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# Media Monitoring Report

United Nations Mission in Sudan/ Public Information Office

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# Highlights

## On the Campaign Trail

### UN seeks to quell row over Sudan's ballot printing contracts

**Sudantribune.com** Khartoum, 24/03/10 - The United Nations (UN) today responded to a complaint filed in mid-March by an opposition leader who expressed fury at the world's body electoral officer in Sudan saying he was complicit in an improper switching an award to print the ballots from a Slovenian company to a local one belonging to the ruling National Congress Party (NCP).

The leader of the Umma Reform and Renewal Party (URRP) Mubarak Al-Fadil who wrote the letter to UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon said that this would lead to duplicate papers and ballot box stuffing.

"When we wrote to the National Election Commission complaining, the Commission wrote back to us in a letter dated March 10, 2010 justifying their action and confirming that these actions had been approved by the Chief of the Electoral Assistance Division of UNMIS, Mr. Ray Kennedy (All tender vetting and evaluation had been undertaken in participation of the UNMIS Electoral Assistance Division and that the National Election Commission had not received any complaint regarding the award of tenders)" Al-Fadil said in his letter

"This action supported by your staff member has left the door open for the duplication of ballot tickets and thus manipulating and forging the electoral process. Mr. Kennedy has shown ignorance and incompetence in comprehending the legal and political set up in which the elections are being conducted".

UNMIS Chief Haile Menkerios wrote a response on behalf of Ban stressing that the UN was not involved in the decision taken by the NEC.

"I would like to clarify that elections in Sudan are nationally owned process and the United Nations' (UN) mandate remains limited to technical assistance and support only. Accordingly, the decision to print the aforementioned ballot tickets locally was taken solely, as it should be, by the National Election Commission (NEC)" Menkerios said.

Menkerios said that the UN position on elections "has remained consistent and will continue to be so".

"We believe these elections need to be free and fair and we will do all within our mandate to advise, encourage and assist that they be so".

The UN official attached a letter dated February, 9 2010 from the NEC to United Nations Development Program (UNDP) Project Manager Elections Assistance notifying them of their decision to "separate the printing of the polling papers for Executive Elections to be printed inside Sudan".

"From previous experience, Sudan Currency Printing Press which is well equipped with technical resources can do this work with the required time limit...So NEC would like to withdraw Lot(1) for Executive Elections from our previous request and meet the expenses of the printing of this lot from its own funds".

Menkerios also responded to URRP leader criticism of Ray Kennedy, UNMIS Chief Electoral Affairs Officer. Al-Fadil said that Kennedy "has been quoted consistently in the local press commenting on political issues, criticizing opposition parties' demands. These demands include conditions needed to hold a free and fair election".

"Mr. Kennedy affirms he was clearly misquoted as his role in the elections is purely that of a technical expert" Menkerios said.

### **As Sudanese elections near, UN voices concern over reports of harassment**

**UN News New York, 23/03/10** - The United Nations expressed concern today about reports that some opposition party members and supporters in Sudan are being harassed, intimidated, arrested or detained ahead of presidential and parliamentary elections slated for next month.

UN Spokesperson Martin Nesirky, responding to questions from journalists at UN Headquarters in New York, said the world body is also concerned by the low rate of voter registration among internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the Darfur region of western Sudan.

He added that another concern is a series of technical challenges to the vote, such as the logistics of transporting election materials in areas with little infrastructure and how to recruit and train tens of thousands of poll workers.

"We have encouraged the Government of Sudan to address these concerns to ensure that the elections reflect the will of the Sudanese people," he said.

Nesirky stressed that the elections are a Sudanese process, with the UN providing only technical assistance and limited logistical support - as mandated by the Security Council - to the authorities staging the ballot.

### **No postponement of the elections – Al-Bashir**

On the campaign trail in Al-Fulla, Southern Kordofan, yesterday, President Bashir reiterated his rejection to opposition calls for a postponement of the polls and for the formation of a national government. **Akhir Lahza** reports that the President told a rally in Fulla that his government has earmarked funding to the tune of \$1 billion dollars from a Chinese grant for the purposes of development and meeting the needs of the marginalised in Southern Kordofan State.

"It is by action, not rhetoric, that we combat marginalisation," he said.

### **Interior Ministry sets traffic plans for the elections season**

The Ministry of Interior has put in place new measures to ensure security on roads during the elections season, **Al-Khartoum** reveals. The new measures would also cover escorts to ensure candidates travelling by surface transport upcountry reach their destinations safely. Khartoum Police Spokesperson Mohamed Abdulmajid Al-Tayeb said that authorities are carrying out a technical evaluation of the roads in Khartoum State and have pulled out some roundabouts to facilitate traffic flow. The measures also require the removal of tinting from vehicle windows.

### **Thursday meeting of the Presidency rescheduled**

**Sudantribune.com Khartoum, 24/03/10** – Vice-President Ali Osman Mohamed Taha flew today to Malaysia "on a short mission", Sudan state media reported.

**Sudan News Agency (SUNA)** reported that the meeting of the Presidency with President Al-Bashir and FVP Kiir scheduled for Thursday (25/03/10) has been rescheduled to Tuesday. The meeting was supposed to discuss an opposition memorandum demanding a postponement of the April elections to next November. FVP Kiir has called for the memorandum to be included as an agenda item for the meeting of the Presidency.

### **Juba Alliance opposition group defers meeting to Saturday**

The Juba Alliance of opposition parties has deferred to Saturday next week its meeting scheduled to take place today, **Al-Ahdath** reports. Alliance leader Farouq Abu-Eissa said that the decision was taken in order to give the Presidency of the Republic more time to respond to

opposition demands for a postponement of the elections.

In a related development, **Al-Sahafa** reports that the SPLM will dispatch Deputy Chairman Riek Machar, Secretary-General Pagan Amum and its flag-bearer Yassir Arman to join the Juba Alliance's talks over the elections next Saturday. Pagan Amum revealed that FVP Salva Kiir presided over a meeting of the SPLM leadership yesterday that discussed issues pertaining to the elections, the NEC and the recent threats to expel international observers. He said that these issues will also feature in the Saturday meeting in Khartoum of the Juba as well as at the forthcoming meeting of the Presidency of the Republic.

### **Independents seek assistance from the people**

Independent candidates have lashed out on the NEC, the government, UNAMIS and political parties, describing all of them as "lacking internal democratic practices", **Al-Sahafa** reports.

The head of the coalition of independent candidates, Abashar Hassan Rufai, told a press conference in Khartoum yesterday that the NEC and UNMIS have rejected their requests for funding of their elections campaigns "despite the fact that Article 68.3 (?) provides for such funding." He briefed the media about the coalition's efforts to secure funding and revealed that the Presidency has also refused their requests to seek audience over the issue and the NEC told them that the funds it receives are for its structures. He went on to say that the coalition boasts of a membership of 856 independent candidates representing various parts of the country excluding Khartoum State and the states of southern Sudan. Abashar called on the Sudanese people and institutions that advocate for democracy to help fund their campaigns.

### **Kiir pledges to reintegrate independent candidates after election**

**Sudantribune.com** *Renk, 24/03/10* - SPLM candidate for GoSS President, Salva Kiir Mayardit, said he would consider welcoming back to the fold of the party those SPLM members who opted to run as independent candidates after the April elections.

Kiir made public this statement during an electoral meeting held in Aweil, the capital of Northern Bahr El-Ghazal State, on Wednesday. The rally was massively attended by the population as authorities closed down the local markets. "I need you to elect leaders and representatives of your choice. Those are your people. People who would represent you at all levels with requirements and abilities, Kiir said. He also revealed that SPLM would consider welcoming back independent candidates after elections, whether or not they are successful at the polls.

Dhieu Mathok Diing Wol, an independent candidate who attended the rally, described Kiir's speech as "encouraging".

"Our people and contestants should now embrace the similar tune of the president in all their political activities to make the upcoming election a peaceful exercise acceptable to all," said he.

The president who addressed his electoral rally in the town also travelled to Malek Alel, headquarters of Aweil South County, where a political rally of the independent candidates was banned by county authorities recently.

Abraham Aleu, commissioner of the area reportedly said was not informed in advance prior to the conduct of the rally. "I have no problem with conduct of the rally of independent candidates but a notification of it should have been sent to me so other arrangements including security at the rally are provided, he said.

### **Elections observers who interfere with the process will be expelled – NCP**

The NCP has reiterated its threats to expel any elections observing body that shades doubts over credibility and interferes in the electoral process in the country, **Al-Sahafa** reports. Speaking to the press yesterday, prominent NCP figure Qutbi Al-Mahdi said that the NCP has welcomed

observers and pledged commitment to cooperate with them but then some of these organisations use their observations as hostile media campaigns that shade doubts over credibility of the country's electoral process. Their role, he said, is confined to presenting their observations on the exercise to the NEC.

He accused certain parties from within that he declined to name for providing these organisations with wrong information that to be circulated by foreign media.

### **Kiir advises to vote wisely during elections and referendum**

**Sudantribune.com** Juba, 25/-3/10 - In his campaign trail which has already covered states of Greater Upper Nile and Greater Equatoria, the incumbent President of the Southern Sudan and contestant to maintain his presidential seat in the upcoming April elections, Salva Kiir Mayardit, has advised the people of Southern Sudan to vote wisely during the April elections and referendum in January 2011.

Kiir urged the voters to vote for his SPLM party, saying it is the only party that would make the people of Southern Sudan to "cross the river to the Promised Land".

Addressing a huge rally in Mundri town of Western Equatoria State, Kiir said it would be up to the choice of the people of Southern Sudan to either vote for unity of the country and remain "second class citizens" or vote for secession and establish their own independent state. He said he wanted all the SPLM official candidates to be elected back into office by the citizens so that they complete the good work they have been doing.

"I want Costello Manibe back and you must bring him back," he told the crowd in Mundri in his direct reference to the current GoNU Minister of Cabinet Affairs and contestant for a parliamentary seat in the constituency.

In Yambio, the capital of Western Equatoria state, Kiir equally gave support to the incumbent Caretaker governor, Jemma Nunu Kumba, and the rest of party candidates in the state.

Kiir and his deputy, Dr. Riek Machar, have left almost empty their presidency offices in Juba for the most part of this month as the top two leaders have been jointly campaigning and mobilizing their supporters for the election to the presidency and giving support to their junior party candidates.

"Dr. Riek Machar is the Vice President and also the deputy chairman of the party. Whenever I travelled outside, Dr. Riek Machar always remained in charge of government in Juba, and when he went for a mission, I remained in Juba, but now you can see us moving together and campaigning for the elections," Kiir said.

### **Elections-related material exempt from customs**

The head of the Public Relations Department at the Customs Police has announced that the Customs' Laws provide for a customs' waiver for all elections-related material. According to **Al-Sahafa**, he told the press at Khartoum Airport following the arrival of the second batch of 2,183 ballot boxes from South Africa that the Customs Police have facilitated the clearance procedures for elections-related material and hand these materials directly to the NEC.

## Other Highlights

### South Sudan sets to issue firearms numerical control mark

**Sudantribune.com Renk**, 24/03/10 - The southern Sudan government said it will soon embark on a new method of marking all firearms and light weapons in the region to mitigate illegal ownership of arms.

Minister of internal Affairs General Gier Chuang Aluong in an interview with **Sudan Tribune** from Juba said illegal ownership of firearms will be mitigated through the marking, as the arms will easily be identified.

"There are a lot of firearms in the hands of local populations that need to be removed through systematic disarmament including marking of firearms possessed by illegitimate groups," the general said.

He added they will also put specific marks such as badges on uniforms and other police equipments for easy identification across the region, declining to comment on whether SPLA are part of the upcoming proposal.

The influential minister said officers from the regional police service will be asked to mark their own weapons using a pin-marking machine to differentiate them from those held by ordinary people in rural towns and villages.

"Officers are expected to stockpile and manage small arms and light weapons with the aid of a pin-marking machine. All firearms in the region are going to be engraved with special numbers. This will help in the identification of firearms in terms of their origin and ownership," he said.

He also warned that police will not rest until people trading illegally in firearms and light weapons are dealt with. "I warn those people who are involved in illegal trade and ownership of small arms and light weapons that the South Sudan Police and other law enforcement agencies will not rest."

"Those that hide these weapons in sacks and pack them in their pickup vans as if they are carrying goods should know that the police will soon catch up with them," he said. Earlier, General Gier pointed out that the records generated in the process of arms marking will ease tractability and identification of the sources and end users of arms within the region.

### UN evaluates performance of its peacekeeping troops in Sudan

**Kuwait News Agency (KUNA)** reports that the UN launched yesterday an evaluation on the performance of its two peacekeeping forces in Sudan (UNMIS and UNAMID) amidst reports of deficiencies in internal controls in a number of areas in peacekeeping missions around the globe. The Military Adviser to the United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), Lieutenant General Chikadibia Obiakor, held a series of closed door meetings in Khartoum yesterday with the leaderships of the two missions as well as with Sudanese government officials.

In his meeting with the visiting UN Military Advisor, Undersecretary for Foreign Affairs Muttrif Sidig assured that the recent attack on UNAMID forces in the Jebel Moon area will not affect relations between the UN and Sudan, **Al-Ahdath** reports. What is important, he maintained, is to make use of the recommendations of the joint team that carried out investigations into the incident in order to avert possibilities for such attacks in future and to strengthen channels of coordination and consultation between the two sides.

Sidig expressed his government's appreciation for UNMIS' assistance in the logistics involved in transporting elections-related material to southern Sudan.

On his part, General Obiakor said that the UN is satisfied with the high levels of cooperation

between the UN missions and the Sudan government. He said that his visit to the country comes within the context of assessing the performance of UN forces in the country. He assured the Sudan government of full UN cooperation in all fields.

### **UN forces lax about security, report finds**

**Reuters; Al-Ahdath** 25/03/10 - United Nations missions in several world trouble spots neglected proper security procedures and financial controls, exposing the world body to unnecessary risks, according to an internal report made public on Tuesday. The report by the UN watchdog the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS), covering last year, found fault with operations in a series of countries but focused especially on Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Iraq. The report "highlights deficiencies in internal controls in a range of areas, from contract management to air operations, which expose the (UN) to unnecessary risk", OIOS head Inga-Britt Ahlenius wrote in a preface. "Lack of compliance with standard operating procedures, poor planning and inadequate management are just a few of the deficiencies identified."

In Darfur, the unit found that security precautions and preparations by a joint UN and African Union peacekeeping force were inadequate for the risks. The force known as UNAMID, which has lost 22 soldiers and police since the beginning of 2008, made some improvements, the 23-page report said, after the OIOS recommended that "urgent measures" be taken. The report, commissioned by the UN General Assembly, also criticised UNAMID for overpaying a fuel contractor 4,7m because of a failure to verify invoices properly.

### **Tens of dead or injured, thousands flee in renewed Rizeigat-Misseriya clash**

Rizeigat-Abbala and Misseriya tribesmen have renewed violent clashes near Kass and Deissi in South Darfur, reports **Al-Sahafa**. Casualty figures have not been confirmed with some sources citing 14 people dead or injured while others say the figures may be a lot higher. Reports say that over 7,000 people have fled the area following the fighting that also saw around 15 villages scorched. State Governor Omar Abduljabbar said at a press conference yesterday that a group of about 400 unidentified warriors, some on 40 vehicles and others on horseback and camel, swept from West and North Darfur on a retaliatory raid targeting six villages. Some normalcy has returned following the deployment of police reinforcements and investigations have been launched, he said.

In a related development, West Darfur Governor Abu-el-Gassim Al-Imam has revealed that some 73 people have so far been killed or injured as the fighting between the Misseriya and Rizeigat tribesmen spread in West and South Darfur. Mohamed Saleh Abu-Sikeen, a Misseriya tribal leader, has accused the Border Guards of siding with the Rizeigat in the fighting that started since 26 February and that the governments of West and South Darfur have failed to defuse so far, reports **Al-Ahdath**.

### **Chadian army officers join border monitoring command in Sudan**

**Sudantribune.com Khartoum**, 24/03/10 - Chadian military officers, who are part of the joint Sudan-Chad command formed recently to monitor the border, arrived to the capital of West Darfur State, El-Geneina, where they are based, the Sudanese army announced today. Alsoarmi Khaled Saad, Spokesperson of the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF), said the Chadian commanders reaffirmed that their troops to the joint force are gathered in the town of Adre, near Sudanese border, with armament and equipment, the official **SUNA** reported today.

He added this move represents the beginning of the process of troop deployment, on the specific sites, jointly with the Sudanese forces.

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