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# Media Monitoring Report

United Nations Mission in Sudan/ Public Information Office

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- Commentary: 2010 elections in Sudan: It could be another African disaster!!! (**ST**)  
By Ahmed Elzobier, Sudanese writer and Human rights activist  
<http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article34570>
- Op-Ed: ICC warrant a pain in the neck for Bashir (**Daily Nation**)  
By: Chege Mbituru  
<http://allafrica.com/stories/201003290008.html>

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# Highlights

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## **SPLM ready for elections – Kiir**

The two CPA partners have embarked on a series of meetings for discussion on a range of issues including the upcoming elections in preparation for the presidency meeting tomorrow, **local dailies** report. According to **Al-Sahafa**, FVP Salva Kiir Mayardit will arrive in Khartoum today to take part in the presidency meeting Tuesday. Reportedly, the FVP will also participate in opposition parties' meeting thereafter. Kiir yesterday confirmed the SPLM readiness for elections despite the challenges involving the conduct of the process.

Meanwhile, the DUP (mainstream) is reportedly submitting a petition today to the NEC to protest the NCP's spending of \$33 million on elections campaigning.

## **No postponement if elections are transparent and free - SPLM**

**Miraya FM** 28/3/10 - The SPLM will be committed to the elections schedule if conditions of transparency and freedom are met. SPLM's spokesperson, Yen Mathew told Radio Miraya that the movement has always promoted openness among all political parties, adding that the SPLM's political position is for the government to consider the opinions of the opposition.

Mathew was referring to the recent opposition's petition that calls for April's general elections to be delayed.

The spokesperson said that the government must listen to concerns of the opposition, discuss these issues with them and reach a compromise in order for the general elections to be free and fair. He pointed out that the movement will meet the Presidency on Tuesday to decide whether to push for a postponement or not.

Mathew disclosed that his party has urged opposition parties to be patient with regards to demands for postponing elections. He further revealed that the SPLM is studying the possibility of delaying the elections at all levels.

Earlier, opposition parties together with the SPLM presented a petition to the Presidency demanding the immediate postponement of the elections, followed by the formation of a National interim government. The petition was decided on after a meeting of opposition parties held in Omdurman on Saturday. Spokesperson of the opposition parties, Farooq Abu Issa told Radio Miraya that the decision was made after a review of the country's current political situation.

Farooq added that the opposition had informed FVP Salva Kiir Mayardit when the petition was presented to the Presidency. He urged the Presidency to consider the petition and all issues raised.

## **SPLM to set up truth and reconciliation commission if wins elections**

SPLM spokesperson Yen Mathew speaking at a symposium in Khartoum last Saturday said their party would set up a truth and reconciliation commission if it wins elections **Ajras Al-Hurriah** reports. He called on the NCP to hand over power and apologize to the Sudanese people if it is defeated. Mathew said SPLM is for justice and stressed the need to try whoever has committed a crime against the Sudanese people.

Meanwhile, SPLM official and candidate for governor of Khartoum state Edward Lino has called on the NCP to apologize to the Sudanese people for killing civilians in Kajbar, squandering oil revenues, ill-treating physicians and starving civilians in the east. He accused the NCP of seeking to rig elections and rejected the printing of ballot cards inside Sudan.

### **Lam Akol harassed by security in Wau**

SPLM-DC candidate for president of southern Sudan Lam Akol was not allowed to land in Wau airport by the security authorities in the town but he insisted on landing and the security authorities eventually let him out, *Khartoum Monitor* reports. Akol was blamed by the security authorities for coming one day before the schedule for his electoral campaign which should have started today not yesterday. He argued that as Sudanese citizen he has the right to move to any part of the country at any time. Local authorities also attempted to disarm Akol's guard.

However, *Al-Sahafa* reports that Akol and several supporters were briefly detained and four of his bodyguards were assaulted.

### **132,000 police personnel ready to secure elections**

Deputy Director of police forces Maj. Gen. Omer Mohamed Ali told *SMC* yesterday that 132,000 police personnel have been trained to secure elections, *Al-Rai Al-Aam* reports. Gen. Ali said securing elections is the exclusive responsibility of the police forces.

Meanwhile, *Akhbar Al-Youm* reports that the Interior Ministry announced that nobody would be allowed to carry arms during the forthcoming period, saying protection for the candidates is a priority for the police force. The Ministry has also graduated 2,600 soldiers for securing elections and that batch 49 of security police will also be graduated for the same purpose.

### **Umma Party leader criticizes “fatwas” in support for Al-Bashir**

National Umma Party leader Sadiq Al-Mahdi has criticized the “fatwas” issued by some clerics calling on civilians to vote for NCP candidate for president Omer Al-Bashir, *Al-Ayyam* reports. Al-Mahdi, in a letter to the Sufi Sects, pointed out that the Sects have deviated from the right path by issuing fatwas in support for the ruling party candidate for president Omer Al-Bashir, saying the NCP is pursuing a bloody and repressive programme and is implementing policies in the name of Islam which are actually run counter to the faith. According to *Al-Sudani*, Al-Mahdi warned of what he described as “seditionists” who might plunge the country into a bloodbath.

### **SPLM bans flights over Bahr el Ghazal**

SPLM Intelligence Services have banned flights over Bahr el Ghazal, threatening to shoot down any aircraft flying over the area, *Al-Intibaha* reports. According to the newspaper, the ban is intended to impede the campaign of NCP candidate for president Omer Al-Bashir and SPLM-DC candidate Bona Malwal.

## **Other Highlights**

### **UN has no monitoring role in Sudan's elections - SRSG**

*Sudan Tribune website* 28/3/10 – UNMIS stressed today that it has no monitoring role during the upcoming elections in the country but added it could bring any discrepancy to the two peace partners.

The newly appointed head of UNMIS, which facilitates the implementation of the CPA signed in January 2005, held today his first press conference since his arrival to Khartoum where he dealt

mainly with issues related to the next month elections.

The Eritrean diplomat, Haile Menkerios, pointed out that the Mission supports and ushers the implementation of the CPA provisions including the electoral process which is part and parcel of the deal aiming to achieve democratic transition in the country.

Menkerios underlined that the Mission can support the independent observers and "provide them logistical assistance" but added UNMIS will not be involved directly in the monitoring process. However he said as the parties are committed, in accordance to the 2005 accord, to hold fair and free elections, the UN body has brought "any discrepancy that we see by ourselves" to the CPA signatories and to the National Election Commission.

"We have continued to advise, to encourage and to assist that measures be taken to ensure that a conducive atmosphere for free and fair elections exists and continues to do so," he said.

As the UNMIS was accused recently of giving the green light to the printing of election ballots inside Sudan, the head of mission emphasized today on the consultative role they are playing in the implementation of the different aspects of the peace agreement that ended more than two decades of war in southern Sudan.

Speaking about the position of the UN chief Ban Ki-Moon who recently expressed surprise on the calls to postpone Sudanese elections, Menkerios said what Ban "expressed is the issues raised by the opposition to make this process free and fair need to be addressed in a way that does not create an obstacle to the implementation of the CPA".

### **Peacekeepers will intervene in areas of threats of armed confrontation**

SRSR Haile Menkerios told a press conference yesterday that the decision for the conduct or postponement of the upcoming elections rests with the NEC, adding that UNMIS role is confined to assisting the Government and the NEC to ensure that the process takes place on schedule and it is fair and transparent, *Al-Sahafa* reports. He said UNMS peacekeepers would intervene to ensure security in the areas where threats of armed confrontation exists. The SRSR said the partners have been on the CPA track in terms of implementation without major violations, considering elections as an important CPA benchmark and the beginning of a democratic process to achieve stability in the Sudan, adding it is the responsibility of the GoNU and the NEC to ensure a free and fair process. *Al-Rai Al-Aam* reports the SRSR as saying that postponement of elections would have a negative impact on the implementation of the remaining CPA benchmarks such as the referendum. With regard to the ballot printing, *Akhbar Al-Youm* reports that UNMIS had denied participation in the decision for printing the ballot cards inside Sudan, saying the decision was taken by the NEC without consulting with the UNDP.

### **SRSR Haile Menkerios promises secure elections**

*Miraya FM* 28/3/10 - UNMIS will provide nationwide security and stability to allow the Sudanese people to vote freely during April's elections. The statement was made on Sunday by the newly appointed UN Secretary General's Special Representative to Sudan, Haile Menkerios who further said that UNMIS will continue to coordinate with the Sudanese Government to ensure a conducive environment for the elections.

Menkerios, speaking in Khartoum highlighted possible security threats in Darfur particularly where fighting is still continuing. He cited flash areas along the north and south border and certain areas in the south as risky security zones.

Conflicts in the South, he observed, were more localized, adding that clashes were usually within or between communities. He also noted that some communities have differences with the SPLA and that southerners have been threatened while campaigning.

The SRSG further said that violence, wherever in Sudan, will be mitigated if not prevented as it will affect the ability of people to vote.

### **SRSG stresses national ownership of upcoming elections**

**UN News Centre** 28/3/10 - The new head UNMIS reiterated today his call for the national elections to be carried out next month as scheduled, but stressed that any decision to delay should be made entirely by Government officials and the electoral institution.

“Elections need to take place according to timelines subscribed by the CPA [Comprehensive Peace Agreement], and they have to be conducted in a conducive atmosphere to ensure a free and fair process,” said Haile Menkerios today in Khartoum, in his first press conference since becoming the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) and head of UNMIS.

“The CPA, however, is an agreement by the two Parties. And should the two Parties decide whether to have the elections on time or should they want to postpone them for a time, it is up to them,” the Special Representative added.

He also told reporters that it was his understanding that the presidency would meet on Tuesday to review a request by political parties for postponement of the elections currently scheduled to take place from 11 to 13 April.

Speaking to reporters, Mr. Menkerios stressed that the elections are a Sudanese process led by the governments and the NEC with the UN providing only technical assistance and limited logistical support – as mandated by the Security Council – to the authorities staging the ballot. “The election in all its aspects is a totally nationally owned process,” he said.

“While the responsibility to provide security during elections lies with the Governments of National Unity, and the Government of Southern Sudan in its area, our peacekeeping forces will also assist in enhancing security in areas where threats of armed confrontation may exist,” Mr. Menkerios said.

Mr. Menkerios also stressed that the UN does not have a monitoring role in the elections. That role will be filled by various independent observer groups, both international and national, accredited by the NEC that will perform monitoring functions and report accordingly.

When asked what he thought of the decision to print electoral ballots at the National Printing Press in Khartoum, which is being criticized by some opposition activists, Mr. Menkerios said that decision rests solely with the NEC.

### **Darfur rebels say shot down two helicopters, army deny**

**Sudan Tribune website** 28/3/10– SLM-AW said today they shot down two helicopters in Jebel Marra, South Darfur, however the Sudanese army denied the rebel claim saying it was a technical failure.

Sudanese army had intensified air and ground attacks on the positions of SLM-AW who remains the sole rebel group out of the peace process. Thousands of civilians fled the area seeking humanitarian assistance in other parts of the restive region.

"Our troops near Kaloking, 18 klm from Kass in southwest area of Jebel Marra, South Darfur State, opened fire on four military helicopters yesterday Saturday. We successfully shot two, one crashed near Mray Genkiah, north of Kass and the other near Toringa south of Kass."

Speaking by Satellite telephone to Sudan Tribune from the region commander Al-Sadiq Rekero added the two choppers burnt totally. He said they were looking for the pilots as the two planes crashed at 15 kilometers from the area where they shot the choppers.

In Khartoum, the Sudanese army spokesperson Al-Soarmi Khalid Saad confirmed the incident but said the two planes crashed for technical malfunction.

The military official said the first helicopter fell due to technical failure as it was flying at low altitude while the second, which landed to rescue the crew of the first, caught fire after sand got into the engine, he said in a short statement to **SUNA**.

The hybrid peacekeeping force in Darfur did not release any statement about the incident. The Sudanese warplanes participate regularly in attacks on rebel positions in Darfur violating UN Security Council resolutions banning offensive flying.

### **Sudan government and JEM trade accusation over stalled peace talks**

**Sudan Tribune website** 28/3/10 — The Sudanese Government and the JEM exchanged accusations over the failure to break the deadlock in the current peace talks in N'djamena and Doha.

Amin Hassan Omer who is Khartoum's chief negotiator in the Darfur talks was quoted by SUNA as saying that JEM signed a goodwill agreement "but is practicing the exact opposite on the ground".

He further said that JEM did not release government POWs as it has committed in the accord they signed.

JEM leader Khalil Ibrahim has pushed a negotiation paper to Sudanese presidential adviser Ghazi Salah Al-Deen Al-Attabani in N'djamena containing demands for posts including Vice president, federal ministers, diplomats, judges and other civil service positions.

Ibrahim is currently in Doha for talks with his negotiating team in which he reportedly told them that the truce agreed upon is obsolete.

Sudan's chief peace negotiator said his government is committed to finalizing an agreement before April 5 or adjourn talks till after the new elected government takes over.

JEM spokesperson Ahmed Hussein on his end blasted Khartoum accusing it of preparing for a new military offensive. "There is an airlift from areas of Damazin, Gadaref, North and South Kordofan and Khartoum and sent to El-Geniena in West Darfur" adding that enforcements are building up for days.

The rebel official added that Khartoum is under pressure from opposition parties internally leading to disagreements within the NCP making it difficult to reach a compromise with JEM. Hussein also accused Khartoum of breaching the ceasefire agreement despite JEM being committed to it and rejected setting a deadline for concluding the talks as set forth by the government delegation.

According to **Sudan Vision** 29/3/10, the Government confirmed that 5th April will be a deadline to end negotiations with both JEM and LJM.

### **“We want mechanism more effective than the ICC” – Darfur movement**

Darfur's Justice and Liberation Movement Chairman Al-Tijani Al-Sesi said his movement is preparing a proposal for the establishment of a mechanism more effective than the ICC to achieve justice for the people of Darfur but declined to elaborate, **Ajras Al-Hurriah** reports.

### **Nuba warns Kiir over possible SPLM disintegration**

**Sudan Tribune website** 28/3/10 — A leader from Nuba Mountains, who fought equally with Southerners during the two decades of civil war, has warned today in a stern statement of possible disintegration of the SPLM if it does not handle the current situation carefully.

"I have observed and saw that possibilities of SPLM disintegrating into smaller and weaker factions, like what happens in Darfur, are at the verge of coming into reality," said Yusuf Hassan, a leader of Miri section in Nuba Mountains in Khartoum. "My observations are that SPLM will be disintegrating if Salva Kiir, the leader of the Movement, is not careful to address sensitive issues at the earliest possible time based on popular understanding and compromises;" he stressed.

He further stated that loyalists and real war veterans will be getting disciplined and suspended from the party indefinitely by the same comrades with influence from group of interest and families. "They will finish themselves one by one through disagreements and dismissals hence leaving SPLM susceptible to weakness," he adds. I am saying this because SPLM chairman in the Southern Kordofan State, Abdal Aziz Adam Al-Hilu, fired chunks of long and committed SPLM members recently on allegations that they are becoming dishonest and serving interest of the NCP without verifying it.

However, Yusuf did not reveal which loyalists were being targeted and dismissed indefinitely from Nuba reiterating that there are signs suggesting possible disintegration of the SPLM if immediate actions with precautions are not taken.

Nuba resentment of the SPLM is building, as many feel the Movement has "betrayed" them. Also the appointment of Abdel Aziz Hilu, a Massalit's son from West Darfur, as deputy governor by Salva Kiir last year had been seen by many as another betrayal from the SPLM leadership.

### **Troops, cash needed to fight Uganda rebels-group**

**Reuters** 28/3/10 - The United Nations must boost peacekeeping forces in areas of Africa where LRA rebels operate to stop massacres such as one that killed more than 300 people in December, a rights group said.

The Ugandan rebel group has killed and abducted people on a regular basis for the last 23 years, from Uganda, Sudan, CAR and DRC, Human Rights Watch noted in a report.

It said the United Nations has fewer than 1,000 peacekeepers in these vast and often impenetrable areas where the rebels mount their attacks.

The UN says the LRA killed more than 1,200 people in a 10-month period throughout 2008 and 2009, while the rights group puts the death toll in a massacre previously unreported in the remote northeast last December at 321.

"The four-day rampage demonstrates that the LRA remains a serious threat to civilians and is

not a spent force, as the Ugandan and Congolese governments claim," Anneke Van Woudenberg, a senior researcher at HRW, said.

HRW also wants the Congolese government to work with mobile phone companies to bring network coverage to the area.

One witness cycled 60 km (40 miles) to find a telephone to inform the UN of the massacre, and villages that were subsequently attacked knew nothing of nearby attacks.

Other recommendations in its report charting LRA atrocities, released late on Saturday, include donor funding for a comprehensive strategy, better coordination, community radio, helicopter support and deploying elite military groups.

"High-level attention, bold steps and courageous leadership are necessary to develop and implement a comprehensive regional strategy that resolves the LRA threat," said the report, which said one source of hope comes from the U.S. government.

The U.S. military's African Command (Africom) provides communications, logistical and intelligence support for Uganda's national army in its pursuit of the LRA, and the U.S. is considering legislation to ensure a strategy to catch the LRA leadership.

"The number of peacekeepers we have on the ground is already not enough to cover Congo, but it's not only about blue helmets -- we need more cooperation among the three countries in the fight against the LRA," a spokesman for the U.N. mission, known as MONUC, said.

### **Party leader receives threat**

**Rai Al-Shaab** reports that Chairman of the Islamic Moderate Party Yousif Al-Koda has received repeated threats from unknown persons. It is worth mentioning that Al-Koda has earlier announced that in Islam there is no immunity for persons who commit war crimes, adding that all those who have committed war crimes in Darfur including Al-Bashir should appear before hybrid courts.

Meanwhile, **Al-Akhbar** reports Al-Koda has said that Takfir (to declare a person infidel) is the authority of legal courts not clerics, warning against the issuance of "Takfir fatwas" in politics and elections.

### **Egypt expands anti-smuggling efforts to Sudanese border**

**The Jerusalem Post** 29/3/10 - Defense Ministry official says significant forces have been deployed with the aim of preventing the smuggling of weapons to Hamas.

Egypt has expanded its efforts to prevent weapons smuggling into the Gaza Strip via its southern border with Sudan, which is where trucks make their way from port cities along Africa's Red Sea coast to the Philadelphia Corridor, The Jerusalem Post has learned.

According to a senior Defense Ministry official, the Egyptian military deployed significant forces along the Egyptian-Sudanese border several weeks ago with the aim of preventing the smuggling of weapons to Hamas in the Gaza Strip.

One of the main routes used by Iran to smuggle weapons to Hamas in Gaza starts at ships which dock in ports in Eritrea and Sudan. The cargo is unloaded onto trucks which travel through the Sudanese desert, up through Egypt and the Sinai Peninsula until they reach the Philadelphia Corridor, a 14-kilometer strip along the border which is home to hundreds of



smuggling tunnels used by Hamas to move weapons and explosives into Gaza.

According to the official, the turning point for Egypt which reinforced its decision to crack down on Hamas's smuggling apparatus was in January when Hamas shot and killed an Egyptian border guard. Following the incident, Egypt also stepped up its work on the steel underground wall it is building along the Philadelphia Corridor to cut off the tunnels.

Work on the wall started in late 2009 and is being done with assistance from American military engineers who have helped the Egyptians bury special tunnel-detection sensors along the underground metal wall. The Egyptians have already built close to two km. of the wall and will likely complete the construction by the end of the year. The wall reaches depths of about 25 meters.

"Egypt is now operating against the entire smuggling route," the senior Defense Ministry official said. "They are building the wall along the border with Gaza and have beefed up military forces along the border with Sudan."