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Media Monitoring Report

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Highlights

Kiir meets AEC, SRSG

Al Sahafa reports GoSS has called for a regional initiative to discuss disarmament in south Sudan. GoSS President Kiir held a series of meetings yesterday in Juba with the AEC and SRSG Ashraf Qazi. GoSS Presidential Affairs Minister Luka Biong told the paper that AEC informed Salva Kiir yesterday about the lack of progress in the issues already raised by the AEC in its previous reports. He said Kiir reiterated his commitment to elections on schedule but he stressed the need to address some issues before elections take place especially the restrictive laws and census results.

Biong added that the meeting between Kiir and Qazi also focused on the same issues discussed with the AEC especially the prospective CPA conference in Washington, adding Qazi explained UN's vision on the need for a peaceful disarmament.

US to host conference on Sudan peace accord

Sudan Tribune website 3/6/09 reported the US administration has formally invited delegations from the NCP and the SPLM for a conference on the progress of the CPA. The meeting is scheduled for June 23rd and each delegation will consist of three people.

The conference will be addressed by US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and attended by special envoy Scott Gration.

SPLM complains to UN about slow CPA implementation

Al-Watan reports South Sudan Assembly Speaker James Wani has complained about the slow implementation of the CPA especially the border demarcation and funding for Abyei area. He told the paper after a meeting with SRSG Ashraf Qazi that SPLM would stick to its position on the census results, saying despite the fact that the CPA was concluded four years ago, it continues to face numerous implementation hurdles.

Samar calls for lifting immunity from army members

Al-Rai Al-Aam reports the Special Rapporteur for Human Rights in the Sudan Sima Samar has called on the National Assembly to restore to the Criminal Code a repealed section which prohibits female circumcision. Samar has also called on the Parliament to lift immunity from army members as stipulated in the law and stressed the need for guarantees to enable journalists to work. According to **Akhir Lahza**, the National Assembly's Human Rights Committee rejected Samar's proposals.

Akhbar Al Youm reports the head of the General Prosecutor Babikir Abdul Latif as saying the meeting with Samar did not touch on the case of those convicted of killing journalist Mohamed Taha Mohamed Ahmed. He said the meeting focused on the legal measures taken in the case of JEM elements accused of attack on Omdurman. A source said Samar called for more transparency in the humanitarian work.

HAC, Sima Samar review humanitarian situation in Darfur

SUNA 3/6/09 - The Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid, Hassabu Mohamed Abdul-Rahman, yesterday met with the special rapporteur for human rights in Sudan, Sima Samar, and reviewed the humanitarian situation in Darfur and the measures adopted by the state following

the expulsion of a number of voluntary organizations. Hassabu called on Sima Samar to submit neutral and objective reports on the situation in Sudan that reflect the facts on the voluntary repatriation. Hassabu and Sima Samar also discussed the situation in south Sudan and the major role being played by the national unity government to enhance the conditions in the south. He affirmed the government commitment to transparency and neutrality concerning all issues in Sudan. Sima Samar acknowledged improvement of humanitarian situation in Darfur.

NCP, SPLM fail to agree on security bill

Al-Rai Al-Aam reports SPLM Legal Affairs Minister Michael Macuwai as saying that VP Taha and GoSS VP Riek Machar failed at a meeting yesterday to reach a compromise on the national security bill especially the section on the security apparatus' power to arrest. He said the meeting decided to refer the bill to the Cabinet and then to the Parliament. He added that during the meeting, SPLM also received a draft copy of the referendum law for consideration and that the meeting also discussed popular consultation bills for the Nuba Mountains, the Blue Nile and Abyei referendum.

Kiir, SPLA commanders differ

Al-Wifaq has learned from informed sources that differences emerged between SPLA commanders and GoSS President Kiir in the backdrop of the recent changes in the SPLA structure. According to sources, Kiir affirmed to the SPLA commanders that the reshuffle was normal; it has nothing to do with alleged corruption or tribal conflict in the south.

DDR kicks off on Wednesday in Juba

Akhbar Al-Youm reports the National Council for DDR Chairman Gen. Bakri Hassan Saleh announced that the DDR in southern Sudan states would kick off in Juba on Wednesday. National DDR Council Executive Director Brig. Osman Nourri said SRSG Ashraf Qazi, UN agencies, donor Ambassadors and civil society organizations had been invited to attend the ceremony which would also be honoured by FVP Salva Kiir.

Darfur movements, opposition to meet in Juba

Al-Sahafa reports Sudan's opposition parties and some Darfur movements are expected to meet in Juba on Saturday to discuss the status quo including Darfur crisis. Sources told the paper that the meeting, organized by the SPLM, will also witness deliberations on the upcoming elections and peace agreements.

GoSS frees Presidency delegate

Akhir Lahza reports GoSS yesterday freed the Presidency delegate Muntasir Ibrahim after GoSS VP Riek Machar intervened. Machar deplored the arrest, saying he was detained by mistake. He said Ibrahim was sent by the Presidency to assist northern traders in Malakal and western Equatoria, adding that Ibrahim resumed his mission after his release.

Meanwhile, the NCP has described the arrest as "dangerous and irresponsible", saying the danger of the incident stems from the fact that Ibrahim was dispatched by the Presidency. "The incident reflects extent of insecurity in southern Sudan and serves as an evidence of what President Al-Bashir has said at the closing session of the NCP Shura Council," NCP official Qotbi Al-Mahdi said.

NCP intends to deny self-determination for South – Amum

Miraya FM 3/6/09 reported SPLM SG Pagan Amum has accused the NCP of intending to withdraw from what was previously agreed upon regarding the self determination for Southern Sudan which is stipulated in the Naivasha Agreement.

Speaking to Miraya FM, Amum said that the NCP kept on dodging issues relating to the referendum of southern Sudan, describing that as a breach of the rights of the Southerners.

UDF fails to register, decides to shift to the south

Akhbar Al Youm reports the Political Parties' Affairs Council has refused to register the United Democratic Front Party led by Peter Abdul Rahman Sule on the grounds that the party's logo encourages secession. Reportedly, the party decided to transfer its head office to Juba to prepare for elections. The party announced that it was asked by the Council to delete "south Sudan independence" from its logo and replace it with "self-determination for southern Sudan" as a pre-requisite for registration.

Darfur JEM claims POW's tortured by Khartoum

Sudan Tribune website 3/6/09 – JEM published a letter it said was leaked from its POW's alleging torture and ill treatment by Sudanese authorities.

The prisoners were taken after the JEM bold attack on the Sudanese capital a year ago, that was repelled by Sudanese government forces.

The letter signed by JEM prisoners in the notorious Kober prison said that they were divided into two groups, one of which was subject to mock trials and summarily executed.

"A separate group of 15 members of JEM were executed in a firing squad at the White Nile, Ingaz Bridge on May 11th 2009" the letter read.

JEM prisoners in the other groups described being tortured by "electric shocks, whips, iron bars, dogs and sleep and water deprivation" and other forms of ill treatment.

The letter urges the international community to intervene and secure the release of the prisoners.

Internal, external security in South seen as competing priorities

Sudan Tribune website 3/6/09 – SPLA and other security organs face competing priorities between providing internal security within south Sudan and making preparations for potentially renewing the war with the Government of Sudan, according to the latest Sudan Human Security Baseline Assessment Issue Brief (HSBA).

HSBA is a multi-year project administered by the Geneva-based Small Arms Survey. It has been developed in cooperation with the Canadian government, UNMIS, the UNDP and other partners.

The security newsletter highlights the extent to which Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS)'s security planning continues to be driven by the belief that a future confrontation with the North is likely, and how this orientation constrains its ability to address insecurity and conflicts emerging within the South.

For instance, the report notes the concern of southern military figures at the failure to demarcate the north-south border, the failure to redeploy forces, "the ongoing recruitment of proxies," and the underdevelopment of the treaty-mandated Joint Integrated Units.

"Despite the continued effort to adhere to the terms of the peace agreement, the GoSS's

security decision-making continues to be driven by what it perceives to be the unresolved conflict with the North. Security continues to be understood in terms of the need to prepare for a possible future war, which includes the need to address perceived proxy forces and other destabilizing groups and individuals operating in the South," says the assessment.

Such preparations for this possible future war include troop build-ups in strategic border areas, the deployment of 18 tanks from Ethiopia to positions in Blue Nile in July 2008, and the more recently reported shipments of tanks and other weaponry from Ukraine, says the assessment.

Claiming that ceasefire violations by the North are distracting Southern Sudan from "equally destabilizing" security concerns within the south, the report authors recommend several measures. First, they urge better monitoring of the ceasefire and security arrangements of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. Second, they urge donors to engage with the Government of Southern Sudan on security sector reform. Third, they suggest stakeholders to focus on peace-building rather than civilian disarmament.

The paper adds, "Mediation of internal divisions and a renewed focus on South-South dialogue and peace-building could set the stage for the GoSS to plan for internal security, including by addressing unresolved issues relating to militia."

HSBA is also responsible for occasional working papers, including one in January that was critical of the 2008 disarmament campaign carried out on the order of SPLA Commander-in-Chief Salva Kiir Mayardit.

The brief was based on research by the Small Arms Survey and London-based Saferworld.

SPLM SG's mother passed away

Akhbar Al Youm reports the mother of the SPLM SG Pagan Amum died yesterday in Khartoum after a long illness. SPLM leading figures, political parties' leaders and civil society representatives visited Amum's house in Mamoura in Khartoum to express their condolences. She will be buried today in Malakal.

Two cases of swine flu detected in Khartoum

Ray Al-Shaab reports the Ministry of Health announced yesterday that two cases of swine flu were detected at Khartoum Airport. The paper stated that Health Minister Tabitha Boutros told the National Assembly that two travelers (from Mexico and UK) tested positive and were immediately deported.

Arab World rolling out red carpet to President Obama

VoA News.com 3/6/09 - Top Arab satellite television stations, from North Africa to the Gulf, are devoting a large portion of their coverage to President Barack Obama's visit. The tone is mostly positive and commentators appear optimistic.

In coffee houses and tea-houses in Beirut, Damascus, Baghdad, Riyadh, and Cairo, everyone from intellectuals to the common man seems to be preoccupied with Mr. Obama's visit and a highly anticipated speech Thursday in Cairo.

The editor-in-chief of the Saudi daily **al-Watan**, Jamal Kashoggi, says he likes what he sees. "[The visit] is good news. It is different from what we have had with Bush. Our cartoon, our caricature, tomorrow, in al-Watan tells the story. Obama is being received with flowers and he is saying 'Why they love us,' while George Bush is saying 'Why they hate us.' So, Obama is

changing the subject, Obama is not going for confrontation; he is into reaching out to the Muslim world. I think the public in Saudi Arabia is very much welcoming his visit," he said.

Kashoggi believes Mr. Obama and Saudi King Abdullah, as well as many other Arab leaders; want to put an end to the era of confrontation between cultures and religions.

In **Sudan**, many say they are optimistic about the Obama Mideast visit. Sidig Turabi thinks most Sudanese are pleased the U.S. president is coming to Cairo and are eager to hear him speak.

"I think that people are very hopeful about his visit, just as would be most Muslims and Arabs, maybe also North Africans, because Sudan is an Afro-Arab country, and well, we are all looking forward to the speech. I am sure many people will be watching this speech and also watching the events after," he said.

But Turabi, the son of veteran Sudanese politician Hassan Turabi, says he is afraid the attitude of the Sudanese government, which he thinks is not favorable to improving relations with Washington, could impact negatively on the opportunities being presented by President Obama's visit.

"We only hope that our governments, some of which are not so favorable by their peoples, are intelligent enough to use the opportunity to gain and create as many win-win situations as possible. We believe that in the Sudan, the government is unnecessarily creating hard conditions for itself and for the new administration in the USA, and we are not very confident that this government is capable of using this good opportunity to make life easier, socially and economically," he said.

In **Damascus**, top Syrian political analyst Imad Fawzi Shueibi thinks President Obama is trying to demonstrate his administration is different from that of former President George Bush.

"I can only say that this visit is good, because maybe Mr. Obama can say something against the bad reputation of the Bush administration, and maybe he can make a plan for peace in the region," he said.

But Shueibi is disappointed Mr. Obama is visiting Saudi Arabia and Egypt, and not Syria.

"I think that it is a bad choice that he is coming to Saudi Arabia and to Egypt, only. He should come to Syria, too," he added.

In **Beirut**, Haigazian University President Paul Haidostian thinks many Arabs are looking for something fresh and different from Mr. Obama, along the lines of what he promised the American people during the election campaign.

"People would expect President Obama to bring something fresh to show that his perspective and his background, his personal background, and his discussions and talks during his campaign would come true and bring something that is more peaceful, that is more even-handed, that looks at the sufferings of all the peoples of the Middle East and not only part of the issue," said Haidostian.

Haidostian argues that most ordinary people in the Arab world are not looking for solutions to thorny geopolitical issues or matters of state. "Most people are expecting real solutions to the real problems of real people in the Middle East," he concluded.

Commentary

How Obama can save Darfur -In Egypt

The **New Republic** 3/6/09 - Barack Obama's trip to the Middle East is one from which few concrete results are expected. If news reports are to be believed, his speech in Cairo will largely be symbolic. In practical terms, Obama is unlikely to make much progress on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Iran's nuclear program, or even human rights in Egypt. Yet there is one major issue on which Obama could make serious, substantive strides if he devotes attention to it while he is in Cairo: Darfur. Ironically, this is also the one issue that Obama may not mention at all.

Obama's first years in office are coming at a turning point for Sudan. The hot genocide that occurred from 2003-2005 is no longer in progress, but the government that committed it is still in place, having herded Darfur's two million survivors into refugee camps where they continue to live at the mercy of Sudan's military junta. That junta, however, has recently lost its footing. The International Criminal Court (ICC) has indicted its leader, Omar Al Bashir, for crimes against humanity; and the current government may lose much of its power in the upcoming elections, scheduled for 2010 under the Comprehensive Peace Agreement.

Sudan's recent actions--especially the cross-border guerrilla attacks into Chad and the expulsion of humanitarian aid groups in the south, which threatens mass death among the Darfuran refugees in retaliation for the ICC ruling--have dampened the enthusiasm of Sudan's close allies in Egypt and China, who believe that Khartoum has gone too far. (Egypt and China are also unhappy paying the diplomatic price for supporting an indicted war criminal, despite their public expressions of support.) These regional powers, who have long backed Sudan's government because it promised stability--meaning a stable flow of oil to China and stable control over the waters of the Nile, which originates in southern Sudan--are beginning to wonder whether Khartoum's divide-and-conquer approach to governance ultimately entails variability and risk.

So now, in Cairo, Obama has a chance to offer them an alternative. In his speech and in private meetings with Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak, he ought to make the case that Sudan would become more stable if Egypt, Libya, and the rest of the Arab world backed a negotiated solution to resolve all of Sudan's outstanding issues, including violence with Chad and the status of Darfurians. He could argue that the Arab world benefits more from upholding the ICC indictment and supporting the re-admittance of aid groups to Southern Sudan, so long as there is a plan in place to protect Arab countries' own interests in the region, than they do aligning themselves with Bashir, in opposition to the international community. And Obama could explain that all of the regional parties have an interest in stepping up to ensure that Sudan's 2010 elections are free and fair, so that they engender a stable, legitimate, broad-based government that shares power between representatives of Khartoum and the south. That way, regional powers would no longer be accused of propping up a pariah state, and they could stop worrying about a civil war that might claim more lives than the genocide; transforming southern Sudan into a hostile, independent country camped on the Nile's headwaters.

All indications are that Arab governments, along with regional powers such as China, would be relieved to see American leadership in this direction. Broad outlines do exist for a consensus solution to all of these problems that still protect the interests of Egypt, China, and other powers in Sudan. But if Obama does not raise Sudan in his speech, or with Egypt's leaders in private, it will be a concrete sign to the Arab world that Obama truly does not consider Darfur a priority--in contradiction of his, his vice president's, and his cabinet's statements on the campaign trail. If that happens, then the regional powers will likely continue backing Khartoum. And the violence will continue.

Commentary

Old problems in the new south

Southern Sudan is becoming bloodier than Darfur

The Economist.com 2/6/09 - ACCORDING to the United Nations special envoy to Sudan, Ashraf Qazi, violent conflict has killed more people in recent months in south Sudan than in Darfur. Mr. Qazi is not trying to play down the awfulness of the situation in Sudan's western region, where about 300,000 have died as result of fighting since 2003 and more than 2.5m have been displaced. Rather, he was drawing attention to the sad fact that the south is now slipping back into its pristine state of widespread insecurity from which it was supposed to have been rescued by a peace deal in 2005.

Most of the recent deaths in the south have been caused by inter-tribal fighting, usually linked to land rights. As the rainy season arrives in different parts of Africa's largest country, so the traditional competition for the best grazing areas for cattle and other livestock becomes more intense. Central Sudan, particularly in the state of Southern Kordofan, has been hit by heavy fighting recently. Last week it was reported that perhaps as many as 250 people had been killed in clashes between the Rizeigat and Misseriya, two Arab nomadic tribes that populate the area around the Nuba Mountains.

These sorts of tribal fights over access to the best grazing lands have been at the heart of many of Sudan's bloody wars. Up to the 1980s, such conflict was well managed by local inter-tribal councils. Such forums used to resolve how far the nomadic tribes, or pastoralists, would be allowed to bring their cattle through the lands of settled farmers. The marauding herds would cause a lot of damage as they passed through the farmers' fields; but inter-tribal councils worked out the compensation that the nomads had to pay to the farmers as a result.

This system, however, broke down in the 1980s after the terrible drought and famine of the early 1980s, during which some nomadic tribes lost as much as 80% of their livestock. Furthermore, many of the Arab tribes were now armed, for their own political purposes, by the Islamist politicians in the central government in Khartoum. This made the young nomads much less inclined to use old peaceful arbitration methods; now the armed nomads could just shoot their way through.

But it is dispiriting that these clashes still happen, and on the scale of the past few weeks. In recent years the UN and international NGOs have tried to revive the old tribal arbitration systems, even demarcating the seasonal migration routes with clearly marked poles. Yet still the fighting continues, in the south, in the centre and in Darfur.

The problems in the south have been compounded by other factors. The government of south Sudan, based in Juba, has suffered from the falling price of oil. This means that almost their only source of revenue has dropped by about half over the past year. As a consequence, the government's old guerrilla army has not been paid for months, teachers have been on strike, and the money for new roads, hospitals and schools has all but dried up. This has provoked more tension as the southern tribes begin to compete for a dwindling pot of money. None of this bodes well for a peaceful national election, supposed to be the first time in four decades that the country has voted as one that is scheduled to be held next February.