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Media Monitoring Report

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Address: UNMIS Headquarters, P.O. Box 69, Ibeid Khatim St, Khartoum 11111, SUDAN
Phone: (+249-1) 8708 6000 - Fax: (+249-1) 8708 6200

Highlights

No traces of bomb explosion at SPLM office– Police

Local dailies report Khartoum State Police issued a statement yesterday saying they found no traces of an explosion at the SPLM office in Khartoum. The statement said the SPLM building has no police protection. According to **Al-Sahafa**, Khartoum state police said it was not informed when the explosion occurred; instead SPLM office informed JIUs.

Meanwhile, **Reuters** 25/5/09 reported a bomb placed outside the Khartoum offices of Sudan's former southern rebels which failed to go off on Monday was an attempt to terrorize the group, a senior official said.

"This is a clear attempt to terrorize the SPLM, to intimidate the SPLM," SPLM SG Pagan Amum told reporters in Khartoum. "We believe this was carried out by people who propagate hatred."

SPLM officials said it was still not clear whether the attempted bombing was a political act or a more personal attack on one of its officers.

The office is regularly used by senior SPLM official Yasir Arman, who recently faced death threats from an Islamist group over comments he had made objecting to the application of Islamic sharia law to non-Muslims.

"This sort of thing is highly unusual. I hope it is an isolated incident," Sudan expert Alex de Waal told **Reuters**. "If this sort of thing is happening right at the start of election campaigns, it doesn't augur well."

"This is a very, very serious event," Fouad Hikmat of the International Crisis Group think tank told **Reuters**. "If it had detonated, it could have driven an even deeper wedge between the SPLM and the NCP."

SPLM spokesman Yien Matthew Chol told **Reuters** neighbours saw two men approaching the office in the Arkawet district of Khartoum at around 3.30 a.m. (0030 GMT). The men jumped over a fence and left an object close to one of the building's entrances, then ran off after barking dogs roused the guard, said Chol.

"The guard saw something flashing on the object and suddenly there was a loud explosion. Fortunately, it seems that only the detonator exploded, and no souls were lost ... This was a definite attempt to kill people and destroy the building," Chol told reporters. "We were very, very lucky."

Chol said more than 60 people usually worked in the building, and the SPLM had been planning to host a meeting with opposition political parties on Monday.

UN mission protests against demolitions of housing in Juba

Local dailies/Sudan Tribune website - Demolitions of residential areas in Juba have left upwards of 30,000 people displaced, UNMIS said in a statement of protest yesterday.

The UN body called on the Government of Central Equatoria, which is responsible for the town although it is the capital of the Government of Southern Sudan, to provide alternatives to people

who have lost their homes.

The areas targeted are predominantly occupied by citizens from other states who put up illegally in those areas and could not legally obtain plots because of unsettled misunderstandings over the issues of jurisdictions and land ownership among different levels of government and local communities in Juba. Many of the former residents are reportedly left in poor sanitary conditions and some are still living atop the ruins.

“UNMIS is concerned that implementation of the Government of Central Equatoria’s plan to improve living conditions in Juba has not been done in a manner which is consistent with southern Sudanese law and international human rights standards,” said the statement. It added that these human rights standards include notifying tenants of the demolitions ahead of implementation, publication of the eviction exercise, consultation with affected communities, provision of alternative land, access to adequate housing, compensation, and the possibility of residents to challenge the decision.

According to UMMIS, most of these standards required under Southern Sudan’s laws have not been met. Thus the UN called on the state government to immediately halt the demolitions.

UNMIS added that state and regional authorities should take “prompt and necessary steps to provide alternative land, adequate housing, access to basic services, and compensation to the large numbers of families who have been suddenly uprooted from their homes in the past four months.”

Town authorities have also targeted petrol stations for demolition, many of them foreign-owned.

PCP will participate in Juba meeting – al-Turabi

PCP leader Hassan al-Turabi said his party would take part in the political parties’ meeting in Juba, ***Al-Rai al-Aam*** reports. Turabi made the remarks after meeting with SPLM SG Pagan Amum yesterday. Al-Turabi and Amum discussed a range of issues including freedom of press, elections, Darfur, amendment of laws and self-determination for southern Sudan.

National Assembly endorses criminal code

Local dailies report the National Assembly yesterday unanimously passed the Criminal Act amid protest from SPLM and NDA. According to ***Al-Rai Al-Aam***, while NDA parliamentary group chairman Hassan Abu Sabeeb threatened to resign, SPLM parliamentary bloc chairman Yassir Arman criticized the National Assembly Speaker Ahmed Ibrahim Al-Tahir, saying “he is despotic”. The two groups walked out of the session. ***Al-Sahafa*** reports Speaker Al-Tahir called on the MPs who walked out to tender their resignation rather than keep walking out of Parliament sessions.

Majority Sudanese support al-Bashir – NCP

SMC reported the NCP has downplayed the opposition meeting scheduled to take place in Juba in collaboration with SPLM. “The purpose of the meeting is to agree on one nominee to compete with President Al-Bashir in the upcoming elections”, NCP official Ibrahim Ghandour said. He added that it is up to opposition and SPLM to coordinate together but he said President Al Bashir is not the candidate of NCP alone, he commands the support of the majority Sudanese.

Sima Samar briefed on the humanitarian situation

Al-Sahafa reports the Special Rapporteur for Human Rights Sima Samar received yesterday at the Justice Ministry a briefing on the situation of human rights. Human Rights Advisory Council

Rapporteur Abdul Moniem Osman said Samar was briefed on the new laws and legislations, the humanitarian situation and the DDR. He said Samar had received responses to all her queries.

President Al-Bashir travels to Libya Thursday

Al-Watan has learned from sources that President Al-Bashir will travel to Libya on Thursday to take part in a summit meeting of the Desert and Coast Group.

Kiir receives Haroun and Hilu

Al-Sahafa reports FVP Salva Kiir received yesterday in Juba the Southern Kordofan governor Ahmed Haroun and his deputy Al-Hilu. Kiir agreed to their invitation to visit Southern Kordofan early in June. Haroun and Al-Hilu briefed Kiir on their work plan to promote partnership, peace and to achieve reconciliation, peaceful coexistence, stability and security in the region. According to *Al-Rai al-Aam*, GoSS Minister for Presidential Affairs Luka Biong said Kiir expressed confidence in the Southern Kordofan State's new leadership headed by Governor Ahmed Haroun and his Deputy Abdulaziz Al-Hilu.

US Senate delegation in talks with Sudanese officials

Sudan Tribune website 25/5/09 – A United States congressional delegation met on yesterday with some of the highest figures in the Sudanese government.

Senator Johnny Isakson and Senator Bob Corker, whose visit marks the latest in a series of moves on the part of the US to reengage in a bilateral dialogue, arrived in Khartoum yesterday noon.

“Sudan looks forward for close cooperation with the United States of America to push ahead the relations on the basis of mutual respect, MFA Ambassador Nasr-Eddin Wali said.

31 killed in Messeriya-Rizeigat clash

Al-Sudani reports tribal fighting resumed between the Messeriya and the Rizeigat in the eastern Abu Jabra town of Desseisa, South Darfur State. Thirteen killed and four wounded on the part of the Messeriya and eighteen killed and four injured on the Rizeigat side.

Sudan opposition parties revive alliances, calls for new government

Sudan Tribune website 25/5/09– An alliance of opposition parties have emerged in Sudan calling for the current government to step down ahead of the February 2010 elections.

The extraordinary move of the 17 parties forming the alliance, will likely increase political tensions as the national assembly is deliberating over some laws that witnessed intense debate between the ruling NCP and opposition parties.

The alliance 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. SPLM participated in the meeting with an observer status.

The coordinator and spokesperson of the 'National Alliance' Farouk Abu Essa held a press conference in Khartoum saying that running in the upcoming elections is contingent upon ending “freedom restricting laws” and modifying press law and a “good election record”.

The coalition agreed to name one candidate to run for the presidential elections against

Sudanese president Omer Al-Bashir.

Abu Essa further said that census results have to be clear from any “fraud” as another condition.

He lashed out at the NCP saying the ruling party is responsible in large part for the crisis in the country adding that the coalition refuses its hegemony over power and wealth.

The Sudanese parliament member also pointed out at an economic crisis and rising costs of living for ordinary citizens and deteriorating healthcare coverage.

The alliance urged the National Unity to dissolve itself and form a broad-based government to prepare for the elections.

“The NCP can not be trusted to conduct elections at all because they want to run it their way so they can stay on power” Abu Essa said.

He said that “all options are open” to resist the “undemocratic” situation in the country but did not elaborate.

The NCP political bureau Secretary General Mandoor Al-Mahdi said the opposition parties do not want to run in the elections because they are worried about “their lack of popularity”.

Al-Mahdi said that no government in the world steps down or dissolves itself before national elections.

SPLM denies backing formation of national government

Al-Intibaha reports SPLM denied that it has agreed with the opposition parties to push for the formation of an interim government. SPLM official Yassir Arman told reporters yesterday that SPLM had not called for formation of a national government and stressed the movement’s commitment to the CPA.

Rumbek farm schemes face insecurity, lack of expertise

Sudan Tribune website 24/5/09 — The Lakes state Minister of Agriculture and Animal Resources, H.E. Engineer Chol Tong Mayay, said that insecurity in rural areas posed a threat to agriculture, and lashed out at Lakes state civilians for turning to violence rather than agricultural schemes to ward off hunger in Rumbek.

In an exclusive interview, Mayay affirmed that insecurity is a big threat in rural areas, referring to the crime, inter-ethnic and clan violence that has plagued this state particularly since the 2005 north-south peace agreement. One of the threats is that people in rural villages are running away from cultivated areas, he said.

Army awaiting orders to retaliate – Defence Minister

Addressing the National Assembly yesterday in response to an urgent question, Defence Minister Gen. Abdul Rahim Mohamed Hussein described Chad’s aggression on Sudanese territory as “flagrant violation of international charters”, *Al-Rai Al-Aam* reports. He said Chad had attacked Sudanese territory and was conducting aerial reconnaissance over Sudanese territories. He accused unnamed regional and international circles of backing the aggression. He said the army high command was awaiting the leadership’s go-ahead to retaliate.

Sudan Tribune 25/5/09 reported Gen. Hussein also told the parliament that air raid by foreign warplanes in eastern Sudan killed 119 civilians, 56 smugglers and 63 would be immigrants, from Ethiopia, Somalia and other countries.

According to **Al-Ayyam**, Gen. Hussein said the identity of the aircraft had not been established.

On incidents in Ambaro, **SMC** reported Gen. Hussein as saying SAF inflicted heavy losses on JEM. SAF spokesman Osman Mohammed al Agabash said the army destroyed 32 vehicles, captured other four in good condition, killed 43 and injured 54 of JEM elements. 20 soldiers killed and 31 injured on SAF side.

PDF to mobilize Mujahideen to defend borders

Al-Raed reports PDF is reportedly determined to mobilize 100,000 Mujahideen by early June to join a special force to defend Sudan-Chad border.

Ban condemns fighting between government, JEM north Darfur

KUNA 26/5/09 -- Voicing grave concern, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon condemned late Monday the fighting between Sudanese forces and the rebel Justice and Equality Movement in the area of Umm Baru, his press office said in a statement.

Noting that this clash was reportedly initiated by the JEM, "the Secretary-General condemns such military action, which puts civilian lives directly at risk and which seriously undermines efforts to achieve a peaceful end to the conflict in Darfur," the statement said.

It added that the Secretary-General called on both the Government in Sudan and the JEM to suspend military action and apply themselves fully to achieving a negotiated, inclusive, and lasting resolution to the conflict.

He further reminded them of the commitment they made last January in Doha, Qatar, to settle the conflict between them through peaceful negotiation.

Yesterday's clashes follow an incident earlier this month in which JEM armed elements attacked Sudanese Government forces based near the town of Korno, located between Umm Baru and the Chadian border.

Government, JEM delegations travel to Doha today

Sudan government and JEM delegations will travel to Qatar today to resume their consultations on pending issues of the Goodwill agreement they had earlier signed prior to engagement in talks to resolve the Darfur crisis, **Al-Sahafa** reports.

50 SAF prisoners will be released - JEM

Miraya FM - JEM said that it plans to release 50 prisoners from the armed forces, captured during the battles in Darfur.

Speaking to **Miraya Fm**, the JEM Humanitarian Affairs official, Suleiman Jamos, said that this step comes within the framework of implementing the "good will" agreement, which they signed with the government in February.

Jamos explained that they will hand over the prisoners to the Red Cross/Crescent delegate, after informing the mediators of this step.

He pointed out that the movement had earlier released 24 prisoners, calling on the government to fulfill their commitment of releasing JEM prisoners.

SPLA rescue abducted Equatorian child in Bor

Sudan Tribune website 25/5/09 – A 9-year-old Central Equatorian boy is rescued by SPLA from abductors on Sunday.

The child, Umiyan John Patrick, will be reunited with his parents this week, Hussein Mar Nyuot, the Deputy Governor of Jonglei State told reporters on Monday.

A son to John Jimmy (father) and late Dwoki (mother) from Bari tribe Central Equatoria State, SPLA soldiers recovered him (Umiyan) while being led to Pibor County's territory on Sunday.

Umiyan told reporters he was abducted with two other boys (older than him) on May 16 in Gumbo, a suburb in Juba. The boys were grazing goats.

Polio eradication campaign starts in south Sudan

Miraya FM 25/5/09 - Three days of a 5th round of mass polio vaccinations in Southern Sudan will begin tomorrow Wednesday.

The campaign is triggered by the re-emergence of polio in Southern Sudan and will target almost 3 million children under the age of five.

The polio vaccination campaigns being coordinated by the Government of Southern Sudan's Ministry of Health, WHO, and UNICEF are designed to counter the rapidly spreading polio outbreak in Southern Sudan.

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Commentary

Problems Facing Southern Sudan

By Ruach Chuol Bol

Sudan Tribune website 24/5/09– More than four years have gone by since the signing of the peace accord between the government of Sudan and Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A). Yet, Southern Sudan is still far behind in terms of development and stability. These two and many other critical issues seemed to be insurmountable and impossible to be achieved for the time being because of the irresponsible, incapable, failed, and corrupt government in Juba, the capital of Southern Sudan. It is a fact that people of Southern Sudan are in a state of deep frustration about Government of Southern Sudan's (GoSS) inability and poor performance in governing the South.

The problems facing Southern Sudan today are not caused by outsiders or traitors as some people might think. The SPLM leadership is solely responsible and accountable for every single mistake occurs in Southern Sudan. That is, the SPLM is the ruling party of the semi-autonomous government in Southern Sudan. Hence, it should be held accountable for all failures and setbacks that include insecurity, corruption, lack of development, privation, nepotism and tribalism, and so on and so forth.

A person does not need to be an economist, educated, or security expert to figure out the weaknesses of the so-called SPLM party – the ruling party in Southern Sudan. That particular

party has proved its lack of transparency and practicality regarding issues that concerned the citizens of Southern Sudan. In instead, the leadership of the SPLM party on several occasions always attempts to dispel the notion that its members practice all kinds of evil things, such as embezzlement of public funds and tribalism. Two years ago or so, an SLPA general held a meeting with his tribesmen and tribeswomen in one of the cities in the United States of America to update them on the situation at home. And when asked about the corruption, he said, "We are thirsty!" He was referring to the "rampant corruption" that exists in Southern Sudan and how the ruling party members have "gone wild" looting public money. He was honest about that. Prior to saying what he said, he begged the audience not to go to the internet to reveal or write about what he would be saying about the corruption. Now it is obvious that the SPLM is no longer the movement of the "marginalized people," instead it has become the movement that practices the "marginalization" itself.

Recently, Eritrea's President Asaias Afewerki rebuked the Government of South Sudan and was quoted as saying that "corruption in Southern Sudan is no secret." He added that "security violations continue in Southern Sudan." Truer words were never spoken. He was absolutely hundred percent right.

Certainly, President Afewerki has been known for being a good friend, a strong allied, and a supporter of various Sudan's opposition parties for a very long time, specifically the SPLM/A and National Democratic Alliance (NDA), whom he has been supported politically and logistically. Thus, accusing him of being a traitor or an agent of the Khartoum regime is absurd, ridiculous, illogical, tasteless, and baseless. He is the man who liberated his people and knows what it takes to build a new state. I am not suggesting that he is a perfect leader in his own country. What I am saying is that he pointed out clearly the truth about problems facing Southern Sudan. The SPLM party should learn from him and take his advice seriously and stop being snobby toward anyone who criticizes its performance.

It is clear that the SPLM party has failed to do what it supposed to do in Southern Sudan in its stint as the ruling party. Insecurity is one of the problems that facing the people all over the South. The massacre that was committed in Abyei by Arabs is a great example of insecurity and recurrence murder and mayhem in Warrap State, Jonglei State, Lakes State, and Upper Nile State are other examples as well. Moreover, corruption and tribalism considered to be the biggest stumbling block for development. Former Finance Minister in Government of Southern Sudan, Arthur Akwein, is an example of an "SPLM corrupt official" and the unpaid or delayed salaries of soldiers and other public servants and collapse of Nile Commercial Bank (NCB) are examples, too.

To solve all those problems that I mentioned above, the Government of Southern Sudan should start now disbarment of all civilians and investigate atrocities that took place in Abyei, Lakes, Warrap, Upper Nile, Jonglei, and elsewhere and bring those culprits and criminals who committed them into justice. Furthermore, the government should crack down on "corrupt officials" by making it clear to all of its functionaries that corruption and tribalism are unacceptable and whoever practices them would be fired and brought into justice for the world to see.

The SPLM party should not blame others for its failures, poor performance, and mismanagement of public funds in the South. It must accept responsibility, accountability and criticism. I wish the best for the government in all my heart and hope that Almighty God gives our leaders the wisdom.

The author is based in Nebraska, USA. He can be reached at ruachjack4@yahoo.com

EDITORIAL: Census results jolt referendum preparations

Juba Post – 26/05/09

Discussions over the results of the census will continue to dominate the public's mind in southern Sudan. It is not only wealth sharing and the upcoming elections that are at stake. The bigger issue is the referendum, preparations for which will be influenced by the census. The census gives some idea of the number of southern Sudanese who will vote in 2011. The bottom line is that there are 8 million southern Sudanese. All budgets and plans will be based on this figure with a little extrapolation for minors who will reach adulthood by then.

Preparations for the referendum itself have been delayed by delays in the census exercise and, of course, the elections. The Referendum Law is long overdue. Why, if it may be asked, are preparations for the different provisions of the CPA not occurring concurrently? The Referendum Law referred to above, for instance, did not require an outcome of the census. Setting up the Referendum Commission required nothing but the necessary legal framework.

As we prepare for elections, we should at the same time give our preparations for the Referendum a wake up call. In terms of mobilization, little is happening on the ground in terms of civic education. How then is the electorate required to make an educated vote within the remaining two years? Little has been done to promote the noble hope of the CPA to make unity attractive to southerners. The southern populace is also unaware of what the other option has to offer. Is separation still an alternative that is too hard to contemplate? NCP and the SPLM should now lead the rest of the political forces in preparing the southern Sudanese populace to make the right decision in 2011. Our destiny and the destiny of much of the Horn of Africa region and other neighboring states are at stake. Now is the time to begin to act.

INTERVIEW: Luka Biang, GoSS Minister for Presidential Affairs

Al-Sahafa – 25/05/09 (part II will follow tomorrow)

Why did the SPLM reject the census results?

The GoSS and the SPLM have taken part in the preparations for the housing and population census from the beginning. We focused on ensuring a transparent process. In 2004, when we were preparing for the assessment mission, I was the head of the department for the housing census. At that time we contacted the National Housing and Population Census Committee and agreed to include questions on ethnicity and religion in the questionnaire. The SPLM also did make its position known on numerous occasions but the NCP did not heed to our views.

Did the process go on well in southern Sudan?

The process in the south could be described as transparent but the problem was in the north where the data and results were not logical such as the reports of a 60% increase of the population in Darfur since the last census in 1993 and the population of South Darfur increased by 90% during that period. We also have information that the census did not include the IDPs in their camps - leave alone the refugees in the neighboring countries. The strangest thing is that the results show a 322% increase in the population of the nomads.

What does this mean? Did they bring in people from outside Sudan?

I do not want to say that. The results are not acceptable. A large population of the nomads has now started to settle in the urban centers.

The National Population and Housing Census Committee and its southern Sudanese counterpart had agreed that they would exchange primary data to compare them with the results in case of discrepancies but this did not happen.

What percentage should the population of southern Sudan be in respect to the total population

and is it logical that you demand a certain percentage of the population?

Not less than 30% of the total population of Sudan.

No, there is no logic in demanding a certain percentage of the population. We would have accepted the results had the census process been transparent and fair. We voiced our doubts over its accuracy so that it does not affect power and wealth sharing between north and south.

We maintain the view that we should consider the geographic constituencies used in the 1993 census to avoid census-related problems that may occur not only in the north but also in the south. I think FVP Salva Kiir carried this message to the last meeting of the Presidency but they did not reach a consensus on the issue.

Is SPLM divided on the census results?

The SPLM is not divided on the census results. I said that the census results are not useful for the elections and for power and wealth sharing because of the lack of agreement on the results.

What would you do should the NCP sticks to its position? Would you resort to the use of the 1993 results?

Who told you the NCP would reject the suggestion? I am telling you what I see. This is just a suggestion.

Is the SPLM united in its position on the census results especially there are reports of FVP Kiir having endorsed the results and SPLM SG Pagan Amum reportedly holding different views on the issue?

I do not know but how could FVP Kiir accept the results? Who told you he endorsed them? What I want to tell you is that Salva Kiir has expressed his observations over the census results and said the results should not be used in the elections or in power and wealth sharing between the north and the south.

Does this mean he rejects the census results?

I do not want to say this but this is what he said in the meeting of the Presidency. If a party at the meeting expressed reservations over the results then that means there was no consensus on the results and that means there was no decision on the issue. (To be continued tomorrow)

FM Deng Alor Interview

In a lengthy interview to **Akhir Lahza**, FM Deng Alor said, "SPLM expressed its views on the census before the results were announced. The number of the Southerners in the North is estimated at less than half a million. We will not accept this. It is a conspiracy intended to serve as a basis for constituency distribution. NCP eye is on southern and northern Kordofan, Darfur, Gezira and Khartoum states".

"Before the CPA there was talk about southerners in the north numbering 4 millions. Where are they now? How come their number is now less than half a million? These are desperate attempts to rig elections before they commence".

Asked what will be the solution he said, "We will discuss it with the NCP".