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Highlights

Sudan lifts media censorship but editors cautious

Reuters.com Khartoum, 27/09/09 – President Al-Bashir has ordered an end to state censorship of media on Sunday, officials said. The move will be seen as an important step towards the country's first multi-party elections in more than 20 years. Editors gave the announcement a cautious welcome, but some said they would still face pressure over sensitive stories.

"We had a meeting with President al-Bashir. He ordered a stop to censorship from today," the chairman of Sudan's National Press and Publications Council, the state regulator, Ali Shomo told **Reuters**.

Sunday's announcement came two weeks after newspaper editors said they sat down with officers from Sudan's national security service to sign a code of journalistic conduct, seen as a precursor to the lifting of censorship. A copy of the document, seen by **Reuters**, included broad promises for newspapers to be fair in their reporting, to respect religious and racial differences and to obey the law.

"It is a very important move," said the editor of independently-owned **Al-Khartoum** newspaper Fadlallah Mohamed.

"Censorship is contrary to free press in Sudan. We are expecting the general election. It is very important to have a free press in such circumstances."

Adil al-Baz, editor-in-chief of political daily **Al-Ahdath**, also welcomed the move but said it was unclear how the government would deal with media that broke the code of conduct. "Perhaps they will go to court or punish the newspaper by closing it. There is always a risk in this profession."

Sudan's **Ajras al-Huriya** newspaper, linked to the Sudan Peoples' Liberation Movement (SPLM), warned that journalists would still face pressure when writing about Darfur and other highly-charged topics. "There is no way they (the security services) are going to tolerate anything about security, about the International Criminal Court," said deputy editor-in-chief Faisal Silaik.

Party leaders at Juba conference call for political reforms

Leaders of political parties participating at the Juba Conference that kicked off yesterday underlined the need to conduct the referendum on southern Sudanese self-determination to be conducted on schedule, reports **Al-Sahafa**. They also called for democratic transformation and the need for domestic solutions to the Darfur problems. Party leaders also proposed a series of proposals to help resolve the country's economic, political and social problems. Their proposals on making unity an attractive option included the need to deduct 10% off the country's annual revenue for southern Sudanese development.

Neither NCP nor SPLM would decide the fate of Sudan – FVP Salva Kiir

Addressing the opening session of the Juba Conference of political parties yesterday, FVP Salva Kiir Mayardit pointed out that neither the NCP nor the SPLM are the ones to determine the fate of the country and should not be allowed to do so, reports **Al-Sudani**. He said that the CPA is a tool for transformation in all aspects of Sudanese life but the SPLM has used all possible means to encourage its NCP partners to implement the deal to little avail. FVP Kiir renewed calls on the NCP to help enact laws that conform to the constitution.

The FVP also reiterated doubts over the census results and pointed out that the SPLM listed its

reservations on the issue to the federal government but is yet to receive a response on the issue.

"The two possibilities of unity and secession, without speculating the results of the referendum, are real. Consequently wisdom dictates us that we prepare ourselves to both eventualities," Kiir said, according to the **AFP**.

"To us in the SPLM unity is a noble cause, but not any unity. Unity that does not generate a value-added to the present status of South Sudan does not attract anybody," the FVP said.

NCP says organisers of Juba Conference received \$18m from foreign parties

The NCP has announced it is stopping dialogue with the SPLM because of what it described as "current developments". According to **Al-Sahafa**, Party Political Secretary Mohammed Mandour Al-Mahdi has requested the SPLM to show "new goodwill" for the resumption of dialogue between them.

"I believe that the Juba Conference will result to more tenacity on SPLM positions with vis-à-vis the outstanding CPA benchmarks," Al-Mahdi told the press in a statement yesterday. He further pointed out that the conference is a "conspiracy against the CPA" that is bound to weaken the agreement and further increase the differences between the CPA partners.

In a related development, key NCP figure Qutbi Al-Mahdi told the press yesterday that his party is not concerned with the possible outcome of the Juba conference. He pointed out that western parties that are "known to the NCP" have agendas against the country and have given \$18 million to the organisers to bankroll the conference. He also said that the conference has some undisclosed goals primarily aimed at contributing to post-GoNU arrangements with foreign support.

"We are not concerned with the possible outcome of this conference because we basically consider it a failure," he added.

Speaker says Referendum Bill to be endorsed in next parliamentary session

Speaker of the National Assembly, Ahmed Ibrahim Al-Tahir, has assured that the House would endorse the Referendum Bill in its next session that starts early next month, **Al-Ayyam** reports. He underlined the need for the NCP and the SPLM to overcome their differences over the draft bill.

Speaking to a visiting delegation from the AU, Al-Tahir also underlined the need for the elections to take place as scheduled pointing out that the referendum on southern Sudanese self-determination has to take place against the backdrop of an elected government.

NCP says US lobby group supports southern Sudan secession

NCP figure Mohamed Mandour Al-Mahdi expects that the report on Sudan that the US Administration is expected to issue in the next few days will be no different than past reports, according to **Al-Sahafa**.

"It is clear that the US lobby has a strong influence on the different levels of US executive decision making institutions and we expect the new report will be influenced by these lobby groups that support southern Sudanese secession," he said. He cited Roger Winter as a key member of the lobby.

Sudan criticizes U.S. travel ban on politicians

XINHUA Khartoum, 27/09/09 – The NCP has criticized the US Administration's decision to

"This decision clearly indicates that the Obama Administration is following the same steps of the Bush Administration," NCP Political Secretary Mohamed Mandour Al Mahdi told **Xinhua**.

"The U.S. administration wants to put pressure on Sudan through new means," he added.

The U.S. administration on Saturday imposed travel restrictions on politicians from the three African countries to the United States.

Al Mahdi said he was not optimistic that improvement of the relations between Khartoum and Washington was possible, saying "There are signs which do not encourage optimism including the contradicting positions of the US Administration and Special Envoy Scott Gration.

Ghazi Salahuldin to address UN General Assembly today

Sudan's Permanent Representative to the UN, Abdelmahmoud Abdelhaleem says Presidential Advisor Ghazi Salahuldin is set to address the UN General Assembly today, reports **Al-Rai Al-Aam**. He said that Ghazi is also set to hold separate meetings today with UNSG Ban Ki-moon and the Secretary-General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, to discuss the current developments in Sudan.

Lou-Nuer condemn Jonglei attack, criticize misleading reports

Sudantribune.com Juba, 27/09/09 - The Lou-Nuer community in Juba has condemned the recent attack by its members against the Dinka community of Duk Padiet in Jonglei State. They also described reports on the attack as misleading. The community however accused the GoSS and the Jonglei State Government of siding with the Dinka ethnic group in the incidence.

In a meeting that was open to the press which was organized on Sunday by the Lou-Nuer Community Council and was attended by over two thousand participants including intellectuals, elders and youth members, the community refuted any statement describing the armed civilians as militias in the state.

In a statement to the press the Community's Chairperson, Gabriel Yoal Dok said the allegation was reported to the government by "those with the intention of misleading the government to wage war against the community."

Dok, who is a member of the National Assembly, explained that the attack was unfortunately carried out by angry armed civilians who decided to take the law into their own hands as a result of their unresolved grievances that accumulated since 2006. The community called for relocation of the state capital outside of Bor County, accusing the Bor community of acting as if the town exclusively belonged to their community.

He accused in particular the Governor of Jonglei State, Kuol Manyang Juuk and the former governor, Philip Thon Leek, of allegedly promoting inter-community conflicts and failing to address the grievances.

They also accused the minister for Internal Affairs, Gier Chuang Aluong and the Head of the National Security for the Southern Sector, Majak Agot of allegedly siding with the Dinka community.

The community further explained their source of arms saying that its disarmed members since 2006 recently re-armed after the looting of arms from the SAF and the SPLA in Khorfulus and Malakal.

The community claimed that both the GoSS and state authorities overreacted to the Duk Padiet incidence by mobilizing a combination of forces from the SPLA and other organized forces including the National Security to side with the Dinka community. It alleged that these combination of forces exercised excessive use of force against the armed civilians including the use of heavy artillery.

The meeting also explained that GoSS and state authorities had refused to take for medical care wounded Lou-Nuer armed civilians but airlifted to Juba for medical care the wounded members from the Dinka community and the organized forces.

Malakal hosts disarmament strategy workshop

Gurtong.org Malakal, 19/09/09 - The Bureau for Community Security and Small Arms Control last week held a one-day disarmament workshop to discuss the implementation of the disarmament exercise.

The workshop held at Dr John Garang Meeting Hall at the SPLM Secretariat was attended by the State Government officials, UNMIS Civil Affairs and Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) section, international NGOs and community chiefs.

The workshop met to discuss the implementation of the disarmament exercise in five cluster areas that include Lakes, Warrap and Unity states, Upper Nile and Jonglei states, Eastern, Central and Western Equatoria states, Western and Northern Bahr el Ghazal states and Abyei, Nuba Mountain and Southern Blue Nile states.

First train arrives in Aweil after 15 years

Radio Miraya FM 25/09/09 - Northern Bahr el-Ghazal State on Friday celebrated the return of the first train to the state capital Aweil, after 15 years. State Governor Malong Awan said that the railway would put an end to transportation difficulties the citizens face.

The Director of Babanusa-Wau Railway Renovation Project, Abdelrahman Sheriff, said that the next stage is the renovation of the Aweil-Wau railway line, which will start in the coming days. He pointed out that the project is funded by the Unity Support Fund and donors.

Southern Sudan seeks to stop smuggling of counterfeit money

Sudantribune.com Juba, 26/09/09 – Authorities in southern Sudan have warned the public against the proliferation of counterfeit Sudanese pounds and US dollar bank notes printed outside the country and smuggled to the region.

The GoSS Interior Ministry estimates that there are over 15 million fake dollars in circulation in southern Sudan. Speaking from Juba, Interior Minister Gier Chuang Aluong said that the region is flooded with millions of fake hard currencies imported mainly from neighbouring countries he declined to name.

However, he said three Kenyan nationals were arrested last July in Bor town in possession of large sums of counterfeit Sudanese currency and US dollars.

LRA leader “no longer” wants GoSS VP Machar as mediator

As the LRA expresses interest in a new ceasefire deal and fresh negotiations, it is also calling for a new mediator, **Radio Miraya FM** reports. LRA Spokesperson, David Matasanga, said movement leader Joseph Kony would prefer the former Nigerian President Olusegun Obasango to GoSS Vice President Riek Machar to serve as mediator.

South Africa president warns Sudan’s Bashir of arrest

Sudantribune.com Washington, 27/09/09 – President Jacob Zuma of South Africa told CNN’s Christiane Amanpour that “as a signatory of this particular agreement [the ICC Statute] we said that once he has been arrested [in South Africa by judiciary], we could not stop the arrest of Al-Bashir. That is the position we made”.

Asked by Amanpour whether he sticks to his earlier statements that if Bashir “was to ever set foot inside your [South Africa] country you would order him arrested”, Zuma replied “that is correct”.

The statements are the first of its kind by an African head of state since the ICC charged Bashir with seven counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity.

This is also the first time Zuma speaks on the issue since the African Union (AU) summit held in Libya last July in which the states adopted a resolution that they shall not cooperate with the ICC in executing the warrant.

“What the AU said in the decision which we are part of. It did not say that president Bashir must not be arrested, all it asked is that a deferment of that action on the basis of the progress we are making in terms of the peace intervention. Our view was if you acted at that point you could reverse the process we are making and the consequences of it will certainly affect the Sudanese who are fighting. Therefore give us a chance to complete that particular chapter then you could deal with Bashir later” he added.

Sudan calls on Arab countries to support voluntary IDP returns

SUNA 27/09/09 - Sudan has called on the Arab Ministerial Committee on Darfur, affiliated to the Arab League, to boost the Arab contribution in the field of infrastructure at villages in Darfur toward helping the Darfurian refugees to return voluntarily to their home villages.

The State Minister at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ali Karti, lauded in a press conference in Cairo the Arab support for the humanitarian work in Darfur and the remarkable progress in this connection. The state minister indicated that there were continuous complaints by the government of Sudan and the people of Darfur that the Arab presence on the ground in the region was little, a matter that led us to contact the Arab League and the Arab countries.

Karti indicated that two years ago the Arab support started to flow in Darfur through the efforts of the Arab League and the Arab countries. He acknowledged that some armed groups and armed robbers are attempting to undermine security or so but the war ended, affirming the importance of strengthening security situation to allow the voluntary repatriation to the villages. He disclosed that the meeting also discussed the efforts being exerted by Qatar, the Arab Committee, the African Union, international community, the Joint Mediator of the United Nations and African Union for Darfur, Djibril Bassole and the recent attempts by the US envoy to Sudan, Scott Gration to meet the armed movements that did not participate in the beginning of the negotiations.

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