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Media Monitoring Report

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Voting Watch: Day 2

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- Let those people go - A flawed election would be better than none, for it would mean progress towards a peaceful north-south split (**The Economist**)
http://www.economist.com/opinion/displayStory.cfm?story_id=15867994&source=hptextfeature

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Highlights

Some problems emerge in day 2 of Sudan election

CNN website 12/4/10 - As Sudan began its second day of voting on Monday in an historic election, problems in the vote emerged in some areas. Widespread confusion prevailed at polling stations in the Southern capital of Juba. Voters could not find their names on the registry at several polling stations, while many couldn't understand the complicated 12 levels of voting in the forms, others were confused by the lack of presidential pictures to identify candidates.

Citing the delays, the main party in the South, the Sudan People's Liberation Movement, has asked for a four-day extension for the vote...

Chaos reigns as Sudan begins complex election

Reuters 11/4/10 - - With lines of voters hunkered down for hours on makeshift benches or sheltering under trees from the baking sun, Sudan's complex and controversial elections got off to an often chaotic start.

Officials had spent months preparing for the polls, but confusion soon erupted on Sunday as centre after centre, sometimes hours into the voting, discovered that voters were using the wrong ballot papers or that names or symbols of candidates were either missing or incorrect.

Given that votes are being cast for two presidents, 24 governors and 26 state and national assemblies, using three different voting systems and up to 12 ballots, things were bound to go awry.

Many opposition parties boycotted the elections, citing widespread fraud before the voting even began.

The National Elections Commission had insisted it was ready, despite demands from the opposition for a short delay to ensure the process ran smoothly. Mokhtar al-Asam, a top official, said on the eve of voting that the electoral system was "foolproof".

It was a novel experience for many voters, and for election officials. Some were too nervous to ask voters to dip their fingers fully into indelible green ink - used to show that people had cast their votes - and had to be reminded of the rules. Quite which ballot papers to use also posed a problem for some election officials.

"We're running out of ballots," one shouted down the phone, urging Sudanese observers not to worry -- until he discovered the parliamentary ballots he had been using for the past four hours were from a different constituency and voting was halted.

That centre was brimming with policemen, who had waited for almost four hours to vote. Their presence worried some of the monitors. Other centres had line after line of soldiers pushing to get in the door.

"There's only one national party in this country - the National Congress Party," one of a group of soldiers, sitting in the army lorry which had brought them to vote, said in reference to President Omar Hassan al-Bashir's party.

Bashir is widely expected to win another term and his party is accused of rigging the vote and intimidating competitors.

One of the opposition complaints was that election officials had allowed all of Sudan's numerous security forces to register to vote at their barracks. Many felt their heavy presence in these areas could tip votes towards the ruling party because voters felt intimidated.

Voting booths were made of cardboard and many were already looking ragged on the first of three days of polls.

Ill-trained local monitors watched carefully but few noticed basic errors such as the use of incorrect ballots.

Voting was a difficult task even for those with a seasoned political eye - it took Bashir 10 minutes to cast votes on his eight ballots.

The confused scenes in some stations in Khartoum prompted many to wonder what was happening in the more remote parts of Africa's largest country, where illiteracy rates are high and decades of civil war have devastated infrastructure.

Despite the problems, many Sudanese insisted on voting. After a quarter-century without free elections, they saw the event alone as historic, despite the boycotts and complaints. "Even if this is 50 percent right it's better than nothing," said voter el-Fatih Khidr.

Chaos and confusion on the first day of elections

Al-Rakoba website 11/4/10 - Chaos and confusion marred the first day of Sudan's election due to grave mistakes in ballot papers, forcing the withdrawal of at least three candidates. Tens of people were detained including two from Turabi-led PCP which disclosed the occurrence of more than hundred cases of irregularities in the process yesterday. Many polling stations were closed after it was discovered that voters were using the wrong ballot papers, symbols and names.

The NEC admitted what it described as "technical and administrative errors" but said the polling process was proceeding in a "good way". Reportedly, the SPLM denounced the irregularities and called for extension of the voting period by four days.

PCP leading figure Al-Mahboub Abdul Salam said police personnel kicked out political parties' agents and delegates from more than 100 stations in Khartoum alone. It was also reported that unidentified vehicles were seen transporting ballot boxes and that there were two types of ink one is removed the moment the hands are washed and the other type can stay for just an hour.

Kamil Idriss, an independent candidate, said he was shocked by the wide spread irregularities occurred on the first day of polling.

Polling in constituency (2) postponed

River Nile state's Higher Elections Committee announced the postponement of voting in constituency (2) due to an error in the symbols of two independent candidates, **Al-Ayyam** reports. According to a senior electoral officer, voting in this constituency would be conducted within a period not later than 60 days.

Meanwhile, the political parties contesting the elections have complained of widespread violations and irregularities on the first day of polling in Khartoum, South Darfur, North Darfur,

northern and southern Kordofan, Kassala, White Nile and the River Nile states.

“We have noted problems on the first day of polling” – NCP

Al-Sudani reports NCP official Nafie Ali Nafie told a press conference yesterday that his party noted some problems on the first day of polling and they were being addressed by the NEC. According to Nafie, the problems occurred in a few states including Khartoum.

Results expected to keep Sudan's Bashir, Kiir in power

Al-Arabiya News Channel 12/4/10 - Sudan's first multi-party elections in a quarter-century entered its second day on Monday, after confusion, delays and charges of fraud prevailed during the first day of poll. The vote is expected to test the fragile unity of Africa's biggest country.

Queues -- one for men, one for women -- formed in stifling heat at voting stations in central Khartoum Monday before polling began at 08:00 am (0500 GMT), as cars arrived bringing even more voters.

The three-day election could also show whether Sudan can avoid more conflict and humanitarian crises as it heads toward a 2011 referendum on independence for the oil-producing south.

No major unrest was reported on the first day of voting as people voted to choose a national president, a leader of south Sudan, national and local parliaments, and governors of all but one of the country's 25 states.

The results are widely expected to keep Sudan's two most influential men in power: President Omar al-Bashir, who faces an arrest warrant from the International Criminal Court for allegedly planning war crimes in the western Darfur region, and Silva Kiir, who leads largely autonomous south Sudan.

Across the country, there were long queues and chaotic scenes outside polling centers. Kiir was forced to wait 20 minutes on Sunday under a tree for his polling station to open in the southern capital Juba and then spoiled his first ballot by putting it in the wrong box.

Bashir, a military man who took power in a 1989 coup, came to vote at a school near Sudan's army headquarters, he took 10 minutes to cast his vote while security officers waited outside, shouting "God is greatest."

Would-be voters lined up in the morning in Khartoum, where police were out in force on unusually quiet streets. Many voters were hindered by delays in getting ballots to polling stations, ballot mix-ups and names missing from the electoral roll.

Yet the elections' credibility was undermined even before voting started, as leading opposition parties pulled out candidates and blamed the government for widespread vote-rigging and intimidation. Election officials, trying to plan a complex election for the first time in a generation, denied the charges.

Opposition parties on Sunday listed more than 100 alleged violations and errors. They said elections had not begun at all in White Nile state by late afternoon because of ballot errors.

Kiir's Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) asked for voting to be extended to seven days in south Sudan because many polling stations opened so late and many voters, including

senior officials, could not find their names on voter rolls.

"We are complaining that the first day of elections was really very bad all over the south," said Kiir's campaign manager, Samson Kwaje.

Many Sudanese voted for the first time, grappling with a complex polling process that included eight ballot papers in the north, and a dozen in the south.

Men and women waited in separate lines, dipping a finger in indelible green ink before voting at cardboard booths.

"There are a lot of crowds and there should have been more information because there is a whole new generation that have never voted," complained al-Fatih Khidr, a 55-year-old pilot who came to cast his vote in Khartoum's Riyadh district.

In the south, where most follow Christianity or traditional beliefs, there was a palpable sense of excitement as people took part in polls they see as a prelude to the 2011 referendum that could give them independence from the mainly Muslim north.

After voting, Kiir called the vote "a good beginning" for Sudan. "I hope it will be a foundation for future democracy."

But that could go awry if Bashir blocks the 2011 plebiscite, which could prompt unilateral secession by the south and likely reignite Africa's longest civil war.

Bashir had hoped a globally accepted vote would strengthen his hand to defy the ICC warrant, but the last-minute boycotts and widespread complaints of voting problems could derail that.

Ink is easily removed

Al-Ayyam reports that the civil society network which is observing the elections announced that the NEC is using a type of ink which can easily be removed, allowing voters to vote in more than one station. Network official Dr. Al-Bagir Al-Afif said NEC officials are asking voters to vote for the NCP and accused security authorities of detaining candidates' delegates in the town of Haya in the Red Sea state.

No issues reported in Darfur during voting

Sudan Tribune website 11/4/10 — The first day of voting in Sudan's western region of Darfur proceeded with no major issues other than those experienced by voters in other parts of the country. Most of the IDP's in the restive region have not registered under instructions from the rebel groups while others saw no point of taking a part in elections under the situation they are living in.

The European Union (EU) monitors pulled out from Darfur this week saying that they are unable to guarantee the safety of their team in a region placed under emergency law after the conflict erupted between the government and rebel groups belonging to African tribes.

They further said that their ability to effectively observe all aspects of the voting process has been curtailed.

But everything was under control when Darfur resident went to cast their votes. "So far the situation is calm," one peacekeeper with the UNAMID told Agence France Presse (AFP) of the election in which Sudanese are voting for president as well as for legislative and local

representatives.

"It's true that there were some logistical problems at first — some ballot papers were taken to the wrong places — but the problems are being corrected," one official in El-Fasher in north Darfur told AFP.

Darfur is crucial for the ruling party desperately seeking legitimacy for its leader Omer Hassan Al-Bashir wanted in the Hague tribunal for war crimes committed there.

The ruling NCP has been accused by the opposition, Darfur rebels and some international think tanks of inflating the population in some parts of Darfur by including new settlers who came from other countries such as Niger and Chad.

In Nyala in south Darfur, witnesses told AFP that the electoral process was riddled with logistical and technical problems.

One candidate in Nyala, Zein al-Abdeen Ahmed al-Masri, said he was surprised to find on polling day that his campaign symbol — needed to help those who cannot read — had been changed.

"I spent the whole campaign with the symbol of a lorry and today I found it had changed to a bell," Masri said, adding that he would complain to the national election commission in Khartoum. Residents, many of whom are illiterate, said they had trouble finding their names.

"I can't read. I couldn't find my name. Why couldn't they get someone to shout out our names using a megaphone?" asked Al-Sherif al-Hussein. "It's all very complicated."

The elections — the country's first competitive multi-party vote in more than two decades — is taking place over three days, but logistical problems could lead to an extension of voting.

Confusion and irregularities on the first day of voting – Turabi

PCP Secretary General Hassan Al-Turabi told journalists that reports coming from the North and the South revealed widespread confusion and irregularities in the voting process, ***Al-Sahafa*** reports. He said pro-NCP soldiers in Darfur also intervened in the process. Al-Turabi made the remarks yesterday after casting his vote.

Mahgoub Mohamed Saleh, editor-in-chief of ***Al-Ayyam*** and a well-known writer and commentator, speaking to Al-Jazeera Channel today has described the irregularities as "serious".

Violence in Red Sea state on first day of polling

Radio Miraya 12/4/10 - the first polling day in the Red Sea State witnessed several irregularities, procedural problems and disputes. According to Beja Congress candidate for the Haya constituency, Ibrahim Al Dab, unknown men with light arms stormed into the polling center in Dalgeik area and kidnapped representatives of opposition party members stationed at the center. The Red Sea State High Elections Committee has also decided to withdraw and suspend the candidates list for the NCP in constituency five Port Sudan East, because two candidates had conflicting symbols in ballot papers. Moreover, several party representatives alleged to Radio Miraya that the NCP is using forged residency certificates. There were also allegations of ballot papers being swapped between Port Sudan constituencies eight and nine and that the papers of NCP's independent candidate for constituency nine, were duplicated. Generally, the turnout of citizens at the polling centers differed from one area to another. Centers in Al Diom East and areas dominated by NCP supporters recorded a high turnout, while fewer voters turned out at the centers in Al Diom South area, an area where many residents support pro-boycotting political parties like the SPLM and the Umma party. Logistic hiccups

plagued the first day of elections in Red Sea State with many voters confused by the complicated procedures and duplication in ballot papers taking an estimated 30 minutes to complete the voting process, leading to congestion in most polling centers.

Alor tells Abyei voters to vote without fear of violence

Sudan Tribune website 11/4/10 - Deng Alor Kuol, SPLM senior member and a native of Abyei, has called upon Abyei electorates to vote freely without fear of any possible violence.

The Sudanese Foreign Minister arrived from Khartoum; cast his vote today at his native village of Maker, in northern Abyei. He was accompanied by other well-known figures and natives of the area including members of the media and the area's chief administrator, Deng Arop Kuol.

Never deny yourselves right to vote during these elections because of any concern. It is a national event being conducted peacefully everywhere. This is why there are security forces around you. They are your protection, he said.

Elections in the area though started late at 11:00 am o'clock (local time) remains to be peaceful as residents continue to enjoy peaceful Polling Day with full security as majority of the local inhabitants showed exciting faces and hope to see possible change through elected candidates of their choice in the oil-rich region of Abyei.

Security measures have been beeped up. All polling stations are fully protected as security forces are deployed distance of 4 kilo meters from the polling stations.

A voter walks with smiles and exchanged greetings and friendly chats with members of the security forces.

Agents belonging to all political parties participating in the elections get access to the monitoring at the polling stations without stops and intimidations. Similarly, official observers and journalists with proper identification cards have full access to and from the polling stations.

Many residents seen and interviewed by journalists at the polling station were so keyed up admitting that it is the first time for them to participate in such multiparty elections.

In Northern Bahr el Ghazal and Unity states, claims of blockage of agents associated with independent candidates have been reported but authorities were quick to deny. Notwithstanding these concerns and reports of irregularities coming out in the region, citizens of Abyei pledged commitment and adherence to the conduct of credible result in the region.

In an interview with Alor Kuol, a local representative of the National Election Commission in the area, who said they are conducting elections as part of Warrap, expressed optimism that election results in constituencies located in Abyei will be fraud-free. "We are running these elections as attached to Warrap State. This is why we do not have candidates contesting for the post of Abyei chief administrator," he said.

We have enough security forces deployed to all polling stations since yesterday. Arop however accepted starting late today citing logistical concerns. "We had limited resources and moving ballot papers and boxes at once was not possible but we have finished moving them all anyway," he said.

Three candidates withdraw over voting irregularities

Rai Al-Shaab reports that three candidates who are also newspapers' chief editors decided to withdraw from the race to protest the widespread irregularities and the grave mistakes made by

the NEC. The three candidates are Al-Hindi Izzeldine, Mahgoub Erwa and Osman Mirghani.

SPLM accuses Sudan electoral board of incompetence, partiality

Sudan Tribune website 12/4/10 – The ruling political party in Southern Sudan has accused the body overseeing the conduct of the ongoing elections of being under the influence of other parties.

The SPLM revealed it had discovered serious irregularities during the first polling day in the region and criticized the NEC, chaired by Abel Alier, for being incompetent and partial in the electoral process.

In a press conference held on Sunday evening in Juba by the party's presidential candidate's campaign team leader, Dr. Samson Kwaje, he revealed that names were missing; wrongly written or transported to wrong polling stations and some boxes were also missing.

He said in some Counties, the name and picture of the SPLM presidential candidate, Salva Kiir Mayardit, was missing in the Southern Sudan's presidential ballot papers in such counties, leaving the county citizens not to vote for him.

The same incident, he added, occurred in Warrap state where the name of the SPLM official candidate for the position of governor, Nyandeng Malek, was also missing on Sunday.

"In this situation, what do we do?" asked Kwaje.

In Central Equatoria state, the name of the current minister of Cabinet Affairs, Dr. Luka Monoja, is also missing along with other officials in different states. Dr. Monoja is contesting for Southern Sudan parliamentary seat in Juba South Constituency number 2. He couldn't vote on Sunday as his name was not found.

It took the Vice President and Kiir's running mate, Dr. Riek Machar, three hours in Bentiu, Unity state, to locate his name which was wrongly published in station 5 instead of station 1 where he registered.

Delays in the opening of polling stations also frustrated voters. The SPLM deputy chairman, James Wani Igga, had to wait in an empty designated station for long waiting for the list to be published so that he could locate his name.

The incumbent President, Salva Kiir, was made to wait for half an hour outside another polling station because the staffs said they did not complete their preparations in order to begin the exercise.

Kwaje added that names have also been published in wrong places or stations. He said in many discoveries, names from a certain county or payam have been taken to different counties and payams.

People have been calling from different payams and counties in urban areas informing the people whose names they could recognize telling them that they saw their names in such places, he said. Kwaje lamented that the matter was even worse in rural areas where means of communication to inform people and transport are not available.

No lists of names were published at all for a number of stations including Bilpam in Juba, he added. Some boxes were also missing.

There are concerns that tens of thousands if not hundreds of thousands of people may not

locate their names. Some names are also disordered where the middle name becomes the first and the first name becomes the last, making it difficult for a voter to recognize even his or her own name. Other strange names were also detected in some localities.

Kwaje also explained that even in Juba SPLM agents were also prevented from participating in the polling exercise in many stations. They were just sitting frustrated because they [NEC staff] said it was their work and didn't need assistance, he added.

Kwaje confirmed that such irregularities were wide spread in all the ten states of Southern Sudan and that an investigation would be carried out into NEC's source of irregularities.

He added that the party would present a request to NEC to extend the period of polling from three to seven days in order to try to correct the situation.

RUMBEK: Radio technician arrested for taking payment from NCP

Sudan Tribune website 11/4/10 — Security officers in Rumbek on Friday evening arrested Johnson Lago Machot, a radio technician for the Lakes state-owned Radio Rumbek 98 FM. He was charged with having sold audio recordings to the National Congress Party (NCP) local campaign manager Mathew Mayor.

Director of 98 FM James Magok confirmed the arrest, explaining that the security officers have claimed that Mr. Machot received a sum of 3,500 Sudanese Pounds from the NCP campaign manager in exchange for the audio speeches of the President of the Republic and the one of the President of Southern Sudan made during their public rallies in Rumbek's Freedom Square. He further said that the allegations have not been verified.

Mr. Magok also said that the Minister for Information for Lakes State was not happy with the manner in which Mr. Lago was arrested adding that the "98FM Radio Administration should have been informed and the matter should have been dealt with administratively."

"I don't know what to do now since my staffs are arrested in such a manner without state authority informing me first," said James Magok.

Johnson Lago, speaking to Sudan Tribune from behind bars, denied having profited from the sale of the audio. He said that "the radio had laid out its rule that all audio played over radio are charged with money to be paid by a particular party whose own audio is to be paid to radio management." He said what happened was that Mathew Mayor came to radio station with the intention of paying money to broadcast Omar Al-Bashir's speech. He said the audio was broadcast on the basis of payment but NCP did not pay their bill. He added that during this process a member of public security Elijah Mabor appeared and demanded for his arrest.

NCP campaign manager Mathew Mayor confirmed that he went to the radio station to pay the bill – his aim was not to buy the audio, he said. He requested to be given the audio but the audio was not given to him by the radio technician.

Nevertheless, Director Magok said that the Governor of Lakes State, Dr. Telar Ring Deng, has instructed the police to immediately release Mr. Lago, but as of 6 p.m. on Saturday evening, Mr. Lago was still behind bars.

The arrest of Mr. Lago of 98FM Rumbek came on the eve of Sudan's first democratic elections in the last 24 years.

Speaking in his office, Telar Ring Deng said that Johnson Lago would be set free. He defined

journalism as the fourth pillar of government structure around the globe.

Opposition parties slam NEC for election mismanagement

Political parties have expressed dissatisfaction on the first day of polling attributing it to “mismanagement” by the NEC, *Khartoum Monitor* reports. Speaking to reporters in Khartoum yesterday, representatives of some opposition parties said that they have listed at least 150 irregularities in the process yesterday. The violations, they said, included missing names in the voter registry. PCP Secretary for Political Affairs, Kamal Omar, reportedly stated that ballot papers were erroneously distributed in several polling stations while polling was delayed several hours in others. There were also reports that the ink used to mark voters who have already cast their ballots was “not indelible” and there were also reports of intimidation of party agents in some polling stations.

Defence Minister says security under control as polling gets underway

As polling kicked off yesterday, Defence Minister Abdelrahim Mohamed Hussein stated that the overall security situation throughout the country was under control, *Khartoum Monitor* reports. The minister expressed hopes that the situation will proceed calmly in the next few days.

Asked to comment on a statement attributed to the JEM last week threatening to raid polling stations in Darfur, the minister dubbed those threats as “baseless’ pointing out that the JEM has no presence on the ground in the region.

List of irregularities reported by opposition on first day of elections

Sudan Tribune website 11/4/10 - Below are a list of irregularities reported by opposition during the first day of voting:

- ▶ Ballots arriving late to the polling stations
- ▶ Insufficient number of ballots at the polling stations
- ▶ Polling stations opening later than scheduled
- ▶ Names of candidates in the ballots misspelled or assigned the wrong symbol
- ▶ Missing names in the voter registration lists at the polling stations or relocated elsewhere
- ▶ Political parties unable to secure clearance for their delegates to monitor the voting
- ▶ Registering people at the polling stations and allowing them to vote thereafter
- ▶ Electoral officials instructing voters to pick the NCP electoral symbol
- ▶ Children allowed to cast their votes
- ▶ NCP tents in the proximity of the polling stations
- ▶ Some voters did not have their fingers immersed in ink as required. Some of the ink used was removable.