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Highlights

Sudan's unity depends on "NCP seriousness" – Kiir

Local dailies report FVP Salva Kiir Mayardit told a press conference yesterday in Cairo that separation of the South from the North was possible, adding unity was not made attractive.

However, according to **Al-Sahafa**, Kiir said there was still hope to make unity attractive if the "NCP is serious", adding that he did not know why the northerners failed to make unity attractive despite the fact that he and President Al-Bashir maintain good relations. He added that if unity is not made attractive, the South would secede.

On the North-South border demarcation, Kiir said so far there was no progress on the issue and announced his opposition to any move to extend the interim period beyond 2011, adding the referendum would be held on schedule.

Diplomatic sources in Cairo stated that Kiir's visit was intended to discuss relations between Egypt and South Sudan in anticipation for the latter's separation as well as to discuss implementation of more development projects in the South.

Al-Sudani reports that Kiir, upon return from Cairo yesterday, told reporters that the Arab leaders and the NCP are to blame if separation takes place, saying they did not make unity attractive through the implementation of the projects provided for in the CPA.

According to **Al-Rai Al-Aam**, Kiir said Egypt is concerned over possible separation of the South.

North Sudan opposition boycotts parliament, joins SPLM

Local dailies report Sudanese opposition parties have walked out of the National Assembly's session yesterday convened to discuss and vote on the national security bill.

According to **Sudan Tribune website** 26/10/09, the opposition parties refused to support the vote without the participation of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement.

The SPLM boycott since last week the activities of the National Assembly requesting a clear timetable to discuss and vote the outstanding bills related to the democratic transition in this last parliamentary session before the election.

Besides the referendum law, the current national security bill is seen as violation of the comprehensive peace agreement signed in 2005. The SPLM and the opposition lawmakers want to remove any article empowering the security service to arrest people.

The security apparatus, in accordance with the constitution and the CPA, has no right to arrest people, or search, confiscate and seize their funds; said Arman reaffirming the position of his party.

"We requested the Speaker to postpone the discussions on the security law in order to discuss it with the SPLM MPs, said Farouq Abu Eissa, a leading member of the opposition National democratic Alliance.

The opposition figure further said that they decided to walk out of the parliament after the

Speaker had rejected to postpone the session.

Al-Sahafa reports the National Assembly passed the national security bill's general features by majority vote and that the Assembly speaker Ahmed Ibrahim Al-Tahir threatened to stop the entitlement of the SPLM MPs if they fail to return to the Assembly by Wednesday.

Al-Bashir will not meet Gration even if “he requests that” – Advisor

US envoy Scott Gration is due in Khartoum next week for talks with the Sudanese officials on the US strategy toward Sudan, **Al-Sahafa** reports. Presidential Advisor Mustafa Osman Ismail in press statements yesterday said the Government was still reviewing the US policy, saying the strategy contains advantages and disadvantages. Ismail denied any arrangement for a meeting between President Al-Bashir and US envoy Scott Gration, saying the President would not meet him whether during this visit or any other visit even if Gration requested such a meeting.

Government wants observations on panel report taken into consideration

Al-Intibaha reports that Sudan Government has called on the AU Peace and Security Council (AUPSC) to take its remarks on the AUPD's report into consideration. Presidential Adviser Mustafa Osman Ismail told reporters yesterday following President Al-Bashir meeting with the AUPSC Commissioner Ramadan Lamamre that submission of observations by the Government does not necessarily mean rejection of the report.

Meanwhile, **Sudan Tribune website** 26/10/09 reported that the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Jean Ping sent a letter to the Sudanese president Omar Al-Bashir ahead of the AUPSC due to start in Abuja this week, Sudan state media reported.

Sudan official news agency (SUNA) said that Bashir today received Ramadan Al-Amamra, the AU Commissioner for Peace and Security who conveyed a letter from Ping.

SUNA said that Ping “expressed his desire to reach ideas before the Peace and Security Council meeting in Abuja”.

The AU top official affirmed in his letter to Bashir the PSC resolve “to find African solutions to the continent's problems to achieve peace and security and drying up tension spots”.

The PSC summit will be primarily devoted to discussing the AU panel report on Darfur submitted earlier this month which examined the crisis and came up with recommendations to speed up resolution of the conflict through political, judicial and reconciliation measures.

The Sudanese presidential adviser Ghazi Salah Al-Deen told the Qatar based Al-Jazeera TV in an interview last July that Khartoum “trusts the intentions of the panel and its evaluation because it is African and not stemming from a colonialist mentality”.

“We are awaiting whatever the Mbeki panel....we are satisfied with whatever results from its recommendations” he said.

However, the panel appears to have made an implicit endorsement of the International Criminal Court (ICC) suggesting that it should be allowed to prosecute individuals who bear the greatest responsibility for the crimes committed in Darfur.

“This prosecutorial policy inevitably leaves the overwhelming majority of individuals outside of the ICC system and still needing to answer for crimes they might have committed.... justice from the ICC, exclusively, would therefore leave impunity for the vast majority of offenders in Darfur, including virtually all direct perpetrators of the offences”.

Al-Amamra was quoted by SUNA as saying that the AU is keen on Sudan's position on the work of the panel "and its willingness to continue to respond and cooperate to continue the important mission to tackle the problems at hand through peaceful, balanced and fair ways that guarantee peace and security".

He also expressed gratitude to Sudan for enforcing the role of the AU and facilitating the deployment of the African Union-United Nations mission in Darfur (UNAMID).

Furthermore, Al-Amamra said that the PSC summit is an opportunity for Sudan to state opinion on the panel's report.

VP off to Abuja today

Local dailies report VP Ali Osman Taha will visit Nigeria today heading Sudan delegation for participation in the AUPSC summit scheduled for Thursday. Presidential Advisers Mustafa Osman Ismail and Ghazi Salah Al-Din, Justice Minister Abdul Basit Sabdarat and North Darfur Governor Osman Kibir will accompany Taha.

Journalist Lubna on why she filed suit against Parliament Speaker

Journalist Lubna Ahmed Hussein said she decided to institute a legal action against the National Assembly Speaker because he directed personal insult against her, **Ray Al-Shaab** reports. She said the Press Prosecution informed her that her case could not be processed due to the Speaker's immunity. However, Lubna said she was determined to take up the case with the Attorney General and the Minister of Justice for decision and then to the Constitutional Court and the President of the Republic. Lubna said her case represents a simple test for the Sudanese judiciary, adding that she would file other actions against many other people especially that she has resigned her post and now she is free to follow up.

Elements trained to sabotage elections - police

Al-Rai Al-Aam reports the NCP, the SPLM and other political forces have traded charges over posing threats to the upcoming elections. NCP leading figure Hassaballah Omar said the opposition political parties and the SPLM constitute a real threat to the elections. Meanwhile chairman of the Higher Committee for Securing Elections Maj. Gen. Ahmed Imam Al-Tohami, at a symposium on elections organized by the newspaper yesterday, claimed that a number of Darfurians who returned home revealed that they had been trained in neighbouring countries on how to sabotage upcoming elections.

PDF will continue to exist – Government

Al-Raed reports Undersecretary for Information Abdul Dafie Al-Khatib as saying that the People's Defence Forces (PDF) will continue to exist, saying the upcoming elections need the PDF efforts so that the exercise is successful.

France seeks exclusion of Sudanese president from Egypt summit

Sudan Tribune website 26/10/09 - The French Government is considering calling off the next Africa-France summit due to be held in the Egyptian Red Sea coastal city of Sharm El-Sheik next February, according to news report.

The 'La Lettre du Continent' newsletter based in Paris, reported that Egypt is unhappy because France does not want to give the green light to invite embattled Sudanese president Omer Hassan Al-Bashir.

Diplomatic sources told AFP that participation of Bashir will embarrass Paris in light of the arrest

warrant and also put Cairo, a strong backer of the Sudanese president, in an awkward position.

Paris has not been in Sudan's good graces, analysts tell AFP, due to its support of the ICC warrant, its hosting of Darfur rebel chief Abdel-Wahid Al-Nur and its military presence in neighboring Chad.

Since the ICC issued its warrant in March against Bashir for war crimes and crimes against humanity in Darfur, 10 foreigners — including three French nationals — have been kidnapped in the war-torn western region.

However, Janjaweed militia leader Musa Hilal told AFP that there is no specific targeting for French nationals.

"I don't think there are links between the positions of France (regarding Sudan) and the kidnappings," said Hilal who is also chief advisor of the Ministry of Federal Affairs in Sudan.

He said that there are three reasons for the kidnappings.

"Firstly, the (humanitarian) organizations don't distribute aid in a fair manner... and they don't hire people from different tribes in a fair manner," "The second reason is political," he said, refusing to elaborate. "Thirdly (the kidnappings) are sending messages to the NGOs, to the Sudanese Government, to the African Union, to the United Nations and to the process in Doha," where rebels held talks with Khartoum, he said.

Members of the Arab tribes of north Darfur are behind the kidnappings, several analysts have said. France appeared to be a target after five employees of Medecins Sans Frontieres (Doctors Without Borders- MSF), one of them a French national, were abducted in March.