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Referendum Monitor:

- Presidency endorses Referendum Commission Secretary-General (*Al-Sahafa*)
- Referendum Commission yet to decide on voter registration date (*Al-Ahdath*)
- INTERVIEW-U.S. offers Sudan new incentives for peace deal (*Reuters*)
- Sudan Rejects U.S. Referendum Incentives (*Reuters*)
- Military and security arrangements in place for the referendum – SAF (*Al-Rai Al-Aam*)
- Minister proposes oil arrangements to avert return to war (*Al-Ayyam*)
- Advocacy group warns against ambiguous provisions in Referendum Act (*Sudantribune.com*)

Other Highlights:

- UN rights expert urges probe into recent Darfur attack on civilians (*UN News Centre*)
- GoSS parliament approves SDG1.2 billion Supplementary Budget (*The Citizen*)
- NCP blasts Yassir Arman on statements urging new constitutional setup (*Al-Ahdath*)
- SPLA denies Israeli military support (*Khartoum Monitor*)
- Relocation of IDPs from Kalma to new camp site “voluntary” – Governor (*Al-Ahdath*)
- Qatari official and Darfur mediator discuss peace process (*Sudantribune.com*)
- Chinese national kidnapped in Chad, taken to Sudan: official (*AFP*)

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Referendum Monitor

Presidency endorses Referendum Commission Secretary-General

Al-Sahafa Khartoum, 15/09/10 – President Al-Bashir issued yesterday a decree appointing Mohamed Osman Al-Nigoumi as the Secretary-General of the Southern Sudan Referendum Commission.

Informed sources meanwhile reveal that the Commission had earlier requested UN technical assistance with regards to referendum material including the symbols to be used on unity or separation, voter cards and the types of ink to be used. The source says agreement has been reached to print the ballot cards abroad but under UN supervision.

Referendum Commission yet to decide on voter registration date

Al-Ahdath Khartoum, 15/09/10 – The South Sudan Referendum Commission says it has not issued any statement to the effect that registration for the referendum would start in October next month. An informed source within the Commission says the referendum body would sit to endorse the by-laws governing voter registration for the referendum before announcing a date for the referendum.

Meanwhile, the Chairman of the South Sudan Referendum Commission says time is not on their side as most of the logistics required for the exercise are lagging behind. He told the *Washington Post* yesterday that the registration for the referendum would not be easy, citing the bad roads in some parts of southern Sudan.

INTERVIEW-U.S. offers Sudan new incentives for peace deal

Reuters Washington, 14/09/10 - The US has offered Sudan a package of new incentives including trade, investment, debt relief and full diplomatic normalization if it resolves outstanding issues over Darfur and a vote on southern secession next year, Washington's Sudan envoy said on Tuesday.

Scott Gration said the package, which holds out the threat of additional sanctions against the oil-rich African nation if progress is not made, is aimed at persuading all sides to iron out problems ahead of a planned Jan. 9 independence referendum in southern Sudan.

"What we're looking at is this historic moment," Gration told *Reuters* in an interview, adding that any delays or setbacks to the vote could result in renewed conflict between the Khartoum government and the south of the country.

"We're in a time when we really need to act now to prevent bad things from happening," he said.

Gration took the new plan - essentially a roadmap for the the normalization of Khartoum's international relations - to officials in both southern Sudan and Khartoum over the weekend and said it was well received.

The package marks a new phase of the Obama administration's push to resolve decades of conflict in Sudan, a vast state which has been riven by civil war and a separate rebellion in the western region of Darfur.

U.S. President Barack Obama will attend a U.N. summit on Sudan on Sept. 24, at which the

United States is expected to push for more support for its Sudan proposals.

"The President, and the Obama administration, has taken a really serious look at what we can do now ...and (if) there are any incentives that need to put in place, that we do it now," Gration said.

Gration said the new package made clear the benefits of a potential deal while also outlining possible consequences, including new sanctions, if the situation deteriorated or failed to make progress.

"What they have now is words on paper. What we want to do is to ensure that these things are implemented in a way that changes the environment," he said.

Analysts said the package gave Sudanese leaders a clear choice in the remaining months.

"I'm confident that the balance of pressures and incentives is in the right direction, and that is a significant departure from the past," said John Prendergast, co-founder of the Enough Project, an anti-genocide group that has been critical of the Obama administration's Sudan policy.

Gration said the proposed deal could open up new economic and political opportunities for Sudan, which has long had strained ties with the West.

First, the United States will immediately begin granting licenses for items such as agricultural machinery to help Sudan's struggling food sector, relaxing limits in place for about a decade.

"This will communicate to the people of Sudan that we do care about them, in addition it will give confidence that we're serious about this package," he said.

Next, if there is a peaceful, credible referendum on Jan. 9 and both sides respect the results, the United States will take steps to allow additional trade and investment in Sudan in certain prescribed non-oil sectors, he said.

The United States would further agree to an exchange of ambassadors if both sides agreed on the key principles for co-existence after the referendum vote.

And finally if Sudan managed to fully implement the 2005 peace deal and resolved the conflict in Darfur, the U.S. government would work with Congress to lift economic sanctions, rescind the state sponsor of terrorism designation and support international assistance and relief of Sudan's \$35 billion in external debt, Gration said.

Gration said he was encouraged by progress on borders but that there was tougher going on the question of sharing revenues from oil, which is produced mainly in the south but shipped out of the country through the north.

Sudan Rejects U.S. Referendum Incentives

Reuters Khartoum, 15/09/10 - A package of incentives offered by Washington to ensure the smooth holding of a referendum on whether south Sudan should secede from the north amounts to interference in Sudan's affairs, a ruling party official said Wednesday.

"Really this is threatening and giving a warning to the Sudanese government without any reason," Rabie Abdelati, a Senior National Congress Party official, told **Reuters**.

"If somebody is saying they will do what's agreed upon there's no need to say to him I am warning you."

He said the NCP was committed to holding the referendums on time so threats were not necessary.

Abdelati said Khartoum was confused by Washington's policy on Sudan, saying it heard conflicting voices from the administration.

U.S. Sudan envoy Scott Gration is often criticised by Sudan activists in the United States for being too soft on Khartoum, a policy they say has yielded no tangible results with disputed and flawed April elections and little progress towards democratic transformation.

"We feel that some institutions in the USA don't have the same view and the same trend towards Sudan," Abdelati said. "That is why up to now for us the stance of the U.S. administration is not clear."

He said U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton showed a tougher line than others including Gration.

"This shows a conflict in the centre of decision making in the USA especially about Sudan -- we don't receive one message with one colour," said Abdelati.

Military and security arrangements in place for the referendum - SAF

Al-Rai Al-Aam Khartoum, 15/09/10 – Sudan Army Spokesperson Al-Suwarni Khalid says the army is prepared to provide security during the referendum. He revealed that a military and security plan is in place to face any eventualities. Khalid reiterated SAF commitment to guarantee a free and fair referendum that would provide the southern Sudanese electorate the freedom to practice his constitutional right.

Minister proposes oil arrangements to avert return to war

Al-Ayyam Khartoum, 15/09/10 – Oil Minister Lual Deng says there are fears that southern Sudan separation would mean that Sudan would lose the 80% of its oil revenues. This, he says, may be a cause for the return to war. He proposed that special arrangements be made that would allow some oil sharing arrangements that would gradually phase out as northern Sudan develops alternates should the south secede.

In a separate story, *Al-Ayyam* reports that Kosta Manibe (SPLM) who co-heads the joint NCP-SPLM Economic Committee charged with handling the post-referendum wealth-sharing arrangements said that any contracts by the GoSS for the construction of oil pipelines are not subject to their discussions. He pointed out that if such contracts should be reviewed, then a comprehensive review should be made of all the pipelines constructed so far and the contracts in the pipeline.

Advocacy group warns against ambiguous provisions in Referendum Act

Sudantribune.com Khartoum, 15/09/10 - An advocacy group has warned against ambiguities in the Southern Sudan Referendum Act (SSRA) particularly some provisions dealing with the voter identification and the regulatory role of the Referendum Commission.

"Flaws in the process will make acceptance of the result more difficult to achieve, contributing to tension and possibly violence," cautioned Democracy Reporting International (DRI), an independent organisation working to improve democratic, participatory governance, in a report released last week.

The report further warns that the ambiguities in the SSRA could lead to a result perceived by the southern Sudanese as in non-compliance with the CPA. A result in the referendum which is anything other than watertight could be cause for renewed violence between northern and southern Sudan.

The report calls for the adoption of a set of regulations which include: clarification of voters' identification and neutrality of government bodies and officials from taking part in the referendum campaign.

On voter identification the SSRA should clarify "what is needed to identify oneself for voter registration and in particular whether oral testimony by a competent Chief from the County suffices," the report says.

With regards to neutrality, it stresses the need to make it clear that "government bodies, officials and public authorities should not engage in campaigning for either referendum option".

Another cause for concern, expressed in the report, is the passage in the SSRA which stipulates that if the minimum 60% participation requirement is not reached, a repeat vote must take place within 60 days.

The report expresses concern about this point for two reasons: firstly, because minimum voter turnout, which is not normally required in referenda on independence, is usually set at 50%; and secondly, because there is no contingency plan for a repeat vote not reaching the minimum turnout figure.

The report cites the Council for Europe's Venice Commission, Europe's advisory body on constitutional matters, which advises against minimum turnout requirements, "Since it risks involving a difficult political situation."

The report further notes that in recent referenda there were no minimum turnout requirements: "The referenda on independence of Eritrea (1993), Timor Leste (1999), and Montenegro (2006) included no turn-out requirement. They all had a high turnout: of 99%, 98% and 86% respectively." This makes it unclear what purpose the high minimum turnout requirement serves.

However, this figure of 60% was the result of a negotiation between the NCP and SPLM last year, in which the NCP asked for a 90% minimum turnout.

It is feared that the minimum turnout rule could be used as a tool by those intending to scupper the referendum - for anti-secessionists, failure to vote will be in some ways, more effective than voting for unity. In theory, if 58% of those eligible to, vote for secession and 1% for unity, unity could be retained, because the 60% minimum turnout requirement would not be achieved.

Other Highlights

UN rights expert urges probe into recent Darfur attack on civilians

UN News Centre *UN, 14/09/10* - Mohamed Chande Othman, the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in the Sudan, has called for a "thorough and transparent investigation" into the 2 September attack in the village of Tabarat.

"This incident should be investigated thoroughly and impartially and those responsible should be brought to justice," he stated in a news release.

Mr. Chande Othman said that new information gathered over the past 10 days appears to confirm initial reports that more than 37 people were killed and over 50 injured after a militia group, identified by several witnesses as Janjaweed, attacked civilians gathered in a marketplace in the village.

“I am deeply disturbed about these killings which highlight the continuing deterioration of the situation in Darfur,” said the expert.

Mr. Chande Othman urged the international community to continue its efforts to assist the UNAMID, which has been in place since the start of 2008, to provide effective protection to civilians. He also voiced concern that UNAMID teams that were dispatched to the area to assess the situation were initially prevented from reaching the village of Tabarat by SAF and an armed group.

GoSS parliament approves SDG1.2 billion Supplementary Budget

The Citizen Juba, 15/09/10 - The Southern Sudan Legislative Assembly (SSLA) has finally approved an SDG1.146 730 261 Supplementary Budget for the fiscal year to primarily allocate funds for referendum security and for the establishment of the new post-election ministries. The passage of the budget along with the Supplementary Appropriation Bill awaits the GoSS presidential nod but ahs relieved the MPs who, however, underlined the need for regular updates on finance form the GoSS Ministry of Finance.

NCP blasts Yassir Arman on statements urging new constitutional setup

Al-Ahdath Khartoum, 15/09/10 – NCP Information Secretary Fathi Shila has censured SPLM Deputy Secretary-General Yassir Arman over recent reports in which the latter was quoted as having said that the NCP needs to institute a new constitutional setup to encourage the unity vote. Shila described these statements as a departure from the CPA and called on the SPLM to comment to Arman.

SPLA denies Israeli military support

Khartoum Monitor Khartoum, 15/09/10 – SPLA Spokesperson Kuol Dem has described as “baseless” recent media reports that an Israeli military delegation toured southern Sudan recently with the purpose of offering support to the GoSS post-referendum. He said that the rumours are part of a conspiracy masterminded by the NCP against the GoSS and the people of southern Sudan with the aim of turning Arab Muslim states against southern Sudan.

Relocation of IDPs from Kalma to new camp site “voluntary” - Governor

Al-Ahdath Nyala, 15/09/10 – South Darfur Governor Abdulhameed Musa Kasha says IDPs would be transferred from Kalma Camp to the new camp site on a voluntary basis. On an inspection tour, he pointed out that the new site has basic services such as water, electricity, education and health services.

The Governor was accompanied on the tour by representatives of UNAMID.

Qatari official and Darfur mediator discuss peace process

Sudantribune.com Doha, 14/09/10 - Qatar’s state minister for foreign affairs and Darfur chief mediator discussed today in Doha the resumption of peace talks between the Sudanese government and the rebel Liberation and Justice Movement (LJM) and issues related to the whole process.

Minister Ahmed bin Abdullah Al-Mahmoud and UN/AU Joint Chief Mediator Djibril Bassole discussed on Tuesday the peace process in Darfur and the mediation’s future plans to resume talks.

They also discussed Bassole’s contacts with two main rebel groups who are not part of the

process: Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) which froze its participation in the talks last May, and Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM) of Abdel Wahid Al-Nur who met minister Al-Mahmoud and Bassole last July and pledged to join the process.

Bassole also on Tuesday evening left Doha to Khartoum where he is expected to meet on Wednesday with presidential adviser Ghazi Salah Eddin who is in charge of Darfur dossier and the head of the joint peacekeeping mission in Darfur Ibrahim Gambari.

The mediator announced last week he would travel to the Sudanese capital to get Khartoum approval of a meeting he intends to organize in Darfur with JEM leader Khalil Ibrahim who is currently in Libya.

Chinese national kidnapped in Chad, taken to Sudan: official

AFP N'djamena, 14/09/10 - A Chinese national working for an engineering company in Chad was kidnapped last week in the northeast of the country and taken to Sudan, a senior Chad official told **AFP** on Tuesday.

The army was currently searching for him, the official said.

The man was seized in Am-Djarass in the Ennedi region, close to the border with Sudan, where he was working on a water supply project, Chadian state radio said.

He is an employee of CGCOC-Chad. CGCOC is a Chinese construction company with many branches in Africa and Asia.

"The kidnappers crossed the border with their hostage and elements of the joint Chad-Sudan force were mobilised to find the Chinese man," he said.

The kidnappers and their hostage were on Sudanese territory Tuesday, he said, refusing to give further details.

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