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Highlights

War in Darfur is over; peace will be achieved this year – Al-Bashir

Local dailies report President Al-Bashir yesterday addressed a function hosted by the Presidency to mark the Independence Day.

According to **Al-Ayyam**, Al-Bashir promised to achieve a comprehensive peace in Darfur this year. “War in Darfur is now over. Minor insecurities will be addressed at Doha talks to normalize the situation in Darfur,” Al-Bashir said. “This year will be the year of peace in the Sudan,” he added. The President said the road to South Sudan’s referendum has been paved, hoping that unity would be the choice.

Referendum law is “prescription for war” – Adviser Ghazi

Presidential Adviser Ghazi Salahueldin has warned against the referendum law describing it as a “prescription for war”, saying article (67) of referendum bill is the most dangerous provision, **Al-Rai Al-Aam** reports. “The article does not include a specific date for reaching agreement on post-separation arrangement such as the border and nationality, warning that the time is running out and the absence of agreement on such issues would lead to war. Ghazi, who was speaking in an interview to the Blue Nile TV, lashed out against the SPLM, saying it talks about attractive unity but it works for separation and it calls for democratic transformation and does not allow the same in the South. He also accused the SPLM of funding opposition parties and demonstrations in the north.

“If separation takes place without knowing the border, the rights of the southern citizen, the status of the resources such as oil and water, these things could reignite war,” Presidential Adviser Ghazi Salahueldin said in an interview, according to **Al-Intibaha**.

Messeriya leaders to meet President Al-Bashir today

Al-Ahdath reports that leaders of the Messeriya will meet President Al-Bashir today to discuss the status of the tribe in the wake of passage of the Abyei referendum bill. Messeriya leader Mohamed Abdulla Adam told the paper that the Misseriya would request the President not to sign the bill into law and to return it to the Parliament for amendment to incorporate the tribe’s aspirations.

In a lengthy interview to **Al-Intibaha**, Presidential Adviser Ghazi Salahueldin said the Misseriya concerns are justifiable, citing general feeling that the text of the Abyei referendum bill is not clear.

According to **Al-Sahafa**, GoSS Presidential Minister Luka Biong has expected the White House to focus on the implementation of the South Sudan and Abyei referendum laws as well as the popular consultation for Southern Kordofan and the Blue Nile, saying the crisis over the bills sent a strong message to the international community on the need to guarantee their implementation. Biong has called on President Al-Bashir to sign the bills into law as well as the formation of the commission, saying self-determination for Southern Sudan and Abyei has become a reality.

Sudan Tribune website 3/1/10 reported that representatives of the Messeriya tribe in Abyei have called on President Al-Bashir not to sign the recently endorsed Abyei referendum law, saying it should be returned to the parliament for further discussions.

They have also warned that the tribe would not allow the implementation of the law if it is signed in its current form and would hinder the demarcation process of the Abyei geographical boundary.

A leading member of the tribe Abdel Rusul Al-Nur on Saturday explained the move against the bill, adding that the Messeriya would do every thing they could to hinder its implementation.

"This law must go back to the parliament and we appeal to the President of the Republic not to sign the law because it was endorsed in a decision by which we will not recognize the law; and we will not deal with it and we will seek every means to enable ourselves to annul this racial and bias law," he said.

However, **local dailies** report that the National Assembly Deputy Speaker Mohamed Al-Hassan Al-Amin has ruled out that the Abyei referendum bill would be returned to the Parliament for further discussion due to the Messeriya objection since the law was drafted based on the PCA Award but expected the tribe's concern to be addressed politically.

SPLA kills 7, rapes 20 in the Lakes State, MPs ask UN to intervene

The SPLA yesterday carried out wide revenge attacks on Akot area in the Lakes state, burning and looting the town and killing seven people, **Al-Intibaha** reports. The paper claimed that 20 women were raped and many residents fled. The Lakes State Assembly MPs called on the UN and its humanitarian agencies for urgent intervention to address the humanitarian situation.

Sudan Tribune website 2/1/10 reported thirteen SPLA soldiers were killed in the southern part of Akot payam of Rumbek East County of Lakes state, allegedly as part of a revenge attack carried out by pastoralists.

Armed civilians yesterday by one account ambushed a lorry which was carrying food to Akot, killing 13 soldiers and wounding 20 others at Makur-Agar. The civilians who attacked the truck took away 20 firearms. This information was relayed by the official SPLA Spokesman Maj-Gen. Kuol Deim Kuol.

"We are sending in more reinforcement troops to Lakes state. We must disarm those civilians by all means," said Kuol.

However, local sources described the January 1st confrontation as beginning on the premises of the house of Paramount Chief Dut Malual Arop. Community leaders denied the statement of Kuol saying that the community was resisting disarmament.

Chief Sahwat Malual Arop confirmed that 3 civilians were killed on the premises of the house of the paramount chief, while 4 sustained injuries in an attack that he said was organized by SPLA soldiers.

According to the account of Chief Sahwat Malual, the soldiers arrived at Chief Dut Malual's house located at Makur-Agar. However, Chief Dut was in at his house's birth-room. When the soldiers found youth playing a traditional game under a tree, they immediately started firing at youth killing 2 brothers.

Chief Malual said "All the houses around Akot were burned down by soldiers - what is the matter? – is this government loyal to protect her civilians? Communities' properties are burnt down and looted by soldiers. Those soldiers are having a different agenda against the

community".

An angry youth member told Sudan Tribune that "those who are sent by SPLA headquarters to disarm our youth in Lakes state are militia groups — they are not well trained soldiers. They are from Division 5, all of whom are Nuer tribesmen who fought badly with us during Dr. Riak Machar's defection in 1991".

"Nuer usually loot our cattle across Lakes state and our state government orders us to return back their looted cows but Nuer natives do not return back our cows that they have looted," said the youth member. However, the SPLA spokesman dismissed this tribal designation, saying "There are no tribal soldiers in South Sudan; all in Division 5 are SPLA soldiers".

Lakes state leadership under Governor Daniel Awet Akot at the emergency meeting on the night of January 1, 2010 failed to come to a decision. But some voices on the 51-member council were calling for immediate withdrawal of Division 5 forces in Akot to be replaced by "SPLA soldiers loyal to the community".

Liberation Council members blamed two of the soldiers in the killing of the civilians, calling for their arrest along with Colonel Mou Wol Lueth. Commenting in the forum, Governor Awet said "If I was appointed as SPLA chief of general staff, I would have dismissed all generals in the SPLA armed forces and that was the cause the president declined to appoint me".

But the officer in charge of the operations department at the Akot military barracks, SPLA Brigadier Stephen Nhial Gatduel, told the Liberation Council members that "We are for you, the people of Southern Sudan. All those organized SPLA forces are under the command of Lt-Gen Daniel Awet Akot. The civil authority is upper class in ruling us — there is no way that we can separate army from civilian because they coexist."

Brigadier Gatduel also insinuated, however, that the county commissioner of Rumbek East was to blame for not having cooperated with the military. That commissioner was reportedly absent from the county when the clashes occurred.

A curfew is imposed from 9:30 p.m. until 6:00 a.m., according to an emergency announcement over state radio by the governor.

North Darfur Governor reveals food gap

North Darfur Governor Mohamed Osman Kibir at press conference yesterday confirmed the existence of a major food gap in the state caused by lack of rains, *Al-Wifaq* reports. He said a comprehensive survey is being conducted to determine the size of the problem, citing readiness of the federal and state governments to address the situation.

Turabi's party nominates Southerner for Sudan presidential elections

Sudan Tribune website 1/1/10 – The Popular Congress Party (PCP) led by Islamist opposition figure Hassan Al-Turabi formally announced today that it has nominated a Southerner to run in the April 2010 presidential elections.

Al-Turabi told reporters in the Sudanese capital that the decision to nominate the party's deputy Abdullah Deng Nhial was reached by the majority (76%) as an "expression to address the conscience of a large sector of southerners and northerners".

He added that the biggest crisis facing Sudan is the North-South one and thus putting forward a

candidate from the Dinka tribe, the largest tribe in the south, could bring an end to beliefs that there is marginalization because major posts are limited to Northerners.

So far only the ruling National Congress Party has decided on its candidate for the presidential elections. The other major parties including the Umma party led by former Prime Minister Al-Sadiq Al-Mahdi, Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) led by Mohamed Osman Al-Mirghani and Sudan people Liberation Movement (SPLM) led by First Vice President Salva Kiir has yet to name a contestant.

The SPLM, PCP, Umma party and other smaller opposition parties that met in Juba last September have said in the past that they may decide on one joint candidate to run against Bashir. It is not clear if each party will nominate one figure and later the coalition will meet to decide on a joint candidate among them.

The SPLM spokesperson Yen Mathew, who welcomed Nhial's nomination, told the Doha-based Al-Jazeera TV that the ex-southern rebel group will meet next Thursday to nominate its presidential candidate.

Al-Jazeera website said that Nhial was a professor in Juba University in 1985 then a minister of Guidance and Endowments following the 1989 coup, a minister for peace and reconstruction, the White Nile governor in 1994 before siding with Turabi in his 1999 major fallout with Bashir.

He told Al-Jazeera TV that his nomination came as a surprise to the Sudanese people given his ethnicity stressing that running for president is open to anyone interested "regardless of any consideration" which would enable Southerners to reach the highest positions in the government.

Nhial added that the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) did nothing to Southerners other than giving them the post of First Vice President currently held by Salva Kiir.

In today's press conference Turabi slammed the Sudanese National Elections Commission (NEC) suggesting that it is controlled by the ruling NCP. The PCP leader did not rule out the possibility of fraud in the April 2010 elections but said it is likely to be concentrated in the outskirts of the country.

This week, Turabi reiterated his call to Bashir to hand himself over to the International Criminal Court (ICC) which charged him with committing war crimes in Sudan's western region of Darfur.

Health Ministry cleaner attacks staff

Local dailies report a man armed with a knife yesterday ran berserk in the Federal Ministry of Health's compound, stabbing 8 staff members including physicians. Some papers say the victims were eleven.

While Khartoum State Police statement said the man was suffering from a mental and psychological problem, the Undersecretary of the Health Ministry questioned the claim, according to **Ajras Al-Hurriah**. Eyewitnesses said the attacker is the Ministry's cleaner and the indiscriminate assault was stopped only when a police man shot him.