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Media Monitoring Report

United Nations Mission in Sudan/ Public Information Office

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Highlights

Local Arabic and English Language Press

US senator Kerry arrives in Sudan

Local dailies report US Senator Kerry arrived in Sudan yesterday for talks with senior government officials.

"Now it is my opportunity representing the U.S. Congress and U.S. Senate to be here to engage on humanitarian issues and obviously issues pertaining to the conflict," Kerry told reporters after landing, according to **Reuters** yesterday. "We're all very hopeful that we can make progress on these issues. According to **Al-Ayyam**, Kerry is unlikely to meet with President Al-Bashir.

Akhbar Al-Youm reports Kerry's talks will focus on bilateral relations, CPA implementation and Darfur. The national Assembly Deputy Speaker Mohamed Al-Hassan Al-Amin who received Kerry upon arrival expressed hope that the visit would contribute toward efforts to normalize relations between the two countries, adding that the government is optimistic about the noted change in the US policy.

According to **Ajras Al-Hurriah**, Sudan's Foreign Ministry has welcomed Senator Kerry's visit. MFA spokesperson Ali Al-Sadiq said the government would do its utmost to normalize relations with the US and hoped Kerry would show understanding of the need to lift the economic sanctions imposed on the Sudan as well as the removal of Sudan from the terrorist list. Kerry is expected to meet today with VP Taha, Presidential Assistant Nafie Ali Nafie, Presidential Adviser Ghazi Salah Al-Din and Foreign Minister Deng Alor and will proceed to Darfur on Friday for meeting with IDPs, Governor of North Darfur and UNAMD.

Al-Khartoum reports Sudan Ambassador to US John Akej Koj as saying that Sudan government is hopeful that the visit will contribute towards resolution of the pending issues. He said the visit was important as issues like lifting economic sanctions and removing names from the terrorist lists can only be sorted out by the Congress. Presidential Adviser Mustafa Osman Ismail said relations between Sudan and US are likely to move to a new stage of cooperation during the next period. However, he said it was premature to talk about change in the US policy towards Sudan.

Al-Akhbar editorial says Senator Kerry is rational and realistic but it is not easy to convince him with mere words and slogans. "A golden opportunity is made available for Sudan government officials to meet an open-minded man who is also a good listener. It remains to be seen whether the government will present a convincing case" the editorial says.

But a number of politicians, experts and strategists who took part in a forum organized by the **Akhir Lahza** yesterday, painted a grim picture of the US strategy towards Sudan. They said they expect no positive change in the US policy.

SPLM politburo met in Juba

Al-Rai Al-Aam reports SPLM Politburo chaired by FVP Salva Kiir met yesterday in Juba. According to SPLM spokesperson Mathew Yen, the meeting did not discuss the question of SPLM's candidates for the upcoming elections but discussed the ICC and the census. Reportedly, the SPLM intends to name a person other than Kiir to run for presidential elections. However, **Al-Ahdath** reports that a list of four SPLM presidential candidates have been

presented which included SPLM Chairman Salva Kiir and his deputy Malik Aqar.

President Al-Bashir decrees formation of committees on aid effort

Al-Rai Al-Aam reports President Al-Bashir issues two decrees on formation of two committees to follow up and collect the humanitarian assistances committed by the national, Arab and Islamic NGOs to address the humanitarian situation in Darfur. The financial committee will be headed by the Minister of Finance Awad Al-Jaz and is tasked with following up with the national NGOs and the second committee is headed by the Presidential Adviser Mustafa Osman Ismail and is tasked with following up aid committed by Arab and Islamic countries.

In another development, Sudan government has rejected Oxfam GB appeal for readmission. According to **Al-Sahafa**, the Humanitarian Affairs Ministry, MFA and the Presidency share identical stances that the INGO ouster decision was sovereign and final. Presidential Press Adviser Mahgoub Fadul Badri told the paper that none of the expelled INGOs would be readmitted and no appeal would be accepted.

However, **Al-Ahdath** yesterday reported Sudan Government and the International Community reached understandings to overcome the INGO expulsion crisis. The paper has learned from an influential government source that an agreement was imminent between the government and international community including the USA whereby new INGOs will be allowed to operate in the country. According to the paper's source, the government also agreed to American NGOs to operate as per specific conditions. Meanwhile, **Al-Rai Al-Aam** yesterday quoting informed sources, reported that the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs has noted new "irregularities" by a UK, Dutch and Danish NGOs. Reportedly, the Ministry is considering taking measures against them. The source further added that the Ministry is in the process of drafting new laws to regulate humanitarian activities.

President Al-Bashir to visit Ethiopia next week

Al-Raed reports President Al-Bashir will visit Ethiopia next week to participate in Sudan-Ethiopia High Committee meetings scheduled for 20 April.

Oral submission on Abyei on Saturday

Al-Ahdath reports NCP and SPLM will deliver their oral submission to the Abyei Arbitration Tribunal on Saturday. The Government delegation, accompanied by several journalists, is expected to leave for The Hague today. A 60-member SPLM delegation headed by GoSS VP Rieck Machar is also expected to arrive in The Hague for the oral argument. Reportedly, the Tribunal is likely to announce the results after 90 days from the submissions. Meanwhile, SPLM said the claims by the NCP official Al-Dirdiri Mohamed Ahmed who handles Abyei dossier to the effect that the Presidency transferred a million dollars to meet the cost of the SPLM's submission on Abyei arbitration was incorrect. GoSS Presidency Affairs Minister Luka Biong told journalists yesterday that on 14 April the Government transferred \$ 800,000 just hours from SPLM delegation departure for The Hague a matter that affected the SPLM preparation for the submission and that the movement was forced to loan to meet the charges. He said even the \$800,000 would not have been transferred had it not been for the pressure exercised by the Court.

Bomb threat at US Juba Consulate

The Citizen reports that military police deployed by the SPLA searched the US Consulate in Juba yesterday following a bomb threat last Monday. The Consulate was closed to staff on Tuesday.

Eight killed in cattle raid in Lakes State: **The Citizen** reports that the police have confirmed the death of at least eight people in Lakes State in a cattle raid yesterday. State authorities have confirmed that a group of youths from Yirol West County attacked a cattle camp along River Jau in Yirol East while the camp dwellers were still asleep and got away with thousands of cattle.

South Sudan relief commission urges focus on returns

Rai Al-Shaab reports that the Southern Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Commission has urged all stakeholders to focus more on return programs in order to ensure that all refugees return to their homes. Speaking to **Miraya FM**, Director of the Commission, Simon Duol Koth, also underlined the need to provide employment opportunities to Sudanese citizens, explaining that some refugees are discouraged to return due to various challenges including lack of job opportunities.

No amendments to the Constitution - Speaker

National Assembly Speaker Ahmed Ibrahim Al-Tahir told the House yesterday that parliament has a term of five years that will end in 2010 according to the Constitution, **Al-Rai Al-Aam** reports. These statements put to rest the debate over whether or not to amend the constitution in order to extend parliament's term after the deferment of the elections to early 2010.

Southern Sudanese applicants' list for public service slots finalized

Al-Ayyam reports that the Public Service Commission has prepared the first list of applicants for the 20% slots for southern Sudanese in the public service as per the CPA provisions. The 1,039 positions include four ministerial undersecretaries' posts. The head of the Commission, Moses Machar, said that this preliminary list of applicants awaits endorsement by President Al-Bashir.

Websites/International News Coverage

Sudan court sentences 10 alleged rebels to death

AP, 15/4/09, KHARTOUM — A Sudanese anti-terrorism court on Wednesday convicted 10 alleged Darfur rebels of waging war and sentenced them to death for their role in last year's deadly attack on the country's capital, court officials said.

The court's verdict brought to 60 the number of people who have been sentenced to death in a series of trials after the May 2008 attack just outside of Khartoum that killed about 200 people including civilians.

It is unknown how many people were arrested after the attack, and it is not clear if all those detained were rebels. New York-based Human Rights Watch, citing witnesses, said in May at least 100 people were arrested at checkpoints and in house-to-house searches.

Judge Mutasim Osman convicted the 10 of waging war against the state and terrorizing civilians and acquitted three others. After the verdict was read, the men chanted slogans against the government, and some of their relatives wept.

The government and JEM had started peace talks in February. But the talks faltered after the International Criminal Court issued its warrant in March against President Omar al-Bashir.

Al-Bashir rejected the accusations and responded by expelling 13 foreign aid groups and three local ones working mostly in Darfur.

JEM says it will not participate in further talks unless al-Bashir reverses his decision. The aid groups make up nearly 40 percent of relief providers in the region, and the U.N. and U.S. officials warned of a developing humanitarian crisis.

After arriving in Khartoum, Kerry, D-Mass., said he was "hopeful" that progress can be made in

Sudan.

Darfur JEM slams execution of suspects in journalist case

Sudan Tribune website, 15/4/09 (KHARTOUM) – JEM reacted strongly to the executions of nine men carried out on Monday by the Sudanese authorities.

The verdict drew strong condemnation from JEM. “The head of the regime, Salah Gosh [spy chief], Osama Abdullah [Dam construction official], Abdel-Rahim Mohamed Hussein [Defense minister] know very well that they have nothing to do with the assassination of Mohamed Taha Mohamed Ahmed” a statement by the rebel movement read.

“Whoever assassinated are the notorious guards of the regime and power lobbies and special interest groups within the regime. Once again motivated by disgusting racism and in a blatant abuse of justice and human values, the people of Darfur pay the high price”.

It was reported that the slain journalist himself had been the target of an assassination attempt five years previously after writing an article which criticized the ruling National Congress Party (NCP).

“We say it loud and clear. The regime...will pay the high price for this massacre...made in the name of justice” JEM said.

“Today’s crime proves that the jurisdiction over the crimes committed in Darfur lies under the ICC. There is no justice in Sudan”.

VP Taha presides over the higher council for migration and aliens

SUNA, 15/4/09, Khartoum – VP Taha Wednesday headed the fourth meeting of the Higher Council for Migration and Aliens that comprised a number of concerned Ministries and government bodies. The Assistant Director General of the Passports Civil Record Department General Bashir Ahmed Bashir said the meeting reviewed foreign influx into Sudan through the neighboring countries and how this could be controlled and how the negative impacts could be remedied.

South Sudan VP says agreement nears on referendum law

Sudan Tribune website, 15/4/09 (JUBA) — NCP and SPLM are close to finalizing repeal and creation of 21 national laws including the law for the exercise of referendum for the people of the semi-autonomous Southern Sudan.

The CPA calls for review and establishment of national laws during the interim period that should conform to the peace deal and the Interim Constitution of Sudan.

GoSS VP Riek Machar said the Joint Executive Political Committee of the National Congress Party (NCP) and the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement (SPLM) was close to agreeing on the proposed law for the conduct of referendum in Southern Sudan which is expected to take place about 19 months from now.

Dr. Machar added that the NCP’s committee led by the Vice President of Sudan, Ali Osman Mohamed Taha, had also agreed on the need to establish respective laws for the exercise of referendum in Abyei and for popular consultations in Nuba Mountains and Southern Blue Nile.

He said the issue had been problematic for the last three months since presentation of the

SPLM's proposals on the issues because the NCP had refused the establishment of such laws for the three contested regions.

He explained that the current law governing the Central Bank of Sudan deprives the Bank of Southern Sudan from owning national reserves.

He added that his committee had presented a new proposal to the NCP on devolution of some functions to the Bank of Southern Sudan. "We have given a new proposal. This is being studied [by NCP], and we think our proposal conforms to the CPA," he said without revealing details of the proposal.

The SPLM Deputy Chairman further explained that they also discussed the need to decentralize judiciary in respect to justice administration. "This section or branch of government really has not been affected by decentralization as stipulated in the CPA," he explained.

Machar further explained that power sharing didn't mean sharing of executive and legislative organs only, but should also include the administration of justice at the national level.

He also said customs, which is a national competence, needed a new law for its establishment in Southern Sudan.

Others, he said, included the SPLM proposed respective laws for Civil Aviation and Telecommunications, which bills were presented and agreed upon by the two parties.

Machar further added that discussions are also ongoing with laws in regard to issuance of passports, immigration and civil registry.

A law on civil defense was being worked out, he said, in case of disasters on how a nation should act or respond to a natural disaster.

Many proposed new laws (bills) have been agreed upon by the two partners and are awaiting endorsement by the National Assembly. Some are yet to pass through the GoNU Council of Ministers in Khartoum while the rest are still being worked out by the Joint Committee.

"In total there are 21 laws before the National Congress [Party], which within May [next month], we should dispose of them so that the National Assembly which opened last Monday passes these laws." With that we could then close the dossiers of the legal part and we wait for the North-South Border issue," Machar further explained.

North Sudan DDR calls for social peace in Darfur

SUNA, 15/4/09, Khartoum - Minister of State in the Council of Ministers, Ali Majouk Al Mu'min held a meeting with the North Sudan Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Commission on Thursday at the Council of Ministers. Briefing the meeting on the DDR's activities, Commissioner Dr Sulaf Edeen Salih stressed the need for building social security in Darfur to pave the way for peace and integrating signatory movements' affiliates in sustainable development projects and civil society. The meeting agreed to hold a meeting with Darfur movements to sponsor certain DDR programmes in the region.

Uganda, Sudan discuss regional security

Sudan Tribune website, 15/4/09 (KHARTOUM) – Sudanese and Ugandan officials today discussed efforts among states in the Great Lakes region to facilitate herding inter-border

movements and prevent clashes.

Uganda's Foreign Affairs State Minister Isaac Musumba met in Khartoum with his Sudanese counterpart Ali Karti. Musumba also came in his capacity as the coordinator of the Great lakes organization.

Sudan official news agency (SUNA) quoted Karti as saying that achieving peace and security is crucial to development in the region.

The Sudanese foreign ministry spokesperson Ali Al-Sadiq told reporters that both sides also discussed political support and trade between Uganda and Sudan.

Al-Sadiq said that the Ugandan official stressed his country's support for Sudan in its conformation with the ICC which last month issued an arrest warrant for President Al-Bashir.

The Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni said in the past that Bashir should be investigated by the AU and took a cautious position on the issue contrary to other African states that have rallied behind the Sudanese head of state.

Musumba said that his visit to Sudan comes in the framework of disarmament in the border areas of Sudan, Kenya, Uganda and Ethiopia.

Justice Minister Interview

In a lengthy interview to ***Akhir Lahza***, Justice Minister Abdul Basit Sabdarat has reiterated Sudan government rejection of dealing with the ICC, pointing out that the Sudanese law is now containing provisions that will try war crimes, adding these new provisions will be discussed by the National Assembly in its new session. Asked about media reports that Ahmed Haroun will be tried of alleged crimes he said, "This is incorrect. There are no charges against Ahmed Haroun and we can not charge him based on the ICC Prosecutor Ocampo's report. In Short, he is not facing any charge now". Sabdarat said the Arab League has sent a delegation to review the Sudanese judiciary but it has yet to submit its report.

Commentary

Elections funding ... equality in distribution

Abdelraouf Awadh – Al-Rai Al-Aam - Preparations for the general elections next February require that all political parties that intend to vie for the polls avail large amounts of money for their media campaigns in addition to internal trips and other related expenses. In an unprecedented move, the Ministry of Finance and National Economy said it has earmarked an amount of \$77.3 million from oil revenue for January this year to meet funding requirements for the elections. This step has widely been accepted in political circles despite the fact that the SPLM has opposed this step because elections funding should have nothing to do with the SPLM share in the oil revenue. Other political parties however called for an equitable distribution of those funds. Qutbi Al-Mahdi, a key member of the NCP, has expressed hopes that the issue of funding should not be the key issue for the elections campaign and has urged political parties to focus on their agenda. He explained that the government has earmarked those funds to increase the capacity of political parties.