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Highlights

Post-elections

Ruling party welcomes DUP participation in next government

Sudan Tribune website 5/5/10 - The National Congress Party (NCP) has welcomed the participation of the opposition Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) in the next government that it plans to form soon.

Ibrahim Ghandour, a senior official of the NCP, welcomed the DUP participation adding that the two parties would continue to dialogue. Reportedly, the NCP has offered four ministerial portfolios to Al-Mirghani.

Ghandour also hailed the stance taken by its chairman Mohamed Osman Al-Mirghani on the unity of Sudan, national consensus and the International Criminal Court, adding it conforms with NCP positions in this regard.

Next elections after five years – NEC

Al-Wifaq 6/5/10 – NEC member Prof. Mukhtar Al-Assam told a symposium in Khartoum yesterday that the tenure of President Al-Bashir, the governors and the MPs will be five years not four years. He said next elections would be held in 2015 not 2014.

Speculation on upcoming government

Al-Khartoum 6/5/10 – sources said the forthcoming government would be broad-based but the decision-making process would be limited to a small circle which will include the Foreign Ministry, the NISS and the Defence Ministry. The sources also revealed that the government is likely to increase the number of presidential advisers to about 100 and the number of ministers of state will be reduced.

Pagan Amum expects southern Sudanese to head Energy Ministry

Al-Ahdath 6/5/10 - SPLM Secretary-General Pagan Amum said southern Sudan will have a 30% representation in the next government. Amum said he expects a southern Sudanese to be appointed the next Federal Minister of Energy and Mining because most of the country's oil originates in the south.

Referendum:

US urges quick solutions before Sudan referendum

AFP 6/5/10 - US envoy Scott Gration is telling the Sudanese there "is no time to waste" to solve all the problems before a 2011 referendum that could split Sudan into two states, officials said yesterday.

"That's Scott's message in the region this week. We face a very steep hill towards the referendum in January," State Department spokesman Philip Crowley told reporters.

"And should the south vote to secede, it's only six months from that point to where you have the emergence of a new country," Crowley said.

"So there's no time to waste. There are a lot of very complex and important issues that have to be resolved. Border demarcation... how to resolve and share energy resources within Sudan," he said.

"We have to be prepared for a vote that will lead to a new country in January 2011," Crowley said. "That is a very distinct possibility."

The west and US want to divide Sudan – Al-Mirghani

Al-Sahafa 6/5/10 – Sudan's Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) leader Mohamed Osman Al-Mirghani has directed unprecedented criticism to the west and the United States because of accepting Sudan's elections result "despite flaws" in return for "separation of the South", adding "peace does not mean fragmentation of the country".

Machar says referendum polling may take place in December 2010

Sudan Tribune website 6/5/10 - The Vice President designate of the GoSS Dr. Riek Machar Teny said the Southern Sudan's referendum on independence may take place by the end of December this year so that the results are declared on 9th January 2011.

He added that 9th January 2011 would be the date for declaration of the official final result instead of beginning of polling and then counting of ballot papers.

Polling alone will take seven days in accordance with the referendum law. Dr. Machar said the earlier the formation of the referendum commissions the better so that voter registration takes place by July in Southern Sudan and Abyei.

He also stressed that he would want to see the upcoming popular consultations for Southern Blue Nile and Nuba Mountains taking place ahead of Southern Sudan's referendum.

Dr. Machar made the remarks during his meeting on Wednesday with the US Special Envoy, Scott Gration, who visited the Southern Sudan's capital Juba for the first time after the announcement of results for the recently conducted presidential, gubernatorial and parliamentary elections in the region.

Dr. Machar also in a separate related meeting on Wednesday briefed Koen Daviose, the Netherlands Special Envoy to the country on the political developments in the country.

The two diplomats were briefed, respectively, on post-elections issues including the upcoming formation of government at all levels and subsequent resumption of negotiations between the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) and the National Congress Party (NCP), on the outstanding issues in the implementation of the 2005's peace deal between North and South.

Dr. Machar also revealed that there was a disagreement between the authority of Renk County of Upper Nile state and demarcation committee on the suggested borderline with the White Nile state in the North.

The Envoys and the Vice President also touched on the post-referendum issues which included the future of oil production, transport and marketing among several others.

Dr. Machar predicted that after the referendum the South would more likely experience a mass exodus of millions of Southern Sudanese internally displaced persons (IDPs) that currently reside in the North.

He appealed to the respective Envoys to support the upcoming processes in the implementation

of the peace deal.

The diplomats also expressed willingness to continue to support the two parties and achieve smooth and successful implementation of the deal.

The US Envoy, Scott Gration also expressed concerns on insecurity in Southern Sudan during this critical phase in implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA).

He expressed the need to maintain stability in the region in order to achieve smooth conduct of referendum.

Op-Ed: North-South border demarcation, the coming crisis

By: Mahgoub Mohamed Saleh, Al-Ayyam 6 May 2010

(Summary) "The demarcation of the border between the South and the North will not be an easy issue. International pressure will be stepped up to push for resolving the issue because it will be impossible to conduct referendum to decide the destiny of a region whose borders are unknown and contentious. Differences over this issue are likely to be the cause of forthcoming wrangle between the two partners under continued international pressure and the two partners' eyes set on oil"

Other Headlines

Somali pirates hijack China-bound oil tanker

Reuters 6/5/10 - Somali pirates on Wednesday hijacked the China-bound oil tanker MV Moscow University 350 miles off the coast of Yemen with 23 Russian crew and crude oil worth \$52 million on board.

"The oil is Chinese. It belongs to UNIPEC. It was sailing to (the Chinese) port of Ningbo," said a Russian shipping source.

Maritime experts said the Russian-owned tanker had a deadweight of 106,474 tonnes and a Russian shipping source said the vessel had begun its journey from Sudan with a cargo of 86,000 tonnes of oil.

"This morning we had an attack on a Liberian-flagged ship Moscow University in the northeastern horn of our operation," Commander Rear Admiral Jan Thornqvist of the European Union's Navfor naval force told reporters in the Kenyan port of Mombasa.

"The crew members locked themselves in the radar room. This ship has been hijacked." Somali sea bandits continue to outwit an international fleet of warships in the busy shipping lane linking Europe with Asia, raking in tens of millions of dollars in ransoms.

One pirate who identified himself as Abdi said the tanker was headed to a pirate lair on the coast of central Somalia and warned against any rescue mission.

"Any attempt to rescue the ship will certainly endanger the crew. The ship will be docked at Garacad," Abdi said, adding it was too early to talk about a ransom.

A source at the Novorossiysk Shipping Company, which owns the tanker, said it was sailing from Sudan to China.

Russian media quoted military sources as saying a Russian warship deployed to the MV Moscow University was not expected to reach the tanker before the end of the day. It was not clear what the warship would do next.

Some oil tankers are sailing around southern Africa and further east into the Indian Ocean away from Somalia's coastline to avoid the Gulf of Aden and pirates who are striking deeper out at sea, shipping experts say.

But many continue to run the gauntlet through the busy Gulf of Aden shipping lane, where warships operate convoys and have set up transit corridors. The tanker had not registered with the Maritime Security Center Horn of Africa, EU NAVFOR said.

The use of mother ships has enabled Somali pirates to strike as far as the Mozambique Channel and off India's coast in recent months, launching smaller boats known as skiffs against ships.

“26 killed” in south Sudan tribal fighting

AFP 5/5/10 - Clashes over livestock between members of two large tribes killed 26 people in the south Sudan state of Warrap on Wednesday, a senior officer in the south Sudan armed forces said.

"Nuer coming from Mayom county (in the southern state of Unity) attacked Dinka in (neighbouring) Warrap state. Eleven Nuer were killed and 15 Dinka," said Malaak Auyen Ajok, spokesman for the former rebel Sudan People's Liberation Army.

"This involved fighting over livestock," he said, adding that no more details were immediately available.

“27” killed in bloody fighting in Unity state

Al-Intibaha 6/5/10 – the situation in the Unity state has exploded as the Dinka attacked the Nuer killing 14 Nuer on Myandit-Fanjar road.

Meanwhile, fierce fighting between the Misseriya and the SPLA yesterday in Mayom left 19 Misseriya and four SPLA soldiers dead. Reportedly, the fighting was triggered by ongoing disarmament.

Police arrest 58 in Darfur investment scam probe

Reuters 5/5/10 - Police investigating an investment scam in Sudan's Darfur region have collected bounced checks and receipts for up to \$27 million and arrested 58 people, the justice minister said Wednesday.

Thousand of investors have lost money in a pyramid-style "Ponzi scheme" which collapsed earlier this year, UN officials and residents told Reuters.

Justice Minister Abdel Basit Sabderat said police were hunting for missing assets across Darfur and beyond and working through about 3,700 complaints from investors.

The statement from a senior minister underlined how seriously Khartoum is taking the unrest following the collapse of El Fasher's "El Mawasir" market - the nickname for the scam using a local term for pipes which is slang for a swindle.

Sabderat said the scheme was started by two police officers in March 2009 who went on to win

seats in North Darfur's state assembly in last month's national elections, standing as candidates for the north's dominant National Congress Party.

The two men had since been arrested, alongside 56 other people, and police had already frozen one of their bank accounts containing six million Sudanese pounds, he said.

Officers had collected "bounced checks totaling 28 million Sudanese pounds and receipts for 32 million (together just under \$27 million)," and also found more than 100 vehicles, including Hummers, linked to the operation, said the minister.

El Fasher residents said the men had taken cash and goods from investors and promised to repay them with large returns and above-market prices after a period of time. The men gave investors receipts or post-dated checks as a guarantee for their future earnings, residents said.

SAF denies threat to El Fasher

Al-Rai Al-Aam 6/5/10 – The Sudanese armed forces have dismissed claims of security threat to El Fasher following a rumour that JEM attack on the city was imminent. SAF spokesperson Lt. Col. Al-Sawarmi said the situation is under control.

African Union undermined Darfur peace process - rebels

Sudan Tribune website 5/5/10 - The peace process has been weakened by the African Union and negative interferences of the international community, said the spokesperson of the rebel Justice and Equality Movement (JEM).

Ahmed Hussein Adam said the peace process in Doha has been turned to a tribune for political maneuvering in a way to present the Sudanese President as peace lover seeking to resolve Darfur conflict peacefully. "But in fact Khartoum does not desist from the military option and does not want to deal with the root causes of the conflict but simply seek to absorb rebels within the regime of the National Congress Party".

"The mediation led by Mr. Djbril Bassole has been weakened because he does not have the support of the African Union. Mr. Jean Ping Chairperson of the AU Commission who has strong relation with the Sudanese president and he seeks to protect Omer Al-Bashir. This is why the AU lost its strength in Darfur," he said.