

Sudan Domestic Media, May 17, 2010 (covering May 10 to May 16, 2010)

By Kristen Zbikowski, MIGS Reporter for Sudan

May 10

(The Citizen, Khartoum, in English 10 May 10)

- Yasir Sa'id Arman, a senior official from the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), said the SPLM had evidence that Omar al-Bashir and the National Congress Party (NCP) were trying to destabilize the south by arming Arab tribes as proxies in the semi-autonomous region of Sudan. Last month, clashes between the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) and Darfuri Arab tribes along the disputed north-south border resulted in many casualties on both sides.

(Juba Post, Khartoum in English 10 May 10)

- Col Mayaak Ayuen Ajok, the SPLA's head of information and public relations, denounced personal threats on specific media houses and journalists during the April elections.
- Political leaders in southern Sudan have expressed concerns that the upcoming referendum may be rigged by advocates of unity within the region's ruling party.
- Sixteen National Elections Committee (NEC) computers containing important information and election data were robbed by unidentified armed men from the Central Equatoria State High Elections Committee on April 26. Police are investigating the incident.

(Al-Sahafah, Khartoum, in Arabic 10 May 10)

- The Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) indicated that it had notified Egyptian officials that the Darfur peace talks in Doha had been suspended because of cease-fire violations on the part of the government. Although JEM has not yet opted to withdraw from the talks, Ahmad Husayn, its official spokesman, stated that all options will remain on the table if the government continues to violate the cease-fire.

(Al-Ayyam, Khartoum, in Arabic 10 May 10)

- The Khartoum North Criminal Court adjourned the hearing against Ajras al-Hurriyah newspaper, represented by its acting editor-in-chief Fayz al-Silayik, and writer Al-Haj Warraq, who both face charges pertaining to incitement of hatred. The lawsuit against them was filed by the National Intelligence and Security Services.

- According to an *Al-Ayyam* commentary, “It is regrettable that many of the big powers and international envoys are now publicly preaching separation. They have consequently abandoned willingly the role of facilitator and catalyst and are trying to take the decision on behalf of the people concerned. By taking such a position, they place themselves at best in the position of waging a psychological war against the people of Sudan and at worst at working in favour of an agenda of sabotage.”

May 11

(Al-Ahram al-Yawm, Khartoum, in Arabic, in Arabic 11 May 10)

- Eighty people were killed and 37 others were injured in clashes that broke out on May 10 in Aiot locality, Jonglei State, between the SPLA and SPLA renegade General Gorge Athor’s forces. Sources said that the toll was only an early estimate of the actual number of casualties.

(Al-Ra’y al-Amm, Khartoum, in Arabic 11 May 10)

- In response to a Carter Center statement indicating that Sudan’s vote tabulation process was highly chaotic and vulnerable to manipulation, thus lacking in transparency, an informed source at the NEC said that the Carter Center’s statement was political and aimed at creating confusion. The source dismissed the Carter Center’s statement and challenged the Center to provide proof that rigging took place during the elections.

(Sudan Vision website, Khartoum, in English 11 May 10)

- The Southern Sector in the NCP stated that the future of the south would be gloomy without the north and warned against the possibility that that the SPLM would rig the referendum outcome as it had done with the South Sudan elections.

(Al-Watan, Khartoum, in Arabic 11 May 10)

- The electoral commission indicated that seven vehicles it had rented were seized by the SPLM in Awil in Northern Bahr Al-Ghazal. Three of the drivers escaped while four others were detained, beaten and tortured before their eventual release.

(Suna news agency website, Khartoum, in English 11 May 10)

- The Coordinating Council of the Sudanese Communities in Europe intended to hand over a memorandum to the International Criminal Court (ICC) on May 15 protesting the ICC prosecutor’s position vis-à-vis Sudan. The protesters, responding to a statement made by the ICC prosecutor in March in relation to the elections, will ask for his apology to the people of Sudan and the members of the Rome Convention who seek to take collective action against him.

(Republic of Sudan Radio, Omdurman, in Arabic 0400 GMT 11 May 10)

- According to Abd-al-Basit Sabdarat, the minister of justice, an arrest warrant is still out for Ibrahim Khalil, the leader of the JEM, following a May 11 attack on Omdurman city. The minister has asked Interpol to assist in his apprehension.

May 12

(The Citizen, Khartoum, in English 12 May 10)

- The NEC stated that it may postpone polling in South Kordufan State. The Presidency has also decided to re-conduct the population census in the state in May and June. The possibility of conducting the elections based on the current population census has not, however, been out ruled.

May 13

(Juba Post, Khartoum in English 13 May 10)

- A number of tribal clashes over cattle in the southern state of Warrap involving Dinka in Unity State and Nuer communities in Tonj left 26 people dead over the past week. Amidst a worsening security situation, Makuc Makuc Ngongdit, the SPLM's secretary general in the state, vowed against retaliatory attacks. In his words, "We know our people are subjected to regular killings by neighbouring tribes over cattle raiding because we have already been disarmed but fighting back will not be the best option... We have always preferred dialogue and deployment of joint police and SPLA troops at the borders to monitor movements of these elusive cattle raiders."
- Yasir Sa'id Arman, a senior member of the SPLM, has asked the UN to verify allegations of arms smuggling in southern Sudan meant to destabilize the region ahead of the January 2011 referendum. While the cease-fire between the south and the north has held, sporadic fighting has been observed. In April, forces believed to belong to the SPLA clashed with Arab tribes from Darfur along the north-south border. Heavy casualties on both sides were reported.

(Al-Quwat al-Musallaha, Khartoum, in Arabic 13 May 10)

- Maj Al-Sawarmi Khalid Sa'ad, the official spokesman for the armed forces, affirmed that the JEM is weak and fragmented because of its contradictory position in Doha, its violation of the cease-fire agreement and its attacks on citizens. He also indicated the readiness of the armed forces to confront acts of aggression.

May 14

(The Citizen, Khartoum, in English 14 May 10)

- Edward Lino, a leading member of the SPLM, predicted that war will break out as a result of north-south border demarcation that is not being done equitably by the regime. He also accused the technical committee responsible for border demarcation of intentionally escalating conflict as it carried out its work.
- The United Nations Mission in Sudan has pledged to mediate between the south Sudan government and Lt-Gen George Athor Deng. The UN indicated Athor's willingness to negotiate with the government. Athor threatened to attack an important town if the assault on his forces continued, but he added that he is willing to negotiate. Kuol Manyang Juuk, the state's governor, warned that an attack would be considered a rebellion and the government would not allow it to occur.

(Republic of Sudan Radio, Omdurman, in Arabic 0400 GMT 14 May 10)

- According to Gen Dr Muhammad Abd-al-Majid al-Tayyib, police spokesman, following a "terrorist attack" carried out by the JEM on a number of villages, boreholes and civilians, the JEM attacked a commercial convoy carrying relief aid for residents of Darfur. The attack was repulsed by central reservist forces.

(Sudan TV, Omdurman, in Arabic 1500 GMT 14 May 10)

- Dr Amin Hasan Umar, head of the government delegation for the Doha talks, affirmed that the JEM is unwilling to engage in the talks. He added that the government will continue talks with other movements.

May 15

(Al-Sahafah, Khartoum, in Arabic 15 May 10)

- The NCP and the JEM denied that there were any prior arrangements for a meeting to discuss the situation in Sudan. According to JEM spokesman Ahmad Husayn Adam, "The conditions on the ground prove that the two sides are in a state of war because the government wants this and because of its actions in Darfur." He went on to describe the Doha forum as a public relations arena for the Sudanese government.

(The Citizen, Khartoum, in English 15 May 10)

- Twenty police officers were killed and 12 others were hurt in a sudden escalation of fighting between JEM and government forces in Sulay'a region, located between Nyala and Du'ayn, on May 14.

(Al-Ra'y al-Amm, Khartoum, in Arabic 15 May 10)

- Gen George Athor indicated that he has not ruled out that his mutiny might lead to the ousting of the SPLM leadership. According to Athor, “We will oust them so that they won't rig the referendum results as they rigged the elections.”

May 16

(Akhbar al-Yawm, Khartoum, in Arabic 16 May 10)

- In a commentary by Ali Yasin, he stated that the only option left with respect to the JEM is the military decision. He ended his commentary with the following remark: “One cannot exclude the possibility that Khalil's movement may have an agenda with foreign States, like it has an agenda with internal parties. This does not constitute a danger to Darfur alone but to all of Sudan... We cannot forget here the recent statements by the Israeli Security Minister in which he said that they were able to enter Darfur as part of the American organizations and that they have not targeted Sudan in recent years only but since its independence so that it does not attain stability, exploit its tremendous resources, become a major country in the region, and support the countries that confront Israel.”

(Akhir Lahzah, Khartoum, in Arabic 16 May 10)

- The Sudanese government accused the United States of working to secure the secession of the south. It noted that the U.S. has ignored the north by failing to discuss the removal of economic sanctions and removal of Sudan from its list of states sponsoring terrorism. Sudan warned the U.S. against supporting secession, especially because the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) supports unity.

(Al-Sahafah, Khartoum, in Arabic 16 May 10)

- Jonglei State affirmed that 100 people have been displaced as a result of fighting between the SPLA and General George Athor's forces. He added that the security situation is currently stable.

(Republic of Sudan Radio, Omdurman, in Arabic 1300 GMT 16 May 10)

- The National Security and Intelligence Agency confirmed its decision to confiscate the property of Al-Nadwah Press and Media Company Limited and suspend *Ra'y Al-Sha'b*, an opposition newspaper. According to a high-level security source, the decision resulted from the newspaper's “misleading journalistic approach.” Furthermore, the newspaper “harms the national security in the country without regard to the principles of press, professional and objective code of conduct in a continued attack on the country's capacities and achievements, spread discord and harm relations.” The decision was said to be made to protect Sudan's achievements.