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Media Monitoring Report

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Highlights

Presidential elections to be held as scheduled – Al-Bashir

Local dailies report that President Al-Bashir said on Sunday that presidential elections will be held as scheduled and pledged to hand over power to whomever the people choose.

Some political powers want elections to be postponed in fear of its outcomes, despite the fact that its timing was "no surprise", Al-Bashir told a crowd celebrating the opening of the first Sudanese aircraft assembling complex. He called on all political parties to get ready for the elections, slated to take place next April as stipulated in the CPA.

President Al-Bashir also accused some opposition political parties backed by the US and neighbouring states of trying to topple the government.

Defense Minister Abdulraheem Mohamed Hussein, who was also at the event, said that the new aircraft would be used for training purposes. He pointed out that the complex has maintenance sections for fighter aircraft, helicopters and Russian transport aircraft.

Sudan's Bashir says new plane defies sanctions

(**Reuters** – 05/07/09, *Khartoum*) Sudan's president said on Sunday sanctions could not block development in his country, as he unveiled its first home-manufactured aircraft -- a \$15,000 training plane that runs on car fuel.

President Omar Hassan Al-Bashir spoke at the latest in a string of defiant rallies mounted after the ICC issued an arrest warrant against him in March, to face charges of masterminding atrocities in Darfur. Bashir has repeatedly sought to highlight his government's development record since the court ruling, speaking this year at the opening of a hydroelectric dam, a new bridge in Khartoum and Sudan's first ethanol plant, among other projects.

On Sunday he spoke at the launch of the Safat-01 aircraft, a two-seater propeller plane produced at Sudan's state Safat Aviation Complex, part of the country's Ministry of Defence, according to its website.

"Sudan has its own military industry. It makes tanks, missiles and many types of guns, all made by Sudanese hands," Bashir told hundreds of supporters outside the plant in Wadi Sayidina military area, north of the capital.

"Today, Sudan has entered a new industry -- aviation," he added.

Bashir did not mention the global court directly, or the Western governments he says are supporting the legal case.

But he told the crowd in local dialect "What we are doing will enrage our enemies," adding "sanctions cannot stop development."

He added: "They conspired, they supported rebellions, and created rebellions. They pushed neighbouring countries, they imposed economic, diplomatic and political sanctions and what was the result? Everyday, thanks to God, his strength and power, we are moving forward."

GoSS President calls for peace prayers for Abyei

Al-Sahafa reports that the Government of Southern Sudan has declared 18 – 22 July this year as Peace Days for Abyei. GoSS Presidential Affairs Minister Luka Biong said that the

Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) is expected to issue its ruling on the Abyei issue around that time. This, he said, is why the GoSS is calling on all religious clerics in southern Sudan to fast and pray for peace in Abyei during this period. He added that the PCA is expected to notify the Parties to the CPA later today or sometime tomorrow on when its ruling on the Abyei boundaries would be out.

Minister Biong further noted that FVP Kiir's visits next Tuesday and Wednesday to Abyei and AL-Mujlad would focus on the need for peaceful coexistence and on the basic issues that affect the people.

Parties still tied on contentious issues on draft Referendum Bill

Al-Sahafa reports that NCP Secretary for Political Mobilization Ibrahim Ghandour said that the NCP and SPLM have endorsed the draft Referendum Bill presented by the National Constitution Review Commission as a basis for consultation but are yet to agree on some disputed items of the bill such as voter eligibility, the processes involved, formation and membership of the Commission and the targeted states. He said that the Partners have agreed to involve political parties on the disputed issues but said that they will first meet today to finalise the draft ahead of such consultations.

Police does not rule out elections violence, chaos

Deputy Director-General of Police, Gen. Al-Adil Ajab, does not rule out possibilities of elections chaos and violence, **Al-Rai Al-Aam** reports. Addressing the inauguration of an elections security training for police in Khartoum yesterday, he urged political parties to shun from inciting elections violence and assured that the police, together with the state security apparatus, is capable of safeguarding the electoral process.

Air bridge to convey humanitarian aid to affected areas in the south begins

(**SUNA** – 05/07/09 – Khartoum) - The Commissioner General for Humanitarian Aid, Hassabu Mohamed Abdul-Rahman, has announced that an air bridge has been launched and has started providing humanitarian assistance to conflict areas in southern Sudan from 05/06/09. He said that the first relief-laden aircraft left flew to Aweil area carrying 20 tons of food items for children. He said that the air bridge will continue in the coming days to cover all the areas that were affected by tribal disputes in the south.

SPLA barring traders from work in parts of Eastern Equatoria

Sources reveal that some SPLA elements are barring some traders from practicing in parts of Eastern Equatoria on the grounds that the traders are not SPLM supporters, reports **Rai Al-Shaab**. Informed sources reveal that a group of SPLA soldiers has been harassing traders and civilians in the local markets and has killed 3 and injured 15 in related scuffles. The source adds that citizens have formed organized groups to combat such practices.

Government ready for Darfur ceasefire

Al-Ayyam reports that Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Ali Al-Sadiq announced yesterday that the government has accepted a US proposal for a comprehensive ceasefire in Darfur and is prepared to exert all possible efforts for a final and comprehensive settlement of the problems in that region. He said that US Special Envoy Scott Gration will be here next week to continue talks on Darfur.

Graton had earlier held talks in Chad and Libya with representatives of some Darfur armed groups. These talks culminated in agreement with some of the armed groups to convene talks (at a venue yet to be agreed upon) on the 24th of this month in a bid to unify their negotiations positions.

In a separate story, the Political Affairs Secretary of SLM-Unity faction reports that a delegation of SLM-Abdulwahid representatives flew into Libya yesterday. He said that the two factions held consultations yesterday on possibilities of convening a meeting of the armed groups and of reaching a unified negotiations position.

Only UNSC could bar the President Al-Bashir arrest warrant

Justice Minister Abdulbassit Sabdarat has criticised ICC Chief Prosecutor Louis-Moreno Ocampo over recent statements in which the prosecutor reportedly said that the AU decision not to cooperate with the ICC over the President Al-Bashir arrest warrant was irrelevant. The minister pointed out that Ocampo's statement was in "implementation of western agendas", reports ***Al-Ayyam***.

The ICC Prosecutor had said that only the UNSC had the right to stop the Al-Bashir arrest warrant.

Meanwhile, ***The Citizen*** reports that Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Ali Al-Sadiq said that Botswana's announcement that it would not adhere to the AU summit's decision on the ICC was "insignificant". He said in a press statement yesterday that the AU decisions are binding to all members.

Umma Party to continue talks with armed groups

Undaunted by protests from the NCP, the National Umma Party says it will continue consultations with the JEM in order to reach a final settlement in Darfur, reports ***Al-Ayyam***. Party SG, Sidiq Ahmed Suleiman, told a press conference at Umma House yesterday that the party intends to open channels of dialogue with the other armed movements in Darfur including SLM-Abdulwahid.

Party Political Affairs Secretary, Sarrah Nugdalla, also underlined the need to sit with the other political forces in the country and chart a position over the legitimacy of the current government after the 9th of July this year. On the National Accord deal signed between the party and the NCP, she said that the NCP "condemned that accord to death when it organised the People of Sudan Initiative."

Elections could take place in 90% of North Darfur, says Governor

Al-Khartoum reports that North Darfur Governor Osman Yusuf Kibir said that preparations for the forthcoming elections are proceeding well. He said that he expects the electoral process could cover 90% of the North Darfur State. The Governor conceded that the census did not cover some areas such as Al-Teina, Oum Baro, Dar-es-salaam and some parts of Kalamando but added that projections could be made to address the issue.

Sudan, US discuss opening of new US Embassy premises

Talks yesterday between Undersecretary for Foreign Affairs Muttrif Sidiq and US Chargé d'Affaires Robert Whitehead, also covered issues pertaining to the opening of the new US Embassy premises in Khartoum, said Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Ali Al-Sadiq. ***Al-Rai Al-Aam*** reports that the talks also covered preparations for the forthcoming visit of Special Envoy Scott Graton.

Al-Sahafa reports that US Chargé d’Affaires Robert Whitehead has requested the Sudan Government to defer the visit of US Special Envoy Scott Gration who was expected for talks with officials here on 10 July.

Inclusive talks on Darfur to convene in August – Gration

Al-Sahafa reports that US Special Envoy Scott Gration has announced that talks on Darfur will resume in Doha next month with the participation of all Darfur armed factions. He told a delegation of the United Salvation Front led by Idriess Abu-Garda in Libya last Saturday that no armed group would be left out of the forthcoming Doha talks which would also include civil society organizations.

Gration also slammed requests by the JEM to confine the talks between them and the government. Special Envoy Gration pointed out that the JEM does not represent the people of Darfur and the fact that it bears arms does not give it the right for exclusive talks with the Sudan government.

Police uncover millions in counterfeit dollar notes

The Director for Criminal Investigations at the Khartoum State Police said that police have uncovered \$16 million in counterfeit bank notes in the Mayo suburbs of Khartoum south, reports **Al-Sahafa**. Following a tip-off, the police uncovered the fake notes in the possession of a foreign veterinary doctor and his Sudanese spouse. Police are on the trails of a third suspect said to be another foreigner.

Press Council threatens to revoke license of some newspapers

The National Press and Publications Council has threatened to revoke the license of “society” newspapers (such as **Al-Dar**, **Hikayat**, etc.) if such papers continue to foment “destruction of Sudanese values”, reports **Al-Rai Al-Aam**.

Rai Al-Shaab added that the Council discussed at a meeting yesterday the deteriorating state of the specialized press especially in covering issues related to society and technical matters. The decision reached was that the quality of output on society invokes lust and destroys Sudanese values through highlighting criminal events that are foreign to Sudanese values and norms.

Sovereignty Sector endorses the Aviation and Air Safety draft bills

Ajras Al-Hurriya reports that a meeting of the Sovereignty Sector headed by Presidential Affairs Minister Bakri Hassan Saleh endorsed yesterday the draft Aviation Bill and the draft Air Safety Bill. The bills will soon be tabled before cabinet for endorsement. The Sector has meanwhile instructed the Sudan Civil Aviation Authority to take the necessary measures during the grace period to be decided by the Council of Ministers in order to streamline the implementation of these bills once approved.