

26 April 2009

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Media Monitoring Report

United Nations Mission in Sudan/ Public Information Office

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Address: UNMIS Headquarters, P.O. Box 69, Ibeid Khatim St, Khartoum 11111, SUDAN
Phone: (+249-1) 8708 6000 - Fax: (+249-1) 8708 6200

Highlights

Local Arabic and English Language Press

Census results to be announced tomorrow

The Presidency's Population Census Council is to meet today to endorse the final census results which will be announced tomorrow, reports **Al-Rai Al-Aam**. Census Monitoring and Follow-up Committee Chairman Abdul Bagi Al-Gailani said there were no differences or obstacles that might defer their announcement tomorrow.

Miraya reports the National Elections Commission hinted that it might revise the electoral timetables if the announcement of the 5th population census results is delayed.

Meanwhile, FVP and SPLM Chairman Salva Kiir has instructed the SPLM Northern Sector official Yassir Arman to register SPLM with the Registrar of Political Parties within 72 hours.

SPLM threatens to boycott elections, anticipates further deferment

Al-Sahafa 25/4/09 reported the SPLM has voiced concerns over census results and has threatened to boycott elections if the results proved questionable. SPLM Secretary General Pagan Amum said it was unlikely that elections would take place in February and anticipated further deferment, citing pending North-South border demarcation issue and delay of census results. "NCP is delaying the announcement of the census results for fear of a reaction," Amum told a symposium organized by SPLM cadres in The Hague yesterday. GoSS VP Riek Machar, who also addressed the symposium, said SPLM would launch a 3-points initiative to resolve the Darfur crisis, adding the proposal would be shared with the international community, Sudan government and the Darfur movements. Machar has also announced GoSS offer to host Darfur peace talks in Juba.

GoSS seeking US guarantees to implement Abyei arbitration decision

Al-Sahafa 25/4/09 reported GoSS Presidency Affairs Minister Luka Biong yesterday left The Hague for US to seek guarantees and mechanisms to ensure implementation of a possible Abyei arbitration decision. "It is likely that the government will reject the arbitration tribunal ruling," he said. "Rejecting the decision by either side will lead to a crisis and will deal a major blow to the CPA," he added. Member of the SPLM delegation to The Hague Edward Lino has also shared Luka Biong's fears that the NCP might reject the arbitration decision, citing Sudan Government representative Al-Dirdiri Mohamed Ahmed's statements which, he said, lacked any reference to the NCP commitment to the expected Abyei arbitration decision.

Israel admits bombing convoy in eastern Sudan – Al-Bashir

Al-Rai Al-Aam reports President Al-Bashir said he was proud of being a soldier, saying the army has been fighting rebels for long years to bar them from coming to power. "I am a soldier and I am proud of that. Politics is imposed on me," President Al-Bashir told **Al-Jazeera TV**. He said Darfur witnessed excesses and grievances but "they are not as serious as the hostile media is trying to portray".

Regarding the trucks convoy bombing in eastern Sudan, he said only one person survived the attack and some people were injured. He said the government's initial report indicated that the bombing was carried out by US aircraft but later Israel claimed responsibility of the attack.

On elections, he said he had requested the NCP not to nominate him as a presidential candidate and the request was backed by some NCP leaders but ultimately the motion was defeated.

He said Sudan was facing a danger and that the media was being used as a tool to carry out hostile activity. "We are not sensitive to criticism, but we will not tolerate incitement to sedition," he said.

NISS bans Al-Wifaq daily

Quoting the Sudanese Media Centre, *Al-Rai Al-Aam* reports NISS DG Gen. Salah Gosh has ordered the shut down of *Al-Wifaq* daily newspaper and also ordered its Editor-in-Chief Isaac Ahmed Fadullala to stop writing. The paper is accused of running a seditious editorial in its yesterday's issue. According to an informed source, the ban is effective as from today until further notice.

According to *Reuters*, Fadullalah, in the editorial has called for the killing of a senior official from the Sudan People's Liberation Movement, Yasir Arman, because of recent comments he made during a parliamentary discussion on a criminal law. Newspaper reports said Arman had objected to non-Muslims being subjected to Sharia law, specifically in reference to flogging as punishment for adultery.

Senator Kerry paints different Darfur picture back home

Informed US sources revealed that Senator John Kerry was back home with a different picture of the situation in Darfur, saying "it is not as bad as portrayed by the media" reports *Al-Intibaha*.

Also, the paper reports that the former US envoy to Sudan Andrew Natsios said the Darfur crisis was likely to be resolved after the South Sudan had seceded. Meanwhile, the present US envoy to Sudan, Scott Gration is due in Khartoum on May 3 to convey proposals relating to the upgrading of the diplomatic representation between the two countries, lifting of economic sanctions and removal of Sudan from the list of states sponsoring terrorism. Natsios told a symposium in Washington that the US and the international community were seeking to ensure peaceful session of the Southern Sudan by 2011 to be followed by the resolution of the Darfur crisis. He indicated that Obama Administration was facing growing opposition from the Congress over intent to engage Khartoum in Dialogue.

However, *Al-Akhbar* reports Sudan government has downplayed Natsios' statements and described them as "personal". Presidential Media Adviser Mahgoub Fadul said Natsios' statement about the resolution of the Darfur crisis after the Southern Sudan has seceded was personal view. "The government will welcome whatever choice made by the southern Sudanese," he said.

Serious contradictions between the Justice Ministry and the Parliament

Al-Akhbar reports Justice Minister Abdul Basit Sabdarat as saying that proposed amendments in the criminal code have been submitted to the National Assembly for debate, noting that the Parliament was currently deliberating proposed amendments for the Criminal Procedures Act. Sabdarat said he was astonished by reports of amendments in the Criminal Act being deliberated by the Parliament.

However, the National Assembly's Justice and Legislation Committee Chairman Ghazi Suleiman said the National Assembly was currently deliberating proposed amendments for the Criminal Act.

Websites/International News Coverage

NCP to hold series of talks with political parties

Sudanese Media Centre 25/4/09 - NCP plans to hold a series of meetings with political parties which are not members of the government of national unity. The purpose of the meeting is to exchange views on how to make Doha talks between the government and Darfur rebels a successful one. NCP Secretary for Mobilization Ibrahim Ghandour told (**smc**) that the proposed meetings would take place in the context of joint committees formed with political parties. He added that his party wants to conduct discussion with political parties to consolidate consensus on national issues and to give Doha talks the required political push.

Akol and Ghazi to be interrogated - Arman

Miraya FM 25/4/09 - SPLM Deputy Secretary General for Northern Sector, Yassir Arman, confirmed that the party's leading members, Lam Akol and Ghazi Suleiman, will soon be notified with the Political Bureau's decision to probe them.

Speaking to **Miraya FM** Arman said the investigation committee would submit its recommendations to the movement's Political Bureau immediately after the completion of its work. He also denied accusations of financial and administrative corruptions in the Northern Sector, adding Akol and Suleiman are trying to implement their own agenda which does not fall in the interest of the SPLM.

While speaking to **Miraya FM**, Mr. Akol said he discussed the issue of this group with the party's Chairman, Salva Kiir Mayardit, but the group managed to coax Kiir and controlled the situation from within, as he put it.

Mr. Kol pointed that he has not been officially informed of an investigation committee formed to probe him.

In a separate issue, Mr. Akol stated he is not in charge of sensitive and important files at the authority level, which does not mean he is marginalized within the movement's other institutions.

He further said he plans to run in the upcoming elections for any position except that of President of the Republic.

It is worth mentioning that earlier, the SPLM insisted on investigating Lam Akol and Ghazi Suleiman on the pretext of departing from the movement's official line following their declaration of support for President of the Republic, Omer Al Bashir concerning the International Criminal Court crisis.

Sudan's Muslim Scholars loyal to NCP - Arman

Miraya FM 25/4/09 - The Deputy Secretary General of SPLM for Northern Sector Yassir Arman has strongly criticized the Sudan's Muslim Scholars saying they are affiliated to the National Congress Party.

This came in reaction to the Scholars' call to put him on trial. Mr. Arman told **Miraya FM** that the concerned Scholars are not recognized, pointing that they only execute agendas of the NCP but not of Muslims. Yasser Arman reiterated that the punishment of flogging for adultery should not apply to Non-Muslims as stipulated in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement.

Humanitarian Affairs Ministry denies news INGO admission

Sudanese Media Centre, 25/4/09 - The Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs denies knowledge that new INGOs have been allowed to enter into the country. Reliable sources in the Ministry told (**smc**) according to the Presidency's instructions, humanitarian work would be transferred to the national organizations under the "Sudanization" program.

Lakes governor in heated talks with Warap state over mass rape incident

Sudan Tribune website, 25/4/09 (RUMBEEK) - The Lakes state Governor, Lieutenant General Daniel Awet Akot, traveled to Tonj South County of Warap state on Friday to lobby the state authority over a rape crisis that occurred last Tuesday at a rural village of Agugi for Tonj South County of Warap state.

Reportedly, Gok clan youth of Lakes State on Tuesday raped twenty-eight women and girls from the Bongo community, one of whom died, so Lakes officials are trying to assert their authority in the area until local authorities bring the accused youth to face justice.

Governor Awet was escorted by advisors comprising the gender advisor, security advisor and political advisor, together with the commissioners of two counties bordering Warap — Rumbek North County (Maper) and Cueibet County.

Teams from both Warap and Lakes state governments walked to Agugi village where the rape had taken place to talk to rape victims over there, said a source

Lakes State SPLM Secretary Samuel Mathiang Keer has strongly condemned the rape and seriously assured that the state executive will take more steps to bring accused youth to face justice and also has warned that the SPLM party will take this case ahead as a party case if the state executive fails.

In a separate incident, two friendly groups belonging to Panyon clans took revenge on Friday at a cattle camp called Aleek leaving two people dead from both sides. The SPLM party official also condemned this revenge act carried out by Panguetkor against Pam-many clan.

Violence struck again Friday, when Warap state youth of Luac attacked Rumbek North County of Lakes, resulting in 40 people wounded and seven people dead as a result of the assault while vast numbers of cows were taken with the raiders from Warap.

Thereafter, active youth of Pakam in Rumbek North County (Maper) are still running after them to get back their cattle. "However, elders said it is too late to return back those cows," said a Lakes state lawmaker, Hon. Manyiel Ater. Nevertheless, Warap state authorities seem not to be happy with the incident, said a government official of Warap.

Clans struck across state lines in late March as well, when youth of the Cueibet Gok clan launched a flashpoint assault into Warap territories to a place called Kolkou and Manyang-yic. The unexpected attack came after a conference in Cueibet County on March 20 at which members of parliament from each of the two states signed a framework for peace for two the states.

Child abduction breaks history - Jonglei State

Sudan Tribune website, 25/4/09 (BOR TOWN) — Three children, including a two-month old girl, are abducted at Panpandiar, the SPLA headquarters in Jonglei State, officials say. The armed gunmen killed three mothers in the abduction ever known to involve youngest kids on

Thursday, April 23. Panpandiar is seventeen kilometers on Bor – Juba road.

Bor County's Kolnyang Payam Civil Administrator Malith Manguk told reporters at Bor Civil Hospital on Saturday that the incident was a sign that Murle atrocities are totally inhuman.

One of the children – 5 months old girl bearing wounds on her left leg and arm, was abandoned by the abductors on continuously yelling and later found by men trying to rescue the children. She is being nursed of the injuries at Bor Civil Hospital. Her mother was also killed. The other two girls, one two-months-old kid and other two-years-old, remain at large.

Flanked by area Member of Parliament at Jonglei Assembly Hon. Ezra Mayom Ngok, Mr. Malith says the latest incident is alarming.

"The people of Southern Sudan and the international community can prove beyond doubt that this [Abduction] is totally inhuman," he said referring to the abduction of youngest kids.

Child abduction is a common occurrence in Jonglei State and Murle tribesmen are widely accused by neighboring communities. Murle also claim they sometimes buy children which is the verification that human remain a commodity in Jonglei state; either by abduction or the former.

Peter Crowley, the Director of UNICEF, South Sudan Program visited Jonglei this April and voiced concern about the raging insecurity and children safety. The government of the State represented by Deputy Governor Hussein Mar then says forceful disarmament is the only way out; a method opposed by Human Rights groups.

UN warning about Darfur is “a big lie:” - Sudan envoy

Reuters, 23/4/09 - The United Nations was lying when it said at least 1 million people in Sudan's conflict-torn Darfur region were in serious danger due to the expulsion of some foreign aid organizations, Sudan's U.N. envoy said on Thursday.

In a recent report to the U.N. Security Council, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon warned that the decision to expel 13 foreign and three domestic humanitarian aid organizations had put "over 1 million people at life-threatening risk" in Darfur.

Sudan's U.N. ambassador, Abdalmahmoud Abdalhaleem, dismissed the report. "It's a big lie," he told reporters when asked about Ban's estimate. "They are very good at dramatizing things. You will never find a report coming out of this body saying something positive about the situation." He said there were no problems in Darfur and that "everything is positive." "There is now calm in Darfur," Abdalhaleem said. "No starvation." The United Nations has said the expelled aid groups accounted for more than half of the aid distribution capacity in Darfur. That, Abdalhaleem said, was another "big lie." "The volume is 4.7 percent," he said, referring to the amount of aid the 16 groups were responsible for.

A joint U.N.-Sudanese assessment of the situation in Darfur found that the removal of the aid personnel there had created a gap in the delivery of supplies and services across Darfur, an area roughly the size of France.

The Sudanese envoy said other aid agencies that were committed to humanitarian ideals were welcome to come to Darfur to help fill the aid distribution gap. Khartoum dailies also widely circulated the Ambassador's remarks.

Parties close arguments at Hague over Abyei.

Sudan Tribune website,24/4/09 – Debate ended Thursday in the arbitration case over the disputed Abyei region after heated exchange in which lawyers presented widely different interpretations of the evidence and treaty at issue. Lawyers representing the Sudan People's Liberation Movement and the Government of Sudan, presented witnesses and other evidence Tuesday and Wednesday on the delimitation of the boundary for the region, with vast areas being contested between the two claimants.

The five-member tribunal will make a decision within 90 days, either to validate the Abyei Boundary Commission (ABC) whose ruling had been rejected by the Government of Sudan, or reject the ABC for exceeding its mandate, and hence delimit a new boundary. "We have every confidence in them," Minister for Presidential Affairs Luka Biong Deng (SPLM) said of the judges, in a phone interview Wednesday with Sudan Tribune.

"The underlying issue is whether the arbitral tribunal (the ABC) exceeded or failed to exercise the authority that the parties granted to it," said Alain Pellet, representing the Government of Sudan during the concluding session yesterday.

Minister Luka Biong noted that the arbitration itself was "a recognition that we have failed to implement the very agreement that we signed; a recognition that as Sudanese we have failed to find even a mechanism to implement the provisions of the CPA; a recognition that we can not actually provide justice and peace to our people."

Ultimately, if the tribunal chooses to validate the boundary report of the ABC experts, then it will not have to demarcate anything itself. This clearly was the rhetorical aim of Gary Born's final presentation to the judges.

Born characterized the whole ABC process as "a striking example of how internal dispute resolution should work," also recalling that at no point during the ABC process had the government objected to the composition of the panel of experts nor to their work, and had solemnly committed to abide by their determination.

The lawyer, whose work elicited considerable satisfaction from Luka Biong, lauded the ABC experts for producing "an impressive report," which "deserves our respect and our honour."

On the contrary, Pellet belittled the ABC report for the manner in which it divided the Abyei area's vast, disputed grasslands where nomads had allegedly exercised either primary, secondary, or equal rights to grazing, water points and transit routes. He criticized the experts for making a "pseudo-legal decision" based on fabricated principles of equitable distribution of secondary rights.

At the close of the session, Ambassador Dirdeiry Mohamed Ahmed for the government and SPLM Deputy Chairman Riak Machar thanked the tribunal.

Machar said, "The SPLM/A wants to affirm to this Tribunal its commitment to implement your decision and hopes that the Government of Sudan will also honor its commitment to implement your final award."

Paris talks don't budge Sudan on aid groups

AP 23/4/09 - French and British negotiators failed at talks this week to persuade Sudan to allow expelled aid groups back into Darfur, officials said Thursday.

"These NGOs are not going to be let back into Sudan," Nafie Ali Nafie, adviser to President Omar al-Bashir on Darfur issues, said on France-24 television Thursday.

French and British diplomats met on Tuesday with a Sudanese delegation in Paris to discuss the humanitarian situation in the western Darfur region and the Sudanese peace process. The European officials expressed concern about worsening conditions for refugees and urged Sudan to allow 16 foreign and local aid groups back into Darfur, according to the French Foreign Ministry.

"We have huge evidence that (the aid groups) have been messing around with our interests and security," he Nafie.

"We don't see any good reasons whatsoever for the groups to be a point of difference ... between us and other countries," Nafie said.

Nafie insisted that the aid groups remaining in the region were sufficient to take care of refugees' needs.

A French diplomat said that despite hopes for progress, this week's talks produced no breakthroughs and that the Sudanese delegation stuck to the government's long-held positions on aid groups and other issues. The diplomat spoke on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the closed-door discussions.

The failure of this week's talks is a frustration for France, which has played an active role in diplomatic efforts with Sudan over Darfur

Yasser Amram receives death threats over adultery bill

*(Dailies/Website)*24/4/09— The head of the largest opposition blocs in the Sudanese National Assembly came under fire after a stand-off over legislation setting the penalties for adultery.

The debate over draft criminal law has bitterly divided the legislature, partly because the adultery legislation is directly linked to provisions of Shari'a Islamic law.

Yasser Arman, chairman of Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) caucus in the parliament, objected to the Shari'a provisions included in the draft law on adultery during a Tuesday session of parliament.

Arman was articulating the position of the SPLM, which believes that Shari'a law should not apply to non-Muslims.

Arman said that "some different societies who may not see adultery as a crime".

The SPLM official was interrupted by some legislators and sharp exchanges took place with pro-government parliamentarians. He described as those opposed to his views as "an act of terrorizing".

The head of the ruling National Congress Party (NCP) bloc Ghazi Salah Al-Deen said that adultery is a crime for Muslims and tribal traditions.

"Any political argument put forward by any member or political party we are ready for it" Al-Deen said.

The adultery crime under the new law is punishable by stoning to death for married males or females and 100 lashes for non-married individuals.

Since the parliament debate, pro-government media reports have implied that Arman, who is himself a Muslim, is guilty of apostasy — a crime punishable by death under Sudanese law.

"This now has created a very bad position for Yasser. He is being terrorized right now in Khartoum," said Ruben Marial Benjamin, a political affairs officer at the Government of Southern Sudan Mission, in Washington.

"His life is being threatened by the hardliners in the NCP," said Benjamin, referring to the ruling National Congress Party.

Benjamin, who is also Deputy Head of Mission, added that imams in Khartoum are expected to issue a Fatwa against Arman on Friday, broadcast on the official television.

Under Comprehensive Peace, Islamic Shari'a law is to remain applicable in the North and parts of the constitution are to be rewritten so that Shari'a does not apply to any non-Muslims throughout the Sudan.

South Sudan Nile Commercial Bank out of cash- official

Sudan Tribune website 23/4/09 — Southern Sudan based Nile Commercial Bank (NCB) has

run out of cash to meet its obligations, the clearest sign to date of the deepening financial crisis facing the semi-autonomous region.

The cash strapped bank has been unable to honour withdrawal requests from its clients who have deposited their own salaries. The bank has advised impacted customers to wait indefinitely.

Bank officials have pointed fingers at some officials at the Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS) saying they are to blame.

The Assembly branch manger in Juba, Marta Michya alleged that some senior GoSS officials borrowed "huge amount of money but failed to repay".

"Hence we told our clients to wait until the borrowed money is paid back" she said.

The NCB official added that some of the money has been loaned out to some of these officials without proper collateral.

South Sudan has suffered along with the North of the sharp decline in oil exports which accounts for 93% of its 2009 budget.

GoSS has implemented strict fiscal measures to control spending as part of the efforts to weather the economic crisis.

Government officials, World Bank and Joint Donor Team representatives described the financial situation in Southern Sudan as "serious."

There were recent reports that the commissioner of Western Equatoria fled to Kenya with \$1 million to Kenya during Easter holidays; speaker of Eastern Equatoria was accused of stealing 36 millions dollars.

It was also alleged that \$240 million were found in Benjij Hotel Juba when the hotel caught fire and that millions of dollars were caught being smuggled out of south in a coffin. However there were no independent confirmations of these reports.

Number of Sudanese returnees from Uganda in 2009 tops 20,000 – UN

UN News 23/4/09 - The number of Sudanese refugees returning home from Uganda this year with the assistance of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) topped the 20,000 mark yesterday.

This brings the total number of people helped home by UNHCR since the signing of the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement to nearly 150,000, including 85,000 from Uganda. An additional 160,000 others have repatriated on their own from neighbouring countries.

"We are very pleased to see the steady increase in the number of Sudanese returning to their country," said Stefano Severe, UNHCR Representative in Sudan, adding that the agency looks forward to helping many more repatriate.

Last year saw the return of 42,000 Sudanese refugees from Uganda, compared to just 17,000 in 2007. Thousands more of the 50,000 Sudanese still in Uganda are expected to return before the end of the year.

Commentary

Between Ameera Haq and Ban Ki-moon

"DSRSG/HC Ameera Haq has no option but to say that the INGO ouster will not affect the humanitarian situation for two months" Mahgoub Osman, **Al-Raed** columnist, wrote a commentary under the above heading. "Since Sudan government took part in the joint assessment mission, Haq and her team were also left with no option but to formulate a report that seemed disappointing to US, UK and France. The report was unquestionable because both the government and UN took part in its formulation. As such, what made the SG Ban Ki-moon to appear inconsistent with his organization by claiming that over a million people are suffering? There is nothing a part from the fact that the SG is trying to please those who secured him the job to avoid the rug being pulled from underneath his feet.