

10 Jan 2010

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Media Monitoring Report

United Nations Mission in Sudan/ Public Information Office

Referendum Watch

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Address: UNMIS Headquarters, P.O. Box 69, Ibeid Khatim St, Khartoum 11111, SUDAN
Phone: (+249-1) 8708 6000 - Fax: (+249-1) 8708 6200

Highlights

Huge turnout again on 2nd day of south Sudan vote

AFP 10/1/11 - Thousands of south Sudanese poured out to vote for a second straight day in a landmark independence referendum on Monday, bringing the region a step closer to becoming the world's newest state.

Repeating the jubilant scenes witnessed on Sunday, huge queues formed outside polling stations in regional capital Juba from long before dawn as voters seized their chance to have their say on whether to split Africa's largest nation and put the seal on five decades of north-south conflict.

The scale of the turnout on the second of the seven days of polling brings the south a big step closer to the 60 percent threshold set by a 2005 peace deal between north and south for the referendum to be valid.

"I was born in 1955 as the first war started," said Lometa Hassan after he cast his vote in Juba, referring to a mutiny by southern troops over Britain's decision to give Sudan independence as a single country the following year.

"We have had just 10 years of peace in my entire life," he added, referring to the brief lull between civil wars from 1972 to 1983.

Like many people, Hassan had come very early to vote on Monday after being deterred by the thousands already waiting long before polls opened at 8:00 am (0500 GMT) on Sunday.

"I came here at 5:00 am because yesterday I tried, I came at 7:00 am and I found the whole place filled up," he said.

James Khor Chol, 28, took even more drastic action. "I came at 2:00 am. Today I was the first to vote," he said proudly.

Like many in this mainly Christian region, Chol had gone to church on Sunday before going to the polling station where he was overwhelmed by the queues.

Many were wearing their Sunday best again on Monday as they cast their vote on whether to break away from the mainly Arab Muslim north.

After standing solemnly in sex-segregated lines for hours to perform what for many was a patriotic duty, voters took turns to dip their finger in indelible ink and put their ballot in the box. The women ululated after each one.

Southern leaders had urged voters to turn out en masse but the size of the crowds on the first day surprised the referendum organisers.

After initially being effusive about the scenes outside polling stations, Chan Reec, the organising

commission's number two, later appealed for more consideration to be shown to women with children and the elderly.

Polls had been scheduled to close at 5:00 pm (1400 GMT) on Sunday, but many polling stations visited by AFP in Juba stayed open for another two hours or more to deal with the huge backlog of eager voters.

"This is the historic moment the people of south Sudan have been waiting for," Kiir said, holding up his hand to reporters to show the indelible ink that demonstrated he had voted. US envoys Scott Gration and John Kerry as well as Hollywood star George Clooney watched as Kiir cast his ballot.

On first day of polling: turnout in the South high, in the North low

Local dailies 10/1/11 – polling on self-determination for southern Sudan kicked off yesterday across the country in a peaceful atmosphere, with long queues of voters seen in the South waiting to cast their votes.

The turnout of voters in the South was huge but in Khartoum it was low on the first day of voting, according to *Al-Ahram Al-Youm* 10/1/11.

SSRC Chair Mohamed Ibrahim Khalil, who toured polling centres yesterday, directed that voting hours should be extended until 6:00 pm instead of 5:00 pm. He described voting on the first day as successful, adding that in the south polling exceeded expectations.

Khartoum state police Director Gen. Mohamed Al-Hafiz Hassan has confirmed the stability of security situation during the first day of the referendum, saying the process went off peacefully and no referendum-related incident was reported to the police on the first day.

"The Sudanese people are conducting the process in a civilized manner," Fathi Shilla, NCP information official told reporters after a meeting held by his party yesterday to assess the vote on the first day, according to *Al-Ahdath*.

In South Darfur a wave of chilly and dusty weather prevented voters from heading for polling centres to cast their votes although they have been opened on time.

In a related development, *Al-Ahdath* 10/1/11 reports that around 100 pro-separation northerners who are supporters of the Just Peace Forum gathered yesterday in front of SPLA HQs in Khartoum to celebrate the start of the referendum. They slaughtered a white cow near the SPLM office to express their joy over what they described as the true beginning of Sudan's independence. They also called for the departure of the SPLM from the North and demanded application of Islamic Sharia in the North.

Jubilant south Sudanese vote en masse in referendum

AFP 9/1/11 - Men grinning and waving, women singing and dancing, south Sudanese dressed in their finest queued by the thousand Sunday to vote in a landmark referendum expected to create the world's newest state.

They had begun forming up in orderly sex-segregated lines from soon after midnight, eager to be

among the first to have their say on whether the impoverished south should finally break away from rule by Khartoum, ending five decades of conflict between north and south.

When the polls finally opened at 8:00 am (0500 GMT) for the start of the seven-day vote, the excitement was electric. Each time the next vote was inserted in the ballot box, women ululating in celebration.

A few voters wore their opinions on their chests with T-shirts demanding independence. Most donned the Western suits and brightly coloured floral dresses normally reserved for church in this largely Christian region but they showed no less enthusiasm for separation from the Muslim, mainly Arab north.

Southern leaders had urged voters to come out en masse on the first day. The 2005 peace deal requires a turnout of at least 60 percent for the referendum to be valid. The outcome will then be decided by simple majority.

The deputy head of the organising committee, Chan Reec, was effusive about the massive turnout in the first hours of the independence vote.

"There is singing, there is dancing, this is a day like no other in the history of the people of south Sudan," he told AFP.

Some 3.75 million people are registered to vote in the south and around 117,000 in north Sudan, the majority of them in capital Khartoum.

South Sudanese president Salva Kiir was among the first to cast his ballot in the regional capital Juba.

"This is the historic moment the people of south Sudan have been waiting for," Kiir said, holding up his hand to reporters to show the indelible ink that demonstrated he had voted.

US envoys Scott Gration and John Kerry as well as Hollywood star George Clooney watched as he cast his ballot at a polling station set up at the memorial to late rebel leader John Garang in the regional capital Juba.

It was Garang who signed the 2005 peace agreement that provided for Sunday's referendum, shortly before his death in a mysterious helicopter crash on his way back from Uganda.

His widow Rebecca said: "I have mixed feelings about this day for I know that my husband did not die in vain and I know that freedom has a price," she said.

Yar Mayon, who grew up in refugee camps in Ethiopia and Kenya, said: "I came here in the early morning because I wanted to show just how much I wanted to vote."

As the sun rose, another voter, Wilson Santino said: "This is a new dawn because we vote for our freedom."

After touring a polling station with ex-US president Jimmy Carter, former UN chief Kofi Annan

said: "It is important that the energy and enthusiasm lead to solid results that are accepted by everybody."

Carter, who held talks with northern leaders in Khartoum before heading to Juba for the vote, said he believed the prospects for the referendum to result in new violence had greatly receded in recent days.

"Now there is a general acceptance in the north and south that if a vote for independence should be cast -- and we don't know that yet -- then it will be accepted peacefully."

Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir, an army man who led the north's war effort against the south for a decade and a half before signing the 2005 peace deal, has said he will respect the outcome of the vote if it is "free and transparent."

But many ordinary people in the north were less accommodating.

"If you want to come back, you will first have to apply for a visa," scoffed Hamdi Mahmoud Hassan, when told by a southern fellow police officer that he had voted for secession, one of the few to do so in the north, where -- in stark contrast to the south-- turnout amounted to no more than a trickle.

Hassan said he was "furious" but also resigned to the prospect of the partition of Africa's largest nation.

The run-up to polling day had been overshadowed by deadly clashes in two remote oil-producing districts on the north-south border that were bitterly contested in the most recent, 1983-2005 round of conflict but a military spokesman said the situation was calm across the south on Sunday.

Results are not expected until early next month because of the immense logistical problems involved in collecting ballot boxes in a vast, war-ravaged region which has just 40 kilometres (25 miles) of tarmac road, most of it in Juba.

South Sudanese from the Diaspora were also voting Sunday in Kenya, Uganda and Egypt.

SRSG expresses satisfaction with Referendum arrangement

Miraya FM 10/1/11 - Visiting polling centres in Juba and Torit in south Sudan on the first day of the Referendum poll, the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General in Sudan, Haile Menkerios, expressed his satisfaction with the arrangements.

Menkerios hailed the peaceful start of the polling process across Southern Sudan, and the absence of discrepancies in the voter lists at polling centres, cases of which were observed in last year's general elections.

He commended the government's efforts to put security in place for the peaceful start of a week-long polling process within Southern Sudan.

UN Secretary-General; AEC chief laud on-time referendum

Al-Raed Khartoum, 10/01/11 – UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon has lauded the efforts of the

federal government in Sudan and of the Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS) to conduct the referendum on schedule. In a statement issued yesterday, the UN called on the parties to the CPA to work for the success of the vote and vowed to continue support for the referendum and the full implementation of the CPA.

He also commended the work of the South Sudan Referendum Commission in Khartoum and its bureau in Juba, reports *Radio Miraya*.

He further expressed his gratitude to all international partners, for supporting the process. Ban urged the parties of the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement to ensure free, fair and secure polling and called on the people of Sudan to follow the process in the spirit of brotherhood and peace.

In a related development, *Al-Raed daily*, reporting from Juba, states that the head of the Assessment and Evaluation Commission (AEC) described the referendum as a “historic moment” in Sudan’s history that would enable the people of north and south Sudan transcend the problems that have weighed down the country since independence. Sir Derek Plumbly who was attending the start of voting for the referendum yesterday, said that the referendum brings Sudan to the threshold of a new era.

10,500 voters cast their ballots in the North

Radio Miraya website posts a story today putting the overall figure of votes cast in northern Sudan at the close of polling yesterday at 10,500. Quoting SSRC Chairman Mohamed Ibrahim Khalil, the highest turnout in the north was recorded in South Darfur State.

Meanwhile in Khartoum State, Kober prison has recorded the highest number of voters in Khartoum State as the first day of polling closed yesterday, according to *Al-Sahafa*. Some 185 inmates and former inmates from southern Sudanese turned out to vote at the Kober Prison polling station yesterday. SPLM’s Yassir Arman headed a party delegation yesterday touring polling stations at the prisons.

UPDATE 5-Millions vote in South Sudan independence poll

Reuters 9/1/11 - Millions of jubilant south Sudanese voted on Sunday in an independence referendum expected to see the largely non-Muslim region splitting away from the Arab-led north to create Africa's newest nation.

People queued for hours in the burning sun outside polling stations in the southern capital Juba, and many were turned away as the first day of voting in the week-long ballot ended around sundown. Southerners view the poll as a new beginning after decades of civil war and perceived repression by north Sudan.

"This is the moment the people of southern Sudan have been waiting for," southern president Salva Kiir said after casting his ballot, urging people to be patient as they waited to vote.

"I am voting for separation," said Nhial Wier, a veteran of the north-south civil war that led up to the vote. "This day marks the end of my struggles. In the army I was fighting for freedom. I was fighting for separation."

Hours after voting started, the celebratory atmosphere was marred by reports of fresh fighting between Arab nomads and tribes people associated with the south in the contested oil-rich Abyei region that borders north and south...

In the north, the prospect of losing a quarter of the country's land mass -- and the source of most of its oil -- has been greeted with resignation and some resentment.

Sudanese President Omar Hassan al-Bashir, who campaigned for unity in the run-up to the vote, has been making increasingly conciliatory comments and this month promised to join independence celebrations, if that was the outcome.

In Juba, actor George Clooney and U.S. Senator John Kerry mingled with dancing and singing crowds dressed up to the nines. Voters waiting outside one polling station burst into a rendition of the hymn "This is the day that the Lord has made".

"It is something to see people actually voting for their freedom. That's not something you see often in your life," Clooney told Reuters.

In the north, emotions were also running high. "We feel an incredible sadness that a ... very loved part of Sudan will separate from us," said northern opposition Umma Party official Sara Nuqduh.

"We must now work to reassure the northerners in the south and southerners in the north and the tribes in the border zone that they will not be harmed," she said, breaking down in tears.

Obama: World is watching Sudan referendum

AP 9/1/11 - President Barack Obama said Sunday the world is watching as voters in southern Sudan go to the polls in a weeklong referendum that's expected to split the troubled African nation into two parts and create the world's newest country.

Writing in *The New York Times*, Obama said that not every generation has the opportunity to "turn the page on the past and write a new chapter in history."

"Yet today after 50 years of civil wars that have killed two million people and turned millions more into refugees this is the opportunity before the people of southern Sudan," he said.

The south, which is mostly Christian, is expected to secede from the mainly Muslim north, dividing Africa's largest country in two.

Obama said the vote and the action of the leaders of Sudan will help determine whether Sudan will "move toward peace and prosperity, or slide backward into bloodshed."

The referendum, he said, will have consequences not only for Sudan, but also for sub-Saharan Africa and the world.

Omar al-Bashir, the president of Sudan who's facing charges for alleged genocide and war crimes in the western Darfur region, has vowed to honor the outcome of the vote and let go of the oil-rich south. His government tried for years to derail the referendum now taking place

under massive international scrutiny.

"Now, the world is watching, united in its determination to make sure that all parties in Sudan live up to their obligations," Obama said. "As the referendum proceeds, voters must be allowed access to polling stations; they must be able to cast their ballots free from intimidation and coercion."

"A successful vote will be cause for celebration and an inspiring step forward in Africa's long journey toward democracy and justice," Obama said.

But, he cautioned, lasting peace in Sudan will demand far more than a credible referendum.

He said the peace pact agreed to in 2005 must be fully implemented and that border disputes need to be peacefully resolved.

Obama also said there can be no lasting peace until the situation in Darfur is resolved. He said that the government of Sudan must live up to its obligations and stop the attacks on civilians in the region.

"The United States," Obama said, "will not abandon the people of Darfur."

No dual nationality in the event of southern Sudan secession – Assembly Deputy Speaker

Al-Tayyar 10/1/11 – National Assembly deputy Speaker Hajo Gismuel-Sid said the parliament is monitoring the referendum in the South and the North through representatives deployed in those areas. He said the Parliament would respect the vote result, hoping that the North and the South would be good neighbours.

Mr. Gismuel-Sid said dual nationality would not be granted to southerners in the event of secession. "After secession southerners in the North will have the option to live in the North or leave for the South but a dual nationality will not be granted".

Fighting continues between the Misseriya and Dinka near Abyei

Al-Sahafa 10/1/11 – Clashes renewed yesterday between the Misseriya and the Dinka in Makuer area 12 km northwest of the disputed Abyei territory, claiming many casualties. A security meeting between the southern Kordofan state governor and Abyei Chief Administrator agreed to arrangement a meeting between the federal interior minister and GoSS interior minister to address the issue.

Ismail Jamma Hamdan, who introduced himself as Abyei Liberation Front field commander, said that the fighting between the tribe and the SPLA renewed yesterday and 12 people were killed and 41 wounded on the part of the Misseriya tribe while he put the SPLA casualties at 136 people, saying the Misseriya fighters would launch further battles. Tibeik Shaqiga, another Misseriya leader, told the newspaper that the Misseriya fighters seized 120 Kalashnikov rifles and 4 artillery from the SPLA.

Ismail Hatao said the attack was launched by the Misseriya against Makuer camp located north of 1/1/65 line, adding the camp was completely destroyed.

However, Abyei Chief Administrator denied that there is a camp in Makuer. He said an attack was launched on the Makuer village yesterday but residents were able to repulse the attack. He pointed out that 10 people were killed and 40 wounded on the part of the Misseriya and 12 were killed on the part of the Dinka but the number of the wounded is unknown.

In Khartoum, the NCP has called on the SPLM to remove its police from Abyei and to allow unimpeded migration of the Misseriya nomads. NCP official Mohamed Mandour Al-Mahdi, speaking to reporters yesterday, stressed the need for the SPLM to cease war rhetoric particularly from its Secretary General Pagan Amum, adding that the Abyei territory is administered by the Presidency and any escalation in the Area would have impact on the referendum process and the relationship between the North and the South.

Meanwhile, Misseriya Union Chair, Mohamed Khatir Gumma said the tribe would hold a rally today in Mujlad (southern Kordofan) to direct call to the international community and the federal government on the need to intervene to stop SPLA attacks on the tribe, according to *Al-Ahram Al-Youm* 10/1/11.

Deadly clashes in Abyei on first day of South Sudan referendum

Sudan Tribune website 9/1/11 - A series of clashes over the last three days involving local police force and armed elements allegedly associated with members of nomadic tribe of Misseriya, in the oil-producing region of Abyei has left an unknown number dead.

Yesterday Khartoum-based Arabic newspaper *Al-Sahafa* reported the more than 49 people were killed and dozens wounded in the clashes in the disputed area, although this has not been confirmed by the UN. Reports over the cause of the violence are not clear with different reasons put forward from both sides.

Al-Sahafa reported Sunday that, nine people of those killed from the Dinka Ngok ethnic group, while the rest were either police or members of the Misseriya tribe. Both sides accuse the other of attacking first. Reuters have reported that a UN official has confirmed the clashes have taken place but have not confirmed the number of killed or injured.

Dinka Ngok sultan, Kual Deng Magok, said the clashes erupted after the Misseriya attempted to capture the village of Macare and that Southern security forces had been ambushed.

But the senior Misseriya leader, Hamdi al-Doudo has said the clashes were triggered by the southern army (SPLA) moving up to 1,500 soldiers into the area, which the Arab nomads regards as a route to grazing fields.

South Kordofan Governor, Ahmed Haroun, has called for an immediate cessation of hostilities.

Speaking to Sudan Tribune from the oil-producing region, Juac Agok, the acting SPLM chairman in the area, said armed groups camouflaged as nomads killed 28 local police in a series of clashes on Friday, Saturday and Sunday.

"[An] armed group possessing heavy artillery and tanks launched series of attacks on police posts in three different places in the area on Friday and Saturday. They also attacked the same and additional three other locations today," said Agok.

Agok said the clashes occurred in Maker Abior, Miakol, Todach and Shegei.

"They launched heavy attack on the police post today (Sunday) at 11 o'clock this morning at Maker Abior resulting into the killing of 18 on the side of local police and injury of 20 others. This occurred as [a] retaliatory attack, after the Friday attack, in which one police was killed and 9 others in Todach on Saturday," said Agok.

"On their side, we do not have accurate information but we have reports that 22 were killed from today's attack at Maker. The local police who conducted sentry surveillance at five o'clock today found a lot of dead bodies. I am told 19 bodies were found. This was the clash of today. As for yesterday, 20 were found killed," he said.

The official said that some of those believed to have sustained injuries are taken to a local hospital in an area called Balilal outside of the Abyei region.

"Balilal is a one of the localities under southern Kordofan state at the corridors branching to the way to Kadugli and to the north from Abyei. It is in the middle serving as the headquarters of militia group. This is where attacks against Abyei and other places in the south are planned," explained Agok.

The senior official of the southern ruling party in the area also said that 13 were injured on Friday and a further 18 members of local police in Saturday's attack.

The Abyei administrator, Deng Arop Kuol, also in an interview with Sudan Tribune from Abyei town, confirmed the clash but gave different casualty figures.

"Yes, there were clashes starting on Friday and again today. The armed group best described as Misseriya tribesmen launched series of attacks on civilian settlements in three different locations."

"They attacked Miakol, which is about 18 km north of Abyei town, killing at least one on Friday and 9 others on Saturday. 13 were also injured and 5 today," said Kuol, the Abyei chief administrator.

The top local official, however, said that he and his northern counterpart, the southern Kordofan Governor, Ahmed Haroun were ready to find a settlement to the conflict.

"Governor Ahmed Haroun was here today after traveling to Muglad for talks with members of the Misseriya tribe who are currently engaged in these attacks. In our meeting we have discussed and agreed ways forward to stop escalation of these attacks to large scale."

"On our side, we have agreed that our local police will not proceed but remain in their position. Governor Haroun also assured that he would ensure nobody from members of the Misseriya should again launch another retaliatory attack on civilian population and police post we have agreed to find immediate settlement at earliest possible so that peace is restored and movement between the two areas resumes immediately," Kuol told Sudan Tribune from Abyei...

Clashes in Sudan's Abyei kill at least 33: rival chiefs

AFP 10/1/11 - The feuding Misseriya Arab and Ngok Dinka peoples of the disputed Sudan district of Abyei on Monday both reported heavy losses in clashes over the past three days totalling at least 33 dead.

"Thirteen Misseriya have been killed and 38 wounded since Friday," Misseriya tribal leader Hamid al-Ansari said.

Abyei chief administrator Deng Arop Kuol said: "The total for these three days, we lost about 20 to 22 Dinka.

"They attacked us three times already and we are expecting them to attack again today." Tensions in the district on the north-south border have been rising with the launch of a landmark independence referendum in the south on Sunday.

Abyei had been due to hold a simultaneous plebiscite on its own future but it has been indefinitely postponed.

SPLM blames Khartoum for deadly Abyei clashes

AFP 9/1/11 - A senior southern leader in Sudan on Sunday urged Khartoum to honour agreements on Abyei, after renewed fighting in the flashpoint oil district on the eve of an independence referendum for the south.

Deng Alor, a senior leader of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement, reported clashes in Abyei, confirming reports that calm had returned to the district on Sunday after fighting the day before in which several people had been killed and wounded.

"If the National Congress (Party of the north) want peace, cooperation and benefits with the south, the way is to cooperate with the SPLM, and to accept the implementation of the agreement on Abyei," Deng Alor said.

He added that militias organised by the NCP had carried out attacks in Abyei and in Bentiu, another key oil-producing district on the border.

Alor was speaking as voting began on Sunday in a referendum that will decide whether south Sudan opts to remain part of the north or choose independence, fulfilling a key provision of a 2005 peace agreement between the two sides.

Hamid al-Ansari, a leader of the Misseriya tribe, confirmed clashes Saturday between his men and rival Dinka Ngok tribesmen.

"The fighting happened yesterday when our cows tried to go to the river to drink and were fired on by the Dinka Ngok," Ansari told AFP by phone from Abyei.

"One of our people was injured and one of the Dinka Ngok was killed," he said, adding that the Dinka then returned with reinforcements and heavy fighting ensued.

"Five of our people were injured, while we got 24 of their weapons," Ansari added.

Abyei's southern-appointed chief administrator Deng Arop Kuol confirmed the region was quiet on Sunday, after fighting in which several people had died.

"The fighting was yesterday and the day before yesterday," he told AFP, without giving more details on the victims.

Much attention in the run-up to the southern referendum had focused on Abyei, given the district's potential to create a new flare-up between north and south Sudan.

A spokesman for the United Nations peacekeeping force in Sudan said UNMIS was investigating the latest violence.

"We are aware of this incident in Abyei, however we don't have details. A UNMIS patrol is going this morning to the location of the incident... to get more information," Kouider Zerrouk told AFP...

Editorial: What next

Al-Ayyam 10/01/11 – Yesterday was a sad and dismal day for the north and a jovial day for the south. Two conflicting positions that together describe what is happening in this country and the acute polarisation afflicting the country in such a way that what makes one-third of the country dance in jubilation is a cause of sadness and sorrow for the other side. This is a trend we have noticed ever since the referendum date drew near with the north making a unilateral effort to salvage unity and dreaming that unity would emerge miraculously at the eleventh hour while the south continues to tune up to the separation song without there being any objective dialogue between the two camps.

This comes as no surprise because the CPA laid the foundations for one-state two systems and not two states one system. Furthermore, none of the partners wanted to bridge the gap between an Islamic system in the north and a security system in the south that have a long history of heated confrontation and sustained conflict that, in turn, continued into the Interim Period.

Time would come when the south would secede and go its way and then each of the two sides would have to face their respective internal crises. Separation does not resolve the issue and would not solve the issue of governance – be it in the south or in the north. The challenges brought about by a long tradition of lack of good governance, marginalisation and accumulated grievances all cloaked in a thin veil of participatory governance would still remain. Hegemony and single-party politics would only lead to further fragmentation of what remains of Sudan.

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United Nations Mission in Sudan - Public Information Office

Address: UNMIS Headquarters, P.O. Box 69, Ibeid Khatim St, Khartoum 11111, SUDAN
Phone: (+249-1) 8708 6000 - Fax: (+249-1) 8708 6200