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# Media Monitoring Report

United Nations Mission in Sudan/ Public Information Office

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# Highlights

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## **Sudan's Bashir threatens southern referendum**

**Reuters** 29/3/10 - Sudan's president warned former southern rebels on Monday that if they refused to take part in April's elections, a southern referendum on secession would not happen, according to comments broadcast on Al Jazeera.

"If the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) refuses to hold elections then we will refuse to hold the referendum," he said during a campaign speech in Khartoum.

"We will not accept a delay to the elections not even for one day," Bashir said. Last week he threatened to expel international observers who asked for any delay to the presidential and legislative polls due to start on April 11.

The only international long-term observer mission, the Carter Center, had said a short delay may be necessary because of logistical problems including hundreds of thousands of missing names from the electoral register.

The opposition wants the polls delayed until November. They cite a continued conflict in Darfur and unresolved complaints of electoral irregularities.

The north-south civil war that began in 1983 claimed an estimated 2 million lives and destabilized much of east Africa. Most analysts believe the south will vote for independence in 2011.

In a further sign of the deterioration in relations between the northern and southern authorities, who formed a coalition government in 2005, a rare meeting of the presidency scheduled for Tuesday in Khartoum was abruptly cancelled.

"There was no agreement on the agenda to be raised to the presidency," Abdallah Masar, an advisor to Bashir, told Reuters late on Monday.

"There are differences over the elections - the NCP says the elections must happen on time," he added.

When relations between the north-south partners hit a wall, the presidency usually meets and resolves the differences. The decision to cancel the meeting indicates how far apart their positions are less than two weeks ahead of the polls.

According to **Sudan Tribune website** 29/3/10, the SPLM SG Pagan Amum told the independent **Al-Sahafa** that he along with SPLM VP Riek Machar, SPLM Deputy SG and presidential nominee Yasir Arman, foreign minister Deng Alor are meeting with presidential assistant Nafie Ali Nafie who is part of the NCP leadership.

Amum said the participants discussed the opposition memo and the role played by the National Elections Commission (NEC) and violations it committed that go in favor of the NCP. He added that both sides have not reached a common ground.

Today, the top official for the Southern Sector of the SPLM, Ann Itto, said her party had been worried by recent irregularities in the electoral process.

In a press conference on Monday, Itto said ballot papers were being printed in Khartoum instead of in other countries, such as the Republic of South Africa, as previously believed. Ballot papers for posts of three executive levels that include President of the Republic, President of the Government of Southern Sudan and state governors were being printed in Khartoum, she explained. She added that such printing had been taking place in money mints "totally controlled by the NCP".

Itto expressed skepticism whether all of the printed ballot papers had been handed over to the National Elections Commission (NEC) or some of them might have been taken somewhere else.

The NEC said a bid for printing the voting slips was advertised and two Sudanese companies secured it and that due to time constraints one set of the cards was diverted from a Slovenian company to a Sudanese one stressing that at each step this process was made with the participation of UNMIS elections office.

The opposition parties said this clearly shows the collaboration between the NEC and NCP to defraud the elections and noted that cost of printing locally costs five times as much to print abroad.

An internal UN document obtained by the Sudanese opposition, however, warned of a potential "conflict of interest" in allowing the state-owned press to print the ballots.

### **SPLM informs opposition their petition rejected by NCP**

*Al-Ayyam* reports that SPLM informed the opposition forces (Juba Alliance) that the NCP has rejected their petition pushing for postponement of elections. The SPLM also informed the alliance that the NCP position was that there was no need for a Presidency meeting. However, sources told the paper that FVP Salva Kiir is due in Khartoum today to take part in the Presidency meeting.

### **SPLM not joining calls for election delay**

*VoA 29/03/10* - The SPLM says southerners are "ready" for April elections and that it is not supporting calls from northern opposition parties for the vote to be postponed.

Sudan People's Liberation Movement Deputy Secretary-General Anne Itto told reporters in Juba the SPLM wants elections held on time.

"We are not only concerned about delays of election that might affect the [independence] referendum, but we feel like this is the time for elections, and our people are ready, and we do not want our people to be disappointed. SPLM has never requested for elections to be delayed," Itto said.

Itto said points of concern raised by the opposition forces are "genuine," but that resolving them does not necessarily require pushing back the polls.

"Other political parties have issues, but most of them can be addressed without having to postpone the elections. We want those issues addressed, but it does not mean that we want elections postponed. We recognize there are issues, but they can be addressed," Itto said.

Itto said Mr. Kiir will discuss with Mr. Bashir concerns over the fairness of ballots printed in Khartoum, the abilities of international observers to freely monitor the vote, and feared presidential powers to declare a state of emergency.

## Candidates threaten collective action against NEC

Ten candidates for president, at press conference yesterday, threatened to take "collective action" should the NEC fail to respond to their demands within 72 hours including the formation of a committee to probe irregularities within the Commission, *local dailies* report. According to *Al-Khartoum*, the presidential candidates, at press conference yesterday, accused the NCP of attempting to rig the elections. The candidates revealed that they had received official documents from the UN indicating that the printing of the ballot paper inside Sudan was the Commission's decision and that the process was funded by the Government after the UN refused to fund the printing inside the Sudan.

Meanwhile, the presidential candidates signed yesterday a statement demanding the formation of an "independent body to audit the NEC", *Reuters* reports.

It said the awarding of the printing contracts to a government firm had given the NCP full control over the key registration process. "This is very serious and underlines that there is absolutely no transparency whatsoever," said opposition Umma Party Spokesperson Mariam al-Mahdi.

Mubarak al-Fadil, a presidential candidate opposing Bashir, said his supporters had seen the NCP still registering people, accusing it of adding more names to the register.

"This is very worrying indeed because this confirms that the registration was fiddled with," he said. "This explains how they (NCP) were doing a parallel registration, and still are - because they had direct access to the books."

The NCP criticised the opposition for doubting the integrity of a national institution like the Sudanese Currency Printing Press and accused them of trying to sabotage the polls.

"To use printing of (ballot) papers as a forgery element in elections you need to put them inside the ballot box ... (which) is being observed by ... the political parties and observers from international organisations," said senior NCP official Ibrahim Ghandour.

He said the NCP were going house to house registering supporters, not adding to the electoral register.

## Lam Akol says GoSS authorities obstructing his election campaign

*Sudan tribune website 29/3/10* – SPLM-DC leader Lam Akol has accused southern Sudan security forces of obstructing his electoral campaign in Wau saying they arrested nine of his team members including journalists and security staff.

In a press conference held in Khartoum on Monday, party leader Lam Akol said security officials in Wau had detained and beaten nine members of his team including two journalists and the security members before they were released.

Party Secretary-General Charles Kisanga also complained about difficulties they face in other southern Sudan states. "We also wanted to go to Rumbek and Yambio but were told that SPLM has a plan to visit these areas too;" and authorities in Yambio "have completely denied us access urging that airstrip is under construction but information we have indicated that it is being used." Concluding "These are tactics to deny us to conduct our rallies so that we cannot reach potential supporters and voters," he stressed.

George Garang Deng, the Undersecretary at the Ministry of Information and communication service, in Juba, on Monday 29, said he did not hear about the arrest of Dr. Lam Akol as circulated in the media.

"What I heard to have happened was that he was found to have more body guards, all well armed by airport authorities in collaboration with national intelligence and security service," Garang said. He (Akol) was neither touched nor taken for questioning but was kindly and officially approached to explain why he had more than the authorized number of bodyguards,"

he added.

### **Southern Sudanese holds inter-party political conference**

**Juba Post** 29/03/10 - Due to the conflicts between party nominees and independent candidates, Eastern Equatorial State held a two-day political conference bringing together party representatives and independents in the state capital Torit. The event was organised under the theme "Choose the ballot but not bullet".

The conference was organized by Pact Sudan and south Sudan law societies and brought together the caretaker Governor of Eastern Equatoria, the chairman of the state electoral high committee, representatives of southern Sudanese political parties and independent candidates. The organisers sought to contribute towards a conducive environment for peaceful, free and fair elections in Eastern Equatoria and to prepare their candidates for mature co-existence and collaboration after the elections for a united, peaceful, democratic and prosperous southern Sudan.

### **Pro-election walkathon event kicks off in Juba**

**Sudan Tribune website** 29/3/10 - Deng Foundation, a civil service organization in partnership with the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports is organizing the first ever walkathon in Juba, the South Sudan capital in support of the forthcoming general elections.

The event, earmarked for Saturday, April 03, is exclusively sponsored by White Bull in joint partnership with the Joint Donor Team, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and World Vision.

Daniel Deng, the foundation Chairman said the pro-election walkathon exercise is in line with its mission to entertain, educate and mobilize citizens to turnout in large numbers and peacefully participate in the April elections as well as the forthcoming referendum.

"We shall use dialogues, campaigns, concerts, and walkathons to deliver neutral civic and voter education messages," Mr. Deng, the foundation Chairman told journalists.

### **Al-Bashir campaigns in Bentiu**

**Al-Sahafa** reports that NCP candidate for president Omer Al-Bashir has reiterated that the elections would be held on schedule. Addressing a campaign rally yesterday in Bentiu, Unity State, Al-Bashir said that the election is a CPA benchmark and that the parties have committed to implementing it. He promised not return to war.

A key member of the NCP's southern sector reports that the SPLA had attempted to bar citizens in Matdid, Faryang and Mayom counties from attending the rally.

### **Carter Center should not be expelled over report - NEC**

**Al-Intibaha** reports that NEC Deputy Chairman Abdullah Ahmed, in response to a question on whether the polls would be delayed should the meeting of the Presidency decide that such action was warranted, he said, "I would not respond to this question"

On the Carter Center report, the NEC Deputy Chairman acknowledged that some names have indeed dropped out of the voter registry for Warrap State as reported by the Center. He hailed the Center and the role it plays and pointed out that despite reservations over some aspects of the Carter Center's report, such errors could not be resolved by expelling the organisation.

### **SPLM says NCP is threaten its candidates in Khartoum**

SPLM yesterday said its candidates in Khartoum received threats from NCP supporters, **Al-Ayyam** reports. SPLM candidate for governor of Khartoum state Edward Lino warned that SPLM would retaliate if the NCP used violence against its candidates.

## Other Highlights

### **Presidency denies Al-Bashir unhappy with AL summit in Libya**

The Presidency yesterday categorically denied claims that President Al-Bashir returned to Khartoum unhappy with Arab League summit meeting held in Libya because of failing to condemn the ICC, *Al-Sahafa* reports. Adviser to Information Minister Rabie Abdul Atti said Al-Bashir's return home before the conclusion of the summit was normal, necessitated by his domestic engagement.

### **Sudan 2nd VP Taha meets with Mbeki**

**Sudan Tribune website 29/3/10** - The Sudanese 2nd Vice President Ali Osman Taha, today received the former South African president and Chairman of the AU High Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP) Thabo Mbeki and discussed a range of issues including the recent Darfur reconstruction conference held in Cairo.

Mbeki was quoted by Sudan state media as telling reporters afterwards that his meeting with Taha was "fruitful and constructive," noting that he briefed the 2nd VP on the outcome of the International Donors Conference on Support for Rehabilitation and development in Darfur.

The AUHIP chair said that the conference was successful and that significant funds were committed by the donors "in support of peace, development and rehabilitation in Darfur". He pledged to follow up fulfillment of the donors to their financial commitments.

The conference raised less than half the targeted \$2 billion for development in Sudan's violent western region after several countries refrained from pledging over security worries.

Mbeki further said that he also briefed Taha on his visit to the headquarters of the European Union (EU) in Brussels, adding that he urged the European governments to work with Khartoum for realizing peace and development in Darfur.

During the conference Mbeki representing the African Union, noted Sudan faces presidential elections next month and a referendum on Southern Sudan's independence next year.

"We cannot fail to assist Sudan during her hour of need," he said. "This is because such failure, if it were allowed to occur, would have serious negative consequences for generations to come."

AUHIP was tasked with implementing all aspects of the AUPD recommendations and assist the Sudanese parties in the implementation of the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) and other related processes, as part of the democratic transformation of Sudan.

### **JEM rebels say ready for peace talks, warn of return to war**

**Sudan Tribune website 29/3/10** – JEM leader has accused Sudanese Government of stalling the peace process in Doha and warned his group may return to war if talks fail.

Khalil Ibrahim arrived since three days to Doha after the failure of meetings held in the Chadian capital with the Sudanese presidential adviser in charge of Darfur file Ghazi Salah Al-Deen. The discussion deadlocked on the power sharing issue where they failed to agree.

Chad which brokered the framework agreement did not succeed to persuade the Sudanese parties to reach a compromise on the power sharing. Chad reportedly stopped its efforts and asked the two stakeholders to negotiate directly in Doha.

In a press conference held in Doha today, Khalil Ibrahim reiterated the readiness of his group to negotiate with the Sudanese government but warned they would return to arms if the Doha talks

are not concluded successfully.

"We are still negotiating, and if the government is serious about wanting to achieve peace, then we are ready," he said. "But if peace is not reached, our position is known, and our aim is to change the regime of (President Omer) Al-Bashir. It is either a fair and comprehensive peace or we carry on with our regime change project," he added.

Sudanese Government and JEM rebels signed a framework agreement in Doha on February 23 including a ceasefire agreement. They also agreed to reach a peace agreement on March 15. However, the signatories failed to ink the peace deal as pledged.

Instead of negotiating, strong distrust between the two parties pushed JEM to refuse any separate talks with a new rebel group formed the same day where they signed the framework agreement. The two parties failed also to hold direct negotiations to implement the framework agreement particularly the ceasefire agreement.

Ibrahim accused the government of violating the ceasefire several times adding that Sudanese army has undertaken military buildup and preparing for war. Khartoum also said the rebel group violated the ceasefire for twenty times since February 23.

On the other hand, the rebel leader minimized the demand of election postponement stressing that holding elections before the end of Darfur conflict would complicate ongoing efforts to reach a peaceful solution.

Khalil said that Sudanese Government has refused to pay \$1500 as individual compensation for every affected person. He also said Khartoum rejected the formation of a joint force to secure the return of IDPs and refugees to their homeland.

He further said JEM demands to maintain its troops during the interim period because it has a large army and it would be difficult to integrate it easily in the regular forces.

He also reiterated his call for the reinstatement of the former system of territorial administration when the country had been divided to nine provinces

Khalil urged Abdel Wahid Al-Nur, the leader of the rebel SLM-AW to join the peace process in order to reach a comprehensive settlement for the seven year conflict in the ravaged region.