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Media Monitoring Report

United Nations Mission in Sudan/ Public Information Office

Referendum Watch

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Highlights

GoSS suspends school competition, says SAF launches fresh bombing

Dailies 8/12/10 – GoSS has suspended school competitions scheduled to kickoff on Friday in Wau in protest at SAF's continued bombing of areas in the South and called on the UNSC to investigate the bombing including the NCP claims that the SPLM is shelter Darfur rebel movements. GoSS Minister of Peace Pagan Amum told a press conference yesterday that SAF launched fresh aerial bombings in north and west Bahr el Ghazal yesterday and day before intended to gear the country back to war and disrupt the CPA implementation.

SUNA 7/12/10 reported that SAF spokesman Lt. Col. Al-Sawarmi Khakid Saad has denied the SPLM allegations.

In a press statement to SUNA, Lt Col. Saad said that the circles that circulate these allegations are ignorant about the cordial atmosphere which prevailed at the meetings held Monday in Falluj between VP Ali Osman Taha and GoSS VP Dr. Riek Machar, the meetings between the federal Minister of Defence, Gen. Abdul-Rahim Mohamed Hussein, and the Minister of the SPLA Affairs, Niyal Deng, and also the meetings of the Joint Defence Council.

He said that these meetings underscored the importance of giving priority to boosting the stability and carrying out joint work to guarantee the flow of petroleum, adding that stoppage of the petroleum flow will lead to a disastrous situation in the south and affecting the economy of the north.

The Armed Forces' spokesman pointed out that the Armed Forces are continuing their operations to fight and pursue the rebels of Darfur at border area between the north and the south without encroaching on any areas south of the border of 1956.

Voter registration process ends, extended for abroad states

Sudan Vision 8/12/10 - The referendum voter registration process will come to an end this evening but the SSRC announced extension for southerners in the Diaspora to compensate the lost days at the beginning of the process.

According to the acting Chief of the SSRC, John Makuer, the targeted number of voters in the North is more than 271 thousand and in the south more than 3 million with 400 thousands in the Diaspora, adding that there would be another 10% voter ballots printed...

NCP threatens not to recognize referendum results

Al-Sahafa 8/12/10 – The NCP has expressed doubt that the referendum process is progressing in a fair and free manner and accused the SPLM of terrorizing and intimidating southerners to prevent them from registering.

Deputy Chairman of the NCP in Khartoum state Dr. Mohamed Mandour Al-Mahdi said after touring registration centres in Omdurman that all indications were that referendum in the South is not progressing in a free and transparent manner. He called on the Presidency to discuss this

issue, saying the “NCP made it clear that it will not accept the results if the process is not free and fair”, adding that the international community will also not accept the result.

We need 5 million ballots– SSRC

Al-Sudani 8/12/10 –SSRC Spokesperson George Makuer revealed that the Commission needs the printing of 4,500,000 referendum ballots at \$230,000 for the upcoming process, saying the British company which won the contract is committed to deliver the ballots at Khartoum and Juba in addition to eight countries.

He described the post-registration phase as “complex” due to the short time but pointed out the possibility of successful and peaceful referendum.

AUHIP representative, former president of Burundi, told reporters after a meeting with SSRC Chairman that the Commission is committed to conduct a timely referendum.

Referendum center official shot dead in Upper Nile state

Sudan Tribune website 7/12/10 - Unknown gunmen have shot dead a member of Southern Sudan Referendum Bureau (SSRB) in Nasir County of Upper Nile State.

Ben Utong Kong, who served as a referendum center official, was killed alongside his father over the weekend. The incident occurred in Mading Payam, Nasir County.

On Monday a condolence message posted on SSRB website, the southern referendum body said it was deeply saddened by Kong’s untimely death.

Aleu Garang Aleu, the SSRB spokesman, told Sudan Tribune that the cause of the incident has no connection with the deceased’s referendum registration assignment, saying it may have been “due to other issues”.

There was no official communication from the Upper Nile state referendum high committee officials as their spokespersons were unavailable for comment according to the SSRB.

Meanwhile, SSRB still maintains that registration is proceeding well and with a consistently high turnout for the plebiscite, which was agreed as part of a 2005 peace deal between north and south...

Arab League delegation in Sudan for Referendum observation

Sudan Vision 8/12/10 - Arab League Secretary-General Advisor for Arab and African Affairs, Zaid Al-Saban, revealed the preparations of a technical delegation from the AL to visit Sudan within the coming few days to be acquainted on the logistic preparations for deployment of AL mission for referendum process observation as part of the Arab summit decision and the MoU signed between the AL and the SSRC.

Al-Saban said in press statements that the technical delegation will follow up the preparations to arrange the arrival of the official mission of referendum observation under the chairmanship of Assistant Secretary General, Ambassador Mohammed Al-Khalmishi.

On the visit of Secretary-General of the Arab League Amr Moussa to Sudan, Al-Saban said that it has been postponed until the last week of December.

Misinterpretation of Referendum symbols

Sudan Radio Service Juba, 07/12/10 - The Director of Southern Sudan Television (SSTV) says that southern Sudanese at the Ugandan border have raised concern over misinterpretation of the referendum symbols.

Obede Kunda told SRS on Tuesday that the two hands shaking are misunderstood for peace among southerners in the areas where voter education is minimal. He appealed to civil society organizations and the media to embark on referendum awareness at the grass-roots rather than concentrating on the urban centres.

“I got a message yesterday (Monday) from Uganda that they are complaining that, yes, they have registered but now they are confused because which is which in regards to the two symbols of unity and separation. Some of them have decided not to register so that they don’t vote,” he said.

SSRC will no longer beg for funding – SSRC Chairman

The Citizen Khartoum, 08/12/10 – The Chairman of the Southern Sudan Referendum Commission said yesterday that he was not going to fight anymore to raise funds for the commission to cover the budget deficit for the referendum.

“I will not beg anymore,” Mohamed Ibrahim Khalil said, “if there is no money we would just stop.”

Khalil said he had told authorities that the budget would cover for a “referendum of sorts” but not a good quality referendum. He pointed out that many of the donors who come to meet him do not know the sort of problems facing the commission.

“When they come and we tell them about the challenges we face, they say ‘okay but we still want the referendum to happen on time’.”

Divergence of opinions prevent Al-Bashir, Kiir from agreeing on Abyei

Al-Sahafa 8/12/10 reports that the Presidency meeting held yesterday failed to reach a settlement on Abyei as the two parties have disagreed on the proposals submitted by AUHIP Chair Thabo Mbeki. The meeting was attended by President Al-Bashir, his FVP Kiir and co-chairs of the joint political committee Gen. Salah Gosh and Pagan Amum. Mbeki is reportedly optimistic that a solution would be reached.

However, *SUNA* 7/12/10 reported Mbeki as saying that the two partners of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) have agreed on the major proposal which he forwarded to them concerning the solution of Abyei issue.

In a press statement after his meeting on Tuesday evening with the President of the Republic, Field Marshal Omer Al-Bashir, and the First Vice President and President of the Government of South Sudan, Salva Kiir, Mbeki said that the meeting has realized a remarkable progress for achieving solution of Abyei issue.

He appreciated the serious response expressed by President Al-Bashir and the First Vice President and President of the Government of South Sudan, Salva Kiir, to his major proposal.

Mbeki said that he would continue meetings and consultations with the two partners on the proposals pertinent to Abyei issue.

Mbeki said that the two partners reiterated their commitment not to return to war and continue negotiations to reach solutions for all the pending issues in the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA).

Responding to a question, Mbeki said that his meeting with President Al-Bashir and Kiir did not tackle formation of the Commission for the referendum of Abyei.

Retired army general denies links with Misseriya Abyei Administration

Al-Sudani Khartoum, 08/12/10 – Retired army general Fadlalla Burma Nassir says he has no links whatsoever with the alleged Misseriya government in Abyei. In a phone interview, Nassir, who has been named as head of security and intelligence of the Misseriya Administration, said he has not been contacted on the issue and has only heard of the Misseriya government from the media. He said he was proud to be a member of the Misseriya tribe and the National Umma Party but his “loyalty to Sudan and its people is on top of all other considerations”.

He pointed out that he does not think that the Misseriya would want to turn their lands into a battle zone and neither would they want to be a reason for renewed fighting between the north and south. The retired general said that the problem of Abyei could be resolved through sincere dialogue between the Misseriya and the Dinka-Ngok without interference from external players.

Misseriya declare readiness for confrontation with the SPLM

Al-Tayyar Khartoum, 08/12/10 – The General Union of the Misseriya has revealed that its representatives are in talks with counterparts from some Arab tribes in Darfur to prepare for confrontation with the SPLM “should the need arise”.

“SPLM must know that the Misseriya are not alone. They have the support of the Habbania, the Ta’ aiysha and the Rizeigat,” warned Musa Hamadein, a leading figure of the Union.

No concessions or deals on Abyei – NCP

Al-Rai Al-Aam 8/12/10 – The NCP has said that it would neither accept deal from the international community nor make any concessions on the Abyei territory unless the rights of all parties are guaranteed.

NCP leading figure Ibrahim Ghandour told reporters yesterday that Misseriya historic rights would not be relinquished and no international deals would be accepted whether from the US or any other body that seeks to deny the Misseriya their inherent rights in the territory.

CPA parties to resume Austria-sponsored talks in Addis Ababa

Ajras Al-Hurriya 8/12/10 – Foreign Minister Ali Karti met yesterday with his visiting Austrian counterpart Michael Leefer and told reporters after the meeting that they discussed the possibility

of resuming talks between the two CPA parties in Addis Ababa on December 13th. He said the parties could benefit from Austria's experience in post-referendum arrangement.

South Sudan urges UN to probe alleged bombing

AFP (Khartoum) 7/12/10 - Sudan's southern former rebels on Tuesday demanded a UN probe into alleged aerial bombing by the north's army ahead of a referendum widely tipped to lead to the partition of Africa's biggest nation.

"We call on the Security Council of the United Nations... to form a team of investigation that will also involve the structures for ceasefire implementation between the parties so as to prevent a return of Sudan to war," said Pagan Amum, secretary general of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement.

"The National Congress Party is implementing a plan to take Sudan back to war so as to avoid the implementation of CPA, particularly the conduct of the referendum on self-determination," he said in reference to the north's ruling party.

The autonomous southern regional government last month accused the northern army of carrying out air strikes on its positions south of the north-south border, a charge the army denied.

But the United Nations said it was already looking into the allegations.

"The verification process is underway," Kouider Zerrouk, spokesman of the United Nations Mission in Sudan told AFP, noting the process involved peacekeepers and the armies of the north and south.

Speaking at a Khartoum news conference, Amum said the bombing continued on Monday and Tuesday in Northern Bahr al-Ghazal and spread to the neighbouring state of Western Bahr al-Ghazal, disrupting school activities.

"For all these reasons, and to protect the life of our children, the government of southern Sudan has decided to suspend the school competitions," the SPLM official said.

The NCP of Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir has meanwhile accused the southern army of aiding rebels in Darfur, the western region at war for the past seven years.

Amum called on the UN Security Council to look into the NCP's "false allegations," which he said were being used "as an alibi to drag Sudan back to war."

"The SPLM does not want a return of Sudan to war," he said.

"Even if the choice of the people is secession, we look forward to build good relations between the south and the north so that they become two independent states living in peace."

South Sudan accuses northern army of fresh attacks

Reuters (Khartoum) 7/12/10 - South Sudan's main party accused the north of fresh bombing attacks on its territory on Monday and Tuesday, saying Khartoum was trying to take the country back to war and wreck an independence referendum.

Sudan's northern army denied mounting any attacks and U.N. ceasefire monitors were not immediately available for comment.

"The Government of Sudan and the (north's dominant) National Congress Party has continued bombing south Sudan especially in Western Bahr al-Ghazal from yesterday up to today," the secretary general of the south's dominant Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) Pagan Amum told reporters.

"It is clear that the National Congress Party is implementing a plan to take Sudan back to war so to avoid the ... the conduct of the referendum on self-determination," he added, calling on the U.N. Security Council to investigate the attacks.

The southern army accused the north of bombing inside its border several times in November, saying Khartoum wanted to disrupt the vote, scheduled for Jan. 9, to keep control of the south's oil. The north said it accidentally dropped bombs once as it battled Darfur rebels just over the border in the north but has denied all other reports.

"The Sudanese army did not attack any place in Bahr al- Ghazal. There has been no fighting," the northern army's spokesman said on Tuesday.

Preparations for the referendum have been dogged by logistical problems but both the United Nations and the vote's organising commission have cut corners and compressed timetables to try to meet the deadline.

Officials on Tuesday said the referendum could happen on time as they gave British company Tall Security Group a tender to print and deliver ballots by Christmas day. The company won the tender from among 12 groups with a bid of almost \$230,000 and had undertaken to deliver the ballots within 12 days of signing the contract, said the head of information at the referendum commission, George Makuer.

"This means we can make Jan. 9 and all the ballot papers will be ready in the voting centres inside and outside Sudan," Makuer told reporters.

Denis Kadima, the U.N. official in charge of referendum arrangements, told Reuters the ballots would need to be in Sudan before Dec. 25 to be distributed to voting centres in time.

But he added they would need to wait until the voter registration was completed and fully counted before they could tell the company how many ballot papers needed to be printed.

Makuer said it could take up to a week after voter registration ends on Dec. 8 to get final numbers from all parts of the remote south.

Sudan's north-south war was fuelled by differences over religion, ethnicity, oil and ideology. It destabilised much of east Africa and the continent is anxious to keep Sudan at peace.

UN in emergency appeal for south Sudan

AFP 7/12/10 - The UN is seeking 32 million dollars in emergency funding to help tens of

thousands of people returning to south Sudan for a landmark independence vote, its aid chief for the region said on Tuesday.

Southerners who sought refuge in the north during the 1983-2005 civil war have been returning home at a rate of more than 1,000 people a day, UN humanitarian coordinator for south Sudan Lise Grande said.

In all, more than 51,100 people have returned since October 30 and as many as 150,000 more could arrive in the coming months, she said.

"We are appealing for 32 million dollars to support emergency returns," she said. "We need that honestly right now, in order to provide emergency assistance to the folks that are coming back."

The mass influx is being coordinated by the autonomous southern regional government, with its humanitarian arm -- the Southern Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (SSRRC) -- supporting returnees on their arrival.

"The SSRRC is suggesting that between now and March there could be as many as 150,000 southerners who return in a voluntary and safe way to the south," Grande said.

But many southerners living in the north also fear what will happen after the vote, which most analysts expect to result in a decisive vote to divide Africa's largest nation in two.

"Humanitarian agencies are providing emergency assistance to the returnees when they reach their final destination," Grande told reporters.

"That includes food aid, seeds and tool, shelter, water and sanitation, support for education and support for health."

The southern regional government has directly assisted an estimated 30,000 southerners to leave the north, according to estimates by the International Organisation for Migration, which is monitoring the returns.

Efforts have been made to ensure returnees go back to their home districts and do not set up shantytowns around the region's major towns.

"We want to avoid creating IDP (internally displaced persons) camps," Grande said. "We are trying to provide assistance for the returnees in their final destinations."

"It is the governments in the north and in the south who are fully responsible for ensuring that all returns take place in a voluntary, safe and dignified manner," Grande said.

North, south agree to guard oil sites before, after January's referendum

AP 7/12/10 - A top official in Southern Sudan says security officials from Sudan's north and south will jointly guard oil installations before and after the south's January independence referendum.

Minister of Internal Affairs Maj. Gen. Gier Chuang Aluong said Tuesday that the oil facilities

will be guarded by a joint north-south military unit and by southern police and security agents.

Aluong says the security decision came Monday during a meeting between top north-south officials. He says oil workers, many of whom are foreigners, had been nervous about security surrounding the vote.

SPLA detains 9 student union leaders in the South

Al-Rai Al-Aam 8/12/10 – SPLA intelligence yesterday detained nine leaders of the Sudanese student union in Bahr el Ghazal state who are NCP supporters among them Abdullah Deng, the chairman of the union of southern students in Khartoum state and Peter Deng, chairman of youth authority for peace and unity in Torit.

The union has threatened a strong reaction if the detained students are not freed. Chairman of the union, Habibullah Al-Mahfooz said the union would stage a demonstration today to hand over a petition to the SPLM demanding their release.

7 people killed, 2000 cattle robbed in Lakes State

Miraya FM 7/12/10 - At least seven people have been killed and two thousand heads of cattle stolen in two successive raids on Yirol East County of Lakes State in the last two days.

The speaker of Lakes State Legislative Assembly, John Marik Makur, who is visiting Kiriem and Gombek cattle camps, where the incidents occurred, described the situation as alarming and called for State Government intervention.

Marik said that the situation may affect Referendum process in the areas. These incidents happened two days after a Peace Conference involving Lakes, Unity and Warrap States to establish boarder courts to keep peace in the areas.

Trade Union will lose 10,000 employees after secession

Al-Rai Al-Aam 8/12/10 – Chairman of the Sudanese Federation of Trade Unions Ibrahim Ghandour told a press conference in Khartoum yesterday that the Federation would lose 10,000 members if secession takes place but said it would not affect progress of work in the North.

Relocation of three southern universities in the north begins

Sudan Radio Service Juba, 07/12/10 - The GoSS has embarked on the relocation of three southern universities in the North by repatriating the first batch of students from the North on Monday.

The first batch of three hundred students of greater Equatoria region arrived in Juba en-route to other towns to participate in the referendum registration exercise that ends on Wednesday 8th.

GoSS minister of higher education, Joseph Ukel told SRS on Tuesday that the relocation of the students and the universities is in the bid to secure the referendum voter turn-out and also as part of the post-referendum arrangements

Other Highlights

Unknown group intercept Abyei Deputy Chief Administrator's car

Akhbar Al-Youm 8/12/10 – unidentified group intercepted in Khartoum yesterday the car of Abyei Deputy Chief Administrator Rahama Abdul Rahman Al-Nur while the vehicle was crossing Manshiya Bridge. When the car stopped, they brandished their weapons but they discovered that only the driver was in the car, Al-Nur was not. The driver reported the incident to the police and investigation is underway.

An anonymous NCP leading figure described the incident as part of what is happening to the NCP cadres, saying they are ready for all eventualities, adding the SPLM would be held responsible for any harm to Al-Nur.

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