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Media Monitoring Report

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Referendum Watch

Final results of the referendum to be announced February 7

The Citizen Khartoum, 03/02/11 – Announcing yesterday the initial results of the southern Sudan referendum on self-determination, the Southern Sudan Referendum Commission (SSRC) said that 3,851 994 people out of 3,947 676 (i.e.97.57%) registered voters cast their votes in the referendum. 98.83% of the voters voted for secession while 1.17% voted for unity, the SSRC says

SSRC Chairman Mohamed Ibrahim Khalil said at a press conference yesterday that he does not objection to these results “unless a trouble-maker attempts to delay us by one week beyond the 7th of this month,” with reference to the date the final results would be announced should there be no challenges to these preliminary figures. He pointed out that the process took place successfully thanks to the consolidated efforts of internal and external bodies as well as the UN agencies. Khalil also lauded the work of international, regional and local observer missions.

The SSRC Deputy Chairman, who also doubles as the head of the Southern Sudan Referendum Bureau (SSRB) based in Juba, said that the 3-day period allowed for appeals to the results started yesterday.

In a related story, *The Citizen* also reports that UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Sudan, Haile Menkerios, congratulated the two partners of the CPA for successfully implementing the CPA on schedule and lauded the work of the SSRC and the efforts it exerted to accomplish the process in such a short period of time. He also commended the international community for their contributions that made the process a success.

Presidency to form committee on debts, economic sanctions

Al-Sahafa Khartoum, 03/02/11 – The Presidency has called for the formation of a technical committee to discuss the issue of Sudan’s foreign debts and its efforts to encourage an ease in the economic sanctions imposed on the country, said Foreign Minister Ali Karti following a meeting yesterday with President Al-Bashir. He said that the committee was delegated because follow up on these issues requires knowledge of the legal and other technical aspects of the issue.

Sudan may consider return to dinar as legal tender

Al-Ayyam Juba, 01/02/11- Speaking at the weekly media forum, organized by the ministry of information and broadcasting service in Juba on Tuesday, the Governor of the Bank of Southern Sudan expressed fears of an economic collapse ahead of southern Sudanese independence. "I am afraid the state is collapsing before it even begins. In as long as you are not straight, the economy will not be straight, because, a few of you will control the economy. You will be tycoons. "What is happening in Tunisia, Cairo can easily come here. Let us look at what the resources of the state are. And let us see how they are rationalized to the public so that they are satisfied," Elijah Malok who also doubles as the Deputy Governor of the Central Bank of Sudan told the press. The senior bank official also informed the press that the region is likely to become independent in less than a year and will have its own currency, which will be released when discussions between the parties are over. However, he declined to comment on the name of the new currency and its value, saying they are delicate issues which cannot be made public before post-referendum arrangement discussions on economics are concluded. Aleng also said the bank is

trying its best to stimulate and maintain a modest foreign exchange rate, through appropriate policies and interventions." We are trying our best to at least maintain the stability of the bank, but there are several economic and human factors which hinder these efforts. One of these factors is that the region depends heavily on imported foods and technical labour from neighbouring countries, paid in hard currency. Another factor driving inflation is that many South Sudanese have their families still in the Diaspora thus send their salaries [abroad]", said Aleng.

The Central Bank of Sudan has meanwhile denied plans to introduce a new currency once southern Sudan secedes. A source at the Central Bank who opted for anonymity described these reports as "baseless". He pointed out that talks are currently underway between the CPA partners on issues related to the post-separation economy and these talks include how long a new state in the south would be allowed to use the Sudanese pound and how that legal tender would be phased out of southern Sudan after a while.

Labour Union calls for listing of southern Sudanese workers in the north

Al-Tayyar Khartoum, 03/02/11 – The National Federation of Workers' Union is calling on the Ministry of Labour to draw a list of southern Sudanese employees in the private and public sectors to enable an early start of the recruitment process for northern Sudanese to replace them after the south separates.

Adam Fadul, a high ranking member of the federation, said that the state should pay its southern Sudanese employees all their dues and relieve them of duties but may consider keeping employees with exceptional skills. These however would have to be regarded as expatriates and should be legally in the country (visa and all) once the passports issue is resolved.

NCP to talk with opposition

Al-Rai Al-Aam Khartoum, 03/02/11 – The NCP leadership office sitting yesterday has resolved to open up channels of dialogue with the opposition parties focusing on the contentions issues on the national political agenda. The leadership office met under the chairmanship of party leader President Al-Bashir and discussed also issues pertaining to the changes that need to be instituted post-separation. NCP Information Secretary Fathi Shila said that participants resolved to open up discussions on the necessary amendments to the constitution so political forces and the civil society would participate in the process for the sake of creating a "Second Republic" in Sudan.

Al-Ayyam daily meanwhile reports that the alliance of opposition parties has expressed willingness to talk if the NCP wants to do so. Sidig Yusuf, a senior member of the alliance, said that the National Consensus Forces looks forwards to playing a key role on outstanding issues such as border demarcation, Abyei and a permanent constitution for the country in addition to the establishment of good relations between Sudan and a new southern state.

Popular Consultations Watch

Aggar calls for roadmap for peaceful coexistence

Al-Sudani Damazin, 03/02/11 – Blue Nile State Governor Malik Aggar says the Popular Consultations exercise is a good opportunity to guarantee the rights of future generations. Aggar reiterated commitment to cooperate with the states on the north-south border should the south separate in order to shore up peace and stability and strengthen the social fabric along those

borders.

Meanwhile, *Al-Ayyam* daily reports that over 68,000 people participated at the just-ended popular consultations exercise in the state.

Other Highlights

US and Sudan agree on a roadmap to improve bilateral relations

Sudantribune.com Khartoum, 02/02/11 – The US Administration and the Sudanese government have agreed on a roadmap to improve bilateral relations, said the visiting U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Wednesday after a meeting with the Sudanese Vice-President.

Flanked by Scott Gration US President Special Envoy to Sudan, James B. Steinberg held a series of meetings with several Sudanese officials in Khartoum including Vice President Ali Osman Taha, Presidential Assistant Nafei Ali Nafei, Minister of Foreign Affairs Ali Karti and Presidential Adviser for Security Affairs, Salah Gosh.

We "agreed on a roadmap between the two countries to serve to common interest," Steinberg told reporters after a meeting with the vice-president Ali Osman Taha. He further said that his first visit to Khartoum aims to continue dialogue with the Sudanese officials on the pending issues in the implementation of the Comprehensive peace Agreement (CPA) and Darfur conflict.

The U.S. official expressed his appreciation to the Government of Sudan for its commitment to hold the southern Sudan referendum timely and the recognition of its outcome in favour of secession.

Sudanese foreign minister Ali Karti Wednesday briefed President Omer Al-Bashir on his recent visit to the United States and the discussions held with the American officials.

Speaking to the media, Karti stated that his talks in Washington focused on the need to lift Sudan from the list of states sponsoring terrorism and the removal of economic sanctions. He further ruled any linkage between the Darfur conflict and the lift of sanctions.

Following his meeting with Steinberg, Nafei Ali Nafei told reporters that the United States of America are ready to open a new page with the Sudan and contribute to resolve the outstanding issues in the CPA implementation and the Darfur conflict.

For his part, presidential adviser Salah Gosh called on the US to comply with its commitments towards his government stressing "We see no reason for keeping Sudan in the list of state sponsors of terrorism or maintaining the economic sanctions".

Commenting on the US policy towards Sudan on Tuesday, Gosh who was seen as the man of Washington in Khartoum, said the United States of America still intends to topple down the Sudanese regime. "However they will continue to pursue a policy of appeasement – as it was the case during the interim period — in order to complete the CPA implementation and the separation of the South, which represents the only achievement of U.S. foreign policy," he said.

Arrests, curfew in Unity State

Al-Rai Al-Aam Khartoum, 03/02/11 – Unity State has declared 19:00p.m. to 06:00a.m. curfew following the assassination by unidentified gunmen of a local chief. The state security committee has, as a result, resolved to impose the curfew and conduct a disarmament exercise among other

measures to avert such incidents.

Machar urges end to Darfur conflict, vows to settle Abyei issue by March

Sudantribune.com Juba, 02/02/11 - The leadership of the soon-to-be independent state of South Sudan wants to see the ongoing armed conflict between Darfur rebels and the northern Sudan government quickly brought to an end peacefully, saying it has invested interest in achieving peace in that region.

South Sudan's Vice President, Riek Machar, on Tuesday said a priority of the emerging independent state is to make sure that it establishes strong relations with north Sudan after secession of the South following the referendum on independence. However, he expressed fear that the continuation of the Darfur conflict could harm the chances of achieving good relations.

Preliminary results announced by the Southern Sudan Referendum Commission indicate that the people of South Sudan have voted overwhelmingly for secession by 99%. The Vice President explained that an independent state of South Sudan has already been created by the secession votes of the people, while the remaining announcement on 9 July is a mere formality.

Machar told the Italian diplomats, Roberto Cantone, Italian Ambassador to Sudan, and Gianni Vernetti, Member of Parliament in Italy, during their meeting in Juba on Tuesday, that the Darfur war, unless brought to an end, may in the future spill over to the South, with Darfurians crossing over for refuge in the new independent state.

Among other issues, demarcation of 2,000km north-south border is not yet concluded. Officials from both north and south have expressed their commitment to resolve the issues in a peaceful manner and forge good relations in the future. There is an estimated population of 50,000 Darfurian citizens already residing in South Sudan, in addition to other citizens coming from other regions of north Sudan. Most of them are business people trading in South Sudan.

Machar said they have the right to residence in South Sudan, even after independence.

Machar also informed the Italian diplomats that the two parties to the 2005 peace deal, the National Congress Party (NCP) and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), have agreed to finalise the issue of Abyei by March this year.

The meeting also touched on the processes of the conduct of popular consultations in Blue Nile and Nuba Mountains.

The Vice President, who mediated the peace process between the Ugandan government and the rebels of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), said there is need to review how to deal with the LRA if the present military approach alone against the rebels has not achieved peace.

LRA leader Joseph Kony refused to sign a concluded text of the Juba-mediated final peace agreement with the Ugandan government in 2008, citing indictment by the International Criminal Court (ICC) as an obstacle.

Internally, Machar informed the diplomats that all the political groups in the South, together with civil society organisations and faith-based groups, have already agreed on a roadmap in October 2010 that will guide the region on issues of governance in the post-independence period.

Minnawi to leave Juba and head for Darfur in the next 24 hours

Al-Sudani Khartoum, 03/02/11 – Informed sources reveal that the SPLM has requested the Darfur armed groups currently in southern Sudan to leave the area within the next 24 hours "... in order to not embarrass the SPLM". The source points out that the SPLM did not want to be

embarrassed before the Khartoum government especially after exchanging pledges on cessation of hostilities.

Airline companies in Sudan may cease operations as dollar shortage worsens

Sudantribune.com Bentiu, 02/02/11 - A Kenyan private airline has decided to suspend operations in all ten states of Southern Sudan in light of the sharp drop in the value of the Sudanese pound against the U.S. dollar, one of its officials told *Sudan Tribune*.

“We are closing down because we were facing a lot of challenges in the market due to high dollar rates. This is why we stopped and this decision came from the board of directors,” said Malual Tuong who is Branch manager for 748 Air Services in Sudan’s Unity state.

Tuong emphasized that the airline was forced to make this move as a result of the direct impact of the exchange rate issue on its bottom line. He disclosed that the company’s senior management team was recently in Juba to assess the situation.

The airline’s branch manager gave an example of how a ticket worth 500 Sudanese pounds used to exchange for 200 dollars but because of the declining exchange rate it is now worthless.

The decision became effective Monday and no date has been given for it to resume operations. Tuong said they could reverse the move if currency situation improves.

“If we are able to get any ministry or the bank of South Sudan to give us dollars, then we would be able to come back to the market. Otherwise for the moment we don’t know how long we will be out of the market” he said.

The situation faced by 748 airlines is not the only one of its kind in Sudan.

The Sudan manager of German airline Lufthansa, Hartmut Volz, told *Reuters* last Thursday the airline industry was being hit hard, with millions of dollars in revenue stuck inside Sudan.

"All airlines are facing the same problem," he said, adding Lufthansa would decide what to do with its Sudan operation, a tiny portion of their global network, next April.

"We are talking to the central bank and to our bank but there is no chance to get the money out at the time being," Volz said.

Figures of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) show that Sudan’s central bank has limited hard currency at its disposal to intervene in the market.

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