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Media Monitoring Report

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Highlights

SPLA yet to decide a presidential candidate – Kiir

Al-Ahdath reports FVP Salva Kiir said that the SPLM had not decided on a presidential candidate yet. Kiir, who addressed a rally in Kauda, Southern Kordofan, stressed the need for full implementation of the CPA to avoid restart of war. He pointed out that unity could not be made attractive without providing services and development to the population. He urged civilians to voluntarily surrender their arms to the police and to desist from aggravating conflict.

Meanwhile, **local dailies** report the NCP has commended the FVP Kiir's speech in Kadugli where he called for re-energizing the NCP-SPLM Partnership to ensure unity of the country. According to **Al-Ahdath**, NCP Political Secretary Mohamed Mansour Al-Mahdi described Kiir's line as "very positive". NCP Information Secretary Kamal Obeid also issued statement welcoming Kiir's assurances and keenness to implement the CPA, saying it would make unity attractive for the people of the Southern Sudan. "Relationship between the NCP and SPLM is strategic," Presidential Assistant Nafie Ali Nafie said, according to **Al-Raed**.

"Opposition memo a plot to overthrow the government" – Nafie

Local dailies report the NCP reacted strongly to the opposition announcement that the government's legitimacy is over. According to **al-Rai Al-Aam**, Presidential Assistant Nafie Ali Nafie described the opposition memorandum to the constitutional court as a "conspiracy to overthrow the government". "They submitted the memo after they have become certain of the futility of their attempt to topple the government through the ICC or elections," he said.

Sudan Tribune website 8/7/09 reported NCP and Northern opposition parties exchanged strong words and sharp criticisms on the constitutional status of the government after July.

July 9th mark the deadline set by the 2005 CPA for conducting the presidential and parliamentary elections on national and state levels.

The Northern opposition parties assert that as per the CPA, the current government should be disbanded as of July 9th and a new interim cabinet should be formed to prepare the country for elections.

The former prime minister Al-Sadiq Al-Mahdi and head of the Umma party said in a press conference yesterday that the NCP "stubborn" policies and insistence on exclusion of other political powers created a "series of crisis" in the country.

Al-Mahdi said that the NCP is leading the country towards secession of the North from the South when a referendum is held in the South in 2011.

The opposition leader said that the solution is in forming a broad based national government to run the country and ensure "fair and free elections".

Both JEM and the Umma party agreed in the document they signed that the legal status of government as "unconstitutional" after July 9th saying it creates a "constitutional vacuum that can only be addressed through a national government based on national consensus".

The leading figure in the National Democratic alliance (NDA) Farouk Abu Essa said that the government could have avoided this situation by amending the constitution through the national assembly two months before July 9th.

Abu Essa added that opposition parties do not trust the Supreme Court and therefore will not challenge the constitutionality of the government.

Furthermore, Abu Essa recommended that a political consensus needs to be reached to form a transitional government and postpone elections till 2011.

The deputy leader of the Popular Congress Party (PCP) said that the opposition parties do not trust the government describing it as a "totalitarian" one adding that any elections cannot be fair under it.

But the powerful presidential assistant Nafi Ali Nafi directed fierce attacks at the opposition parties describing them of being "agents of [Western embassies and hotels".

Nafi accused the opposition parties of seeking to split the country and undermine its unity.

The deputy Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) leader Ali Mahmood Hassanein wrote a legal Op-ed saying that the electoral commission does not have the legal authority to set dates for the polls.

Al-Intibaha reports ex-Prime Minister and Umma Party leader Sadiq Al-Mahdi as saying that the prospective Abyei arbitration decision would not be a final solution. He stressed the need to involve other parties in the process. Al-Mahdi made the remarks at a forum in Khartoum.

UN undertakes measures ahead of Abyei Arbitration decision

Al-Intibaha reports SRSG Ashraf Qazi has said the Abyei Area roadmap is at a critical stage as the arbitration decision nears. Qazi, who paid a brief visit to Abyei yesterday for meeting the interim administration officials, said his mission and the local authorities had undertaken measures to prevent insecurity.

No evidence of NCP hand in south conflict - UN

Al-Intibaha reports UN expressed concern over tribal violence in the south. UN Regional Coordinator for south Sudan David Gressely told a press conference yesterday that the violence must end and the security situation should improve before elections. Mr. Gressely attributed the tribal violence to war, spread of arms, tribal conflict over water and pasture and poor judicial capacity. He said UN has no evidence of a hand in the tribal conflict in the south. "UN has no evidence of NCP hand," he added.

However, in reaction to Gressely's concern over insecurity in the south, an unnamed source said since the CPA gave SPLM the right to rule the south, ending tribal violence is the responsibility of GoSS, **Al-Rai Al-Aam** reports. But the source said the central government in Khartoum could consult with GoSS on the issue if requested to ensure stability of the south.

According to **AF** 8/7/09, Gressely said tightening between tribes in southern Sudan has increasingly targeted women and children and likely killed more than 1,000 people since January.

Tension between heavily armed tribes in the south has grown as competition for scarce water

and pasturage has increased. Clashes that began early this year have intensified and gone beyond traditional cattle raids to include attacks on civilians. "Horrendous" attacks have targeted large numbers of women and children, he said.

Gressly said the fighting has become widespread and now includes the south's 10 states, covering the entire south.

"Some news media accounts about that violence have spoken of more than 1,000 deaths since the beginning of this year, and while UNMIS is unable to verify independently that figure, we believe such estimates to be credible," he said.

Gressly said the new fighting between tribes in the south threatens to interfere with parliamentary and presidential elections already delayed twice and now set for April 2010. Those elections are a key requirement of the 2005 peace deal that ended the north-south civil war.

Still, the U.N. official said he was optimistic the voting could go ahead in the south. Sudan is also scheduled to hold a referendum in January 2011 on whether South Sudan should become independent.

The fighting this year has also disrupted agricultural production, raising the prospect of a food crisis, Gressly said. He said an assessment mission was evaluating the food situation.

SPLA sends Intelligence units to Abyei ahead of arbitration decision

Al-Intibaha reports GoSS last week ordered SPLA Intelligence Company to travel to Abyei to join SPLA troops stationed in "Neit" area. The newspaper has learned that SPLA intelligence units in Mujlad and Meiram were also instructed to travel to Abyei to report any information with regard to SAF movements around Abyei and the north-south border.

South Sudan builds up tank numbers as tensions rise

Reuters, 9/7/09 - South Sudan's army is building up its tank numbers at a time when tension is growing over a faltering peace deal with the north, the journal Jane's Defence Weekly reported on yesterday, citing satellite evidence.

SPLA on Tuesday said it was exercising its right to modernize its military hardware, but denied the reports of new tank deliveries, saying it had no intention of antagonizing Khartoum.

The Jane's report comes at a particularly sensitive time, weeks away from a ruling on the contested boundaries of Abyei, an oil-producing region where both sides clashed last year.

"South Sudan is assembling an armour fleet, preparing for any eventuality in its enduring dispute with Khartoum," reported the latest edition of trade journal Jane's Defence Weekly.

"In total, military and diplomatic sources confirmed to Jane's, 100 MBTs (main battle tanks) were ordered by South Sudan."

The journal published satellite images it said showing an SPLA compound northeast of the south's capital Juba in March containing tanks covered with camouflage or "wedged into the vegetation around the compound".

It said 12 new covered vehicles were photographed in May, each the same shape as a Ukrainian T-72 battle tank. The satellite images also showed fresh track marks leading from

Juba airport to the compound "indicating that these vehicles were airlifted to Sudan, probably in early May, and driven to the SPLA facility," said Jane's.

It added it had not been able to prove the vehicles pictured near Juba in May were the same T-72 tanks found on a Ukrainian ship hijacked by Somali pirates in September last year.

At the time, diplomats, the U.S. navy and the pirates said they believed its cargo of tanks had been heading to south Sudan via Kenya. Both South Sudan and Kenya denied the claims.

The T-72 tanks were transported to Kenya in February, after a ransom was paid. Jane's said the Kenyan army had promised to show reporters the tanks were still there, but had so far not followed through on the offer.

The SPLA on Wednesday told Reuters it did order some T-72 tanks in 2007, which were delivered in 2008. But spokesman Malaak Ayuen Ajok denied receiving any more after that date.

"The SPLA has not received any new tanks this year. No tanks have been airlifted into South Sudan," he said.

Ajok said the south was not building up its forces to prepare for any threat, but was working to modernize its army.

"We are not re-arming because of any confrontation with the north ... We are transforming our army from a guerrilla army to a conventional army," he said.

The rules of the 2005 accord allow both sides to replenish arms, as long as they have the approval of a north-south Joint Defence Board. No one was immediately available to comment from the Joint Defence Board or the northern Sudan Armed Forces.

South Africa defends stance on ICC-Sudan row amid criticisms

Sudan Tribune website 8/7/09 — The South African government sought to defend its position regarding the African Union (AU) resolution adopted last week in their semi-annual summit halting any cooperation with the ICC in the arrest of Sudanese president Omer Al-Bashir.

The AU has reportedly adopted the resolution by consensus but the Vice president and foreign minister of Botswana said that the issue was not properly debated and member countries were forced to accept it under pressure from Libya which chairs the pan-African body.

Botswana is the only ICC member at the AU to announce that it will not abide by the Sirte resolution and will arrest the Sudanese president if he visits.

Observers were awaiting to see how South Africa, a heavyweight country in the continent, would act on the issue of the ICC.

South Africa along with Botswana were the only two countries to publicly announce their intention to execute the arrest warrant if needed.

The 'Cape Town' newspaper based in South Africa had also reported that the deputy justice minister Andries Nel upheld his government's commitment to the ICC during a meeting of African members of the court in Addis Ababa last month contemplating withdrawal from the Rome Statute, which is the founding text of the ICC.

The newspaper said that Nel further called on the AU to “increase its co-operation with the ICC and firmly reject the view that the ICC was picking on Africa because all four situations it was prosecuting were on this continent”.

The newspaper quoted unidentified South African officials who acknowledged that government “is in a difficult position” over the resolution which conflicts with its obligations under the Statute.

The officials commented on Botswana’s dismissal of the AU resolution saying “it is not an option for South Africa” which they say is “deeply involved” in attempts to resolve the conflicts in South Sudan and in Darfur.

“How is it going to help the ongoing peace processes in South Sudan and Darfur, if Al-Bashir is behind bars?” one official said. “We need him to take those processes forward.”

The AU decision on non-cooperation with the ICC will not take place until it is ratified by the parliament the officials said. It is not clear how long the process will take as it involves a complex legal issue

Last week the Sudanese foreign ministry spokesperson Ali Al-Sadiq said he thought the AU decisions are binding to its members, so Bashir would not have to wait for further approval from the parliaments of each state.

South Africa’s judiciary committee in the parliament did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

The influential, privately-owned South African daily Business Day said that South Africa’s president Jacob Zuma failed his first foreign policy test by allowing the resolution to go through.

“The government should have unequivocally distanced itself from the AU’s gangster approach towards the Rome Statute on the International Criminal Court (ICC), to which South Africa is a signatory,” its editorial said.

“With the exception of Botswana...the African heads of state consciously chose, however, to ignore a process that they started. Instead they resolved to dishonor a treaty obligation....South Africa’s silence on the AU’s resolution implies that the government would be willing to host al-Bashir in this country”.

“SA cannot have its cake and eat it too; it can either take a stand against the AU as a signatory to the ICC and fight for justice, or allow the AU to resort to the old ways of its predecessor, the Organization of African Unity, which protected political despots and dictators”

Business Day cited the spokeswoman of the Department of International Relations and Co-operation Nomfanelo Kota as saying that while South African government would explain its position in due course, the AU resolution was not indicative of the government’s attitude to the ICC.

Egypt studies building \$500 million rail link to Sudan

Reuters 8/7/09 - Egypt is considering building a \$500 million rail link from the southern city of Aswan to a north Sudanese border town, state media said on Wednesday, in a move that would connect the two countries' rail networks.

The line would connect Aswan to Wadi Halfa on the Sudanese border and would pass through the Egyptian town of Abu Simbel, the site of two pharaonic temples moved to higher ground in the 1960s to save them from the rising waters of Lake Nasser.

Aswan and the Sudanese border town of Wadi Halfa are situated at opposite ends of Lake Nasser, a giant artificial lake filled by Nile waters and created by the construction of the Aswan High Dam.

Wadi Halfa, around 700 km (430 miles) north of Khartoum, marks the northern end of Sudan's rail network. People and goods currently traverse the border via a ferry on Lake Nasser.

The rail link would extend for 310 km and would also serve Egyptian Nubian villages around Lake Nasser as well as Toshka, a southern desert reclamation project, state news agency MENA said, quoting Aswan governor Mostafa al-Sayyed. Egypt is keen to maintain close ties with neighbouring Sudan, with which it shares strategic Nile river waters as well as longstanding cultural, political and trade links.

Kidnappers demand ransom for Darfur aid staff

Reuters 9/7/09 - Armed "bandits" have demanded a ransom for the release of two female aid workers kidnapped in Sudan's Darfur region and are negotiating with government officials, a minister Today.

One of the abducted women, Sharon Commins, 32, from Ireland, has managed to phone officials in Dublin and North Darfur, and has confirmed she and her Ugandan colleague are in good health, said state minister for humanitarian affairs Abdel Baqi al-Jailani.

It was the first confirmation that officials are negotiating with the armed men who seized the workers for Irish aid group GOAL from their compound in the north Darfur town of Kutum on Friday -- the third kidnapping of foreigners in the remote western region in four months.

"They want money and negotiations are ongoing," al-Jailani told **Reuters**. "We now know the names of the people and their tribes.

"This is nothing to do with politics. This is nothing to do with the (Darfur) rebels. It appears that they are some bandits. We hope we will have some good news in a few days time."