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Headlines

- NEC accepts nomination of SPLM presidential candidate (**Al-Sahafa**)
- NEC releases new timetable (**Dailies**)
- Minnawi sends petition to Presidency over elections (**Al-Rai Al-Aam**)
- Government downplays HR Watch's statement on electoral monitors (**Al-Wifaq**)
- AU Panel to stay until end of elections (**Al-Sahafa**)
- Sudan's ousted PM to challenge Bashir in election (**AFP**)
- Lam Akol submits his nomination for South presidency (**SUNA**)
- Misseriya attack SPLA in Unity state, killing five (**Al-Sahafa**)
- We are making efforts to establish nuclear facility – Al-Bashir (**Al-Intibaha**)
- Man hurls shoe at President Al-Bashir (**Rai Al-Shaab**)
- Khartoum paper prints "nonsense" on Blue Nile troop build-up –SPLA (**ST**)
- Peace partners failed to reach agreement over parliamentary seats (**ST**)
- Dinka- Rezeigat conference appeals for international assistance (**ST**)
- Arab League steps up efforts in anticipation for South secession (**Al-Rai Al-Aam**)
- Arrangements for a conference on South with US Participation (**SV**)
- Sudan urges international community to honour pledges (**Al-Rai Al-Aam**)
- Government committed to PCA ruling on Abyei- Dirdeiry (**Al-Rai Al-Aam**)
- Outgoing UN envoy calls for continued talks on Abyei (**UN News**)
- No alternative to dialogue with the NCP – SPLM (**Al-Rai Al-Aam**)
- Doha talks adjourned pending arrival of delegations (**SV**)
- Editorial: UN should have teeth or get out (**Khartoum Monitor**)

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Highlights

NEC accepts nomination of SPLM presidential candidate

SPLM yesterday submitted nomination papers of Salva Kiir Mayardit which were cleared by the NEC although Kiir will keep his post as SPLA commander, *Al-Sahafa* reports. The Commission explained that the SPLA post Kiir is currently holding is not of military nature because he had retired since 2005. The SPLM also handed over to the NEC the nomination documents of its national presidential candidate Yasir Arman.

NEC releases new timetable

The National Elections Commission (NEC) has released a new electoral timetable, *local dailies* report. According to the new schedule, the nomination deadline has been extended by five days until 27 of January, appeals to court will run from 30 January to 6 February and the final list of nominees will be released on 10 February. Electoral campaigns will continue for 56 days while polling will run from 11 to 18 April.

Minnawi sends petition to Presidency over elections

Al-Rai Al-Aam reports that SLM Chairman Minni Minnawi has submitted a petition to the Presidency demanding amendment of article 149 of the constitution which bars military movements from electoral registration.

Government downplays HR Watch's statement on electoral monitors

Sudan Government has downplayed the statements by the Human Rights Watch on the need to deploy observers in Sudan to ensure free and fair elections, *Al-Wifaq* reports. An unnamed government source said the statement was incorrect because it came from an entity of questionable credibility, citing the government's invitation to the international community, regional and international organizations to monitor the elections.

Meanwhile, *Sudan Vision* reports that Mr. Chande expressed his understanding of the Sudan Government's expulsion, over the last two days, of 26 foreign NGOs and warning 13 others in Darfur.

AU Panel to stay until end of elections

Chairman of the AU Panel on Darfur Thabo Mbeki informed President Al-Bashir yesterday about the possibility of cooperation between the Panel and the Government on upcoming elections and ongoing efforts to resolve Darfur issue, *Al-Sahafa* reports. Mbeki told reporters yesterday that the panel would stay in Khartoum until the conduct of the electoral process to promote democratic transition. Mbeki described his meeting with President Al-Bashir as good, pledging support of the Panel to address all issues.

Sudan's ousted PM to challenge Bashir in election

AFP 25/1/10— Sudan's former prime minister Sadiq al-Mahdi, who President Omar al-Beshir ousted in a military coup 20 years ago, will run against him in the April elections, his party said on Monday.

Mahdi, 74, heads the influential Umma opposition party and is spiritual leader of "Ansar," a Sufi brotherhood that venerates the famous Mahdi who defeated British colonial forces under General Gordon in 1885.

"He has been nominated presidential candidate," an Umma party official told AFP.

Descended from Sudan's legendary Islamist ruler, Sadiq al-Mahdi has held the premiership twice before, in 1966-67 when he was just 30, and again after his party won Sudan's last multi-party elections in 1986.

Mohammed Osmane al-Mirghani, DUP chief, will not run in the elections, his party said.

The DUP will instead field party spokesman Hatem al-Sir as its candidate in the elections, his assistant Walid al-Bakri told AFP.

Rumours have circulated in Khartoum for weeks of Mahdi's plan to run as a presidential candidate, but his party's political bureau only took the decision to nominate him on Sunday evening.

The nomination is significant because "it might impact the process of reunion of the Umma party," Fouad Hikmat of the International Crisis Group (ICG) told AFP.

"If that happens, that will draw attention and draw momentum as far as alliances are concerned in the North," he said.

Lam Akol submits his nomination for South presidency

SUNA 25/1/10 – SPLM-DC Dr. Lam Akol, on Monday submitted his nomination papers to the Higher Election Committee as a candidate for the position of the president of the government of southern Sudan. Dr. Lam Akol has assumed the position of the Minister of Foreign Affairs and other portfolios before quitting Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM).

Misseriya attack SPLA in Unity state, killing five

Al-Sahafa reports SPLA spokesperson Kuol Diem as saying that the Misseriya have attacked SPLA camp in Unity state, leaving two SPLA soldiers dead including an officer and two Misseriya. Diem warned of the consequences of the incident, saying militias of Lt. Col. Thomas Tael and authorities would be held responsible for any further incident.

We are making efforts to establish nuclear facility – Al-Bashir

Addressing the first session of the National Council for Strategic Planning yesterday, President Al-Bashir has pledged free and fair elections, **local dailies** report. According to **Al-Intibaha**, Al-Bashir stressed the need for an effective national supervision of the upcoming electoral process, saying it is the responsibility of the GoNU and opposition parties. The President has also enumerated the major achievements made by the state, citing commercial exploitation of the Sudanese oil. He revealed ongoing efforts to establish the first Sudanese nuclear facility for peaceful purposes including power generation.

Man hurls shoe at President Al-Bashir

Rai Al-Shaab reports that a man threw a shoe at President Al-Bashir who was attending inaugural session of the National Council for Strategic Planning in Khartoum yesterday. Sources said the shoe missed the target and the man, 50, was arrested by the security. While some local papers say the man was insane, others claim he was trying to give a note to the President at the podium.

Sudan Tribune website 25/1/10 reported that the Sudanese President Al-Bashir joined the

ranks of former US President George Bush to become a victim of a shoe thrown at him as he was delivering a speech in Khartoum on Monday.

According to eyewitnesses, shortly after 10 am (Sudan local time) a man by the name of Adel Mohamed Fath Al-Rahman Mahjoub moved from his seat positioned in the second row to the podium and threw his shoes at Bashir who was flanked by the minister for presidential affairs in the cabinet Kosta Manibi and the secretary general of the national council for strategic planning Taj Al-Sir Al-Amin.

The shoe missed Bashir and hit the podium but the assailant was immediately wrestled to the ground by Sudanese security and bodyguards and taken outside the Friendship Hall in Khartoum.

The embarrassing incident took place at the inauguration of the first session of the 2010 National Council for Strategic Planning causing a brief chaos and bewilderment among the attendees before the Sudanese head of state resumed his speech.

Shoe hurling at an individual is a grave insult and a sign of contempt in Arab culture and for Bashir who is running for reelection in April, this unpleasant scene runs contrary to an image portrayed made by Sudanese officials and state media of a president that enjoys overwhelming support among the people.

The security agents at the hall moved swiftly to confiscate all recording equipments and cameras from journalists and TV crews and thoroughly searched them in a bid to prevent the pictures from making it to the public. The London based Al-Sharq Al-Awsat newspaper quoted journalists who were present as saying that Sudanese officials asked them not to mention what happened.

The pan-Arab Al-Jazeera TV based in Qatar which afforded extensive coverage to Bush shoe story in Iraq at the time, was hours late in reporting what happened to Bashir despite having its reporter present at the hall.

It is also unlikely that the Sudanese man will get the same attention as Al-Zaidi who was hailed as a hero in the Arab world.

Reuters, which was the first to report the story quoted the presidential spokesman Emad Sid Ahmed denied the shoe incident, saying: "The man just wanted to give the president a note... but was intercepted by the security".

However, later Sudan official news agency contradicted Ahmed's assertions saying that a shoe was indeed thrown at Bashir.

"The abovementioned citizen prepared a handwritten memorandum of grievance and tried to hand it over to the President of the Republic.....but the presidential guards barred him as they deemed he has failed to choose the right place and the right time, a matter that drove him out of his temper and he started to hurl his shoe at those present" SUNA reported.

The state run media identified the man as someone who has a history of psychological disturbance and treatment for mental illness.

"Information obtained by the Sudan News Agency shows that the abovementioned citizen

suffers from psychosis which causes psychological disturbances and that he has been receiving medical treatment with Dr Abdul Sami Mohamed Hassan, and that the last time he visited the clinic was on January the 18th and according to the psychiatrist, the patient has recently failed to take his medication regularly a matter that resulted in the instability of his psychological condition”

“The Sudan News Agency has learned that the said citizen is suffering from a complex of social injustice by people, though he has no political or social affiliation and a number of his relatives are actually occupying government positions”.

The agency mentioned that Mahjoub was born in El-Obeyed town in 1965, and his original home area is Merowe. He has received all his schooling up to the secondary level in El-Obeyed town. He is single and works in trade.

It was not clear given his status how the man made it to the front rows at the conference. Witnesses said that he acted calmly upon his arrest.

The editor in chief of the pro-government Al-Wifaq newspaper Ishak Fadl Allah said in his editorial on Tuesday edition suggested that Mahjoub was sane and not acting on his own behalf.

“Granted that popular outrage, which will evolve in response to the insult, would make the man - and the parties behind him- eat their shoes in shame”

Sudanese Media Centre (SMC) reports that Mahgoub who attempted to breakthrough the security is currently receiving treatment with a psychiatrist and would be handed over to his family after his treatment is completed.

Khartoum paper prints “nonsense” on Blue Nile troop build-up -SPLA

Sudan Tribune website 25/1/10 – The Sudan People’s Liberation Army (SPLA) Official Spokesman, Maj-Gen. Kuol Deim Kuol, today denied that the South Sudan army is building up forces in Blue Nile State. He was responding to a news article printed in **Akhir Lahza**.

The Khartoum-based pro-government newspaper published a story accusing SPLA of building up troops in Blue Nile state. "Akhir Lahza’s sources have revealed that 40 trucks loaded with Doshka cannons and Katyusha launchers have reached the command of the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement in the area of Al-Samir, south of Kurmuk County," stated the newspaper.

Akhir Lahza claimed that the trucks were sent to support an 8,000-man force of the SPLA "so that they would be able to face the requirements of the coming phase." The SPLA made deployments in the region of Khur al-Budi, supported with military vehicles, and other military forces deployed in the regions of Wadka, Al-Dim, and Yabus, said the paper.

"This is all nonsense," said the SPLA spokesman in reply. "SPLA is not present in Blue Nile, all our troop is in Northern Upper Nile at Gupa — you see Sudan Armed Forces’s problem is that they mix up borders, and the fact is that the border is not demarcated."

He suggested the problem was perhaps a matter of border demarcation and called upon the Khartoum government to demarcate the borders. "Where is the border between Upper Nile state and Blue Nile state demarcated?" he asked.

Kuol said that Sudanese Army Forces (SAF) are building up their troops in Southern Blue Nile and Southern Kordofan, as well militias are been developed in the Abyei area under militia leader Thomas Chiliro. "We are looking at SAF activities at the undemarcated borders and SAF is trying to cover their full mistakes by rushing into media in Khartoum and that will be not solution. They are trying to cover their mistakes; it is the Sudanese army forces that are building up troops."

This is not the first time that the SPLA spokesman has taken on the newspaper Akhir Lahza. In an interview last year in September, he slammed the newspaper, along with some other northern media outlets such as Akhbar Al-Youm, for "writing against South Sudan" and "falling under the influence of Northern military intelligence."

Peace partners failed to reach agreement over parliamentary seats

Sudan Tribune website 26/1/10 – The Sudan's partners to the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) have failed to reach an agreement over the controversial results of the 2008 population census.

The dominant National Congress Party (NCP) and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) could not agree to increase the number of parliamentary seats for Southern Sudan in the National Assembly.

The Vice President of the Government of Southern Sudan, Dr. Riek Machar Teny, who also heads the SPLM team that negotiates with NCP the implementation of the CPA, said NCP has rejected the SPLM proposal to increase the seats for Southern Sudan.

Speaking at Juba International Airport shortly after his arrival from Khartoum on Monday, Dr. Machar added that NCP has also refused to amend some sections of the laws which would guarantee free and fair elections.

He described his recent meeting with the Vice President Ali Osman Mohamed Taha as "disappointing."

He added that NCP's position was that the discussions on the issue would be postponed and resumed after the April elections.

Dr. Machar questioned the usefulness of the discussions after the elections, adding that he would consult with the SPLM leadership over the issue.

SPLM wanted more seats for the South in the National Assembly in order to make it possible to block any future attempt to amend the constitution by the elected national parliament which might affect the gains of the CPA in the South or the conduct of referendum itself.

Southern Sudan officials have however observed that NCP had become more intransigent after learning that the SPLM had distanced itself from forging an alliance with it during the upcoming April elections.

Dinka- Rezeigat conference appeals for international assistance

Sudan Tribune website 25/1/10 — A peace and reconciliation conference between the territorial connected states of Northern Bahr el Ghazal and her neighboring state of South Darfur, ended today Monday 25, with an appeal for international assistances.

Achuil Malith Bangol, SPLM Secretary for political affairs and syndicate, who participated as facilitator of the conference said a generally applauded conference ended with a number of recommendations encouraging resumption of viable tribal and ancestral ties among tribesmen and women in the regions.

"From my observation while facilitating the conference, I realized that the two sides will honour these resolutions because they seem to have bitter history," he said.

However, Achuil was quick to mention that the two sides seriously need international assistance with resources to help them implement resolutions of the conference.

"There are feelings and commitments to boost up ancestral ties between these pastoral and territorial communities who have long history of peaceful coexistence but lack resources to implement their wishes," he commented.

According to him, the three days open and participatory conference attended by over both local leaders and community experts resulted into profound understanding between Rezeigat of South Darfur and Dinka Malwal of Northern Bahr el Ghazal.

It further agreed to foster regular facilitations and sponsoring of voluntary reconciliation conference between members of the Rezeigat tribe from Southern Darfur State and Dinka-Malwal from Northern Bahr el-Ghazal. They also agreed to better manage shared grazing areas, water points and protect routes of movement during season of migration mostly dry seasons.

Banggol who facilitated the conference with wider knowledge on community resources management policy, said the three day conference held in Aweil town, capital of Northern Bahr el Ghazal State, "started well and ended happily."

"All presentations I moderated met no resistance or ambivalent voices before, during and after conclusion; he said adding it began with an approved reading of the agenda, followed by the implementation of the agenda and finally an agreement on five major topics."

He said major resolutions included management of seasonal grazing routes, provision of basic services for peaceful coexistence, promotion of culture of peace and recognition of existence of traditional authorities with all their roles.

Arab League steps up efforts in anticipation for South secession

The League of Arab States has stepped up diplomatic activity in anticipation for secession of southern Sudan, *Al-Rai Al-Aam* reports. The League SG and permanent delegates are due in Darfur in mid February to discuss the humanitarian situation and political reconciliation in the region. They will also visit several villages the League has rebuilt in Darfur.

Arrangements for conference on South with US participation

Sudan Vision 26/1/10 - Cairo and Washington are witnessing arrangements these days to hold the second international conference on South Sudan with the participation of Egypt, USA, Libya and the representatives of North and South Sudan.

The conference was scheduled to take place during this month but USA requested its postponement for few weeks.

The General Secretary of Arab League is expected to arrive in Juba heading a delegation of Arab businessmen in the third week of coming February to hold a meeting about the Arab investment prospects in South Sudan.

Foreign Ministry urges international community to honour pledges

Al-Rai Al-Aam reports spokesperson of Sudan Foreign Ministry Muawia Khaled has described UNSG Ban Ki-moon's report to the SC as generally "balanced", calling on the international community to honour its pledges to achieve development to prevent renewal of conflict. However, he disagreed with Ki-moon over likelihood of a renewed violence between the South and the North.

Government committed to PCA ruling on Abyei- Dirdeiry

Sudan Government has reiterated its total commitment to the PCA ruling on Abyei which was endorsed by the National Assembly, **Al-Rai Al-Aam** reports. Head of the Government's delegation for talks on Abyei Al-Dirdeiry Mohamed Ahmed yesterday briefed the visiting Human Rights Expert Mohamed Chande on the situation in Abyei and the movement of the Misseriya and Dinka, saying referendum in the area would be confined to the population living in the area.

Outgoing UN envoy calls for continued talks on Abyei

UN News 25/1/10 - Dialogue must continue in the oil-rich town of Abyei, Ashraf Qazi, the outgoing top United Nations envoy to Sudan, has said, underscoring that peace in the disputed area will help to bolster the stability of the African nation as a whole.

In his most recent report on Sudan, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon expressed concern over the lack of progress in resolving outstanding issues regarding Abyei, close to the border between Sudan's north and south and where a referendum on its future is scheduled to be held in 2011.

Nearly five years after the signing of the peace pact ending more than two decades of north-south strife, one of Africa's longest and bloodiest civil wars in which at least 2 million people were killed, tensions persist in Abyei, home to the Missiriya and Dinka Ngok tribes.

Although that ruling was welcomed by both the National Congress Party (NCP) and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), the two signatories to the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), the relationship between the Misseriya and Dinka Ngok tribes has been marked by clashes and inflamed tensions.

"Challenges are overcome through negotiations... when everybody's concerns are addressed," Mr. Qazi said yesterday in his last visit to the area as the Secretary-General's Special Representative.

Given Abyei's crucial role in Sudan's peace process, stability in the area will promote peace in the entire country, he underscored.

Charles Abyei, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of the Abyei Area Administration (AAA), noted the improvement in the relationship between the two tribes, praising the UN's "good understanding of the area."

"The road ahead may be long, but this major step forward should make the journey easier," he stressed.

No alternative to dialogue with the NCP – SPLM

There is no alternative to dialogue with the NCP in order to implement the CPA, said GoSS Presidential Affairs Minister Luka Biong. According to **Al-Rai Al-Aam**, the minister said that the

SPLM would continue to try to convince the NCP on the need to continue dialogue on the outstanding CPA issues.

"It is not in the interest of any of the parties to suspend dialogue at this time," he said.

Mr. Biong declined to comment on press reports that the NCP had in fact demanded the SPLM to withdraw its presidential candidate Yassir Arman as a prerequisite to continue talks on those issues.

Doha talks adjourned pending arrival of delegations

Sudan Vision reports that the joint mediation over Darfur peace started its consultations with Sudanese government and JEM delegations separately.

Qatari Foreign State Minister, Ahmed Bin Abdalla Al-Mahmoud and the UN/AU mediator Djibril Bassole met with the government delegation chaired by Dr. Ghazi Salah Addeen and JEM delegation chaired by Ahmed Tugud. Addis Ababa factions arrived in Doha yesterday and Tripoli factions are also expected to accomplish the consultations.

The Qatari Minister stated that he would continue consultations after the arrival of Addis Ababa and Tripoli factions, affirming that the consultations held on Sunday revealed several points of agreement between the two parties with other points which need efforts from the mediation to narrow the gap of differences.

He added that they will listen to all the participants to reach a comprehensive vision to resolve the Darfur crisis.

Al-Mahmoud said, "We cannot fix timeframe for the resumption of the talks unless the remaining delegations arrive in Doha."

He revealed about contacts with SLM leader Abdul Wahid Nur in France to invite him to attend the talks, adding that their response is that they are ready to arrive in Doha anytime with some conditions.

Editorial: The UN should have teeth or get out

BY: Alfred Taban (Editor-in-chief, Khartoum Monitor)

The United Nations Secretary General's recent call for the parties in Sudan to address the post referendum issues to avoid war is a timely advice. If the Sudan people's Liberation Movement (SPLM) candidate, Yasir Arman fails to get elected as the president of the Sudan, conflict is inevitable. This could lead to war as no other party or candidate is likely to implement the deal between southerners and northerners in a way that will please the southerners. For this war to be averted it is not the parties in Sudan alone to act, the international community, especially the UN too has to be heavily involved. Things are not going well because one of the two parties has not been faithful to the CPA which brought the current peace to Sudan. The current ruling NCP has defaulted at every turn. Instead of being a good referee and punishing the offender, the UN has turned the other way whenever the CPA is abused. It is time the UN changed its ways and showed in words and deeds that it does not pay to violate internationally guaranteed agreements. For a start, the current election process is not free and fair. The pre-election atmosphere is saturated with NCP rhetoric. No credible elections can emerge out of this situation. The UN has not uttered a word on this abuse. When the SPLM was battling the NCP for the removal of laws that restrict freedom, the UN stayed aloof.

Currently, the NCP government is making it difficult for monitors to register to observe the polls and the UN is mum. The UN knows exactly where the problem lies but it is not talking. We

thought the UN is after the truth for the sake of world peace. That is clearly far fetched. The UN appears to be afraid of the NCP. It fears to anger the NCP. As a provider of just peace, it has failed in Sudan. It should now confine itself to the provision of humanitarian aid. As a peace keeper, it has been found to be wanting. In Darfur, it has not challenged the Sudanese army and the murderous Janjaweed which have ruined scores of villages. In Southern Sudan, tribal clashes have increased under the noises of the UN. When Dr. John Garang died in 2005 and many fanatical northerners wanted to send the southerners living in Khartoum after him, the UN fled abandoning the southerners to their fate.

You UN, since you are unable or unwilling to handle this situation, go away and leave us alone. We will resolve the situation the Sudanese way. No hard feelings.