

23 Sept 2010

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Media Monitoring Report

United Nations Mission in Sudan/ Public Information Office

Referendum Monitor

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Address: UNMIS Headquarters, P.O. Box 69, Ibeid Khatim St, Khartoum 11111, SUDAN
Phone: (+249-1) 8708 6000 - Fax: (+249-1) 8708 6200

Highlights

VP Taha to address UNGA on Monday, FVP Kiir met with UNSG

Al-Akhbar (Khartoum) 23/9/10 – Head of the Sudanese Government's delegation to the UNGA meeting VP Ali Osman Taha will deliver Sudan's speech on Monday, expected to focus on government efforts to conduct the referendum on time.

Meanwhile, FVP Salva Kiir Mayardit traveled from Washington to NY where he met with UNSG Ban Ki-moon late in the night yesterday.

NCP decries intimidations, threatens to not recognize referendum outcome

Sudan Tribune website 23/9/10 - Sudan's ruling National Congress Party (NCP) denounced today the lack of freedom to campaign for the referendum on self-determination in southern Sudan and threatened not to recognize its result.

In a press conference held in Khartoum jointly with the opposition Alliance of South Sudan Political Parties, Ali Tamim Fartak member of NCP leadership council and head of political secretariat at the NCP referendum committee, condemned the intimidations and detention of NCP members and restrictions they face in the semi-autonomous region.

He further stressed that these practices breach the 2005 peace deal, the interim constitution and the Referendum Act. He called on the president of southern Sudan government to direct the release of the detainees and ensure the freedom of campaigning for the referendum.

Fartak and the members of the alliance said their members campaigning for unity in southern Sudan are intimidated and arrested by local authorities in Greater Bahar el-Ghazal and Unity states.

Also the SPLM-DC issued today a press statement echoing Fartak's statements. The opposition party said it has several members in Upper Nile state arrested since May and a member travelled recently to Aweil, capital of North Bahr al Ghazal, had to leave the town for his personal safety after being prevented from campaigning for the referendum.

The NCP leading member warned that they would not allow the SPLM to seize their right to campaign freely or to confiscate the will of southerners. Fartak also stressed they will continue to put pressure to create conducive environment for a fair and transparent referendum.

He added they will inform the international community, regional and international organizations to facilitate a democratic atmosphere for the conduct of the referendum.

He underlined such environment will make the outcome of the referendum acceptable by all the parties. Otherwise this result would not be recognized due to the "direct threat" to the referendum in the south.

The SPLM-DC went further to say "Those who today pretend to be overzealous for a separation

vote while ignoring the requirements of a conducive atmosphere for the conduct of an internationally acceptable referendum are the very enemies of the cause of separation".

"Because they are walking into a trap," the party emphasized.

"How will South Sudan go for a historic and momentous vote divided?"

“Those accusing us of delaying referendum are liars” – Al-Bashir

Al-Sahafa 23/9/10 – President Al-Bashir, in his address to the inaugural session of parliamentary forum of the Lakes states in Khartoum yesterday, said “we want a free, fair and transparent referendum”. “Those who claim we delay the CPA implementation are liars. Had peace not been our aim we would not have signed the CPA in the first place,” he reacted angrily to claims that the NCP is delaying the referendum.

UN mission in Sudan outlines referendum role

Sudan Tribune website 22/9/10 - The UN Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) has outlined the nature and scope of its role in a vote due in January 2011 on the possible independence of south Sudan, asserting that it will only be acting as a provider of technical and logistical assistance to the Southern Sudan Referendum Commission (SSRC), the domestic body tasked with organizing the exercise.

In a press conference held Wednesday at UNMIS’s headquarters in Khartoum, the director of the United Nations Integrated Referendum and Electoral Division (UNIRED), Denis K. Kadima, briefed local and foreign journalists on the role that the UN is going play in the referendum.

Kadima, whose office is responsible for supporting the referendum, pointed out that the UN will provide technical and logistical assistance to the SSRC throughout all stages of the referendum process.

"We will be assisting the Referendum authorities in every phase of the process, starting from the conceptualization of operations, the planning of the procurement and distribution of materials, to the Voter Registration exercise, the exhibition and challenges and finally polling, counting, tabulation and announcement of results," he said.

Kadima was keen to emphasize that UNIRED is neither monitoring, nor observing the referendum. However, he later pointed out that separate panel commissioned by the UN’s Secretary-General would be monitoring the referendum at the behest of the CPA’s signatories.

"Exceptionally, this referendum will also benefit from the presence of the UN Secretary General’s Referendum Monitoring panel which has been invited by the CPA signatories to support the process and this panel will engage with national authorities and the Commission to make sure all political, security and any other issue affecting the credibility of the process are addressed in a timely fashion," he said.

UNIRED would be working in tandem with the UNDP and other international organizations to carry out tangible and advisory assistance to the SSRC. He announced that the UN would deliver "approximately 120 tons of voter registration materials, consisting of training manuals, registration booklets, registration kits, forms, voter education pamphlets and other supplies".

He further revealed that the UN was training national security officials to safeguard the referendum, and also setting up over 70 Referendum Support Bases and offices in Sudan's northern states.

The UNMIS official declined to comment on a question about whether the UN thinks that the January 9, 2011 deadline can be met, saying it was up to the SSRC to answer.

Obama says will back Sudan, declares new aid policy

Reuters (UNITED NATIONS) 22/9/10 - President Barack Obama on Wednesday pledged support for a peaceful shift to democracy in Sudan ahead of a January referendum many fear could lead to violence, as he declared a new U.S. approach to development.

"We will reach out to countries making the transition from authoritarianism to democracy, and from war to peace," the President told a summit to curb poverty held at the United Nations, according to remarks prepared for delivery.

"As others show the courage to put war behind them - including, we hope, in Sudan - the United States will stand with those who seek to build and sustain peace," he told the summit on the Millennium Development Goals to ease poverty.

Obama will also attend a special summit on Sudan on Friday on the sidelines of the U.N. General Assembly meeting...

South Sudan's Machar says Abyei not a shared area

Sudan Tribune website 22/9/10 - "Abyei area belongs to the nine Ngok Dinka chiefdoms and not a shared region with anybody else", remarked the Vice President of the semi-autonomous southern Sudan, Dr. Riek Machar Teny at a meeting on Tuesday, September 21, 2010.

Machar criticized the recently floated proposal by the northern Sudan's National Congress Party (NCP) and peace partner to the southern Sudan ruling Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), which suggested giving Abyei area a special status.

During the meeting on Tuesday with a delegation of diplomats from various foreign embassies in Khartoum which came to Juba to seek the views of the leadership in the south, the Vice President, who spearheaded the Hague's Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) ruling that defined the boundaries of Dinka Ngok land, rejected the proposal, saying the NCP's new position was a "discouraging" attempt to take the two parties back to square one.

Abyei, on the border between north and south Sudan is oil rich and the matter of heated debate with regards to the referendum.

"Abyei belongs to Dinka Ngok, and not a shared area," he said, explaining that despite the fact that the 2005 peace deal has provided for "other Sudanese residents in Abyei" to vote in the referendum on either joining the South or remaining with the North, criteria on who should be eligible to vote in the Abyei referendum, among the other Sudanese residents, has not yet been agreed by the two parties.

He said if the NCP had the same political will as the SPLM, the issues would have been

resolved.

Machar also told the diplomats that the current discussions on post-referendum arrangements between the two parties have been very slow, as they were intermittent, with long breaks and short discussion periods.

On the Southern Sudan referendum, he reiterated that it had to be conducted on January 9, 2011 whether or not the borders were demarcated or the post-referendum issues were agreed upon. “The referendum should not be tied to the borders or the post-referendum issues,” he said.

Machar reminded the delegation that Sudan “did not demarcate all its borders with its neighbors, such as Egypt and Ethiopia, when it became independent in January 1956.”

He was critical of voices from the north “who sometimes try to create unnecessary tensions over issues people can discuss during and even after the referendum. Let them not raise temperatures.”

Machar told the diplomats that only critical issues such as citizenship and the roles of the future of Joint Integrated Units (JIUs), the Sudanese People’s Liberation Army, Sudan Armed Forces, the national police and civil servants need to be resolved before the referendum. As there are southerners and northerners working in these groups in both regions, there will be conflicts of interest.

Issues such as oil, international agreements, assets and debts, if they cannot be agreed upon within the next three months, can be discussed after the referendum, explained Machar. He feared that some of these issues “may drag on for the next ten years.”

He appealed to the international community through the representatives present to double their efforts in supporting the processes of the referendum. Asked when the SPLM would officially declare its support for either unity or secession, Machar said the party’s Liberation Council would convene in a meeting during October to evaluate its position and decide on the way forward.

“We [SPLM] are hearing voices in streets from the youth and civil society organizations, calling for separation,” he said. The party’s first deputy chairperson said the northern and southern sectors of the SPLM would debate on the issue and try to come out with a position.

In the upcoming Liberation Council meeting Machar felt the members should ask, “Are we failing, or have we succeeded in changing Sudan? Are we out of touch?”

SPLM accuses NCP of supporting LRA to disrupt independence vote

The Citizen (Khartoum) 23/9/10 – The SPLM has accused the NCP of continued support to the LRA in a ploy to disrupt the conduct of an independence vote in southern Sudan.

In a press briefing yesterday at the SPLM Southern Sector Secretariat, the Acting Deputy Secretary General for the Southern Sector, Antipas Nyok Kucha, said SAF arms the LRA to create instability in the South.

“They are armed wings, armed militia, being funded by the NCP to sabotage the system in the South,” Antipas Nyok told reporters.

“Do not think LRA is a rebel army fighting against the Ugandan government but it is a support militia backing the SAF to destabilize people in the South,” he said, adding these destructive plans are responsible for the quest of southerners for an independent nation in an internationally-supervised referendum in January next year.

Finance Ministry to endorse referendum running budget

Al-Ahdath (Khartoum) 23/9/10 – the Ministry of Finance & National Economy announced its commitment to provide necessary budget for the Referendum Commission to carry out its task. The Ministry also directed its Undersecretary to sanction a running budget for the Referendum Commission.

Minister of Finance Ali Mahmoud told reporters after a meeting with the Referendum Commission that the referendum budget would be contributed by the federal government, the GoSS and the International Community.

Referendum Commission Head Mohamed Ibrahim Khalil revealed that the Commission is facing difficulties, saying delegations were sent to the northern states to set up offices. However, he said, the Commission made great strides in its work in the South.

According to *Al-Akhbar* (Khartoum) 23/9/10, the Minister of Finance said the referendum budget would be discussed next week, adding a running budget would be sanctioned to enable the Commission to function until the full budget is approved.

Reportedly, the Referendum Commission has named Ambassador Jamal Mohamed Ibrahim as its official spokesperson.

South Sudan starts talks with renegade militia chief

Reuters (KHARTOUM) 23/9/10 - Southern Sudanese officials have started talks with a renegade militia commander who joined a rebellion that has threatened the stability of the region in the run up to a sensitive referendum, the south's army said.

David Yauyau was one of at least three militia leaders who took up arms saying they had been cheated out of seats in April's elections and accusing the south's ruling party of corruption.

"The local authorities in Pibor County have started peace talks with David Yauyau ... The initiative to reach a peaceful settlement came from him. Whether he is serious or not serious remains to be seen," said southern army (SPLA) spokesman Kuol Deim Kuol.

Kuol said SPLA forces had been told not to attack Yauyau's supporters in the south's remote Jonglei state -- where French group Total holds a largely unexplored oil concession -- to avoid disrupting the discussions.

Yauyau, from the Murle tribe, told Reuters it was the local authorities who first approached him with a letter, but the contact had not yet turned into detailed negotiations.

"We have replied to them. This is the first step we have started with them. We have some

burning issues to be amended," he said. "If the letters continue to be positive, we can have some dialogue with them."

Kuol said troops were still hunting for George Athor, a former SPLA general, and his supporters in Jonglei, but floods were hampering the search. Kuol said a third militia leader Galwak Gai was being treated for injuries in north Sudan.

Southern leaders have accused the north of backing the militias in a bid to disrupt the referendum and keep control of the south's oil, a charge dismissed by Khartoum.

Athor told Reuters he was also interested in negotiating a settlement but was facing SPLA attacks, most recently in August.

Abyei rejects NCP proposed dual citizenship

The Citizen 23/9/10 – Natives of Abyei have deplored a proposal by the NCP to administer the oil-rich region as bi-national entity in case southern Sudan separates from the rest of the country and forms an independent nation in 2011. At a press conference yesterday at Millennium Hotel, the chairperson of Abyei Referendum Forum, Chol Deng Alak, said the proposed dual citizenship is an unacceptable return to colonial condominium rule and a renegotiation of the 2005 peace deal.

“The NCP’s proposal reveals that the NCP is not a ruling party but an imperial expansionist party; otherwise, how do you explain the denial of Dinka Ngok to be normal citizens in a state like any other human beings in the world,” said Chol Deng Alak, the chairperson of Abyei Referendum Forum.

“We think that the integration between the North and the South has failed as the unity has already failed. Integration between Dinka and Misseriya has not and it can not be possible for the same reasons which led to the failure of unity between the North and the South,” he stressed. “Misseriya are invaders like other Asians and Dinkas are indigenous like other Africans”.

Other Highlights

US grants South Sudan \$200 million for road construction

Miraya FM 22/9/10 - The US administration has granted US\$200 million to GoSS to construct the road between Juba and Nimule in Southern Sudan. This was announced by Government of Southern Sudan Minister of Road and Transport Anthony Lino Makana in a weekly media forum in Juba on Tuesday. The minister said that this road is going to be the first modern highway to connect Southern Sudan with Ugandan border.

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