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Media Monitoring Report

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Post-referendum Watch

- GoSS renews amnesty for militia groups (*Akhir Lahza*)
- Elections Commission releases list of candidates in southern Kordofan (*Al-Ayyam*)
- Crisis over southern MPs top item on agenda of Presidency meeting (*Al-Ahdath*)
- NCP is a separatist party – SPLM Atim Garang (*Al-Sudani*)
- Two killed in assassination attempt against senior SPLM official in Warrap (*ST*)
- Juba rejects power sharing - south Sudan opposition (*AFP*)
- JDB to convene last meeting tomorrow in Juba (*Al-Rai Al-Aam*)
- Foreign Ministry calls on the international community to assist in resolving North-South issues (*Al-Wifaq*)
- About 34,000 people flee S. Sudan tribal clashes-UN (*Reuters*)
- Machar directs officials to begin preparations for South independence celebrations (*ST*)

Other Headlines

- Two people killed by unknown missile in Port Sudan (*Dailies*)
- Gunmen kill blue helmet serving with UN-AU mission in Darfur (*UN News*)

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Highlights

GoSS renews amnesty for militia groups

Akhir Lahza 5/4/11 – The Government of South Sudan (GoSS) has renewed an offer of amnesty for militias in a bid to defuse tension in the region.

“The amnesty covers all militias” GoSS Minister of Peace, Pagan Amum, told reporters in Juba yesterday. “Our message to all these militias is that the time has come for them to respond positively to the call for reconciliation. The offer of pardon is still valid and they had better accept it” he added. Amum reiterated that the militias are backed by the North, a charge Khartoum is denying.

Meanwhile, *Al-Intibaha* 6/4/11 reports that thousands of southerners gathered yesterday in “Tor Abyat” area in the Mayom County (Unity state) to declare their support and allegiance to Lt. Gen. Peter Gadet who defected from the SPLA recently. The crowd chanted slogans demanding a change of the GoSS. Gadet has called on the rally to join the protesters to change what he described as a “failed government”.

Elections Commission releases list of candidates in southern Kordofan

Al-Ayyam 6/4/11 – the National Elections Commission has released the final list of election candidates for the post of governor and Legislative Assembly members in southern Kordofan state, saying the total number of candidates is 255 including three who would vie for the governor post.

A press release by the Commission yesterday said 14 political parties would contest the elections in the state.

Meanwhile, *Al-Rai Al-Aam* 6/4/11 reports that an SPLA force made up of 370 soldiers intercepted yesterday a convoy carrying 600 persons heading to participate in the launch of campaign of NCP candidate Ahmed Haroun. The SPLA force blocked the convoy at a location 90 km away from the town of Kadugli yesterday and detained 35 tribal leaders as well as other NCP functionaries who were beaten up and intimidated. Five vehicles were also seized.

Crisis over southern MPs top item on agenda of Presidency meeting

Al-Ahdath 5/4/11 – FVP and GoSS President Salva Kiir Mayardit said the Presidency had earlier reached an agreement on the need for the CPA institutions to continue until the end of the interim period. Kiir met yesterday with SPLM leaders in Juba to discuss the crisis over the southern MPs. According to SPLM Luka Biong, the controversy over southern MPs is on top of the agenda and the Presidency would resolve the problem in its meeting tomorrow in Juba. Biong said Kiir stressed the need for peaceful separation between the North and the South to ensure continuity of relations between them.

Meanwhile, *Al-Sahafa* 6/4/11 reports Kiir has called on the southern MPs to exercise self-restraint in dealing with Khartoum on matters related to the interim period, saying he is committed to the Presidency’s decisions that the CPA institutions should continue until 9th July.

Cabinet Affairs Minister Luka Biong told reporters after a meeting with Kiir that the latter considers Al-Bashir as the President of both the North and the South and that Sudan's flag will continue to fly in the South until the new state is declared.

NCP is a separatist party – SPLM Atim Garang

Al-Sudani 6/4/11 – The SPLM hinted that the South might resort to the International Court should the North block export of oil via its territory.

National Assembly Deputy Speaker Atim Garang told the newspaper that the NCP is a “separatist party” because it localized oil facilities in the North to compel the South to continue depending on it. He pointed out that after secession, the South would enter into talks with the North to reach an agreement on oil and its export via the North's pipelines and territory adding that “if the North refuses, we will go to the international court”.

Meanwhile, the NCP parliamentary group sent a memorandum to the Presidency expressing its support and adherence to the Speaker's decision terminating membership of the southern MPs.

Two killed in assassination attempt against senior SPLM official in Warrap

Sudan Tribune website 5/4/11 - At least two people have been killed in an assassination attempt against a senior member of the South Sudan's governing party, the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), in the State of Warrap, local officials say. Several others are reported to have sustained injuries. The attack took place in Tonj North County, Warrap State on Monday 4 April.

Speaking to Sudan Tribune from the regional capital of Juba, former Warrap state governor, Luis Anei Kueidit, said Tuesday that Aleu Ayeny Aleu, chairperson of the Security Committee in the Juba-based South Sudan Legislative Assembly, narrowly escaped assassination attempt after falling into an ambush laid by unknown gunmen on Monday evening, at around 10:00pm in his constituency while traveling in a convoy of three vehicles between Lurchuk and Pagol.

“One of his bodyguards was shot in a pickup vehicle in which they were traveling and one of these unknown gunmen was subsequently shot dead by the same guard whom they [the attackers] shot”, explained Anei.

According to the official, the attackers opened the fire on the third vehicle after the vehicle carrying Aleu had passed. One his guards was injured and later died in Wau hospital. One of the attackers is believed to have been killed while the rest were able to flee.

Attempts made by Sudan Tribune to reach Aleu failed. However, his brother, Deng Ayeny Aleu confirmed the incident took place...

Juba rejects power sharing: south Sudan opposition

AFP 5/4/11 - South Sudan's opposition leader Lam Akol says the southern ruling party, which accuses him of fomenting unrest, does not believe in power-sharing and blames the army for deadly violence since January.

The former foreign minister, southern president Salva Kiir's leading political adversary, charged

in an AFP interview that the Sudan People's Liberation Movement has repeatedly failed to respect its commitments, and denied having any contact with southern militia groups.

"They don't believe there should be a transitional period, contrary to the agreement that was made during the south-south dialogue conference ... They never believed in power-sharing," he said, speaking at his headquarters in Khartoum.

"If they change, we are ready to cooperate," added Akol, who formed the breakaway Sudan People's Liberation Movement-Democratic Change in 2009.

"The only way forward is for the government to respect the resolutions of the south-south dialogue conference and talk peace with anybody who is carrying arms in the south," said Akol.

Akol, who split with the SPLM during the war to form his own Khartoum-backed militia, insisted he did not know Ulony, the rebel leader he is accused of supporting.

He argued that the southern army had provoked the recent clashes because senior army officials felt threatened by the reconciliation process.

"It is the SPLM who attacked (George) Athor's base in Jonglei state. It is the SPLM who attacked Ulony's base in Upper Nile. It is the SPLM who attacked (Bapiny Monytuel) Wijang's base in Unity state," Akol said, referring to three rebel leaders.

"My own analysis is that some of them in the SPLA do not want the reconciliation process to take place between the government of southern Sudan and either the (opposition) political groups or the military groups."

"There are people who feel threatened by the reconciliation, that they may lose their positions," he added.

JDB to convene last meeting tomorrow in Juba

Al-Rai Al-Aam 6/4/11 – The Joint Defence Board (JDB) is holding its last meeting in Juba tomorrow after the SAF and SPLA have completed redeployment of JIUs. Sources said preparations have been finalized for convening the meeting tomorrow under the chairmanship of SPLA Chief of Staff James Hoth.

Reportedly, assessment of what has been accomplished by the JDB during the interim period will be the focus of the meeting.

Foreign Ministry calls on the international community to assist in resolving North-South issues

Al-Wifaq 6/4/11 – The Sudanese government confirmed its resolution to solve outstanding issues with the GoSS by peaceful negotiations, saying the two parties would not go back to war.

Foreign Ministry spokesperson Khaled Musa told reporters yesterday that ministry's undersecretary Rahamtullah Mohamed Osman and the visiting Swedish envoy discussed the peace process in the Sudan. According to Musa, the undersecretary urged the Swedish government to assist the South and called on the international community to assist negotiations

between the two CPA parties in a neutral manner, free from pressure that influences ongoing efforts to address issues.

The Swedish envoy said the EU began serious engagement in Sudan's peace process, citing ongoing efforts to write off Sudan's debts.

About 34,000 people flee S. Sudan tribal clashes-UN

Reuters (Juba)6/4/11 - About 34,000 southern Sudanese have fled their homes after tribal clashes over land, water and cattle in recent weeks, a U.N. humanitarian official said, adding to southern troubles before independence in July.

The euphoria following the south's historic vote has been undermined in recent weeks by a string of violent clashes, including skirmishes between the southern army and rebel militia, as well as traditional tribal fighting over resources.

About 80,000 people fled violence in the region between January and March, some 34,000 of them in the last few weeks, Lise Grande, U.N. Deputy Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Southern Sudan, said on Wednesday.

The latest mass displacement was caused by fighting that broke out between communities along border regions in the Lakes and Western Equatoria states before the region's intense rainy season, a U.N. report said.

Fighting first broke out on Feb. 9, followed by a second wave from March 9, the report said.

"In Southern Sudan there is a cycle or pattern to this type of violence ... it is resource-based," Grande told Reuters, adding that disputes over land, cattle and water come to the fore as heavy rains arrive in the underdeveloped region.

The seasonal violence compounds the south's other humanitarian pressures as it prepares to form a new African nation in just over three months.

More than 264,000 returnees have flocked to the south since October, the report said. In Jonglei state at least 18,000 people have been displaced since more than 200 people were killed in early February, when a rebel militia battled the southern army, it added. The United Nations said the persistent tension and fighting in the south has hindered access to civilians in need.

Analysts fear for the stability of the new nation, given the momentum of its humanitarian crises, along with its troubled relationship with the north and unresolved issues such as sharing oil and the disputed Abyei area.

Machar directs officials to begins preparations for South Sudan independence celebrations

Sudan Tribune website 5/4/11 - The Vice President of South Sudan, Riek Machar Teny, has directed the various sub-committees under the High Level Committee for independence celebrations to immediately begin work to prepare the region for its secession from north Sudan in just over two months.

Machar who chairs the High Level Committee tasked to prepare the nation for the July 9 independence celebration issued the directive on Monday in a meeting with officials in charge of 10 various sub-committees. These include sub-committees on security, information, catering, ceremonies, protocol, health, organization, accommodation, transport, finance and entertainment.

Almost all of the sub-committees are headed by a relevant minister in the Government of Southern Sudan. For instance, security sub-committee is headed by the minister of Internal Affairs, information sub-committee by the minister of Information, accommodation sub-committee by the minister of Housing, transport by the minister of Transport, health by the minister of Health, finance by the minister of Finance and entertainment by the minister of Culture and Heritage.

A budget for the celebration was passed by the Council of Ministers last week which amounted to over 94 million Sudanese Pounds. Machar explained that the approved budget by the Council will further be presented to the Southern Sudan Legislative Assembly, which he said may increase or reduce the current amount approved by the Council.

The money will be released by the minister of finance and transferred to an account in the Office of the President under the supervision of the Minister in the Office of the President, Dr. Cirino Hiteng.

Each of the ten Southern Sudan states has been allocated one million Sudanese pounds for the celebrations in their respective states.

Other Highlights

Two people killed by unknown missile in Port Sudan

Local dailies 6/4/11 – Two people were killed when an unidentified missile hit a vehicle (Sonata saloon) yesterday 15 km south of Port Sudan. The state's security committee informed the central government about the incident and ministers of defence and interior held a meeting yesterday to discuss the bombing.

Al-Rai Al-Aam 6/4/11 reports police sources as saying that the attack was launched by two aircraft which were hunting four vehicles, one car was hit by a missile and the rest fled. Eyewitness said the bombing left residents of Port Sudan and Suakin panic-stricken and gunshots were heard after the explosions.

Arabiya.net 5/4/11 reported that two people were killed in an attack on a car near Port Sudan late on Tuesday, which police suggested was a missile fired from the sea, while state media and a regional government official blamed a foreign aircraft.

Witnesses at the scene near the airport at Sudan's main port city said the small car was destroyed and the two charred bodies of its passengers could be seen.

"A missile from an unknown source probably bombed the car," police spokesman Ahmed al-Tahmi told Reuters. He earlier told local radio the missile had likely been fired from the Red Sea.

“We heard three loud explosions. We went outside to see what was happening and eye witnesses told us they saw two helicopters which looked like Apaches flying past” a source at Port Sudan airport said.

The Sudanese Media Center, a news agency linked to Sudan's state security apparatus, and the speaker of the Red Sea state parliament, Ahmed Tahir, said an unidentified aircraft had flown into Sudanese air space to bomb the car.

"A plane bombed a small car which was coming from Port Sudan airport to the town... There were two people in the car and both were killed. The vehicle was completely destroyed," Tahir told AFP by telephone.

The unidentified plane, which struck at about 10:00 pm (1900 GMT), flew in from the Red Sea, to which it then returned, Tahir added.

The Sudanese Media Center said the army responded with missiles that the foreign plane managed to evade.

Tahir said the two people killed were travelling into the town from the airport when their car was hit. They have not been identified.

This is not the first time mystery has surrounded a strike in Sudan's eastern Red Sea state.

In January 2009, unknown aircraft hit a convoy of suspected arms smugglers on a remote road in the state according to Sudanese officials, a strike that some reports said may have been carried out by Israel to stop weapons bound for Gaza.

A total of 119 people were killed in that strike near Sudan's border with Egypt, according to state media, even though the attack was disclosed only two months after it occurred.

Hamas has close ties with Khartoum and has long maintained a base in Sudan, to which the group's exiled chief Khaled Meshaal is a frequent visitor.

According to *AFP* 6/4/11, the air strike made the front pages of all of Israel's main newspapers today. "IDF carried out an attack in Sudan" read the front page story in the top-selling Yediot Aharonot, the headline inside quotation marks. "Liquidation in Sudan" reads another story on the front page of Israel HaYom.

"Planes which approached from the Red Sea assassinated wanted men in Africa," read the strapline, although the entire article quoted foreign media sources.

The Israeli military had no immediate comment on Tuesday's air strike.

Gunmen kill blue helmet serving with UN-AU mission in Darfur

UN News Centre 5/4/11 - A peacekeeper serving with UNAMID in Darfur was killed today after being abducted by armed men following a firefight in the north of the war-racked Sudanese region.

The mission reported that a group of armed men ambushed a mission patrol returning from the town of Fata Borno in North Darfur state.

The blue helmets returned fire, killing one of the attackers, but the attackers managed to carjack a UNAMID vehicle containing three peacekeepers.

Two of the UNAMID soldiers were later released by the gunmen, although both sustained injuries and one is in a serious condition. They have been taken to the nearby town of Kutum for medical treatment.

The third peacekeeper was found to have been killed, according to a press release issued by the mission.

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