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Media Monitoring Report

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Referendum Watch

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Highlights

Sudan's NCP threatens to reject referendum result

Reuters 21/11/10 - Sudan's ruling northern party warned on Sunday it may not recognise the result of a Jan. 9 southern referendum on independence if problems with registering voters were not resolved...

However, the northern National Congress Party (NCP) said low registration of southerners living in the north would affect the credibility of any outcome. The NCP blamed the southern ruling party, the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), for telling southerners in the north not to register.

"The SPLM is using tools to pressure and threaten and terrorise people not to register and this means ... that the whole referendum will not be free and fair and transparent," senior NCP official Rabie Abdelati told Reuters.

"If this behaviour continues by the SPLM ... this will not lead to an atmosphere conducive to holding the referendum and ... the results will be affected," he said. "This will ultimately lead to non recognition not only by the Sudan government but by the whole international community."

Two SPLM officials, who declined to be named, confirmed to Reuters that it had told southerners in the north not to register, saying they feared the NCP could manipulate results there. However, the SPLM publicly denied this was official party policy, instead accusing the NCP of intimidating southerners.

The referendum commission has estimated that around 5.5 million southerners may be eligible to vote, including 500,000 in the north and another half a million abroad.

The NCP believes many southerners in the north may vote for unity whereas a majority in the south will vote to secede.

Khartoum governor Abdel Rahman al-Khidr said that only about 1,000 southerners registered in the capital on Nov. 15, when registration opened. Since then the daily numbers had decreased in Khartoum, where most of those eligible to vote in the north live, he said.

The referendum commission confirmed the turnout in the north was "very low" but declined to give numbers. Registration will last for 17 days from Nov. 15.

More than 60 percent of southerners who register must turn out to vote for the result to be valid.

NCP lodges official complaint to SSRC over registration obstruction

Local dailies 22/11/10 report that the NCP lodged yesterday an official complaint to the South Sudan Referendum Commission (SSRC) against what it described as obstruction of the ongoing voter registration process in the North.

According to *Al-Sahafa* 22/11/10, the NCP's Memo to the SSRC which was handed over by the party's deputy chairman and Presidential Assistant Nafie Ali Nafie, raised eleven points as reasons for the low turnout and slowness of the registration process.

Nafie indicated the political problems created due to the SPLM's policy of intimidation to prevent southerners from registering their names, citing an incident of attack on residence of a pro-unity southern female activist.

Sudan Tribune website 21/11/10 reported that the NCP has submitted a complaint to the SSRC against what it termed as irregularities and anomalies marring the ongoing registration of voters for south Sudan's upcoming referendum on independence.

SUNA reported on Sunday that the NCP had submitted a memorandum to the SSRC, which oversees the exercise, against "several irregularities occurring inside and outside registration centers."

Those include, according to the text of the memo, blocking people with mixed south-north parents from registering, delaying registration procedures, early closure of registration centers and the existence of registration officials who are less than 40 years old.

The NCP urged the commission to redress those "irregularities," saying they constitute a breach of several articles in the Referendum Act.

Sudan Vision 22/11/10 reports that the complaint was handed over by the NCP Deputy Chairman for Political and Organizational Affairs Dr. Nafie Ali Nafie together with NCP Chief in Khartoum State, Dr. Abdel Rahman Al Khidir.

According to Nafie, some parties obstruct arrival of southern Sudanese in Khartoum state to register for referendum in the designated centers which, he said, were located far from areas of high southern population density. He further affirmed that registration rate was poor in northern states in general.

"Registration guides were not from among South Sudan Sultans, they were unqualified to guide people to the centers and they sometimes object registration of southern citizens," Nafie said while addressing a press conference he held after handing over the complaint, adding, "Guides should be the sultans themselves and they should coordinate with Khartoum state," he said.

Nafie added that a joint committee between the commission and the state was set up to investigate violations, intensify media and security efforts for enhancing and protecting the registration process as well as safeguarding operators urging southerners to come to the centers. He reported that some operators were harassed in some areas such as Darosahab and Taiba Alahamda.

Khartoum State Governor, NCP Khartoum Chief, Al-Khidir said that they had filed an official complaint including (11) remarks on the process. Remarks were related to centers location, media and state's participation in guides' selection.

"Protection of voters and centers is the responsibility of the State," the governor said, pointing

out that there was no registration at all in some centers despite the high density of southerners...

Organisers aim to boost registration in north for Sudan vote

AFP 21/11/10 - Sudan's government and organisers of a referendum on southern independence agreed on Sunday to work together to try to improve voter registration numbers in the north, officials said.

The decision was taken at a meeting between officials of the South Sudan Referendum Commission, Khartoum's governor, Abder Rahman al-Khidir, and members of President Omar al-Bashir's ruling National Congress Party (NCP).

According to Khidir, they agreed to set up "a joint committee to think and to search about these problems and find some solutions."

Registration for the January 9 referendum which could partition Africa's largest country kicked off on November 15 with an air of celebration in the south and a large turn-out by local residents.

But few southerners living in the north have so far signed up, with Sudan's former southern rebels and Bashir's NCP accusing each other of intimidating voters ahead of the referendum.

Turnout "is very low but we will pick up in the coming days," said Mohammed Osman al-Nujumi, the secretary general of the referendum commission...

Around five million southerners, living in both north and south Sudan and abroad, are eligible to sign up. Sudan has 2,794 voter registration centres, with 2,629 of them in the south, and they will remain open until December 1.

President Al-Bashir, FVP Kiir to attend IGAD summit in Addis

Al-Sahafa 21/11/10 – President Al-Bashir and FVP Salva Kiir Mayardit are to participate in the IGAD summit meeting in Addis Ababa tomorrow. The summit will focus on the CPA pending issues.

Al-Ahram Al-Youm 21/11/10 reports political sources as saying that the summit is likely to postpone Sudan's referendum.

Sudan Tribune website 21/11/10 reported the state-owned SUNA as saying that Al-Bashir would lead Sudan's delegation to the special summit of the Inter-Governmental Authority for Development (IGAD) on Sudan, which is due to begin on Monday, November 23.

The IGAD summit was originally to be held in the Kenyan capital last October but it was later relocated to Addis Ababa to avert a potential diplomatic crisis over Al-Bashir's attendance...

The summit was called for by Kenya in order to review the implementation of the CPA, especially with regards to the final crucial phase of south Sudan's referendum vote on independence...

SSRC regrets invitation to participate in IGAD summit

Al-Rai Al-Aam 22/11/10 – The SSRC has announced that its chairman Prof. Mohamed Ibrahim Khalil would not be able to take part in the upcoming IGAD summit in Addis Ababa.

SSRC SG Mohamed Osman Al-Nujoomi told SMC that the Commission did receive an invitation but due to pressing work circumstance the Commission would not be able to take part in the summit meeting.

There should be no stone unturned in the referendum process – South Sudan speaker

Sudan Tribune website 21/11/10 - The Speaker of Southern Sudan Legislative Assembly, James Wani Igga, said there should be no stone unturned in the referendum process that appears likely to lead to the independence of Southern Sudan.

Igga told the Southern Sudan lawmakers in Rumbek on Saturday that they were elected and entrusted by the people to successfully take them through the referendum.

The top lawmaker in the semi-autonomous region said the south's ruling Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) would not have signed the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) with the then Sudan government without incorporating the right of self-determination.

"I want you to underline this...all the things signed in the CPA would have been meaningless without the referendum...This referendum must leave no stone unturned," he said.

The Speaker's comments come after accusations by Southern Sudan government officials that the northern dominant ruling political party, the National Congress Party (NCP) had been intimidating the Southern Sudanese in the north to register.

The SPLM fears that if southern Sudanese in the north register but are prevented from voting, when the poll begins in January, then the 60% threshold for participation required by the referendum law may not be met and therefore vote declared invalid.

Meanwhile the Juba parliamentarians are preparing to begin awareness and participation activities across the ten states of South Sudan as registration continues until December 1, 2010.

For the south to secede in a valid referendum, there must be an absolute majority of a minimum of 50 percent for independence plus one vote, and 60 percent of those eligible must also have cast their ballots.

European Union ministers discuss policy for Sudan after referendum

Sudan Tribune website 21/11/10 - European Union will discuss Monday the political situation in Sudan and the possible secession of southern Sudan as direct result to the referendum on self-determination that will be held next January.

In a meeting to be chaired by the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Catherine Ashton, the European Union 27 foreign ministers are scheduled to meet in Brussels tomorrow to discuss the situation in Sudan and to show their support to the full implementation for the 2005 peace agreement.

The foreign ministers are expected to reiterate the EU's readiness to strengthen dialogue with all the Sudanese stakeholders in the north and the south regardless of the outcome of January referendum.

The Council, according to reliable European sources, will reaffirm the EU willingness to boost the capabilities of south Sudan, southern Kordofan, the Blue Nile, Eastern Sudan, Abyei and Darfur region.

The EU deployed 16-strong team of independent observers to monitor for the first time the voter registration that started on 15 November and later brief the European Observation Mission (EOM) on their findings.

Europe believes it should play a complementary role with the US administration to secure regional and international support to the process and advertise for a peaceful coexistence strategy through dialogue and common interests between the north and the South...

Eight southern parties threaten not to recognize referendum result

Al-Intibaha 22/11/10 – Eight southern political parties have threatened not to recognize the referendum results if the process is not free, fair and transparent, saying the SPLM is coercing southern civilians to vote for secession.

Chairman of the United Democratic Front Party (UDFP) David De Chan dismissed claims that the eight southern parties have received financial support in return for registration of their supporters. He said that if the registration is not carried out in a free, transparent and democratic atmosphere the result of the upcoming referendum would not be recognized.

CPA parties agree on 40 contentious issues, Presidency to meet on Sunday

Al-Akhbar 22/11/10 – Informed sources have revealed that the joint political committee between the two CPA parties, co-chaired by Gen. Salah Gosh (NCP) and Pagan Amum (SPLM), finalized a framework agreement on forty pending issues including security arrangements, nationality, residence and borders.

Meanwhile, the sources said Head of the AUHIP Thabo Mbeki is likely to present a package of proposals to the two parties in a bid to overcome crisis over Abyei territory. The sources added that Mbeki's proposals would be presented to the Presidency meeting on Sunday and that the proposals would be incorporated into the framework agreement and would be signed to serve as a roadmap during the coming period.

On the other hand, SPLM SG Pagan Amum revealed that the SPLM and the US Administration had offered a "ransom" to what he described as "NCP pirates" in order to release Abyei. He said a response was expected from the NCP at the Presidency meeting which is expected to take decisions on Abyei referendum.

Amum, who made the remarks while addressing the Sudanese Community in Washington, declined to elaborate about the "ransom" but said that US President Barack Obama had sent a message to the NCP leadership urging them to free the "hostage", conduct referendum on time and recognize its result in exchange for lifting economic sanctions and removing Sudan from the

list of countries sponsoring terrorism.

Amum appeared optimistic that the NCP would accept the “ransom” to pave the way for a final solution of the problem over Abyei.

Civil society organizations urge civilians to register for referendum

Sudan Tribune website 21/11/10 - A Sudanese civil society organization, based in Khartoum, has urged Southern Sudanese organizations to double their efforts to make sure rural communities are aware of January’s self-determination referendum.

On Saturday, Ahmed Girshsb the executive director of the Institute for Development of Civil society said that “the Civil Societies need to have a positive role in informing the Sudanese people about the referendum process consisting of registration and voting, including the identification of what can trigger violence and ways to prevent referendum violence”.

Speaking during a workshop in Rumbek on how to prevent referendum violence, he said the South Sudan referendum must be a free and fair democratic process without discrimination or injustice.

Girshsb, whose institute is also conducting awareness workshops in Khartoum, added that civil society in Sudan has to advocate for a “smooth and peaceful referendum whatever the result”.

“It is important for civil society to have active role to raise awareness for people to know where they stand, and that we wanted peaceful referendum – it’s important for the people of Southern Sudan to understand the rule of the law in referendum that we need smooth peaceful referendum”.

Meanwhile, Charles Waliaula who works with Women for Women International said the workshop had taught him the means of identifying triggers of violence in the referendum process, mechanisms of dealing with violence, deeper understanding of the concept of citizenship including democratic principles and values and conflict resolution skills.

Waliaula urged Southern Sudanese to take an active role in the referendum process by turning up to register for vote - that is likely to see the south secede from the north.

However, Waliaula cautioned Southern Sudanese against registering but not voting as a 60% turn out of registered voters is needed under referendum legislation for the vote to be valid.

“If you know that you’re not going to be available to vote, please do not register because you are going to compromise the process,” he said.

The process of voter registration is going on peacefully in Lakes state, although so far election officials say that more men have turned up to register.

Other Highlights

North Sudan oil production to reach 110,000 bpd before year end - official

Sudan Tribune website 21/11/10 - The oil production from fields in North Sudan will reach 110,000 barrels per day (bpd) by the end of 2010, an official at the oil ministry said on Sunday.

The remarks come amid raging fears on the impact of the likely South Sudan breakup on the economy of the North. The central bank governor has recently blamed these speculations for the deterioration of the Sudanese pound exchange rate versus the U.S. dollar.

Sudan's 500,000 barrels per day of crude is mostly located in the south but the oil infrastructure is entirely in the north, whose experts control all aspects of the production. Some southern officials have said oil revenues, which are shared roughly half-half since 2005, will continue to be shared post referendum, but the north and south have yet to reach agreement on what the new sharing arrangements will be.

South Sudan is also mulling using a pipeline that would pump oil produced on its territory through a Kenyan port rather than Port Sudan. The pipeline project is still in the bidding process and will likely take several years to build if approved.

The state minister for the oil Ali Ahmed Osman told the pro-government Al-Rayaam newspaper that the current production levels of oil in the North will suffice should the South opt to secede.

He revealed that there are 50,000 bpd produced in the Greater Nile Project, 60,000 bpd in Al-Foula with 5,000-10,000 bpd expected to be added from Abu-Jabra field. Osman said that overall production in the North is 100,000 bpd at this point.

The official also downplayed reports on the rising production of oil in the disputed Abyei region lying on the North-South borders. He stressed that the North will seek other remedies to make up for the loss in oil revenue from the South including tax and monetary measures in addition to tapping other sources of revenue such as gold mines...

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