



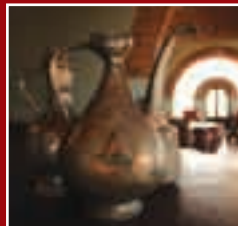
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United Nations Mission

In SUDAN

Safeguarding 2010 elections

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FRONT COVER: Election security anti-riot exercise, Malakal. Photo: UNMIS/ Imelda Tjahja.

BACK COVER: Nubian house in Dalgo village. Photo: UNMIS/Tim McKulka.

Diary

8 January: UNMIS dispatched a long-range military patrol to Warrap State to help defuse tensions and reduce chances of reprisal attacks after deadly ethnic clashes near Gogrial town. The patrol also aimed to prepare for the arrival of humanitarian assessment teams following reports that more than 139 (mainly Dinka) people were killed, 91 injured and thousands of cattle looted.

9 January: On the fifth anniversary of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon urged parties to redouble their efforts to reconcile and successfully complete remaining benchmarks, especially elections and the 2011 referendum on continued unity or secession.

9 January: UNMIS voiced concern about escalating violence over the past two weeks in Southern Sudan, in which more than 150 people were reportedly killed and many more injured or displaced. Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) Ashraf Qazi urged the Government of Southern Sudan to investigate the incidents and assist with de-escalating rising violence in the region.

10 January: SRSG Qazi called on CPA parties to ensure the success of the peace deal in the face of the emerging challenges during 2010, the final full year of the accord's Interim Period.

11 January: The World Food Programme (WFP) warned that Southern Sudan was facing a massive food deficit fuelled by drought and widespread insecurity, noting that food aid would be key for the region in 2010. WFP aimed to feed 11 million people across the country this year, including 4.5 million people in the south, where drought had pushed cereal prices up and livestock prices down.

15 January: The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights strongly condemned the execution on 14 January of six Sudanese accused of murdering 13 policemen during a forced eviction in 2001, despite UN requests to determine whether fair trial standards were respected. The men were sentenced to death in November 2006 and a stay of execution granted by the Supreme Court of Sudan in early December 2009, which expired on 6 January.

19 January: The top UN envoy in Sudan announced he would step down from the post at the end of next month after more than two years in the African nation.

22 January: Veteran Nigerian diplomat Ibrahim Gambari arrived in Sudan to assume his new duties as Joint Special Representative and head of the joint African Union-UN peacekeeping mission in Darfur (UNAMID), succeeding Rodolphe Adada as head of the mission.

24 January: During his last visit to Abyei as SRSG, Ashraf Qazi said dialogue must continue in the disputed, oil-rich area, stressing that peace there would help bolster the stability of Sudan as a whole.

31 January: During a mini-summit in Addis Ababa, Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon announced his intention to appoint his Assistant-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Haile Menkerios, as the new head of UNMIS, beginning at the end of February.

2 February: Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said in a statement that the United Nations was neutral on next year's referendum on independence for Southern Sudan, refuting recent media reports claiming that the world body supported unity. The reports came after Mr. Ban noted in Addis Ababa on 30 January that the United Nations would support efforts to "make unity attractive".

3 February: The appeals chamber of The Hague-based International Criminal Court ordered the pre-trial chamber to reconsider adding the charge of genocide to the arrest warrant for President Omar Al-Bashir issued last March, claiming that the standard of proof set earlier was too demanding at the arrest warrant stage, amounting to an "error of law".

Violence a real possibility, says Ban

Sudanese parties to the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) have made important breakthroughs, but violence could still occur, warns Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's latest report.

Covering the period between end of October and December 2009, the report cites recent positive developments, including high turn-out for voter registration and the passing of legislation governing next year's referendum on independence for Southern Sudan.

"Nevertheless, a return to conflict remains a very real possibility, with potentially catastrophic humanitarian, political, military and economic consequences throughout the region," says Mr. Ban.

The report reiterates that the success or failure of the peace process lies in the relationship between the Southern Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) and the National Congress Party (NCP).

"The current atmosphere of pervasive mistrust, in which any gain by one party is viewed as a loss by the other, dramatically undermines that political will, effectively disrupts international efforts to assist, and sets the stage for renewed conflict," states the Secretary-General.

The lack of progress in resolving outstanding issues regarding the Abyei Area remains a contentious issue, the report says, as the NCP and the Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS) are still debating revenue sharing from the Higlig oilfields.

Mr. Ban also mentions the 7 December 2009 banned demonstration of opposition parties and detention of prominent figures, including SPLM Secretary General Pagan Amum, Deputy Secretary General Yasir Arman, and Khartoum State Minister of the Interior Abbas Gumma. He added that several demonstrations in the south against these arrests turned violent and protesters burnt down an NCP office in Warrap State.

The report acknowledges that important peace agreements were reached, including one between the Abu Junok (Nuba) and Um Sileem (Misseriya) on 5 October, ending a three-year conflict. But it lists several security incidents, mainly in Upper Nile, Unity and Jonglei states, which



Voter registration for the planned April 2010 national elections underway in Juba.
Photo: UNMIS/Tim McKulka.

resulted in more than 60 deaths.

The humanitarian situation in Southern Sudan is worsening, the Secretary-General notes, with at least 40 per cent of the area's population at serious risk, owing to inter-tribal conflict and violence related to the Ugandan rebel Lord's Resistance Army, a massive food gap, and GoSS financial matters.

"More than 1.5 million people are currently receiving emergency food assistance (in Southern Sudan)," Mr. Ban says, adding that "some 400,000 children are benefiting from school feeding programmes".

Food security is also dire in Abyei, where an estimated 20,000 residents remain displaced and reliant on food aid.

The humanitarian situation is further threatened by more than 1,700 people returning through organized returns from Khartoum to the Abyei area, and Misseriya nomads, who will arrive there over the course of their seasonal migration.

The report cites the positive development of 16.5 million people registering for this year's national elections out of approximately 20 million estimated eligible voters, including 71 per cent of the estimated electorate in the north (including Darfur), 108 per cent in the south, and 67 per cent in Darfur.

"The 108 per cent figure indicates that more people registered to vote than

were counted during the national census," Mr. Ban states, adding that UNMIS communicated all reported irregularities to the National Elections Commission.

Commending legislation for enabling the holding of popular consultations in Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile states, the report decries the National Assembly's final approval of the National Intelligence and Security Services Bill, despite opposition from the SPLM and opposition parties.

"The Bill is contrary to the role of the National Intelligence and Security Services as set out in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement ... and will have a detrimental effect on electoral conditions in the Sudan," says the Secretary-General.

While welcoming progress made in disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, Mr. Ban says he is aware that former combatants may return to armed violence in an insecure environment, and calls for international funding for the programme's final, reintegration phase.

In catering for the increased need to prepare for the post-referendum period, the report says, UNMIS organized a symposium on 3 November 2009, where NCP and SPLM representatives discussed laying the groundwork for peaceful separation, while continuing efforts to make unity attractive. ■

Safeguarding 2010 elections



Election security anti-riot police officers, Malakal. Photo: UNMIS/ Imelda Tjahja.

An angry mob of 15 men storm a polling station as the emerging trends in the voting go against their candidate.

Some of the intruders are packing firearms and they want to destroy the boxes containing ballots cast by registered voters earlier in the day.

Police officers assigned to provide security at the polling station issue an urgent call for reinforcements. Within minutes, a platoon of specially trained anti-riot cops equipped with shields and wooden poles rush to the site to restore order and arrest the intruders.

This simulated incident was part of a three-day training course in election security that UN police advisers recently held in the Upper Nile State capital of Malakal for 40 officers of the Southern Sudan Police Service (SSPS).

Over 10,000 police officers had received such UNMIS-sponsored training in North and Southern Sudan as of late January, a figure that long ago surpassed the original target of 7,000 when these courses began in September 2009.

Funding for the courses has come from the Elections Basket Fund of the UN Development Programme, which has set aside nearly \$1.1 million for elections security training.

"This training has brought so many improvements," said Lt. Col. Sayid Suliman, the head of the SSPS anti-riot police office in Malakal. "We now

understand how to control the situation prior to, during and after an election."

The ability of Sudanese police officers to defuse tensions between followers of rival candidates for office will be put to the

"We now understand how to control the situation prior to, during and after an election."

test as the country heads into full-blown campaign mode during the run-up to the national elections in mid-April.

"The nature of elections worldwide and in Africa in particular is always associated with violence," said Maj. Gen. Jackson Elia, director of training at the SSPS. "It is imperative to prepare the police for election security to ensure that everybody is allowed to exercise his democratic rights freely and fairly."

A 16-page handbook of election security guidelines prepared by UNMIS police identifies impartiality, restraint, respect for political speech, respect for civilian election authorities and the maintenance of order and security as the basic principles law enforcement officers must uphold during the current electoral campaign.

The courses address a variety of topics, ranging from VIP protection and crowd control tactics to an overview of the election process and relevant provisions of the 2008 National Elections Act.

The training programme has gone quite smoothly in 12 northern states where over 7,000 members of the Sudan National Police have received instruction from UN Police (UNPOL) advisers, many of whom are native Arabic speakers from Yemen, Jordan and Egypt.

"We were surprised by the extent of cooperation we received in the north," said Surendra Sharma, the reform and restructuring coordinator for UNMIS police who has overseen the training programme since its inception.

About a dozen newly trained officers of the Sudan National Police even went to Southern Sudan to help UNPOL advisers work with their counterparts in the SSPS.

(Similar training is being provided to Sudan National Police officers stationed in the Darfur region by UNAMID police advisers.)

But it's been a slightly different story in the south, where training has sometimes been hampered by illiteracy rates among active-duty SSPS officers that vary from 65 to 90 per cent.

Many of these policemen are former Sudan People's Liberation Army rebels who received little or no instruction in law enforcement before joining the SSPS.

"Nobody in this part of Sudan has any idea of how an election is run, and they mostly see any demonstration as unrest and unlawful," said UNMIS deputy police commissioner Klaus Dieter Tietz.

Western Equatoria State Governor Jemma Nunu Kumba issued a public apology in late January after dozens of students and other civilians were injured when security forces broke up a protest in the state capital of Yambio.

"They have a military way of thinking, and it's a question of changing the mindset," said Mr. Sharma. "You can't do that in a day, but we tell them about human rights, freedom of speech and the right to assemble."

Though the pace of training in Southern Sudan has lagged at times, Mr. Tietz said at least 5,000 SSPS officers will have completed election security training courses by the middle of March. ■

Joseph Contreras and Imelda Tjahja

Keeping an eye on elections

Thousands of Sudanese citizens will be assigned a special role in the country's national elections this April.

As officially accredited observers, they will be on the lookout for voting irregularities, politically motivated violence and other behavior that could jeopardize a free and fair electoral process.

"Our mandate as domestic observers is to create awareness on the agreed code of conduct for all political parties," said Zahra Said Ali, programme officer of the Sudanese Network for Democratic Elections (SuNDE), a coalition of 78 civil society organizations and faith-based groups.

"We bring together all contestants in Southern Sudan and engage them in forums that discourage post-elections violence," said the SuNDE official.

Until now, much attention has been focused on the international election observers who will be brought into Sudan by the Atlanta-based Carter Center. And the European Union announced earlier this month it would send 130 monitors of its own.

But SuNDE, a non-partisan network founded in April 2009 and supported by the Washington-based National Democratic Institute (NDI), will also be deploying about 2,000 observers across Southern Sudan, according to the organization's chairman, Rev. Benjamin Lokio Lemi.

The network's key function will be to observe and report, rather than intervene should irregularities occur, noted Susan Stigant, NDI Programme Director for Sudan.

"The observers' role is to dispel myths and expectations (through reports) and help people think elections are credible."

SuNDE's NDI-supported counterpart in the north, the Sudanese Group for Democracy and Elections (SuDGE), an association of eight non-governmental organizations (NGOs) formed last December, also plans to deploy about 2,000 observers, said NDI Senior Programme Director Tarikul Ghani.

Complementing SuNDE and SuDGE, about 1,000 observers from the Sudan Domestic Election Monitoring and Observation Programme (SuDEMOP), supported by the Carter Center and UN Development Programme, will deploy across the south, said Ammar Abboud,

Carter Center deputy director for the northern domestic programme.

Another 2,000 SuDEMOP monitors will be deployed in the north and centre by the NGO Tamam and in the east and west by the Sudanese Civil Forum, the deputy director said.

Over 100 SuDEMOP volunteers attended a Carter Center training course on election observation and voter registration in Juba last November, and another 74 observers participated in similar courses organized by the centre in Khartoum.

"Elections are essential to democracy, and public confidence in the institutions and processes surrounding elections are cardinal," said the Carter Center's deputy country director for Southern Sudan Masa Janjusevic. "Observation by domestic observer groups can help to deter violations and promote confidence in the honesty and integrity of the electoral process."

With a steering committee in Juba and offices in all 10 southern states, SuNDE conducted two rounds of voter education for over 200,000 Southern Sudanese in September and October.

"Elections are essential to democracy, and public confidence in the institutions and processes surrounding elections are cardinal."

In coordination with the National Elections Commission (NEC), SuDGE distributed video clips on voter registration in four local languages to the 15 northern states during the last week of the process in early December.

Gaining a head start for election monitoring, over 180 SuNDE observers acquired hands-on experience during the voter registration process. They visited 260



SuNDE advocacy urging populace to register for poll.

registration centres in 45 counties across Southern Sudan during two four-day periods in late November.

A statement issued by SuNDE in December gave the voter registration exercise high marks for enabling eligible citizens to sign up in a "free, peaceful and transparent manner" without fear of intimidation or violence.

But the network criticized the NEC for its lack of advance planning that delayed the start of the registration process in several states.

The SuNDE statement also noted that some registration centre staff members did not always adhere to the rules and regulations issued by the NEC, and insufficient registration materials sometimes forced officials to suspend the process in at least five states.

SuNDE coordinator Edmund Yakani is calling on all Sudanese political parties to refrain from playing the tribal card on the campaign trail.

"Political parties and all politicians ought to distant themselves from ethnically affiliated campaigns," he said. "The content of their campaigns should be based on issues rather than on personalities." ■

James Sokiri

Votes from disabled?

With Sudanese elections just around the corner, many of the country's deaf and blind have yet to learn about the long-awaited poll or how to cast their ballots.

Lack of funding was the main obstacle to voter education for the disabled, according to Atim Caroline Ogwang, Secretary-General for Southern Sudan Deaf Development Concern (SSDDC), herself a member of the deaf community.

"We are optimistic about training the (disabled) community how to vote, if funds are provided at the right time," said the 23-year old SSDDC official, conveying her message through a sign language interpreter.

In an effort to bring the deaf to the polls, the SSDDC had recently appealed to President of the Government of Southern Sudan Salva Kiir for assistance, Ms. Ogwang said. "We want ... support for the deaf community in the coming election."

Not only were the deaf lacking voter education, many had no knowledge of basic sign language, noted SSDDC Chairperson Peter Kachinga, adding that only 80 out of 385 known deaf people in Juba had been taught the skill.

Mr. Kachinga also pointed to the desperate lack of sign language interpretation across the region. Only three interpreters were present in Juba – two paid by the government at Southern Sudan Television and another working voluntarily at the SSDDC.

If the deaf failed to vote in the coming poll, they would be denied their rights and the entire country could lose out in the final count, Ms. Ogwang said. "Our votes can make a difference, either in the elections or the referendum."

According to Awad Mustafa, leader of the personal disability section of the Advisory Council for Human Rights in Khartoum, about 3,800,000 people or about 8-9 per cent of the total population, are living with disabilities in Sudan.

This Central Bureau of Statistics figure, based on the 2007 national census, includes the physically disabled, the blind, the deaf and people with mental disabilities.

"Out of this, 58 per cent are the physically disabled, 24 per cent are the blind and 14 per cent are the deaf," said Mr. Mustafa. According to this data, about 912,000 people of Sudan's population are blind and 532,000 people are deaf.

Educating the disabled

UNMIS Civic/Voter Education Advisor Marie D'arenberg was optimistic that civic and voter education for the deaf would occur throughout Sudan with the help of civil society groups, despite the lack of financial support.

The mission had already held a four-day training workshop for the deaf from 5 to 8 January in Central Equatoria State, and hoped to hold six two-week sessions with 25 participants each in February, Ms. D'arenberg said. "The first part will include sign language lessons for both the hearing (without speech) and non-hearing deaf."

Efforts are also ongoing in the north, according to Hamed Mohamed Modalal, head of the National Union for Persons with Disabilities in Sudan. The Union had recently received an International Organization for Migration/UN Development Programme grant to educate

disabled people about the upcoming vote.

"We intend to use live theatres and face-to-face interactions – using flipcharts, posters and stickers to raise public awareness among disabled people in the north on the importance of elections and voting as well as how the voting process works," Mr. Modalal said.

But procedures for the deaf to follow during the actual poll were still lacking, lamented Ms. Ogwang. "I'm worried, if we are to participate in elections, things should have been taken into consideration."

Ms. D'arenberg concurred that voting procedures for the disabled had yet to be issued by the National Elections Commission (NEC). Her unit had encouraged the SSDDC and other disabled organizations to unite in directly addressing the NEC to ensure their special needs were met.

Annania Modi Lolik, Chief Election Return Officer for the Southern Sudan High Committee, similarly stressed the need for disabled polling procedures, adding that arrangements would also be needed to overcome dangers of manipulation, given that interpreters were provided.

"We fear that interpreters may influence the deaf and blind to their own interests and not what the deaf or blind want," Mr. Lolik said.

Juba resident Alison Lado Joseph, blind since she was four years old due to a genetic defect, said she was optimistic the NEC would help the blind and deaf identify ballot boxes by describing candidates' slogans and locations of booths.

"I would like to vote in the election ... the electoral commission assured us sometime back that there would be special arrangements for those with special needs," the 36-year-old woman said. ■

Story and photos by Isaac Billy with inputs from Moses Zangar

Left to right: SSDDC Secretary-General Atim Caroline Ogwang, SSDDC Chairperson Peter Kachinga and member of the deaf community, Juba.



Delivering the vote

As Sudan gets ready for its first multi-party general election in 24 years, the National Elections Commission (NEC) is racing against time to finalize preparations and ensure a successful vote.

The logistical challenges will be particularly daunting in Southern Sudan, a region roughly the size of France and Belgium combined, where voters will be asked to cast ballots for a dozen different executive and legislative offices.

"Preparations for logistics are currently in high gear, both at the Southern Sudan High Committee (SSHC) and the state high committees," said SSHC Deputy Chairman Anthony Ariki. "The high committees are preparing their needs for the movement of materials and personnel, which will include vehicles, motorbikes, boats and bicycles.

If the country's disputed 2008 census is anything to go by, NEC officials must prepare for a wide range of contingencies that could hamper the voting process scheduled to take place over an eight-day period in mid-April.

Census organizers were plagued by inadequate funding and infrastructure, a lack of publicity and the remote location of many rural communities.

Some communities designated to receive English-language census forms received documents in Arabic instead, a glitch that underlines the importance of ensuring that ballots are delivered to the right geographical constituencies, according to Dragudi Buwa, head of the UN Population Fund in Southern Sudan.

The recently concluded voter registration exercise also encountered its share of logistical obstacles, such as insufficient transportation facilities and communication equipment, SSHC Deputy Chairman Ariki said.

Balloting was deliberately scheduled during the dry season to maximize voters' access to polling stations. But Mr. Ariki said that NEC officials are making plans for the possibility of early rains that would further complicate the Herculean task facing them.

Limited communications infrastructure is a particular headache in Southern Sudan. The SSHC has purchased additional satellite Thuraya phones for distribution to the state-level NEC committees.

UNMIS is mandated to provide advisory



Southern Sudan High (elections) Committee office, Juba.

and technical support to the electoral process and provide contingency logistical assistance.

The scale of logistical needs associated with this year's election can be glimpsed from the support UNMIS will be providing in the coming weeks.

"Time is of great essence. Everything needs to fall into place in good time if the elections are to be successful."

The mission provided logistical assistance to 44 locations ahead of the voter registration process in November and early December. Over 130 tons of registration kits, forms, training supplies and other materials were distributed.

Mathew Dominic of the UNMIS Electoral Assistance Division (EAD), said increased demands posed by the election will be eight to 10 times greater than those encountered during voter registration.

An estimated 20,000 tons of equipment must be delivered to locations throughout

Sudan prior for the start of the balloting.

The regional team leader of EAD in Southern Sudan, Mr. Dominic has worked on 15 elections during his UN career, but he said none of them approached in complexity the balloting process awaiting the country's 16 million registered voters.

Over 7,000 polling stations will be installed in the 10 southern states alone, and voting materials for most of those locations will have to come via Juba.

UNMIS will provide air transport during the electoral process while the UN Development Programme will be primarily responsible for road transport.

The peacekeeping mission has requested delivery of 16 additional helicopters to bolster its air assets.

"Time is of great essence," said Mr. Dominic. "Everything needs to fall into place in good time if the elections are to be successful." ■

Story and photo by Antonette Miday

Choose your party

Through questions about 30 debated topics ranging from power sharing to Sharia law and the independence of Southern Sudan, electionnaire.com helps undecided voters find a political party closest to their preferences.

According to the website's editor, Roman Deckert, Electionnaire is useful for voters and, judging from feedback, for Sudanese political parties as well.

"Some of the parties commented that this is not just voter education but party education as well," Mr. Deckert noted, as it actually motivated parties to revise main agenda points and policies.

The site's questionnaire was developed

by the German organization Media in Cooperation and Transition (MICT) in close cooperation with Sudan's 16 main parties, academics, students and civil society. It also contains relevant documents related to the peace process and elections scheduled for April 2010.

Citizens seemed to welcome the project based on responses the team received on the need for comprehensive information about parties and elections-related issues.

"They said (the website) is necessary, especially because in Sudan electoral decisions are primarily made based on traditional, family and tribal affiliations," Mr. Deckert said.

The editor, who first came to Sudan in 1997, viewed the project as a great improvement, adding that cooperation with the government had been quite smooth, although a few topics had to be avoided, including the role of the International Criminal Court or National Security.

The website was inspired by positive feedback about a similar tool launched for the 2005 elections in Iraq, and was supported by the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (Foundation), in collaboration with the University of Khartoum's Institute for Peace Research. ■

Eszter Farkas

Elections on the web

Sudanvotes.com: MICT launched this website on 9 January, the fifth anniversary of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, mainly to enhance elections coverage in Sudan by supporting resident journalists. MICT's activities include training for journalists and producers, programme and content development, production of radio programmes, films and media research.

As site Editor-in-Chief Roman Deckert noted, most societal issues were inter-related, thus the site featured culture and entertainment stories as well and strived to "display everyday life in Sudan", balancing out negative news about the country.



Screen shot of Sudanvotes.com website.

Nec.org.sd: The website of the National Elections Commission (NEC) features daily updated news in Arabic and English as well as background documents, including the Elections Act of 2008, the interim national constitution, elections law as well as timetable, and several fact sheets developed together with UNMIS' Electoral Assistance Division, explaining the electoral process.

Aceproject.org: The ACE Electoral Knowledge Network is an online knowledge facility that provides comprehensive and well-sourced information on elections, aimed at increasing transparency and credibility of electoral processes.

The website, searchable by country, provides information about present-day elections across the world, relevant conferences and forums, and publishes analyses and reports, comparative data and electoral advice. Aceproject is a collaboration of numerous partners, including the UN Electoral Assistance Division, UN Development Programme, the Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance and the International Foundation for Electoral Systems.

Sudan elections 2009/10 on Facebook: This common interest group on the community website had over 1,700 members as *In Sudan* went to print. The group's testimony reads that it is "intended to be a forum to inform ALL Sudanese about their right to vote and how to practise this right in the April 2010 Elections", aiming to bridge the information gap without lobbying for a particular political party. Members post news and have a discussion board, although the latter is less active.

<http://www.ndi.org/sudan>: The National Democratic Institute has run a radio-based civic education programme for Southern Sudan since 2007 and airs a weekly 30-minute radio show "Let's Talk!", discussing such topics as anticorruption, women's rights and free and fair elections. Episodes are produced in collaboration with the Sudan Radio Service and broadcast in Arabic and English on several radio stations, including Radio Miraya (an UNMIS station supported by Fondation Hirondelle). Some are available on the website for listening.

A tale of two ports

The opening of Juba's new river port two years ago was hailed as a significant milestone in the development of infrastructure in Southern Sudan.

Built by the Japanese International Cooperation Agency at a cost of \$2.5 million, the port was inaugurated on 21 August 2007 in the presence of Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS) Vice-President Riek Machar and the Japanese ambassador to Sudan, among

other dignitaries.

But its first full year of operations yielded somewhat disappointing results. The volume of goods moving through the port declined during the course of 2008, owing to a narrow dock and a small crane that failed at times to accommodate bigger merchandise items.

Business has picked up in more recent times, however. The new river port now services 16 barges and four ships on average each month, according to port

manager Zubeir Taban.

"Inadequate equipment in 2008 had discouraged traders from using barges and ships," he said. "But business has exploded. Goods consumed in Khartoum have flooded Juba markets, and we can now bring in bulky goods by barge in the shortest time possible."

Formerly a small docking area that only handled military weaponry during the long civil war, the port has been operated by the GoSS since its inception. Managerial responsibility will be soon transferred to the government of Central Equatoria State.

The city's old port is farther downriver, sitting on the edges of Juba's commercial district. From there, steamers plying the waters of the White Nile once provided the city's only inexpensive transportation link to the national capital of Khartoum.

When the Addis Ababa peace agreement ended Sudan's first civil war in 1972, Juba's old port served as a point of embarkation for civilians who had been displaced by the fighting and wished to return to their homes in or near the riverside towns of Terekeka, Bor and Malakal.

The aging facility is now slated to become a shipyard under a contract that GoSS officials signed with the Dutch engineering firm Damen Shipyard Gorinchem.

The completed shipyard will be capable of handling up to four vessels at a time, according to assistant project manager Thomas Kramer.

The Dutch company has also helped dredge the shallow banks of the old port's docking area by an additional three meters to reduce a ship's risks of getting stuck in the mud of the river bed, said Mr. Kramer.

Site engineer Rudi Kramer said the company had trained about 45 Sudanese employees to date in carpentry, welding and other skills.

"We have the potential to raise the capacity of the Sudanese people so that they can manage the project once we leave the country," said the site engineer. "Right now, 90 per cent of our labour force is Sudanese, and we are working hard to ensure that the project is a success for the people of Southern Sudan."

Rehabilitation of the old port began in January 2009 and is scheduled to finish in March of this year. ■

Juba River port.



Lifting cargo at Juba River port.



Story and photos by James Sokiri

A rich experience

After almost two and a half years in Sudan, Special Representative of the Secretary-General Ashraf Qazi is leaving UNMIS to return to his native country Pakistan. During his tenure in Sudan, Mr. Qazi was faced with several potential crises, including tribal conflicts in the south and the Abyei boundary issue. Shortly before he left, In Sudan spoke with Mr. Qazi about some of the key challenges and achievements he experienced in the country.

In Sudan: What was your impression of Sudan when you arrived in October 2007

Ashraf Qazi: Well, at that time the SPLM (Sudan People's Liberation Movement) had just walked out of the Government of National Unity cabinet over a number of issues, including the Abyei area. They eventually returned, but this was a challenging time.

Although the parties had signed the CPA (Comprehensive Peace Agreement) and were working together to achieve its goals, they still retained a considerable degree of mistrust due to the past conflict. They overcame this mistrust and compromised on solutions to reach certain CPA benchmarks, but the difficulty was finding political will to resolve more complicated issues.

Would you say the parties have overcome much of that initial mistrust?

Yes, this was evident during the fifth anniversary CPA celebrations last month, when party leaders made visionary statements about the country's future. Whatever the outcome of the upcoming referendum (on whether the south will remain unified with the north or secede), they promised to build on the many links binding north and south. For example, President (Omar) Al-Bashir said he preferred unity but would welcome any decision the south made.

The spirit of Yambio is required if the political leadership, with the assistance of the international community, is to reach compromise solutions and ensure peace regardless of the outcome of the referendum.

What would be one of UNMIS' major achievements while you were here?

The mission has been very active in assisting the National Elections Commission (NEC) draft laws as well as the elections budget and work towards the establishment of the two referenda commissions – for Southern Sudan and Abyei.

But although much has been achieved in preparing for elections, logistical hurdles remain. These include funding, policy decisions and ensuring materials are transported to polling stations. It is a work in progress and a tremendous effort will be needed to meet the deadline.

What is the UN doing to assist with the forthcoming elections?

Well, as I said, it will be a challenge procuring and transporting balloting materials from the capitals to the states, *payams* and polling stations themselves, especially with the lack of public transport in the country. The UN and the international community must have a plan B to activate if needed so that donors are aware of the problems. Assistance with elections is already under consideration.

All problems have solutions at the technical level, but sometimes political will is lacking to provide an enabling environment. This is a function of the residual lack of trust (between the parties) that the leadership must overcome to preserve peace, no



SRSG speaking to residents of Abyei displaced by fighting.

matter what the final outcome. The UN must help the two parties to bring about an environment that will move the country onward.

Can you comment on some of the other obstacles still remaining?

One would be the political impasse over the census results. We have encouraged the parties to find a political solution. The two sides have met on the issue and are aware of the importance of resolving it. They also know the elections must meet international standards, that they must be fair and inclusive.

Then there is border demarcation, which involves two issues. One is Abyei, which was resolved with the PCA (Permanent Court of Arbitration) decision on its boundaries. The other is the so-called 1-1-56 line between north and south, which needs delineation and demarcation.

The Ad Hoc Border Committee has pretty much concluded its negotiations with north and south and the report is being finalized for the presidency. They have agreed on all areas of the border except two and will present their report with a map on the parts agreed. Hopefully, the presidency will agree on the two remaining areas before elections, but more importantly before the referendum.

What about the need for post-referenda discussions?

The parties have identified 10 issues they must agree and make important progress



SRSG Qazi meeting with UNMIS staff in Juba.

on to bring an environment of stability and maintain cooperation irrespective of the outcome of the referenda. A task force had been established to hold preliminary discussions in the south, and the north will also be setting one up. The two sides will then engage with each other.

The most pressing issues are wealth-sharing, water and other natural resources, which need addressing in maintaining the peace. We are ready at the UN to provide technical expertise and outside resources. We will play a coordinating role in the provision of technical assistance.

Since you arrived here, there have been several tribal conflicts in the south. Do you think UMIS should have done more to resolve them or protect civilians?

Last year was a difficult time for the south, resulting in a large number of casualties and displaced persons. A number of measures were taken in Jonglei and Upper Nile states, including community based initiatives and conferences between ethnic groups.

We helped with stabilization plans and in bringing together opposition parties. We also gave priority to a protection of civilians strategy and developed military temporary operating bases to conduct patrols. But we realized that other issues like human rights and rule of law were also important to nip any violations in the bud and mitigate

SRSG Ashraf Qazi touring Census Commission processing facility in Rumbek.



further problems. It was an integrated task.

Maintaining peace and protecting civilians is the primary responsibility of the government. But there are problems of capacity, especially in the south, so we have provided training to build that up. This is also a work in progress.

The international community was concerned about UNMIS' response to the conflicts, but sometimes expectations are high considering the capacities we have. Sudan is a widespread area and we can't replace the constitutional authorities. We can only provide assistance and work to improve local performance.

Have there been occasions when you thought UNMIS' mandate was insufficient in carrying out peacekeeping duties in Sudan, given the complexity of its political and ethnic makeup?

UNMIS is a Chapter 6 mission, with a Chapter 7 section on the protection of civilians. As Chapter 6, its mandate is to maintain the ceasefire, assist with implementing the CPA and provide technical and other assistance in meeting CPA benchmarks.

Sudan is challenged by a legacy of civil war and its consequences and there are expectations that UNMIS could behave like a Chapter 7 mission. The country is seriously challenged, although not a failed state. It is lacking development, especially in the south, but has achieved much in setting up a government and commissions like the NEC.

Some think the UN must do everything, but under Chapter 6 it is here to assist, facilitate and implement the CPA.

Another event last year was the ICC (International Criminal Court) indictment against President Bashir. Did this in any way affect UNMIS' relations with the government?

For a while it seemed to because of the impression that UNMIS was involved. But people were unaware of the mission's mandate and that it was independent from the ICC, although there is cooperation between the UN and the ICC.

The misunderstanding only lasted for a short time, so there was no real impact



SRSG Qazi meeting with FIST Vice-President, Salva Kiir in his office, Juba.

on the working relationship between the government and UNMIS, as was actually feared. The UN came under some suspicion with regard to the ICC and Darfur, which diverted attention from the need to satisfy humanitarian needs.

What would you say about Sudan being the only country with two peacekeeping missions in different areas of operation?

Because the situations are complicated with different dynamics, it was found expedient to have two peace efforts – the CPA and the hybrid mission for Darfur – which reflect the complex realities of the two areas.

The peace process in Darfur was stillborn but efforts are being made to revive it and there are hopes of success. Then we have the CPA which needs to be implemented. But there is cooperation between the two missions. There is only one country team to cover the two areas and UNMIS is assisting with elections in Darfur.

How do you feel about leaving Sudan before the elections and referenda occur?

I had to make a choice. I've been away from my family for a long time and at this stage, it's important for me to return for personal reasons. But I'm sad to leave Sudan at this end run period of the CPA. On the other hand, my successor Haile Menkerios is a very fine man and will hit the road running.

I've grown to respect and admire the people of Sudan and have many friends in the UN family. I am privileged to have had this wonderful, rich experience. ■

Photos by Tim McKulka

NUBIAN

cross and moon



Gate of Nubian house in Dalgo village

Nubian civilization is one of the world's oldest, with artefacts as ancient as 7,000 years old. Nubian villages line both banks of the Nile from the first to the sixth cataracts, expanding from present-day southern Egypt to northern Sudan.

Various cultures have left their influence on the Nubian mud-brick houses.

Pharaonic, Christian and Islamic heritage can all be discerned in the sturdy houses ornamented with bold and vibrant symbols.

The walls are traditionally decorated with colourful motifs resembling Egyptian hieroglyphs and powerful animals, or more recently, Arabic letters and images of tools used around the house.

There are three types of wall decorations, the first one being an adobe relief, explained architect Rashid Diab. "They (the Nubians) adorn the surface around the doors and windows and the two sides of the gate with clay."

Another technique is "inlaying" materials into the outer surface of the walls, including crystals, conches (sea snails), ceramic pieces and plates, or placing cow horns above the bawaba, or arched gate.

The third type of decoration is painting various characters or patterns, mainly to protect the house and its inhabitants from the evil eye, the architect noted.

The image of a lion means protection, a triangle stands for stability and fertility, a cross is Christian heritage, while the moon comes from Islamic influence.

At times Arabic script adorns the top part of the bawaba, greeting pilgrims returning from Mecca. ■

*Text by Eszter Farkas
Photos by Tim McKulka*



Traditional Nubian home in Dalgo village.



Nubian tea pot in traditional style guest house at the foot of Jebel Barkal.



Hotel in traditional Nubian style, Sesabe village.



Gate of traditionally painted Nubian home in Dalgo village.

Suffering in silence

Social taboos about sexuality, misplaced notions of infection and fear of rejection have kept many HIV/AIDS victims in the Sudanese capital of Khartoum silent about their disease.

Many AIDS victims fear being branded as individuals of low moral values and shunned by their communities, leaving them to battle the disease alone.

"Many people have refused to declare that they are living with the disease for fear of being regarded as prostitutes, unfaithful to their spouses," said Ibrahim, a 50-year-old AIDS victim and father of four.

Also isolating are erroneous beliefs that HIV may be as contagious as the common cold, according to Ibrahim. "Our own people ... don't want to mix with us, be it at the workplace or any social gathering because they feel they may be at risk of being infected."

Some victims even keep the disease hidden from members of their family, for fear of losing vital support. "If I tell people that I am infected I am going to lose the company of my friends and relatives," confessed 35-year-old Omar.

Misconceptions about the disease may also rob people living with AIDS (PLWA) of their jobs at a time when they desperately need the support. "They (employers) may even deny you employment or terminate your contract," said Ibrahim.

In attempting to overcome their plight, many PLWAs have sought refuge in the non-governmental organization Sudanese PLWA Care Association, which has a registry of 450 male and female members, including children, in Khartoum state.

Founded and run by volunteers, the association is supported by the Agency for Co-operation and Research in Development and the UN Development Programme. It provides instruction in basic care and nutrition, counseling services, livelihood skills training, assistance with income-generating activities and lobbying for funds to support PLWAs.

Above all, the association unites PLWAs in sharing their experiences and bringing hope to isolated victims. It gives them one voice in fighting the disease's stigma, raising awareness of the dangers and preventing its spread.

"Most of us have no regular source of income and access to treatment. It is important to have income-generating activities so that we can take care of ourselves and live longer," said Ghada, who has been living with the disease since

HIV/AIDS "has no tribe, no culture and no religion."

1995.

Although the government provided free treatment, many people were ignorant of this or feared going to hospitals and becoming known as HIV positive, the 45-year-old mother of seven said.

"When people can talk about AIDS freely ... it will be easy to fight the disease. But if people with the disease don't come out openly, it will keep spreading silently until a large number of people will be lost to the pandemic," Ghada added.

Erasing the stigma

Over the past few years, the government, UNMIS, UN Development Programme (UNDP) and other organizations have been seeking to educate people about the realities of HIV/AIDS.

In a 2008 training session, Bishop Adi Ambrose, Ministry of Guidance and Endowment Director of Churches stressed that Muslims and Christians alike must unify in responding to the disease.

HIV/AIDS "has no tribe, no culture and no religion", the bishop told participants at the event, organized by the UNDP, the government and Khartoum religious communities.

Similarly, Dr. Hassan Abu Asha of the State Ministry of Health said, "Nobody is immune ... we are one family and are all vulnerable to this disease," and urged people to support people living with HIV/AIDS.

UNMIS has also been working together with NGOs and community based organizations to create awareness and advocate non-discrimination of PLWAs.

"We have used ... trainings, special campaign days, and quick impact projects ... to train people who will go back to the communities and teach them about the dangers of the disease," said UNMIS HIV/AIDS Training Officer Ahmed Fadeel.

Such efforts have paved the way

for access to treatment and reduced the stigma among the community and health professionals. "Now you are free to go for treatment and the nurses and doctors can attend to you without any fear," noted Ibrahim.

But Mr. Fadeel lamented that the absence of clear policies and rules protecting PLWAs in the country was halting efforts to combat discrimination and stigma, despite ongoing efforts.

"The absence of such policies and rules to protect PLWAs make them feel insecure in declaring their status openly, because they may lose their jobs or become isolated," the UNMIS officer said. ■

Emmanuel Kenyi

Names of HIV/AIDS victims have been changed for confidentiality.

Facts and figures

According to a survey conducted by the Sudan National AIDS Programme in 2002, Sudan is the most severely affected country in North Africa and the Middle East, with an estimated 500,000 people living with HIV/AIDS, and most in need of antiretroviral therapy.

Epidemiological data is limited, but it is believed that the country is in the early stages of a generalized HIV/AIDS epidemic, with an almost exclusively heterosexual transmission pattern. The adult prevalence rate of HIV/AIDS has been estimated at 1.6 per cent, with specific population group prevalence rates ranging from 0.5 to 2.5 per cent in the northern part of the country.

The 2002 survey showed a low awareness of HIV/AIDS, with only 53 per cent of the population being aware of the sexual transmission risk of HIV/AIDS, and a total of 640,000 individuals being infected with HIV.

It has been reported that 0.5 per cent limited sentinel surveillance testing during 2004 yielded prevalence rates of 0.95 per cent (18/1,900) among pregnant women, 1.9 per cent (9/465) among symptomatic sexually transmitted diseases patients, and 2.3 per cent (33/1,436) among tuberculosis patients.

False beliefs about HIV transmission were common, as were indicators of strong stigma. Some 44 per cent of respondents said that they would not share a meal with an infected individual, 31 per cent would not nurse a patient, and 30 per cent would not allow an infected child or teacher to attend school.

Source: UN Development Programme

“Your identity is culture”

Under the slogan, “Your identity is your culture,” the University of Juba has been hosting a series of cultural events at its main campus to spotlight the traditional dances of various Southern Sudanese ethnic groups.

Organized by the Juba University Students Union, the weekend programmes have featured performances of dances drawn from such tribes as the Nuer, Acholi and Azande.

“The cultural day is a very important occasion,” said university student Bagura Abraham. “It brings unity among people, who are able to explore the rich cultures in Southern Sudan.”

The events have also attracted prominent government officials who have leapt at the opportunity to relive their youth and express solidarity with their ethnic roots.

“I am reminded (of my culture) many years after I graduated from primary school in a rural Acholi village,” said John Panyech, a senior official at the Ministry of Regional Cooperation of the Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS), as he watched Acholi women go through the steps of a familiar dance.

GoSS Minister of Internal Affairs Gier Chuang Aluong recently served as master of ceremonies during Nuer culture day at the university.

“There is no way we can avoid practicing our culture,” said Mr. Chuang, a major general in the Sudan People's Liberation Army, who took over the GoSS cabinet portfolio last June.

Students and visiting dignitaries have welcomed the performances as a showcase that puts into perspective the significance of their tribal heritage.

“One of the main reasons why Southern Sudanese waged war against the national government in Khartoum was to protect their cultures, traditions and customs,” said Julia Duany, an undersecretary of the GoSS Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs.

The cultural days have also revealed some of the common elements linking the dances of different ethnic groups, nine of which performed during 2009.

The Nuer, Azande, Acholi, Dinka, Bari and Lotuko tribes all have dances that are reserved for the funerals of the elderly.

Gourds are used by the Azande and Acholi to produce sharp percussive sounds



Azande cultural performance, University of Juba.

even though the tribes use different names to identify the instruments.

Both the Nuer and Azande brandish shields known as “kot” and “vura” in their respective languages during traditional dances that reenact past glories on the battlefield.

Acholi women use a variety of tools and props that are invested with different meanings. They sometimes display old photographs of deceased husbands as a way of paying tribute to their late spouses.

Dancing has been traditionally associated in Southern Sudan with the dry season when the crops have been harvested and people can set aside more time for recreational activity.

The cultural days at Juba University are a timely reminder of the importance that dance has long enjoyed throughout Southern Sudan.

“Dance was one of the basic sources of identity, leisure and popularity in the African past,” said Acholi dancer Mary Lamunu. “Before the civil war ended, my impression was that Southern Sudanese cultures had been lost and would not return. But with these cultural shows, now at least I have hope.”■

Story and photo by
Paiyo Charles Angelo

Coming events

Feel the COLOR



22 February-8 March

An exhibition by two Sudanese photographers, Ala Kheir and Dia Khalil, will be held at Universal Café in Amarat, Khartoum, aiming to “display the beauty of various styles and techniques of photography”.

Francophone hip hop show

25 February, 7.30 p.m.

French-Sudanese rapper Abbas Anoor is giving a special concert at the French Cultural Centre terrace in Khartoum. Mixing traditional rhythms of west and northern Sudan with modern hip hop, accompanied by his words – sung in Arabic, French or English – his compositions portray the image of a unifying artist, an artist for peace. Entrance free.

Learn to draw and paint

15 March-15 April

The Rashid Diab Arts Centre is offering a drawing and painting course in English, two days a week for a month. Enrollment at the centre is open until 10 March.

NEWS BRIEFS

President to support south's decision

While encouraging his country's continued unity, Sudanese President Omar Al-Bashir said recently in Yambio, Western Equatoria State, that he would be the first to support southerners if they voted for secession.

Speaking during the Comprehensive Peace Agreement's (CPA) fifth anniversary celebrations on 17 January, the president also promised to assist the south in ridding itself of Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) rebels.

Also addressing the event, First Vice-President of Sudan and President of the Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS) Salva Kiir Mayardit said north and south would continue to work together -- whether on grazing land access or sharing of oil resources -- if separation occurred.

Adding that the current year would be a challenge and test of Sudan's destiny, Mr. Kiir assured the international community that southerners had chosen peace rather than a return to war.

Noting that elements of a return to war existed, Special Representative of the Secretary-General Ashraf Qazi said renewed conflict was absolutely unacceptable. "Let us not lose sight ... and forget challenges lying ahead of us pertaining to full implementation of the CPA."

The CPA celebration drew dignitaries from the United States, European Union and African Union as well as participants from throughout Sudan.

Dinka and Rezeigat hold peace conference in Aweil

The Dinka and Rezeigat should build up confidence in joint bodies like the police, rather than viewing security forces along tribal lines, Northern Bahr El-Ghazal State Governor Paul Malong said on 24 January at the beginning of a three-day peace conference in Aweil.

The conference, attended by representatives from Southern Darfur, Northern Bahr El-Ghazal, Western Bahr El-Ghazal and Warrap States, aimed to tighten social and economic ties between the two communities in an effort to avoid cattle-related conflicts.

Governor Malong called on citizens of neighbouring states to contribute positively to good relations among them. "We are doing today the same thing our predecessors used to do. They sat together and discussed ... their relations," he said.

The conference discussed a joint court for disputes, the exchange of trade, improved fishing relations, construction of the Aweil-Dein road as well as Safa Bridge and establishment of health centres for nomads.

The gathering also sought to create relations between counties, encourage visits by cultural groups and governments, motivate peace projects and manage Sudan People's Liberation Army movement so that citizens could circulate freely.

President Bashir pledges full support to UNAMID

Sudanese President Omar Al-Bashir assured newly appointed UNAMID Joint Special Representative (JSR) Ibrahim Gambari of the full support of his government during an encounter in Khartoum on 28 January.

After several meetings earlier that day with high-ranking politicians, including Senior Assistant to the President and Chairman of the Sudan Liberation Army/Movement Minni Minnawi, Assistant to the



President Nafie Ali Nafie and Minister of the Interior Ibrahim Hamid, Mr. Gambari addressed the press at the Council of Ministers Media Centre.

"I've had a very good meeting with His Excellency the President. We covered the situation of Darfur, the political process, the security aspect and Chad-Sudanese relations as a factor in trying to ensure peace in Darfur," Mr. Gambari said.

The UNAMID chief highlighted as his core priorities continued support to the Darfur peace process and security for UN personnel as well as civilians in the region, so that conditions would be created for people from IDP (internally displaced person) camps to return to their homes. "We can then move to the phase of recovery and development."

UN leads humanitarian aid in Haiti

The United Nations has been coordinating international relief efforts in Haiti after a 7.0-magnitude earthquake hit the impoverished country on 12 January, leaving over 200,000 people dead and close to one-third of its nine million population in need of aid.

As requested by Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon, UN Special Envoy Bill Clinton flew into Haiti on 5 February to assume a leadership role in humanitarian efforts, from emergency response and reconstruction to launching a new funding appeal.

In line with the Secretary-General's message of mid-January that the quake "must also serve as a reminder of the global community's wider responsibilities to help the poor worldwide", Mr. Ban and Mr. Clinton stressed the need to help get the Haitian economy back on its feet, as emergency humanitarian assistance continued.

As of 12 February, 1.9 million people had received food aid since the quake in and around the Haitian capital Port-au-Prince, according to the World Food Programme.

The United Nations was grouping aid needs into 'clusters', with, for instance, a health cluster run by the World Health Organization organizing medical assistance among 21 international agencies.

On 19 January, the Security Council approved Mr. Ban's call for an additional 3,500 troops to reinforce the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), which would augment its 9,000 uniformed personnel already on the ground.

To help relieve MINUSTAH staff who had survived the quake and were working under extreme conditions, UNMIS temporarily deployed 10 personnel to Port-au-Prince as of early February, and was reviewing additional requests. Areas that UNMIS staff were assisting with in Haiti included aviation, finance, public information and mission support.

The earthquake caused the single greatest loss of life in the UN's history, with 94 staff killed and 7 unaccounted for as of 12 February. Among those confirmed dead were head of MINUSTAH Hédi Annabi, as well as his deputy, Luiz Carlos da Costa.

