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Highlights

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SG calls for peaceful resolution of Abyei dispute

The UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon has urged the Sudanese parties to achieve a peaceful and final solution to the dispute over the Abyei area, ***Al-Rai Al-Aam*** 9/5/09 reported. Ki-moon, in statements after the parties' oral arguments at the Abyei Arbitration Tribunal in The Hague, welcomed the commitment by the NCP and the SPLM to implement the Court's decision.

Government agrees to admit three US aid agencies

Al-Sahafa reports Sudan government has agreed to Washington's nomination of three US NGOs to replace the ousted ones, to begin operations in June. A source told the paper that the US envoy Scott Gration's consultations in Khartoum were "positive and fruitful" and largely focused on the humanitarian situation in Darfur.

However, ***Al-Akhbar*** reports the USG and Emergency Relief Coordinator John Holmes as saying that no offers have so far been received for aid agencies to replace the ousted ones.

Meanwhile, Sudan government has ignored a proposal by John Holmes for the establishment of a mechanism comprising local and international parties, with wide powers, to monitor the humanitarian situation on the ground and submit a report, but the proposal was ignored by the Sudanese government, ***Al-Ahdath*** reports.

US will support Southern Sudan referendum – US envoy

NSV 7/5/09 – US Envoy to the Sudan Scott Gration told reporters on Thursday in Khartoum during his second visit to Sudan that the United States would support the referendum for southern Sudan in 2011 and full implementation of the CPA. "We want to see elections that are carried out, elections that are credible," Gration said.

"It is our decision that we will support the referendum, that we'll support the CPA, and we'll push very hard that it's fully implemented," he said. In addition, Gration said that it's imperative that all the prerequisites for the referendum and the laws are set straight to facilitate the referendum." We also believe that we have to start right now to pass the laws that are required so that we can get a referendum so that the will of people is demonstrated in a way that's credible and in a way that can be accepted by all sides of the international community," he said.

US monitor urges reforms to Sudan's election plans

Sudan Tribune website 9/5/09 – An election monitoring organization founded by former US President Jimmy Carter this week recommended reforms to the planned election process in Sudan but welcomed the recently announced official electoral calendar.

The Carter Center, which says it conducts election observations in accordance with a UN declaration of principles, urged Sudan's National Elections Commission (NEC) to "urgently conclude policy decisions affecting the formation of the subsidiary state and regional elections High Committees."

Though the Elections Commission “appears to be close” to appointing the subsidiary committees, even if formed now these bodies would be left with a little less than a month to prepare for an extensive voter registration process, noted the Carter Center report.

Furthermore, the NEC has yet to articulate what powers will be devolved to the subsidiary High Committees, and to clarify the delineation of responsibilities between the national, regional, and state election bodies.

“During its initial months in operation, the NEC has needed to focus on its internal arrangements. As the process moves forward, however, greater transparency in the day-to-day workings and periodic meetings of the NEC will allow citizens to better understand the NEC’s electoral preparations, and will build confidence in the legitimacy of the electoral process,” said the report.

The monitoring organization also called on the NEC to make policy decisions related to constituency delimitation and voter registration – a process begun yesterday, according to an announcement by the chairman of the delimitation committee Mukhtar Al-Asam.

Observers from The Carter Center will be present across the country to witness the registration process. However, the group predicted that registering voters in Darfur and other regions will be difficult due to security concerns. The report thus concluded that the Sudanese electoral officials may need to consider “special accommodations” and additional resources for registering voters and administering elections there.

SPLM rejects census results

Sudan Radio Service 8/5/09 - The Sudan People’s Liberation Movement has declared that it rejects the results of the fifth national population census which was endorsed by the presidency of the republic on Wednesday.

Addressing a press conference in Khartoum on Thursday, the SPLM secretary-general, Pagan Amum said the SPLM is not convinced with the authenticity of the census results.

“We have studied this issue at our level as SPLM and now we would like to declare our total rejection of the results of the census and we consider that these results give us a reason to doubt the credibility of the census exercise especially with regards to the points that we have reservations to, maybe the results of the census would be used for other purposes but these results cannot be used as basis for peaceful power-sharing and for wealth-sharing in the country, and even for development purposes we still doubt these results. We, as SPLM, would like to declare our position today regarding these census results and this is the confirmation of the position undertaken by the SPLM chairman and the first Vice-President of the Republic during their meeting yesterday” Pagan said.

During the meeting to endorse the census results, the first Vice-President and SPLM chairman, Salva Kiir Mayardit, said the SPLM has a unified position on the census results and will not accept the results of the census that was announced by the National Population Council.

Amum added that the results of the census, which was endorsed by the presidency, is not good for demarcation of geographical constituencies as the people of Sudan prepare for the coming general elections in February 2010.

“We communicated with the census commission in southern Sudan and yesterday they held a

press conference. The census that has been conducted in northern Sudan has three main observations and the census commission in Khartoum does not cooperate in responding to these observations: the first observation is that the population of Sudanese nationals originally from southern Sudan in Khartoum has been numbered to be about 240 thousand. Previous estimates, whether from the government, or local communities around the city indicated more than 1 million southern Sudanese citizens. The number of all southern Sudanese citizens who have been counted in all the fifteen states of northern Sudan has been numbered to be about 500,000 citizens and our estimates indicate more than this number” Amum said.

Amum also accused the National Population Council of committing technical errors and indulging in foul play. He also accused the NCP of using the census results for political purposes in the Darfur region.

NEC downplays SPLM census concerns

Miraya 9/5/09 - The National Electoral Commission has played down the SPLM's rejection and concern of the 5th population census results, and the impact that may have on the elections process. NEC member Mukhtar Al Asam told **Miraya FM** that the number of southerners in the North or all over Sudan has no impact on the number of geographical constituencies.

Reacting to SPLM's concern on the increased population of South Darfur State, Al Asam said that special procedures are made in the registration of nomads in South Darfur.

He pointed that the Commission will commence preparations for the elections process, calling on all political forces to participate in the upcoming elections battle.

Meanwhile, GoSS Minister of Presidential Affairs Luka Biong has said that the Government of National Unity is taking 50% of the fund for the electoral process from the oil revenues for the south.

In an exclusive interview with **Miraya FM** Biong said that the elections are supposed to be a national duty.

Electoral board starts to delimit Sudan's constituencies

Sudan Tribune website 8/5/09 — NEC has started to delimit the total number of electoral constituencies in the 26 Sudanese states after receiving the result of the census.

Mukhtar Al-Asam, the chairman of the delimitation committee said today that the national elections board has already started to plan the schedule of the upcoming elections.

He added that based on the outcome of the census, a single constituency for the proportional representation requires approximately 575 thousand people, 350 thousand women are needed to form one women's constituency, and 145 thousand people for one geographical constituency.

To determine the number of seats allocated to every state, the committee will divide the number of population in each state by the above-mentioned electoral quota. The delimitation committee will continue to define the constituencies during the coming three months.

The election bill sets a 4 percent minimum vote needed for any party to enter parliament through the proportional representation and requires for candidates at presidential elections to get at least 200 endorsements from 18 of Sudan's 25 states.

The new law enfranchises all Sudanese citizens over the age of 18. Candidates for election must be over the age of 40 and have no criminal record.

Independent candidates need the signatures of at least 100 local supporters.

Elections constituencies delimited

Informed sources revealed that the process of delimitation of elections constituencies has been finalized and that the NEC has fixed a two-month period for receiving any objections, reports **Al-Wifaq**. The sources told the paper that 63 constituencies have been allocated to Khartoum State, 57 constituencies for the Southern Sudan, 29 constituencies for Darfur and 7 constituencies for the northern State.

President Al-Bashir conducts ministerial reshuffle

Local dailies 7/5/09 reported President Al-Bashir issued a presidential decree conducting ministerial reshuffle. **Reuters** 8/5/09 reported Sudan has chosen Ahmed Haroun, wanted by the International Criminal Court on Darfur war crimes charges, as governor of a sensitive north-south border province that contains key oil fields, state media said on Friday. **SUNA** reported President al-Bashir had named Haroun to lead the province of Southern Kordofan, which includes the contested border town of Abyei, site of clashes between northern and southern armies last year.

According to **Sudan Tribune website** 7/5/09, the presidential decree appointed Dr. Abdel-Bagi Al-Jailani as the State Minister at the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs. The reshuffle, which dealt with the NCP ministers and northern Sudan governors, removed Al-Zubeir Bashir Taha from the ministry of agriculture and replaced him with the former governor of Khartoum state Abdel-Halim Ismail Al-Muaafi. Also Dr. Faisal Hassan Ibarhim is appointed as Minister of Animal Resources taking the position of Mohamed Tahir Abu Kalabeesh.

The Sudanese president further appointed Ms. Halima Hassaballa as the State Minister at the federal Ministry of Education.

Taha, the former agriculture minister, is appointed as governor of Gezira State. While the former minister of Animal Resources Abu Kalabeesh is appointed governor of North Kordofan State. Also Dr. Abdel-Rahman Al-Khidir is appointed as Governor of Khartoum State.

Deby takes over Sudan's schools, threatens to withdraw from AU

The Chadian President Idriss Deby has announced the shut down of the Sudanese Cultural Centre, ordered takeover of the Sudan-funded schools in N'Djamena and hinted to sever diplomatic relations with Sudan, **Al-Rai al-Aam** reports. Deby said in speech yesterday his government should "review its relations with Sudan if the situation does not improve" and pointed out that he was "weighing a withdrawal from the AU".

Meanwhile, **Sudan Tribune website** 9/5/09 reported the Government of Chad urged its followers to mobilize for battle as commanders claimed victory in clashes in which hundreds of Sudan-backed rebels were reportedly killed after crossing deep into Chad from their bases in western Darfur.

"Each and every Chadian man and woman must feel the Sudanese menace as a real threat to his own existence," highlighted President of the High Council of Communication, Mustapha Ali Alifeï, according to the website of the Chadian presidency.

In clashes Thursday and Friday south of Abeche in eastern Chad, 225 rebels and 22 soldiers were killed, according to the government. Yesterday the army displayed some 100 war prisoners at Am-Dam, in the east.

The fighting culminated in Chad threatening to break off all diplomatic relations with Sudan and refer the situation to the United Nations.

Near the border much farther to the north, the Darfur rebel Justice and Equality Movement, allegedly positioned in rear bases in Chad to assist in the defence of the country, clashed with Sudanese forces in Darfur some 200 kilometers northwest of El Fasher.

President Idriss Deby Itno, speaking in front of the presidential palace in N'djamena, declared victory over the rebels, threatened to break off diplomatic relations with Khartoum and ordered the closure and seizing of Sudanese cultural centres and schools.

"The deliberate destabilization of Chad by Sudan demands the attention of all Chadian. Nobody should stay on the sideline of this fight for the defence of the homeland," said a statement from the presidency.

Deby, who hails from the same ethnic group as the leaders of both the friendly Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) and the hostile Union of Forces of the Resistance (UFR), convened the heads of the major institutions of the government to address the crisis.

"The Head of State declared on this occasion that the regime of Omar Hassan Al Bashir has reorganized and equipped the mercenaries in order to destabilize the country yet again. Al Bashir since last Monday has prompted his loyalists to attack the positions of the defence and security forces," said a statement from the presidency.

According to the statement, Deby asked the officials to "conduct a broad awareness campaign to confront Sudan and its attendants."

Nassour Guelendouksia Ouaïdou, President of the National Assembly, said bitterly "The mercenaries attacked the country with over 400 vehicles equipped with sophisticated weapons. Where did they find this war materiel? One must call a cat by its name. Is it Sudan who is the provider?"

Ouaïdou stated that legislators will be involved in "informing the public of the danger posed by Sudan on Chad and its own security."

According to Minister of Defence Adoum Younousmi, the invading rebel force had about 3,000 to 4,000 men with 300 to 400 vehicles, the **AFP** reported.

Forces under the command of the current UFR leader, Timan Erdimi, participated in an assault on the Chadian capital in February 2008, though the offensive was repulsed while nearing the gates of the presidential palace.

UN News Centre 8/5/09 reported the Security Council condemned the renewed military incursions in eastern Chad, where the United Nations says ongoing clashes are hindering efforts to assist hundreds of thousands of civilians taking refuge in the area.

In a statement read by Ambassador Vitaly Churkin of Russia, which holds the Council's rotating

presidency for May, the 15-member body spoke out against the incursions “of Chadian armed groups, coming from outside.”

The Council stressed that any attempt at destabilizing Chad by force is “unacceptable” and demanded that rebel armed groups cease violence immediately.

In addition, it voiced deep concern at the direct threat posed by the activity of armed groups for the safety of civilians and humanitarian operations in the area.

Clashes in North Darfur, civilians flee

Reuters 9/5/09 - Darfur rebels JEM clashed with forces loyal to a former rebel leader in North Darfur on Saturday, rebels and the Sudanese army said.

A spokesman for the UNAMID peacekeeping force said there were unconfirmed reports about fighting between the government and JEM in North Darfur and that about 160 people had been displaced.

JEM commander Suleiman Sandal told **Reuters** JEM forces had fought off an ambush in Umm Baru by Sudanese armed forces and troops loyal to former rebel Minni Arcua Minnawi, the only Darfur rebel to sign a peace deal with the government in 2006.

"JEM was subjected to a treacherous ambush by government forces aided by Minni's forces. JEM was able to completely defeat the forces and crush and destroy them, and was able to capture some light and heavy weapons," Sandal said.

A spokesman from the Sudanese army confirmed clashes had taken place between JEM and troops loyal to Minnawi, but denied government forces had been involved.

UNAMID spokesman Nouredine Mezni said: "Civilian populations from that area, because of the fighting, have started moving towards our camp. They are mostly women, children and older people, and we are taking care of them."

Defence Minister says army ready to repulse any Aggression

SUNA 10/5/09 - Minister of National Defense, Abdul Rahim Mohammed Hussein, has reaffirmed the readiness of the Armed Forces to repulse any aggression on the Sudanese territories, pointing to the Chad-backed JEM movements on the northwestern border. The Minister said in the conclusion of a visit he paid to Al-Fasher today that the visit aimed at inspecting the security situation in the state and getting acquainted with the plan which was carried out by the security committee in the state to secure the main towns of the state specially Al-Fasher. Meanwhile, the North Darfur State Governor Osman Yousif Kibir described the visit as good and reaffirmed the concern of the high leadership for the security of the citizens and the homeland.

Sudan's Kiir witnesses South Africa's Zuma inauguration

Sudan Tribune website 9/5/09 —FVP Salva Kiir Mayadrit witnessed today Jacob Zuma's inauguration as fourth President of the Republic of South Africa, since the end of Apartheid Regime.

Salva Kiir who arrived yesterday to represent the Sudanese government was accompanied by the minister of foreign affairs Deng Alor. South Africa officials said Bashir's presence would force them to arrest him, based on the arrest warrant issued against him by the ICC last March.

Also a SPLM delegation led by its secretary general Pagan Amum was at the inauguration venue at the Union Buildings in Pretoria where the festivities took place. South Africa ruling party the African National Congress (ANC) invited the SPLM and some other Sudanese political forces to attend the event.

“Abyei should become a free economic zone” Mahdi

Umma Party (Reform) leader Mubarak Al-Fadil Al-Mahdi has joined the group calling for the formation of an interim national government to be agreed upon by all the political parties at an internationally and regionally-monitored roundtable conference to run the country and supervise conduct of elections, *Al-Sahafa* 9/5/09 reported.

Al-Mahdi, who was addressing his Party's convention on Friday, said referral of Abyei Area for arbitration was the height of failure as far as the CPA is concerned, and proposed making the Abyei area a “a free economic zone”.

Unidentified armed group causes insecurity around Juba

Attacks by an unidentified armed group, suspected to be Mundari tribesmen, have caused insecurity and tensions on the outskirts of Juba, *Al-Intibaha* reports. Reportedly, the armed group clashed with Bari tribesmen in the Gudele suburbs west of Juba yesterday injuring a number of people. A source said the Mundari got away with Bari cattle and left tens of people dead. The source has expressed surprise that the GoSS did nothing to prevent the clashes. Bari tribesmen have requested urgent intervention from the GoSS to save them from these attacks.

Sobat River County clashes claim 59 lives

A group of Lou-Nuer tribesmen attacked a cattle camp on 08/05/09, getting away with their cattle and leaving 59 people dead and 65 injured in Sobat River County, Upper Nile State, sources told *Al-Intibaha*. The area is inhabited by clans of the Murle tribe.

Dusty storm lowers visibility in Khartoum State

Al-Sahafa reports that large areas of the country especially Khartoum state witnessed a dusty storm over the past couple of days resulting in a very poor visibility. Weather forecast authorities anticipated the dusty storm to continue for another week. Meanwhile, *Akhbar Al-Youm* reports the storm caused a traffic mishap where a mini-bus and tanker collided in Jebel Awlia in Khartoum yesterday killing 16 and injuring 18. The storm has also disrupted air flight schedules.

Government, political parties and the elections

(*Al-Ayyam – Editorial* 09/05/09) The endorsement of the results of the population and housing census has paved the way for the forthcoming elections. What is required now is a climate conducive to an event that the world will closely be following.

The CPA gave its parties full authority during the interim period and also granted them an absolute majority in the legislative and executive bodies. In order to conduct free and fair elections, a conducive environment is required and that in turn entails urgent amendments to all the laws which are not in harmony with the constitution besides the elimination of all restrictions on political activities. Also, the government should not do anything that may make elections appear questionable and it should allow other political forces an equal access to the national media.

It is high time that the other political parties ended their hibernation and start moving towards their grassroots supporters who will also to participate in their decision-making processes. They also need to start awareness campaigns to inform the people what elections are all about – the majority knows completely nothing of the process.

Very little time is left for carrying out all the complex groundwork for the elections. It is therefore important that the political parties embark on these preparations right away.

GoSS must act now!

(Al-Ayyam – Editorial 10/05/09) The southern part of the country has not seen peace or stability since Sudan attained independence save for very short periods. When the CPA was concluded, much hope was therefore pinned on the agreement to usher in a new era of peace throughout the region. However, the tribal conflicts in southern Sudan have completely withered away the hope for peace and stability.

The UN has joined our calls on the GoSS to bring the situation under control. USG/ERC John Holmes said during his visit to Akobo yesterday that the conflict has caused much casualties and damages.

This tribal violence, if not checked, may engulf the entire region and may even extend to the north. We therefore repeat our call on the GoSS to address the situation.