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Media Monitoring Report

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Highlights

Al-Bashir to meet with political forces despite opposition boycott

Al-Sahafa 19/8/10 - Differences among Sudan's political forces persist over whether to attend the consultation meeting with President Al-Bashir called by the NCP.

The opposition political parties (Juba Alliance) have announced their boycott of the meeting with President Al-Bashir, saying they would continue their own preparations to hold a parallel meeting.

However, NCP sources confirmed that the proposed consultation meeting with the President stands, despite the opposition boycott.

Meanwhile, NCP leading figures, Nafie Ali Nafie and Ibrahim Ghandour, are to hold a press conference today in Khartoum, reportedly important, on a range of issues with a focus on referendum.

SPLM-DC calls for South-South dialogue on referendum

Al-Ayyam 19/8/10 – SPLM-DC Secretary-General has stressed the need for convening a South-South dialogue to support the conduct of fair, transparent and acceptable referendum.

The {unnamed} official said SPLM-DC supports organization of the referendum on time but added that the South has no capacity to become an independent state under existing rebellion led by Maj. Gen. George Athor.

SPLM's politburo rejects referendum delay

Sudan Tribune website 19/8/10 – SPLM Politburo has reiterated its rejection of delay of a plebiscite on the region's possible independence from the Arab-dominated North in January 2011.

The final communiqué of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement's (SPLM) politburo meeting in Juba, August 13 - 16, declared that, "there shall be no retreat from holding the referendum as scheduled on January 9, 2011."

According to the text of the communiqué received by **Sudan Tribune**, the meeting discussed the status of the implementation of the CPA, the peace deal that ended two decades of civil war between north and south Sudan in 2005. Particular focus was given to the south Sudan and Abyei referenda as well as the popular consultations taking place in Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile states on the north-south border.

The statement said that the 27-strong politburo received briefings from the SPLM chairman, Salva Kiir and the SPLM's secretary-general Pagan Amum.

On the issue of media campaigning in the run-up to the referendum, the SPLM called for state media to give equal access to both the opponents and proponents of unity.

They also committed the GoSS to allow the supporters of both choices to campaign freely and without intimidation.

“The SSRC and all levels of government in the country ought to guarantee absolute freedom to those campaigning for either choice (unity or separation) to express their views in accordance with the agreement and the referendum law,” said the communiqué. It further warned that “any attempt to prevent Sudanese citizens from campaigning for the choice they consider best for them shall not result in a vote that is free, fair and transparent.”

On the situation in the disputed oil-rich region of Abyei, the communiqué expressed serious concern over the NCP’s procrastination to enforce last years’ ruling by the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) on the region’s boundaries, ongoing efforts by the NCP to alter Abyei’s demographic makeup resettling Misseriya tribes in the region, as well as the unreasonable delay in the formation of the Abyei Referendum Commission (ARC).

“These attempts” added the statement “indicate an intention by some quarters to preclude the conduct of Abyei referendum.”

The SPLM’s statement reaffirmed the SPLM’s desire to continue talks with the NCP on post-referendum issues despite the latter’s reluctance to discuss matters pertaining to changes in the system of governance in Sudan should southerners vote to confirm the unity of Sudan. The former guerrilla movement said it had always stood for Sudan’s unity but added the NCP’s “desire to entrench a theocratic and undemocratic state” as well as its “unconstitutional” practices have thwarted the model of unity advocated by the SPLM.

“The SPLM has distanced itself from unconstitutional practices that the government in Khartoum, of which the SPLM is a member, has carried out against the local press, journalists, doctors and political leaders” said the statement.

“These practices do not reflect the democratic transformation enshrined in the CPA or provide a lasting solution to the root causes of the crises in Sudan’s turbulent peripheries or attract south Sudan people to be part of a state that does not respect its constitution and perforce treat them as second or fourth class citizens.”

The SPLM’s statement cited the issue of the Khartoum-destined helicopter captured on August 10 by south Sudan’s authorities with rebels on board affiliated to Gorge Athor, the renegade SPLA general who launched a rebellion against south Sudan’s government, as an evidence of Khartoum’s “dark schemes against the South.”

The politburo enjoined that those captured on board be brought to trial and further decided to inform the guarantors of the CPA including UN chief, IGAD, African Union, European Union, Arab League of the incident saying it constitutes a "breaching of the ceasefire agreement" signed between the SPLA and the Sudan Armed Forces.

Referendum Commission to visit Juba on Monday to launch committees work

Al-Ayyam 19/8/10 – In a first visit with its full membership, the National Referendum Commission will travel to Juba on Monday to swear-in members of the its office in the South as well as members of the higher referendum committees in the ten southern states. Head of the Commission, Ibrahim Khalil, is expected to hold consultations with GoSS officials.

Analysts say that differences among the members of the referendum commission over the appointment of the secretary general have delayed the formation of its offices in the North.

Meanwhile, Khalil met with visiting US envoy Scott Gration and briefed him on the issue of short time during which the Commission is needed to organize the referendum.

In a related development, MP Mohamed Al-Hassan Al-Amin (NCP) has called on the two partners to end controversy over the referendum by amending the Referendum Act.

State level referendum committees members appointed across south

Sudan Tribune website 18/8/10 - Southern Sudan has announced the members of the ten states referendum committees ahead of the autonomous regions vote on independence in January.

A statement from the Southern Sudan Referendum Bureau (SSRB) received by Sudan Tribune listed the 50 appointees to the Referendum High State Committees.

According to the bureau, the appointments were carried out “as per Article 22 of the Southern Sudan Referendum Act 2009”.

A swearing-in ceremony for the committee members is due to take place in Juba.

Kiir tells his advisors to work for unity of the people in the region

Sudan Tribune website 18/8/10 - The President of the semi-autonomous Southern Sudan, General Salva Kiir Mayardit, has urged the newly appointed presidential advisors to work for the unity of the people, saying there is no easy walk to freedom. President Kiir made the remarks during the swearing in ceremony of the newly appointed advisors on Wednesday. “We need to sacrifice more,” he told them, adding he would cooperate with them and take some of their advices.

He said that is why in his government he has made sure that it is an inclusive administration which has brought into cabinet leaders from the opposition parties.

The newly sworn in additional advisors include:

1. General Joseph Lagu Yanga, Special Advisor
2. Dr. Martin Elia Lomuro, Advisor on Public Affairs
3. General Kennedy Gain Ngare, Advisor on Inter-Communal Peace and Traditional Leadership Affairs
4. Sultan Tem Kuac Ngor Advisor on Inter-Border Conflicts and Traditional Leadership Affairs
5. Dr. Joseph Monyuel Wiejang, Advisor on Social Services

Southern members call on head of referendum Commission to resign

Al-Ahdath 19/8/10 – The southern members of the Referendum Commission have labeled Commission Head Mohamed Ibrahim Khalil “arrogant and haughty”, who run the Commission unilaterally without consulting with other members, deploring his claim that the southern members nominated for the secretary-general’s post are unqualified. The five southern members said “had it not been for their presence in the commission, Khalil would have run it in a manner that would adversely affect the referendum process”.

The members have also called for the exercise of pressure on the NCP to accept the appointment of a southerner to the post of secretary general. “If Khalil refused to agree to a southern secretary general, he should be forced to resign in which case the deputy head of the Commission will take over until a new head is named,” they said.

President Al-Bashir holds meeting with southern Governors

Ajras Al-Hurriya 19/8/10 – Governor of Bahr El Ghazal state Brig. Rizig Zacharia said President Al-Bashir held a closed-door meeting yesterday in Khartoum with governors of the ten southern states. The meeting focused on the upcoming referendum, security situation and development in the South. Rizig said President Al-Bashir reiterated commitment to implement the remaining CPA benchmarks, citing the difficulties encountered by the committee tasked to demarcate the border. According to Rizig, President Al-Bashir has rejected LRA activity in the South. The governors have also briefed the President on the security situation in their states.

“SPLM will not tolerate obstruction of referendum” – Edward Lino

Al-Ahdath 19/8/10 – In an interview to the newspaper on referendum, SPLM leading figure Edward Lino said the SPLM would not tolerate hampering of the organization of the referendum, adding the SPLM has other options to prevent obstruction of the process, and that SPLM leaders would not keep silent on the NCP’s “tricks”.

“SPLM declaration of independence will not derail the CPA. What will actually derail the CPA is the failure to conduct the process on schedule. If any attempt occurs to postpone or block the referendum, the Southern Sudan Parliament will step in to ensure that southerners exercise their right to self-determination. One of these ways will be the organization of the process by the southern Parliament if the North continues to block it. SPLM and GoSS will insist on declaration of independence from within the Parliament should the NCP continue to hamper the referendum and to deny southerners their right to self-determination guaranteed by the CPA and the Constitution,” He said, when asked that declaration of independence from within the Parliament will derail the CPA.

South Sudan Student Union supports secession

Khartoum Monitor 19/8/10 – Southern Sudan Students Union declared intention to organize a media campaign to support separation.

The union’s Chairman, Emannuel Lubari Joseph, said that ten committees have been formed to work in the southern states and Abyei to make the students aware of the referendum process and to register the nationals. He added so far full preparations have been finalized; only the logistic side remains.

In a related development, the Coalition of associations and leagues of students of Southern Sudan declared their support to the referendum and expressed their readiness to raise public awareness of the people of the South in order to avoid repeating the errors made during elections and census.

The Coalition held a press conference yesterday in which it explained the shortcomings that marred the elections process particularly with regard to public awareness.

Head of the Coalition, Choul Majuk, said they would seek access to the remote parts of the Southern Sudan and would involve sultans, intellectuals and native administrators in their drive to raise public awareness about the referendum.

US envoy in Sudan amid referendum discord

AFP18/8/10 - US envoy to Sudan Scott Gration arrived on Wednesday for talks as disagreements within a commission tasked with organising a southern independence referendum threatened to delay the January vote.

A diplomat in the Sudanese capital said Gration's visit was expected to last for several days.

His trip comes as the commission responsible for organising the vote is deadlocked over the appointment of a secretary general to start work on technical and administrative regulations for referendum.

The US State Department said before Gration's visit there were "concerns" over the schedule of the vote, a key part of the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) that ended a two-decade-long civil war between north and south.

"There are obviously concerns," said spokesman Mark Toner. "We are working with key stakeholders to address those concerns," he said, according a transcript on the State Department's website.

"We believe that keeping the referenda on track is part of building a lasting peace and our ultimate goal is, obviously, full implementation of the CPA. So we don't want to see any delays."

Meanwhile, **SUNA** 18/8/10 reported that Foreign Minister, Ali Karti, Wednesday received the American envoy for Sudan, Scott Gration, and discussed with him obstacles facing the referendum and the efforts for reaching a solution for Darfur issue under the new strategy.

In a press statement, Karti said that his talks with the American envoy were focused on Darfur issue and the referendum for South Sudan and ways to address a number of controversial issues.

Karti said that they agreed to return to calm dialogue away from the media confrontations.

Meanwhile, Graton affirmed the keenness of the United States to contribute to enhancement of the humanitarian situation in Darfur, indicating that he aims to be informed about the situation in Darfur and to be assured on access to the humanitarian aid workers to the affected people

Other Highlights

Sudan says will deport foreign NGO workers

AP 18/8/10 - KHARTOUM, Sudan – Sudan's government confirmed Wednesday it would expel a number of international aid workers from the restive western region of Darfur, without specifying how many.

The officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak to the press, said it was a verbal order.

Foreign Ministry spokesman, Muwaia Khaled told the Associated Press the aid workers were being deported individually, and the deportation does not reflect on the organizations they work for.

"Any organization that abides by the regulations and code set will be respected," Khaled stressed. "There are indeed some violations committed and this is the reason why they were expelled."

He did not elaborate on the nature of the offenses and said the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs would disclose more details later.

The U.N. has said constraints on aid agencies operating in the vast Darfur region have been steadily increasing since March 2009, when 11 international aid organizations were expelled following an indictment of the Sudanese president for crimes against humanity in Darfur by the International Criminal Court.

Samuel Hendricks, spokesman for the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in Sudan, said the recent orders have larger implications than just the state of international staffing.

"It's not about the individuals or the organizations, the point is these people are working in a humanitarian capacity and trying to help the population of Darfur," he said.

Gold mine collapses in Sudan

AFP 19/8/10 - Ten people were killed in a collapse at a small gold mine in a desert region of northern Sudan that is currently in the grip of a gold rush, the Interior Ministry said on Wednesday.

"Ten people are dead following the collapse at a small gold mine at Kabkabah village in the Abu Hamed sector," a ministry statement quoted Nile state police chief Adel Khujly al-Jak as saying.

Rising gold prices combined with the availability of metal detectors has sparked a gold rush in northern Sudan, with thousands of prospectors descending on the area in recent years in the hope of striking it rich.

Several reports have appeared in the Khartoum papers about deadly accidents, usually citing anonymous sources. Prospectors from the north often come to the capital to sell gold in the large Al-Arabi market.

"For the past two years prospectors have been coming to us to sell gold," Mahdi, a jeweler in the market, told reporters. "Sometimes they have 100g, 250g or even a kilogram or more.

"Here in Khartoum we have cash to buy their gold, whereas in the north the merchants have less liquidity."

Southern Sudan unveils plans for animal-shaped cities

BBC 18/8/10 -The authorities in southern Sudan have unveiled a \$10bn (£6.4bn) plan to rebuild the region's cities in the shapes of animals and fruit. Elaborate blueprints for the new cities have already been drawn up.

The regional capital, Juba, will be relocated and designed in the shape of a rhinoceros. Wau, the capital of Western Bahr el-Ghazal state, is to be a somewhat unwieldy giraffe.

In Juba, the office of the regional president is situated where the rhinoceros's eye should be.

In Wau, the sewage treatment plant is appropriately placed under the giraffe's tail. There is talk that the town of Yambio will be shaped like a pineapple.

The reason for these shapes is not entirely illogical - they match the symbols that appear on the flags of southern Sudan's states.

But how will the authorities raise the \$10bn they say they need to make this plan a reality? They say they are talking to investors but it is all a bit vague.

Although there is plenty of oil in southern Sudan, people there are extremely poor.

The United Nations says more than 90% of the population lives on less than a dollar a day.

The plans for the new cities perhaps reflect the heady optimism of a potential new independent South Sudan, but whether they will ever get beyond the drawing board is another matter.

Somali President concludes visit to Sudan

SUNA 18/8/10 - The Somali President, Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed, has affirmed his government keenness to solve the crisis in his country and to enhance its institutions.

In a press conference he held at Khartoum Air port before his departure, the Somali President stressed Sudan's important role for solving the Somali crisis, indicating that the coming days would witness new developments at the security and political levels.

The Somali President thanked Sudan's government for the warm welcome and its positive response to all the issues he presented.

Arrangements underway to build Al-Bashir Medical City at SDG 500 m

Sudan Vision 19/8/10 - First Undersecretary of the Federal Ministry of Health, Dr. Kamal Abdel Gadir has disclosed that arrangements for the execution of Al-Bashir Medical City at SDG 500 million have been completed. The medical city will be built in the national capital on an area of 6,000,000 sq. m.

Al-Bashir Medical City will be a breakthrough in integrated medical treatment facilities inside the country," he said. The medical city will comprise all minute and complex specializations in brain and nerves surgery, open-heart surgery, implant, tissue surgery, bone and joints surgery, general surgery, plastic surgery, eye diseases, skin disease, head and neck surgery and an integrated heart disease, chest diseases, dental diseases and rectification and cancer hospitals.

"The new hospital will help in the reduction of medical treatment cost, training of medical staff and the attraction of expatriate Sudanese doctors working abroad as well as international experienced medical doctors specialized in rare medical fields and medical engineering," he said. He added that the choice of the name Al Bashir given to the new hospital has many meanings that are connected to everything noble and its political and social dimensions in the lives of Sudanese. "It is a token of respect and appreciation from the health sector to the symbol of the nation and our sovereignty," he said.

It is expected that tenders will be invited from renowned international companies and consultants specialized in the construction of medical cities to execute the project.

"The project is a breakthrough in the concept of medical tourism designed to attract patients from African, Arab and Asian counties," he said.

New Sudan minister pledges oil transparency

Reuters 18/8/10 - Sudan on Wednesday said it would publish daily production figures and conduct a full independent audit of the oil industry since 2005, a move analysts said could help prevent future conflict over oil.

The pledge was designed to remove a potential bone of contention ahead of a referendum in southern Sudan on whether the semi-autonomous region - where much of the oil lies - should become an independent state.

Sudan's oil industry has long been opaque. Western firms mostly pulled out during a north-south civil war and the sector is currently dominated by Asian companies.

The bulk of Sudan's estimated 6 billion barrels of oil reserves are in the landlocked

"We hope to comfort all the Sudanese people that there will be transparency even if there was none in the past," said new Energy Minister Lual Deng (SPLM).

"The audit is basically to look at the production since 2005 - it will be done by an independent firm," Deng said. "Our preference is to accelerate the process so that the results are made available before the referendum," he added.

Deng said production figures would be published daily on the ministry's web site and he would work with the finance ministry to ensure oil revenue figures were also made available.

He said current crude production was around 450,000-470,000 barrels per day and he hoped that to rise to at least 600,000 bpd next year.

That could reach 650,000 bpd on the back of increased production from Block 6 and more efficient oil recovery techniques, he added.

European firms had begun to take more of an interest and Total (TOTF.PA) - the largest Western firm with a concession in Sudan - would be starting work on its Block B in the south soon, Deng said.

"Total...wanted to have assurances about what will happen after the referendum and they have been assured that their contract will be respected regardless of the outcome," he said.

National elections in April had not been violent, an indicator likely to attract investors to Sudan's oil sector, he added.

Most analysts believe the south will secede next year and investors worry because much of the oil lies along the border dividing Sudan's two halves, which is still disputed. However, most expect any secession to be amicable given both sides dependence on oil.

Meanwhile, ***Sudan Vision*** 19/8/10 reported that Global Witness declared its apology for a report published recently on the Sudan oil revenue share explaining that the said report was based on mistaken information taken from web sites of foreign companies working in Sudan.

The Representative of the Company, Dr. Jevin Herman said that the company apologizes for the mistaken report.

Sudan committed to agreements with UNAMID – Foreign Minister

The Citizen 19/08/08 – Foreign Minister Ali Karti has reiterated Sudan's full adherence to all agreements it signed with the UNAMID, asserting that it would support the joint mission to fully carry out its duties and implement its mandate in the best possible way.

Karti made these statements at a meeting in Khartoum with JSR Ibrahim Gambari. The

minister also expressed his country's appreciation for the role of UNAMID in Darfur and looked forward to its role in the execution of the new strategy for achieving comprehensive peace, security and development in Darfur.

Libya unveils initiative support Darfur peace process in Doha

Al-Ayyam 19/08/10 – The Libyan government has unveiled a new initiative for a peaceful solution of the Darfur problem through unification of the armed groups, Justice and Liberation Movement Vice-Chairman for Political and Media Affairs, Mahjoub Hussein disclosed. Hussein said that the initiative focuses on support and improvement of the Doha process, exerting efforts to bring the holdout groups to the negotiations table and urging the armed groups to form a unified negotiations position for the talks.

He said that his movement is currently studying the initiative and would respond probably within the next two days.

Fact-finding committee formed on Rizeigat-Misseriya clashes

Al-Ayyam Nyala, 19/08/10 – Renewed fighting yesterday between Misseriya and Rizeigat nomads in the Kass area of South Darfur left 80 people dead or injured. The Deputy Governor of South Darfur said military reinforcements were rushed to Kass and a fact-finding committee has been formed to identify the reasons behind the fighting between the two tribes.

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