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Media Monitoring Report

United Nations Mission In Sudan/ Public Information Office

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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

Local Arabic and English Language Press

President Bashir and FVP Kiir to discuss elections

Al-Rai Al-Aam reported that President Bashir and FVP Kiir will discuss the elections issue after they meet this week.

SPLM said it was considering the possibility of holding elections before or after schedule due to rainy season.

Border Demarcation Committee sets next April for completing its work

SUNA carried a report stating that the Technical Committee for the Demarcation of 1.1. 1956 Border between the north and the south has set next April as the deadline for completing its work and submitting its final report to the Presidency. Chairman of the Committee Abdullah Al-Sadik said the committee held a meeting Saturday in which it set a timetable for completing its mission. He affirmed the capability of the committee to accomplish its mission before the elections, pointing out that the committee would begin determining the line on paper in next December.

The committee intends to organize two workshops the first of which will be in next November on enlightenment of the citizens in the states with the border demarcation process and the second in April to brief the constitutional post holders on the arrangements for the demarcation process.

Results of Fifth Population Census to be announced before the end of the year

SUNA also reported that data recording of the fifth population census is about to be completed. The results are expected to be announced before the end of the year, Director of the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) Dr. Yassin Al-Haj Abdeen told SUNA. He added electronic scanning has been carried out for over 50% of the forms and that analysis of data is to start early next month so as to help announce the results in North and South through the Presidency.

Juba to host Sudan, donors round-table conference in October

Sudan Vision carried a report stating that the Chairman of the experts committee and Minister of State for Humanitarian Affairs, Ahmed Haroun said Juba will host the second round-table conference next month between government and donor to review to donors' commitment to their pledges for supporting the DDR program in the Sudan.

Appointment of Sima Samar is a waste of UN resources – Parliament

Al-Rai Al-Aam (Sept 12) stated that the National Assembly's Human Rights Committee said more than 48 human rights observers are working with UN and submit regular reports about human rights situation in Sudan.

Deputy Chairman of the Committee Hamato Mukhtar said the presence of a special rapporteur for human rights for Sudan was a waste of UN resources. Hamato, who leaves for Geneva soon said they would inform the human rights meeting that there was no need for Simar Samar's mission to continue in Sudan.

Minnawi to visit USA

Al-Sahafa reported that the Senior Presidential Assistant and SLM chairman Minni Minnawi is to visit the United States next week, where he will meet with senior US administration officials. He is expected to discuss his suspension from participation in the government and obstacles hindering the implementation of DPA.

SLM sources said Minnawi would be accompanied by his wife who is presently in Chad.

SLM again complain of SAF attacks

Miraya FM carried a report stating that SLM-Abdul Wahid reiterated accusations that SAF has been attacking its locations in Khazan Tungur in Northern Darfur. SLM Field commander Abu Baker Mohamed told Miraya FM that fighting was still continuing and that the army was using the air force.

SAF spokesperson Lt Colonel Al Sawarmi Khalid confirmed the fighting between the armed forces and what he called armed robbers in the area of Khazan Tungur adding the area was now under the control of SAF and denied use of air force.

SPLA detention of two students triggered demonstration in Juba

Al-Rai Al-Aam reported that violent demonstrations broke out yesterday in the University of Juba when SPLA force broke into the University campus to detain two students supporters of the Democratic Front. SPLA raided the university because the two students reportedly criticized GoSS, accusing it of becoming undemocratic and corrupt.

Residents of Warrap State request UN intervention for SPLA withdrawal

Al-Rai Al-Aam stated that residents of Kangor in Warrap State have requested UN intervention to convince the State government to withdraw SPLA forces from the area. The residents are worried about their animals because SPLA forces are sharing the livestock as source of food.

Omdurman counter terror courts to begin prosecuting 73 suspects

The anti-terror courts set up to try Omdurman attacks suspects are to begin today procedural sittings to try 73 persons accused of participation in the attack on Omdurman last May.

Chief prosecutor Yassir Ahmed Mohamed said the courts have received the third batch of the accused who are charged with attempt to sabotage the constitutional system, waging war on the state, use of military uniform, use of arms and contravention of article (5 and 6) of the Counter Terrorism law.

Omdurman court received 30 accused, Khartoum court received 30 and Bahri court received 13 accused.

Websites/International News Coverage

Ban welcomes creation of new high-level committee on Darfur

(UN News Centre) 12 September 2008 – Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon today welcomed the establishment of the new Ministerial Committee aimed at furthering peace efforts in the war-torn western Sudanese region of Darfur.

The body will be chaired by Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim bin Jabr Al-Thani, Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Qatar; Amr Moussa, the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States; and Jean Ping, Chairperson of the African Union (AU) Commission.

According to a statement issued by the Secretary-General's spokesperson, the Committee will also work closely with Djibril Bassolé, the AU-UN Joint Chief Mediator for Darfur.

In a related development, Mr. Bassolé today expressed his concern over reports of continued clashes in Darfur. There are reports that Sudanese Government forces launched sustained aerial bombardments over the past week near the villages of Birmaza and Disa in North Darfur state.

He "calls on all parties to exercise restraint and cease all military activities in order to protect civilians and create conditions for political dialogue," according to a statement issued in Khartoum by his spokesperson.

US special envoy says Sudanese army targeted Darfur peace partner

(Sudan Tribune) – U.S. President Special Envoy for Sudan, Richard Williamson, condemned today Sudanese army attacks against rebel positions in Darfur. He also said one of these attacks appeared to have been directed against the former rebel leader, Minni Minnawi.

Sudanese army carries military campaigns against rebel positions after troops build-up since a rebel attack on the capital last May. Khartoum says its operations are against bandits responsible for a spate of attacks on aid convoys.

Williamson, who denounced the attacks against rebel positions, said Saturday's attack in North Darfur state was especially worrying if Minni Minnawi, now a Senior Presidential Assistant was targeted, given the key role he plays in the Darfur peace process.

"This is very disturbing," Williamson told Reuters, adding that he had spoken with Minnawi earlier on Saturday. "The government should honor the ceasefire. This descent into violence causes grave concern about the humanitarian situation."

Minni Minnawi left his office in the presidential palace in Khartoum and lives with his troops in Darfur since three months to protest against the ill-implementation of a peace deal he signed with Khartoum in May 2006.

He also said the recent attacks appeared to have been part of a "pattern of violence under the guise of a law-and-order campaign" by Khartoum.

"The U.S. government condemns this. It has to stop," said Williamson. He further added that the attacks had been going on for nearly a month.

The Sudanese army spokesperson Osman Al-Aghbash, said today that the army will continue to carry its military actions across the three states of Darfur.

Sudanese army continue attacks in Darfur - rebels

(Sudan Tribune) – Rebel groups said the Sudanese government troops attacked on Saturday their positions in southern Darfur.

"Sudanese army troops and militiamen with more than 150 vehicles attacked our positions in Tarni area, eastern Jebel Mara," said Mahgoub Hussein the spokesperson of the Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM) – Unity Command in a statement emailed to Sudan Tribune.

Also Salah Bob, field commander of the SLM led by Abdel Wahid Al-Nur, said the attack began

since Friday. Bob was speaking from Hazanat-Tungur location in eastern Jebel Marra.

"There are also aero planes that are bombing," he said, adding that casualty figures were impossible to gather until the fighting ends.

Hussein said they repelled the attack. But the Sudanese army spokesperson Osman al-Aghbash stated that the government troops didn't face resistance.

Aghbash stressed the army carries out attacks against carjackers and didn't aim at any rebel positions. He also added that military action will continue across Darfur states to secure the roads for aid trucks.

Growing insecurity in Darfur has undercut the ability of aid agencies to deliver critical supplies.

No agreement to delay Sudan's national elections – SPLM

(Sudan Tribune) – "There is no any agreement reached to delay the forthcoming Sudan national elections," said the Deputy Chairperson of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), Riek Machar, who co-chairs the Joint Political Executive Committee for implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) between the National Congress Party (NCP) and SPLM.

Machar responded to questions posed to him in a press conference on Saturday by journalists to confirm media reports quoting the Minister of Presidential Affairs, Luka Biong Deng, as stating that the elections could be delayed for at least six months from July 2009 to February 2010 due to expected heavy seasonal rains as well as logistical problems.

Machar agreed that the month of July may not be appropriate during which to hold the elections because of rainy seasons in the South and some other regions of the country.

He however explained that the parties have yet to consult on the issue, which he said may not necessarily lead to the delay of the elections beyond July 2009, but may lead to early conduct of the elections before July during the coming dry season.

NCP and SPLM signed a landmark agreement, the CPA, in 2005, that ended the two decades of war and provided for national elections during the mid-term of the interim period before the conduct of separate referenda due in 2011 in Southern Sudan and Abyei.

The people of Southern Sudan shall, according to the CPA, vote to either separate from the rest of Sudan or confirm the unity of Sudan, while the people of Abyei shall also vote to either join the South if it separates or remain with the North.

SPLM has declared its interest to contest for political seats at all levels of government including the post of the president of the Republic.

Sudan National parliament two months ago passed electoral laws, paving the way for the first comprehensive elections in the country.

Britain blocks prosecution of Sudan's ruler

Alex Duval Smith, Africa correspondent

The Observer, Sunday September 14 2008

Britain is playing a key role in efforts to block the prosecution of Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir for the carnage in Darfur.

Human rights activists yesterday accused the government of a 'shocking abdication' of its commitment to justice after it emerged that Britain is backing moves by Libya, the Arab League and several African countries to halt the indictment of Bashir by the International Criminal Court (ICC) in The Hague.

But the government says it has adopted the controversial position to save lives in the western Sudan province where the United Nations estimates that 200,000 people have died and 2.5 million others have been driven from their homes since 2003.

In July the ICC's chief prosecutor, Luis Moreno-Ocampo, applied for an international arrest warrant for Bashir - the first such move ever against a serving head of state. The prosecutor wants to try Bashir for genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes. He claims to have evidence that the Sudanese state and its agents have killed at least 135,000 people in Darfur. The move was criticized by some regional experts, who argued that it would bring greater suffering and threaten hopes of a peace deal.

Britain was a leading player in the establishment in 2002 of the ICC - a unique permanent court with wide-ranging powers and a UN mandate to end impunity at high levels and punish war crimes, including genocide.

In a last-ditch attempt to prevent ICC judges from issuing an arrest warrant for Bashir in the next few weeks, Bashir's supporters - the Arab League, the African Union, China and Russia - will use the UN General Assembly, beginning on 23 September, to ask the UN Security Council to block the prosecution. They are supported by two countries which were instrumental in instigating the ICC investigation - permanent Security Council members Britain and France.

Britain and France say privately that the lines of communication with Khartoum are nearing total breakdown. The Sudanese authorities are blocking the work of the 11,000-strong Unamid peacekeeping force and have not handed over two other ICC suspects - government minister Ahmad Harun and militia chief Ali Kushayb - for whom arrest warrants were issued last year.

Foreign Office Minister for Africa Mark Malloch Brown and his French counterpart, Bruno Joubert, are understood to have both traveled to Khartoum recently to suggest a deal under which Bashir could be let off the hook. It would require Khartoum handing over Harun and Kushayb, committing to the peace process in Darfur and southern Sudan, and allowing Unamid to fully deploy.

But Steve Crawshaw of Human Rights Watch said bargaining with justice will permanently undermine the ICC's credibility and independence. 'The idea that you can do deals on justice is both short-sighted and a shocking moral abdication on Britain's part. It can only be damaging to the court.

'Justice is not a tradeable option. We have seen again and again that Sudan makes empty promises. To think that Sudan is likely to act in good faith is either naive or cynical,' said

Crawshaw.

The ICC prosecutor is confident of his case. His special adviser, Beatrice Le Frapper, said: 'We share the objective of stopping the crimes in Darfur. But to do so you need justice and security. Unamid will not be able to carry out their tasks if they have to liaise with criminals who are ordering crimes against civilians. The indictment of Bashir contributes towards his becoming a lame-duck President.' She said the ICC would meet Foreign Secretary David Miliband and his French counterpart, Bernard Kouchner, to outline the ICC's position on 23 September.

But Malloch Brown defended Britain's role: 'It is precisely because we respect the ICC that we do not want to bargain away (its authority). This is not about handing a defeat to the court in its early life. But Khartoum has interpreted the indictment against Bashir as a measure that pits Sudan against the Western world. A great deal is at stake; not just Darfur but the peace process in southern Sudan. We have to keep hold of the strategic intentions of the ICC, which we share - to end impunity and increase security in Darfur.'

End of the road; Juba peace talks crumble

(Sunday Monitor- Uganda) Chief Mediator Dr Riek Machar has declared that "the negotiations [with the LRA] are over", after the group failed yet again to make a meeting with United Nations Special Envoy and ex-Mozambique President Joachim Chissano. Sources now say Chissano is due to submit a progress report to the UN Security Council which he will basically say that there is no progress in getting the rebels to sign.

However, today's Al-Sudani newspaper quotes news agencies reports as saying that the GoSS Vice President Machar will meet the LRA leader on 17 September in Juba.

Earlier, according to **Al-Khartoum**, GoSS announced that it would discontinue funding talks between Uganda and LRA. A press release issued by chief mediator Riak Machar's office said the two sides should fund the talks in future.

Sudan ruling NCP say elections delay not necessary

(Sudan Tribune) 12/9/08 (KHARTOUM) – Sudan ruling National Congress Party (NCP) declared today that it sees no need to delay holding the general elections scheduled for July 2009. Dr. Ibrahim Gandour who handles the elections dossier in the NCP told the pro-government Sudanese Media Center (SMC) that they received no official notification from the SPLM for a postponement.

GoSS Minister for Presidential Affairs Luka Biong told Reuters on Thursday that it would not be feasible to hold the elections at that time due to heavy rains and logistical problems. The SPLM was considering calling a meeting with the NCP to arrange a change in the date.

According to Dr. Gandour, it is up to the Elections Commission to make any decision warranting a delay. The NCP official added that the CPA allows for rescheduling elections if both parties agree. However, his party insists on conducting them on time.

"Elections are very crucial for democratic transformation. Sudan people and its political parties are awaiting the elections", he noted, adding that membership of the Elections Commission would be announced "any day now" after the nominations was sent to the presidency. There were disagreements between the SPLM and NCP over the people who will be sitting on the commission.