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Media Monitoring Report

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Post-Referendum Watch

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Highlights

Abyei is part of the North, Luka Biong is a northerner - Bashir

Akhir Lahza 4/4/11 – President Al-Bashir, addressing the 5th convention of the Sudanese Workers Trade Unions Federation yesterday, said Abyei is part of the North and Dr. Luka Biong (Cabinet Affairs Minister) is a northern citizen. “After July 9, we will part ways with our southern brothers except Luka Biong”, he said, adding that the North would respect the new state in the South.

The President called upon the workers to put their accumulated experience at the disposal of the South.

UNMIS future will be decided by July 2011

Al-Rai Al-Aam et al Khartoum, 04/04/11 – Foreign Minister Ali Karti said following a meeting yesterday with visiting German minister of cooperation and economic development that the future of UNMIS troops would be decided by the end of July 2011.

Al-Ahram Al-Youm 4/4/11 reports that the German official has enquired about the future of UNMIS and the Sudanese Foreign Minister told him that the matter was being looked into based on whether there was a need for such troops. Karti said that so far indications were that there was no need for these troops.

President Bashir and Kiir intervene to resolve crisis over southern MPs

Al-Sahafa 4/4/11- GoSS President Salva Kiir Mayardit is to hold a decisive meeting today with southern members of the National Assembly in the presence of Cabinet Affairs Minister Luka Biong (SPLM) to discuss the crisis over their membership.

While NCP leading figure Mohamed Al-Hassan revealed that President Al-Bashir, VP Ali Osman Taha and Chairman of the NCP Parliamentary group Ghazi Salahuedin would hold a meeting today with National Assembly Speaker Ahmed Ibrahim Al-Tahir in a bid to resolve the crisis, National Assembly Deputy Speaker Atem Garang (SPLM) said the southern MPs would leave the House immediately after President Al-Bashir inaugurates the new session.

Cabinet Affairs Minister Luka Biong has urged GoSS President Kiir to withdraw all SPLM ministers from the central government except the ministers of oil, humanitarian affairs and higher education, questioning the utility of their continued presence in the executive.

The Southern Sudan Legislative Assembly (SSLA) is to hold a meeting today to take an official position on the decision by the National Assembly Speaker Ahmed Ibrahim Al-Tahir to terminate membership of the southern MPs before July 9.

According to *Al-Rai Al-Aam* 4/4/11, Biong has confirmed the issuance of a decision by the Presidency instructing the continuation of all institutions until the end of the interim period including the membership of the southern MPs. He said the decision by the National Assembly Speaker Ahmed Ibrahim Al-Tahir to terminate their membership contradicts the Presidency's

directive. "It seems Al-Tahir did not receive the Presidency's decision," he said. Al-Tahir, however, declined to comment.

The southern MPs have reportedly refused to receive their entitlements from the House and said they would not attend today's session.

"We tried to overcome key issues regarding sacked membership of MPs in the National Assembly but it seems there is a legal problem in interpreting article 118 for continuation of CPA institutions," Biong said after a meeting with Al-Tahir, according to *Sudan Vision* 4/4/11.

"Our view in the government and SPLM is that we want to build a bridge between the executive and legislature as we believe that the coming period requires more common work," he added.

"I do understand the Speaker's position but we seek to create a bridge between the executive and legislative arms of government and we hope the parliament will follow in the footsteps of the executive and allow southern MPs participate until 9th July," he said, according to *Al-Ahram Al-Youm* 4/4/11.

"What I heard from the Speaker is, pursuant to Article 118 of the Constitution, it is difficult for the National Assembly to accept us as members of the House," he added.

Head of the SPLM parliamentary bloc, Thomas Wani, said that southern lawmakers would boycott the opening session of parliament today, adding they would not consent to attending the Parliament "as guests".

Nafie to launch NCP campaign for S. Kordofan gubernatorial post

Al-Sahafa 4/4/11 – The NCP will launch today the election campaign of its candidate for the post of governor of southern Kordofan state.

Presidential aide and deputy chairman of the National Congress Party, Nafie Ali Nafie, will kick off today in Kadugli the campaign of Ahmed Haroun, the incumbent governor of southern Kordofan and NCP's candidate for the post.

NCP deputy chairman in the state, Mohi Al-Din Al-Tom said the party had planned a strong campaign to win votes for its candidates, adding that around 10,000 party leaders and members are expected to take part in the launch of today's campaign.

Meanwhile, *Al-Khartoum* 4/4/11 reports the SPLM in southern Kordofan has finalized preparations to contest complementary elections for executive and legislative posts in the state.

Mohamadein Ibrahim Yagoub, SPLM official spokesperson, said the movement had trained over 6,000 observers and agents to prevent rigging and moral corruption during all phases of the electoral process. He added that the SPLM would kick off its election campaign, codenamed "hope and change" on Thursday in presence of its southern and northern sector leaders.

In a related development, *Al-Raed* 4/4/11 reports Chairman of the Elections Commission in southern Kordofan state Adam Abideen as saying that 49 candidates withdrew from the race including 28 independent candidates, 10 from the Umma Party, 5 from the Justice Party, one

each from the DUP, Umma Reform and Development Party and Bathist Party. He said that after these candidates have withdrawn, 54 candidates from the NCP and 53 from the SPLM would contest elections in the state.

North Sudan: DUP threatens to join regime-change seekers

Sudan Tribune website 3/4/11 - The Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) in north Sudan has shifted its tone towards the ruling National Congress Party (NCP) and threatened to seek regime change should the latter rejects a draft constitution the DUP intends to put forward in their next round of talks.

The wave of revolts currently convulsing the Middle East has also stoked discontent and doubled pressure on the NCP, which is attempting to create rifts within the coalition of mainstream opposition parties by holding bilateral dialogue with the DUP and the National Umma Party (NUP) led by former prime minister Al-Sadiq al-Mahdi.

Under the leadership of Mohamed Osman Al-Mirghani, the DUP has been facing speculations that the party is likely to agree on a power-sharing deal with the NCP.

But Ali Ahmad Al-Said, a senior member of the DUP, on Sunday strongly denied that his party was engaged in power-sharing talks with the NCP.

“Any talk on participation is not an option for us,” Al-Said asserted, adding that his party’s dialogue with the NCP was confined to discussing “a new constitution.”

According to Al-Said, the draft constitution that his party intends to put forward would contain demands for conducting early elections and placing a two-year limit on presidential and parliamentary terms.

Should the NCP rejects the draft constitution, Ali Al-Said warned, his party would join those calling for a regime change.

“We are moving in [two] specific pathways: one is negotiations and the other is regime change” the DUP’s leading member said, indicating that some of the party’s top leadership “totally rejects dialogue with the NCP and supports the regime-change option.”

“If the NCP rejects the constitution, we would give preference to the choice of regime change” Al-Said said. “It will either be democracy or confrontation,” he added.

Ali Al-Said went on to criticize the NCP, saying that its mentality does not comprehend the importance of dialogue and that some of its members deal with it as a “means to buy more time.”

The DUP threat follows another threat issued on Friday by the NUP leader Al-Sadiq al-Mahdi who warned the NCP against facing a popular uprising if it does not conclude talks with his party within a week.

Meanwhile, the NCP’s political secretary Ibrahim Ghandour said that change in Sudan is conditional upon consensus among political parties.

Ghandour further called on political forces to agree with the government's programs and the established cornerstones of religion and patriotism.

NCP committed to dialogue with political forces

Sudan Vision 4/4/11 - The National Congress Party (NCP) has stressed its commitment to dialogue with various political forces as a method to address the many complex issues of the homeland.

Sheila said, in a press statement yesterday, "We are working on the order of our conditions after separation to cope with the event and the preparation of the Constitution to accommodate these new developments with the participation of parties," adding, "We have a vision to be presented to these parties, to be discussed collectively or individually or through organizations of civil society [on] overall issues on the future of the Permanent Constitution."

The ruling National Congress Party (NCP) has affirmed that its visions are very much similar to that of the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) regarding a permanent constitution for the country.

Mr. Jamal Mahmud Ibrahim, the rapporteur of the NCP currently engaged in dialogue with the DUP pointed out that there is a big similarity between papers presented by the two parties following their exchange in a recent meeting, considering that the issue of constitution is a political and legal matter.

"We will hold a dialogue on these papers then we will sit to demonstrate our notes to arrange agenda to be negotiated," he said.

In a response to a question on contentious issues Ibrahim stated that there were no contentious issues but the argument was about two papers proposed by two parties to each other, and that the two parties will come to a meeting on Monday to express their observations on the other side's paper.

Other Highlights

Turabi's wife says government opposed to his release for fear of uprisings

Sudan Tribune website 3/4/11 - The Sudanese government is keeping leader of the Popular Congress Party (PCP) Hassan Al-Turabi in jail without charges beyond the maximum time allowed under the law for fear that freeing him will trigger a popular uprising, his wife said.

A senior official at the ruling National Congress Party (NCP) said last month that Turabi's arrest was made for security reasons and is not politically motivated.

"[Sudanese President Omer Hassan] Al-Bashir was going to let him go because of the law but Nafie [Ali Nafie the presidential assistant] convinced him not to because this may cause people to take the streets and overthrow the government in light of political changes in the region," Turabi's wife Wisal told Sudan Tribune by phone.

"This is against the law. We cannot resort to courts because they will not serve justice. Even the judges of constitutional court do not have the courage to rule against the government which pays

them their salaries," she added.

There has been attempts by Islamist leaders from Egypt, Palestine and Jordan to convince the Sudanese president to release Turabi but were rejected.

The PCP chief has been in and out of jail since his split from Bashir's ruling party in 1999/2000. Reasons for his arrests included allegations that he is the main backer of the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) which is fighting the government in Darfur.

Turabi's wife expressed concern over the conditions he is encountering in jail. "He is 79 years old suffering from high blood pressure that he acquired while in prison last year. He is kept in a very small cell that he can barely fit in," Wisal said.

"Because of a burst sewer pipes, people in jail have to walk through the sewage creating a very unhealthy environment for anyone let alone someone at his age," she added.

She called on human right groups to put pressure on Khartoum to release Turabi and other PCP members who were jailed with him.

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