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Media Monitoring Report

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Referendum Watch

Referendum Commission, AU sign memorandum of understanding

Al-Sahafa Khartoum, 25/11/10 – The SSRC announced that there was no tendency to extend the registration period for the referendum which entered its eleventh day, adding that registration in Egypt was delayed due to an error in protocol procedures.

SSRC Spokesperson George Makuer told reporters that the Commission had requested the Arab League (AL) to contact the two CPA parties, NCP and SPLM, to halt trading of accusations.

Makuer said that the Commission had no intention to extend the ongoing registration, saying the remaining period would be sufficient for the process if the two parties cease accusations and counter-accusations which affect progress.

Meanwhile, the SSRC signed yesterday a memorandum of understanding with the Arab League that would allow the League to deploy an 80-strong team to monitor the referendum process.

Referendum Commission warns attack could undermine Referendum

VoA 24/11/10 - The spokesman for Sudan's referendum commission has called on the ruling National Congress Party (NCP) and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) to keep their promise of maintaining peace and security during the voter registration exercise, as well as the 9th January referendum.

George Benjamin also expressed concern that Wednesday's reported attack on an army base in southern Sudan could prevent prospective voters from going to register for the upcoming referendum.

"Definitely, the people living around that area could be scared and run away and that can impact negatively on the registration process in that location and (those) areas in the vicinity. And, if it is not controlled and it spreads, then that can have serious repercussions on the whole process."

Philip Aguer, spokesman for the southern Sudanese army, said helicopter gunships from the north attacked a base in the Bahr al-Ghazal region Wednesday. The attack he said wounded four soldiers and two civilians.

Some southern Sudanese also claimed that the attack was aimed to derail the upcoming referendum on independence. But, an official of the Sudanese army rejected the accusation as completely false.

Benjamin warned that both the ongoing voter registration and the referendum could be in jeopardy if violence is not contained.

"The maintenance of security all over the country, and for the purposes of the referendum process, is a duty of the governments. Both the federal government and the government of southern Sudan have committed themselves that they will maintain security during the referendum process, so that the process could go on uninterrupted."

Benjamin further called on both governments to fulfill their promise to ensure peace and stability in the upcoming referendum.

"If peace is maintained, the commission will appeal to the people in those areas affected to come back and continue (to) register in order to vote next January."

Meanwhile, the U.N. peacekeeping force in Sudan says it has no information on the reported attack. If confirmed, this would be the second time this month northern Sudanese forces have carried out an airstrike in the south. On 13th November, northern aircraft bombed the south while fighting rebels from Sudan's Darfur region. Northern officials said the bombing was an accident.

NCP would accept referendum outcome only if carried out as per CPA

Al-Raed Khartoum, 25/11/10 – The Sudan Government would accept the outcome of the 2011 referendum on self-determination for southern Sudan if the exercise is carried out as per the provisions of the CPA, says Vice-President Ali Osman Mohamed Taha. He pointed out that the referendum should meet the conditions of fairness and should be carried out in an atmosphere that guarantees freedom of expression, reports *Al-Rai Al-Aam*.

Taha also assured the opening session of a conference of African ministers in charge of development that southern Sudanese residing in the north of the country and their property would remain safe whatever the outcome of the vote.

SPLM-DC leader accuses “parties” of hampering referendum registration

Al-Rai Al-Aam Khartoum, 25/11/10 – SPLM-DC leader Lam Akol has called on southern Sudanese to come forward to register for the referendum. Speaking at a press conference at the head offices of the *Sudan News Agency (SUNA)*, Akol accused “parties” he declined to disclose of hampering the referendum registration process especially in the northern states and of issuing threats of death or expulsion to prospective voters. He described the situation in Khartoum State as “strange”, calling on the CPA partners to clarify their views for the southern Sudanese voter.

Presidency to discuss outstanding issues on Saturday – Amum

Al-Sahafa Khartoum, 25/11/10 - SPLM SG Pagan Amum at press conference yesterday in Juba said that the Presidency would hold a meeting on Saturday to discuss the pending issues between the two CPA parties including post-referendum arrangements. He said the SPLM is ready to make concessions to resolve the deadlock over the Abyei referendum. He went on to say that the mediators have sensed that the NCP may accept a US-sponsored deal on Abyei in return for scrapping Sudan off the US list of state sponsors of terrorism as well as scrapping the US unilateral sanctions on the country and helping effect a stay on the ICC warrant on President Al-Bashir.

Al-Sudani also quotes SPLM figure Deng Alor as saying that the SPLM would not object a “reasonable and acceptable” deal on the Abyei referendum between the CPA partners. Alor assured that Abyei would never be a cause for renewed north-south fighting. In answer to a question by the *Al-Sudani* interviewer, Alor pointed out that the SPLM does not seek to sponsor an alliance of Darfur armed groups against Khartoum. “We have not yet stood on our two feet and how then could we be able to sponsor such an alliance?” he responded, pointing out that Minnawi and Imam’s presence in Juba has no political or military undertones.

On the other hand, *Al-Sahafa* also reports that NCP point man on Abyei, Al-Dirdeiri Mohamed Ahmed, denied the possibility of a deal with the SPLM on Abyei. “I am not aware of any deal for a ‘ransom’ on Abyei,” he said. He pointed out that the Sudan Government had earlier rejected the US incentives on Abyei that the SPLM Secretary-General was referring to. He pointed out however that the two sides are slated to meet to discuss Abyei and other issues soon.

South says six wounded in Sudan army attack

AFP/Reuters/ST 24/11/10 Local Dailies 25/11/10 - The SPLA has accused SAF of attacking its positions on Wednesday wounding four soldiers and two civilians as part of efforts to disrupt the south's independence referendum.

"An SAF (Sudan Armed Forces) helicopter gunship attacked SPLA positions at Kiirabem in Northern Bahr al-Ghazal, wounding four SPLA soldiers and two civilians," SPLA Spokesperson Philip Aguer said.

"The intention of the SAF in this move is to try to disrupt the referendum process," Aguer added in a statement.

Reuters reported (24/11/10) that the SPLA accused the SAF of carrying out an air strike on an army base in southern Sudan on Wednesday in an attempt to derail a Jan. 9 referendum on southern independence.

If confirmed, this would be the second time this month the north has conducted aerial raids in the south. On the first occasion, the southern army said northern forces accidentally dropped a bomb on its territory while fighting rebels from Darfur near the north-south border.

"Today SAF (northern army) helicopter gun-ships attacked our position, injuring four soldiers and two civilians," SPLA spokesman Philip Aguer said.

"The SAF is trying to drag Sudan back into war again and to disrupt or prevent the referendum," he said, but the southern army would not respond militarily.

A U.N. spokesman had no immediate information on the report.

Aweil North (where the attack occurred) Commissioner Kuol Athuai told **Reuters** by telephone: "This was the northern army -- they attacked a village and an army base."

In an escalation of the pre-referendum war of words, a senior northern figure said the south had declared war by supporting rebels from Darfur.

"If you are accommodating these forces in the south, you are supplying these forces with weapons, logistics, petrol and cars ... we think that this is a declaration of war against the north of the country," Mandour al-Mahdi, a senior official from the northern National Congress Party, told Reuters on Wednesday.

Mahdi said the Darfur rebel Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) had moved its forces to the south to receive training.

Another rebel leader, Abdel Wahed Mohamed el-Nur of the Sudan Liberation Army (SLA), was expected to visit the southern capital Juba in the coming days, his spokesman said, and other rebel chiefs have visited or reside there.

South Sudan's army was not immediately available for comment on Mahdi's remarks, but it denies aiding rebels from Darfur.

Local dailies on 25 November quote SAF Spokesperson Lt. Col. Al-Sawarmi Khalid as having denied the SPLA accusations of an aerial raid by the northern army on its base in Kiirabem area in Northern Bahr-el-Ghazal. "These allegations are absolutely untrue, SAF has not attacked anywhere near the border," he said.

UN unveils post-referendum contingency plan

Al-Ayyam/Al-Sudani Khartoum, 25/11/10 – DSRSG/HC/RC Georg Charpentier, addressing a press conference yesterday in Khartoum, revealed that the UN has requested donor assistance to the tune of \$63 million for implementing a post-referendum contingency plan.

On returns, he said over 18,000 southerners returned to Unity State, attributing the increasing return of southerners to their areas in the South to their feeling of uncertainty, adding that northerners in the South also intend to return for similar reasons. He said about 1000 people returned to Abyei from the Blue Nile and Sennar states and about 2,151 and 5,307 from Khartoum and Kosti.

Contingency plan for voluntary return for 2011 – UN

Al-Akhbar Khartoum, 25/11/10 – The UN has revealed a contingency plan for 2011 for voluntary return to the South based on the worst-case scenario by directing call for \$63 million from donors. Some donors have responded but DSRSG Georg Charpentier, at press conference in Khartoum yesterday, stressed the need to turn the pledges into concrete financial support to cover the humanitarian contingency plan.

Mr. Charpentier said the Humanitarian Country Team is providing targeted assistance in areas of return – focusing on the usual return package but also on livelihoods and services to promote and support reintegration in order to avoid creating new conditions of dependency or new IDP camps.

UN beefs up monitoring of returnees in Southern Sudan

UN News Centre 24/11/10 - As part of its efforts to assist in the return of refugees and displaced persons, the United Nations in Sudan has enhanced its monitoring of the number of people going back to their homes in the country's south.

Speaking at a press conference in Khartoum today, the UN Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Humanitarian Coordinator in Sudan, Georg Charpentier, said the UN and its partners, in collaboration with national and state authorities, have enhanced monitoring of departures in the country's north, as well as in key transit hubs and return areas.

“The Southern Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Commission has reported 18,213 state-organized returns to Unity (state) with buses continuing to arrive,” Mr. Charpentier said. “The first return convoys to the Abyei Area, organized by the Abyei Area Administration, have now departed, from Blue Nile and Sennar (states) on 19 November and from Khartoum on 20 November with an estimated total of approximately 2,000 returnees.”

He added that at Kosti, in White Nile state, the UN's partners have detected 5,307 spontaneous returns in the month of November – equivalent to roughly double the average total for the same period in previous years.

The Humanitarian Coordinator said that the efforts to help those returning also include a particular focus on livelihoods and services to promote the reintegration of the returnees, in order to help avoid creating dependency or new camps for internally displaced persons.

“We should not put people who are self-reliant into a situation of dependency,” Mr. Charpentier said, adding that humanitarian operators in the country welcomed the commitment of authorities in both northern and southern Sudan to de-linking returns from any political considerations tied to the upcoming referenda.

He also noted that the UN and its partners were coordinating their contingency plans for any

uncertainty related to the outstanding benchmarks of the CPA, including the referenda.

“To ensure timely support, supplies in key life-saving sectors, including health, nutrition, water, and food are being procured and pre-positioned in several places and in line with potential needs,” Mr. Charpentier said, adding that the Government – in both the North and South – has been called on to ensure unhindered humanitarian access to vulnerable populations.

Another war in Sudan could cost \$100 bln: report

Reuters 25/11/10 - If a referendum on independence for southern Sudan in January reignites a civil war with the north, the cost both locally and to the wider region could total \$100 billion, a report said on Thursday.

The south is widely expected to choose independence in the January 9 vote -- allowed for in a 2005 deal to end a conflict that killed 2 million people -- while the north is anxious to hold on to the oil-rich southern region.

The report, compiled by a coalition of European and African economic experts, put the price tag of a resumption of a civil war in Sudan at more than \$100 billion, and said the economic fallout would extend well beyond its borders.

"The overall cost would be particularly grave for Sudan's neighbours, amounting to 34 percent of their total annual GDP over a 10 year period," said the report, published by Frontier Economics.

"Both Kenya and Ethiopia could potentially lose over \$1 billion per year," it said.

The region would look like a risky place for investment, Sudan's demand for imports would drop and neighbours would see resources stretched by an influx of refugees while channelling addition funds into their militaries, the report said.

The estimate includes humanitarian and peacekeeping costs of up to \$30 billion - to be footed by the international community - and the likelihood that Sudan would surrender some \$50 billion of its GDP through return to war.

Analysts say the potential economic impact remains Sudan's biggest deterrent to war, with both economies dependent on the landlocked south's oil revenues - for which the north is its only channel of export.

"Oil is the greatest disincentive they have. Both parties are cognitive of the fact that their economies are reliant on oil and war would prevent access to it," said International Crisis Group analyst Zach Vertin.

The north's role in exporting southern oil - the refineries and ports are in the north - remains its strongest bargaining chip throughout the referendum process and in any subsequent negotiations, Vertin said.

If oil production were to shut down at the outbreak of war, Sudan would immediately lose 10-20 percent of its GDP, equivalent to \$6.5-13 billion in 2011, the report said.

Other Highlights

SPLM confirms receiving SLM-AW delegation in Juba

Radio Miraya website Juba, 24/11/10 - The Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) has confirmed it has received a delegation of the Abdulwahid Mohamed Nur faction of the Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM-AW) in Juba. SPLM's Deputy Chairman, Riek Machar, told *Radio Miraya* that Abdelwahid had requested such a visit.

He explained that the move is in line with the President of the Republic's plan to realize peace in Darfur ahead of the 2011 Referendum.

The NCP has meanwhile condemned the SLM-AW delegation's visit to Juba. Rabie Abdul Atti, a prominent member of the NCP, said the visit is provocative and noted that southern Sudan is still part of the country. He stressed that the visit should have been coordinated with the National government and that such a visit might affect north south relationship.

Tripoli to host extraordinary high level meeting of AU peace council

Al-Rai Al-Aam Khartoum, 25/11/10 – The Libyan capital is due to host an extraordinary meeting next Tuesday of the African Union Peace and Security Council as a follow-up to AU efforts aimed at resolving the differences between the NCP and the SPLM ahead of the 2011 referendum. Sources privy to the issue intimate that President Al-Bashir and FVP Salva Kiir have been invited to the meeting.

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