



Sudan Referendum Fact Sheet

7 January 2011

Background on the Sudan Referendum

From 9 to 15 January 2011, registered voters in Sudan and eight out-of-country voting (OCV) and registration countries (Australia, Canada, Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, the United Kingdom and the United States) will have an opportunity to cast their ballots in a referendum in favour of unity or secession from Sudan.

Under the law, the referendum is deemed legally binding if at least 60 per cent of registered voters turn out to vote. If the threshold is not met, the referendum will be repeated within 60 days from the declaration of final results. Provided the turnout threshold is met, the winning ballot option (unity or secession) will be secured by a vote of 50 per cent +1.

The referendum was called for by the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) between the Government of Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), which ended more than 20 years of war. A second referendum on the destiny of the Abyei Area will not be held on 9 January 2011, as originally planned.

The Sudanese authorities are responsible for the referendum. The United Nations is providing technical and logistical assistance to the CPA parties' referendum preparations through support from its peacekeeping missions on the ground in Sudan, as well as the good offices function provided by the Secretary-General's panel aimed at ensuring the impartiality, independence and effectiveness of the process, and by the UN Integrated Referenda and Electoral Division (UNIRED).

Established under provisions in the Southern Sudan Referendum Act of 2009, the Southern Sudan Referendum Commission (SSRC) registered 3.9 million voters for the southern Sudan referendum. This process has been accepted by the SSRC and the international community as a credible exercise laying necessary groundwork for the remainder of the process.

The Security Council statement

In a statement issued by the Council President in New York on 6 January 2011, members of the Security Council said that they "welcome the Sudanese parties' reaffirmation of their commitment to full and timely implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), including their commitment to respect the outcome of the southern Sudan referendum, and appreciate, in this regard, the statements by President Omar al Bashir during his visit to Juba on 4 January 2011 and by Vice-President Salva Kiir in his 3 January 2011 New Year message. The members of the Council reaffirm full support for the efforts of the parties."

The members of the Security Council further welcomed "the progress made towards the holding of a peaceful and credible southern Sudan referendum that reflects the will of the people and commend in particular the work of the Southern Sudan Referendum Commission". The members of the Council stated that they were looking forward to the start of voting on 9 January and urged the CPA parties "to ensure that the 9–15 January voting process and subsequent counting and tabulation take place in an atmosphere of peace and calm, with ongoing reassurance that the rights, safety, and property of people of all nationalities in Sudan, including southerners in the north and northerners in the south, will be respected". The members of the Council reaffirmed support for the work of the United Nations Secretary-General's Panel for the Referenda, led by President Benjamin Mkapa.

In the statement, the members of the Security Council also noted with deep concern the absence of an agreement on Abyei, and strongly urged the parties “to quickly reach agreement on Abyei and to resolve critical post-referendum issues, including the border, security, citizenship, debts, assets, currency and natural resources.”

Voter Registration

The final referendum register and the threshold of voters needed for the process to be deemed legally binding will be announced by the SSRC on 8 January 2011. Unofficial registration figures as of 5 January 2011 were 3,753,815 in Southern Sudan (39 percent female and 61 percent male) and 116,860 (52 percent female and 48 percent male) in North Sudan. Voters can cast ballots at 2,638 centres in Southern Sudan, 174 in the north and 80 out-of-country stations.

Polling and Counting

- Polling is scheduled to start on 9 January 2011 and will take place over seven days, ending on 15 January. At the end of the final polling day, the ballots will be counted at each referendum centre.
- Results will be announced at several levels, beginning with the referendum centre at the end of polling and ending with the “Declaration of Final Results” by the SSRC Board of Commissioners. Barring any legal appeals of the results, the SSRC is expected to declare the final results on or about 6 February. If appeals are filed, the final results would be declared on 14 February.
- Prior to the official “Declaration of Final Results”, unofficial results will also be announced at the county level in Southern Sudan, the state level, and at the country level for out-of-country voting (OCV).
- Official results will be released only after the SSRC or its Juba-based Southern Sudan Referendum Bureau (SSRB) has verified and approved the results from each referendum centre (or polling station in the case of OCV). SSRC/SSRB will release progressive results and post them on the SSRC/SSRB websites.
- Official results for Southern Sudan will be declared by the SSRB, while the SSRC Headquarters in Khartoum will announce the official results from “other locations” (North Sudan and OCV). The SSRC will add the results for Southern Sudan to the results for other locations and announce the “Preliminary Results for the Referendum”.

Appeals to the Results and Final Declaration

- Voters have three days from the SSRC’s Declaration of “Preliminary Results for the Referendum” to appeal the results of the referendum centre where they voted to either the Supreme Court of Sudan or the Supreme Court of Southern Sudan. The Court has seven days to hear the appeal, take a decision, and inform the SSRC of its decision.
- The SSRC must take into consideration any decisions issued by the Court.
- Forty-eight hours after the close of the appeals period, the SSRC is to issue its “Declaration of Final Results”.

Observers and Monitors

- Approximately 17,185 domestic observers (which include political party representatives) have been accredited by the SSRC. Approximately 1,200 international observers will observe the process in Sudan and in the OCV countries. Among the international observer organizations are: the Carter Center, European Union, African Union, League of Arab States, and Intergovernmental Authority for Development.
- At the request of the CPA parties, a special panel was appointed by the UN Secretary-General to report on the conduct of the referendum and to encourage the parties and relevant authorities to take corrective measures to resolve any significant problems or disputes that may arise.

Security and Anti-Fraud Measures during Voting

- All voters must present their registration card when voting.
- Each registration card has a unique serial number that matches the registration form. Each card is laminated to prevent subsequent alterations.
- The registration card will be hole-punched during voting and returned to the voter in the event a second-round of voting is required. Punching of the card is an additional safeguard against multiple voting.

- Voters will also place their thumbprint against the original registration record and have their finger inked at the time of voting.

UN Support to the SSRC and the Referendum Process

The United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) and the United Nations Integrated Referendum and Electoral Division (UNIRED) are supporting the referenda process in Sudan. UNIRED provides technical advice and assistance to the SSRC and its subsidiary bodies. Nearly 340 UNIRED staff (two-thirds of them are UN Volunteers) work to support the SSRC at the headquarters and Juba levels, as well as at the state and county levels in southern Sudan, and in five areas in the North where there are concentrations of southern Sudanese—Khartoum, Kassala, El Fasher, Kadugli, and Ed Damazin.

The UN, in cooperation with its international partners, has also provided financial and logistical support to the referendum process. This support includes procurement and transportation of registration and polling kits, registration books and cards, training materials, voter education material, office furniture and equipment, and vehicles (including cars and motorbikes) throughout Sudan. The UN is using its air assets to transport materials to and from remote and isolated referendum centres.

Distribution of materials is a key challenge facing the SSRC given the size of the country and the lack of infrastructure in some areas. UNIRED has been providing assistance by distributing referendum materials from Khartoum and Juba to the state capitals and onwards to the county level in Southern Sudan. From the county, the SSRC has been transporting materials to the referendum centres by various means, including 4x4 vehicles, motorcycles, boats, canoes, donkeys and camels.

In Southern Sudan, 1.2 million kilograms of materials have been delivered via domestic flights funded by the UN Development Programme (materials include voter education posters, stationery, IT equipment, manuals, training kits, polling materials). During the past week, UNMIS flights delivered some 30,000 kilograms of material to 50 remote drop-off points serving 473 referendum centres in southern Sudan.

UN Police serving with UNMIS have trained thousands of Sudanese police throughout the country on referendum security. 17,600 officers in southern Sudan and 4,500 in northern Sudan have been trained. UN Police are also serving on referendum security committees to provide advice and support to the Sudanese police.

The UNDP Basket Fund for the referendum includes \$69.5 million committed, and \$56 million received. UNDP Basket Fund donors include: Australia, Canada, Denmark, the United Kingdom, the European Union, France, Japan, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden.

Other International Partners

The International Organization for Migration (IOM), in coordination with southern Sudanese organizations, is assisting SSRC in the organization and supervision of the out-of-country process.

The International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES), funded by USAID, is supporting the referendum process with technical advisory assistance and material support (procurement of registration and polling materials, staff training, office furniture and equipment).

Additional Sources of Information

UNMIS Website: <http://unmis.unmissions.org/>

UNMIS page on UN Peacekeeping website: <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/missions/unmis/index.shtml>

UNDP Website: <http://www.sd.undp.org>

OCV Registration and Voting: <http://www.southernsudanocv.org>

SSRC Website: <http://www.ssrc.sd/SSRC2/index.php>

SSRB Website: <http://www.ssrbureau.org/>

