

29 Dec 2009

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Media Monitoring Report

United Nations Mission in Sudan/ Public Information Office

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By: Dr. Elwathig Kameir, member of SPLM Political Bureau.
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Highlights

NCP, SPLM differences delay passing of referendum bill

The NCP and the SPLM again disagreed on the referendum bill yesterday delaying the passing of the law to today, *local dailies* report. According to *Al-Rai Al-Aaam*, the postponement of the passing of the law was requested by the SPLM for more consultation.

SPLM official Prof. Ibrahim Ghandour told reporters that an agreement was reached whereby southerners residing in the north since early January 1956 shall have the right to register and vote anywhere. However, SPLM Parliamentary Bloc Chairman Yassir Arman said the southerners residing in the north before independence would vote in the South. He added that SPLM requested postponement of the passing of the law in order to allow time for resolution of some procedural matters.

Presidential Assistant Ali Tamim Fartak said an agreement was reached whereby southerners in the North would vote regardless of dates of their settlement adding that it was also agreed that committees would be set up to verify the identity of the voters.

According to *Al-Sahafa*, the NDA, Darfur Peace Group and the Beja Congress have announced that they would walk out of today's session to protest the two partners' monopoly of dialogue on key bills. SPLM Parliamentary Bloc Chairman Yassir Arman told reporters yesterday that the two partners have overcome their differences on the referendum bill saying "today will be an important day for confidence building between the North and the South and will put a decisive end to war".

Sudan Tribune website 29/12/09 reported the two houses of the national parliament in Khartoum, the National Assembly and the Council of States, have delayed the debate and passage of the Southern Sudan referendum bill till Tuesday.

The controversial bill was prematurely passed last week by the NCP's block in the parliament amidst protest by the SPLM block in collaboration with other Southern Sudan political parties that walked out in rejection of an article in the bill.

The article, which the NCP block modified against the original wording agreed upon by the two parties and passed in the Council of Ministers, reversed that northerners who claim ancestry in the South would register and vote wherever they are in northern Sudan or abroad.

The SPLM's position is that those northerners who claim to qualify to have been southerners should move to the South for verification and confirmation by their respective local chiefs before they could qualify to register and vote within the South.

SPLM senior officials on Monday held a briefing in Khartoum with the Vice President of the Government of Southern Sudan, Dr. Riek Machar Teny and discussed the current nature of the bills of referendum laws for Southern Sudan and Abyei in addition to popular consultations for Southern Blue Nile and Southern Kordufan states, pending their passage by parliament.

The NCP official Ibrahim Ghandour said that both parties agreed on the required amendments of the referendum law and make sure it satisfies the wishes of the SPLM.

However, according to **AFP** 29/12/09, The Sudanese parliament adopted a key law today afternoon paving the way for a promised 2011 referendum on southern independence and southern leaders struck a deal on a disputed article.

The new version of the law approved by MPs includes a provision demanded by southern politicians that requires Diaspora southerners to cast their ballots in the south.

A previous version adopted last week had allowed for absentee votes, prompting a walkout from parliament by southern politicians fearful that if southerners voted in the north there could be fraud and pressure by the Khartoum Government.

South separation has actually taken place – Minnawi

Al-Sahafa reports Senior Presidential Assistant and Darfur Transitional Authority Chairman Minni Minnawi as saying that South Sudan's separation has actually taken place and all that remain is legalization in 2011, warning that the situation in Darfur which he described as "a fire under ash" could deteriorate further. Minnawi, who was speaking to the **London-based Al-Sharq Al-Awsat**, warned of the danger of separation of the South. He said that many observers expect breakout civil war in the South but his feeling was that a more dangerous war would breakout in the North.

FVP Kiir calls on the international community to save CPA

FVP Salva Kiir Mayardit has called on the international community, IGAD and CPA friends to intervene to save the CPA from collapse, **Local dailies** report. According to **Ajras Al-Hurriah**, Kiir, who was addressing demonstrators in Juba yesterday, accused enemies of peace in the NCP and warmongers of saber-rattle to reignite war. He said the SPLM would not renegotiate the CPA adding that upcoming elections would not take place without resolution of the Darfur problem.

Umma Party (Reform and Renewal) leader Mubarak Al-Fadil Al-Mahdi has described the demonstration in south as successful, saying GoSS did not obstruct the march which means a true democracy exist in the South.

Thousands demonstrate against NCP in Rumbek

Sudan Tribune website 28/12/09 — Over fifteen thousand people turned out today in Rumbek, the capital of Lakes state, demonstrating against the laws which were passed in Khartoum by the national parliament without concern for the objections of the Southern Sudan ruling party, the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM). Parliamentarians of the majority National Congress Party (NCP) were responsible for passing the bills earlier this month.

The protesters demanded amendment of the law that dealt with the National Intelligence and Security Services (NISS). They also called on the national parliament to revise the Southern Sudan Referendum Law, Abyei referendum law and popular consultation for the Blue Nile which were passed by the NCP without SPLM participation in parliament.

Demonstrators were joined by all Lakes state ministers, advisors, lawmakers, trade unionists and students. Protesters cried out, "We don't need change in the CPA document or re-negotiation of the CPA – only we need full implementation of the CPA".

The peaceful demonstration was addressed by SPLM Lakes State Secretary Samuel Mathiang Keer, Rumbek Centre County Commissioner Abraham Makoi Bol Kodi and Acting Governor David Nok Marial Buot in conjunction with others from among the Southern Sudanese political

parties in Rumbek Freedom Square on Monday.

In a joint press conference held on Sunday at SPLM Lakes state secretariat office attended by all eight Southern Sudanese political parties, the Southerners had voiced together their willingness to fight injustice and to aim toward the common goal of democratic transformation and full implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement.

"Khartoum government is cheating us badly; we are not receiving our 50% of oil revenue of wealth-sharing as mentioned in the CPA. NCP is our partner but it has turned horn against us and they are struggling to destroy this peace by all means like the agreement of 1972," said a SPLM official.

The SPLM official downplayed the differences among Southern Sudanese political parties operating in Lakes state and said that together they are eyeing Khartoum as their senior enemy of peace. "We are Southerners and we were marginalized by the Khartoum government, let us demonstrate peacefully."

David Nok Marial Buot, the deputy governor and minister of Local government and Law Reinforcement Agency in Lakes state affirmed that "If NCP took away our Southern Sudanese community properties by force, then we must return it back – if NPC would like to force us to war, then we will decide immediately – there is no more return to war but NCP is alarming to take back the country to war".

Kuc Abyei, the leader of African National Congress - Sudan (ANC) asked the crowd of demonstrators "whether God were wrong to create us in Southern Sudan land? Why does always Northern Sudan, the Khartoum government, put Southerners' life under threat and cheat us daily?"

This is the first demonstration carried out peacefully in Lakes state since the signing of the Sudan Comprehensive Peace Agreement.

Abyei demonstrates over delay in passing referendum bills

Sudan Tribune website 28/12/09– Thousands of Abyei residents demonstrated today to protest the delay in referendum bills.

The southern Sudan ruling Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) and six political parties appealed to demonstrate peacefully on Monday to protest the delay in referendum bills for the semi-autonomous region and Abyei which has a particular administration during the interim period.

The two peace partners are at odd on who has the right to participate on Abyei referendum. The Sudan's dominant National Congress Party (NCP) wants to give the Misseriya the right of vote in the referenda while the SPLM looks for a strict criterion over the sensitive issue.

Chanting anti government slogans with alternate slogans for peace and stability, the demonstrators called for immediate passage of the bill without insertion of any article giving non-citizens right to vote at referendum.

Speaking from Abyei town amid crowd where sounds of demonstration were heard during interview, Chol Changath, SPLM Secretary General, said citizens and SPLM supporters are demonstrating to share their frustrations over delay in passing referendums.

He said the ruling NCP has no intention to pass the bill. "This is what prompted the whole town to stage demonstration so that the world is informed," he added.

Some of protesters came from far villages just to attend this demonstration, this shows that these citizens have something to which the government of the day should listen, he said.

Questioning National Assembly proposition prioritizing discussions on Post- referendum deliberations, he posed, where and why is the assembly interested in post referendum issues while referendum itself is not passed.

However, in statements to the media today, Yasir Saeed Arman who heads SPLM parliament bloc said the National Assembly will hold today an evening session to discuss the referendum laws for Southern Sudan and Abyei.

NCP declares war on peace

The SPLM supporters marched yesterday on Juba streets protesting the NCP's obstruction of the implementation of the CPA provisions, *the Citizen* reports.

Speaking in the rally, SPLM Deputy SG Dr. Ann Itto said the NCP has declared war on peace, freedom of expression and on people with the right to exercise democracy. "The SPLM will never go back to war, but we will continue the struggle through peaceful demonstrations," she said. Itto added that the registration process for voters was successful. "The registration concluded peacefully. More than 90 per cent of eligible voters registered," she said.

South Sudan is rejecting "inclusive" referendum bill

Sudan Tribune website 28/12/09 – South Sudan minister of legal affairs and constitutional development has said the SPLM would not accept a referendum bill that allows all Sudanese to decide southerners' fate.

Addressing people who marched against what they called "oppressive laws" in Bor on Monday, Michael Makuei Lueth said the SPLM would welcome the bill when only southerners are legible to participant in 2011 referendum.

Briefing protestors in Bor on Monday, Minister Makuei Lueth warned that the CPA will be critically tested if the referendum bill is signed into law by President Omar Bashir in the present form, then that will allow all Sudanese to decide southerners' destiny. Mr. Lueth said if all southerners outside the south will participant in referendum, "this means all Sudanese are going to participant. This is inclusive and will not give correct results of referendum."

The protest, erupted in all southern towns on Monday, December 28, 2009 also demands that popular consultations in Nuba Mountains and referendum in Abyei should be made fairly.

The demonstrators also had banners with writing "Peace in Darfur is a necessity before 2010 elections." Some banners also say "partnership between NCP and SPLM lies in the implementation of CPA."

This display indicates public frustration over repeated delays in implementing the CPA. For example, referendum bill was expected in 2008. North—South border demarcation was due in the first six months of CPA but all in vain.

According to Makuei, Monday peaceful matching organized by SPLM and other political parties

is also meant to inform the NCP that the National Security bill is oppressive, giving security agents powers to arrest rather than only collecting information is against basic human rights.

China grants three million USD for Sudan's election

Sudan Tribune website 29/12/09 — China has extended a three million US dollar grant to support the organization of general election in Sudan in April next year.

The announcement was made today by the Deputy Chairman of the National Commission for the Elections (NCE), Mr. Abdullah Ahmed Abdullah, who received in his office the Chinese ambassador to Sudan Mr. Li Chengwen.

Following the meeting, Chengwen reiterated China's support for the electoral process in Sudan and expressed the hope that election would lead to the democratic transformation in order to achieve stability and development. He also praised the developing relationship between China and Sudan in all fields

Abdullah explained all the ongoing preparation to hold the 2010 general election. He also praised the efforts undertaken by China to develop the country.

Sudan reaffirms commitment to conducive environment for Darfur talks

Sudan Tribune website 28/12/09 — Sudan reaffirmed commitment to provide a suitable atmosphere for the start of next round of talks with Darfur rebel groups, stressing keenness to make progress in the negotiations before the elections scheduled for April 2010.

Darfur mediation plans to hold peace talks between the government and rebel groups on January 24, 2010. The negotiations are expected to focus on a ceasefire agreement and a framework for the peace process.

Sudanese delegation headed by the Sudanese Presidential Adviser, Ghazi Salah Al-Deen Attabani who is in charge of Darfur dossier held Sunday a meeting in Doha with Ahmed bin Abdullah Al-Mahmoud, Qatari Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, and Djibrill Bassolé, the AU/UN Joint Chief Mediator for Darfur.

Initiated by the mediation the meeting discussed the efforts done to reunite Darfur rebels but also tackled ways to create a conducive environment before the peace talks.

"We informed the mediation about the efforts made by the government to improve humanitarian and security situation in Darfur, especially for the displaced persons but also we presented an overview of the political situation and ongoing preparation for the elections," said Amin Hassan Omer who heads the government delegation for the peace process.

Omer stressed that the mediation listened to government efforts to improve the security situation and relief, as this will help in creating a positive environment to resolve Darfur issue and encourage negotiations.

The Sudanese official, in addition, said they informed the mediation about the recent contacts with the Chadian government to improve and normalize relations between the two countries, stressing the importance of this step to speed up the Doha talks.

Following a visit by the Chadian foreign minister to Khartoum last week, the two countries said they agreed to implement a security pact to prevent cross border by rebel groups from the two

sides, they also decided to hold a meeting within two weeks in N'djamena to discuss the technical details related to enforce it.

Omer disclosed that, following a joint security meeting, Chad and Sudan will implement within four weeks the security protocol between the two countries, which allows controlling the border by joint patrols from the two sides.

He added that the mediation expressed optimism that improved relations between the two countries will reflect positively on the negotiations.

The Sudanese official also welcomed the Chadian participation in the peace talks saying the Doha process aims also to improve relations between the two countries.

President Al-Bashir receives congratulatory message from UNSG

Local dailies report President Al-Bashir has received a message from UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon congratulating him on Independence Day. According to *Al-Ahdath*, Ki-moon has called on member states to unlock their energy to achieve MDG, praising Sudan's pioneering role in this regard.

President Al-Bashir witnesses air force maneuvers in the north

President Al-Bashir yesterday attended a military maneuver carried out by the Air Force in Atmoor desert in the northern state, **local dailies** report. According to *Al-Sahafa*, 14 fighter aircrafts participated in the exercise which was carried out in the night to destroy imaginary targets. Al-Bashir described the exercise as the first of its kind in SAF history and pledged full support for the army units to counter any threat.

Chief of Joint Staff Gen. Mohamed Naserulddin said all army units have undergone training this year, citing the Air Force night training as the first of its kind.