

Sudan Domestic Media, October 25, 2010 (covering October 18 to October 24, 2010)

By Kristen Zbikowski, MIGS Reporter for Sudan

State-Owned Media

October 19

(Sudan Vision website, Khartoum, in English 19 Oct 10)

- Rahma Abd-al-Rahma al-Nur, Abyei's Administration Deputy Chief, stated that claims regarding a tense situation in the Abyei region were false and affirmed the stable security situation there. He told Sudan Vision that media reports suggesting that the area was experiencing waves of displacement were baseless. He noted that citizens in the region were going about their normal daily lives.

(Suna news agency website, Khartoum, in Arabic 19 Oct 10)

- President Omar al-Bashir commended the strong ties between Sudan and South Africa when he received the new ambassador of South Africa to Khartoum's credentials on October 19. President al-Bashir expressed appreciation over South Africa's support for Sudan's peace process and South Africa's ambassador noted his desire to further improve relations between the countries in all respects.

(Sudan TV, Omdurman, in Arabic 1500 GMT 19 Oct 10)

- President Omar al-Bashir, accompanied by Chief Justice Jalal al-Din Muhammad Uthman, swore in Dr. Farah Ibrahim al-Aqar as state minister in the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs. They also swore in Husayn Abd-al-Rahman as state minister in the Ministry of Youth and Sport. The new state ministers expressed their appreciation over their new roles and responsibilities and their commitment to working toward unity, peace and stability in Sudan.

October 21

(Sudan TV, Omdurman, in Arabic 1500 GMT 21 Oct 10)

- President Omar al-Bashir received a letter delivered by Ahmad Abu al-Ghayt, the foreign affairs minister of Egypt, from President Muhammad Husni Mubarak of Egypt. During their meeting with President al-Bashir and Vice President Uthman Ali Taha, the foreign affairs minister of Egypt and the head of national intelligence in Egypt heard the Sudanese view on implementing the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) and holding the South Sudan referendum. Egypt's foreign affairs minister said that President Mubarak was

- keen to know more about the situation in Sudan, noting that the Egyptian president was deeply concerned about peace and security in the country.
- Vice President Ali Uthman Muhammad Taha met with a high-ranking team headed by Thabo Mbeki, former president of South Africa, in anticipation of the second meeting to be held in Addis Ababa on the CPA's implementation, post-referendum arrangements and the issue of Abyei. Both sides agreed that adequate preparation was necessary before the meeting, which extends from the first talks which took place in Addis Ababa and included U.S. Special Envoy Scott Gration. The first meeting between the ruling partners focused on the Abyei issue. The second set of talks will include discussion of the implementation of the CPA and post-referendum arrangements. On October 22, Thabo Mbeki will meet with First Vice President of Sudan and President of South Sudan Salva Kiir Mayardit to decide when the meeting should take place.

October 22

(Sudan TV, Omdurman, in Arabic 1030 GMT 22 Oct 10)

- An October 22 sermon by Shaykh Abd-al-Jalil Nazir Al-Karuri was broadcast live on Sudan TV from the Al-Shahid Mosque in Khartoum. The first sermon covered religious issues in general and the second sermon focused on the new Israeli settlements in Palestine, saying that such activities should be condemned. The preacher also spoke in favor of Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez's visits to Iran and Syria, noting that such visits would support relations with the Muslim world and help overcome obstacles presented by the United States.
- The AU High-Level Panel on Darfur held a meeting today in Juba. Led by Thabo Mbeki and including Salva Kiir Mayardit, leader of the South Sudan government and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), the talks dealt with challenges associated with the upcoming South Sudan referendum and efforts being made to hold it on time. Mbeki told the press in Juba that his meeting with Salva Kiir also dealt with the upcoming Abyei talks to be held in Addis Ababa and sponsored by the U.S. and the African Union. Mbeki said that the AU would support the Naivasha partners (the SPLM and the National Congress Party (NCP)) until they surpass the remaining challenges related to the Abyei issue. In his press statement, Mbeki indicated that he and Salva Kiir were optimistic that the issue of Abyei would reach a resolution at the upcoming meeting in Addis Ababa.

October 23

(Sudan TV, Omdurman, in Arabic 1500 GMT 23 Oct 10)

- Lt-Col Sadiq Babikir al-Hadi, commander of the First Infantry Battalion in the Joint Integrated Units of South and North Sudan, announced that he would be defecting from the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA). He stated that he was defecting because of the SPLM's change in policy and its move away from the policy of supporting Sudanese unity. The SPLM's failure to bring together

the people of Sudan around the New Sudan program was given as another reason. He commented that the SPLM had been persuaded by separatists within its ranks and had not built a formal and equipped army. Lt-Col Sadiq Babikir added that he had been harassed on numerous occasions as a result of SPLA commanders' attempts to exclude him. He noted that the New Sudan program had been riddled with problems since the death of its former leader, Dr. John Garang.

- The SPLM admitted that it has not arranged against adverse circumstances for southern citizens should the referendum result in a vote for secession. Dr. Luka Biong, the leading SPLM figure, spoke at a symposium on the status of southerners in North Sudan after the referendum. At the symposium, organized by *Al-Ra'y al-Amm* newspaper, Biong emphasized that northern traders were offering excellent services to the South Sudan government and the southern economy. The NCP affirmed that if citizens of the south vote for secession, they will automatically and according to the law lose their Sudanese citizenship. The NCP added that the government was committed to protecting the rights of South Sudan citizens prior to the conclusion of arrangements on this issue.

October 24

(Sudan TV, Omdurman, in Arabic 1500 GMT 24 Oct 10)

- During its second session for 2010, President Omar al-Bashir chaired the opening meeting of the National Council for Strategic Planning at the Friendship Hall in Khartoum. In his address, he said that the implemented components of the CPA and the commitment of the NCP and the SPLM were achievements of all the people of Sudan. He also said that he hoped that voluntary unity would be the result of the upcoming referendum. He noted the responsibility of both partners and other political forces in dealing with the consequences of the referendum and remarked that the transitional period would not end with the referendum in January, but rather would extend until July 2011.
- During a meeting with U.S. Senator John Kerry and a number of senior officials, Sudan asked the international community and the U.S. administration to support peace efforts in Sudan. Sudanese Vice President Al-Ustaz Ali Uthman Muhammad Taha stated that the two peace partners could overcome the remaining challenges between them through dialogue and were keen on implementing the provisions of the CPA. Sudan's presidential adviser Lt-Gen Salah Abdullah also criticized repeated American promises to lift sanctions against Sudan that had not made any tangible progress.