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Media Monitoring Report

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Referendum Watch

- UN hands over ballot papers to south Sudan referendum commission (*Xinhua*)
- Roman Catholic bishop of Juba calls for separation of south Sudan (*ST*)
- NCP warns against establishment of a state with undefined boundaries (*Al-Sahafa*)
- Islamic clerics reject south Sudan referendum, demand Islamic laws (*ST*)
- NCP will lose legitimacy in case of secession – NCF (*the Citizen*)
- “North-South divorce inevitable” – Turabi (*Al-Rai Al-Aam*)
- Egypt’s top newspaper blames Sudan’s Bashir for the country’s likely breakup (*ST*)
- SPLA burns down “Dok” village (*Al-Intibaha*)
- SSRC responds to the Constitutional Court on appeals (*Al-Sahafa*)
- SPLA forces should move south of the 1.1.56 line – NCP (*Al-Sahafa*)
- Dinka Ngok vow not to wage hostile act on the Misseriya (*Ajras Al-Hurriya*)
- Arab League chief to visit Sudan on Tuesday (*ST*)
- Authorities in Khartoum bar pro-secessionist march (*Al-Sahafa*)
- Editorial: Sudan: Soon to be two (*The Guardian*)

Other Headlines

- Darfur crime prosecutor admits impact of politics on legal cases (*Miraya/ST*)
- GoSS asked Darfur rebels to leave the South (*Al-Sudani*)
- Sudan Central Bank bans cash withdrawals by foreigners (*Al-Rai Al-Aam*)

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Highlights

UN hands over ballot papers to south Sudan referendum commission

Xinhua 23/12/10 - The United Nations on Thursday handed over the ballot papers for south Sudan referendum to officials of the South Sudan Referendum Commission (SSRC), less than 20 days ahead of the process, slated on Jan. 9, 2011.

Director of the UN Integrated Referendum and Electoral Division (UNIRED) Denis Kadima said at the hand-over ceremony that the UN has fulfilled its pledge to print and hand over the ballot papers in 12 days.

"The ballots for southern Sudan referendum are now in Juba and in Khartoum," Kadima said.

"Upon completing the process, the UN will continue using its air vehicles to distribute these materials to the polling stations located in areas difficult to access by road. I would like to reiterate the commitment of the United Nations to continue to support this process within the time frame set by the referendum commission," the official added.

Meanwhile, U.S. Ambassador Princeton Lyman, in his address before the ceremony, commended the political leaders in north and south Sudan.

"They took the hard decisions for peace for Sudan and they took the hard decisions to face what is a very difficult process to allow the vote of self-determination without knowing for sure what the outcome would be," Lyman added.

SSRC Secretary General Mohamed Osman Al-Nijoumi, for his part, reiterated the commission's commitment to conducting the referendum in peace and transparency.

"We are entering a stage not less important than the registration and we are keen to see the process conducted in a smooth, peaceful, transparent, credible and orderly manner," he said.

The UN would be tasked with distribution of the referendum ballot papers and other materials to the ten southern Sudan states by Christmas and then to the polling offices by Jan. 8, 2011.

Roman Catholic bishop of Juba calls for separation of south Sudan

Sudan Tribune website 25/12/10 - The Archbishop of Southern Sudan Archbishop Paulino Lukudu Loro threw his weight today behind the calls for making the semi-autonomous region fully independent in the vote that will take place in less than two weeks.

Addressing thousands of Catholics in Juba who attended Christmas Mass at Kator Cathedral on Saturday, Archbishop Loro, who presided over the sermon called on eligible southern voters to opt for separation when they go to the polls on January 9th 2011.

Arch-Bishop Lukudu thanked God for making referendum possible and praised south Sudan police and the security organs for providing adequate security during Christmas at the time of

referendum activities.

“We are very proud of our Police and other security organs for providing security during the Christmas and referendum”, said Lukudu...

On his part, the president of the Government of South Sudan (GoSS) Salva Kiir Mayardit, in a Christmas message delivered at the same church wished the people of South Sudan “Merry Christmas and Happy New Year”.

He said that he did not expect to reach an agreement with the North on post-referendum issues.

“Our partner to the comprehensive peace agreement did not expect us to reach to this day; we are left with only 14 days for referendum day”.

Kiir urged the people of south Sudan not accept to be provoked at any cost “by enemies of peace”.

“Do not accept to be provoked at any cost by enemies of peace, exercise patience and be vigilant because enemies of peace are not sleeping” he said.

“They do not want peaceful referendum to take place on January 9, 2011,” said president Kiir. He accused pro-unity of using all type of tricks to undermine peaceful conduct of referendum.

“Unionists know that the option of unity in the referendum is not possible but they have not given up, they are using all types of tricks to undermined peaceful, transparent, free and fair referendum,” he said.

The Sudan People Liberation Movement (SPLM) leader also added that groups he termed as enemies of peace are trying their best to find mistakes in order to have the outcome of the referendum rejected.

“The enemies of peace are not only trying to find any mistake to use to reject the outcome of the referendum but they are using tricks to provoke situation so that they use our response as tool to reject result of the referendum,” said Kiir.

Kiir also appealed to the People of South Sudan to report any one found selling voter card to undermine the referendum processes.

He instructed the police to take necessary measures against those who are selling their voter cards including non-Sudanese (Ugandans and Kenyans) who are being used by the enemies of peace.

The Southern leader also warned against making wrong choice in the voting; that they will regret forever for the mistake they have committed.

“The upcoming January 9th is the only day on which our people would be expected to cast their votes to decide their destiny. It will be you and area vote. Nobody with there to tell what to do, it is you and vote. If you do not make right decision, it is up to you to regret it if you have taken wrong choice,” said President Kiir...

Meanwhile, Kiir has praised the role played by Sudanese President Omer Al-Bashir to sign the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in 2005...

"I would also like to take this opportunity to extend my very best wishes to our President, Field Marshal Omer Hassan Al-Bashir and the National Congress Party (NCP), our partner in peace and the Sudanese people. On behalf of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), the government and people of Southern Sudan and on my own behalf, I wish to sincerely acknowledge the role our President and the NCP have played in order for the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) to be signed.

"That brave move will forever be remembered by peace-loving Sudanese and particularly Southern Sudanese who will be voting on January 9th, 2011. This is a historic credit to President Bashir and the NCP and I further urge him to continue working hand in hand with us to consolidate peace and prosperity for all irrespective of what the referendum holds in store for Sudan," said Kiir.

NCP warns against establishment of a state with undefined boundaries

Al-Sahafa 27/12/10 – While the SPLM has said that a breakthrough on post-referendum issues would be possible only if the North-South border is demarcated and the Abyei issue is resolved, the NCP has warned of a renewed war if a state of unknown borders emerged in the South.

GoSS International Cooperation Minister Deng Alor described talk about breakthrough in post-referendum issues as “nonsense and baseless”. He said the two partners would hold a meeting today or tomorrow but the SPLM would not sign any agreement in isolation from the issues of demarcation of the border and resolution of the dispute over Abyei territory.

Meanwhile, NCP leading figure Qutbi Al-Mahdi has warned that if the contentious issues are not resolved before the referendum they could be the cause of a renewed war, adding that carrying the sticky issues over to the post-referendum phase would complicate negotiations and open the door for foreign interferences.

Islamic clerics reject south Sudan referendum, demand Islamic laws

Sudan Tribune website 25/12/10 - A group of radical Muslim clerics on Friday overtly faulted the Sudanese government for accepting south Sudan's referendum on independence, and demanded imposition of Islamic Shar'iah law in the entire country whether citizens of the mainly Christian region of south Sudan like it or not.

The legitimate League of Muslim Preachers and Clerics (LLMPC), a group of radical clerics existing in parallel to the official clerical body known as the Association of Muslim Scholars, marched in protest on Friday, 24 December, and held a press conference in which the group's leaders declared rejection of south Sudan's referendum on independence and called on the government to implement Shari'ah law in full.

The group's prominent member Mohamed Abdel-Karim addressed the protestors and demanded the government in the north fulfill its long-standing promise to implement Shari'ah Islamic law regardless of what southerners want.

Abdel-Karim, whose name is often cited in association with Al-Qaeda branch in the Land of the Two Niles, said that the implementation of Islamic Shari'ah was currently incomplete in Sudan as evidenced by the fact that president Al-Bashir said he would adopt an Islamic constitution after south Sudan secession.

The group's leaders declared south Sudan's referendum on independence as "null and void" and part of a "Zionist-Western" plot to divide Sudan into five frail states, implying that the government was already aware that signing the CPA would pave the way for the south to secede.

"Those who say that the agreement [CPA] was consented by all sides and that they are surprised that the people of the south [will] choose secession have deceived the nation because the agreement works in favor of secession," Abdel-Karim was quoted by the daily newspaper Al-Sahafa.

Abdel-Karim further warned that secession would reflect negatively on the Islamic gains in the south under a strong secular drive to boot Islam out of the region.

In August 2009, Mohamed Abdel-Karim and his group sparked concerns of raising religious extremism when they issued a Fatwa branding members of the Sudanese communist party as infidels and instructed that they should be divorced from their spouses and their children to be deemed children of adultery.

Separately, the leader of the National Umma Party Al-Sadiq Al-Mahdi, who is also the leader of Al-Ansar religious sect, poured scorn on the LLMP, saying that their demands would tear Sudan into pieces.

NCP will lose legitimacy in case of secession - NCF

The Citizen 27/12/10 – The National Consensus Forces (NCF) have said that the NCP would lose its legitimacy should the South break away.

The NCF are pushing for the formation of an interim government to undertake the task of organizing a constitutional conference to define the structure of the northern state and to address issues that they described as urgent. They threatened to seek to eliminate the regime if it refused to hold the constitutional conference.

In a statement they issued following the party leaders' meeting yesterday, the NCF underlined the right of self-determination for the people of South Sudan through a fair and free plebiscite, stressing that the NCP would lose its legitimacy if the people of the South opt for separation.

"We will not accept a constitution that grants another five years of rule for the NCP," Farouk Abu Eisa, prominent NCF member, said, stressing the need for a new constitution and new laws under the participation of the entire population because the present constitution was agreed upon between the NCP and the SPLM.

According to *Al-Sahafa* 27/12/10, the NCF announced that they would hold a meeting immediately after the referendum result is released to discuss the way forward.

Meanwhile, VP Ali Osman Taha has said that talk about formation of a national government

after referendum is premature, citing the recent elections on the basis of which the current executive was selected. Taha, however, pointed out that the “nature of the forthcoming stage requires consensus on national policies and national governance ... because what is needed is to share the responsibility of building the nation without prejudice to the “democratic equation” produced by the election result”.

“There is no room for a national government,” NCP’s deputy chairman and presidential assistant Nafie Ali Nafie reacted to Sudanese prime minister and leader of the opposition Umma Party Al-Sadiq Al-Mahdi’s call for a broad-based government , according to *Sudan Tribune website* 24/12/10.

Al-Mahdi made a list of demands last week that he wants the NCP to fulfill after the South Sudan referendum takes place in less than two weeks.

He called for an interim government that would write a new constitution, conduct new general elections that are fair and free, resolve the Darfur conflict, craft a brotherhood agreement with the south should it opt for independence in next month’s referendum, allowing for unrestricted political, tackling economic crisis and dealing with the International Criminal Court (ICC) row.

Nafie said that the NCP “is not concerned with Al-Mahdi’s choices” saying that the former prime minister is the one who should make the call on what he wants to do.

“North-South divorce inevitable” – Turabi

Al-Rai Al-Aam 27/12/10 – Popular Congress Party leader Hassan Al-Turabi has revealed his party’s intent to expand the memorandum of understanding it signed with the SPLM in the event of the South secession. “Divorce between the North and the South has now become certain,” he said.

Egypt’s top newspaper blames Al-Bashir for country’s likely breakup

Sudan Tribune website 26/12/10 - The semi-official top newspaper in Egypt launched a rare attack on Sudanese president Omer Al-Bashir saying that his policies over the years have made people in South yearn for their own state rather than desire to stay united with the rest of the country.

"The truth is that the government of Sudan bears alone the largest part of the tragedy lurking in Sudan now. Although it is too early to evaluate the mistakes which led Sudan to this fate, the government of Sudan has committed a series of blunders since assuming power in the country. They emphasized to the southerners that the concept of self-determination rather than integration with the North’s ideological policies, made the coexistence between them difficult and impossible," said Osama Saraya, editor in chief of *Al-Ahram* newspaper in his op-ed published Friday.

"The Government promoted the sin that the adoption of the right to self-determination will make the unity of Sudan a correct choice for the South, but it did not do anything over the years that have elapsed since the adoption of this right. The successive governments did not comprehend very well the elements the Southern issue nor did it realize the surrounding international situation indicating that they [international powers] were keen in their quest for the dismemberment of this great country “he added.

Saraya said that Khartoum brushed aside advices by Cairo in the lead-up to the signing of the Machakos protocols in 2002 which he said resulted in the current situation. He hinted that the Egyptian government wanted the ruling National Congress Party (NCP) in the North to abandon the imposition of Islamic Sharia's law to make unity attractive to the Southerners.

"Egypt was never far from the evolution of the situation in Sudan. It did not desist from giving warnings and advices to those who are in power in the south and the north and cooperating with them. Egypt interacted with the situation to the extent of its internal dimensions with a problem in a sovereign state. [Egyptian] President [Hosni] Mubarak visited Juba in southern Sudan, while Southerners wondered where is the Sudanese president from visiting Juba?"

"But the situation caused by repeated mistakes led to what we are in today" Saraya said. He noted the mini-summit held in Khartoum this week that was attended by Mubarak and other regional leaders including Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi and Mauritanian President Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz. They all met with Bashir and southern leader Salva Kiir to discuss progress on implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) signed between the North and South in 2005.

Saraya said that the North now needs to adopt a "new way of thinking" that will help it face the new post-secession challenges "to maintain stability, and to develop radical solutions to the problems that will likely get more complex".

He criticized Bashir's speech last week that pledged to transform constitution in North Sudan to a fully Islamic one after the South secedes.

"Not included in this new way of thinking is for the Sudanese president to stand in the midst of the current crisis to announce a few days ago that the constitution would be amended and that the Sharia's [law] will be the source of legislation in the event of secession of the south".

"This means that the Sudanese president continues to believe that the Caliphate state in the Sudan is more important than unity and that with the secession of the south he got rid of the force which hindered the establishment of a religious state in the Sudan. Not only does [this speech] makes unity hopeless but pushes southerners further toward secession, and deepens the rifts between the two countries after the referendum".

Saraya said that Bashir's defense of the video showing a Sudanese woman being lashed further encourages division and weakens Sudan's international standing...

SPLA burns down "Dok" village

Al-Intibaha 27/12/10 – SPLA yesterday burned "Dok" village located north of Bor town following a fierce chase of a number of renegade Gen. Athor's elements. Tens of people were reported killed and wounded by the SPLA in the village.

Athor said a number of his soldiers went to spend Christmas holiday with their relatives in north Bor but when the SPLA knew about their presence it attempted to arrest them and the burning of the village ensued.

SSRC responds to the Constitutional Court on appeals

Al-Sahafa Khartoum, 27/12/10 – In response to an earlier request from the Constitutional Court, the legal department at the SSRC tabled before the Court yesterday a memorandum on the appeals filed against the Commission.

SSRC Spokesperson Su'ad Ibrahim told the press that the memorandum is in response to the legal aspects of the appeals filed against the SSRC and the registration process.

Meanwhile, the SSRC has announced that the final date for appeals to the Courts expires on 29 December 2010.

SPLA forces should move south of the 1.1.56 line – NCP

Al-Sahafa et al Khartoum, 27/12/10 –The NCP has said that forces loyal to Malik Aggar, governor of Blue Nile State and the forces of Southern Kordofan Deputy Governor Abdul-Aziz Al-Hilu would be treated on par with the SPLA so they would be needed to move south of the 1.1.56 line.

“As for SPLA soldiers who hail from the Blue Nile and the Nuba Mountains area, these are northerners and the issue of their status has to be resolved,” said NCP’s Ibrahim Gandour, following a meeting of the party’s political bureau yesterday.

He told the press that the meeting focused on referendum and post-referendum issues and resolved that the party should continue discussions on these issues through the bilateral political committee with the SPLM. The meeting also resolved to campaign for unity with northern and southern advocates for unity.

Dinka Ngok vow not to wage hostile acts on the Misseriya

Ajras Al-Hurriya Kadugli, 27/12/10 – Kual Deng Majok, a leader of the Dinka Ngok, has assured that his people would not start any hostile act against their Misseriya neighbours whatever negative turn the situation in Abyei takes. He said that dialogue between the Dinka and the Misseriya is continuing.

In an interview, Majok accused the government of training militias currently positioned at the borders of the Abyei area and of blocking delivery of the region’s share in oil revenue.

On the performance of the Abyei Area Administration, he pointed out that the Administration came to serve the people but the Presidency seeks to weaken it in order to make it lose the support of the people by blocking its budget.

In a similar story, Mohamed Hammad Abdul-Jaleel, a Misseriya leader, said that the Misseriya are prepared to make concessions on executive and legislative positions in the Administration for the sake of peaceful coexistence.

Arab League chief to visit Sudan on Tuesday

Sudan Tribune website 26/12/10 - The Secretary General of the Arab League, Amr Moussa will begin a two-day visit to Sudan on Tuesday where he will meet with senior officials in Khartoum and Juba.

The head of the Arab League Secretary General's office Hesham Yousif said that his boss would review progress in implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) between North and South as well as to get acquainted with preparations for the South Sudan referendum that will start in less than two weeks. Moussa will meet with Sudanese president Omer Hassan Al-Bashir and president of South Sudan government Salva Kiir among others. He will reportedly assure Southerners that Arab aid will not cease even if Southerners choose to create their own state in the upcoming referendum. The semi-official *Al-Ahram* newspaper published in Cairo said that Moussa has scrapped plans to visit Darfur but provided no reason for that. The visit by the Arab League Secretary General was originally scheduled for early December and it was only last week that Sudanese officials finalized arrangements for the trip. Last week, Moussa had denied cancellation of his travel plans but said that no final date was set and is pending coordination with Khartoum. This month Wikileaks documents quoted prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) Luis Moreno-Ocampo as saying to U.S. diplomats that Moussa told him that Arabs "were frustrated with Bashir".

Authorities in Khartoum bar pro-secessionist march

Al-Sahafa Khartoum, 27/12/10 – Authorities in Khartoum State yesterday refused to grant permission to the Forum for Just Peace to stage a demonstration slated for today. The Authorities have cited, "need to bring about a climate conducive to the referendum," as reason for denying the permission.

The Forum for Just Peace is a northern-based entity advocating for the separation of the north from the south of the country.

Editorial: Sudan: Soon to be two

The Guardian, Monday 27 December 2010

Two countries will be created when more than 3 million Sudanese vote in a referendum on independence on 9 January. South Sudan will be reborn for the first time in over half a century, an act of secession which should put to rest the ghosts of Africa's longest and bloodiest civil war. North Sudan, however, will not be able to emerge from this process unchanged.

President Omar Hassan al-Bashir vowed in his last speech to turn Sudan into a state governed by Sharia law if the south chose to secede. Although the north is largely governed by Islamic law already, an interim constitution which recognised the country's ethnic and religious diversity would be overturned. The number of Christians living in the north is hotly disputed, but their ability to live in whichever part of the country they wish and to move freely across the border after a new state in the south is created would be integral to any post-referendum settlement. Al-Bashir's incendiary words were intended to raise the spectre of mass expulsions.

His were not the only noises off. Sudan's army attacked a rebel group in a village in South Darfur, which was also an attempt to draw the southern ruling party, the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), into the fray. This was preceded by a series of bombing raids on its territory, which the northern army denied any involvement in, even though theirs is the only airforce around.

Day by day, the referendum is becoming a reality and with it the realisation that both sides will have to find a means of living with each other. There will be a number of hurdles. The first is

whether al-Bashir's National Congress party (NCP) recognises the result.

Their intentions are notoriously hard to read, and some observers doubt they themselves know how to play it. As the International Crisis Group said last month, the NCP feels threatened by the break-up, especially as it is about to lose the majority share of its most profitable resource – oil – and seeks assurances that the new capital in the south, Juba, will not side with opposition parties. The NCP do not want to be blamed for breaking the country up. The SPLM wants the reassurance that the referendum will take place, and once in, will be recognised, and not challenged in court. Neither side wants to commit to a post-referendum deal before they get those assurances.

The optimistic scenario is that mutual reliance will bind the two countries together. About three quarters of Sudan's 500,000 barrels of oil each day come from the south. The existing agreement to share the revenues of oil produced in the south was the single biggest factor behind the success of the comprehensive peace agreement which ended the civil war. But that ends with the referendum and a new deal will have to be hatched. Until a southern export pipeline is built, the oil has to go through the north, so the deal will hinge on how much of a cut it gets and for how long.

Then there is the question of negotiating a new international border. If Khartoum expels southerners living in the north, the south could reply by stopping the southern migration of nomadic cattle-herding groups which are an important constituency for the NCP. The obvious solution is to have an open border with clear rules for cross-border movements.

Both sides have to realise that they rely on each other, not just on oil and the border, but a common currency and issues like Sudan's external debt. Western donors will be tempted to pour money into the south as a counterweight to Khartoum. But it's a temptation they would be wise to resist. Differential treatment would entrench the divide between north and south. The referendum on 9 January will be only the start of a long and hard transition period in which a number of vital deals will have to be hammered out. Next year will be a defining period for Sudan, both north and south.

Other Headlines

Darfur crime prosecutor admits impact of politics on legal cases

Miraya FM 26/12/10 - The Prosecutor General of Darfur crimes, Abdul Moneim Zumrawi, has said that political situations have impact on legal cases of crimes in Darfur. However, he said he is not concerned about political interventions into the crimes he is investigating. Speaking to a press conference in Khartoum, the Prosecutor General said his top priorities include attacks on unarmed civilians and peacekeeping forces in Darfur.

He pointed out that he will investigate all crimes committed in the region since the start of war in 2003. In the meantime, Zumrawi said warrants of arrest have been issued against 22 suspects in the Debra incident that occurred in north Darfur, adding that the orders have been submitted to the police and security organs for implementation.

He said the Sudan Armed Forces have cooperated with them and the issue of immunity did not constitute an obstacle to the investigations. Zumrawi also confirmed requesting cooperation with

Mbeki's Panel regarding protection of witnesses and the formation of a mechanism for this purpose.

Zumrawi considered the idea of the International Criminal Court to be "noble" but said it has been defeated by the political agenda. He added that the ICC indictment against President Bashir on the grounds that he is the General Commander of the Armed Forces is not enough, and should have not been the reason for filing charges against him.

Sudan Tribune website 26/12/10 reported Zumrawi has acknowledged that efforts to serve justice in the war-torn western region have been overshadowed by the political situation in the country.

He said his office was planning on developing a witness-protection program in collaboration with the AU High-Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP) led by former South African president Thabo Mbeki.

Zumrawi was appointed as a special prosecutor for Darfur on October, 17 2010 to replace Nimr Ibrahim Mohamed who was moved aside without an explanation.

Mohamed has not brought any cases to court during his two years in office. He has made a failed attempt to investigate the then state minister for humanitarian affairs and current southern Kordofan State governor Ahmed Haroun.

Zumrawi, who declined to say whether Ali Kushayb is still free or in custody, admitted that political interferences had shielded Haroun from appearing before the former prosecutor.

However he later asserted that he intends to perform his duties without fear or bias. "I am not concerned with political interferences" he said.

Zumrawi said that his office, which comprises representatives of the police and the army, is currently undertaking investigations into several incidents that occurred in Darfur, including the recent attack on Tabra village in north Darfur and the inter-rebel fighting in the area of Qiridah in south Darfur.

He further revealed that 22 witnesses had so far been interrogated in the case of the attack on Tabra village, which occurred in early September 2010 when Arab militiamen allied with the Sudanese government went on a firing spree, leaving as many as 72 people dead and scores wounded.

The prosecutor said he was also investigating the inter-rebel fighting which in July 2008 drove thousands from their homes in Qiridah area and caused the killing of peacekeepers of the AU peacekeeping mission.

According to Zumrawi, investigations carried out by his office into Tabra attack, abduction of peacekeepers in Zalingi town and the robbery of a bank in Nyala town in south Darfur had so far resulted in charges against 51 suspects of whom 11 had already been arrested.

Zumrawi singled out the issue of witness-protection as one of the problems faced by his office because witnesses tend to refrain from testifying due to political considerations.

In order to solve this problem, Zumrawi said his office had decided to initiate a witness-protection program following discussions with Mbeki panel.

He concluded that justice would extend to all those implicated in Darfur crimes whenever there are reasonable grounds to believe they are responsible.

GoSS asked Darfur rebels to leave the South

Al-Sudani 27/12/10 – Leaders of Darfur rebel movements residing in Juba have been asked by the Government of southern Sudan (GoSS) to leave the region. While a number of rebel leaders have declined to comment on the news, GoSS sources said the decision had nothing to do with the NCP's protest; it was taken due to the financial burden on the government. According to the source, the decision would better relation between the North and the South.

Sudan Central Bank bans cash withdrawals by foreigners

Al-Rai Al-Aam 26/12/10 (BBC Monitoring) - The Central Bank of Sudan has instructed banks to stop "cash" payments from special accounts for "foreigners" while still allowing dealings in checks.

According to newspaper's sources, the Bank explained the measure by saying that there was no justification for cash payments as long as these institutions have a presence in Sudan. Diplomatic missions and foreigners were allowed to withdraw cash for local payments on the condition that this should be exchanged into currency.

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