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Media Monitoring Report

United Nations Mission in Sudan/ Public Information Office

Referendum Watch

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Highlights

SSRC denies requesting referendum delay

Al-Khartoum 5/12/10 – SSRC spokesperson Ms Sua'd Ibrahim Eissa has said that the Commission was committed to the referendum deadline despite the short time. Reacting to reports that the Commission had requested delay of the referendum, she said it was not proper to speak to the media about the correspondence between the SSRC and the Presidency, adding the vote would take place on schedule.

“We are still committed to the deadline;” SSRC chair Prof. Khalil said, adding “the printing is not going to delay the process”.

According to *Reuters* (Khartoum) 2/12/10, the head of the commission organising south Sudan's independence vote intends to ask the country's leaders to delay voting by up to three weeks, his deputy said on Thursday, a move that would anger southerners.

The head of the referendum's organizing commission, Mohammed Ibrahim Khalil, a northerner, told fellow board members he would write to Sudan's president and the leader of the semi-autonomous south asking for a delay, his deputy said...

"The chairman said he was going to write to the presidency to request an extension up to the end of January ... Because of the tight timeframe, he thinks that is it necessary for some extra time," commission deputy chairman Chan Reek Madut said...

Khalil said he could not comment on the contents of any letter between the commission and the presidency and said he was still working hard to meet the Jan. 9 date.

"If the commission addresses a letter to the presidency it would not be proper to say we have asked the presidency to do so and so and so," he told Reuters.

"The question of time has always been in the discussion right from the beginning," he added. "If you get more time we can do this (referendum) more efficiently. If we don't get more time, we will try to make do with what we have got."

Madut, a southerner, said he disagreed with the chairman's assessment that officials could still meet the Jan. 9 deadline, despite a late decision to reopen the bidding for the printing of ballot papers and other logistical delays. "Any extension is unpopular (in the south)," he said...

Over three million voters registered in the South – SPLM

Al-Rai Al-Aam 5/12/10 – SPLM Deputy Secretary General Ms Ann Itto told reporters in Juba yesterday that the number of voters registered in the South has exceeded 3 millions, adding that the registration process was progressing peacefully.

However, *Al-Khartoum* reports SSRC Public Information Officer George Makuer as saying that over two million voters have been registered in southern states and in the northern states the

registered number exceeds 91, 000 voters.

SSRC decries UNMIS control over funds

The Citizen 5/12/10 – the SSRC has decried UNMIS’ control over funds and unilateral appointment of experts in the Commission.

SSRC Information official, George Makuer, said in press statements yesterday that “UNMIS control over the referendum funds is currently a subject of discussion and understandings between the Mission and the Commission to find solutions,”

Makuer unveiled that the SSRC is renting few cars, less than what is actually needed, saying “had they been in control of the funds they could have bought more cars”.

Secession inevitable, Abyei will not be given up – Deng Alor

Al-Khartoum 5/12/10 – The SPLM has accused the NCP of circumventing the PCA ruling on Abyei territory by voicing its recognition of the ruling and at the same time claiming the territory referred to in the ruling belongs to the Dinka and part of the Messeriya.

SPLM leading figure Deng Alor, in an interview to the newspaper, revealed that had it not been for a stern order from Salva Kiir himself, the SPLA would have overrun the territory during the recent incidents. He said the borders specified by the ruling would not be given up, adding that the SPLM has no objection to the participation of resident Misseriya in the vote but opposes the participation of the nomads. Alor said secession is now inevitable.

Abyei Administration denounces formation of government by the Misseriya

Al-Watan 5/12/10 - Abyei Assistant Chief Administrator Mr. Achol told the newspaper that the formation of a local government by the Misseriya constitutes a violation of the law, affirming that the security situation in the area is stable, adding that the Area Administration would continue to serve until a referendum commission is set up.

For his part, Mr. Abdul Rahman Al-Dagham, Misseriya-appointed governor of Abyei has criticized the manner the current Administration is running the Area.

Sudan Tribune website 4/12/10 reported that chieftains of Misseriya tribe have established an alternative government to supplant the current administration of the oil-producing area of Abyei, *Al-Sahafa* daily newspaper reported on Thursday...

The new government, which has been scheduled to assume its responsibilities as of 25 December, is composed of 10 ministers. Members of the new government were selected at a meeting held on December 02 in northern Abyei.

The meeting selected Abdul Rahman Bikhtal to head the new government and Tariq Omer Shafiqah as deputy governor.

The move comes in response to an announcement by members of Dinka Ngok tribe last week that they would organize their own referendum if the NCP and the SPLM failed to break the deadlock over Abyei vote.

Tariq Omer, the deputy chairman of the new government, told *Al-Sahafa* that the step was a response to threats by activists of the Denka Ngok tribe...

Abyei residents demonstrate demanding formation of referendum commission

Akhbar Al-Youm 5/12/10 – Civic society organizations staged a demonstration yesterday in Abyei to demand formation of a referendum commission and to denounce threats by the Misseriya tribe that it would occupy the territory on 25 December.

Civic Society Organizations chief Dr. Rao Munil, addressing the crowd, stressed the need for simultaneous referendum in the territory adding that if the organization of the process in Abyei has been hampered they would not allow the Misseriya to enter the Area.

The demonstrators handed over petitions containing their demands to representatives of GoSS, SSLA, Abyei Administration, Abyei Area Legislative Council, SPLM, UNMIS, IGAD, IGAD partners and the international human rights organization.

According to *Al-Sahafa* 5/12/10, the situation in Abyei became tense yesterday after a demonstration staged by the Area's residents to protest President Al-Bashir's statement to the meeting of the NCP Shura (consultation) Council.

Dinka Ngok Chief Kuol Deng Majok told the newspaper that thousands of the Area's residents took to streets yesterday to protest President Al-Bashir's statement to the NCP Shura Council that referendum in the territory would not be conducted without the participation of the Misseriya.

Reliable sources said Misseriya leaders including Abyei Deputy Chief Administrator Rahma Abdul Rahman Al-Nur, Misseriya paramount chief Mukhtar Babu Nimir and Emir Ismail Hamadain have continued their consultation meetings in Khartoum to take a unified position on the Abyei issue.

Sudan Tribune website 3/12/10 reported that Sudan President Omer Al-Bashir warned that attempts to impose "unilateral solutions" to the pending issues in the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) will be catastrophic for both north and south Sudan.

Al-Bashir, who was addressing the opening session of the NCP's consultative council in the capital Khartoum on Thursday, made it clear in his Thursday's address that north Sudan will not accept a referendum in Abyei without the participation of Al-Misseriya.

"We will not accept conduction of a referendum in Abyei area that excludes the Messeriya from voting and we reject their treatment as second class citizens in their lands," he declared.

"Any attempts to impose a unilateral solution to the deadlock over Abyei will lead to disastrous results" Al-Bashir said in response.

Further, Al-Bashir in his speech before the consultative body of the ruling NCP, averred that his party would not attempt to destabilize the south or start war.

"We will not be the ones who initiate the war and we will not work to disturb the stability in the south," Al-Bashir declared.

The leader of north Sudan, which is campaigning to retain the country's unity, urged members of his party to deal "realistically" with the fact of south Sudan's possible secession.

The president sought to contain fears that the economy in north Sudan would collapse after the oil-producing south secedes; saying that north Sudan would compensate the loss with the revenues of exporting the south's oil through pipelines in the north.

President Al-Bashir also wanted to reassure and assuage tension surrounding the issue of citizenship rights in the case of south Sudan secession.

He said that even if southerners opted for secession, "the sentimental unity and social relations between north and south Sudan will remain standing."

Al-Bashir vowed that the rights of southern citizens staying in the north after secession would be safeguarded, saying that his party would not allow anyone to infringe on the rights of southerners in the north, their properties, freedoms and residence regardless of citizenship.

Al-Bashir called on the Government of Southern Sudan to do likewise with northerners staying in the south.

“NCP unveils mechanism to expel international troops after expiry of their mandate”

Akhir Lahza 5/12/10 – The NCP has said that the Government does not intend to extend the mandate of the international troops after the expiry of the interim period.

NCP leading figure and adviser to the Information Minister Dr. Rabie Abdul Atti in statement to the newspaper yesterday said that the international troops would not stay, and accused the US Administration of leading a drive to encircle Sudan and to prolong its crises to divide the country, citing US support to a proposal seeking extension for the international troops on the grounds of instability in the country.

Abdul Atti has called on the Sudanese Government to block attempt by Washington to secure extension by engaging in discussion to decide how to expel the international troops from Sudan and how to resist resolutions calling for extension.

NCP stalls post-referendum negotiations – SPLM

The Citizen 5/12/10 – the SPLM has held its partner the NCP responsible for the stalled negotiations between the two parties on post-referendum arrangements, saying the NCP is hesitant about the talks in a ploy to link it to the 2011 plebiscite.

Ann Itto, Deputy Secretary General for Southern Sector in the SPLM, said the latest round of talks between the economic committees in Switzerland has failed because of the NCP sending indecisive delegates.

“Very little progress has been made on the post-referendum negotiations. The latest talk was

between the economic committees but unfortunately, the NCP sent very low level officials who were only ready to listen to experts and not say anything," Itto told a news conference at southern sector secretariat yesterday.

UN negotiating Sudan peacekeeping force increase: envoy

AFP 2/12/10 - The United Nations is negotiating with Sudan a 2,000 troop increase in the UN peacekeeping force in the country for a tense self-determination referendum, a US envoy said Thursday.

But Susan Rice, US ambassador to the United Nations, said no one has asked for a delay in the January 9 vote which could lead to the breakup of Africa's biggest country.

Rice, whose country is president of the 15-member UN Security Council for December, told a press conference that increasing the UN mission in Sudan strength to 12,000 troops was being "actively considered."

But she added that no formal proposal has been made to the Security Council.

UN officials are negotiating with the Khartoum government and the South Sudan government, the ambassador said. The Khartoum government opposes allowing more international troops in the country.

Rice said the United States, which has warned Sudan about delays, did not yet have an opinion on whether the peacekeeping force should be increased.

She called Sudan "a potentially volatile situation" and said Washington would "look on any (UN) recommendation with urgency and seriousness."

But Rice insisted that neither the United Nations nor "any other responsible body on the ground in Sudan" is proposing a delay in the Referendum.

But Rice said: "My understanding and expectation is that the registration process is continuing, it has gone largely very well in the south, and we are looking forward to and expecting a referendum conducted on January 9."

South Sudan drills its police ahead of referendum

AFP 2/12/10 - Stamping their feet and marching with wooden practice rifles, south Sudanese police recruits are preparing to boost security ahead of a January referendum on the south's potential independence.

Some 6,000 recruits are to be deployed across the south after graduating later this month, the first recruits from the only training centre for the entire south which opened earlier this year.

"When they graduate from here they will be able to carry out the protection of the referendum -- keeping order amongst the people," said camp commander, Colonel Abednego Akol.

"They have been trained in all aspects of policing, but also of course in the referendum code of conduct," Akol added.

The training is being backed by the United Nations and other international donors.

"We see the roll out of police as essential that the referendum is done in a credible way," said Lise Grande, the UN humanitarian coordinator for south Sudan, speaking to reporters during a visit on Thursday to the training centre. "This is an essential element and we have got to get this part right." ...

Another batch of 6,000 recruits have already been selected, ready to undergo training due to begin early next year, with the long-term aim of increasing the total force to about 42,000, officials say.

Civil society organizations launch campaign for dual nationality

Miraya FM 5/12/10 - A number of civil society organizations have launched a campaign to support dual nationality for South and North Sudan in case of a vote for separation in the upcoming Referendum in South Sudan. The campaign, launched in Khartoum on Saturday, also seeks a guarantee for the four freedoms in case of separation.

The Youth Secretary of the Juba Parties Alliance, Addison Joseph Garang, whose organisations is one of those involved, said that the signatures would be sent to the Presidency later. Speaking to Radio Miraya Joseph added that the initiative does not seek to voice support for either unity or separation, but it aiming at preventing the return to war and to support a peaceful referendum.

Presidency to meet tomorrow to discuss Mbeki's proposals on Abyei

Al-Akhbar 5/12/10 – the Presidency is to meet tomorrow to discuss the proposals submitted by Head of AUHIP Thabo Mbeki to resolve dispute over Abyei territory.

NCP leading figure Ibrahim Ghandour said his party was considering the proposals in order to reach comprehensive solution on Abyei. Reportedly, the Presidency meeting, supposed to take place last week was postponed due to President Al-Bashir's participation in NCP Consultative Council meetings.

70 oil engineers in the South resign over security concerns

Al-Intibaha 5/12/10 – reports have confirmed that over 70 northerner oil engineers and workers working with Greater Nile Oil Company in Bentiu area in Unity state have resigned due to the deterioration of the security situations despite the assurances from GoSS VP Riek Machar about their security. According to sources, five Malaysian workers have also ceased working.

Other Highlights

19 killed and 15 injured in a road mishap

Dailies 5/12/10 – 19 passengers were killed and 15 others injured in a traffic accident yesterday on Khartoum-Kosti highway.

Head of Traffic Press Officer Brig. Al-Shazili Mohamed Saeed said the accident was a collision between a bus and mini-bus. He said the accident occurred when the driver of the big bus tried wrongly to overtake a speeding vehicle resulting in a head-on collision with a mini-bus coming

from the opposite direction. All the 16 passengers of the mini-bus were killed in the accident while 3 passengers killed from the big bus including the driver and his assistant.

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