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Post-Referendum Monitor

Premature to talk of no re-election campaign for Al-Bashir – NCP

Al-Khartoum Khartoum, 23/02/11 – Presidential Advisor Mustafa Osman Ismail says the NCP, as represented by its Leadership Office, has not decided that President Al-Bashir should not seek re-election once his term of office runs out. He told reporters at the NCP offices in Khartoum yesterday that the institutions of the party would decide on who the party's nominee for president would be for the next elections. It is yet premature to talk on the issue, he said.

Pagan Amum denounces statements on southern Sudanese lawmakers

The Citizen reports that SPLM Secretary-General Pagan Amum denounced recent statements by National Assembly Speaker Ahmed Ibrahim Al-Tahir saying that the next round of parliamentary sessions would kick off in April without southern Sudanese parliamentarians. Speaking at a press conference following a meeting with the Assessment and Evaluation Commission (AEC), Pagan said he regarded Al-Tahir's statements as contrary to the decisions of the last meeting of the Presidency which recommended that the CPA institutions and settings remain in place until 9th July this year.

The NCP and the SPLM had presented a meeting earlier to the AEC outlining their achievement in the implementation of the CPA. The AEC urged the two partners to find solutions to all outstanding issues.

Al-Rai Al-Aam daily reports meanwhile that SPLM figures continue to vent angry reactions on the Speaker's recent statements. Deputy Speaker Atem Garang told reporters yesterday that the Constitution that would not allow the south to cut off the north's share of the region's oil revenue would also not allow for the move to strip southern Sudanese lawmakers of membership from the National Assembly would likewise not allow for the exit of southern Sudanese parliamentarians from the National Assembly before 9th July. He said that the SPLM would seek dialogue with the NCP on the issue.

"It would amount to a constitutional coup if the constitution of northern Sudan could be amended with such ease through amendments from the Minister of Justice and without deliberation by the Council of Ministers," he said.

But Mohamed Al-Hassan Al-Amin, a prominent NCP figure and member of the parliamentary committee on justice and legislation, told reporters in parliament yesterday that the Ministry of Justice has no authority or powers over the National Assembly. "The final version of the amended constitution would be enacted through endorsement by the National Assembly," he said.

VP Taha cuts short his visit to Sudan's Blue Nile state

Sudantribune.com Khartoum, 22/02/11 – Vice-President Ali Osman Taha cut short his visit to Blue Nile State where he inaugurated a number of development projects.

Taha was scheduled to address a rally at Damazin stadium but was reportedly advised to cancel his appearance there over what was described as a hostile crowd holding anti-Khartoum banners and calling for regional autonomy.

The head of the organizing committee for the event took the stage in the stadium and told the crowd that Taha apologizes for not showing up citing the need to urgently return to address some

pressing issues Khartoum.

Blue Nile Governor Malik Aggar denied speculation that the hostile audience was to blame for cutting short the VPs visit in the state. He pointed out that the VP was not even aware of the hostile crowd awaiting his appearance at the stadium.

Aggar told reporters today that his state will work to solidify relations between the North and South as well as neighbouring Ethiopia. He added that Sudan is heading towards a new stage with the creation of a new state.

In a related story, *Al-Ayyam* reports that the NCP had cut short the VPs visit to the state as a result of “tensions between the NCP and the SPLM over the scrapping of all articles related to southern Sudan in the new draft constitution,”

Governor Aggar has meanwhile underlined the need for a new protocol on security arrangements after the south is declared independent. He pointed out that the outcome of the Popular Consultations exercise has to be included in the new constitution. The governor told a press conference in Damazin yesterday that it is wrong to assume that southern Sudanese separation would cause the creation of an Arab state in the north. He underlined the need to recognise the country’s ethnic and cultural diversity.

Committee to reclaim GoSS share in oil revenue complains to parliament

Al-Sahafa Khartoum, 23/02/11 – A high-level presidential committee formed by FVP Salva Kiir Mayardit to recover from the Federal Ministry of Finance some \$1.4 billion worth of southern Sudan’s share in oil revenue between 2005-2006 has complained to parliament that the Minister of Finance has ignored their calls for his attendance in parliament for grilling. The committee has called on parliament to summon the minister to answer queries over the issue.

Osman Al-Toweel, the rapporteur for the committee, revealed that FVP Kiir had formed the committee last December to carry investigations on the whereabouts of an estimated \$1.4 billion due the GoSS that was accrued between 2005-2006 without permission. He pointed out that the GoSS had not been formed during that period and the funds were therefore taken without prior permission of the GoSS.

GoSS mulls transfer of capital city to Ramchel

Al-Raed Khartoum, 23/02/11 – The ministerial committee appointed by the GoSS to study possibilities for a likely alternative to Juba as the region’s capital city has its sights on Ramchel. A delegation from the committee recently visited the area for talks with the local communities who expressed pleasure and said they were honoured their area has been listed as a possible alternative for the region’s capital.

Border demarcation team sets out to work

Al-Khartoum Khartoum, 23/02/11 – Abdullah Al-Sadig, the head of the Ad-hoc Border Demarcation Committee announced yesterday that the committee has started work in the contested areas on the north-south border. The committee held a meeting yesterday with the joint NCP-SPLM political committee that oversees the process, he said.

Parliament demands clear position on UN forces in the country

Al-Raed reports that lawmakers yesterday called on the foreign ministry to improve Sudan’s foreign relations and come up with a clear position on UNMIS forces.

Foreign Ministry Ali Karti had briefed the House yesterday on his ministry's performance and revealed that consultations are underway with the relevant parties in the army and security to emerge with a clear position on the fate of UNMIS post-July 2011. He pointed out that the UN peacekeepers are in the country with the consent of the Sudan government and are not an invading force as some depict them to be.

Karti criticised what he described as the "unjustified displeasure" by some parties over the presence of diplomatic and UN missions in the country, pointing out that all these missions are here on the basis of international agreements, with the consent of the government and act with the knowledge of the foreign ministry. He said that the relevant organs in the state would decide to decide on whether or not UNMIS forces are needed in the country after their mandate runs out.

Other Highlights

UN offers mediation between renegade General Athor and South Sudan

Sudantribune.com Abye, 22/02/11 - Weeks after renewed armed clashes in the southern state of Jonglei between armed elements loyal to renegade General George Athor Deng and forces belonging to the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) in Fangak County, the UN Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) presented a proposal seeking to end the rebellion against the regional government.

Speaking to *Sudan Tribune* on Monday night, Dok James Puok, who did not want to give his whereabouts, said they have been contacted by UNMIS with a proposal to mediate peace between them and the Government of South Sudan (GoSS).

"The United Nations Mission in Sudan has contacted us with a proposal to mediate peace and we accepted. We are open to peace. We have never rejected any peaceful dialogue because this is what our people want", said Puok.

Attempts made by *Sudan Tribune* on Monday to contact official spokesman of the GoSS, Marial Benjamin Bil, minister of information and broadcasting failed.

Sudan's FM slams finance ministry for slashing his budget

Sudantribune.com Khartoum, 22/02/11 – Foreign Minister Ali Karti has chided the finance ministry on Tuesday saying that it has restricted his spending and made his job more difficult.

Addressing the parliament today, Karti said that the money at the disposal of his ministry was reduced but gave no reason for the measure.

He noted that there were two items in his ministry's budgets that saw cuts from last year by 26% and 40% respectively. Karti expressed concern saying that he is "puzzled" over how his ministry will manage for the remainder of the year given the financial situation.

Karti's statements highlights the growing economic crisis facing the country particularly as the North stands to officially lose the oil-rich South next July.

Earlier this year, the Sudanese government approved an austerity package that partially removed subsidies on sugar and petroleum products with further cuts expected to follow later this year.

Among the steps taken that would have likely impacted the foreign ministry is a 30% reduction in foreign travel for government officials and 10% in the budget of diplomatic missions abroad.

Analysts say that the hikes in price of petroleum products will also reflect on other parts of the economy such as transportation and agriculture.

Separately, Karti appeared to take a direct hit at the governor of South Darfur Abdel-Hamid Kasha in the row that has erupted last week after he expelled a French aid group, saying that some domestic circles in the government are "embarrassing" his ministry in front of the world.

Sudan used sexual violence against female activists, right group says

Sudantribune.com Nairobi, 22/02/11 - Sudanese security authorities have employed several forms of gender-based violence, including rape, against female activists who took part in recent anti-government campaigns, a local rights group said on Sunday.

Sudan Democracy First Group (SDFG), a Sudanese civil society organization, on Sunday issued a press release citing the cases of six politically active females it said were subjected to verbal and sexual abuse, including rape, at the hands of NISS agents.

According to the organization's release, one female activist identified only by the initials S.E was snatched by NISS agents on 13 February and eventually raped following her interrogation which featured multiple physical and verbal abuses.

A video appearing on the video-sharing website Youtube and seen by Sudan Tribune showed the said girl with her face completely covered in scarf sobbing as she recounted her alleged ordeal.

The video has generated furious reactions online and Sudanese facebookers setup a page titled "we're all the raped S.E" which is modelled on the "we're all Khalid Saeed" page which galvanized support for the Egyptian revolution that toppled President Mubarak this month.

SDFG's press release said that crimes of sexual violence were not a novelty in Sudan, recalling that the ruling National Congress Party (NCP) had perpetrated them against women in Sudan's western region of Darfur.

"However, what is new with these crimes is their use of repression and oppression outside of war affected zones and transferring them to urban settings, and to the capital, Khartoum," the organization added.

SDFG stressed that justice must be served for the victims of sexual abuse in Darfur through national and international mechanisms, including the International Criminal Court (ICC).

South Sudan plans law against gender-based violence

Sudantribune.com Abyei, 22/02/11 - The Government of South Sudan (GoSS) pledged on Tuesday to legislate and enforce specific laws against gender-based violence after media reports indicated last week that a girl was beaten to death by a relative in Rumbek North County, Lakes state, over a disputed marital gift.

The act was condemned by the state authorities with Rumbek North county commissioner describing it as "barbaric act" and "against humanity". The minister of gender, children and social welfare, Agnes Kwaje Lasuba, became one of the first women activists to condemn the practice.

Civil society groups petition Kiir - reject constitutional review nominee

Sudantribune.com Juba, 22/02/11 - Leaders of national and civil society groups have issued a petition demanding for the immediate removal of Angelo Beda, the delegate selected to represent them on the technical committee reviewing South Sudan's interim constitution. In a strongly-

worded petition addressed to South Sudan's President, Salva Kiir Mayardit, the group provides a list of three nominees to the committee for "our legitimate representation."

"Angelo Beda is not a civil society actor and has never been part of the civil society in South Sudan," the 19 February petition, also addressed to South Sudan political parties leadership, partly reads. It adds, "The agreement on the nomination and approval of the above mentioned person, was made in the absence of civil society in the meeting itself."

US says Minnawi's threats to attack Darfur airports are "unacceptable"

Sudantribune.com Khartoum, 22/02/11 - The US State Department today said it was alarmed by threats issued last week by a rebel group to attack the airports in the Darfur region saying such actions are unacceptable and put civilians and peacekeepers at risk

UNAMID chief Ibrahim Gambari yesterday slammed the statement of the rebel group saying he called Minnawi and warned him of "the grave consequences of any actions that may harm civilian populations, international personnel and operations or hamper the provision of crucial humanitarian assistance in Darfur". Gambari went further to say he reminded Minnawi that any attack on the peacekeepers is considered a war crime under international law.

"Attacks by any party that place innocent civilians, peacekeepers, and aid workers at risk are unacceptable and inconsistent with the spirit of working collectively toward a peaceful and more prosperous future for the people of Darfur," said State Department spokesperson Philip J. Crowley on Tuesday.

He further stressed that Washington "discourages" such attacks and urged the warring parties in Darfur to stop hostilities and join international efforts to reach a negotiated settlement. The Sudanese army minimized Minnawi's statements saying his threats are meaningless. The Sudan Armed Forces spokesperson Khaled Al-Sawarmi said these threats are for media consumption. He also stressed that all the airport in Darfur are protected.

The peacekeeping operation said intensified patrols in and around Shangil Tobaya to provide protection to the civilians there. Further following several days of fighting in Wadi Mura, North Darfur, a UNAMID assessment team found that civilians abandoned some villages and fled to Tawilla and Zamzam camps.

Authorities release two detained journalists

Al-Sahafa Khartoum, 23/02/11 – Al-Tahir Abu-Johara and Ashraf Abdulaziz, two reporters for the opposition *Rai AlShaab*, were released by authorities yesterday after about one year in detention at the federal penitentiary in Kobar.

At a celebration organised by the Popular Congress Party (PCP) that runs the paper, the reporters talked of the suffering they had to endure during their days in detention.

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