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# Media Monitoring Report

United Nations Mission in Sudan/ Public Information Office

## Elections Watch

- Sudan opposition Umma party will boycott elections (*dailies, news wires*)
- Government refutes justifications cited by EU to withdraw observers from Darfur (*Al Sahafa*)
- Malik Aggar: SPLM to run elections in the north except for Presidency and Darfur (*dailies*)
- 100,000 policemen deployed to secure elections (*Miraya*)
- Sudan's Beshir promises 'free and fair' elections (*AFP*)
- Upcoming Sudanese elections must be free, fair and credible, UN chief stresses (*UN news*)
- Judiciary decided on 8,933 elections related appeals and objections (*SUNA*)
- Constitutional Court may suspend elections (*Khartoum Monitor*)
- Former U.S. President Carter to Monitor Sudan Vote (*VOA*)

## Other Headlines

- LRA attack several villages and escape into DRC (*Afric.com*)
- Armed forces issue statement on violations of JEM to Cease-Fire (*SUNA*)

## Interview

BBC Hardtalk: **Salva Kiir talks to Zeinab Badawi in Juba**

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/programmes/hardtalk/8609347.stm>

You can watch the full interview on Thursday 8th April 2010 on BBC World News at 15:30, 19:30 GMT and on the BBC News Channel at 04:30 and on Friday 9th April.

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# Highlights

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## **Sudan opposition Umma party will boycott elections**

**Dailies and news wires** report that Sudan's Umma Party, one of the main opposition parties, would boycott next week's presidential, legislative and gubernatorial polls, blighting their credibility.

The withdrawal of the Umma party, and that of the main south Sudan party a day earlier, will cast a major shadow over the elections, Sudan's first multi-party polls in 24 years.

"The political bureau decided to boycott the current elections at all levels," senior Umma party official Sara Nugdullah told reporters yesterday.

The party had set eight conditions for participation including a four-week delay and government funding for political parties. Only one condition, a campaign spending ceiling, was met by the April 6 deadline.

Nugdullah said Umma party leader Sadeq al-Mahdi had been granted the right to "take action in the national interests," but three party officials said this would not affect the decision to boycott the elections.

Two party sources said Mahdi may consider taking a position similar to SPLM, which on Tuesday announced a boycott in the north, except in the central Blue Nile and South Kordofan states.

Mahdi was the last democratically elected leader of Sudan in 1986 and was one of Bashir's two main challengers in the presidential polls.

The polls, due to begin on Sunday, look shaky and Umma Party political bureau member Ahmed Abdallah said the Umma decision may persuade other parties still contesting the elections to join their boycott.

According to **AP**, senior Umma party official Mariam Sadiq told reporters her party's move comes after the government and the national election commission failed to respond to key reform conditions. Sudanese opposition parties accuse the ruling NCP of using state resources, limiting their access to the media and controlling the election commission.

In Washington, State Department spokesman P.J. Crowley said Wednesday that Sudanese opposition parties "have legitimate grievances" but that the elections are a crucial step for Sudan. Sudanese officials have said the polling will take place as planned but international observers and rights groups have expressed concerns that all signs point to a flawed process that is unlikely to deliver a free and fair vote on time.

## **Government refutes justifications cited by EU to withdraw observers from Darfur**

**Al Sahafa** reports that the government considered the move taken by the EU in withdrawing its observers from the region of Darfur as a preempt judgment on the electoral process. It called on observers not to announce such judgments that might give a blurry and imprecise view about the situation in the country. The government also rejected accusations of restricting the work of observers. "If there are any reservations on the presence of observers, they would not have been allowed in the country," MOFA Spokesperson, Muawya Osman Khaled said.

**All dailies and news wires** report on the decision of the European Union to withdraw its observers from Darfur just four days before Sudan begins national elections.

EU mission chief Veronique de Keyser told reporters of the move yesterday after flying into the North Darfur capital of El-Fasher to meet the team of six monitors. De Keyser said earlier that she was concerned about the observers' safety, and that they would not have sufficient access to credibly evaluate the polls.

## **Malik Aggar: SPLM to run elections in the north except for Presidency and Darfur**

**Dailies** report that during a statement to *Al-Shirooq TV* yesterday, SPLM Deputy Chairperson Malik Aggar contested the information on SPLM boycotting elections in north Sudan. Aggar said there is no change in the party political bureau's position on elections denying the earlier announcement by the party's Secretary General Pagan Amum.

According to **Al-Khartoum** Aggar stated that Salva Kiir told members of the committee assigned to listen to the views of candidates in the north states that any position on boycotting elections would be a personal one and would not represent the party's line. The paper adds Aggar admitted for the first time that there is a conflict within the party.

## **100,000 policemen deployed to secure elections**

**Radio Miraya** reports that some 100,000 policemen have been deployed nationwide to secure order during the upcoming general elections. Maj. Gen. Mohammed Ahmed Ali, member of the high police committee set up to secure the elections, denied claims of instability in the Darfur States.

## **Sudan's Beshir promises 'free and fair' elections**

**(AFP)** – Sudanese President Omar al-Beshir today promised the country's first multi-party elections in over two decades will be 'free and fair', as campaigning for the April 11-13 vote winds down.

"The elections will be fair and free and clean and exemplary," Beshir told a large gathering at the site of a massive hydroelectric plant in northern Sudan, marking the project's final phase.

They will be clean, because "elections are a religious duty," the Islamist-leaning leader said at the event, which was broadcast on state television.

The Sudanese leader, who focused his campaign on economic development and has taken his rallies across the country, chose to wrap up at the site of his flagship project, the Chinese-engineered Merowe Dam.

"All our projects... are a religious duty," Beshir told the gathering.

The dam's inauguration on March 3, 2009, came on the eve of announcement by the International Criminal Court of the issue an arrest warrant against the Sudanese leader for war crimes and crimes against humanity in the western region of Darfur.

The 66-year-old leader, who has led Africa's largest country since 1989, has been scrambling to maintain credibility after a boycott by opposition parties.

During Thursday's brief speech, Beshir made no mention of the boycott.

The Umma party, one of the two largest opposition groupings in the country, announced late on Wednesday its boycott of the election at all levels.

With the withdrawal of both Beshir's key challengers --Arman and Umma's Sadiq al-Mahdi-- little suspense remains in the race and Beshir looks to secure a comfortable win.

## **Upcoming Sudanese elections must be free, fair and credible, UN chief stresses**

**(UN News)** - Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has called on all parties in Sudan to ensure that next week's national elections are free, fair and credible, while voicing concerns about security and logistics for the polls – the first of their kind in 24 years.

"I call on all concerned to ensure that the electoral environment is conducive to the holding of free and fair elections that are acceptable to the Sudanese people," Mr. Ban writes in his latest report on the UN Mission in Sudan (UNMIS), which was made public today.

UNMIS has been assisting the Government and the National Elections Commission (NEC) by providing technical and logistical support to enable timely conduct of the elections and by advising and encouraging the Commission, the Government and all other parties to address concerns that may jeopardize their credibility.

Mr. Ban's report, which covers the period from 19 January to 20 March, comes amid press reports that the main political group in the south, the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), will boycott the elections and that the European Union has withdrawn its electoral observers from the strife-torn region of Darfur due to security concerns.

"While we respect the right of candidates and political parties to reach their own decisions, we continue to encourage all Sudanese political actors to recognize the importance of dialogue, for the full implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement," Mr. Ban's spokesperson, Marie Okabe, told a news conference in New York today.

"We encourage the Government of National Unity, the Government of Southern Sudan, and the National Elections Commission to ensure that the elections credibly reflect the will of the Sudanese people," she stated.

The Secretary-General voices concern in his report about security in southern Sudan and Darfur during the electoral period. "In particular, the limited capacities of the Southern Sudan Police Service, including the overall level of training, the shortage of vehicles and the lack of communications equipment, will pose a challenge to the Government of Southern Sudan's ability to provide security during elections," he states.

Another challenge arises from the fact that the NEC has plans to establish polling stations with more than 1,200 voters assigned to them, which will pose a significant difficulty in terms of the time allocated for voting, notes the Secretary-General.

In addition, he states, it is unclear whether the ink supplied to each station to mark voters will be sufficient for such high numbers.

Meanwhile, Mr. Ban says "significant" challenges remain in the preparation for the January 2011 referenda on southern secession and on the status of the disputed, oil-rich area of Abyei.

"Although the parties to the Comprehensive Peace Agreement have shown increasing political will to address referendum-related issues, they have made little concrete progress in establishing arrangements that would be required no matter the outcome of the referenda," he writes.

In February the Presidency of the Government of National Unity issued a resolution urging the parties to the CPA to assure the Sudanese people that the parties will reach agreement on the post-referendum arrangements, preferably before the conduct of the referendum in 2011, and to mobilize support from and agree on a well-defined role for the international community.

"The parties to the Agreement have not, however, agreed upon a structure, mechanism or timetable," Mr. Ban laments.

In addition, political disagreements within the Government of National Unity have contributed to delays in the appointment of posts in the Southern Sudan and Abyei Referendum Commissions, hampering progress on technical preparations for the referenda.

"I cannot overemphasize the importance of both effective technical preparations for the referendum voting process and a workable agreement on post-referendum arrangements," states the Secretary-General.

"With less than 10 months remaining before the referenda, delays in addressing any of the major outstanding issues are likely to have serious repercussions for the entire peace process," he adds.

In his report, Mr. Ban also recommends a one-year extension of the mandate of UNMIS, until 30 April 2011, and notes that the mission will face key challenges with regard to referendum preparations, security in the south, and capacity-building in the UNMIS areas of operation in the upcoming period.

## **Judiciary decided on 8,933 elections related appeals and objections**

**SUNA** reported that Chief Justice Jalal Eddin Mohamed Osman revealed yesterday at his meeting with the British ambassador, that special courts have looked into 8,933 of appeals and objections. The chief justice pointed out that he has issued a number of decisions setting up courts to look into appeals and objections in all the stages of the elections including voting and

announcement of the results.

## **Constitutional Court may suspend elections**

**Khartoum Monitor** reports that the Constitutional Court is set today to look into the petition raised by Mohammed Alhassan Alsoufi, one of the presidential candidates which may lead to a slight suspension of the election. The lawyer of Alsoufi, Satie Mohammed Alhaj, said in case the Constitutional Court rules to suspend the elections today, the government and the people should respect the ruling and urged the international monitors to understand that no one is expected to disrespect the Court's decision.

## **Former US President Carter to monitor Sudan vote**

**(VOA)** The director of the democracy program at the Carter Center said the arrival today in Khartoum of former U.S. President Jimmy Carter ahead of Sudan's general election signifies the international community's interest in the upcoming vote. David Carroll said President Carter will be leading the Carter Centre's poll observer team during Sudan's vote set for April 11-13.

"President Carter and other leaders of our mission will be arriving today Thursday to lead the Carter Center observation team in Sudan," he said.

This comes after Sudan's incumbent President Omar Hassan Bashir announced he will grant President Carter and his observer team unlimited access during the vote.

The Sudanese leader had earlier threatened to expel foreign poll observers for "interference" after the Carter Center suggested a brief delay in the election.

Carroll said President Carter will be leading a team that will be impartial in assessing the vote.

"Our purpose is two-fold. We are trying to show the international community what's happening in Sudan (and) we are also here to render an assessment as an impartial, credible observer group, about the electoral process that has been unfolding here in Sudan," Carroll said.

Carroll said the Carter Center's poll observers have been working in Sudan since last year.

"We've been operating in Sudan at the invitation of the government of Sudan and of the election authorities and also under the terms of the Memorandum of Understanding, which provides for the access of observers...throughout the country," Carroll said.

Carroll said incumbent President al-Bashir has clarified his previous pronouncement about expelling international observers after accusing them of "interference".

"We were concerned about some of the remarks made in the past week made by President Bashir, but he has clarified his statements recently that we will have complete access and our observers will be able to carry out their work," Carroll said.

## **Other Highlights**

### **LRA attack several villages and escape into DRC**

**Afric.com** reports that LRA rebels have since Tuesday attacked several villages in Ezzo County, in Southern Sudan's Western Equatoria state. According to Ezzo county commissioner, Raphael Tamania one man was killed and another seriously wounded during the attack.

Tamania said, "A group of LRA rebels crossed the Southern Sudan border from the Democratic Republic of Congo on Tuesday and attacked villages and a Congolese refugee camp three miles away from the border. They looted food and medical drugs."

He said that Southern Sudan troops later confronted the rebels who escaped back to DRC. According to him more troops have been deployed to guard people against the rebels.

### **Armed forces issue statement on JEM violations to ceasefire**

**(SUNA)** The Armed Forces pointed out that the JEM continued carrying out ceasefire violations since the signing of the framework agreement in Doha last February explaining that the total

number of the movement's violations is 35 up to now.

A statement issued yesterday by the Armed Forces' spokesman, Lt. Col. Al-Sawarmi Khalid Saad, said that these violations included strengthening JEM's military capabilities at Jabal Moon and Jaljala areas, carrying out recruitment activities, imposing levies and fees on the vehicles of citizens, detention, abduction and torture, as well as threatening citizens not to participate in the elections

The statement affirmed that all these activities were contradictory with the framework agreement. The Armed Forces said that it will be committed in the coming days to the ceasefire as long as the JEM is committed to it, warning that they will not hesitate to deter any one who attempts to obstruct the election process and frighten the citizens