

Sudan Domestic Media, March 15, 2011 (covering March 22 – March 28 , 2011)
By Janis Grychowski

State Media

(Suna news agency website, Khartoum, in English 26 Mar 11)

- Khartoum, March. 25 (SUNA) - President al-Bashir met with the leader of the opposition National Ummah Party to discuss the NUP's programme on democratic movement in Sudan, the role of Islam, the role of the Arab League.

(Sudan Vision website, Khartoum, in English 26 Mar 11)

- According to the National Congress Party, the establishment of the "strategic prowess battalion is not an emergency act to respond to provocations made by opposition members, but instead is a civil force support to promote the call and services of the NCP. The battalion works to "disseminate literature of the party, and to reply to any calls to mobilize that may be required by the ruling NCP. "We have been in a constant confrontation against various kind of military intervention by all hostile forces and we have defeated them and we are going to fight those who want to fight us, those who want to crush Al-Inqaz (The Salvation Revolution) it will crush them, we are afraid of nothing".

Al-Mahdi affirmed that the NCP will not change his stances and that Shari'ah Law "will remain the guide and stimulus of the party in all its programmes to upgrade social behaviour, achieving development and maintaining the interests of the nation as a whole."

(Sudan Vision website, Khartoum, in English 26 Mar 11)

- A panel of youth representing more than 20 political parties had organized a workshop on the challenges of popular consultation on the Blue Nile/South Kurdufan peace negotiations of the CPA. The procedure of popular consultation was explained to the workshop participants by Deputy Chairman of the Council of States Dr Isma'il Al-Haj Musa. He went further to suggest that the spreading of awareness and mobilization should also include ensuring that local populations know of the procedures and whether it has met their needs. Dr. Al-Haj Musa showed his satisfaction for the success of the preliminary phase of the consultation in Blue Nile. This sentiment was further echoed by Democratic Unionist Party secretary Uthman umar Al-Sharif when he addressed the issue of misunderstanding the concept by local populations.

The leader of South Kurdufan pointed to two major challenges including the loss of 1/3 of territory, and the presence of foreign organizations working in the area who, he suggested, are working for their own self-interests in the region. He promoted the absorption of the tens of thousands of SPLA soldiers into the Sudan Armed Forces as soon as possible, and the return of the 5 former regions of self-governance

(Sudan Vision website, Khartoum, in English 27 Mar 11)

- Chairman of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement for Democratic Change (SPLM/DC), Dr Lam Akol called for an impartial inquiry into the events of Malakal, Bentiu and Fanjak that took place recently in the south.

He also urged the Government of South Sudan (GoSS) to search for a peaceful solution to the insurgency instead of an escalation of hostilities.

Addressing the opening of the third session of the SPLM/DC National Council in Soba yesterday, the Chairman of the SPLM-DC called for an impartial inquiry into recent tensions and conflict, and reaffirmed his denial that the party has placed militias in the area to bring conflict. He accused the SPLM Secretary-General of hatred towards his party and urged the government of South Sudan to find a peaceful solution.

(Sudan Vision website, Khartoum, in English 27 Mar 11)

- The Sudan Government denies the SPLM report that the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) has formed a mechanism to investigate the SPLM's allegations against Khartoum. A spokesperson for the Foreign Ministry stated that the UN Secretary-General did not create an investigation mechanism towards the documents in question and instead, only heard the reports from consultative meetings with Sudan's UN representative, Pagan Amum. Further, he said that the UN has admitted that the documents presented against the Government in the north by the government of South Sudan are false. The Foreign Ministry spokesperson called on Pagan Amum to achieve reconciliation in the south.

Private News Media

(Khartoum Monitor website, Khartoum, in English 26 Mar 11)

- In an editorialized report that questions Sudan's ability to develop peacefully, political and military decisions are made without knowledge of the current social environment and in turn, solely to the interests of the ruling party. The army is loyal to the ruling party and will act against the other parties as directed. Respect should be paid to the founders of the South Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army, however two objectives between factions of the SPLM/A (unity and separation) have confused people. Nonetheless, the factions proposed self-determination and ultimately signed the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA).

Democracy needs wisdom and ideas and the writer offers that Southern Sudan should divide into 10 states or 3 regions. He warns the politicians to not create friction in south Sudan. Political office should be held for no more than two terms in order to be on the track of developed and industrialized countries.

(The Citizen, Khartoum, in English 27 Mar 11)

- Editorial entitled "Beyond documents: The dynamics of the north-south divide"

Tensions continue between the NCP and the SPLM over allegations a ploy from North Sudan to topple the Southern Sudanese government before succession. Existing

documents do not rule out the possibility of the government in Khartoum supporting rebels in the South, just as it does not rule out the possibility of the South's support for rebel groups in Darfur and other regions. The writer believes that both sides are taking advantage of instability in the region – thinking that this instability is in each interests. The writer also states that the most dangerous part of these activities is that the SPLM is following the example of the NCP by using external threats as a diversion to internal problems such as tribalism, the spread of weapons, the existence of militias, corruption and high expectations.

The writer advises that the politicians must demonstrate leadership and to commit daily to fighting the root causes of these problems.

It is possible to track back and attribute the reasons behind his rebellion and his continuous war against the Government of Southern Sudan to the violations which occurred during the 2010 elections.

(The Citizen, Khartoum, in English 27 Mar 11)

- The Popular Congress Party renewed their rejection of dialogue with the National Congress Party (NCP), in an action that affirms the belief from the NCP that their desire to work with the other political forces to topple the regime before July. Political Secretary of Popular Congress Party (PCP) denied any connection between his party and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), and dismissed this accusation outright. The Popular Congress Party has refused discussion with the NCP as there are numerous members that remain detained by the government. However, a representative from the PCP has revealed that they are working with the Communist and Umma parties to topple the NCP before 9 July.

(UN-sponsored Miraya FM website, Juba, in English 27 Mar 11)

- Five people belonging to the opposition SPLM-DC were killed in a clash between police and a group of armed people in Manj in Upper Nile State, Southern Sudan. However, the SPLM-DC denies involvement in the class and a spokesperson claims that the southern government wants to find reasons to arrest party members and prevent SPLM-DC activities.

(Alwan, Khartoum, in Arabic 27 Mar 11)

- According to sources, an agreement has occurred between three Al-Sisi, Abd-al-Wahid, and Muhammad Nur of 3 Darfur rebel groups regarding the postponement of the Doha talks until after Southern Sudan's succession in July.

Alwan has learnt that Dr Al-Tijani al-Sisi of the Liberation and Justice Movement has a new demand to influential groups in the government demanding that the Darfur region be given the position of first vice-president.

According to Alwan, "The armed movements are increasingly betting on toppling the regime and not negotiating with it by relying on Western support to undermine the security and stability in Khartoum and to exploit the current economic crisis."

(Juba Post, Khartoum in English 28 Mar 11)

- The Greater Upper Nile Peace Initiative (GUNPI) has resolved first to settle cases of child abductions and cattle rustling issues between Dinka Bor and Murle tribes of the Jonglei State. The coordinator of Greater Upper Nile Peace Initiative says, "We have seen the death of our people during cattle raids and child abduction and we in Greater Upper Nile Peace Initiative have resolved to end these conflicts among our people. We have started with Dinka - Bor and Murle, We shall move to Murle and Nuer and little by little we shall bring peace to our communities".

Nganthoo Kafula Laju, the paramount chief of Pibor County appreciated the effort of Greater Upper Nile Peace Initiative and announced that, "We are happy with the peace that comes with you. And I would say we should not go back. There is no person who wants to die, we want to live. So all of us need peace", Chief Nganthoo stated. Following the acceptance of both communities to hold peace talks, the talks will be held between the Murle and Dinka Bor communities in the first week of April.

The efforts to find peace among the ethnic communities of Pibor and Bor brokered by the Greater Upper Nile Peace Initiative were not the first of its kind. Several peace agreements have been signed by the two communities. All of them were dishonored and cattle raid as well as child abduction persist for the lack of follow up. Many observers see that although Sudan's north-south war has ended, many South Sudanese will not reap the expected peace until southerners shun violence against each other.

(Al-Sahafah, Khartoum, in Arabic 28 Mar 11)

- The Committee of Sudan's Doctors is staging a peaceful march inside hospital courtyards where doctors will wear black to mourn the medical profession and the deteriorating health conditions in Sudan. The doctors are protesting the issues surrounding the central blood bank, free treatment and corruption.

(Al-Sahafah, Khartoum, in Arabic 28 Mar 11)

- The alliance of democratic lawyers has said that the decision by the lawyer's union to prevent [opposition] democratic front lawyers from celebrating International Women's Day at the lawyers' club in Omdurman is a real catastrophe in so far as it had been taken by an entity whose task was to protect freedoms and guard against campaigns of oppression.

The Alliance of Democratic Lawyers derided the union's initiative to congratulate revolutionaries in the Arab world and said this should have been directed at those inside the country. The Alliance predicts that there will be a restriction of freedoms following succession on July 9th.

The head of the alliance, Dr Amin Makki Madani, said it was regrettable that the Sudanese government and the lawyers' union that basks in its glory should support Arab revolutions while undermining those rights that are causing protests within the country.

At a press conference yesterday, Madani said they were closely monitoring the situation and the increase in the number of protest groups in order to provide the legal backing for protesters.

(The Citizen, Khartoum, in Arabic 28 Mar 11)

- The NCP has stated that discussions with political parties are progressing, especially with the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP). These discussions focused on general trends. The NCP denied the presence of rebel groups affiliated with the NCP and stressed that the people of Southern Sudan should focus on resolving the pending issues. The NCP has liquidated public companies as part of the government's move to distance itself from all forms of direct commercial activities. In response to a question about corruption within the judicial system, a spokesperson for the NCP stated that reports have been submitted by the Auditor General on corruption. He went on to say that the government would continue its fight against corruption as mandated to them under Sharia Law.