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Media Monitoring Report

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Referendum Watch

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Highlights

Khartoum will be the first to recognize vote result – Foreign Ministry

Al-Ahdath 19/1/11 – The Ministry of Foreign Affairs confirmed that the North would be the first to recognize the referendum results and will endeavour to establish good relations should secession is opted for.

The remark was made by the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Rahamatullah Mohamed Osman yesterday during a meeting with Japanese observer mission.

Government to schedule foreign troops departure from the North

Sudan Vision 19/1/11 - Government has stressed its intention to set a schedule for the departure of the African and international forces from the North, underscoring rejection of any force deployment on her soil adjacent to the border line common with the South.

Presidential Advisor for Foreign Relations Dr. Mustafa Osman Ismail, informed that the Sudan is due to formulate a foreign relations strategy for the post-referendum stage, as the North, after secession, will still remain the largest Arab country in terms of area and will be neighboring seven countries.

In an interview with the Arabic Satellite TV Channel, "Ghnat Ala'alam Alakhbaria" Dr. Ismail said, "Sudan relations with neighboring countries are marked by tribal overlapping, common cultural and historical ties, as well as common strategic interests such as the Nile waters.

He said that, the nascent state in the South, in case of separation, will be the largest neighbor in terms of area with an over 2,000 km common border with the North. There will also remain the cultural and tribal overlap with the North under the spread of the Arabic language and Islamic culture in the South and the common interest as represented by the Nile.

"As a state with no access to the sea, her oil export will be transported through the North," he said, brushing away claims made by secession advocates, to the effect that the South will not need the North.

The presidential advisor rejected the Sudanese Peoples' Liberation Movement (SPLM) proposal suggesting exclusion of the Messeriya tribe from voting in the forthcoming Abyei referendum, cautioning an outbreak of war between the South and the Messeriya tribe whose existence in region has been historical. He said that all parties involved should reach a common understanding on this issue.

He added that the Comprehensive Peace Agreement acknowledges 1956's line as the border between the South and the North, saying that Khartoum is ready to reach an agreement on the disputed issues on the basis of this reference.

Concluding his statement to the TV channel, Ismail called for resolution of the Sudanese issues such as Darfur, domestically with exclusion of any foreign intervention in Sudan's local affairs.

57% voted for secession in seven northern states

Al-Sahafa 19/1/11- the SSRC announced that it has received vote results of seven northern states where 57% of voters voted for secession and 38% voted for unity. 98% voted for secession and 0.3% voted for unity in out-of-country centres.

SSRC Spokesperson Sua'd Eissa said the results of vote in the North would be released after the same are received from all centres.

According to **Sudan Radio** 19/1/11, many northern states including Khartoum state voted for secession.

AFP 18/1/11 reported that turnout inside south Sudan for a landmark vote on independence for the region reached 96 percent, massively exceeding the 60 percent threshold for it to be valid, organisers said on Tuesday.

"The total turnout in the south was 96 percent and in the Diaspora it was 97 percent," organising commission spokesman George Maker Benjamin told AFP, adding that it had topped 50 percent even among southerners registered in the north.

The south accounted for some 3.75 million of the nearly four million people registered to vote in the week-long referendum which closed on Saturday.

The huge crowds that overwhelmed polling stations in the south over the first four days drew expressions of admiration from world leaders.

"The sight of so many Sudanese casting their votes in a peaceful and orderly fashion was an inspiration to the world and a tribute to the determination of the people and leaders of south Sudan to forge a better future," US President Barack Obama said on Sunday.

UN praises south Sudan poll but Abyei casts shadow

AFP 19/1/11 - The count in south Sudan's landmark independence referendum gathered pace on Wednesday, buoyed by praise for the vote from the UN Security Council but tempered by concern over deadly tensions in Abyei, a flashpoint border district.

The few preliminary results in so far have shown landslide majorities for separation of the mainly Christian, African south from the mainly Arab, Muslim north and the creation of the world's newest state.

But the region's leaders have warned against any premature celebration or triumphalism that might undermine hopes of a velvet divorce.

The regional capital Juba and the town of Rumbek, which served as rebel headquarters during the 1983-2005 civil war with the north, were among the areas expected to declare preliminary results during the day.

The tin-roof office in the centre of Juba which serves as a centre for the count was crammed with officials double-checking hand-written forms as excitement mounted ahead of the scheduled announcement of provisional results for the surrounding county at 2:30 pm (1130 GMT).

"We have been busy with the counting of the ballots, but that is now complete, and the polling stations have taken their boxes to the county level," said Aleu Garang Aleu, a spokesman for the Southern Sudanese Referendum Bureau, which is running the vote in the south.

"Now the ballots are being moved to the 10 state capitals of the south -- many have already arrived. We are being methodical to make sure all the rules are respected -- and that takes time, of course."

The UN Security Council powers all praised the conduct of the referendum on Tuesday, after foreign observer missions endorsed its credibility.

But council members expressed concern about tensions in the disputed district of Abyei on the north-south border where dozens died in clashes earlier this month, overshadowing the week-long polling that ended on Saturday.

More than three days of fighting between migratory Misseriya Arab nomads from the north and settled pro-southern Dinka Ngok killed between 20 and 60 people, the head of the UN Mission in Sudan, Haile Menkerios, told the council.

The district had been due to hold a simultaneous plebiscite on its own future alongside the wider southern referendum but it has been indefinitely postponed.

Menkerios said that uncertainty meant there was "a risk of instability" for months to come.

The UN peacekeeping force "has increased both the size of its military deployment to Abyei and its military-civilian patrolling in the area in order to deter further clashes," he said.

But he added that there had been attempts to commandeer UN vehicles and "direct threats" to UN personnel.

Patrols by special joint units of northern and southern troops, which are the only other armed force allowed to enter Abyei, are also to be stepped up.

"These efforts for reducing tensions and preventing violence can contain the situation. However, the continued absence of a final settlement on the future of Abyei leaves open the possibility of further clashes between the communities," Menkerios warned.

South Sudanese urged not to miscarry nascent state

AFP 18/1/11 - Southern Sudanese leaders warned on Tuesday against premature independence celebrations as the slow process of collating the result of last week's vote ground on amid indications of a landslide.

Information Minister Barnaba Marial Benjamin said that any triumphalism about the separation of the mainly Christian, African south from the mainly Arab, Muslim north risked sparking a "miscarriage" for their nascent state.

"The opinion polls indicate that the south will definitely vote for a state of their own but we must

still wait for the final result," the minister said.

"Don't dance and beat drums and celebrate before the baby is born in case there may be a miscarriage."

Benjamin called on southerners to be particularly careful about any crowing in front of northerners still in the south, nearly all of whom were excluded from voting in the referendum by the registration criteria.

"The northern Sudanese who are here, these people are here to stay. They have the right as much as you (have) as citizens of Sudan," he said...

South Sudan's new state will face challenges over people's high expectation - official

Sudan Tribune.com 18/1/11 - As preliminary official results of the South Sudan referendum on secession from the north indicate an overwhelming vote in favour of secession, senior members of the government have begun to shift focus on what is expected of the new nation.

Official preliminary results from the centres in South Sudan, north Sudan and the Diaspora have shown overwhelming vote for secession; most of them are above 97%.

Meeting with potential foreign investors in the region's capital, Juba, on 18 January, the Vice President of the semi-autonomous government, Riek Machar, said the next challenge after the referendum is meeting or managing the high expectations which the people of South Sudan have attached to independence.

"The referendum is finished. When the flag is raised [if the result announced in July is in favour of secession] and we tell our people that you are now independent, they will say, well, independence; we want to see its fruits," he told the Chinese investors." Machar said the Government of Southern Sudan would continue to provide an enabling environment, which will attract investors in all sectors of development, in order to speedily meet the people's expectations in the new independent state.

Warrap starts advance celebration of secession vote

Sudan Tribune.com 18/1/11 - While Salva Kiir Mayardit, the president of the semi-autonomous regional government called on citizens not to start celebrating until official results of the recently concluded referendum vote on self-determination are announced, citizens of Turalei county, Warrap state, have already begun.

Colonel Dominic Kuoc Malek, commissioner of Twic County, told Sudan Tribune on 18 January that security had been beefed up in the area, following the conclusion of the referendum vote in the country on 15 January.

"We have increased number of security personnel in the county to look after people celebrating the referendum vote. We have done it because many people are out celebrating with relatives and friends," said Malek.

Malek said celebration in his county started immediately after the last day of voting. Others

started celebrations immediately after casting their votes. "It did not start at once. It started at an individual level until it started to grow and spread through villages," said Malek.

Captain Manut Juuk Lang, in an interview with Sudan Tribune from Aweng payam (district) in Twic County confirmed continuation of the celebrations in the area.

"I can confirm to you that celebrations are in progress in our houses. We are celebrating with our wives and children. Not a single person was found to vote for unity after counting. All those who voted in our centre voted for separation. This is the great achievement that we must allow to pass with celebrating. Who knows what will happen in between the period results," said Lang.

Lang who said joined the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) at the age of 11, said he did not know he would be among those who would cast their votes on referendum day. "I am extremely happy and thankful to God for having kept me alive to reach referendum day. I did not know I would reach referendum nor did I know there would be a referendum. We were fighting for total liberation of south Sudan through bullets. There were no hopes for ballots and agreements were dishonoured by successive Khartoum based regimes," said Lang.

However, Kiir said on 16 January at Saint Teresa Catholic Church in Juba, that people should not start celebrations even if they believe the majority have voted for separation.

He 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.

The SPLM leader also called on the South Sudanese to accept the referendum results, regardless of the result. Kiir also dismissed reports that South Sudan was arming itself in case the North rejects the results as "baseless and unfounded"...

CPA parties to resume talks by the end of January

Al-Sahafa 19/1/11 – AUHIP Chair Thabo Mbeki said CPA parties, the NCP and the SPLM, would resume talks on pending issues by the end of January.

Mbeki told reporters after a meeting with president Al-Bashir that an agreement was reached to continue dialogue on Abyei and other pending issues after the vote results are released.

Meanwhile, SPLM leader Atem Garang has rejected statement by the National Assembly deputy speaker that the southern holders of constitutional posts would lose their jobs if secession is confirmed. Garang warned that the North would lose its oil share should such measure is taken.

Clashes in Sudan region cloud UN hopes for peaceful division

AFP 18/1/11 - A UN envoy warned Tuesday that clashes in a border region between north and south Sudan risked casting a shadow over the peaceful holding of a landmark self-determination vote in the country.

The UN Security Council powers all praised the referendum in south Sudan which is expected to

lead to the breakup of Africa's biggest nation.

But all expressed concern about tensions in the oil-rich Abyei region where dozens died in clashes last week and the United Nations has sent peacekeeper reinforcements to prevent new fighting.

Haile Menkerios, the UN special representative for Sudan, said that uncertainty over Abyei's future meant there was "a risk of instability" for months to come.

Under a peace accord made on January 13, two battalions of UN troops were sent to northern Abyei and 300 police from Dinka Ngok police from the south were withdrawn, Menkerios said.

The UN mission in Sudan "has increased both the size of its military deployment to Abyei and its military-civilian patrolling in the area in order to deter further clashes," Menkerios said.

But he added that there had been attempts to commandeer UN vehicles and "direct threats" to UN personnel.

"These efforts for reducing tensions and preventing violence can contain the situation however the continued absence of a final settlement on the future of Abyei leaves open the possibility of further clashes between the communities," he told the council.

Menkerios said the south Sudan referendum was still an "historic milestone" in the implementation of the 2005 peace accord that ended a civil war between the north and south that killed two million people.

"Much remains to be done," Menkerios said, adding that new talks would be held in Khartoum from January 27 but that neither side had responded to proposals made by UN mediator Thabo Mbeki, the former South African president.

US ambassador Susan Rice also called the referendum a "historic moment" and British ambassador called the vote "an impressive UN operation."

"Though we are concerned by events in Abyei we are very encouraged by the peaceful and orderly conduct of the voting process," he said. "These clashes underline the need urgently to reach a lasting agreement on Abyei. We urge the swift resumption of talks."

PCP leader Turabi planning assassinations – NCP

Al-Ahdath 19/1/11 – NCP deputy chairman Nafie Ali Nafie has charged Popular Congress Party leader (PCP) Hassan Al-Turabi with planning to incite sedition and to carry out assassinations to spark the uprising he is talking about. He told reporters yesterday that security apparatus unearthed concrete evidence of the plot.

Nafie said the opposition has no capacity to ignite an uprising due to lack of popular support but did not rule out assassinations to create instability. He hinted the possibility of preventive detentions.

Meanwhile, NCP leading figure Mohamed Mandour Al-Mahdi said trial of Hassan Al-Turabi

depends on results of investigation adding that the opposition would be disappointed because they people will not respond to its call for a revolt.

Sudan Tribune.com 18/1/11 reported that the Islamist opposition leader Hassan Al-Turabi has been planning to carry out sabotage and assassinations prompting the National Intelligence and Security Services (NISS) to move on him and take him into custody, a senior official in the ruling National Congress Party (NCP) said today.

The Sudanese Media Center (SMC) website which is widely believed to be run by the NISS said yesterday that the move was in light of new information retrieved from Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) members captured in West Darfur last week.

But the NCP deputy chairman Nafie Ali Nafie who is also presidential assistant appeared to provide a different account.

Quoted by Sudan official news agency (SUNA) the NCP official said that Turabi want to disrupt security to start a plan aimed at toppling the government.

Nafie said that the opposition wants to stir the public by exploiting the economic conditions facing the country so they can take the street and carry out assassinations according to information gathered by pertinent authorities.

He said that it would be irresponsible on the government's part to let this scheme proceed with taking action.

Asked whether the assassination was targeting certain officials his response was that the information will become clear.

However Nafie declined to say whether charges will be pressed against Turabi and other PCP figures based on the plot allegedly uncovered.

The presidential assistant made no mention of JEM links as carried by SMC website yesterday...

Meanwhile, the PCP has demanded the immediate release of its secretary-general Hassan Al-Turabi besides ten other party leaders, according to *Al-Sahafa* 19/1/11. PCP Deputy Secretary-General, speaking at press conference yesterday, refuted authorities claims of links between Turabi and JEM, adding Turabi was detained because local authorities are aware about his ability to spark a popular uprising but his detention would not stop a revolt.

Quoting an anonymous security source, the Sudan Media Center (SMC), a news website run by the NISS, said that confessions elicited from a number of JEM members who were captured recently in west Darfur revealed evidence proving the involvement of Al-Turabi's party in funding and supporting the rebel group, according to *Sudan Tribune.com* 18/1/11.

"This is a worn-out falsehood," retorted Sidiq Al-Turabi, son of the detained leader, in statements to Sudan Tribune on Tuesday.

According to Sidiq Al-Turabi, his father's arrest was rather connected to plans by the opposition

to stage street protests against rising cost of living.

“Our information indicates that the arrest is prompted by the regime’s fear of confronting the opposition” he told Sudan Tribune.

Students protest price-hike

Al-Ahdath 19/1/11 – students of Omdurman Islamic University protested yesterday the rising prices of sugar and fuel. The students, who gathered after a session of debate held by PCP loyalists in the campus, criticized the rising prices, restricted freedoms and also denounced the arrest of PCP leader Hassan Al-Turabi.

The demonstration was joined by supporters of political organizations who have criticized the general policies of the state, raising slogans calling for overthrow of the government.

Eyewitnesses told the newspaper that police broke into the university campus and dispersed the demonstration before it reached streets. No casualties reported.

Meanwhile, *local dailies* 19/1/11 report authorities arrested yesterday a Tunisian student on charge of inciting students in Al-Nilain University to spark a Tunis-like uprising to overthrow the government.

In another development, many students of the faculty of medicine of the Upper Nile University in Khartoum staged demonstration to protest relocation of the university to the South. An anonymous eyewitness said southern students gathered in front of the gate of the university compound to demand relocation of the university and a clash ensued with the students opposing the relocation. Police was called in to deal with crowds and seven students were arrested.

Misseriya and Dinka trade accusations

Al-Sahafa 19/1/11 – The Dinka-Ngok have accused the Misseriya of blocking road for movement of returnees and goods in clear violation of the recent agreement signed between the leaders of the two tribes.

Dinka leader Kuol Deng told the newspaper that the Misseriya last Monday blocked the road for returnees passing through the territory and also prevented goods from entering the Area.

Meanwhile, Misseriya leader Ismail Hatwal has also accused the SPLA of violating the agreement by continuous buildup of troops in the Area but confirmed that voluntary returns to North Bahr el Ghazal was continuing smoothly and praised the role by the North Bahr el Ghazal government.

Joint forces to deploy in Abyei within a week

Al-Ayyam 19/1/11 – The Abyei Area Administration says the security situation in the territory remains stable after the recent agreement concluded in Kadugli which provided for replacement of police in the Area with joint forces from the Government and SPLM.

Abyei deputy chief administrator Rahama Abdul Rahman Al-Nur says the said forces would deploy in the area within a week to promote stability in the region, adding that Administration officers would tour Misseriya areas to sensitize them about the outcome of Kadugli meeting

particularly the replacement of police by joint forces and guaranteeing of unimpeded movement of nomads and returnees.

UN welcomes National Government, GoSS security arrangements deal

The Citizen Khartoum, 19/01/11 – UNMIS has welcomed the agreement reached between representatives of the National Government and the GoSS led by Interior Ministers Ibrahim Mahmoud and Gier Chuang at a meeting held in Kadugli on 17 January.

UNMIS said that the meeting included important arrangements pertaining to the provision of security and stability in the Abyei region through the deployment of more JIUs in addition to securing the freedom of movement for returnees.

The Mission considered the agreement as an extension of the deal struck between the elders of the Misseriya and Dinka Ngok last week. It also praised the continuous efforts of the two parties for resolving their differences through peaceful dialogue and displayed readiness to extend the necessary support.

SPLM in Southern Kordofan threatens war

Al-Sahafa Khartoum, 19/01/11 – SPLM, Southern Kordofan chapter, is “leaving all options open, including a return to war,” should the demands for the conduct of popular consultation, a new voter registry and the formation of “new and transparent” elections committee in the state not be met by the elections committee. The SPLM distributed to the media yesterday an “official document’ from the Popular Defence Forces (PDF) Command at the Ministry of Defence outlining the distribution of arms and ammunitions to the PDF in the state and pointed out, at a press conference yesterday, the need to complete the implementation of the CPA with regards to Southern Kordofan.

“The new southerners would not accept any concessions and would have a say if their concerns are not addressed,” the SPLM’s Abdalla Tia (who is also the Federal Minister of Health) told the press conference yesterday.

SAF Spokesperson Al-Suwarimi Khaled pointed out that the PDF is part of the SAF, acts on its command and has every right to conduct any military activity in accordance with the SAF’s plans. The SAF, he adds, has the right to arm this force that is under its command.

NCP Shura Council to meet today

Al-Rai Al-Aam 19/1/11 – The Shura (consultation) Council of the ruling National Congress Party (NCP) is to hold its second session in Wad Medani today amid participation of 1200 of its leaders and members including deputy president of the party Dr. Nafie Ali Nafie.

The meeting is scheduled to discuss the party’s way forward after the results of the referendum are released.

SPLA signs MoU with the Southern Sudan Defence Forces

Al-Ahram Al-Youm Juba, 19/01/11 – The SPLA and the Southern Sudan Defence Forces (SSDF) signed yesterday in Juba last Monday a Memorandum of Understanding following negotiations that span more than a week.

Informed sources report that the two sides agreed that the SSDF establish assembly points in Bahr-el-Ghazal, Greater Equatoria and Upper Nile within a month from the date of the agreement, among other things.

Other Highlights

Darfur death toll mounts amid new war fears

AFP 19/1/11 - The Darfur conflict claimed more than 2,300 lives in 2010, according to new UN figures released with Western powers expressing renewed alarm over the war.

With growing numbers of abductions and attacks on UN peacekeepers, some diplomats accuse Sudan's government of stepping up its offensive in the remote western region while international attention is focused on the self-determination vote in south Sudan.

The Sudanese military has frequently refused permission for UN peacekeepers to go to areas where trouble is reported, according to UN officials.

Three Bulgarian air crew on a helicopter carrying World Food Programme supplies were abducted last week and this week troubles flared in the west Darfur town of Nertiti after the killing of a Sudanese intelligence officer.

In December, Tanzanian soldiers at Khor Abeche in southern Darfur even decided to give out their own rations because food supplies were blocked for nearly a week and thousands of extra refugees had headed for the UN base amid renewed fighting, UN officials said.

UN rules say peacekeepers should not give their own food to refugees.

More convoys have been halted around Khor Abeche this week, according to the UN mission in Darfur, UNAMID...

The renewed fears over the conflict and deadlocked peace talks were highlighted at a UN Security Council meeting on Sudan on Tuesday.

Britain's ambassador Mark Lyall Grant, who has taken a lead role in Security Council efforts on Darfur, said there was "deep concern" at the renewed hostilities.

Last week's abduction of the UN air crew "highlights the lack of security and its impact on humanitarian operations in Darfur," he added.

Lyall Grant called on all rebel groups to join the peace process without delay or pre-conditions.

"These are not sporadic attacks. This is a real war between Sudanese army forces and the rebel groups," said French ambassador Gerard Araud. "It is at the expense of civilians who are chased, causing deaths and tens of thousands of new displaced."

US ambassador Susan Rice called on the Sudanese government to "immediately halt aerial

bombardments," adding: "We condemn in the strongest possible terms attacks on civilians."

She said reaching a ceasefire between government forces and the rebel groups "should be the immediate objective of the peace process."

However, one African diplomat, speaking on condition of anonymity, said: "The Khartoum government is resigned to losing southern Sudan, but it is determined to win back control of Darfur. The referendum in the south has been perfect cover for all sides to open fire again."

Sudan signs agreement with Darfur armed movement

Al-Ahdath Khartoum; Jebel Marra, 19/01/11 – The Government of South Darfur signed yesterday a peace deal with a breakaway faction of the SLM/A-Historic Leadership led by Osman Ibrahim Musa. The two sides agreed to a cessation of hostilities and on security arrangements.

Following the agreement, the SLM/A-Abdulwahid breakaway faction pointed that they decided to seal the peace deal in light of these testing times for Sudan's stability.

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