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Media Monitoring Report

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Referendum Watch

- Foreign observers attest to “fairness, credibility” of south Sudan referendum (*Sudantribune.com*)
- Don’t celebrate just yet: President Kiir (*Gurtong.org*)
- Southern Sudanese officials may lose their federal government positions (*Al-Sahafa*)
- SPLM violating country’s foreign policy – Foreign Ministry (*Al-Ahdath*)
- Sudanese have foiled the hopes of advocates of violence (*Al-Rai Al-Aam et al*)
- Security meeting on Abyei strikes deal on migration, returns (*Al-Sahafa et al*)
- AU's Mbeki says talks between north, south Sudan to resume end of January (*SUNA*)

Popular Consultations Watch

- 7,000 have their say in Blue Nile Popular Consultations (*Al-Rai Al-Aam*)

Other Headlines

- Sudan opposition leader Hassan al-Turabi “arrested” (*BBC; local dailies*)
- Nuba Mountains figures walk out on SPLA (*Al-Rai Al-Aam*)
- Authorities stamp out flames in the vicinity of oil field in Unity State (*Al-Ayyam et al*)
- UN calls Darfur rebels to join peace process (*Newkerala.com*)

Links

- **BBC: Could Abyei dispute reignite Sudan war?**
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-12208399>
- **BBC: The musicians bridging Sudan's deep divisions**
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-12172453>
- **MMD Newswire: UN Secretary-General Welcomes End of Polling Period in Southern Sudan Referendum, Calls for Patience until Final Result Is Announced**
<http://www.mmdnewswire.com/secretary-general-welcomes-end-of-polling-period-in-southern-sudan-referendum-calls-for-patience-until-final-result-is-announced-17999.html>
- **CNN: Hope, uncertainty as people flock back to Southern Sudan**
<http://edition.cnn.com/2011/WORLD/africa/01/17/sudan.returning.home/>

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Referendum Watch

Foreign observers attest to “fairness, credibility” of south Sudan referendum

Sudantribune.com Khartoum, 17/01/11 - Foreign observers who assessed south Sudan referendum on independence on Monday ruled that the vote had been largely successful, peaceful and credible.

A week-long vote in South Sudan referendum on independence ended on Saturday, 15 January, at 3,000 voting locations and eight Out-of-Country polling stations in Kenya, Australia, Canada, Egypt, Ethiopia, Uganda, the UK and the US.

Preliminary reports and statements released on Monday by the EU observation mission, the US-based Carter Center, the AU observation mission, the Arab League and East African observers all concurred that the vote was largely peaceful and credible.

A news conference held in Khartoum on Monday saw the head of the EU Mission, Veronique de Keyser, saying that the terms her mission use to describe the referendum are “peaceful and credible.”

De Keyser further suggested that the turnout, which she described as “overwhelming,” is expected to exceed the threshold required to validate the results of the outcome.

The EU chief observer said that approximately 80 percent of eligible voters had registered. She further noted that the referendum campaign in the south was conducted peacefully despite “isolated cases of intimidation” by government security officials.

De Keyser, whose team consisted of 110 observers who visited 800 polling stations in north and south Sudan, said that the mission would withhold final verdict on whether the process met international standards or not until after the vote counting was over.

The AU observation mission, whose 110 members covered 16 states, said in a preliminary report that the overall conduct of the referendum was “free, fair and credible.”

The mission lauded the “level of preparedness, conduct, and logistical arrangements” put in place by the Southern Sudan Referendum Commission (SSRC), which oversees the process. The mission further observed that while the turnout in south Sudan was “massive,” the turnout in the north was “notably low.”

The AU also noted with concern the incidents of violence reported at borderlands between north and south Sudan, in reference to clashes between the Arab nomadic tribe of Al-Misseriya and Dinka Ngok in the contested central area of Abyei.

The Carter Center indicated that the overall process had been “successful and broadly consistent with international standards.”

The center deployed more than 100 observers to assess the process inside Sudan and in OCV locations and its preliminary report said that early results on vote counting indicate that the plebiscite would certainly result in south Sudan secession, reminding the Sudanese government of its commitment to accept the result.

However, the Carter Center highlighted a number of glitches, such as the presence of security officers at polling stations and the absence of civic education, saying they deserve to be noted for future reference.

Observers of the Arab League team said the vote was “characterized by a high degree of transparency and integrity” notwithstanding some anomalies, including “underage voting and propaganda inside polling stations.”

Another satisfaction came from the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) in eastern Africa whose observation team concluded that the “counting was done in a free and transparent manner.” [Full text of the EU Observer Mission Press Release: <http://www.eueom.eu/sudan2011/home>]

Don't celebrate just yet: President Kiir

Gurtong.org Juba, 18/01/11 - GoSS President Salva Kiir Mayardit has called for patience as vote counting for the Southern Sudan Referendum advances.

The president also urged South Sudanese to continue recognising the national tools and symbols of the Republic of Sudan, despite indications that the South will secede from the North.

“Don't attempt to bring down the flag of the Republic of Sudan in the South. I also urge you to respect the National Congress Party (NCP) and its offices based in South Sudan”, Kiir told the congregation at St Teresa Cathedral in Juba during a Sunday service.

Kiir, who is also the SPLM Chairperson further called upon South Sudanese to accept the referendum results regardless of which side carries the day.

He also dismissed reports that South Sudan was arming itself in case the North rejects the results as “baseless and unfounded”.

Southern Sudanese officials may lose their federal government positions

Al-Sahafa Khartoum, 18/01/11 – Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly, Haju Gism-el-Sid, said yesterday that southern Sudanese officials in the federal government stand to lose their positions once secession is confirmed as the final results of the referendum. “They will all, without exception, lose their ministerial positions, parliamentary seats and other constitutional positions in the federal government,” he told **Al-Sahafa** in an interview. He also pointed out that this is pursuant to the Interim National Constitution that also stipulates that all provisions of the CPA are revoked by a secession vote at the referendum. He said however that such southern Sudanese officials would continue to receive their entitlements, without the privilege of the position, until July this year.

On whether or not parliament would have to be dissolved following such measures, the NCP figure answered in the negative, pointing out that this may require constitutional amendments.

SPLM violating country's foreign policy – Foreign Ministry

Al-Ahdath Khartoum, 18/01/11 – Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Khaled Musa Ali asserts that the SPLM is violating the country's policy directives by dealing with Israel. Sudan, he points out, is still one country.

In a separate but related story, the paper also reports that FVP Salva Kiir denied reports that the GoSS has bought Israeli arms and combat aircraft. He accused parties he did not name of trying to sow hatred between the people of southern Sudan and the Arab world. Kiir says such parties have to be brought to trial.

Sudanese have foiled the hopes of advocates of violence

Al-Rai Al-Aam Kadugli, 18/01/11 – Interior Minister Ibrahim Mahmoud Hamid says the people of Sudan have shown a high level of maturity and proved wrong those who expected an outbreak of referendum-related violence.

Addressing the joint security meeting of the states of Southern Kordofan, Unity, Northern Bahr-el-Ghazal and the Abyei Area held in Kadugli yesterday, the minister said that the country's political leadership played a major role in bringing about a climate conducive for a peaceful referendum. He also hailed the regular forces for their efforts to preserve calm and security.

Security meeting on Abyei strikes deal on migration, returns

Al-Sahafa et al Khartoum; Kadugli, 18/01/11 – Following a meeting of the security committees of Southern Kordofan State, Unity State, Northern Bahr-el-Ghazal State and the Abyei Area Administration, Interior Minister Ibrahim Mahmoud Hamid said that the meeting agreed to open and secure return routes to southern Sudan. Participants also agreed that the SAF and the Sudan police would provide escort for returnee convoys to southern Sudan up to the borders with southern Sudan from where the task would be handed over to their southern Sudanese counterparts.

The parties also agreed that the additional police forces from southern Sudan in Abyei would have to be replaced by JIUs and that the UN monitor and support implementation of that agreement. They also agreed to access to the migratory routes.

Southern Kordofan Governor Ahmed Haroun, on his part confirmed his government's commitment to cooperate with the governments of Unity and Northern Bahr-el-Ghazal states and the Abyei Administration to help realise the wishes of the people of these areas to return without problems, reports *Al-Tayyar*. He told the meeting in Kadugli that any development in the security arrangements on Abyei would directly impact security on the north-south routes. Progress on these issues would lay a firm foundation for the third track – the political solution that the parties, with the help of the international community, seek to bring about to the Abyei problem, he said.

AU's Mbeki says talks between north, south Sudan to resume end of January

SUNA [via BBC Monitoring, 18/01/11] - President Al-Bashir received last evening the chairman of the AU Panel and former President of South Africa, Thabo Mbeki, and affirmed the continuity of discussion on the pending issues between the two partners.

Following a meeting yesterday with President Al-Bashir, the head of the AU High Level Panel said in press statements following the meeting that the negotiations on Abyei and the other issues will be continued by the end of January.

He said the two sides agreed to assist southern Sudan whatever be the outcome of the referendum, expressing his pleasure over holding a successful, fair and transparent referendum.

Popular Consultations Watch

7,000 have their say in Blue Nile Popular Consultations

Al-Rai Al-Aam Damazin, 18/01/11 – The Popular Consultations process for Blue Nile State has continued well into its fourth day with a large turnout. Siham Hashim, the Information Secretary from the parliamentary committee on Popular Consultations, reported yesterday that calm continues to prevail. She says that over 7,000 people have come in to have their say on the issue with turnout recorded at 2,110 for yesterday alone.

Other Highlights

Sudan opposition leader Hassan al-Turabi “arrested”

BBC Khartoum, 18/1/11 - Sudanese Islamist opposition leader, Hassan al-Turabi, has been arrested by security forces at his home, his Popular Congress Party (PCP) has said. Party secretary, Awad Babiker, told the *Reuters* news agency that armed officers had arrived in several vehicles arresting al-Turabi along with a member of his staff who had clashed with them.

On Sunday, Mr. Turabi warned of a "popular uprising" if the government did not reverse new austerity measures. On Monday, Mr. Turabi warned that an uprising as seen in Tunisia last week was "likely" amid public anger over poverty, a lack of political reform, and fears over the likely secession of Southern Sudan.

"This country has known popular uprisings before," he told the *AFP* news agency, referring to revolts in Sudan in 1964 and 1985. "What happened in Tunisia is a reminder. This is likely to happen in Sudan."

"If it doesn't, then there will be a lot of bloodshed. The whole country is armed. In the towns it will be a popular uprising, but in Darfur, and in Kordofan as well, they have weapons."

"Sudan is not a small country like Tunisia, but it is exposed to a risk of chaos worse than Somalia," he said.

"They keep making the same claims over and over again about our links with PCP but they end up producing no evidence. This is just another fabrication by Sudanese security," he added. Quoting a senior security source, the website said that confessions of JEM captives and documents confirm the role of the PCP in directing and financing the rebel group's activities through direct supervision of their military operations in Darfur.

But the *Sudanese Media Center (SMC)* website, which is closely linked to the country's National Intelligence and Security Services (NISS), said that senior officials captured from the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) in West Darfur last week admitted that they have links and are receiving support from Turabi's party to carry out military campaigns in the restive region.

“They just want to divert attention from their growing domestic problems and their withdrawal from the peace talks in Doha” Hussein told *Sudantribune.com*.

But JEM spokesperson Ahmed Hussein described the allegations as “ridiculous”.

On Sunday, opposition parties, including the Popular Congress Party, called a joint news conference to congratulate Tunisians and demand an "end to the totalitarian regime" in Khartoum. They also threatened to take to the streets if the president did not sack the finance minister and reverse a recent decision to raise prices on a range of basic goods.

"All the opposition parties have been talking to the government again and again to try and get them to decentralise, to liberalise, to democratise and promote freedom of expression. But they don't allow it," Mr. Turabi said.

In a related development *Al-Ayyam* daily reports that students from Al-Gazira University campus in Kamlin, a few miles south of Khartoum, took to the streets yesterday protesting the rising costs of living. They were joined by the local residents and the protests temporarily blocked the main Khartoum-Kassala highway to traffic before police intervened with teargas to disperse the crowds. Ten of the protestors are said to have injured, seven of them seriously, and some protestors were arrested in the process. Sources say the protestors wanted to hand to the authorities a memorandum demanding an improvement in services at their hostel blocks and better campus facilities.

On the other hand, *Al-Sahafa* quotes NCP kingpin Nafei Ali Nafei as saying that the government does not fear a Tunisia-like uprising in Sudan. In a program broadcast on state television, Nafei said that the ruling party in Sudan has “entered every house in the country and is in touch with the concerns of the people.” He further pointed out that the current opposition leaders could not topple the government but said his government was in support of the formation of a broad-based government.

Nuba Mountains figures walk out on SPLA

Al-Rai Al-Aam Khartoum, 18/01/11 – SPLA members hailing from the Nuba Mountains area in Southern Kordofan have announced the formation of a new military body by the name “The Democratic Reform Army”. They say they have decided to walk out on the SPLA for having “abandoned the calls for a new Sudan and advocating for separation and a secular southern Sudanese state”. They also said that the SPLA’s push to annex Abyei to the south is also one of the reasons for their revolt as well as racially-laced bias within the SPLA.

In a statement issued yesterday, the new military front also cited the continued arrest of Telefon Kuku and 15,000 others is also among the reasons for their action.

Authorities stamp out flames in the vicinity of oil field in Unity State

Al-Ayyam et al Khartoum, 18/01/11 – Oil Minister Lual Deng has confirmed that the outbreak of fire near the Manga oilfield a few kilometres from Bentiu in Unity State has been brought under control. No casualties in lives or damage to the oil installations have been reported. He attributed the fire to the burning of grass by farmers as they prepare their land for cultivation.

State governor Taban Deng said that the fire broke out in the forest areas but then the flames spread when they reached some of the residue from the oil fields in the area but fire-fighters managed to bring the situation under control.

UN calls Darfur rebels to join peace process

Newkerala.com New York, 18/01/11 - Participants at a United Nations-backed meeting on Darfur have called on all rebel groups to re-engage with the peace process to facilitate a speedy conclusion of the negotiations aimed at bringing peace to the strife-torn Sudanese region.

The meeting, held in the Sudanese capital, Khartoum, on Saturday, addressed the current situation with respect to the so-called Doha peace process, which is hosted by the Government of Qatar, and the prevailing security situation on the ground.

Chaired by Thabo Mbeki, former South African president and chair of the African Union High-Level Implementation Panel for Sudan (AUHIP), the talks also focused on how best to proceed on expediting the all-inclusive Darfur Political Process leading to the Darfur-Darfur Conference.

"The parties agreed that in order to quickly resolve the Darfur conflict, it is necessary to initiate an immediate, concurrent and complementary Darfur Political Process on the ground," according to a note issued by the joint UN-AU peacekeeping mission in Darfur (UNAMID).

The process will be led by the AUHIP and UNAMID, which convened the meeting along with the Governments of Sudan and the United States.

Senior UN officials have been urging all the parties to enter into negotiations in good faith without delay, stressing that only a comprehensive and inclusive negotiated political settlement can bring about a credible cessation of hostilities and address the root causes of conflict in Darfur.

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