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Media Monitoring Report

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Referendum Monitor

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Address: UNMIS Headquarters, P.O. Box 69, Ibeid Khatim St, Khartoum 11111, SUDAN
Phone: (+249-1) 8708 6000 - Fax: (+249-1) 8708 6200

Highlights

Differences over Abyei persist, breakthrough on other issues achieved

Al-Sahafa Daily (Khartoum) 6/10/10 – Ongoing negotiations between the NCP and the SPLM over Abyei in Addis Ababa was supposed to be concluded yesterday amid anticipations that the talks would fail due to the intransigence of the parties to the conflict. However, some sources revealed that a breakthrough was achieved on some political issues.

Meanwhile, *Al-Watan Daily* (Khartoum) 6/10/10 reports a prominent Misseriya leader, Al-Sadiq Babo Nimir as saying that the meeting in Addis Ababa is facing obstructions and difficulties, adding his tribe rejects the US approach to address the problem over Abyei. He also reiterated the Misseriya rejection of the conduct of the referendum based on the current plan and arrangement but said the process could take place in accordance with specific conditions. Nimir described the meeting in Addis as a “public relations conference”.

Also, *Al-Ahram Al-Youm* 6/10/10 reports all-Misseriya leader Mohamed Khatir Jumma as saying that his tribe delegated anybody to speak in their name in Addis Ababa, calling on the NCP and the SPLM to keep aloof from Abyei dossier and leave it to the two Misseriya and Dinka communities to address it. Khatir has praised VP Ali Osman Taha’s statement to the effect that referendum in Abyei would only be conducted if an agreement, acceptable to both communities, is reached.

In a related development, SPLM-DC leader Lam Akol has said that secession is inevitable and warned of possible serious consequences. He said if secession takes place he would return to the South with the southerners living in the North, adding his “bases” in the south would protect him from a possible harm. On NCP-SPLM talks on Abyei in Ethiopia, he said they would achieve no success.

Sudan Tribune website 5/10/10 reported that U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton described dealing with the Sudanese government as "difficult" as the country heads towards a likely breakup following the South Sudan referendum scheduled to take place early next year.

Clinton made the remarks during her meeting on Tuesday with the U.S. African Chiefs of Mission at the George C. Marshall Conference Center.

"We are doing – we have a full court press between our Special Envoy, retired General Scott Gration, called back Ambassador Princeton Lyman to work, we have a very experienced ambassador in Juba," she said.

"It is going to be hard, and it is difficult to deal with Khartoum, try to figure out what they want and how they are intending to go forward. But we are absolutely committed to doing everything we can," the top diplomat added.

The U.S. is currently mediating between the dominant National Congress Party (NCP) in control of the North and the Sudan People Liberation Movement (SPLM) ruling the South in a fresh bid

to break the impasse over the oil-rich region of Abyei which lies on the North-South borders.

The NCP and SPLM delegations currently in Addis Ababa do not appear to have made much breakthrough in talks sponsored by the U.S. The U.S. State department spokesperson said that the discussions with both sides are continuing and revealed that representatives of the Ngok Dinka and Misseriya tribal leadership are also present.

"To reach a genuine agreement on Abyei that paves the way for referendum, you have to have buy-in by all of the major players, and that includes not only North and South, but also the tribal areas in and around Abyei. They have to be part of the solution. We think we've got the right combination of parties there in Addis Ababa, and we hope that through these discussions, there can be an agreement that opens the door for a successful referendum in January," U.S. State Department spokesperson Phillip J. Crowley told reporters.

Crowley refused to confirm reports from Khartoum newspapers that the talks are off to a bad start.

"It's hard for me to characterize what's happening in the room from here, other than to say there have been very, very direct talks, frank talks. The parties do not agree on every detail, but we certainly believe that an agreement on Abyei is possible. That was our goal going into Addis Ababa. The Secretary made clear in her discussions with the leaders and other regional leaders weighed in as well that they should come prepared to negotiate. They have done that, and with the clear authorities to reach an agreement. We believe they have those authorities" Crowley said.

"Now whether we can get there or not, we'll see, but we remain deeply engaged in this," he added.

Analysts have warned there is a risk of a return to war if there is any disruption to the Abyei vote and a separate and simultaneous vote on whether the south as a whole should secede or stay in Sudan.

Kiir insists on secession, warns of assassination

The Citizen Daily 6/10/10 – FVP and GoSS President Salva Kiir Mayardit has reiterated his favour of the secession option for the southern Sudan in a “decolonization” vote slated for early next year and warned that irritated oppressors would wish to eliminate leaders of the struggling people.

He said five years have gone; the central government in Khartoum was supposed to build schools and hospitals but so far nothing has materialized; instead threats of war are eminent.

“When we talked about unity before the campaigns for referendum, was it a mistake? I will continue to say, was it a crime? Instead of implementing the agreement they bogged us down in senseless fighting,” Kiir said yesterday at the opening of the Church and Government Forum at Nyakuron Cultural Centre in Juba.

Northern unionists have said Kiir betrayed unity of the country but Kiir downplayed the claim, saying “I am not betraying it; I am telling the truth that we have failed in the course,”

He slammed circles in the North that say that the southerners have already made a decision and should not waste resources on attractive unity projects, saying, “When they are joined on letting the South go they turn out to say No”.

He said southerners badly want independence and that should the vote be delayed there would be possible violence which shall be the responsibility of the party that delayed the plebiscite.

“I have made the message very clear to the world leaders, it is up to you to take it or throw it out,” he stressed. “If we want to avoid going back to war in our country, it is through maintaining the CPA and implementing all the articles,” he said in reference to the renegeing NCP.

Kiir, in what appeared one of his critical addresses, made a reminder of the then struggling majority South Africans, who were oppressed by an apartheid minority clique before 1994.

When the oppressed were almost succeeding, the oppressors became so irritated that they eliminated many leaders of the impoverished struggling people. Many leaders of the African national Congress, a party that drummed up for freedom and equality of native South Africans, were assassinated.

“I wish you can not forget it, it can happen to you here, your leaders can be eliminated,” he said. “But you should not keep quiet, let us not give up in this way”

Voter registration to kick off on 14 November

Al-Rai Al-Aam Daily 6/10/10 - Chan Recc, Deputy Chairman of the Referendum Commission, announced in a press conference held yesterday in Juba, that voter registration for the referendum would start on the 14th of November and end on the 4th of December. Mr. Recc stated that they are doing their best to have the referendum organized as scheduled. He further stated that the process itself would not be in jeopardy even if it is delayed for one or two weeks.

However, Ambassador Jamal Mohamed Ahmed, Spokesperson of the Referendum Commission, told AFP that no timetables have been released.

According to *Khartoum Monitor Daily* 6/10/10, Reec revealed a change in the timetable of the referendum processes as follows:

- 17 October will be the commencement of the accreditation of observers, advocates and the media.
- 1 November will be the publication of the list of referendum centres.
- 14 Nov. to 4 Dec. voter registration.
- 5 December (7days) the provisional referendum register will be accessible for inspection at the referendum centres.
- 7 Dec. advocacy campaign commences.
- 12 Dec. (7days) consideration committee formed at each referendum centre to consider the objections or consideration made to the roll.
- 17 Dec. (7days) the decisions made by the consideration committee shall be posted at

each referendum centre for display.

- 24 Dec. (5days) individuals unsatisfied with the decisions by the consideration committee may appeal to the Courts which shall make final decisions.
- 31 Dec. the final referendum register shall be completed.

Meanwhile, Reec revealed that the Ministry of Finance and national Economy has allocated an amount of \$ 372 million for the conduct of southern Sudan referendum. He said that the Government of Southern Sudan is equally committed to support the referendum process. “We are on track, in spite of the challenges we are still in a good shape,” he asserted.

In a related development, *Sudan Tribune website* 5/10/10 reported that a US-based independent firm has been contracted to procure all voting materials required for South Sudan’s forthcoming referendum, according to a senior official here.

The revelation ends days of speculations that Khartoum had undertaken the lucrative deal which would have likely led many Southerners to question the integrity of the process.

Justice Reec, the Chairperson of South Sudan Referendum Bureau (SSRB) told journalists in Juba that the Referendum Commission has already contracted International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES).

IFES is described as an independent non-governmental organization based in Washington D.C, providing assistance and support for elections in new and emerging democracies.

Founded in 1987, IFES currently has programs in more than 25 countries throughout Asia, Africa, Europe and Americas, with activities centered on elections, civil society, rule of law, good governance and applied research.

Reec said that the commission approved a budget of about \$370 million to help in preparations for the referendum, which remains behind schedule.

A detailed time-table for the various processes leading to the referendum has also been released. The accreditation of observers’, advocates and the media is scheduled for October 17, while November 1st is the date set for publication of referendum center lists.

The long-awaited voters’ registration exercise, initially planned for October is now scheduled for November 14 and will end on December 04. Diaspora registration, Justice Chan Reec clarified, will be coordinated by civil society entities.

The final referendum registers, the SSRB Chairperson said, are expected to be completed and displayed on December 31, contrary to the Referendum Act 2009 provisions.

According to the Act, final registers should be displayed at least 90 days prior to the actual date for the conduct of the referendum.

However, when asked why the released time-table was contrary to the Referendum Act, Justice Chan Reec said, “Laws are made to save the interests of the people, but can be modified to suit any given socio-political situation. In any case, this is not the first time we have gone behind

schedule in such national preparations”.

He further echoed South Sudan President, Salva Kiir’s call for the timely conduct of the referendum, rubbishing speculations for possible postponement of the exercise as baseless and unfounded.

SPLM seeks to internationalize border issues after secession – NCP

Al-Rai Al-Aam Daily (Khartoum) 6/10/10 – the NCP has accused the SPLM of being loath regarding the north-south border demarcation ahead of referendum, saying it wants to delay the process until after the referendum so that it can benefit from its influences within the international community to decide the issue in its favour.

NCP leading figure Mohamed Mandoor Almahadi reaffirmed the NCP rejection of the conduct of the referendum prior to completion of border demarcation. Almahadi stated that monitoring of the referendum would be shouldered by his party members in the south, other political parties and the international community although the latter is biased against the Sudan.

Meanwhile, Almahadi, commenting on the recent statements by Information Minister Kamal Obeid on southerners’ citizenship after secession, said the remarks do not reflect the position of the party, adding that southerners in the north are well respected by the NCP.

Parliament says chances of unity slim

Akhir Lahza Daily (Khartoum) 6/10/10 – The National Assembly Peace and Unity Committee announced that chances for unity are slim, adding efforts are now focused on how to maintain peace between two states should secession take place.

Committee Chairman Ramadan Hassan Laku told reporters yesterday that the Assembly would hold a meeting with all the political parties and forces in the country for consultation on how to make the process a success. Laku said their role as a committee is to pressurize the NCP and the SPLM to expedite the demarcation of the border to avoid war and to implement the remaining CPA benchmarks.

Southerners in the North intimidated, Church Official Says

AllAfrica.com 5/10/10 - A number of Southern Sudanese living in the North feel "threatened and intimidated."

This was revealed by the Khartoum-based Secretary General of the Sudan Catholic Bishops' Conference, Fr Santino Maurino Morokomomo, in an exclusive interview with Good News Radio last Saturday.

Fr Santino stated that "the lives of the Southerners in the North at this time are threatened," explaining that since most Southern Sudanese are keener on separation rather than unity, the talk of the Northern government is to expel Southerners from the North.

Other Highlights

Al-Bashir did not demand a meeting with us – UNSC delegation

Akhir Lahza 6/10/10 – A delegation of the United Nations Security Council representing all 15 members are expected in Khartoum next Friday for talks with Foreign Minister Ali Karti. The talks would focus on the current state of affairs in the country with the issues of the referendum expected to top the agenda.

Representatives of the Council touched down on Juba later today where they are expected to hold talks with FVP, GoSS President Salva Kiir Mayardit and some senior GoSS officials.

Current United Nations Security Council Chairman Ruhukana Ruganda (Uganda) said that the delegation would not meet with President Al-Bashir because neither the President nor Council members had asked for such a meeting.

Sources report that the delegation would travel to Darfur tomorrow for talks with the Governor of North Darfur and the UNAMID Joint Special Representative.

According to **Al-Akhbar daily**(Khartoum) 6/10/10, there are reports that US Representative Susan Rice may hold separate talks with FVP Salva Kiir in the latter's residence. The delegation would also travel to West and South Darfur where they would tour Kalma IDP Camp and assess government reports on the spread of arms in the IDP camps. The delegation would also hold talks with UNAMID on the status of strategic food reserves and the security situation in the region.

Sudan's Permanent Representative to the UN, Ambassadr Dafallah Al-Haj, would accompany the delegation in heir visits. Sources said that Foreign Minister Ali Karti would be the only federal government official in Khartoum whom the delegation would meet despite attempts by some delegation members to meet VP Ali Osman Mohamed Taha and Presidential Advisor Ghazi Salahudin.

President Al-Bashir off to Libya on Friday

Al-Akhbar Daily (Khartoum) 6/10/10 – President Al-Bashir will depart for Libya on Friday to participate in an Arab-African summit on Saturday for discussion on a range of Arab issues.

Sudan suspends broadcast of Monte Carlo radio service on FM

Sudan Tribune website 5/10/10 - The Sudanese government refused to renew the license of Monte Carlo, the Arabic service of Radio France Internationale (RFI), to broadcast on local frequencies and provided no reason for this abrupt decision.

Rabie Abdulatti, a senior official at the National Congress party (NCP) told the independent Al-Ahram daily that the suspension was not politically motivated.

"Broadcasting inside the cities of Sudan by foreign radio stations requires a license under agreements with the state. There are conditions to be adhered to, including the conditions of reciprocity that would permit Sudanese radio to broadcast its material in Britain and France" Abdulatti said.

Sources at Monte Carlo radio revealed to the newspaper that several of its officials visited Khartoum recently for the purpose of renewing the license but with no success noting that they did not receive an explanation.

Sudan and Darfur rebels agree to end direct talks within two weeks

Sudan Tribune website 5/10/10 - Darfur peace talks will restart from where they left off last August, Sudanese government and rebels agreed today in Doha. The parties agreed to end direct talks within less than two weeks and settle the outstanding issues.

The steering committee composed from the Joint Chief Mediator, the Qatari state minister for foreign affairs besides Sudanese government and Liberation and Justice Movement delegations held today evening a meeting in Doha to sets agendas and schedules of the negotiations.

Sudanese government and Liberation and Justice Movement (LJM) agreed to resume the work of the five negotiating committees to end the outstanding issues between them as of Wednesday until the 19th of October. After that the mediation will draft the final peace agreement in Darfur, State Minister Ahmed bin Abdullah Al-Mahmoud told reporters on Tuesday following the end of the meeting.

"We agreed to resume talks from where we left off," told Sudan Tribune Tadjadine Bechir Niam, LJM secretary for peace negotiations. "The talks will continue from 6 to 15 October in order to complete outstanding issues," he further said.

"We will work day and night," he said to underline the determination of the two parties to reach a final agreement.

The Qatari minister said they are optimistic about the participation of other movements in the negotiations and the door is open for them to join the process. "We are confident they are keen to reach a peaceful solution".

Bassole, for his part, said that the mediation is in contact with all the parties involved in the conflict and working on a peace document acceptable for all the Darfurians and responding to their aspirations.

"We are keen to make Doha agreement a framework for a lasting solution to all the problems of Darfur," the mediator said.

While LJM official called on the other rebel group "to join the ongoing efforts to reach a final peace agreement and to achieve the aspirations of Darfur people," Niam said.

The Justice and Equality Movement led by Khalil Ibrahim and Sudan Liberation Movement led by Abdel Wahid Al-Nur are not part of the Doha peace talks. While JEM froze its participation last May, the SLM never joint the process.

I have not visited Uganda-Mini Minnawi

Al-Rai Al-Aam (Khartoum) 6/10/10 - Chairman of the Sudan Liberation Movement, Mini Minnawi, has dismissed reports that he visited Uganda, adding he has nothing to do in Uganda and he would return from Juba to Khartoum.

According to *Al-Sahafa Daily* (Khartoum) 6/10/10, reliable sources confirmed Minnawi's visit to Kampala where he met with DPA non-signatories before returning to Juba.

Justice Ministry investigating Darfur crimes – Justice Minister

Al-Sahafa Daily (Khartoum) 6/10/10 – Justice Minister Mohamed Bishara Dousa said his Ministry had initiated an investigation in several cases and crimes perpetrated in Darfur. He said the Public Prosecutor on Darfur is currently in the region to investigate all alleged crimes and to bring perpetrators to Justice. The Minister made the remarks on the sidelines of the conference of the Arab Public Prosecutors currently on in Doha.

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Address: UNMIS Headquarters, P.O. Box 69, Ibeid Khatim St, Khartoum 11111, SUDAN
Phone: (+249-1) 8708 6000 - Fax: (+249-1) 8708 6200