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Media Monitoring Report

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Post-elections Watch

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Address: UNMIS Headquarters, P.O. Box 69, Ibeid Khatim St, Khartoum 11111, SUDAN
Phone: (+249-1) 8708 6000 - Fax: (+249-1) 8708 6200

Highlights

After Sudan vote, the battle for unity begins

AFP 27/4/10 - A day after controversial polls returned President Omar al-Bashir to power, Sudan Tuesday turned its attention to its next challenge - forging unity in Africa's largest country before it implodes.

Al-Bashir, who was declared winner on Monday after the country's first multi-party general elections since 1986, wasted no time in sketching out his plans for the months to come.

"Our next battle will be the unity of Sudan," Al-Bashir told supporters of his National Congress Party at a celebratory rally in Khartoum late on Monday.

In a solemn address on television earlier, he had vowed that a promised referendum on the independence of south Sudan would go ahead as planned on January 2011.

"Al-Bashir and his team will have to work hard to convince the southerners to choose unity. He could offer the south more autonomy if he wants to avoid the country's split," Sudanese political analyst Haydar Ibrahim told *AFP*.

A national referendum commission has been promised to oversee the vote. Registration for voters in south Sudan and for southerners living in the north will take place in the coming months, during which time the north and the south will have to resolve all outstanding border demarcations.

"I fear that the National Congress Party will try in the coming months to delay the implementation of the peace process and of the referendum on technical grounds. It's very dangerous," Arman told a small group of foreign journalists.

A delay of the January referendum could push south Sudan towards a unilateral declaration of independence, which could affect the international community's recognition of the new state, where nine million residents live in a territory the size of France.

The other concern is the referendum process itself after European and American observers said the elections had failed to reach international standards.

Nonetheless foreign governments said they were willing to work with Khartoum even if Al-Bashir is wanted by the International Criminal Court for alleged war crimes in Darfur.

"Even if we acknowledge the problems with the election, the priority remains to maintain relations in order to assure a good referendum," a western diplomat told *AFP*.

"Everyone wants to avoid another civil war between the north and the south. But if the referendum is not free and fair, this will cause problems," the diplomat said.

President Al-Bashir receives congratulations

Sudan TV 28/4/10 – president-elect Omer Al-Bashir has received congratulations on re-election from Saudi Arabia, the Palestinian Authority and the Hamas Movement.

Qatar congratulate President Al-Bashir on election

SUNA 27/4/10 - The Emir of Qatar, Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani, and the Qatari Crown Prince, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani, have sent congratulatory cables to the President of the Republic, Field Marshal Omer Al-Bashir, on his election as President of the Sudan.

GCC congratulates Bashir on Sudan election victory

Xinhua 28/4/10 - The Gulf Cooperation Council congratulated Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir on his victory in the Sudanese elections.

GCC Secretary General Abdulrahman al-Attiyah, in a statement, also congratulated "the Sudanese government and people over successfully holding the presidential and general elections in Sudan in a calm manner, which reflected the maturity of the Sudanese people in following the democratic approach to run their country's affairs."

The chief of the GCC also welcomed an announcement by the NCP about its readiness to form a national unity government, comprising representatives from all Sudanese powers, describing it as "a positive step on the path of achieving national unanimity on all the country's issues."

"The success of the Sudanese people in choosing a president for the country will undoubtedly contribute to bringing security, stability, and prosperity to Sudan, and will help solve the problems that the country is facing," the statement added.

Kiir says unity makes Sudan a strong nation, accuses NCP of encouraging secession

Sudan Tribune website 27/4/10 - FVP and president of the GoSS Salva Kiir Mayardit criticized the NCP saying its policies had made the choice of independence more attractive for the people of South Sudan ahead of the 2011 self determination referenda.

"We are trying to change the administration system, which led to the outbreak of war during the past period, and live as equal citizens with the same opportunities, the SPLM is seeking to achieve unity of Sudan on a new basis, and also try to tell the government in Khartoum, that it should restructured the governance and offer opportunities to all citizens equally" Kiir told "Private Meeting" show aired on Egyptian TV.

"I said before, wherever unity is found then strength is found and Sudan could be a strong power if the country remains one country as it is, but the South is not seeking the partition, but the regime in Khartoum is the one dividing Sudan," Kiir said.

"If this regime continues, then not only the South will be seeking to secede, there is war in Darfur and war in the East and [people] must confront this reality as well as [even] individuals in the far north are not satisfied with the current situation and therefore this regime is the one dividing Sudan into small countries and this is the outcome of governance that prevails in Khartoum" he added.

The GoSS president said that people in the South are blaming the North because the latter is the one making the decision and formulating policies leading the people in the South to go to war.

"Who is to blame? The Southerners do not have any authority to blame and Khartoum is the one to blame" he said before adding that despite a spirit of unity among the Southerners, it has been frustrated by the "state partners in the North".

He further pointed out that the SPLM has not felt stability since joining the government but had to struggle for the implementation of the CPA.

Asked on president Omer Bashir announcement that he will work for making unity attractive in the remaining pre-referendum period, Kiir expressed skepticism that this could be achieved with little time left.

"This requires a miracle because there is only two or three months left in order to make the south a ground similar to heaven, but he [Bashir] announced that he would put the unity of Sudan on his priorities and I think that after the success in the elections, he will face difficulty in doing this because it is not about words, but needs to be put into practical action" Kiir said.

He revealed that he suggested to Bashir that an office is established in Juba allowing him to tour the South and see what the people need in terms of development project to make unity attractive but said that his proposal has not seen the light.

Kiir stressed he would give the people of the South the freedom to pick unity or independence and will support any decision they make.

On the recent polls that saw him and Bashir reelected, Kiir said that the SPLM lost a number of parliamentary seats in the South which he said indicated that elections "were fair to a great extent".

UNMIS welcomes Al-Bashir's election

Al-Wifaq, Al-Khartoum, Sudan Radio, Al-Akhbar, Al-Raed 28/4/10 – UNMIS has congratulated the people of the Sudan on successful completion of the election process and also congratulated the president-elect Omer Al-Bashir for winning the confidence of the people of the Sudan as well as all those who have been elected at the executive and legislative levels across the country.

JEM rejects elections results

Miraya FM 27/4/1 -The Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) has dismissed Sudan's next government, saying it is no better than the previous government. Speaking to Radio Miraya, leading member of JEM, Jebriil Ibrahim said that the next government represents a falsification of the people's will. However, Ibrahim further added that JEM will continue negotiating with the next government in order to reach a solution to the Darfur conflict, saying that JEM is merely continuing negotiations with another "illegitimate" one.

Sudanese president meets his Egyptian counterpart

Sudan Tribune website 27/4/10 - Sudanese President Omer Al-Bashir returned to Khartoum after a brief visit to Egypt where he met President Hosni Mubarak who is convalescing after surgery in Germany last month.

The visit took place twenty four hours after the announcement of his re-election with 68% of vote by the National Elections Commission following five days of polling earlier this month.

President Mubarak congratulated Bashir on his winning a new presidential term in the election.

The official news agency SUNA said Bashir and Mubarak held talks on bilateral relations and issues of common concern. He was accompanied by Bakri Hassan Saleh, minister at the presidency and Ali Karti, state minister of foreign affairs.

But the Egyptian *MENA* said the two leaders discussed Southern Sudan referendum and Darfur peace process. Mubarak told Al-Bashir that Egypt was anxious to see Sudan's internal conflicts resolved, while maintaining the territorial integrity of the country.

Egypt expressed concern several times on the possible secession of southern Sudan after a referendum scheduled to be held next January. Cairo hosted last February talks between the two peace partners but failed to broker common grounds on the disputed issues.

New faces are expected in the new government

Al-Akhbar 28/4/10 – The two CPA partners have reportedly embarked on intensive consultations to form the new government.

Meanwhile, the paper reports that the SPLM Political Bureau held a lengthy meeting yesterday and the Bureau is expected to come up with important decisions concerning the organization of the SPLM and the GoSS. Reportedly, the SPLM is likely to carry out changes in its southern sector and in its participation in the central government.

PCP to review relations with opposition parties

Akhir Lahza 28/4/10 -The PCP General Secretariat met in Khartoum yesterday to discuss the reasons for its loss at the polls.

Reportedly, the party has resolved to review its relations with the northern opposition parties and the SPLM. PCP members also lashed out against the SPLM for dishonouring its commitment to the opposition alliance and for using the alliance to pressurize the NCP.

Governors to be sworn-in next week

Al-Ayyam 28/4/10 - The Presidency of the Republic has revealed that Governor-elects of the states of northern and southern Sudan will be sworn in before Presidents-elect Al-Bashir and Salva Kiir respectively next week.

In a press release yesterday, the Presidency pointed out that the new governors would call their respective legislative assemblies to convene to elect two representatives from each state for the Council of States (the lower House). After that the President-elect will call the two Houses to convene a joint session before which he will take oath of office.

Lam Akol rejects South Sudan election results

Sudan Tribune website 27/4/10 – SPLM-DC Chairman Lam Akol rejected the elections results accusing the SPLM of rigging the vote.

"The elections were rigged and the percentage of the votes obtained by the president of south Sudan shows this," said the SPLM-DC leader in a press conference held in Khartoum with other leaders of southern Sudan opposition parties such as Bona Malual and Joseph Lago.

Akol vowed to challenge the election results in court demanding to cancel the announced results; adding they opened a file for the widespread rigging and irregularities committed by the SPLM.

Lam Also blamed the NEC saying it had no control on the electoral operations in the south where the international observers were absent from the majority of polling stations particularly outside the big centers.

Akol warned that the bad conduct of the elections could impact negatively on the referendum. "I think the rigging will have a negative impact on the referendum. If people remain silent in the

face of this cheating, the referendum itself will be rigged," Akol warned.

Political parties react to Bashir's win with more allegations of fraud

Miraya FM 26/4/10 - News of Omar Al-Bashir's win at the polls for the republic's presidency were met with more allegations of electoral rigging as political parties decried the outcome, blasting the result as a fraud. The Democratic Unionist party - Mainstream, has completely rejected the elections' outcome. Deputy Chairman of the party, Ali Mahmud Hassanein told Radio Miraya that the results are "forged".

He called upon political parties to convene to discuss what he termed "the elections crisis", alleging that the results are not legitimate. The Popular National Congress party announced its rejection to the outcome as well.

Nabeil Abdul Razag, office manager to the presidential candidate for the party Abdulla Deng Nial, told Radio Miraya that his party will appeal against the results in the constitutional court. He further alleged that the presidential elections have been rigged.

Similar reactions greeted the news of Bashir's win among Umma National Party members. Leading Umma Party member Mariam Al-Sadiq Al-Mahdi whose party boycotted the elections, alleged that that Al-Bashir rigged the elections. She added there was essentially no competition at the polls as the elections were designed by the NCP and the NCP utilized national tools to run the elections for their benefit.

In response, a leading member of the National Congress Party (NCP), Amin Hassan Omar, retaliated by saying that "losers in the elections" will always allege rigging. He noted that some of the parties boycotted the elections or joined late in the electoral process, adding that it was logical for these parties to lose at the polls.

He told Radio Miraya that his party did not resort to electoral fraud, adding that the results reflect how the Sudanese people want to complete the peace process that was initiated by the NCP and SPLM in 2005.

Sudan's future is now, US envoy says

The NY Times 27/4/10 - A day after Sudan's leader coasted to victory in a fraud-tainted election, a senior Obama administration official defended the vote, and said the United States should turn its attention to getting southern Sudan ready for its likely future as an independent state.

"If we don't redouble our efforts, and work so hard, we know what the predicted outcome will be: it will be violence," Maj. Gen. Scott Gration, the administration's special envoy to Sudan, said in an interview on Tuesday.

General Gration conceded that the election, in which President Omar al-Bashir won 68 percent of the vote, was flawed. But he said it set the stage for a political transformation of Sudan, one that would give more of its citizens a say about their future...

If the south votes to break away, as General Gration believes it will, the question is whether the north will let it go without a fight. And even if it does, he said, how will the new nation survive, with virtually no government institutions, few paved roads and desperate poverty?

The United States must not only head off a war, General Gration said, but will also have to pour in resources to help southern Sudan build its government and economy by July 2011, when

independence would take effect. Fewer than 175 people are doing this work there now, compared with thousands who converged on East Timor, Bosnia and other newly established states.

“We in America are looking at a surge,” said General Graton, a retired fighter pilot. “We really haven’t had a good history of birthing nations. We sure don’t want a failed state or a country at war.”

Given how stretched the United States is in Afghanistan and Iraq, he acknowledged that there were sharp limits to what it could do on its own. He said the administration was trying to marshal support from Sudan’s African neighbors, as well as from Europe and even China.

Critics of the administration say it has not spoken out forcefully enough against Mr. Bashir, who has been indicted by the International Criminal Court on charges of crimes against humanity, stemming from what the court called his “essential role” in the bloodshed in the western Darfur region.

General Graton pre-emptively defended the elections in Sudan, saying they would be as “free and fair as possible.” Even now, he points out that 16 million people registered to vote, 16,000 people ran for office and voters were allowed for the first time to elect members of a national assembly.

“We sort of focused on the Bashir election, and sort of knew the outcome, and missed the bigger story,” he said. “We were not supporting an outcome or a party, but we were supporting the process.”

Analysts said the administration’s strategy, which mixes incentives and pressure, allowed Mr. Bashir’s government to flout international agreements to allow a free press and the right of free assembly.

Many worry that Mr. Bashir will feel emboldened to subvert the referendum or even start a war. Some analysts said the United States must be clear about what it would not tolerate.

“We need to set outer limits on what’s acceptable in terms of violence against civilians,” said Andrew Natsios, an envoy to Sudan during the Bush administration. “If the north attacks the south or attempts to take over the oil fields, we should have a response and it should not be rhetorical.”

Advocacy groups have urged Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton or the United Nations ambassador, Susan E. Rice, to take control of Sudan policy. On Monday, six groups took out an advertisement in *The Washington Post*, saying the administration’s policy was “stalemated.”

“The sooner Secretary Clinton says, ‘This is something I need to do on my watch,’ the more she’s going to be able to demand answers,” said John Norris, executive director of Enough, an anti-genocide project.

General Graton said he had briefed both Mrs. Clinton and President Obama about Sudan’s elections in sessions last week. He is headed to Europe and Africa to drum up support among allies and Sudan’s neighbors. “I don’t think we can avoid having a leadership role,” he said.

But General Graton rejected the suggestion that the United States “owns” the Sudan problem. “The problem is so big that it’s not an American problem,” he said. “It’s a global problem.”

Sudan Government to seek clarification over Gration's statements

Al-Sahafa 28/4/10 – Sudan Ambassador to UN Abdul Mahmoud Abdul Haleem said his Government would seek clarification from both the US State Department and the office of US envoy Scott Gration over statements attributed to the latter on Sudan's elections. Reportedly, US envoy Gration said Sudan's elections were flawed.

According to **Al-Intibaha**, the NCP has criticized Scott Gration's statement saying the west is only concerned about democracy in Sudan as much as it will secure secession for the South.

Arab columnists criticize the re-election of Sudan's Bashir

Sudan Tribune website 26/4/10 - Several Arab columnists described the re-election of Sudanese president Omer Al-Bashir as a continuation of a tradition in the region for Arab rulers to remain in power for extended period of time with some going as far as saying that Sudan will suffer as a result of that.

"Congratulations to the great people of Sudan for his new legitimate president who we expect him to last another century maybe so long that he was able to continue as a president lacking popular legitimacy for more than twenty years," the Algerian columnist Khidair BuGayla wrote in the London-based *Al-Quds Al-Arabi* newspaper.

"No one in the world no matter how naive he is would have doubted that president Bashir would be the winner in the recent presidential elections in Sudan" he added.

Mohamed Krishan a famous Tunisian journalist working at the pan-Arab *Al-Jazeera TV* in Qatar said that Bashir would be mistaken if he thinks his reelection would protect him from the ICC prosecution.

"It was thought by many that the Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic has been spared only to be put behind bars despite being a fugitive for fifteen years in disguise with a long white beard and a false name, and the turn will not be too late for the arrest of his companion in crime, Ratko Mladic" Krishan wrote today.

"Bashir will not be an exception ever, and it will be of no good to him waving the stick as always in the face of people's in a move that is highly symbolic, even if it is familiar with the military" he added.

The deputy editor in chief of the Saudi-owned *Al-Sharq Al-Awsat* Osman Mirghani agreed with Krishan saying that signals from Washington and the US indicate that they will not {take} Bashir off the hook {of} the ICC warrant because he has been re-elected.

Mirghani said that the fact that the six million voters who did not show up to vote along with those who voted for other presidential candidates "pose serious problems to those who talk about electoral legitimacy from the announced results".

"The elections with its outcome clear before the eyes deepened divisions in the north and enhanced opportunities for secession in the South" he added.

"One sad thing in all this story that the whole of Sudan has become a hostage to one man. It does not matter that [Sudan] divided or broken up, it is important that Bashir remains president... it is truly a tragedy" Krishan concluded his Op-ed.

Op-Ed: Omar Al-Bashir's re-election in Sudan is a farce

Louise Roland-Gosselin

Guardian.co.uk. 27/4/10 -The international community should not have permitted a man wanted for war crimes to retain power via a rigged poll.

Omar al-Bashir has been re-elected in the first "multiparty" elections in Sudan for over 20 years. Many had hoped these elections would hail the beginning of a process finally bringing peace and justice to Sudan. Instead, they have proved to be nothing more than a way for Bashir to entrench his control and to become the first head of state to be elected while facing charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity from the international criminal court (ICC).

To those of us who have worked in Sudan, Bashir's conduct is entirely unsurprising. As a master of manipulation, rigging elections presents no great challenge. But what is endlessly frustrating is the role that the international community plays in legitimising this behaviour, once again choosing to believe that Bashir will "come right" despite all the evidence to the contrary.

The fact that Bashir agreed to stage elections at all was perceived to be great progress by the international community, marking the first step on the road to peace and justice as laid out by the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement. This agreement ultimately culminates in a referendum on the secession of the south of Sudan, scheduled for January next year.

For months, it has been clear for all to see that these elections would be deeply flawed. Bashir is a skilled diplomat and was never going to accept a real challenge to his authority. Having firstly undertaken a fraudulent census, which severely under-represented the population of southern Sudan and Darfur and limited access to voter registration, Bashir's National Congress Party escalated their efforts further during the election period, preventing opposition candidates from campaigning, rigging the polls and cracking down on civil and political rights.

With filmed evidence of polling officials stuffing ballot boxes and widespread reports of intimidation of voters, it would have taken a miracle for the NCP not to win. The international community had numerous occasions to speak out, from the manipulated census to the arresting of election observers. But instead, they turned a blind eye, stating that the elections were merely blighted by technical irregularities, yet accepting the results nonetheless.

According to many observers, including Simon Tisdall, the international community's position is right. Rather than expecting the elections to be free and fair, we should see them as step in the right direction: a "staging post on a much longer journey". Therefore, rather than ruffling Bashir's feathers now, we should congratulate him for how far he has come, in the hope that this will make him more conciliatory when it comes to agreeing border demarcations or oil-sharing revenue with south Sudan.

In theory this argument has its merits, but sadly it lacks any basis in reality. Crucially, this approach fails to take into account the character and track record of the Sudanese president. This is a man who, since taking power in 1989 in a military coup, has launched militias against his own people and orchestrated civil war and genocide. More than four million Sudanese civilians have been killed under his presidency. He has consistently promised the international community his regime will adhere to a plethora of peace agreements, only to put them aside at the first opportunity. It is difficult therefore to understand why anyone believes a man of this intent and nature would be willing to allow the oil-rich south to secede from his power, whatever the wishes of the southern Sudanese people.

It is also obvious that by permitting Bashir to openly commit electoral fraud without

repercussions, the international community is damaging its own credibility, setting a very concerning precedent for democratic transitions across the world and legitimising the use of violence and intimidation. Far from strengthening its negotiating position, this electoral process has exposed the United Nations, the US and the European Union, and it has demonstrated how far they are willing to look the other way to keep Bashir on side. Neither the arrest warrant from the ICC, nor the Sudanese government launching one of the largest offensives on Darfuri civilians in Jebel Marra since the Darfur conflict began in 2003, have prevented the world from congratulating Bashir for his commitment to democracy in the past week.

Tragically the ultimate victims of this farcical process will of course be the Sudanese people. Speaking to the Sudanese community ahead of the elections it was clear that despite evidence to the contrary, there was still hope that these elections might have provided them with a democratic choice – a right to vote out a man who has systematically murdered their family and friends and destroyed their lives.

But once again the rhetoric of "democratic change" has been meaningless. While the international community now solely focuses on the 2011 referendum, the Sudanese people are left to wonder once again what it might take for the international community to stand up to Bashir and to protect them.

Other Highlights

North-South border demarcation begins

Al-Sahafa 28/4/10 – The North-South Border Demarcation Commission said the process of demarcation on the ground began since yesterday, adding the delay of the demarcation was caused by technical problems. Reportedly, the Commission has submitted a detailed report to the Presidency with regard to five contentious points for decision. The Commission chairman Prof. Abdullah Al-Sadiq told a press conference yesterday that the commission finalized all the stages and now it would enter the phase of demarcating the border on the ground.

CES Governor-elect plans major employee lay-offs

The Citizen 28/4/10 - more than half of the employees in Central Equatoria State (CES) are going to lose their jobs after a controversial announcement from incumbent and Governor-elect Clement Konga. Merely a day after his re-election, Konga said that his new government will cut down 13,000 employees, nearly 60% of the current workforce in the state.

Presidential Assistant Nafie to address press conference today

Sudan Radio 28/4/10 – Presidential Assistant Nafie Ali Nafie will address a press conference at 8:00 pm at the Friendship Hall today. Reportedly, Nafie will talk about the current political developments in the Sudanese arena.

“Lawful processions” may be staged – Police

Al-Sahafa 28/4/10 – Director General of Sudan’s Police Force Lt. Gen. Hashim Osman Al-Hussein said there would be no objection to the organization of a peaceful demonstration by any body if permission is obtained through the official channels and the law is respected. Gen. Al-Hussein said state governors and commissioners were empowered to approve the organization of demonstrations.

Military observers to go to southern Sudan

Swiss.Info.ch 28/4/10 - The government has agreed to allow unarmed military observers to be sent to the United Nations mission in Sudan (UNMIS), the defence ministry said on Wednesday. The UN last month requested two observers to join the peacekeeping mission to carry out duties including monitoring, reporting and mediation in tense situations.

Since the UN is likely to submit further similar requests, the government decided to approve the dispatch of up to four observers.