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Media Monitoring Report

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Highlights

UN condemns attack on aid convoy in Upper Nile

Al-Ayyam reports DSRSG/HRC Ameera Haq has condemned the attack on the WFP barge convoy carrying humanitarian aid. UNMIS and the humanitarian community are deeply concerned about the continued blockade on the Sobat River which severely harms trade with the villages upriver, for whom river freight is the only lifeline, UNMIS press release said.

Meanwhile, **Al-Sahafa** reports GoSS yesterday announced that more than 40 soldiers and civilians were killed and 41 wounded when a convoy of 31 barges, 28 from the WFP and 3 commercial ones escorted by SPLA soldiers, were attacked. GoSS VP Riek Machar said the situation was under control and curfew was imposed in Nasir.

Casualty count may be over 40 in attack on UN relief barges

Sudan Tribune website 14/6/09 – Scores may have been killed Friday when 27 relief barges were intercepted by fighters of the Jikany Nuer group in Upper Nile, resulting in a gunfight with the SPLA soldiers escorting the convoy. The attack prompted condemnation from the UN, which had sent the barges.

Forty people were killed and 41 others injured in the attack on the World Food Programme convoy, which occurred near Nyariem village, the Vice President of the Government of Southern Sudan told the UN-operated radio network.

Civilian fighters were motivated by a desire to keep supplies out of the hands of Lou Nuer groups, whose raiders had massacred 71 Jikany Nuer villagers at Tor Hech (Torkech) in May, including 13 children. That figure includes some who drowned while fleeing across the river.

SPLA spokesman Malaak Ayuen Ajok told **Reuters** news agency that the armed Jikany demanded to search some of the barges, suspecting they were carrying arms and ammunition to the Lou. After searching one barge, they opened fire when the others continued downriver.

He added that women and children on the boats were killed either by bullets or when they tried to jump overboard.

It is unknown what has happened to 11 of the barges; the other 16 were repulsed and returned to Nasir. UNMIS, the peacekeeping mission, said it was "deeply concerned about the continued blockade on the Sobat River which severely harms trade with the villages upriver, for whom river freight is the only lifeline."

The food on the barges, some of which may have been looted, was destined for some 18,000 civilians who were displaced by earlier fighting, including when the Murle attacked Akobo County in May.

Barges had been blockaded since May but were allowed to leave Nasir on Friday after high-level negotiations. Nevertheless, the SPLA-escorted convoy was attacked by Jikany fighters some 10 to 20 miles outside of the town.

According to the WFP director in South Sudan, Michelle Iseminger, women and elderly among

the Lou Nuer are in need.

Much inter-communal violence has raged thus far without major SPLA involvement, which however is far from unprecedented; SPLA was responsible for decisively defeating the Lou Nuer component of the 'white army' in a battle in May 2006 in which over 100 Lou Nuer were killed.

UNMIS stated today that it "urges the Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS) to work without delay with the local communities to put an end to the ongoing violence and achieve speedy sustainable reconciliation."

INGOs brought expired food to Darfur

South Darfur authorities have seized 258 tones of expired food items brought into the state by INGOs, *Al-Khartoum* reports. The state government has called on the Sudanese Standards and Meteorology Organization (SSMO) to tighten control on movement of food items. South Darfur state Cabinet Affairs Minister Omer Ahmed Abdul Jabbar at meeting with the SSMO DG Mohamed Saeed Harbi expressed his readiness to assist the SSMO and the national NGOs to protect consumers.

Agreement with UN is to register "new, not alternative" INGOs – Ghazi

Presidential Adviser Ghazi Salah Al-Din has clarified that UN has no authority over NGO registration in Sudan, saying it is the prerogative of the Sudan government, *Al-Ayyam* reports. He said statements by UN officials are not binding on the government. Ghazi, who led the talks with the US envoy Gration on the work of US NGOs, said in a press release that they agreed to register "new, not alternative" INGOs.

According to *Sudan Tribune website* 14/6/09, The Sudanese government yesterday issued a formal statement on reports regarding registration of new aid groups with names similar to those expelled last March.

Initially the UN humanitarian chief John Holmes was quoted as saying that four of the expelled US based groups would return to Sudan under different names or different logos.

Later the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) said that Holmes statements were misinterpreted and that these NGO's "should not be characterized as returning NGOs". The groups include CARE, Save The Children, and Mercy Corps.

Sudanese presidential adviser Ghazi Salah Al-Deen said that the move to register the new aid groups was part of an agreement with the US special envoy Scott Gration.

Al-Deen quoted portions of the agreement with Gration which stated that Khartoum would allow new NGO's and would transfer blocked assets donated by USAID to them or existing organizations.

Furthermore, the local employees who worked for the expelled groups would be used by the new NGO's.

The new groups would be registered in compliance with Sudanese laws, the statement said and "distance it from politicization".

CPA forum in Washington convenes Tuesday

Al-Sahafa reports NCP delegation headed by Presidential Adviser Ghazi Salah Al-Din and

SPLM delegation headed by Malik Agar will hold separate meetings with the US Administration to identify CPA challenges in preparations for the forum next Tuesday. Source said the conference would be attended by IGAD, states which witnessed CPA signing as well as international organizations and 25 countries including Russia, China, Saudi Arabia and South Africa. The source added that all the countries participating in the forum would be represented by their foreign ministers. The conference is expected to be addressed by US Secretary of State Clinton, CPA chief mediator, AEC chief, UN representative but the source denied participation of FVP Kiir and VP Taha.

MPs calls for JIU withdrawal in Upper Nile

Upper Nile representatives in the National Assembly have called on the JDB to speed up efforts for final resolution of the crisis between SAF and SPLA JIUs after they have been separated, **Al-Raed** reports. The MPs have called for replacement of the force with new JIUs to ensure stability of the security situation for upcoming elections.

No violence over arbitration decision– Abyei Administration.

Al-Rai Al-Aam reports the Abyei Administration has warned of the consequences of floating rumours predicting insecurity after The Hague-based arbitration court issues its decision. Commissioner of Abyei Mohamed Al-Dourek said the security situation was stable, adding two conferences would be convened in Abyei and Mujlad next week to prepare communities for the arbitration decision.

However, according to **Miraya FM** 14/6/09, Abyei Chief Administrator Arop Moyak said that a number of traders left the region fearing negative repercussions of the International Court of Arbitration decision on Abyei expected on the 22nd of July.

Moyak said that most of the traders leaving the area were from Mujlad and Babanosa, adding that the administration urged them not to leave the area but they insisted. He further said that the decision to leave the area was personal.

Sudan remains free of swine flu - official

Sudan Tribune website 14/6/09— Sudan has yet to record any cases of swine flu, the ministry of Health said Friday as global fears of a new pandemic rose. Reacting to WHO declaration, Fatih Malik, Assistant Undersecretary of the Ministry of Health said Sudan is free of any suspected case of swine flu. He further added that his ministry is currently working to tighten controls at airports in Khartoum, Juba and Port Sudan.

Malik stressed the ministry has sufficient stock of medication for one hundred thousand patients, he said.

ICC hindered reform plans at justice ministry - Minister

Sudan Tribune website 14/6/09 — the row with the ICC has put development plans within the justice ministry on hold, Sudanese Justice Minister Abdel-Baset Sabdarat said. He added there is a “radical reform” program waiting to be executed.

Sabdarat made these remarks during the inauguration of a new prosecutor building in Omdurman, the official news agency (SUNA) reported.

The Sudanese justice minister said that his ministry requires organization and a revamp utilizing its “qualified and trained” employees.

However, he stressed that “a lot needs to be done,” adding that the budget allocated to his ministry is low.

Sabdarat did not elaborate on the link between the proposed reform plans and the ICC crisis.

Sudanese official blasts Juba meeting for opposition parties

Sudan Tribune website 14/6/09 - A proposed meeting for several major opposition parties in South Sudan capital of Juba aims at impeding democratic transformation, Presidential Adviser to the Sudanese President Abdullah Masar said yesterday. He added that Juba meeting is exclusionary.

In late May the SPLM has invited more than a dozen opposition parties for a conference in Juba.

An alliance of the opposition parties held a meeting with the presence of representatives from the Umma National Party, Democratic Unionist Party, Umma Reform and Renewal Party, Sudanese Communist Party, Popular Congress Part (PCP), and other smaller parties.

The parties lashed out at the NCP for exercising hegemony over wealth and power as well as refusing to amend repressive laws.

Masar accused Mubarak Al-Fadil, the leader of the Umma Reform and Renewal party (URRP), of standing behind the meeting “for political gains inconsistent with the interests of the country”.

He called on SPLM chairman to “be well aware” of what Al-Fadil is planning saying the latter has an agenda aimed at distancing the Southern movement from its allies in the government of national unity.

“The conference sends negative signals that will primarily impact the Comprehensive Agreement,” Masar said.

Masar and Al-Fadil both defected from the mainstream Umma party led by former Sudanese Prime Minister Al-Sadiq Al-Mahdi and joined the government.

However following the removal of Al-Fadil from his post as adviser to the Sudanese president, both men fell out after Masar refused to leave the government per his boss’s request.

Masar justified his position saying that Al-Fadil was sacked due to his actions as presidential assistant and not in his capacity as head of URRP, which he said, did not warrant party members to leave the government.

This year Masar formed a new party under the name Umma National Party and will run in the upcoming 2010 elections.

SPLM requests Washington to fund election campaign

Akhir Lahza reports it has obtained a copy of a confidential letter written by SPLM SG Pagan Amum dated 21 December 2008 addressed to the US State Department requesting US Administration to fund SPLM’s election campaign to enable it to lead Sudan to development and democracy.

VP on annual leave

Local dailies report VP Taha and his family will leave today for the holy lands to perform *Umra* (pilgrimage). According to **Akhir Lahza**, after the *Umra* he will spend his annual leave in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Reportedly, VP Taha has not proceeded on annual leave since twenty years.

OP-ED: The Referendum in 2011

Khartoum Monitor – *Alfred Taban* - 14/06/09

The National Congress Party is at it again. It is already placing obstacles on the path to the smooth holding of a referendum to determine whether southern Sudan becomes a separate country or remains in unity with northern Sudan.

The NCP insists that southerners in northern Sudan should vote in the 2011 Referendum and that the proposed 15-member Referendum Commission should be based in Khartoum and should have most of its commissioners from northern Sudan.

It is a surprise that the NCP should all of a sudden become the champion of the cause of southern Sudanese whom they have long mistreated. As stipulated in the CPA, it is southerners alone who will vote in the Referendum. Southerners have a home called southern Sudan. It is only logical therefore, that southerners who want to vote in the Referendum should go home and vote there. Southerners outside southern Sudan including those in northern Sudan should trek home for this extra-ordinary and crucial exercise. Those who go to the south with strange colors and strange languages must be sent to the villages where they claim the hail from for a thorough vetting by the chiefs and elders who will pick out the imposters.

Confining the vote to southern Sudan is one attempt to prevent cheating. The number of southern Sudanese in northern Sudan slashed down by the census is likely to increase, as is the number of votes for unity. We do not trust the NCP to conduct a free and fair Referendum, as we do not trust them to hold free and fair elections next year. We want a Referendum that reflects the genuine wish of the southern Sudanese people and this can only happen if southerners vote in southern Sudan only.

The Referendum must be held on time. Any attempt to delay, rig, manipulate or water down the Referendum would lead to war.

EDITORIAL: Why bar southern Sudanese from the Referendum?

Al-Ayyam – 15/06/09

The Referendum that will soon take place in southern Sudan is aimed at gauging southern Sudanese public opinion on unity or secession.

The Referendum is a historic event that all southern Sudanese whether residing in the south, the north or outside the country should take part in. It is not right to bar any southern Sudanese from the exercise just because he/she temporarily resides outside the geographic areas of southern Sudan. Therefore, the SPLM request to confine the vote for unity or secession to southerners residing in southern Sudan is very strange.

SPLM is aware that the GoSS is failing in its duties towards development and provision of basic services and job opportunities. This lack of development and opportunities in southern Sudan may have encouraged some southern Sudanese returnees to return to the north. Should twice the GoSS punish such people – the first time through lack of incentives for return and the second time through barring them from participation in the Referendum?

Barring some southern Sudanese from participation in the Referendum was first brought up at the 1997 Khartoum Peace Agreement. The SPLM had then strongly opposed such

“marginalization” of some sectors of southern Sudanese based on their place of residence. What then has encouraged the SPLM to back such an idea this time round?