN peacekeepers should also be investigated as to whether they have taken sufficient measures to ensure safe movement of the convoy. The Convoy was under the protection of UN peacekeepers so any investigation to identify the attackers should also look into the utility of the UN and whether it has undertaken its role properly or there was a lapse.

SPLA officials say north is air-bombing

AP 21/5/11 - Southern Sudan's army says the northern army is bombing by air for a second day in the border hotspot of Abyei.

Local officials also say at least six rebels and soldiers were killed in clashes between the southern army and rebels Friday and Saturday in Unity state.

Spokesman Col. Philip Aguer says the northern Sudanese Armed Forces also attacked four villages in the Abyei area, but said Saturday he had no information on casualties.

United Nations spokeswoman Hua Jiang says artillery was heard in Abyei on Friday but that the U.N. could not verify more details because of insecurity in the area.

South Sudan clashes target civilians: UN

AFP 21/5/11 - Civilians are being targeted in "heightened violence" between south Sudan's army and a rebel militia in oil-rich Unity state, the United Nations said on Saturday.

Rebels led by former southern army general Peter Gadet have been fighting the southern army in intermittent clashes since April, leaving over 100 dead and forcing thousands to flee.

Land mines and heavy weapons are being used against civilians, the UN said.

Renewed fighting broke out on Friday in Mayom in Unity State, leaving "several casualties", according to both rebels and southern officials.

"The United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) is deeply concerned by the heightened violence and the loss of life in Unity State," a statement read.

Fighting has also spread to parts of neighbouring Warrap state, with "serious violations of basic human rights."

"Of regular concern are reports that civilians are being targeted, including by use of heavy caliber weapons and land-mines," the statement added.

Charles Kuol, commissioner for Mayom, where some of the heaviest fighting has been seen, said the clinic in his town was "full of wounded."

"There have been many with shot wounds, several killed, including from a land mine yesterday that blew up a vehicle," Kuol said.

Both sides, however, appeared to reject UN appeals for "peaceful settlement."

"It was the rebels who attacked us," said Unity information minister Gideon Gatpan. "They must lay down their arms immediately because we will defeat them if not."

Rebel spokesman Bol Gatkouth said the militia was fighting for "change". "We are willing to talk, but so far we have not seen any sign the authorities are serious in this," he said. "So we are recruiting more forces and they should expect more attacks."

No reliable death toll was available from the fighting, with the rebels and the army each claiming to have killed "several" on the other side, and dismissing each other's reports as lies.

The rebels want to overthrow the southern government, denouncing the "rampant corruption" at the top levels of the South's ruling party.

The rebellion is only one of at least seven different militia groups across the south fighting the government, which is also struggling to contain heavily armed cattle raiders, who fight regularly.

Mayom is near key oil-pumping areas critical to Sudan's economy, close to the disputed north-south border and contested Abyei area.

Fighting broke out in Abyei on Thursday and Friday, including an attack on UN peacekeepers escorting a convoy of northern soldiers, as well as aerial bombing raids.

It continued on Saturday, "with heavy attacks", said Philip Aguer, spokesman for the SPLA. He claimed soldiers from the North's Sudan Armed Forces had "launched attacks by air and land."

"The SAF have bombed several places in Abyei," Aguer said. The SAF spokesman could not be immediately contacted for a response.

Both armies accused each other of starting the fight, with the UN condemning the "criminal attack".

Sudan Government calls for international pressure on SPLM

Sudan Vision 22/5/11 The Sudanese government said it is in the process of initiating a broad diplomatic campaign to expose to the international community the SPLM's violations in the disputed Abyei area.

Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Khaled Musa said that diplomatic measures are

underway and would be announced soon. He called on the international community to exert more pressure on the SPLM and hold it responsible for what happened in Abyei on Friday. The international community has a major role to put pressure on the movement as it has been repeatedly ignoring agreements and committing violations in Abyei, he said.

NCP deplures escalation in Abyei

Al-Ahdath 22/5/11 – the ruling NCP has declared rejection of the SPLM's approach and deplored the developments in Abyei territory.

A statement issued by the party's Information Secretariat said the NCP is keen to achieve peace across the Sudan and to ensure the establishment of a peaceful state in the South. The statement confirmed SAF capacity to safeguard Sudan's territories, stability and security of its people in the South and the North.

CPA partners reach agreement on oil sharing

Al-Sahafa 22/5/11 – the NCP and the SPLM yesterday reached an agreement in Addis Ababa on the issue of ownership of oil wells and pipelines. The two parties also agreed to hold a meeting with the oil companies in Juba on Saturday to discuss oil marketing, duties, contracts etc.

GoSS embarks on plan to contain effects of blockage of goods from North to South

Al-Ayyam 22/5/11 – The GoSS has embarked on the implementation of a host of measures to contain effects of blockage of movement of goods from the North to the South. Reportedly, the plan includes government's subsidy of some essential goods and reduction of custom duties and taxes.

Reports said prices shot up in the South including transportation fares due to shortage of fuel caused by blockage of movement of goods from the North to the South.

Southern Kordofan Elections Focus

International observers endorse outcome of South Kordofan polls

Sudan Tribune website 20/5/11 - The US-based Carter Center has given a seal of credibility to the outcome of contentious elections in North Sudan's state of South Kordofan, dousing claims by the opposition Sudan People's liberation Movement (SPLM) that the vote was rigged in favor of the ruling National Congress Party (NCP).

In a statement released on Thursday, the Carter Center said it "did not observe systemic irregularities that would invalidate the results," which declared that the NCP's candidate Ahmad Harun – a man wanted by the ICC for war crimes allegedly committed in Sudan's western region of Darfur - won the state governor elections by 6,500 votes over his closest challenger, SPLM's candidate Abdul Aziz al-Hilu...

Other Highlights

I have decided to not to seek a further presidential term – Al Bashir

Al-Sahafa 22/5/11 – In an interview to London-based *Al Sharq Alawsat* newspaper, President Al-Bashir has confirmed that his decision not to run for a further presidential term is final.

On Abyei, the President has reiterated rejection of any solution that makes the territory part of the South. The President does not rule out the possibility of the South been turned into a base for Israel and the west.

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