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Media Monitoring Report

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Highlights

Kiir set up referendum task force

FVP and GoSS President Salva Kiir Mayardit has issued a decree setting up “South Sudan Referendum Task Force” and selected an American company to guide the team on legal matters, *Al-Sahafa* reports. Reportedly, Kiir officially informed the international community, the UN and the World Bank about the formation of the task force.

Meanwhile, the NCP and the SPLM have submitted two separate lists of names to form the South Sudan Referendum Commission.

US envoy Gration to visit Sudan on Tuesday

Al-Rai Al-Aam reports that US envoy Scott Gration is visiting Sudan on Tuesday. Director of America Ambassador Tariq Abu Saleh said Gration, who will arrive in Juba from N’djamena, will hold talks with FVP Salva Kiir Mayardit and senior GoSS officials and then proceed to Southern Kordofan for meeting with state Governor and his deputy before coming to Khartoum for talks with central government officials.

Mbeki meets Libya leader for talks on Darfur

Sudan Tribune website 13/2/10– The Libyan Leader Muammar Kaddafi discussed today Darfur crisis with the former South African President Thabo Mbeki who is the chairman of the African Union High Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP) on Darfur.

Mbeki, accompanied by former Burundi President Pierre Buyoya, who is a committee member, is touring a number of African countries to get their support for a roadmap he proposed to resolve the seven year conflict in Darfur that was endorsed by the AU. He was in Kenya and Egypt last week for the same purpose.

Both men presented “a detailed report to the Libyan leader on the committee’s work to bring about peace in Darfur in the context of its keenness to consult Kaddafi who sponsors peace and security in the Community of Sahel-Saharan States (Cen-Sad)”.

The Libyan media reported that Kaddafi stressed the committee’s role and thanked them for their efforts.

Among the major initiatives contained in the Darfur report is the establishment of a hybrid court that contains Sudanese and foreign judges to prosecute war crime suspects.

The panel did not make a formal opinion on the indictment though it said that the ICC cannot handle all Darfur war crime perpetrators.

Darfuri student tortured, killed as vote campaign opens

Reuters 12/2/10 - Students in Khartoum accused Sudanese authorities of abducting, torturing and killing a colleague from Darfur, as tensions rose a day before campaigns opened for the first democratic elections in 24 years.

Police who delivered the body to a morgue said they had found the body of Mohamed Musa, 23, on the street and denied he had ever been arrested.

"We consider this to be a normal crime," a security source said, adding four other Darfuri students had been arrested on Thursday at the morgue for causing "public disorder".

Dozens of Khartoum University students from Darfur gathered in the morgue to mourn on Friday. Witnesses who had seen the body said his hands were burned, his head and body beaten, cut and swollen and his clothes soaked in blood.

"He was taken from the gate of the university by a group of men in a pick-up truck," Darfuri student Mutasim Boker told Reuters.

He blamed the ruling National Congress Party (NCP) for the abduction on Wednesday, saying they were always targeting and beating Darfuri students. "This was definitely NCP ... this is not the first time they have targeted us."

Another Darfuri student at the morgue, Mohamed Adam, told Reuters he thought an anonymous call informing students that the body was in the morgue had come from government authorities.

"His hands were burnt, his skin cut up ... and his clothes soaked in blood," he said, after seeing the body.

A correspondent for the Sudanese website Sudaneseonline.com, Nagla Seedahmed, said police had tried to arrest her at the morgue and confiscate a photo she had of the body.

"This raises a lot of doubts on how we are going to have a free and fair election," said leading presidential candidate Yasir Arman, from the former southern rebel Sudan Liberation People's Movement (SPLM), who visited the morgue.

He said the murder echoed dozens of similar crimes by the security services, urged an investigation and said a law passed by the NCP last year giving the security organs wide powers of arrest, search and seizure must be repealed.

"It is clear now that this security law threatens the democratic process and the elections and it should be repealed."

U.N .-appointed expert on human rights Mohamed Chande Othman this week expressed concern at such laws ahead of April's complex elections. On Saturday the official campaign period opens.

Sudan's opposition says April's elections cannot be credible while the seven-year-old conflict continues in the vast western region of Darfur. It remains under emergency law, with sporadic clashes and more than 2 million people languishing in camps.

Darfur's rebel Sudan Liberation Movement said the government had launched another heavy two-pronged attack in the Jabel Marra region on Friday, trying to gain control over the rebel-held area and derail peace talks in Qatar. Sudan's army denied it had attacked rebels in Darfur.

VP Taha seeking President Mubarak's forgiveness

Rai Al-Shaab reports Assistant SG of the Turabi-led Popular Congress Party (PCP) Ibrahim Al-Sanousi as saying that VP Ali Osman Taha is seeking President Hosni Mubarak's forgiveness for his involvement in an attempt on his life. Al-Sanousi said whenever Taha visits Cairo, a meeting with President Mubarak is his main focus. He claimed that the assassins were trained

in Khartoum and sent to Addis Ababa to kill Mubarak but after the failure of the assassination attempt some of the assassins who returned to Khartoum were liquidated.

Al-Sanousi said the assassination attempt was planned without the knowledge of both Omer Al-Bashir and Hassan Al-Turabi but the then NISS Director General was aware about it.

Apparently, Al-Sanousi made the remarks in reaction to statements by VP Ali Osman Taha in Cairo where he accused Al-Turabi and his party of massacring the people of Darfur. "If what you (Taha) are saying is true why do not you bring the killers of the Darfur people to the book," he said. "If your claim that the PCP and Al-Turabi are responsible for bloodbath in Darfur why their names are not on the ICC list," he added.

Al-Sanousi said Al-Bashir and Al-Turabi parted ways in 1999 and the Darfur insurgency erupted in 2003 so Al-Turabi and his party can not be responsible for the carnage.

UXO threat to development, elections

IRIN 11/2/10 - Major routes in Sudan have been cleared of landmines and unexploded ordnance (UXOs) but there are still areas where the devices threaten civilians, as well as affecting aid and development efforts, say officials.

"The existence of landmines... continues to hamper the delivery of humanitarian aid and the return of refugees and internally displaced people (IDPs)," Margaret Mathew Mathiang, deputy chair of the South Sudan De-mining Authority (SSDA) in Juba, told IRIN.

At least 1,903,729 returnees were projected to return home in Southern Sudan by June 2009, according to the International Organization for Migration.

"The implementation of humanitarian and development projects in this crucial post-war period is also affected. For instance, three bulldozers were blown up [along] a certain road in Eastern Equatoria [while] on a road expansion mission," Mathiang said.

Most of the mines and UXOs were planted by the Southern Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) and the Sudan national army during a 21-year civil war, which ended with the 2005 signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA).

While the clearing of some major routes has improved access, Mathiang expressed concern that unexploded bombs may hinder the smooth implementation of the CPA.

"[There] are still some locations, which were not reached during the census exercise," she said, adding that abandoned roads in these areas were suspected of being landmine-infested.

"The same obstacle might hinder some people's ability to move from the remote areas to voting centre[s] come the next election [unless] efforts are made to secure the safety of those roads."

The census was a key prerequisite for holding elections, scheduled for April, as dictated in the CPA.

At least 4,263 landmine victims have been recorded by the UN Mine Action Service (UNMAS) since 2002. UNMAS programme officer Takuto Kubo told IRIN that the actual number of landmine/UXO victims and survivors was likely to be higher.

Central Equatoria State, home to the capital, Juba, is among the most contaminated regions, while in the north, South Kordofan and Kassala states are most affected.

Since 2002, at least 31,642km of roads have been cleared, verified and opened, and thousands of anti-personnel and anti-vehicle mines destroyed, as well as 847,263 UXOs and 1,147,671 small arms ammunition, said Kubo.

All major routes in North and Southern Sudan have been cleared and verified safe, with about 70 percent of the identified dangerous areas (minefields, UXO contaminated areas, or a combination), being cleared, he added.

But challenges remain, such as insecurity and inadequate funding. "[The] security situation in some parts of Southern Sudan and Darfur are also challenges to our operations," he said.

Recent violence in some Southern regions left at least 2,500 people dead and 350,000 displaced, according to aid agencies.

UNMAS Director, Maxwell Kerley, on 28 January told a media briefing there was no evidence of new mines being laid in Sudan.

"However, all conflicts result in increased contamination by explosive remnants of war and the ongoing conflicts through various parts of Sudan means that contamination is continuing," Kerley said.

According to Kubo of UNMAS, most dangerous areas in the North and South will be cleared by mid-2011 with adequate funding. The residual threats would be dealt with by national capacities.

Mathiang of SSDA agreed that national demining organizations needed more funding.

"Most of our international partners take a stand-down period of three months during the rainy season. This makes the process slow," she said. "However, the national [demining] organizations don't have [a] stand-down period and can therefore be a good boost to demining if well supported."

More community awareness creation is also needed. "In some locations, communities don't cooperate and remove [mine] danger signs that are placed as marks," she said.

She added: "The Ministry of Roads could budget for mine clearance ... since they have road expansion plans; the Ministry of Education could budget for the inclusion of mine-risk education in the curriculum and other teaching aids," she said.

GoSS approves \$10 billion infrastructure project

The GoSS Council of Ministers sitting last Friday unanimously approved the New South Sudan Initiative Housing Project at the tune of \$10.1 billion, *Khartoum Monitor* reports.

The project, once implemented, will bolster the region's economy and provide employment opportunities for the local as well as migratory skilled workers and would encourage investors, officials say. Abu-Malek Companies and Agencies (AMCA), UAS-Canada and the GoSS are the primary incorporators of this project that would "introduce 14 modern cities across the country and have a total of 147,000 housing units available for nationals," said an AMCA press release.

Ban Ki-Moon's stand on Sudan

Editorial by the Punch newspaper (Nigeria) Published: Sunday, 14 Feb 2010

With a history of civil war spanning 21 years and a poorly implemented Comprehensive Peace

Agreement that has failed to stem the systematic decimation and mass displacement of its minority population, Sudan is in desperate need of a mechanism for authentication of the wishes of its disparate ethnic nationalities regarding their continued co-existence in a single political entity.

It was in recognition of that need that facilitators of the peace process in Sudan incorporated a clause for a referendum into the CPA that was signed in Nairobi, Kenya, on January 9, 2005 and witnessed by representatives of foreign governments, including the then United States Secretary of State, General Colin Powell.

The international community, so much appalled by the unending atrocities against the defenseless people of Darfur Province, is eagerly awaiting that moment of decision, the referendum, slated for January, 2011 during which southern Sudanese will vote on whether to remain in one country with their northern compatriots or to have self-government in a new independent nation.

Curiously, the United Nations Secretary General, Ban Ki-Moon, is opposed to the disintegration of the country and, by implication, the free expression of the people's wishes through the referendum. He insists rather illogically that Sudan must remain one indivisible entity irrespective of the material facts. In Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, where he attended the 14th African Union Summit, he declared: "The UN has a big responsibility with the AU to maintain peace in Sudan and make unity attractive... We'll work hard to avoid a possible secession."

It is a puzzle that Mr. Ki-Moon has chosen to view Sudan as exempt from the general rule that allows incompatible ethnic or geopolitical blocs to use orderly means to move apart in order to ensure peace. The right of the oppressed people to self-determination is an ideal regularly propagated by the UN that he leads. From central, eastern and southern Europe to east and south east Asia are examples of countries that split into two or more sovereign states between 1948 and 2005, some with active support of the world body.

North Korea and South Korea, for instance, were together as a kingdom, a Japanese dependency between 1910 and 1945, but became separate nations in 1948. Singapore was part of the Federation of Malaysia, alongside Malaya, Sabah and Sarawak, until 1965. Also, what we have presently as Czech Republic and Slovakia were constituents of what used to be Czechoslovakia between 1918 and 1992. In each case, the wishes of the people prevailed and no external agency intervened to dictate otherwise as Mr. Ki-Moon seeks to do in Sudan.

With religion and ethnicity manifesting as insurmountable barriers and precipitating a civil war that had claimed about 2 million lives, Sudan's Arab North and black African South have more legitimate reasons to reconsider their union than any of the afore-mentioned societies ever had. Bitterness has, in fact, been exacerbated by the inequitable distribution of revenues derived from the rich oil reserves of the South.

In circumstances of that nature, the least that is expected of the UN is to have its operational arms adequately prepared for effective monitoring of the January 2011 referendum in the South. Recourse to the kind of propaganda and meddling intended is utterly unnecessary. If the exercise is free of manipulative acts, then its outcome should become part of the required roadmap to the enthronement of enduring peace.

The UN scribe should not presume to be working for the good of Sudan's oppressed ethnic minority when he openly aligns himself with AU leaders who may also be guilty of the very atrocities for which Khartoum has been repeatedly indicted by the International Criminal Court

at The Hague. Cases of war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide have been established against Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir. Let those who have survived decades of atrocities have the freedom to determine their political future, how they want to organize themselves politically and pursue their own development aspirations.

Elections Special:

Sudan presidential elections campaign kicks off

Local dailies report that Sudan presidential contestants' campaigns kicked off yesterday. Addressing a huge rally of supporters, NCP candidate Omer Al-Bashir promised free and fair elections, citing the achievements made by his Government.

According to **Al-Sahafa**, Umma Party candidate Sadiq Al-Mahdi who also launched his elections campaign by addressing a rally in Omdurman yesterday, lashed out against the Government and the NCP accusing them of seeking to destroy some political parties. Al-Mahdi appeared confident of winning upcoming elections.

Al-Intibaha reports Al-Bashir promised to respect the choice of the southern Sudanese, saying "secession does not mean the South and the North will be enemies". Reportedly, 4 billion Sudanese pounds have been donated by pro-party elements in support for Al-Bashir elections campaign.

Sudan Tribune website (13/2/10) reported that the NCP presidential nominee Omer Al-Bashir has pledged to step down "peacefully" should he lose in the elections scheduled for next April.

Addressing thousands of the NCP supporters in Al-Hilal stadium in the twin capital city of Omdurman, Bashir vowed to conduct free and fair elections and urged other contestants to refrain from "rhetoric and racism" and reject violence during the campaign which officially started today.

"No one forced these elections on us," Bashir said. "We want fair elections, we want clean elections."

"They [opposition] have announced that they are in alliance to win the elections and if they can convince people to vote for them, I will hand over the rule to them peacefully" he added.

In a lengthy speech, Bashir recounted the achievements since he took power through a military coup in 1989, particularly in services and development projects and peace agreements signed throughout the country.

He spoke of the devastated economy his government inherited at the time. Gasoline oil was rationed, the army had no weapons or ammunition, people could not find bread to eat and education was a luxury of the rich, he said.

"Today in every city there is a university or higher education institute. Today in every village in Sudan there is a university graduate," Bashir said.

"Where is the ethnic cleansing? Where is the genocide?" Bashir asked, adding he would make peace in Sudan's west after seven years of rebellion with anyone who was willing to sign.

The Sudanese president reiterated his position that he would respect the choice the Southern

Sudanese would make in the 2011 referendum for self determination.

"If our brothers in the south...decide on independence, we will be their closest neighbors and...we will stand by their side," Bashir said.

Most analysts expect a landslide vote by Southern Sudanese in favor of independence given deep rooted mistrust after more than two decades of civil war with the mainly Arab and Muslim north.

AFP 13/2/10 reported that presidential hopefuls in Sudan, Africa's largest country, began campaigning on Saturday for the first multi-party poll since 1986, with the nation wondering whether an end might be in sight to incumbent Omar Al-Bashir's many years in power.

After being pushed back twice, the presidential election is set to take place on April 11, alongside legislative and regional polls.

Bashir, who seized power in 1989 with support from Islamists, is facing off against 11 other hopefuls, including the first woman ever to aspire to the presidency, and the two-time former prime minister he ousted.

Al-Bashir's main challengers in the race are Yasser Arman, a secular Muslim from north Sudan representing the ex-rebel Sudan People's Liberation Movement, and Sadiq al-Mahdi, the premier whom Bashir ousted and who now leads the influential Islamist Umma Party. Related article: [Twelve candidates contest Sudan presidency](#)

Arman, 49, is counting on the solid support of the secessionist south Sudan, while the 74-year-old Mahdi's main support base is in the north.

But in a country without opinion polls and which has not held real elections in decades, the outcome of the polls is anybody's guess. The only fear of the opposition is that Al-Bashir will use the levers of power, including the security forces, to skew things his way.

Rallies have been prohibited by Al-Bashir's Government, but the opposition plans to test the waters during the month of campaigning to try and stage one anyway in Omdurman, the twin city of Khartoum.

"Everyone is wondering which side will win," said Mohammed, a 30-year-old man sipping tea in a run-down improvised cafe shaded by a tree.

"Bashir is very popular in Khartoum, but in the other regions I am not so certain."

Emerging from a devastating 22-year civil war that pit the dominant Muslim and Arab northern Sudanese against the largely non-Muslim, non-Arab southerners, even the most basic services are lacking in much of the remote and underdeveloped regions of this country of more than 41 million people.

Simply getting the voting materials out across the vast region is a major logistical challenge, and will require the use of UN helicopters.

Concern also is high at the low rates of voter education in a region that is largely illiterate, and facing an incredibly complex poll.

There will be extra votes for a president in the secessionist south, which will decide on independence in a referendum next year.

Because regional and legislative polls are being held simultaneously with the presidential election, voters will be casting 12 ballots -- an extremely complicated process in a country left in ruins by the long years of war.

In addition, tensions are high with several influential SPLM figures running as independents after rejecting their party's official choice of candidate.

Many Sudanese fear that political rivalries will spill over into violence, sparking off fresh clashes between different ethnic groups.

Meanwhile, **Reuters** report that former US President Carter said on Thursday while in Juba that Bashir was unlikely to win outright in the elections, forcing a second round of voting. His Carter Centre is the only monitoring mission to have followed Sudan's elections from the outset, but will be joined for the April polling by observer teams from the European Union, the African Union, China and others. "If no one gets an absolute majority, then there will be a run-off election in May and I think that's a high likelihood," Carter told reporters during a trip to south Sudan. "We don't know yet whether al-Bashir can get a majority in the beginning round. If not, which I think is likely, there will be a run-off between him and the second person who gets the most votes," Carter added. If no presidential candidate gets the more than 50 percent of votes needed to win, the two top candidates will face off in a second round on May 10-11.

Arman sets to visit Aweil for talks with independent candidates

Sudan Tribune website 12/02/10 - Yassir Saeed Arman, SPLM candidate for the President of the Republic, is set to head a high level delegation including Foreign Minister Deng Alor and Madam Rebecca Nyandeng for talks with senior members and key independent candidates in Aweil, Northern Bahr-el-Ghazal State,

Arman's visit is however criticised by the supporters of independent candidates saying he would definitely support the incumbent Governor having received donation of one billion Sudanese from the state administration for his political campaign.

"The coming of Yassir Arman will not bring any difference. They are people of the same interest. Their interests identifies themselves very well and that was why Governor Malong was quick to donate that huge amount to support his campaign because he knew Arman and Pagan are at the apex of leadership to defend him at the Political Bureau," said Honorable Deng Athian from Aweil town.

Northern Bahr-el-Ghazal State was the first southern state in January to donate a significant amount of money to fund Arman's campaign.

Amum accepts to resign if independent candidates drop off race

Sudan Tribune website 13/2/10 — Pagan Amum, SPLM Secretary General said he is recognising and accepting voices calling on him to consider resignation from his post if independent candidates drop off intentions to contest upcoming April elections in favor of official nominees.

"I respect voices of the majority members of the SPLM and will not have problem stepping down from my position if this is what they think as solution," he said. He also expressed his readiness to resign if independent candidates stop from contesting against SPLM runners.

"I am ready to resign if they are ready to stop from contesting independently and with

assurances of having abandoned ideas that divides our party," he adds...

NEC issues campaigning rules and regulations

In an attempt to offer electoral nominees free and fair campaigning platforms, the NEC has issued a detailed list of rules and regulations that all political parties and independent candidates must adhere to, *The Citizen* reports.

The NEC will monitor campaign budgets, unlawful use of state resources and forbid any instigation of violence and defamatory campaigns against the opposition. Financial transparency for campaigns at all levels will be applicable for campaigns conducted during the general elections and in the southern Sudan referendum in 2011.

The guidelines stipulate that no political party or contesting candidate is to utilise state resources with the exception of national media networks. On Friday Sudan Radio and Television Corporation announced the introduction of two daily elections programs starting on 15/02/10.