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Media Monitoring Report

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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

Foreign Minister urges UN to pressurize SPLM to resolve Abyei problem

Sudan Radio/dailies 4/5/11 – Foreign Minister Ali Karti and SRSG Haile Menkerios discussed yesterday the future of UNMIS troops in the Sudan and the outstanding issues between the two CPA parties.

Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Khaled Musa told reporters after the meeting that Karti affirmed Sudan's resolve to continue cooperation for the sake of stability in the South and to prevent resumption of war.

Karti has urged the UN to exercise more pressure on the SPLM to halt harbouring and supporting Darfur movements, to stop provocative acts in Abyei and to implement Kadugli agreement which provides for pullout of the SPLA from the area.

With regard to UNMIS, Karti said the Sudanese Government would take the right decision after the ongoing consultations are finalized.

For his part, the SRSG said the UN appreciates the ongoing efforts to achieve comprehensive peace adding that the organization is aware that extension for UNMIS troops would not materialize without the consent of the Sudanese Government.

Unity State rejects redeployment of Sudanese troops to protect oil fields

Sudan Tribune website 2/5/11 - The government and parliament of the Unity state decided during the weekend to reject the deployment of 300 northern Sudanese troops in the areas of oil production to protest recent Bashir's statement on Abyei.

Khartoum and Juba agreed to re-deploy 300 JIU soldiers to the Manga, Toor, Toma South, Naar and Tharjath oil fields of Unity state to guard the oil production areas until the official declaration of South Sudan's independence on 9 July 2011. Bentiu government also endorsed the redeployment plan.

The Unity state government held a joint council of ministers meeting with the state legislative assembly on 29 April to deliberate on the deployment of JIU from the Sudan Army Forces (SAF) and to discuss President Omer al Bashir's recent inflammatory speech declaring Abyei as part of the north.

After intense debate, the Unity state council of ministers and the state assembly came up with a resolution to not accept the step taken by northern government to redeploy JIUs troops in Unity state...

13 killed in clashes in Abyei yesterday

Local dailies 4/5/11 – SAF convoy and elements of southern Sudan police clashed yesterday leaving 13 people dead, amid exchange of accusations between the two parties.

While Abyei Chief Administrator Deng Arop Kuol said SAF convoy entered the disputed area and clashed with the southern police leaving 12 dead, the Federal Interior Minister Ibrahim Mahmoud Hamid said the southern police initiated the fighting adding that the SAF convoy wanted to join the JIU in the area for implementing security arrangement protocols, according to *Al-Sahafa* 4/5/11.

Al-Rai Al-Aam 4/5/11 reports Misseriya leader Al-Hireika Izzeldine as saying that 10 people were killed in the clash and 23 wounded. “Declaring Abyei part of the South means war and the tribe is ready for that” he warned. “If the SPLA starts the war it will end in our favour in just a quarter of an hour. Either we die or remain owners of the land” he said.

Humanitarian crisis In Abyei is looming, activists say

Gurtong 3/5/11 - The Abyei Referendum Forum, a Civil Society advocating for the achievement of the rights of the people of Abyei have alerted the GoSS and the International community that, there is a looming humanitarian situation in Abyei which needs immediate intervention.

The forum’s leadership confirmed that prices of basic goods and services have skyrocketed due to militia activities and conflict fuelled by the Messeriya against Ngok Dinka community.

Dr. Chol Deng Alak, Chairperson of the Abyei Referendum Forum addressed the press yesterday at the South Sudan hotel in Juba saying that, the humanitarian situation had worsened in recent months due to constant attacks against several villages in the oil rich region.

Rebel activities in recent months have been tense according to the activists. Dr. Chol categorically explained that, Messeriya herders supported by the Northern government have been brutally attacking several villagers hence catalysing the crisis.

He identified the affected areas as; Todac village attacked on the 27th and 28th of February, Maker village on the March 2nd, and Tajalei village on March 5th. He adding that, the attacks involved burning of homes and destruction of water yards.

Dr. Chol further pointed out that, renegade Peter Gadet, who is now heading a militia group; and other militias he disclosed as Abdel Abagi Ayi and Thiel’s forces are involved in these serious rebel activities.

The rebel activities are concentrated in the key areas of Umabama, Lafa-Thimsaas. Gadet’s rebels are involved in planting mines between Bienhom and Abyei, the Activist clarified.

The Abyei referendum Forum explained that, if no intervention is taken against the rebel activities, the economic impact and humanitarian situation will have far reaching effects on South Sudan.

Deng Madding, the Vice Chairperson of the Abyei Referendum explained that, Nyama road has been barricaded by the NCP. Nyama road is a focal linking point in Abyei in which most operating oil and other business companies in South Sudan use to import goods from North to South.

The road plays a great role in ensuring the penetration of goods and services especially to the

Northern States of South Sudan. Mading explained that, Nyama road allows the transportation of goods to Western and Northern Bar El Ghzal, Warrap, Lakes and Unity States.

The Abyei Referendum Forum called on the International Community to put pressure in conducting the Abyei referendum.

The Forum condemned statements by a section of the media amid last week by the Sudanese President Omar Hassan Al Bashir. The reports quoted the President while addressing a gathering in Southern Kordofan saying that, he will not recognize the Independency of South Sudan on 9th July 2011 if South includes Abyei in its on-going constitution amendment.

The Forum expressed its commitment to peace and stability in Abyei. “We affirm our commitment to peace in Abyei through the implementation of the Abyei Protocol and the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, CPA,” said Dr. Chol.

The Forum has called for the implementation of the Abyei protocol which gives the people of Abyei a chance to decide whether they want to remain as part of Sudan or South Sudan.

Southern parties endorse South Constitution except SPLM-DC

Al-Sahafa 4/5/11 – leaders of southern Sudan political parties have wrapped up a conference in Juba to discuss the new South Sudan constitution. The political parties have blessed the draft without recommending any amendments including a provision on Abyei as part of the South and a 4-year interim period.

However, the SPLM-DC headed by Lam Akol said it would not recognize the new constitution and described the meeting as a failure.

GoSS VP Riek Machar acknowledged divergence of opinions but pointed out that the southern political parties have agreed to the inclusion of Abyei in the constitution and described the outcome of the conference as promising.

The conferees agreed to submit the draft to the Cabinet and then to the parliament.

Meanwhile, the NCP announced that reference to Abyei in the Constitution as part of the South is a violation of the CPA, according to *Sudan TV* 3/5/11.

“Abyei is a northern territory and will remain so and we will defend that” NCP political secretary Ibrahim Ghandour, reacted to the outcome of the southern parties’ conference.

North-South road closed

Ajras Al-Hurriya 4/5/11 – authorities in Renk County in the Upper Nile state have disclosed that the centre unilaterally ordered the closure of the road linking the North and South since Monday. County commissioner Deng Akoy told the newspaper that buses coming from the North to the town of Rebek have been turned back, adding that the closure of the road had a negative impact on humanitarian and commercial activities between the North and the South.

Southern Kordofan Elections Focus

NCP and SPLM trade charges over elections in southern Kordofan

Al-Ayyam 4/5/11 – The second day of polling in southern Kordofan was reportedly peaceful but the NCP and the SPLM continue to trade charges over alleged rigging.

While the NCP has accused the SPLA intelligence of committing widespread breaches in seven polling centres in the form of intimidating and beating up its supporters, the SPLM said the NCP continued its elections campaign until yesterday, citing a rally organized in Gadoom Jebel yesterday which was addressed by former minister Salman Suleiman Al-Safi as well as other rallies in Abu Al-Hassan, Al-Mansour, Toma, Al-Fursha and Shamsheka areas. The SPLM also said it seized 199 fake ballot papers in the possession of one person.

Day Two: Over 50% Voter Turnout in South Kordofan

Sudan Vision 4/5/11 - Voting is progressing smoothly in Southern Kordofan supplementary elections with no major hiccups, said Interior Minister, Engineer Ibrahim Mahmoud Hamid adding, "The exercise is a unique lesson on the democratic process."

Following a tour of some electoral stations in Southern Kordofan and a meeting with the security committee supervising the process, Hamid expected the vote will continue calmly till the final results are announced.

"I can say that the process will come to an end peacefully and with complete freedom for the citizens to practice their rights," he said.

The minister also criticized the use of force in elections, pointing out that real force is reflected on ballots. He called on those who are not so lucky in elections to be patient and accept the results while preparing for coming elections.

Initial results are expected as early as 8 May, while the final results will be endorsed by 30 May.

The minister reviewed progress of election's security plan, and said he investigated with the highest committee of elections all requirements of security, affirming his ministry's commitment to ensure stability throughout the election process.

He said that recent events in Abyei are normal, affirming presence of alert measures taken by interior to contain situation, pointing out that although joint troops had reached Abyei according to plan, they were attacked.

"It is regrettable that in the frame of Kadugli Agreement it was agreed that there should be joint forces to control the external security, but inside Abyei there should be ordinary regular police forces," he said.

"It seems that the SPLM doesn't want to commit to the agreement. The SPLM brought its component from the joint forces, but when the Sudanese Armed Forces brought its components it was attacked," the minister said.

On the other hand, Governor of South Kordofan, Mawlana Ahmad Haroun told the press that Interior Minister's visit to South Kordofan is conducted to review the security situation. He affirmed that situations in different parts of the region are stable and calm.

Head of the highest committee, Adam Abdeen Ismial pointed out that rate of voter turnout has surpassed 50 percent, adding that number of centers have witnessed voters' complaints, affirming that elections is expected to go on as smoothly as it has begun.

Electoral stations are to be closed Wednesday night in preparation for counting and sorting in addition to announcing final outputs.

An international observation mission and foreign diplomats are stationed in South Kordofan observing the registration process and the campaigns.

Southern Kordofan vote enters final day as SPLM claims fraud

Sudan Tribune website 3/5/11 - Voting in gubernatorial and legislative elections of Sudan's central state of South Kordofan has entered its final day on Wednesday amid reports of large turnout and accusations of irregularities.

Attention has riveted on Sudan's central state of South Kordofan as its citizens began going to the polls on Monday to elect a state governor and members of the state's assembly, in a sensitive exercise that was postponed for over a year since Sudan held countrywide elections in April 2010.

The vote was rescheduled after disagreements over the results of the 2008 census in the state as well as delimitation of geographical constituencies were remedied by the Khartoum-based National Elections Commission (NEC), which oversees the process.

Adam Abdeen Isma'il, the head of the state's high elections commission, NEC's subsidiary body, was quoted on Tuesday by Sudan's state-run news agency SUNA as saying that the rate of turnout has exceeded 50 percent in a number of polling stations.

The election official said that all polls in the state would be closed on Wednesday evening as the process of vote counting kick-start immediately afterward.

Meanwhile, the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), whose candidate and the state's deputy governor, Abdul Aziz Adam All-Hilu, is running in gubernatorial elections against the ruling National congress Party's incumbent candidate, Ahmad Harun, on Tuesday issued a press release citing reports of irregularities.

The SPLM claimed that three ballot boxes were seized in the area of Um-Battah in the state's Kadugli town. It also said that one polling station was relocated from the police club to Al-Merikh in Al-Bananusa in the geographical constituency number 7 without prior notice.

In a related development, Sudan's Minister of Interior Ibrahim Mahmud Hamdi on Tuesday visited Kadugli and inspected a number of polling centers. According to SUNA, the minister said he expects the elections to become "a role model of democratic exercise" for the rest of the country.

Mahmud went on to assure that all indications confirm that the process would progress calmly until the results are announced.

The run-up to South Kordofan elections was mired in tension after the paramilitary Popular Defense Forces (PDF) attacked El-Feid village in mid-April, leaving 17 people dead and hundreds of houses destroyed.

The SPLM accused Ahmad Harun, who is wanted by the International Criminal Court (ICC) on charges of war crimes related to the eight-year conflict in Sudan's western region of Darfur, of mobilizing the PDF to attack the village.

Other Headlines

Sudan Foreign Affairs tells Libya Consulate to Leave

Sudan Vision 4/5/11 - Sudanese government ordered Libyan Consulate in Al Fashir, the capital of North Darfur to leave the Sudanese territories within 24 hours.

Foreign Affairs Spokesperson told reporters yesterday, "This step is a legal right in diplomatic relations, said Khalid.

Spokesperson Khalid Musa explained that this decision does not affect relations between the two countries.

It is to be noted that Libya government informed the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Sudan to close the Sudanese consulate and evacuate the staff from Kofra, said Khalid.

"What we did is the same decision taken by Libya."

Egypt presidential candidates to visit Khartoum

Sudan Vision 4/5/11 - A high level delegation, including three presidential candidates, from the Egyptian political forces will arrive in Khartoum next Friday.

The visiting Egyptian delegation includes the following nominees for the post of President of Egypt in the upcoming Egyptian elections; Dr. Al-Sayed Al-Badawi, the Chairman of Al-Wafd Political Party, Hamadain Subahi from Al-Karama, Dr. Ayman Nour from Egyptian Al-Ghad party and Hisham Al-Bastaweesi who is the Appeal Court Chief, according to National Congress Party (NCP) office in Cairo official, Dr. Waleed Al-Sayed.

The NCP official in Cairo said that the visiting delegation will meet President Al Bashir and a number of political parties' leaderships, adding that the visit comes in coordination with the Sudanese Embassy under the direct supervision of the Sudanese Ambassador in Cairo, Lt. Gen. Abdul Rahman Sir Al Khatim.

The delegation is accompanied by prominent Egyptian businessmen under the chairmanship of Najib Fisawris, Abdul Hakim Jamal Abdul Nasir, Dr. Omer Hamzawi and others.

The visit expresses the strong bilateral relation between Khartoum and Cairo.

Hundreds in Khartoum pray for the soul of Ben Ladin

Al-Sahafa 4/5/11 – hundreds of people gathered yesterday in Sajana area in Khartoum to hold a congregational prayer on the death of Osama Ben Ladin.

Prominent religious leaders led the congregational prayer. While some worshipers shouted slogans calling for Jihad against Jews, others wept over his demise, describing him as a martyr.

According to *Ajras Al-Hurriya* 4/5/11, the worshippers have criticized the absence of government officials from the congregation, saying it is unwarranted.

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