

SPLM could loose 2015 election, Unity State party official

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October 13, 2012 (BENTIU) - South Sudan's ruling party - the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) - could loose elections in 2015 if corruption and nepotism are not addressed and funding is not improved, warns a senior party official in Unity State.

Franco Duoth Diu, the Chairman of the SPLM in Leer County said the party was starved of the money needed to campaign and motivate young people and the general public.

Some SPLM members in Unity State accuse SPLM Secretary General Pagan Amum of failing to raise funds for 10 state branches of the party, which has governed South Sudan since a 2005 peace deal.

Diu, who served as Commissioner of Leer County from 2009-2010, added that it was a shame that some counties within Unity State there are no SPLM offices as this hindered attempts to explain the party's vision.

In his interview with *Sudan Tribune* on Saturday in Bentiu town he accused some SPLM officials of being corrupt and of failing to deliver the objectives of the party and provide services to communities.

Diu said that if the party's financial situation did not improve the SPLM could struggle in elections scheduled for 2015. The coming elections will be the first since South Sudan seceded from Sudan as part the landmark 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) between the SPLM and Sudan's ruling National Congress Party.

Elections in 2010, held as part of the CPA, saw the SPLM consolidate its base in South Sudan ahead of the referendum in January 2011 that paved the way for independence six months later.

However, Diu warned that the SPLM could lose the next elections if it does not address internal issues such as nepotism, favouritism and unequal political participation among its members in terms of appointments to official government positions.

"If the headquarters [in the capital Juba] is not taking care and we will not get a success of 2015, people are just only using propaganda, that SPLM is very active they can be surprise by just only small party to come up abruptly or accidentally without the knowledge of the SPLM, because the SPLM itself now are not active in the ground".

The Chairman of the SPLM in Leer County said there were no political activities at state, county, *payam* [district], *buma* [sub-district] and village levels.

Diu warned the SPLM Secretary General, Pagan Amum, to keep his eyes on all corners of South Sudan's ten states, so that former rebel movement does not loose popularity.

Since South Sudan's independence on 9 July 2011 Amum has headed Juba's delegation to post-partition negotiations with Sudan and before independence served in the southern cabinet as Minister for Peace and CPA Implementation, while simultaneously holding the position of SPLM Secretary General.

Sudan Tribune was unable to Amum on his phones on Saturday.

While not referring to Amum's specific case, Diu said that South Sudan was in confusion when it came to distribution of positions with many officials having multiple roles at different levels of the government and ruling party.

"The SPLM is concentrating positions to just only few people", he said "they are not even dispersing all these positions to all cadres of [the] SPLM". This meant that some members of the party were being neglected, he said.

"You will find one person is a member of parliament, you will find him a chairman of something, you will find he is the Minister. Why is he/she given all these positions while the rest of people have nothing?".

Diu accused the Unity State and central government of not rewarding the tireless work of SPLM members at lower levels. Now that South Sudan was independent there was no more need for people to work for free as volunteers as they had during the two-decade civil war, he said.

Leer County's SPLM Chairman warned that because of lack of salaries some SPLM chairpersons in Unity State had been forced to join or rejoin the army (SPLA) in order to earn enough money to make a living.

South Sudan has had to implement severe austerity measures this year after it stopped oil production as part of a transit fee dispute with Sudan. A deal to resume production and eight other issues was reached last month under African Union mediation but it will take months before oil exports resume.

Revenue from oil amounted to 98% of the government's income before the shutdown.

When the austerity measures were first announced it was promised that the salaries of civil servants, police and armed forces would not be cut.

However, in recent weeks cuts to the armed forces have resulted in violent protests by police in Lakes State and in Unity State a 25% cut in civil servant salaries has been introduced to the anger of many.

South Sudan is still building viable institutions - distinct from the SPLM - after decades of civil war and underinvestment.

The nascent nation, under its transitional constitution, is also in the process of separating the SPLM, which was the political wing of the SPLA rebels during the war, from the army that now constitutes the national military.

Some citizens of the world's youngest nation accuse SPLM members of self-interest and corruption.

Earlier this year President Salva Kiir wrote to 75 anonymous top officials asking them to return \$4 billion of missing oil revenue during the six-year interim period (2005-2011) of the peace deal, when revenues South Sudanese oil was split 50:50 with Khartoum.

In the letter, Kiir said that the SPLM had forgotten what they had fought for during the civil war, encouraging the officials to return the money to a bank specifically set up in Nairobi, Kenya.

In the 2010 election Kiir won over 90% of the vote in the presidential race and the SPLM won 160 of 170 seats in the National Legislative Assembly.

However, the SPLM Chairman of Unity State Dr. Joseph Nguen Monytuel told *Sudan Tribune* on Sunday that lack of funding was not the SPLM's biggest issue.

Competition between the executive and the SPLM's state liberation council, which is made up of senior party members was causing chaos, he said, describing a parallel ideology between himself and Governor Taban Deng Gai

"Having the governor at the parallel line and the state chairperson at the another line it has created all these problems and this very disastrous dealing of SPLM at the state level," the state chairperson said.

Monytuel accused Governor Gai of disrespecting and ignoring the SPLM at state and county levels level, adding that he had taken a step back from the "chaos" so as not to create conflict within the party.

In terms of finances, the chairman said that state level mechanisms were sufficient to collect enough funds for SPLM activities and that the Juba headquarters did not need to send them extra money.

However, he said that the state executive - the Governor, his ministers and advisers - have not engaged with the SPLM secretariat in the state and created "their own ways of doing things, the current secretariat is not even reporting to me as the chairman of the party."

Monytuel dismissed suggestions that the national government should to fund the party.

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