



# United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS)

Media & Spokesperson Unit  
Communications & Public Information Office

## MEDIA MONITORING REPORT

THURSDAY, 05 DECEMBER 2013

### SOUTH SUDAN

- South Sudan media rejects registration directive for journalists (*Sudantribune.com*)
- South Sudan media threaten blackout starting Sunday (*Radio Tamazuj*)
- South Sudan woos investors at conference (*VoA News*)
- South Sudan opposition group elects new leader (*Sudantribune.com*)
- South Sudan Police officials graduate in specialized courses (*Gurtong*)
- Aweil community justifies endorsing removal of governor (*Sudantribune.com*)

### SOUTH SUDAN, SUDAN

- Sudan universities to admit South Sudanese students holding old Secondary School Certificates (*Radio Tamazuj*)

### OTHER HIGHLIGHTS

- Sudan's ruling party delays approving cabinet reshuffle amid reports of VP Taha's departure (*Sudantribune.com*)
- Sudan's cabinet reshuffle will be followed by changes in legislative assembly, Speaker (*Sudantribune.com*)
- Netherlands allocating €150 million in debt relief to Sudan in 2014 budget (*Sudantribune.com*)
- WFP reduces food aid in Congo due to shortage of funds (*Sudantribune.com*)
- OPINION – The quality of institutions and policies in South Sudan (*by Luka Biang on Sudantribune.com*)

### LINKS TO STORIES FROM THE MORNING MEDIA MONITOR

- Kiir opens investment conference (*Gurtong*)
- World bodies pledge to support South Sudan development (*Catholic Radio Network*)
- National legislature re-passes Media Acts with President's observations (*Catholic Radio Network*)
- One hundred twenty six police officers graduate (*Catholic Radio Network*)
- CEPO to launch website to fight corruption (*Bakhita Radio*)
- Governor Konga criticizes centralization of judiciary system (*Bakhita Radio*)
- Governor urges citizens to adopt family planning initiatives (*Gurtong*)
- EAC to decide on South Sudan admission by April 2014 (*Sudantribune.com*)
- Late LRA commander was close to Kony, says Ugandan army (*Sudantribune.com*)

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# Highlights

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## **S. Sudan media reject registration directive for journalists**

*Sudantribune.com* Juba, 04/12/13 - South Sudan's media fraternity has condemned a directive by the information and broadcasting minister requiring that journalists register with the government.

Journalists say the requirement contravenes constitutional provisions that guarantee freedom of expression, including dissemination of information.

The heads of various independent media outlets in the country failed to reach an understanding on the matter during a meeting on Tuesday with the minister, Michael Makuei Lueth.

Nhial Bol, editor-in-chief of *The Citizen* English-language newspaper told *Sudan Tribune* on Wednesday that media representatives were unable to reach a consensus with authorities because they rejected demands for the registration of all journalists.

Bol said journalists had pulled out of the meeting after accusing Lueth of acting outside of the law.

"The meeting with the minister did not reach any consensus. He (Lueth) wants all journalists to be registered. They need [a] curriculum vitae for individual journalists. This was rejected and the journalists pulled out of the meeting", Bol told *Sudan Tribune*.

"There is no basis. The minister is acting outside of the law. It is just a verbal order. We asked him to put it into writing in the form of [a] ministerial order, but he did not do it. So there is no basis", Bol added.

According to Bol, media houses can willingly register their staff, but individual journalists should not be forced to do so.

"As institutions, we have accepted and registered in compliance with the government policies, but we cannot force individual journalists to register because there is no law which calls for it", he said.

He described the directive as "an unlawful act which cannot be encouraged", stressing that media houses are willing to "hire lawyers to defend journalists in court" if the minister seeks to interfere in their operations.

Independent journalist John Augustine Justin expressed "deep concern" over the new directive, saying it is a tactic aimed at silencing the media.

"Instead of promoting and protecting press freedom the government wants to muzzle the press to avoid accountability. This is a dangerous move and the earlier the minister reconsiders his decision the better for all the stakeholders", Justin told *Sudan Tribune* on Wednesday.

Editor-in-chief of the *Juba Monitor* Alfred Taban slammed the minister's directive as "illegal and unconstitutional".

"The minister [has] assumed the role of media authority, which is the body supposed to be handling such matters, but as you know, the bill which would regulate this body has not been passed into law. The Minister is therefore acting outside the law. The directives are illegal and unconstitutional", Taban said.

Meanwhile, a senior government official at the ministry of information and broadcasting claimed the institution is under intense pressure from the "higher authority" to ensure media do not cross the line.

"You know nobody is against the press freedom. This is a democratic country and we know the importance of the media. The media acts like a mirror. The problem is that some

journalists want to report everything. They are crossing the redline”, the official told Sudan Tribune on condition of anonymity.

Human right organisations say violations to freedom of expression and personal freedoms are frequent in South Sudan, particularly towards critical voices.

The violations are perpetrated by government officials in positions of authority, as well as law enforcement agencies as a ploy to silence critics.

Journalists, members of civil society and human rights defenders have reported experiencing sustained harassment, including assaults, torture, death threats and unlawful arrests and detentions. [\(Back to Top\)](#)

### **South Sudan media threaten blackout starting Sunday**

*Radio Tamazuj Juba*, 04/12/13 - South Sudan’s two main daily newspapers as well as editors of several other media houses have threatened a blackout starting Sunday in protest of verbal directives made by the Minister of Information and Broadcasting, Michael Makuei Lueth.

*Al Masir* and *The Citizen*, the main daily newspapers printing in Arabic and English, respectively, have both warned that they will shut down rather than comply with government orders which they say are extralegal.

In a statement on Tuesday, *Al Masir* newspaper announced that it had agreed with other independent media houses including *The Citizen* and *Juba Monitor* to halt operations as from the coming Sunday until media laws are passed by the parliament.

“It is predicted that all private media houses in the country will agree on Thursday to boycott government activities at all levels, including the Investment Conference, National Legislative Assembly sittings as well the coming meetings of the National Liberation Council on 9 December,” the newspaper stated on its front page today.

Alongside the newspaper editors, representatives of the main radio networks have also met recently to discuss recent directives by the Ministry of Information. Editors have rejected the attempt by the Ministry of Information to register journalists, refusing to bring requested documents such as CVs to the ministry.

No government circular or other written instructions have been given to media houses by the Information Ministry, but verbal orders were given by the minister on 6 November.

This latest developments follow a meeting on Tuesday between the Information Minister and a committee of four editors of different media houses, who resolved to approach the minister together after two *Citizen TV* journalists were detained briefly on the weekend for not carrying a government-issued ID card.

According to one participant at the meeting it went “very badly.” *Al Masir* reported that the minister reiterated his directive that all media houses must comply with “periodic registration of their reporters and subsequently submit the record to South Sudan’s security and intelligence service.”

The Arabic newspaper further described the minister as using “impolite language” during their meeting.

The minister was quoted by *The Citizen* as saying “so long as the media bills are still not passed by the parliament the operation of the media houses and the journalists in South Sudan have to be regulated by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting and any media house or journalist who does not feel comfortable with this arrangement has to stop work and wait for the media bills to come out first then they can resume business.”

Throughout the last month several journalists and senior editors have been summoned to the National Security Service (NSS) and questioned extensively.

Additionally, for reasons that were never made explicitly clear, *Juba Monitor* newspaper was verbally ordered by NSS to stop printing and was forced to do so.

Elsewhere, the manager of a station belonging to one of the main radio networks was ordered by a county commissioner to leave the county, while another station was ordered to produce a letter of no-objection from the national information ministry. [\(Back to Top\)](#)

### **South Sudan Woos Investors at Conference**

*VoA News Juba, 05/12/13* - South Sudan President Salva Kiir declared the world's newest country open for business in a speech to kick off an international investment conference in Juba Wednesday.

"God has blessed us and endowed our young country with vast resources in terms of fertile lands, forests, water resources, minerals and petroleum resources... Those who wait too long may miss the vast investment opportunities that our country offers," he told the conference, which the organizers say has brought more than 800 delegates from some 50 countries to Juba.

U.S. Special Envoy for Sudan and South Sudan Donald Booth called on the government to enact legislation that enhances protection for foreign and domestic investors.

"A formally adopted land act would allow investors access to land and secure land tenure, and I think that's what I have heard from many investors is absolutely crucial." Booth said.

"A framework for public-private partnerships would also allow the government and investors to maximize returns on private money and leverage economic growth," the U.S. official added.

Booth urged investors to take advantage of the fact that South Sudan this year became eligible for the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), which allows African countries to export goods to U.S. markets

The South Sudanese National Assembly is looking at draft laws on land rights, microfinance, and trademarks, among others, all of which would make for a more attractive investment environment.

But the head of the United Nations mission in South Sudan, Hilde Johnson, said passing laws was not enough to draw investors to South Sudan; officials also have to enforce the laws.

"Rules need to be abided with, also in practice," Johnson said, urging the government to make "sure that the justice sector works."

South Sudan hopes to attract investors to six key areas -- agriculture, health, infrastructure, mining, petroleum, and tourism -- to boost the country's economy, create jobs, and eradicate poverty. [\(Back to Top\)](#)

### **South Sudan opposition group elects new leader**

*Sudantribune.com Bentiu, 04/12/13* - A South Sudanese opposition party - the United Democratic Salvation Front Mainstream - has elected a new chairman during a meeting of party members in Unity state.

Simon William Gai Chang, who received 80% of the vote, was applauded by UDSF members after he was voted in for a four year term.

The new leader said that he hoped he would be able to unite the membership and work alongside other South Sudanese parties to bring change and democratic transition to the young nation.

"My priority [is] I want to unite the members of UDSF Mainstream in Unity state and I want to activate the activities of youths and women leagues in the state. So what I can tell to our people in Unity state is that let us work together with the government of Unity state."

Chang praised the party's committed advocacy for South Sudan's separation from Sudan in 2011 referendum.

He said that the UDSF's vision was to unite the people and make peace in the republic of South Sudan.

The UDSF Mainstream was formed after Khartoum peace agreement in 1997 and opened its official office in Sudan in 1998, later moving to Unity state. The Khartoum Peace Agreement was signed by a splinter group from South Sudan's main rebel movement - the SPLA.

The party chairman says they are cooperating with the ruling Sudan People Liberation Movement (SPLM) to address the problems facing the nation.

Chang refused to comment on whether his party had faced any intimidation from the ruling SPLM. [\(Back to Top\)](#)

### **South Sudan police officials graduate in specialized courses**

*Gurtong Juba, 05/13/13* - A total of 126 South Sudan National Police Officers yesterday graduated in specialised fields at Rajaf's Dr. John Garang Unified Training Centre.

The training by specialised trainers from Rwanda and Uganda police forces focused on areas of Criminal Investigation, Information, Communication and Technology (ICT), Traffic and Road Safety Management (TRSM), Counter-Terrorism (CT) and Criminal Intelligence (CI).

The six-month training was aimed at building the capacity of the police to maintain law and order in the country. Robert Igga (CID), Edward Okedy (ICT), John Dhal (TRSM), Noah Mori (CT) and Lino Lotinan (CI) were the best trainees in their respective areas.

The representative of the trainees Deng Deng Kwach praised the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) and the leaders of the South Sudan National Police Service (SSPNS) for organising the training.

He said they learnt a lot in the training, saying they will put the skills acquired to practice once deployed as he asked for more training. He cited training in English, sickness (lack of mosquito nets) and kidnap and killing of one them in Juba as challenges they faced during the training.

United Nations Police Commissioner Dr. Christopher Yiga congratulated the graduates upon successful completion of the course as he urged the national police leadership to deploy the graduates to their specialised areas of training.

"This is nation building. It is just the beginning. Deploy these police officers in their areas of training," said Yiga. "I know we are out to have one of the best police forces from South Sudan," Yiga said to arouse of applause from the graduates.

South Sudan's Inspector General of Police General Pieng Kuol acknowledged the challenges of the trainees and apologized. He hailed them for their perseverance and promised to make amends.

"The areas of the specialization in this training are very, very important for the transformation of the police," said Pieng of the importance of the training. "By detecting crime and investigating it correctly, we could be scoring more 50% of what is expected of us."

Emphasizing the importance of quick but accurate investigations, Pieng urged the graduates to make the unknown known within a short time.

The Deputy Special Representative of Secretary General (SRSG)/Political Raisedon Zenenga, the respective Assistant Inspectors of Police of Uganda and Rwanda Moses Hajj Balimwoyo and Dan Munyuza and members of the diplomatic corps attended the graduation ceremony preceded by the trainees' crime scene investigation demonstration.

[\(Back to Top\)](#)

## **Aweil community justifies endorsing removal of governor**

*Sudantribune.com Juba, 04/12/13* - The Aweil community of South Sudan's North Bahr el Ghazal state has published a list reasons justifying their call for the state governor's removal.

In a press release the group said warned President Salva Kiir that the support of the area is contingent on how he deals with the numerous issues they have raised about the leadership of Governor Paul Malong Awan.

"We have repeated in many occasions that the citizens of Northern Bahr el Ghazal respect you as their leader and have no illusions against your leadership. But if they are pushed against the wall by Governor Paul Malong, as it is happening now, then we shall be left without option, but to step aside and watch the political scenario being played by Governor Malong alone", they statement said.

Only time will tell whether the Aweil community will continue to support the current leadership of the ruling SPLM in northern border state.

"The choice is absolutely yours. It's you who can reconcile and unite Aweil Community behind you and it's you who can also disown this great Community and leave them in unclear and confused political dilemma", the release warns president Kiir in part.

The release explained that the citizens of the area consider president Kiir as their son, adding that he would continue to have their political support as long as he meets their aspirations.

The Aweil community had demonstrated their support of Kiir during the SPLM decades of liberation struggle and since 2005 , when a peace brought the SPLM to power.

Kiir had also received a high percentage of votes from Aweil during the 2010 elections, "an indication that people of Aweil are politically behind you. This fact should not be ignored", the release, bearing signatures of community leaders, adds.

Charges brought against governor Awan following the conduct of a one-day community conference held on 30 November, include his assumption functions and duties not granted to him by the constitution.

"All the executive, legislative and judicial powers are exclusively exercised by the Governor. The Governor interfered in many occasions with functions of State Legislative Assembly. He did this violation by dismissing and arresting MPs, and reshuffling its leadership without legal procedures", the release adds.

The Aweil community also allege that citizens in Northern Bahr el Ghazal are subjected to arbitrary arrest without following legal procedures specified by law.

"The Governor puts himself in a position of prosecutor and/or a judge in the State. He orders the arrest and release of individuals according to his wishes", according to the statement.

Other charges made include spending state budget without following plans and programs as well as not making cash transfers from the central government transparent.

The community leaders also cited Awan's "arbitrary actions", notably the unjustified sacking of the speaker and six members of the state legislative assembly.

The release accuses Awan of embezzling "unspecified" pension funds and pocketing grant transfers for all the five counties from national government covering a financial period between 2012 and 2013

Awan is also held for diverting humanitarian assistance contributed by the natives of the area living abroad for personal use.

"In another incident of misuse of Public properties the people of NBGS living in USA appealed to American based organization (Kingway Association) in 2009 to support the people in the State with medical supplies (Drugs) with a view to alleviate the health

problems in NBG. Immediately Kingway Association procured and dispatched medical supplies amounting to 584 units packed in 4 size big sealed cartons. The medical supplies were sent to the state, received by the Governor and taken to his house .When Kingsway Association requested a detailed report of the distribution such that they could arrange a continuous supply of drugs the Governor and his Minister of Health failed to cooperate with the organization leading to cancellation of the project”, the community members charged in the statement. [\(Back to Top\)](#)

### **Sudan universities to admit S. Sudanese holding old Secondary Certificates**

*Radio Tamazuj Khartoum, 04/12/13* - The spokesperson for the South Sudan Embassy in Khartoum, Gabriel Deng Akot, reported that 8,448 students from South Sudan are studying at various Sudanese learning institutions.

In a symposium at the premises of the Sudanese Ministry of Higher Education, on ”The Role of South Sudanese Students in Improving the Relations between Juba and Khartoum,” Akot confirmed his endeavour to remove all the challenges facing South Sudanese students in Sudan.

Deng, who is also in charge of the Southern Students Affairs at the Embassy, noted that he met with Sudan’s Higher Education Minister, Dr Khamis Kajo Kunda, in order to reactivate the agreements signed previously by the two countries in terms of education.

In a press statement following the symposium, the South Sudanese official echoed that the Sudanese Higher Education Minister asserted the continuation of the good cooperation between the countries, as well as the activation of a signed Memorandum of Understanding on exchange of education expertises.

“South Sudanese students should not be treated as foreigners,” the Higher Education Minister was quoted as saying after their meeting.

Sudan has agreed to accept the old Sudan Secondary School Certificate as valid for South Sudanese students to register at its higher learning institutions, according to the South Sudanese diplomat. [\(Back to Top\)](#)

### **Sudan’s ruling party delays approving cabinet reshuffle**

*Sudantribune.com Khartoum, 04/12/13* - The leadership council of the ruling National Congress Party (NCP) in Sudan postponed till Saturday its meeting scheduled for today which was expected to endorse the new cabinet formation.

There were conflicting explanations given for the rescheduling with some sources saying it was necessitated by the preoccupation of president Omer Hassan al-Bashir with the ongoing visit of Ethiopian Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn.

But other sources spoke of strong disagreements that emerged between NCP leaders on the upcoming government reshuffle.

The weekly Elaph newspaper reported that Vice President Ali Osman Taha has tendered his resignation and that the minister for presidential affairs Bakri Hassan Saleh will replace him.

Saleh is the only one who remained of the Revolutionary Command Council for National Salvation formed after the 1989 military coup and consisted of fifteen officers along with Bashir.

He is also one of the very few military figures to have remained in the government where he switched between the ministries of Defense and the Presidency.

Taha was rumored to be tapped to take over the parliament speakership which sources said infuriated the VP and prompted him to call it quits. He has reportedly vacated his office at the presidential palace on Tuesday night.

If proven, Taha's departure may pave the way for more radical changes in the executive branch which many critics say has remained stagnant for many years.

On Tuesday, Bashir bid farewell to the cabinet in the weekly meeting but the new formation has yet to be announced which is said to be known to very few besides the president.

The reshuffle has been anticipated since earlier this year amidst deep divisions within the ruling party in the wake of a coup attempt staged last year by NCP supporters and Islamists in the military and security.

Another crisis shook the NCP when more than 30 of its top members including the party's ex-head of its parliamentary caucus and former presidential adviser Ghazi Salah Al-Deen Al-Attabani presented a memo to president Bashir last September criticizing the government's decision to remove subsidies on fuel and other basic commodities, saying it "harshly" impacted Sudanese citizens.

They chided the government for the excessive violence used against protestors who took the streets against the subsidies cut and called for deep political and economic reforms.

They also urged Bashir to form a mechanism for national reconciliation comprised of various political forces and assign the economic dossier to a professional national economic team.

"The legitimacy of your rule has never been at stake like it is today" they said in their letter to Bashir which was seen as a direct challenge to the president who is now the country's longest serving leader.

Bashir formed a committee headed by national assembly speaker Ibrahim Al-Tahir to query those whose names appeared in the petition that was circulated publicly.

The commission of inquiry recommended dismissing three members including al-Attabani and temporarily suspending nine others. The decision was endorsed by the NCP leadership council.

Al-Attabani and others later declared his intention to leave the party and form a new one that would "bring new hope to Sudan". This week they officially applied for permission to establish it. [\(Back to Top\)](#)

### **Sudan's cabinet reshuffle will be followed by changes in legislative assembly, speaker**

*Sudantribune.com Khartoum, 04/12/13* - The head of Sudan's national legislative body which is composed of the parliament and the states' council, Ahmed Ibrahim Al-Tahir, announced that the upcoming cabinet reshuffle would be followed by changes in the legislative chamber.

On Tuesday, president Omer Hassan Al-Bashir thanked his cabinet ministers and state's ministers for their participation in the broad base government prior to announcing the new cabinet formation.

Al-Tahir, who addressed the national legislative body on Wednesday, predicted that the new cabinet will be more effective than the previous one, pointing that the ruling National Congress Party (NCP) would witness changes that match with the state's general reform vision and positively affect the security and economic situation in the country.

However, the Sudanese official did not elaborate on the nature of these changes he was alluding to.

The speaker stressed that the government made huge efforts to achieve the national interests, calling upon political parties to join the government and participate in drafting the new elections law.

The opposition parties call for the formation of a national unity government to run the country during an interim period followed by elections after settlement of regional conflicts and agreement on constitutional principles.

The Sudanese government refuses opposition's demand for the formation of an interim government and parliament, calling on them to prepare themselves to compete freely in 2015 general elections.

In the same context, the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), led by Mohamed Osman Al-Mirghani, announced that the leadership bureau would decide on the recommendation made by the follow-up and evaluation committee for withdrawal from the government.

The DUP's spokesperson, Ibrahim Al-Mirghani, said that the party chairman and the leadership bureau are the only parties who have the right to decide on this issue.

On Tuesday, the state's minister at the ministry of agriculture, Jaafar Ahmed Abdalla, who is also a prominent leader in the DUP, said that their participation in the new government would be based on national agenda and to meet the challenges facing the country. [\(Back to Top\)](#)

### **Netherlands allocating €150 million in debt relief to Sudan in 2014 budget**

*Sudantribune.com* Washington, 04/12/13 - The Dutch government has included a proposal in its 2014 budget to cancel €150 million of Sudan's debt but that is contingent upon fulfilling certain conditions, an official in the Hague told the parliament last week.

The Dutch minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation Lilianne Ploumen told lawmakers that Sudan must first satisfy the requirements set forth by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB).

Ploumen also mentioned progress on Sudan's strategy for poverty reduction as a prerequisite for the debt relief.

"Topics such as peace, security, national unity, rule of law and corruption are also of great importance in a country like Sudan," she added.

The remarks by the minister drew questioning by some lawmakers who argued that Sudan is undeserving of such move given its poor human rights record.

The IMF projects Sudan's debt to hit \$45 billion in 2013 which will comprise 85.8% of its GDP.

South Sudan which split from Sudan in 2011 has yet to agree on what portion of the debt it is willing to take.

Currently the two countries with the assistance of the African Union mediation team are working on pressing creditors to agree to debt relief. [\(Back to Top\)](#)

### **WFP reduces food aid in Congo due to shortage of funds**

*Sudantribune.com* Kinshasha, 04/12/13 - The World Food Programme (WFP) has announced it has been forced to cut food assistance for displaced persons in the North Kivu region of the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) due to a shortage of funds.

"In the last six months funding shortages have meant that WFP has already had to halve the rations distributed to displaced people in North Kivu province, at a time when the overall food security situation is deteriorating in that part of eastern DRC", WFP said on a statement on its website on Tuesday.

The UN agency said the reduction in food rations was "due to serious resource constraints".

Kivu is the most volatile region in eastern Congo, with a cocktail of militia groups that until recently included the defeated M23 rebels.

The agency says it needs \$75 million to continue to meet the humanitarian needs of displaced people in the region.

“To continue its operations in DRC over the next six months, WFP, which is funded entirely by voluntary contributions, urgently needs \$75 million to see it through May 2014”, the agency’s statement said.

According to WFP, 500,000 “food- insecure” people will be affected by the shortages.

“The provision of daily hot meals to thousands of schoolchildren is also in jeopardy, as is life-saving nutritional support to some 180,000 malnourished children, pregnant women and nursing mothers across the country”, the agency said.

“We are very worried about the fate of thousands of people who depend on WFP food assistance”, said Martin Ohlsen, WFP’s representative in DRC. [\(Back to Top\)](#)

### **The quality of institutions and policies in South Sudan**

*By Luka Biong Deng on [Sudantribune.com](#), 04/12/13* - South Sudan, unlike other countries that are still struggling to get accepted to the UN, was unanimously accepted to the UN. Such acceptance came as a result of the long political struggle of the people of South Sudan for their independence but importantly it came as a result of the commitment of the international community to the Sudan Comprehensive Peace Agreement.

Undoubtedly, the birth of this new state came with optimism that South Sudan will not only be a viable state but it will contribute in promoting peace and stability in the region. This optimism is based on the fact that South Sudan stands better chance to succeed because of the strong will of its people and the commitment of the international community to making South Sudan a success story. The real question is whether South Sudan living up to this optimism and putting itself on a path that would minimize the risk of being prone to the traps of conflict, bad governance and economic policies and resource curse?

There is compelling empirical evidence that came with conclusion that the quality of institutions is decisive in determining whether natural resources endowment is a blessing or a curse. As such, the presence of the resource curse is attributed to policy failure and bad institutions. For example the outstanding performance of Botswana as resource rich country is attributed to the presence of good institutions. Also Norway as one of the Europe’s poorest countries in 1900 is now one of the richest after the discovery of large natural resources because of its successful policies and good institutions. There are also examples of resource rich countries that failed to perform well because of weak and dysfunctional institutions such as Nigeria, Venezuela, and Mexico.

The performance of South Sudan as resource-rich country can only be assessed in the context of its institutions and policies. The Country Policy and Institutional Assessment (CPIA) of the World Bank provides the most reliable and robust tool for assessing the quality of institutions and policies of every country. The overall CPIA score of South Sudan (2.1) in 2012 was not only below the average score of Sub-Sahara (3.2) but the lowest score in Africa. In particular, South Sudan has been less performing in economic management, public sector management and institutions clusters. In particular debt policy, monetary and exchange rate policy, revenue mobilization and fiscal policy are the worst performing clusters.

The real question is why South Sudan is performing so poorly in terms of institutions and policies after its independence? I would like to shed some light on the performance of some institutions and quality of some policies adopted after the independence in 2011. The performance of SPLM as a ruling party is important in explaining the poor performance exhibited by the government of South Sudan. The SPLM as the ruling party has not been able to provide guidance for the policies being adopted by the government of South Sudan.

Most of the policies adopted by the government of South Sudan are policies formulated by individuals in various ministries without any political guidance and direction. Even the current constitution of the country was not internalized within the structures of the SPLM before it was passed by the parliament. The SPLM as a ruling party seems to be focusing

more on leadership than providing direction and right policies for the government to meet the aspirations of the people of the South.

It is even not known now whether the SPLM exists as some of its leaders cast doubt with rather conflicting statements on the legitimacy of the current structures of the SPLM. While the SPLM Secretary of Foreign Relations and ironically the Minister of Information confirmed that the structures of the SPLM are null and void as allegedly directed by the Chairman of the SPLM or by an order to be issued, the SPLM Second Deputy Chairperson indicated that the SPLM structures are not dissolved and the long awaited meeting of National Liberation Council will be convened on 9th December. One wonders how such a meeting will take place without the meeting of the SPLM Political Bureau.

Whatever the case, a serious damage has been done to the image of the SPLM as a ruling party that is expected to set a good example in respect of its institutions and constitution. Dissolving the structures of the SPLM will not only be unconstitutional but it will be a political suicide that may create political unrest and instability. With tainted image and the dysfunctional institutions of the SPLM, the people of South Sudan are right to indicate in the opinion poll that their country is not heading to a right direction.

The recent outcry about the devaluation of the currency shows vividly the weak institutions and unstructured decision making process in South Sudan. There is wealth of evidence that suggests the flexible exchange rate policy is the appropriate policy option for the resource-rich countries as that would ameliorate the negative impact of weak fiscal discipline and the volatility of government expenditures that are currently experienced by the economy of the South. It does not require a sophisticated economic reasoning to figure out that the fixed foreign exchange policy adopted by the Central Bank has been hurting the economy. As mentioned earlier, the quality of monetary and exchange rate policy adopted by the Bank is one of the worst performing policies.

In fact this fixed exchange rate system has resulted in well-connected individuals to benefit from the premium between official and market exchange rate and led to a substantial redistribution of oil wealth and rent-seeking. Some reliable sources estimated that what the South is losing from this discrepancy between official and market exchange rates may exceed its aggregate foreign aid and assistance. Although the timing of the decision might have triggered nationalistic concerns, the Bank was right in its much-awaited decision to devalue the currency.

The way the decision of the Bank was reversed raises fundamental question of how institutions function and decisions are made in South Sudan? The Constitution provides for the establishment of the central bank as an independent corporate legal entity responsible for the formulation, conduct and implementation of monetary policy. The Constitution also provides for the establishment of the Board of Directors of the Bank as the highest policy-making body and to be responsible to the President. The wisdom of having central banks as an independent corporate legal entity is to ensure their decisions are guided by rigorous economic analysis and rationale rather than political interests.

Regardless whether the decision of the Bank to devalue the currency was right or wrong, it was unconstitutional to force the Bank to reverse its decision. The Parliament has not only passed the Constitution and the Bank of South Sudan Act that established the Bank but it also approved with two-third majority the appointment of its Governor and two deputy governors. In fact the parliament did not question their competence and expertise when entrusting them to head the Bank. This intervention by the Parliament in the affairs of the Bank raises fundamental question of how will the Bank function in the future as an independent corporate legal entity. The Parliament has almost assumed the role of the Board of Directors of the Bank in formulating monetary policy as mandated by the constitution.

As the issue of exchange rate policy is technical, the parliament would have subjected this issue to an in-depth scrutiny by its specialized committee before taking any decision. It seems the decision making process by the Parliament as provided for in the conduct of

business regulations has not been followed. This reminds me the way the current Speaker was overwhelmingly elected by the Parliament but without adherence to the process provided for in the conduct of the business regulations. As parliament represents the will of the people, it is expected more than any other institutions in South Sudan to uphold constitution, protect institutions and respect of rule of law.

With this account, one is afraid that the Country Policy and Institutional Assessment (CPIA) score of South Sudan will deteriorate further in 2013. The optimism about the future of South Sudan is gradually fading away. The leadership of the SPLM, in the name of the selfless sacrifices of its martyrs, has a national obligation to reverse this trend by upholding the structures and constitution of the SPLM as the basis for consolidating unity and nurturing democratic culture within the party. It is then, the SPLM will be able to take the lead in democratic governance, strengthening of institutions and adopting right policies that will put South Sudan on the path of stability, good governance and prosperity.

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