

4 May 2009

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Media Monitoring Report

United Nations Mission in Sudan/ Public Information Office

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Highlights

Local Arabic and English Language Press

NCP accuses SPLM of obstructing census results announcement

While the NCP has denied any agreement between the CPA Partners to hold elections based on the 1986's geographical constituencies, it has accused SPLM of delaying the census results announcement, citing the FVP Kiir's absence from the Presidency meeting intended to approve the results, reports *Al-Wifaq*. "The census results announcement is delayed because of the FVP Kiir's unwillingness to attend the Presidency meeting," NCP official Mandour Al-Mahdi told reporters yesterday. According to *Al-Rai Al-Aam*, Gandour said that NCP would adhere to the principles of a free political competition and called on the other political parties to reciprocate rather than seeking the exclusion of political opponents through coalitions in the upcoming elections.

NEC approves elections committees' formation

Ray Al-Shaab reports the National Elections Commission (NEC) yesterday approved formation of the committees set up to manage elections in States. However, the Commission deferred the approval of some committees in southern states for more consultation.

Parties Council to set up centre to train elections candidates

The Political Parties Affairs' Council has embarked on the establishment of training and studies centre to be tasked with training the political parties cadres who will contest the upcoming elections, reports *Ray Al-Shaab*. The Political Parties Affairs' Council chairman Mohamed Bushara Dossa said the proposed centre would be manned by national and international experts who would train elections candidates.

Sudan governors' roundtable kicks off in Wau

Local dailies report a round table conference of Sudan's northern and southern States' governors will kick off today in Wau. According to *Al-Khartoum*, the roundtable conference, to be chaired by the FVP Kiir and VP Taha, will continue deliberations on the agenda of the first roundtable conference of governors held in Merowe Dam last year. However, the *Sudan Vision* reports the roundtable meeting which will be held under the motto "towards the consolidation of integration and national unity", will discuss the global financial crisis and its impact on the Sudanese economy, peace, investment opportunities, exchange of expertise, integration and national unity.

Washington informs Khartoum of appointment of Charge d'Affaires

MFA has officially been informed about the appointment of the US diplomat Robert Whitehead to serve as US Charge d'Affaires in Khartoum, reports *Al-Rai Al-Aam*. Whitehead is expected to take over in mid May.

SPLM submits credentials to Political Parties Council

Local dailies report the SPLM submitted its documents yesterday to the Political Parties Affairs' Council in preparation to transform to a political party. According to *Al-Rai Al-Aam*, SPLM SG Pagan Amum addressing a gathering marking the launch of the SPLM registration said the movement leadership had taken a decision to contest elections across the country and called on Sudan's political parties to respect the law and the constitution and to work seriously to achieve democratic transition. *Al-Intibaha* reports Amum said SPLM elections issues would include self-determination for southern Sudanese, popular consultation for the Nuba Mountains,

Abyei and the Blue Nile as well as ending war in Darfur. The Just Peace Forum has also handed over to the PPC its documents for registration as a political party.

Defence Minister attends Darfur officers' graduation

Defence Minister Gen. Abdul Rahim Mohamed Hussein and many other army commanders attended yesterday in Omdurman the graduation ceremony of officers of the Darfur signatory movements who have been integrated into SAF, reports **Akhbar Al Youm**. According to **Al-Raed**, 44 Darfur movements' officers with various ranks were graduated.

Websites/International News Coverage

Sudan FVP warns civil war could spill across borders

AFP - A collapse of Sudan's fragile north-south peace deal would spark fresh fighting that would spill over into neighboring countries, FVP Salva Kiir said during a visit to Kenya. Salva Kiir issued the warning in the western Kenyan city of Kisumu Saturday at a dinner in his honor hosted by Prime Minister Raila Odinga.

"The war will not only affect the southern Sudan," said Kiir, who is also president of the government of Southern Sudan. "It will infiltrate into Kenya and other countries. The problem in southern Sudan must be given attention by everybody."

"We sympathize with the people of southern Sudan for what they have undergone and that is why nobody should sabotage the CPA implementation," Odinga said at the dinner.

According to the **Sudan Tribune** 2/5/09, FVP Salva Kiir and the president of semi-autonomous South Sudan warned that unraveling of the North-South peace agreement could drown the entire region onto war.

He was accompanied by the cabinet minister for Presidential Affairs Luka Byong, Ambassador of the Republic of Sudan to Kenya Majok Guandong, head GoSS mission in Kenya Liaison office John Andrugia Duku.

Kiir accused some unspecified parties of trying to push his movement back into war but he stressed that "previous wars gave the people of Southern Sudan negative experience of returning to war".

The SPLM chairman received an Honorary Doctorate of Science by the Great Lakes University of Kisumu (GLUK) in recognition of peaceful transition during the demise of his predecessor John Garang who was killed in a helicopter crash in July 2005.

Darfur boundaries demarcation committee kicks off second stage

Sudanese Media Centre 3/5/09 – the Darfur Boundaries Demarcation Committee is to start the second stage of demarcating an area estimated to at 700 kilometers at northern part of Darfur. Head of the committee Awad Saeed told **SMC** that the committee extends the mission dead line up to next October. He said the committee had already submitted the first stage report to the Presidency.

Pro-government Sudanese daily resumes publication

Reuters, 3/5/09 - A pro-government Sudanese newspaper resumed publication on Sunday after authorities ordered it to shut down a week ago when its editor called for a senior politician from the main party in the south to be killed.

The Arabic-language **al-Wifaq** daily is an Islamist-leaning publication close to President Omar al-Bashir's National Congress Party, Sudan's dominant party which has its powerbase in the north.

Its closure was ordered by General Salah Mohammed, head of the Sudanese National Security and Intelligence apparatus. A state-run press body later decided to suspend publication for five days, according to the Sudanese **Media Centre website**.

Al-Wifaq's editor, Isaac Ahmed Fadlallah, had called in an editorial for the killing of a senior official from the Sudan People's Liberation Movement, Yasir Arman, because of comments he made during a parliamentary discussion on a criminal law. He had objected to non-Muslims being subject to Islamic sharia law.

UN suggests provision of financial subsidy to IDPs for repatriation

Sudanese Media Centre 3/5/09 – GoSS Coordinator of Repatriation Program Kormaj Shol said UN suggested providing financial assistance for IDP families instead of collective transportation. He explains that they would study the proposal in a meeting scheduled in Juba between the federal government, the UN and the GoSS. He said according to legal draft endorsed by cabinet, chiefs in the states and departments concerned have the right to participate in organizing IDP repatriation. Shol said the repatriation programs were delayed because of funds shortages. He said parties responsible for repatriating IDPs hold back funds because of the world financial crisis. However he said there was a sort of financial recovery for some donors like federal government, the GoSS and UN so the repatriation to states might resume shortly.

Sudan and Chad agree to normalize ties

Sudan Tribune website, 3/5/09 — Sudan and Chad agreed to normalize relations and to build confidence in order to ease the current tension between the two neighboring countries. Doha agreement brokered by Qatar and Libya is the fourth after a series of similar deal signed in Tripoli, Riyadh and Dakar. It comes amid reports of military buildup and movement of rebel groups in the both sides of the borders.

The two countries committed themselves on Sunday to consolidate their relations and to implement the agreement they had reached in the past. The two parties in addition expressed their willingness to create an atmosphere of confidence and appropriate conditions to the convening of the Tripoli summit in Libya between the Presidents of the two countries.

Qatar announced it has been preparing these negotiations since last February between Chad and Sudan with the Libyan support. It aims to encourage Darfur rebels to seek political settlement with the government.

Today's deal was signed by Mousa Faki Mohamed, Chadian foreign minister and Al Tijani Saleh Fidail, Sudanese minister of international cooperation.

The signing ceremony was attended by Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim bin Jabor Al-Thani, Qatari Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the State of Qatar, Mousa Mohamed Kousa, Libyan Secretary General of the People's General Committee for Foreign Communication and International Cooperation (foreign minister) and Ahmed bin Abdulla Al-Mahmoud, Qatari state minister for foreign affairs.

Ban concerned at troop build-up along Chad-Sudan border

UN News Centre, 3/5/09 – Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon voiced his concern today at reports of the recent build-up and movement of armed elements on both sides of the Chad-Sudan

border, and called on the two countries to ease tensions.

“In this context, the Secretary-General welcomes the discussions towards the normalization of bilateral relations between the Governments of Chad and Sudan held this week in Doha,” Mr. Ban's spokesperson said in a statement issued today.

The Secretary-General, in his most recent report on UNAMID deployment, stated that “the security situation along the Sudan-Chad border continued to be tense and unpredictable” during February and March of this year.

Pensioners demonstrate in Khartoum demanding pay increase

Miraya FM 3/5/09 - Dozens of retired civil servants demonstrated today in front of the National Insurance Fund at the centre of Khartoum, demanding an increase in their pensions and payment of their arrears.

A number of demonstrators complained to **Miraya FM** of the little pension which hardly meets their family needs, as well as irregular payment, as they said.

Meanwhile, the director of the administrative office at the National Social Insurance Fund, Dr. Manasik Hussein Sulieman, denied any delay in the payment of arrears to pensioners from their side. She added that the ministry of Finance had stopped the support given to pensioners.

President Al-Bashir appreciates stances of Islamic Press Association

SUNA 3/5/09 - President Al-Bashir has appreciated the stances of the Islamic Press Association and its solidarity with Sudan in the face of the unjust ICC decision. After his meeting with President Al-Bashir at the Guest House Sunday in the presence of Dr. Abdul-Hay Yousif, the Chairman of the Islamic Press Association and head of its delegation Ahmed Al-Soyan affirmed that the ICC decision did not target only President Al-Bashir and Sudan government and people but also all Islamic and Arab governments and peoples.

Commentary

OP-ED: When would the census issue be put to rest?

(Mahjoub Mohamed Saleh, **Al-Ayyam**) GoSS Presidential Affairs Minister Luka Biong has assured that the Presidency would soon endorse the census results. However, he mellowed down these assurances by saying that the GoSS still has reservations over the issue. This could mean that he expects the Presidency to find a compromise to the outstanding issues. Only time will tell what form such a compromise would take as the National Elections Commission has already announced the census results and we are only awaiting a census breakdown.

The time factor is of crucial importance now. The National Elections Commission was expecting the census results a month ago in order to start mapping the geographic constituencies for the elections by mid April. The delay has affected its work as well and this may entail that the NEC review the February 2010 date set for the elections once the Presidency resolves these issues. With a referendum just around the corner, what use would the elections be if deferred up to end 2010?

We are aware that GoSS President Salva Kiir needs to be in Juba to resolve some issues but then his staying for such long periods in southern Sudan affects the work of the Presidency. We expected the Presidency to meet as soon as the census results were announced so that it would look into the outstanding issues but days have gone by without such a meeting. The CPA granted the Office of the GoSS President important powers in the federal government and these powers require that he ought to spend plenty of time within the Presidency. Issues such as the

census and border demarcation are of crucial importance to southern Sudan and we do expect the First Vice President to give these issues the attention they deserve. We also hope that the Presidency would meet in the next two days as Luka Biong had assured.