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Highlights

“No peace protocol will go unimplemented” - Kiir

Miraya FM 25/8/10 - A delegation of Abyei Civil Society Organizations Forum yesterday met President of the Government of Southern Sudan, Salva Kiir Mayardit, to discuss implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, especially the Abyei Protocol.

After the meeting, the Chairman of Abyei Civil Society Organizations Forum, Chol Deng Alak, said that the people of Abyei are committed to peace.

According to Chol, Salva Kiir has assured the delegation of Abyei Civil Society Organizations Forum of the full implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement without any exception, and that no protocol would be left out unimplemented.

CPA partners agree to remove obstacles hindering border demarcation

Al-Sahafa 26/8/10 – SPLM Secretary-General and GoSS Minister of Peace and CPA Implementation Pagan Amum said the NCP and SPLM at a meeting yesterday agreed to remove obstacles hindering the demarcation of the border. He said the partners also agreed on the need to hold a meeting with the Ad hoc Technical Border Demarcation Committee.

US appoints ex-diplomat to assist in CPA implementation

Sudan Tribune website 25/8/10 - The United States announced today the appointment of a former diplomat to lead the Sudan negotiation support unit that is tasked with helping the North and South to resolve the outstanding issues relating to the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) provisions on referendum.

The U.S. State department said in a statement that Ambassador Princeton Lyman "will augment and complement the efforts of the US Embassy in Khartoum and US Consulate General in Juba as our diplomatic mission to Sudan".

"Ambassador Lyman will provide a senior-level presence in Sudan dedicated specifically to working with the CPA parties to reach consensus on outstanding CPA implementation issues, such as citizenship, border demarcation and resource sharing," said State Department spokesman Mark Toner.

The State Department said that Lyman will join a "robust" team that would support Special Envoy to Sudan Scott Gration, Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Johnnie Carson, Chargé d'Affaires Robert Whitehead in Khartoum and Consul General Barrie Walkley in Juba.

“Ambassador Lyman departed for Sudan yesterday evening, where he will join Special Envoy Gration in Sudan for meetings this week with the Sudanese National Congress Party (NCP), the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement (SPLM), the UN Special Representative of the Secretary General for Sudan Haile Menkerios, Chairman of the African Union High Level Implementation Panel Thabo Mbeki and representatives of the Sudan Troika (United Kingdom and Norway),”.

The appointment was welcomed by Darfur activist groups in Washington.

“This is a welcome sign for us from the administration that it needs to bring in folks with that kind of résumé,” the Enough project’s David Sullivan told Politico news portal.

“It’s a good step. We now seem to be acknowledging the successful model that helped result in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in 2005 that was negotiated by a team of senior diplomats on the ground in support of an Africa-led process.”

SPLM steps up activity on referenda

Ajras Al-Hurriya 26/8/10 – GoSS Minister of Peace and CPA implementation Pagan Amum said the NCP, the SPLM and AU would hold a joint meeting on 30 August to resolve obstacles hampering the conduct of referenda, adding the meetings between the two partners would continue until all obstacles are removed.

He said the CPA partners would also hold a separate meeting today with representatives of the Troika including US envoy Scott Gration and British envoy for discussion on referenda.

Sudan’s referendum commission SG candidate wants to decline post

Sudan Tribune website 25/8/10 - The candidate for the position of the referendum commission Secretary General is no longer interested in assuming the post, Sudan Tribune has learned.

The development comes only days after the Sudan People Liberation Movement (SPLM) agreed to let a figure from the North assume the position of the Secretary General who controls the funds and budget of the commission.

The head of the commission Mohamed Ibrahim Khalil has nominated Omer Al-Sheik who worked in the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO).

The SPLM has directed fierce criticism at the choice of Al-Sheik saying that he failed in his duties within MINURSO and thus is not suitable to be the commission’s Secretary General.

A source close to Al-Sheik told Sudan Tribune that the latter has made his intentions known to Khalil who asked him to think it over and not make his desire to turn it down public.

According to the source, the prospective SG wants to accommodate his former professor but at the same time feels uncomfortable with accepting the position given the controversies surrounding the referendum process and the highly polarized atmosphere.

"I personally would not be surprised if Khalil himself quits down the road," said the source.

Khalil had threatened to resign if the SPLM continue to stall the appointment of a Northerner Secretary General stressing that Southerners already control 59 out of 63 positions outlined in the Referendum Law.

“Dialogue with SPLM over dual nationality underway” - NCP

Al-Wifaq 26/8/10 – The NCP has downplayed the SPLM’s charges that the NCP is dragging its feet on the issue of census results in Southern Kordofan. NCP political secretary Ibrahim

Ghandour told reporters yesterday that his party would not heed to the allegations being circulated by the SPLM on the reasons behind the delay in declaring the result of the population census of Southern Kordofan State, stressing that the National Congress would go ahead implementing the CPA and abiding by the Interim Constitution ,adding that differences over position of the governor of Southern Kordofan state, demanded by the SPLM, would be resolved by the ballot.

On dual nationality proposed by the SPLM in the event of secession, Ghandour said the issue is being discussed by the two partners at the level of joint committees.

Meanwhile, *Al-Ayyam* reports that census results in Southern Kordofan would be announced by the end of September.

“Don’t register if you cannot vote” - Machar cautions

Sudan Tribune website 25/8/10 - The Vice President of the semi-autonomous Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS) Riek Machar has cautioned potential voters not to only register, but also vote during the referendum’s seven-day voting exercise scheduled to starting on January 9, 2011.

Machar made the remarks while officiating the opening of a one-day workshop organized by a civil society organization, the Southern Sudan Civic Education Organization, to which he was invited as the chief Guest.

In his generalized statement to all civil society organizations that will take part in the mobilization for registration and civic education, the Vice President told them to equally mobilize for registration as well as for voting in order to meet the 60% threshold of registered voters as required by the referendum law.

He said those that feel they may not vote during the referendum should not register in the first place because that would harm the needed turnout.

“Don’t register if you cannot vote,” he said in his remarks targeting potential voters.

According to the law, at least 60% of all the registered voters must vote in the referendum in order to recognize the outcome of the exercise. Also, 50%+1 of the voted – minus spoiled votes - shall be required in favour of either unity or secession option in order to declare it the winning choice of the people.

Machar also stressed the importance of conducting civic education to the people on how to vote throughout the region.

"This is to avoid the issue of spoiled votes which ballot papers may not be properly marked and would affect the 60% threshold," he said.

He revealed that during the voting there will not be two boxes but only one box and one ballot paper with two different symbols; one for unity and another for secession. The selection of symbols will be done by the Southern Sudan Referendum Commission, he said, adding that it is important for the population to be educated about the type of symbol representing each option.

The referendum law has provided for a re-run of referendum voting after 60 days of the original

vote date if the 60% turnout was not achieved in the first round. Machar however said it would be best that the required turnout would materialize in the first round, warning that if it failed, going for the second round would be difficult because it could generate a debate on the justification.

Machar also stressed the need for making the vote transparent, free and fair, explaining that despite the fact that it will be the people of Southern Sudan voting, the referendum is not only about Southern Sudan, but a national act since it will determine the fate of the whole country.

“Somebody in Halfa – a northerner - would want to assure himself or herself that the outcome of the referendum is the free will of the people of Southern Sudan and not manipulated by anybody,” he said.

South Sudan’s VP also cautioned that challenges faced during the April elections should not be repeated, adding that there should be a better way of finding polling stations and writing names correctly.

The Chief Internal Coordinator and co-organizer of the workshop, Lokulenge Lole, told participants that the issue of referendum "is a matter of life and death" and should be taken seriously by all to bring the freedom of the people of Southern Sudan.

Meanwhile the Chairperson of the SPLM parliamentary Caucus and Chief Whip in the Southern Sudan Legislative Assembly, Peter Bashir Gbandi, said the current elected parliament is a “referendum parliament,” and warned that any attempt to obstruct the conduct of the referendum by any party can lead to the Southern Sudan parliament taking over the process on behalf of the people of Southern Sudan.

Gbandi said lawmakers would pass the referendum Taskforce’s budget this week, urging that the amount should not be limited to only 150 million Sudanese pounds but should instead be left open without a ceiling.

Machar on the other hand also briefed the workshop on the ongoing activities of the referendum Taskforce, which he chairs, explaining that the Taskforce will work in cooperation or in coordination with the civil society organizations and support them in playing the role of civic education and mobilization for registration and voting. The budget for the work of the Taskforce is expected to be passed by the parliament this week, he said.

The Vice President told the civil society organizations to freely debate on the two options of unity and secession, adding that while the option for secession is “clear”, there should be issues tackled on the option of unity.

Machar, who seemed to challenge voices from the North that only interpret or focus on the phrase “making unity attractive” in terms of only developing physical infrastructure in the country, said even if the regional capital, Juba, were to be miraculously made to look like Dubai in the next five months to referendum, it would not be enough to attract unity because other issues of justice, governance, accountability and mutual respect, among others, would also have to be tackled first in order to make it an attractive option.

Doubts have been raised on whether the newly formed referendum commission would be able to fulfill its mandate by January given the delay in getting it up and running as well as dispute over appointing a secretary general.

NCP Council of Leaders discuss referendum

Al-Sudani 26/8/10 – The NCP Council of Leaders at a meeting yesterday stressed the need to confront claims that the NCP is hindering the conduct of the upcoming referendum, reiterating their commitment that referendum would be organized on time.

Reportedly, the meeting which was chaired by VP Ali Osman Taha discussed the NCP's position on referendum and the new Government strategy on Darfur.

National unity support body to organise unity vs. separation debates

Al-Ayyam 26/08/10 – The National Organization for Support to Unity is planning to launch a series of debates in the North and the South between advocates for unity and separation starting mid next month. According to a statement by the organisation, the first debate would take place on the 16th of September and would be followed by similar debates in Juba, Malakal, Wau and other towns.

SPLM, CBS strike deal over oil revenue remittance

Akhbar Al-Youm 26/08/10 –The SPLM and the Central Bank of Sudan (CBS) agreed yesterday that the latter would resume remitting GoSS' share of oil revenues in hard currency. SPLM Secretary-General Pagan Amum said following a meeting yesterday with CBS Governor Sabir Mohamed Al-Hassan that the real problem between the GoSS and the CBS was in managing the foreign exchange reserves. He pointed out that the measures taken by the Governor led to a drop in the value of the Sudanese Pound and caused inflation. Amum revealed that the issue has been sorted out and the Central Bank would continue remitting GoSS shares in hard currency.

Other Highlights

SAF to collect unlawful arms in Khartoum

Ajras Al-Hurriya 26/8/10 – military sources revealed that the Sudanese armed forces (SAF) have begun forming joint committees from the JIUs to collect unlicensed arms in Khartoum state.

Meanwhile, the Joint Defence Board (JDB) held its 30th meeting which discussed a range of issues including the issue of the chopper impounded by SPLA at Falluj airfield but sources said the SPLA failed to produce documents incriminate SAF.

Rehabilitation of Torit-Katire 20 km road section begins

Sudan Tribune website 25/8/10 - A rehabilitation of a 20-km road section from Eastern Equatoria state's capital, Torit to Katire has kicked off in a project funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), a South Sudan official said.

“Torit-Katire road will provide multi-purpose services ranging from market access/linkages, farming yards and agriculture products such as dairy milk, meat and easy delivery of services to

the rural communities,” said the newly appointed Eastern Equatoria state Minister of Transport and Roads, Peter Karlo Otim.

The project is being implemented by the U.S. based Louis Berger Group and a local contractor Rhino star Supplies.

A delegation from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) headed by George Wagwa recently visited Torit to assess the viability of feeder road projects underway by the company...

Governor of South Darfur enters Kalma Camp

Local dailies 26/08/10 – South Darfur Governor Abdelhameed Musa Kasha yesterday entered Kalma IDP Camp for the first time since six years to assess the general security and humanitarian situation. Sources said that the IDPs requested the government to provide them with food and security to enable them to return to their villages of origin. The Governor promised to assist them.

The Governor, who travelled without an escort, made a number of stops in the camp to talk to individuals or groups to tell them of his government’s desire to open a new page of relations with the camp population. “We look at the camp as any town or village in the country and you should not be isolated from the rest of the country. We will launch a general campaign to mobilise humanitarian aid to replace those contributions that make the IDPs close to the foreign aid agencies than to their fellow Sudanese,” he told the IDPs.

While many welcomed the visit, some IDPs expressed doubts over the motive behind the visit.

“You were the cause of our current plight but we will test your show of goodwill,” an IDP told the Governor. “Where were they throughout these seven long years of suffering and siege,” another IDP wondered.

Reportedly, the visit did not encounter resistance as was feared.

Meanwhile, *Al-Sahafa* reports that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has welcomed statement by the UN Security Council calling for disarmament in the IDP camps of Darfur. “This is what the Sudan government has been calling for,” Ministry Spokesperson Muawiya Osman Khaled said.

In a related development, Undersecretary for Foreign Affairs Rahama Mohamed Ali and Deputy Head of UNAMID Mohamed Younis yesterday discussed plans by the government to relocate the camp to a safer area. Ali said UNAMID was cooperating with local authorities.