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Media Monitoring Report

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Highlights

Elections Special:

SPLM rejects elections postponement

SPLM Secretary-General Pagan Amum has announced rejection to any move to postpone elections, *Al-Khartoum* reports. "We reject any proposal to postpone the elections or the referendum because it is a violation of the CPA. We are stick to the schedule," Amum reacted to President of Eritrea's call for Sudan's elections delay.

According to *Sudan Tribune website* 5/3/10, the Eritrean President Isaias Afewerki has recommended to his Sudanese counterpart Omer Al-Bashir a 2-year delay to the April national elections and the 2011 referendum in South Sudan, an official in Asmara said.

Al-Bashir concluded a one day visit to Eritrea for talks with Afewerki on the elections, progress of the CPA and the Darfur conflict.

The Eritrean Presidential adviser Abdullah Gabir told the London-based *Al-Sharq Al-Awsat* that his Government fears the April elections could deepen the rift in the country adding that polls are a "tool not a goal".

Al-Bashir criticises proponents of secularism

NCP presidential candidate Omer Al-Bashir, addressing a rally of Sufi Sects yesterday, accused supporters of secularism of an attempt to spread chaos in the country, *Al-Sudani* reports. Al-Bashir also criticized the voices calling for abolition of the public order law.

NCP candidate for Khartoum state addresses huge rally

Addressing a huge crowd of NCP supporters in Khartoum as part of elections campaign, NCP candidate for Khartoum State governorship Abdulrahman Al-Khidir said that the NCP would not deviate from the path of the Islamic sharia law, reports *Akhir Lahza*. He called upon the political parties to abide by the principles of a fair play.

NEC receives petition of protest

The Juba Alliance of opposition parties marched to the NEC premises last Thursday to protest the Commission's circular governing elections campaigning, *Al-Sahafa* (5/3/10) reported. Yassir Arman of SPLM and Mubarak Al-Fadhil Al-Mahdi of Umma-Reforms and Renewal Party were among key opposition figures who led the march. The opposition parties called for an end to NCP control over state media and other means of advertising. The Alliance handed over a petition of seven points to the NEC and demanded a response within a week and threatened with additional steps should the NEC fail to meet the deadline.

Meanwhile, the *Sudan Vision* 7/3/10 reports that the NCP has criticised the petition of protest, saying it is part of a known strategy to escape elections.

South Sudan radio stations say raided ahead of vote

Reuters 5/3/10 - Security officers forced their way into two South Sudanese radio stations and detained staff after one of them broadcast an interview with an election campaigner, station managers said on Friday.

Media activists said the raids on Bakhita Radio and Liberty FM highlighted harassment of journalists in the South in the run-up to presidential and legislative elections next month.

Staff at Liberty FM told Reuters armed men who said they were from South Sudan's police burst into the station's office in the southern capital Juba on Wednesday and forced it to stop broadcasting.

"They came with guns held high," said station manager Albino Tokwaro. "(One of the men) locked up the radio building and took the keys with him."

Tokwaro said he was taken to a police station and interviewed by a senior officer. "He said "you are producing bad programs that bring hatred of the people."

Tokwaro said Liberty FM had aired a live interview with a member of the campaign team for Alfred Lado Gorre, an independent candidate for the governorship of Central Equatoria state, which includes Juba.

He said the interview had included complaints about the lack of clean water, health facilities and good roads in the city.

No one was immediately available to comment from the police.

Meanwhile, ***Sudan tribune website*** 4/03/10 reported that an SPLM member has come out publicly to condemn Central Equatoria Authority's closure of Bakhita and Liberty FM radio stations.

State Minister Elias Nyamelel Wakos joined hundreds of media supporters in expressing dismay over the development. "Where is the freedom of expression of the media?" he wondered.

"How can we profess democratic transformation if we, ourselves, are the ones curbing free expression, he said, stressing that the whole incident was "wrong and unacceptable" especially during the elections campaign month.

"The standard legal procedure globally is that, if the media broadcasts something wrong against any individual or institution, the media is sued. It is the court that will determine the inappropriate or libellous behaviours of the media not a police general or security personnel to take the law into their hands" Nyamelel commented.

South Sudan media "under attack": watchdog

AFP 5/3/10 - Southern Sudanese journalists are facing increasing intimidation as the security services clamp down on reporters ahead of landmark elections in April, a media rights watchdog warned on Friday.

The southern-based Agency for Independent Media (AIM) said it recorded several "disturbing reports" of the harassment of journalists across the autonomous South in 2010, including arrests and violence.

"South Sudan's media is under attack," said David De Dau, head of AIM. "Journalists have been arrested, harassed, intimidated, threatened, humiliated, molested, tortured and detained for no clear reason," he told reporters in the southern capital.

One journalist in Unity State was beaten after security forces grew angry at comments made by the public on a call-in show on a community radio station, Dau said.

Journalists were also arrested in the states of Jonglei and Eastern Equatoria, he added. On Wednesday, security services briefly closed down two independent radio stations in Juba after they broadcast interviews with a campaign team for an independent candidate running for governor of Central Equatoria.

The manager of the temporarily-closed Roman Catholic-run Bakhita radio was told "no politics" were to be broadcast.

"He (the security officer) said he would keep a close ear on Bakhita and that we should stick only to our religious programmes," wrote station manager Sister Cecilia Sierra Salcido, a Catholic nun, in a report.

The clampdown has affected independent and government media, Dau added. Many fear restrictions could increase ahead of next month's elections, Sudan's first multi-party vote in 24 years.

"We are expecting more intimidation and harassment," said Dau. A media law for the autonomous south has been drafted but its passing has been delayed by parliament, something that has infuriated many journalists.

"The harassment is not an organised move, but it is a rampant practice," Dau said.

PCP leader accuses NCP of violating human rights

PCP leader Hassan Al-Turabi has accused the Government of violating human rights, saying existing constitutions are just ink on paper, *Al-Sudani* reports. He said if the local judiciary fails in its job, the international judiciary will act and there will be no immunity. He said Darfur should also get a share of power and wealth like the South.

Meanwhile, the PCP presidential candidate Abdullah Deng Nhiyal said if he wins he would see to it that whoever committed a crime against the Sudanese people including in Darfur and Kajbar is brought to justice. He also pledged to stamp out mushrooming corruption.

According to *Ajras Al-Hurriah*, Al-Turabi said the international estimates of 300,000 killed in Darfur conflict is correct, saying the Government is insisting that the death toll is just 10,000 people.

Sudan's security arrests political activists after spontaneous meeting

Sudan Tribune website 5/3/10 — Sudanese security service arrested three members of a political group campaigning for electoral mobilization to end the rule of the NCP after a spontaneous meeting held at bus stop in central Khartoum this week.

Three members of Girifina (we have had enough) last Thursday were arrested by the Sudanese police and security service. They are charged with causing "public noisiness" under Article 77 of the Criminal Act of 1991. They are still in prison.

A Sudanese rights watchdog, African Center for Justice and Peace Studies (ACJPS), denounced the detention saying their arrest is in violation of the interim constitution which guarantee "freedom of expression, assembly, and association under Article 39".

The ACJPS also said the crackdown on political parties and activists marks out the limits of freedom tolerated by the NCP Government in the current electoral campaign.

Girifna's activists are regularly arrested by the security service for the distribution of mobilization flyers in the streets. However, the group which was formed in September 2009 is extending now its activities out of the capital

Analysts say the security services fear that independent activists can be the nucleus of a large national protest campaign to denounce electoral rigging or any manipulation by the ruling party.

Other highlights

Independent Southern Sudan will be recognised - AEC

The Chairman of the Assessment and Evaluation Commission (AEC), Sir Derek Plumbly, has stated pointing out in an interview broadcast yesterday by the **Sudan Radio Service (SRS)** that the international community will recognise the independence of the Southern Sudan should southerners opt for separation.

South Sudan caretaker ministers take oath of office

Sudan Tribune website 6/3/10 – The Lakes state caretaker governor Telar Ring Deng, has issued state provisional order with immediate effect, closing down all illegal courts that were operating in Lakes state during ex-governor Daniel Awet cabinet.

Only courts established by Southern Sudan judiciary will be allowed to operate in Yirol, Cueibet and Rumbek central said a letter signed by Deng and seen by Sudan Tribune.

Telar Ring Deng ordered the closure of all illegal courts saying that "all courts which were setup across Lakes state without warrant of establishment from judiciary of Southern Sudan must be closed down".

Nine courts comprised of All Payam Court (pending reorganization), Trade Union court, Cattle thief court, Fisheries court, Market and Porters court, Shiekh-EI-Hila court, Town regional court, Border court and Gelweng court are impacted by the decision.

Kiir decides to participate in IGAD summit in Nairobi

FVP Salva Kiir Mayardit has decided to participate in an extraordinary Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) summit in Nairobi on Tuesday, **Al-Sahafa** reports. Sources said VP Ali Osman Taha would represent President Al-Bashir at the summit.

SPLA collects 23,300 pieces of arms from six states

SPLM spokesperson Kuol Diem Kuol revealed that the SPLA has collected 23,372 pieces of arms from civilians in six southern states over the last three months as part of disarmament efforts, **Al-Sahafa** reports. Kuol also revealed that five SPLA soldiers and 13 civilians were killed during a disarmament operation launched last Sunday and Monday in Tonj Country (Lakes States).

Sudan's Bashir slams UN sanctions on Eritrea-media

Reuters 6/3/10 - Sudanese President al-Bashir has criticized the sanctions imposed on Eritrea last December by the United Nations Security Council, Eritrean local media reported on Saturday.

Bashir paid a one-day working visit to the Red Sea state on Friday during which he held talks with Eritrean President Isaias Afwerki and attacked the U.N. resolution.

"The people and the Government of Sudan reject the unjust sanctions imposed by resolution 1907 against Eritrea," the state-run Eritrea Profile reported Bashir as saying.

Yemane Gebreab, head of political affairs at Eritrea's ruling party, welcomed the support.

"Such a logical stance would further enhance Eritrean-Sudanese ties and Eritrea would as ever stand alongside the Sudanese people," the Profile reported Yemane as saying.

Sudan's Bashir "will face justice" - ICC

Reuters 4/3/10 - Sudanese President Al-Bashir will eventually face justice in The Hague, according to the head of the International Criminal Court.

Speaking on the first anniversary of the ICC issuing an arrest warrant for Bashir, its president Judge Sang-hyun Song dismissed criticism that the man wanted on charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity has not been apprehended.

"When arrest warrants were issued against Slobodan Milosevic and Charles Taylor, people laughed and said it was a joke, but it took less than three years to get them brought before the tribunal," Song said on a visit to London.

"President Bashir will be brought to the Hague to face justice," Song insisted.

"Cavalier" violations of UN Darfur arms embargo - US

Reuters 4/3/10 - The US envoy to the United Nations accused Sudan on Thursday of "cavalier" violations of UN sanctions aimed at limiting the flow of arms and curbing violence in Darfur.

"We know that weapons continue to flow into Darfur, acts of sexual and gender-based violence continue unabated and with impunity, military over-flights and offensive actions continue," U.S. Ambassador Susan Rice told reporters after a closed-door meeting of the U.N. Security Council.

"The blatant disregard of the will of the Council is undermining stability rather than fostering it, which was the aim of the (sanctions) regime in the first place," Rice said.

Sudanese Ambassador Abdalmahmoud Abdalhaleem told Reuters that Rice was "swimming against the current of objectivity and common sense."

"What we expect of her is to reinforce the current peace process rather than unnecessary notions about the sanctions committee," he said.

Rice also faulted some Council members for failing to act on any of the recommendations put forward by a U.N. Panel of Experts aimed at improving compliance with the embargo.

The panel said groups on all sides of the conflict were guilty and attacks against the Darfur's population continued.

"We're deeply disappointed the committee has failed to reach consensus on even a single one of these recommendations" to end "what has been cavalier violation of this sanctions regime," Rice said.

Meanwhile, **Sudan Vision** 7/3/10 reports that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has described her statements as inconsistent with the views within the Security Council concerning Sudan.

In a statement to SUNA, the spokesman of the Foreign Ministry, Muawiya Osman Khalid, said that the statements of ambassador Rice came after a meeting of the sanctions committee of the

Security Council which was assigned for discussing issues of three countries other than Sudan, explaining that this sitting was for informing about procedures, but the American envoy called for including Sudan in the agenda of the committee's meeting so that she can be able to attack Sudan.

Two peacekeepers missing in South Darfur - UNAMID

Sudan Tribune website 6/3/10 – Two peacekeepers are missing in Darfur after the detention of a UNAMID patrol in Jebel Marra on Friday by unknown armed men, the hybrid mission said yesterday.

The patrol composed of protection elements, military observers and UNAMID police was in the area of Deribat in South Darfur, to assess the humanitarian situation, following reports about heavy fighting between the Sudanese army and SLA-AW that triggered the displacement of thousands of civilians.

UNAMID which was unable to identify the assailants said "the Mission had received assurances by belligerents that the patrol could carry out its task. It was ambushed by a large group of unidentified armed men."

The peacekeepers were released on Saturday morning along with their three Armored Personnel Carriers (APCs), said UNAMID, "but all other vehicles and equipment were kept by the attackers. Two peacekeepers are still unaccounted for and listed as missing".

Standing by Sudan

Al-Ahram Weekly 4/3/10 (Egypt) - The Arab world is increasingly concerned with developments in Sudan. The latest signing in Qatar of a ceasefire agreement between the Sudanese Government and the most powerful of the Darfur armed opposition groups, the JEM, constitutes a breakthrough and it is significant that it was masterminded by the Qatar Government in conjunction with other Arab and African states.

Indeed, this is a theme that is gaining momentum at the moment. African and Arab countries are discovering that they must work more closely together to resolve conflicts such as the civil war in Darfur. It was of major significance that Chadian President Idriss Deby and his Eritrean counterpart Isaias Afewerki were present in Qatar to witness the signing of the Darfur ceasefire agreement.

The most important question is power-sharing and the right of all the Sudanese people to take part in the decision-making process in Sudan. The country is vast and there are many different ethnic, linguistic and religious groups in Sudan.

Peace in Sudan is dependent on the country's capacity to institute democratic change and to provide political stability so that the country's resources can be developed to the full. The upcoming April elections are of vital importance. The entire Sudanese democratic experience is dependent on the success of the April polls. If the elections are perceived to be free and fair then there is a good chance that the country will heal its wounds and utilise its vast agricultural and mineral resources and oil wealth.

Sudan has the capacity to become a truly vital democratic state. There are many political parties in the country and the chances are that they will contribute positively to the success of Sudan's democratic process.

There are many question marks concerning the healing process in Sudan. The people of the

country are tired of war and they are yearning for peace. They understand that only peace can secure economic progress and prosperity.

The next few weeks will be critical for political reform in Sudan and the country needs all the support it can garner from Arab and African countries and the international community at large. The Sudanese people must overcome their differences and must demonstrate to the world that they are serious about national sovereignty and territorial integrity. They must also demonstrate that the country is ready to attract foreign investors in order to exploit its rich resources.

The Sudanese political establishment must also demonstrate flexibility and political foresight. There is no room for myopic politics that only seek to defend parochial interests. The interests of all the people in the country must be taken into account. The people of Sudan deserve better. They want social justice and the Arab and African states must stand by them.

Sudanese driver executed in Saudi Arabia

BBC News 4/3/10 - A Sudanese driver convicted of murdering his Saudi Arabian employer has been executed.

Mussa Ahmed was beheaded in Riyadh in the eighth execution in the kingdom this year. Ahmed killed Mohammed al-Mutairy by hitting him on the head with a metal object, a statement published by the official SPA news agency said.

Following the crime, Ahmed fled to Sudan but was extradited to Saudi Arabia to stand trial, reports said.

Under the country's strict version of Sharia law, rape, murder, apostasy, armed robbery and drug trafficking are all punishable by death.

Nigerian player dies in Sudan during game

Sudan Tribune website 6/3/10 – A Nigerian player was declared dead in Sudan after falling during a league game, eyewitnesses said yesterday. The 25-year-old Nigerian born striker Endurance Edaho who played for Al-Merreikh team collapsed after an elbow hit in his chest by a member of Al-Amal team in the penalty area.

Edaho was taken to hospital from Al-Merreikh stadium in Omdurman and his death was confirmed. There are reports that he swallowed his tongue causing a heart attack. The referee canceled the match.