



DAN PATTERSON - FLICKR

Perspectives from the Arab World

This bulletin is part of FRIDE's project "The gap between narratives and practices. Darfur: Responses from the Arab world", funded by the Ford Foundation.

Main issues during January 2010

- Upcoming elections
- International peace efforts
- Other issues

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A monthly selection of Arab official, journalistic and academic sources is compiled to give an overview of the main events, opinions and documents from the perspective of the Arab world.

Introduction

The worsening security situation in Yemen and the humanitarian consequences of the earthquake in Haiti were the most important issues in the Arab media during January. As the Sudanese presidential elections approach and peace has still not been achieved, many questions arise; not only regarding the elections but also about the future implications of the electoral process since the new president will have to deal with the south referendum of 2011.

In January, the Sudanese political establishment was occupied with the negotiations concerning who the candidates for the April elections will be. Now that the names have been chosen, attention has turned to how to secure a result that cannot be challenged by accusations of fraud or corruption.



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On its fifth anniversary, the CPA still has not been implemented. Once again, it has been proved that outside powers can broker a deal, but it is the internal forces who are ultimately responsible to make peace. This month, the Qatari efforts to resume peace talks could not overcome the parties' lack of trust in each other, and the meetings came to an end without tangible results.

The United States were absent in political terms. President Obama's 'State of the Union speech' reflected his agenda, showing that Sudan certainly isn't the top priority of the US. This provided fresh evidence that an international community effort to solve Sudanese problems will not be led by Washington; Sudan remains an Arab problem.

■ Methodology

The main objective of this newsletter is to bridge the language gap between the Arab media and Western audiences. In order to obtain a complete picture of the information published in Arabic, five different sources have been analysed: the webpages of regional organisations, Ministries of Foreign Affairs, official news agencies, Arab think tanks and, finally, Arabic newspapers¹.

Our intention was not to cover every article published regarding Sudan and the ongoing humanitarian crisis, but to consider news items, editorials and opinion articles that reflect the main trends in the Arab media's perception of the Sudanese issue.

■ Trends

- As the 2011 referendum approaches, the potential secession of the south represents a challenge for the stability of the region.
- The results of the elections will depend on whether free and fair elections are held or not. This is the main point of concern among the international community.
- The only superpower with a clear interest in Sudan is China.
- The resumption of the Peace Process, with Qatari mediation and the support of the international community, was seen as a major accomplishment. However, the fact is that the Qatari peace talks were mainly consultation meetings that concluded with no results

(1) See the list of sources monitored at the end of this newsletter.

January 2010 Arabic News Report

1. Upcoming Elections

'Second best choice'

The journalist Gamal Nkrumah analysed the implications of Al Turabi's political move. The politician favoured Abdullah Deng Nhial as the presidential candidate of the Popular Congress Party. Nhial is an ethnic Dinka and a pious Muslim. It is said that the southern population will continue to back the SPLM candidate (and Vice-President) Salva Kiir, who is also an ethnic Dinka.

Date: 14–20 January 2010

Source: Al Ahram Weekly (English)

<http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2010/981/re7.htm>

Messages of 'Elders' on Sudan

Hamly Shahrawi reacted to the message of the important political and cultural personalities known as the 'Elders' regarding Sudan. The journalist believes that their message is overly optimistic regarding the Peace Process and the United States policy towards the country. The solution should include the promotion of democratic solutions and a new negotiated consensus rather than conflict.

Date: 12 January 2010

Source: Al Arabiya (Arabic)

<http://www.alarabiya.net/views/2010/01/12/97065.html>

Sudan, a big country that fails

Ajdhar Ibrahim and Bishop Desmond Tutu recognise that the international community's support was one of the main forces behind the 2005 CPA. Today, the presence of appropriate international support is an essential matter in Sudan. If the international community fails to meet this challenge, the conflict and tensions, which cost the country hundreds of thousands of lives in the past, could experience a resurgence.

Date: 09 January 2010

Source: Al Arabiya (Arabic)

<http://www.alarabiya.net/views/2010/01/09/96763.html>

'A questionable deal'

According to Asmaa El-Husseini, the SPLM succeeded in fulfilling its objectives regarding the laws for the 2011 referendum. However, this does not mean that the group will be able to act as a positive force in the southern political arena, as it failed to oppose the NCP on the security laws that were passed, which directly affect the lives of citizens in this conflict-torn region. In addition, many differences remain between NCP and SPLM.

Date: 07–14/JANUARY/10

Source: Al Ahram Weekly (English)

<http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2010/980/re9.htm>

2. International Peace efforts

Meetings in Doha

According to the Qatari Foreign Affairs Minister, the different Darfur factions participating in the sessions in Doha 'really want to reach peace'. Qatar organised a meeting with the joint AU-UN Mediator for Darfur, Djibril Bassole, the Addis Ababa group delegation (made up of eight movements), and the two Sudanese government delegations, the Justice and Equality Movement and the Sudan Liberation Movement (Tripoli Group).

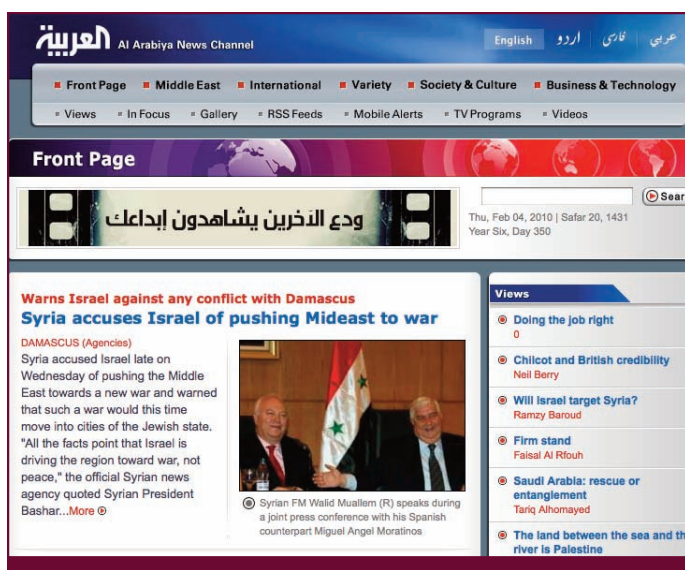
Date: 26 January 2010

Source: Qatari Ministry of Foreign Affairs Website (Arabic)

<http://www.mofa.gov.qa/newsPage.cfm?newsid=12859>

OIC Supports Qatari efforts on Peace Process in Darfur

Ambassador Habib Kabachi participated, as representative of the Secretary General of the OIC, in the international experts workshop on the peace process in Darfur, held in



Doha on 18 January 2010. OIC supports the Qatari role as a joint UN/AU mediator for comprehensive peace in Darfur 'within Sudan's unity, security and stability'.

Date: 20 January 2010

Source: Organization of the Islamic Conference website (Arabic)

http://www.oic-oci.org/topic_detail.asp?t_id=3239&ref=1393&lan=ar



A turbulent year in Sudan

Ali Ibrahim says that even it would be better for Sudan and for the region that the country remains unified due to political and economic reasons, 'in the south, institutes are being prepared for independence and northern politicians seem to have psychologically prepared themselves for the possibility of two states'.

Date: 20 January 2010

Source: Al Arabiya (English)

<http://www.alarabiya.net/views/2010/01/20/97877.html>

Fifth anniversary of the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in Sudan

Egypt, as a guarantor of the CPA implementation, welcomed this new anniversary and according to Ahmed Aboul Gheit, Egyptian Ministry for Foreign Affairs, '2010 will be a pivotal year in Sudan' and will require the cooperation of the international community in order to implement the CPA and maintain Sudanese stability and security.

Date: 10 January 2010

Source: Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Arabic)

[http://www.mfa.gov.eg/MFA_Portal/ar-](http://www.mfa.gov.eg/MFA_Portal/ar-EG/MFA_News/Press_Releases/sudan1012010.htm)

[EG/MFA_News/Press_Releases/sudan1012010.htm](http://www.mfa.gov.eg/MFA_Portal/ar-EG/MFA_News/Press_Releases/sudan1012010.htm)

The south divorces from Khartoum

Abdul Rahman al-Rashed writes in Al Arabiya that the division of the country will become a reality after 2011

referendum. All things considered, they are two different regions: 'they do not have anything in common; they even speak different languages'. But the main problem is that, 'through the wars in the South, the central government sought to retain control of the North, militarise the state and marginalise the opposition'.

Date: 10 January 2010

Source: Al Arabiya (Arabic)

<http://www.alarabiya.net/views/2010/01/10/96857.html>

3. Other issues

What's going on in Sudan?

Abdel Menem Said recognized the importance of the speech that President Al Bashir gave on January 19 in Yambio in which he declared that he will accept the results of the referendum of 2011. It is possible that these words were aimed at calming the situation and reducing the tension which prevails in the Sudanese arena before the legislative and presidential elections in April.

Date: 27 January 2010

Source: Al Arabiya (Arabic)

<http://www.alarabiya.net/views/2010/01/27/98571.html>

OIC will hold the Donors' Conference for Darfur on 23 March

After the first preparatory meeting to the Donors' Conference for the Development and Reconstruction of Darfur, held in Cairo during December, the second preparatory meeting took place in Khartoum. The Donors' Conference will be held at ministerial level under joint Egyptian-Turkish chairmanship with the participation of OIC Member States, Islamic financial institutions, civil society organisations and many international donors.

Date: 23 January 2010

Source: Organization of the Islamic Conference website (Arabic)

http://www.oic-oci.org/topic_detail.asp?t_id=3244&ref=1396&lan=ar

Chinese interests in Sudan

Raghida Dergham, Al Hayat correspondent in Sudan, while analysing the relations between the global superpowers, and Chinese policy towards the major ongoing conflicts in the Middle East points, out a big difference: 'China decided not to engage in the Arab-Israeli conflict, but Sudan is much more important for

China, and it is an issue that concerns it directly for oil-related reasons’.

Date: 15 January 2010

Source: Al Hayat (Arabic)

<http://international.daralhayat.com/internationalarticle/97472>

Arab-African ministerial meeting on food security

The Organization of the Arab League and the African Union will hold a ministerial meeting on food security and agricultural development in Sharm El Sheikh (Egypt) from 14–16 February.

Date: 14 January 2010

Source: Arab League Website (Arabic)

http://www.arableagueonline.org/lasimages/picture_gallery/statement24-2-2010.doc

Turkey stresses its support to OIC's International Darfur Donors' Conference

During a meeting in Jeddah with the OIC Secretary General, Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, the Turkish Foreign Minister, Ahmet Davutoglu, stressed his support for the forthcoming international Darfur donors' conference to be held in Sharm El Sheikh under the joint chairmanship of Turkey and Egypt. The conference aims to find ways of bringing financial stability to the region.

Date: 02 January 2010

Source: Organization of the Islamic Conference website (Arabic)

http://www.oic-oci.org/topic_detail.asp?t_id=3169&ref=1368&lan=ar

■ Chronology - January 2010

28 January

- The UN-African Union Envoy meets Sudanese officials.

24 January

- The new head of the UNAMID Mission, Ibrahim Gambari, takes up office.

22 January

- * Sudan expels 26 NGOs working in Darfur and warns that another 13 might face the same fate if they don't adapt to Sudanese legal requirements.

21 January

- U.S. welcomes normalisation of Sudan-Chad Relations.

15 January

- Sudanese authorities execute six men accused of murder.

14 January

- President al Bashir is nominated as a presidential candidate.

13 January

- Daniel Deng, the Anglican Archbishop of Sudan, accused China of being a bad influence in Sudan due to his policy of economic gain.

12 January

- Fifth anniversary of the CPA deal.

11 January

- President al-Bashir resigns as commander-in-chief of the army.

10 January

- The Sudanese parliament passes the referendum bill.

07 January

- Armed Nuer tribesmen kill at least 139 members of a rival tribe.

■ Annex

Report of the UN Secretary-General on the Sudan

Date: 19 January 2010

Source: United Nations Website

<http://daccess-ods.un.org/TMP/6148725.html>

<http://www.oxfam.org/sites/www.oxfam.org/files/rescuing-peace-southern-sudan.pdf>

Rescuing the Peace in Southern Sudan

Date: 10 January 2010

Source: OXFAM International Website (English)

Decisions and Deadlines: A Critical Year for Sudan

Date: January 2010

Source: Chatham House Website (English)

<http://www.chathamhouse.org.uk/publications/papers/view/-/id/823/>

■ List of sources

Regional Organisations' websites

Arab League	http://www.arableagueonline.org/
African Union	http://www.africa-union.org/
Organization of the Islamic Conference	http://www.oic-oci.org/
Gulf Cooperation Council	http://www.gcc-sg.org/

Ministries of Foreign Affairs' websites

Qatari Ministry of Foreign Affairs	http://www.mofa.gov.qa
Saudi Arabia - Ministry of Foreign Affairs	http://www.mofa.gov.sa/
Libya - Ministry of Foreign Affairs	http://www.foreign.gov.ly/
Egypt - Ministry of Foreign Affairs	http://www.mfa.gov.eg/
Sudan - Ministry of Foreign Affairs	http://www.mfa.gov.sd/

News Agencies

Al Jazeera	http://www.aljazeera.net/
Al Arabiya	http://www.alarabiya.net/
Qatar News Agency	http://www.qnaol.net/
Saudi Press Agency	http://www.spa.gov.sa/
Emirates News Agency-WAM	http://www.wam.org.ae/
Jamahiriya News Agency	http://www.jananews.ly/
Middle East News Agency (MENA)	http://www.mena.org.eg/
Sudan News Agency	http://www.sunas-sd.net/
Radio Dabanga	http://www.radiodabanga.org/

Arab think tanks and information websites

To understand Darfur	http://ifhamdarfur.net/
Arab Program on Human Rights	http://www.aphra.org/pcd/
Arabic Network for Human Rights Information	http://www.anhri.net/
Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies	http://www.cihrs.org/
Al Academy for Graduate Studies	http://www.alacademia.edu.ly/

Newspapers

Ash sharq al awsat	http://www.asharqalawsat.com/
Al Hayat	http://www.alhayat.com/
As Sahafa	http://www.alsahafa.sd/
Sudan Tribune	http://www.sudantribune.com/
Al Ahram	http://www.ahram.org.eg/
Al Watan Al Libi	http://www.alwatan-libya.com/
Tripoli Post	http://www.tripolipost.com/