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Media Monitoring Report

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Referendum Watch

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Highlights

Presidency held a meeting yesterday

Local dailies 27/10/10 – The Presidency held a meeting yesterday chaired by President Al-Bashir and attended by FVP Salva Kiir Mayardit and VP Ali Osman Taha. According to a statement issued by the Presidency after the meeting, the two parties agreed to develop a common vision on future relations between the North and the South regardless of the outcome of the upcoming referendum in order to maintain good relations and to ensure cooperation in all areas particularly security. The statement stressed that there would be no return to war. The Presidency meeting also endorsed the results of southern Kordofan state's census which put the population at 2,508,268.

According to *Sudan Radio* 27/10/10 - the Presidency discussed the report of the political committee and further meetings are likely to look into reports of other committees.

Al-Ahram 27/10/10, reports the Presidency met yesterday but no breakthrough or a comprehensive settlement was achieved on contentious and pending issues especially the demarcation of the border and the dispute over Abyei territory.

In a related development, *Al-Ahram* 27/10/10 has learned from sources that while the Sudanese Government voiced reservations on traveling of President Al-Bashir to Ethiopia to discuss pending issues, FVP Salva Kiir Mayardit say has no objection to travel to Ethiopia for the same purpose.

Sudan Tribune website 26/10/10 reported that the Sudanese Presidency held Tuesday a longtime awaited meeting chaired by president Omer Al-Bashir and attended by his two deputies Salva Kiir Mayardit and Ali Osman Taha. The meeting tackled Abyei referendum and the outstanding issues for the post -referenda which is to be conducted on 9 January 2011.

The meeting once again reiterated that no return to war despite the current divergences between the two peace partners.

The presidency further directed to work out a common vision of relations between the two parts of the country in the future whatever the outcome of next January referendum on southern Sudan independence to emphasize the special relation between the North and the South.

The meeting agreed to develop "economic and social cooperation and integration," said a statement issued by the Sudanese presidency following the meeting.

The move meant apparently to appease the growing tension between the two parties over the issue of Abyei. It also goes in the direction of what some analysts called "petrol factor" saying that the need for money generated by oil exploitation would force the two parties to seek joint cooperation instead of war, which will prevent both sides from this important resource.

The demarcation of the north south boundary is raised by Khartoum as one of the issues without

what the run of the referendum would be difficult to hold. Juba says the issue can be resolved after the vote on separation but it should not be associated to the schedule of the referenda.

The presidency decided to speed up the work of the four committees dealing with border demarcation, Sudan's debit, troop redeployment and Abyei.

These joint panels have to take in consideration what will be agreed between the parties on the common vision on relation between the North and the South, the presidency underlined.

On the border issue, the presidency directed the technical committee to implement its previous instructions to complete the demarcation of the Eastern Sector and to delimit the undisputed areas in the central and Western Sectors.

It also agreed the two peace partners will form a political committee to supervise the activities of the technical panel to consider in the five disputed areas in the three sectors.

The Presidency further decided that the Joint Committee on Abyei continues its work to consider the options available to overcome their differences on the region.

AFP 26/10/10 reported that Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir and southern leader Salva Kiir said in a joint statement on Tuesday that north and south Sudan will have "good relations" regardless of the outcome of January's referendum on southern independence.

"We discussed post-referendum issues and agreed that both parties in the Presidency would promote a shared vision to develop relations between the north and south regardless of the referendum's outcome," the statement said.

"It was categorically affirmed that there will be no war and we want economic and social cooperation and integration," the statement said...

SSRC begins listing southern voters in the North

Al-Sahafa 27/10/10 – The South Sudan Referendum Commission (SSRC) expressed concern over donors' delay to honour their financial pledges towards the SSRC to ensure its financial and administrative independence.

SSRC Deputy Director of Public Information George Macker told the newspaper that the Commission is in the process of requesting the Presidency to urge the donors to speed up meeting their pledges to implement the remaining phases of the process.

He said that referendum committees in the North have begun comprehensive field survey to list target voters in the densely populated areas in order to submit final statistics. He said that referendum staff would be selected by state committees and the SSRC would undertake their training in coordination with UNDP.

SSRC finalizing preparations for referendum campaigns kick-off

Al-Khartoum 27/10/10 – SSRC Public Information Director Jamal Mohamed Ibrahim said the Commission is in the process of finalizing preparations for the start of referendum media campaigns on 7th November, adding the door would be open for all the political forces to

campaign.

South Sudan willing to pay "ransom" to allow Abyei to join south

Sudan Tribune website 26/10/10 - South Sudan on Tuesday suggested that the stalled referendum vote on the future of the oil-producing area of Abyei could be scrapped in favor of a political settlement that gives the area to the south, saying it is willing to pay a "ransom" to the ruling party in north Sudan to secure such settlement.

In a media briefing held yesterday in South Sudan's capital Juba, the secretary-general of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), Pagan Amum, accused the ruling National Congress Party (NCP) in north Sudan of holding talks on the contested area "hostage."

Amum accused the Khartoum-based NCP of holding the Abyei referendum hostage without having any genuine grievances.

The SPLM would remain actively engaged in negotiations aimed at salvaging the floundering talks on the area even if this means "paying ransom for Abyei which has been held hostage by the NCP", he said.

"When this is done, the borders and map of South Sudan would change to reflect the new development," said Amum addressing a weekly press briefing in the regional capital of Juba.

The NCP wants the cattle-herding Misseriya to be able to vote while the SPLM insists that the right to vote should be confined to Dinka Ngok.

"Misseriya have no right to participate in the Abyei referendum. They do not have any single right whatsoever," Amum said.

The top SPLM official said that his party would pay a ransom to secure the release of Abyei from NCP captivity.

"We are negotiating for its [Abyei] immediate release. As a party, we shall do what it takes to ensure that ransom is paid since NCP has taken it hostage. This is contrary to the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) ruling made in The Hague," Amum declared.

All reports commissioned by both CPA parties as well as the ruling of PCA have backed the position of the SPLM but NCP has been consistently renegeing on these commitments, he said.

Amum, who is also the Minister for Peace and CPA implementation at the Government of Southern Sudan, repeated that the SPLM's position that only those who have lived in the area since independence in 1956, without the inclusion of the Misseriya tribe, would be mandated by the law to participate in the referendum.

"These residents could be from anywhere in the country. Some may be from the north and others from the south," he said.

Instead of holding a referendum on the region, the presidency should "take a decision and transfer Abyei by presidential decree to the South, because the process of Abyei referendum has

been delayed and there is no time," said Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) secretary general Pagan Amum, according to *AFP* 26/10/10. "That is what I see as the future of Abyei," he told reporters in the southern capital.

Amum, who is also minister for peace and the implementation of the CPA, said the south was willing to work out a deal to ensure a peaceful future.

"It is all about discussing the comprehensive deal or package that will unblock all these issues," he said.

"Let us discuss Abyei together with border demarcation, with accepting the results of the (southern) referendum, and with the relationship between the south and the north after the referendum," the southern official added.

The talks must be held "with the aim of ensuring that there is peace... (and) no return to war," he said.

Amum accused the northern National Congress Party (NCP) of holding the process hostage by demanding a "ransom" from both the South and Washington to find a solution to Abyei.

"They (Khartoum) have told us that they want something from us, and they want something from the Americans," he said.

"From the Americans, they want the sanctions to be lifted," Amum said, adding that the government wanted to be removed from the US list of states that Washington says sponsor terrorism.

"Also they want certain things from us, and we have expressed readiness to go to Addis Ababa to discuss with them Abyei and all the other issues," the SPLM chief said.

"We are ready to put together the package of the ransom, and give it to them, and then they release Abyei and demarcate the borders... It is not their right, it is only that they have taken the process hostage," he said.

Humanitarian Affairs reveals plan to facilitate return of southern Sudanese

Al-Sahafa 27/10/10 – The Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs has revealed a joint plan with concerned bodies in the GoSS to facilitate repatriation of southern Sudanese desirous of returning to the region. The Ministry also disclosed that financial and capacity building constraints are impeding the implementation of the last year President Al-Bashir's decree for "Sudanizing" humanitarian work in the country.

No extension for UNMIS or UNAMID after the interim period

Akhir Lahza 27/10/10 – The NCP announced that the mandate of UNMIS and UNAMID will not be extended after the expiry of the interim period.

NCP Political Sector member Nazar Khaled Mahgoub, commenting on the Darfur peace plan presented to the US Senate by Senator John Kerry said the Missions' presence in the Sudan is based on an agreement with the UN and the US is not party to the agreement to decide their fate

after the interim period.

SPLM accuses SAF of harassing civilians on north-south border

Sudan Tribune website 26/10/10 - South Sudan's governing party accused the Khartoum controlled Sudanese army of harassing southern civilians attempting to cross from north to south Sudan ahead of the regions self-determination referendum in January.

Speaking to Sudan Tribune from Abyei town on Tuesday, a SPLM representative in the area, Deng Arop Kuol, accused members of the Sudan Armed Forces of harassing civilians and imposing taxes on individual family members coming to the south from the north.

“Members of Sudan Armed Forces are harassing and taxing civilians returning to the south. They are imposing taxes only on south Sudanese returning to the south. Each family member regardless of age pays 100 Sudanese pounds at each check point,” said Kuol.

He claimed that taxation on individual family members coming from the north to the south started in early October.

“This taxation has never been there [before]. They have just started it as another way to discourage internally displaced persons in the north not to return to the south to take part in voter registration,” he said.

The official accused the National Congress Party of being behind the plan.

“This is one of the strategies made by the NCP to sabotage return of those citizens wanting to return to the south before referendum takes place. The National Congress Party is not happy with determination of the south to go and this is why it is trying by all means to sabotage conduct of the referendum. They do not want referendum to be conducted because they are aware that southerners are going,” said Kuol.

However, Kabashi Tom, a member of the National Congress Party representing the Misseriya tribe at Abyei's local council, in an interview with Sudan Tribune from Khartoum, denied that civilians were being taxed on the border.

“I am not aware of this, I have never heard about it. People are coming and going and have never heard that they are being taxed and harassed. This needs be verified but what I know is that nobody is taxing civilians going to the south unless they are business people,” said Tom.

Oil companies will continue regardless of referenda outcome

Al-Sahafa Khartoum, 27/10/10 – Oil companies will continue to operate in the country whatever the outcome of the referenda, oil minister Lual Deng told senior representatives of the Greater Nile Petroleum, PetroDar and White Nile oil companies at a meeting yesterday. He conveyed FVP Salva Kiir's assurances that the oil companies would continue to operate whatever the outcome of the 2011 plebiscite. The minister called on officials at the GoSS oil ministry and southern governors to visit oil exploration sites in order to reassure the oil companies of the need for them to continue.

SAF denies reports of new recruitment drive for National Service

Al-Sahafa Khartoum, 27/10/10 – The Office of the Spokesperson of the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) has noted that recent reports of a recruitment drive targeting youths are unfounded, baseless and are intended to destabilise the country. The SAF said that the National Services have enough reserve forces and do not need further conscription.

FVP Salva Kiir's interview

In a lengthy interview to *Al-Sudani* newspaper 27/10/10, FVP and GoSS President Salva Kiir Mayardit has revealed that the NCP has agreed to the conduct of the referendum before the border is demarcated.

In what the newspaper described as unprecedented criticism, Kiir has lashed out against GoSS VP Riek Machar, saying he is a separatist who believes that he leads a government within government.

On referendum, Kiir said, “we will not agree to delay the referendum even if it is requested by the US”.

He strongly defended SPLM leaders, saying they are more cohesive than they were under late John Garang's leadership.

On GoSS foreign policy, Kiir said he would draw a new roadmap for foreign policy of his government and did not rule out that his government establishing good relations with Israel since it is not an enemy of the South. He said he sees no reason why Israel should not have an embassy in Juba. “Israel is the enemy of the Palestinians only,” he said.

Other Highlights

IGAD summit moved from Kenya as ICC demands arrest of Sudan's Bashir

Sudan Tribune website 26/10/10 - The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) special summit on Sudan has been moved from Nairobi to Addis Ababa in a bid to avert a diplomatic row over the attendance of Sudanese President Omer Al-Bashir.

'The Standard' and 'Daily Nation' Kenya-based newspapers quoted sources as saying that the summit organizers transferred the meeting to Ethiopia to shield Bashir who faces an arrest warrant against him from the International Criminal Court (ICC) for war crimes allegedly committed in Darfur.

On Monday, the court's judges have asked Kenya "to take any necessary measure to ensure" Bashir is arrested and turned over for trial or explain "any problem which would impede or prevent" his arrest.

Should the Kenyan government not send a reply to the ICC by October 29th, “we would assume that there are no problems that would prevent them from arresting Mr. Al Bashir,” an ICC spokesman told Radio Netherlands Worldwide (RNW).

The request issued Monday came after prosecutor Luis Moreno Ocampo notified judges that al-Bashir may visit Kenya on Saturday for the IGAD summit. The last time such a meeting was held, in March, Sudan's Vice-President Ali Osman Taha attended.

Last week, 23 pressure groups sent a letter to the Kenyan president Mwai Kibaki to protest Al-Bashir's invite, saying that his visit would be "an insult" to the victims of Darfur conflict and make "a mockery" of Kenya's commitment to the ICC.

"A return visit by Al-Bashir would make a mockery of Kenya's declared commitment to the International Criminal Court, and would be an insult to victims of atrocities in Darfur and globally" said Hassan Shire Sheikh of the East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Projects.

The letter stated that Kenya's domestic law, the International Crimes Act and the Kenyan Constitution all oblige the Kenyan government to adhere to its commitment to the ICC.

"For all of these reasons" says the letter "we urge the Kenyan government to clearly affirm its commitment to cooperate with the ICC, as states such as South Africa and Botswana have done, and clarify that President al-Bashir will be arrested should he enter Kenya."

The letter said that arresting Al-Bashir would be "an important way to show respect for victims in Darfur, along with Kenya's commitment to accountability for crimes committed during electoral violence in Kenya.

On October 17, the Legal Officer for the Kenya chapter of the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ), Stella Ndirangu, told Sudan Tribune that her group would seek court action to force the government to apprehend Al-Bashir should he attends the IGAD summit.

Sudan will never meet the MDGs on time

Al-Sahafa Khartoum, 27/10/10 – A recent Sudan Government report predicts that the Sudan may not meet most of the MDGs within the next five years if the current maternal and infant mortality rates and other key indicators do not improve. The report further described the economic growth achieved after the discovery of oil in the country as "unbalanced".

JEM requests UN guarantees of a "safe passage" for its field commanders

Al-Ahdath Khartoum, 27/10/10 – The Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) is requesting the UN to guarantee safe passage for its field commanders to and from their field bases ahead of a possible participation at the Doha talks. "Absence of guarantee from the Sudanese Government of a safe passage for our field commanders would mean that they do not want us to go back to the talks," said JEM Political Affairs Officer Djibriel Ibrahim.

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