



# Sudan's Referenda

## Frequently Asked Questions

### What will be determined in Sudan's referenda?

The country's 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) stipulates that a referendum will be held in Southern Sudan to determine whether the region remains united with the north or secedes.

Another referendum in the Abyei Area of central Sudan will determine whether it remains part of the north or joins the south.

### What is the timeline for the Southern Sudan referendum process?

The referendum timeline is as follows:

- 7 November:** Beginning of media campaign
- \*15 November – 8 December:** Voter registration
- 10 December:** Publication of preliminary vote register
- 10-17 December:** Submission of objections
- 22 December:** Disposal of objections by SSRC
- 22-29 December:** Appeals to courts
- 30 December 2010 – 3 January 2011:** Disposal of appeals by courts
- 8 January 2011:** Publication of final rectified voter register
- \*\*9 - 15 January:** Polling period

\*The Commission will officially announce the days and hours of operation.

\*\*The beginning of the polling period – 9 January – is stipulated in the CPA.

### Who will be managing the referenda process?

The process will be managed by the nine-member Southern Sudan Referendum Commission (SSRC), which is based in Khartoum. SSRC members were nominated by Sudanese President Omar Al-Bashir and approved by First Vice-President Salva Kiir Mayardit as well as a majority in the National

Assembly.

The Commission in turn appointed the four members of the Referendum Bureau on the recommendation of the Bureau chairperson, who is also the SSRC deputy chairperson. The Bureau is based in the southern capital of Juba.

The Bureau then recommended five members for each of the 10 referendum state high committees in Southern Sudan, who were officially named and sworn in by the SSRC. The State Committees recommended five members for each of the 79 county sub-committees, who were endorsed and sworn in by the Bureau chairperson.

The SSRC is currently organizing a support structure for state high committees in the 15 northern states. One office will be opened in each state except Khartoum, where there will be three.

### How is the UN assisting with the referenda?

It is assisting through the UN Integrated Referendum and Electoral Division (UNIRED), a joint team consisting of UNMIS and UN Development Programme electoral staff.

UNIRED has three main sections – operations, public outreach and programme management.

Operations will assist the SSRC and its subsidiary bodies on operational planning, logistics, procedures and training, and field coordination.

The Outreach Unit will mainly provide logistical advice to the Commission on voter information, public information, stakeholder relations and accreditation of observers as well as media.

The programme management component relates to the UNDP Basket Fund for Support to Referenda 2011. This section is focusing on areas like security, judiciary and media training, as well as support to domestic observer organizations and civil society.

UNIRED will also assist in training Sudanese, who will then train registration staff in the south. UNMIS will be setting up referendum support bases throughout the south, dispatching and retrieving materials at the end of the referenda process and training Southern Sudan Police Service (SSPS) as well as Sudan Police Force officers in referenda security.

### **What are UNMIS Referendum Support Bases?**

UNMIS has been setting these up in remote locations of Sudan, so that UNIRED can support the Commission at the county level in Southern Sudan. The UN Joint Logistics Operation Centre is working on establishing them.

In addition to its existing 15 sector headquarters and team sites, UNMIS plans to open many more new bases throughout Southern Sudan by the end of November. The bases will work closely with county sub-committees in overseeing referendum operations.

UNIRED staff is also in place in the 10 state capitals of Southern Sudan. UNIRED will support SSRC staff in the northern states from bases of operation in Khartoum, Kassala, Kadugli, Ed Damazin and El Fasher.

### **How extensive is UNMIS security training?**

UN Police advisers have been training Southern Sudan Police Service (SSPS) officers in referendum security since last July. Over 11,500 SSPS personnel had been trained by early October, and at least 16,500 police officers should have completed UN Police security courses by the middle of December.

They will supplement the 10,600 SSPS officers who underwent similar training prior to last April's general election. UN Police will offer the same training to the Sudan Police Force, which is responsible for securing the referendum process in northern Sudan.

### **What are the greatest challenges so far?**

Voter education will be a challenge, given the vastness of Sudan, high rate of illiteracy in many areas, and tight time line.

The referendum law is also unclear on several

provisions, which will require the Commission's interpretation. For example, the eligibility criteria, defining who may vote and where (North Sudan, Southern Sudan and out of country), require additional clarification from the SSRC. These must all be translated into civic education messages as well as materials and disseminated to potential voters.

Acquiring and distributing materials will also be difficult, as the country's infrastructure is lacking in many places, especially in the south. Another challenge is the security situation in the country. Pockets of tension and agitation could escalate and make the situation more difficult than it is already.

Finally, the timeline is very short. The Commission became operational only in early September. Managing all processes up to 9 January will be extremely difficult.

### **Is the Abyei referendum part of the referendum process in the south?**

No, the Abyei poll is separate, but polling is supposed to take place at the same time as the Southern Sudan referendum. UNIRED staff is on the ground waiting to support the process once the Abyei Area Referendum Commission is formed.

### **Will registration happen outside Southern Sudan? If so, what kind of documentation is needed for Southern Sudanese living outside the region to prove their origin?**

Registration will take place in the north, the south and in eight countries—Australia, Britain, United States, Canada, Egypt, Ethiopia, Uganda, and Kenya. The International Organization for Migration is working with the Commission to organize the referendum process outside the country.

There are several documents to prove one is Southern Sudanese, including a UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) document for refugees, but ultimately the Commission must make the decision.

### **How many eligible voters are there?**

The estimated number of eligible voters, based on UNHCR and other data, is about 6.5 million in total.

### Who will carry out voter education?

While the Commission is responsible for voter education, UNIRED is assisting with development of strategies, plans and materials. In addition, the UNDP Basket Fund is providing financial assistance to support the design and production of posters, stickers, kangas, bracelets, and other promotional material, including radio and TV programs.

The Basket Fund is also providing funds for states and counties to hold forums and events to inform the public about the referendum process. All of these activities must be integrated within the timeline of the referenda procedures.

So far, the Commission is holding two weekly press briefings and has launched a website. In the south, the GoSS has networks of educators, who have penetrated to the *boma* and *payam* levels.

### Will the UN be involved in monitoring the referenda?

At the request of the CPA parties themselves, the UN Secretary-General has set up a three-member high-level panel to monitor the referenda and make suggestions about corrective measures.

The panel is chaired by Benjamin Mkapa, former President of Tanzania. Its other members are António Monteiro, former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Portugal, and Bhojraj Pokharel, former Chairman of the Election Commission of Nepal.

It should be noted that this panel is totally independent of UNIRED or UNMIS. As the mission is providing technical assistance, it cannot at the same time observe the referenda process. In other words, it cannot be party and jury at the same time.

## UNITED NATIONS MISSION IN SUDAN

Ebeid Khatim Street  
P.O. Box 69  
Khartoum, 1111  
Sudan

PHONE:  
(249) 187-086000

FAX:  
- Inside Sudan: 0 187 086200  
- Outside Sudan: +1 917  
3673523

E-MAIL:  
ecomment-pio@un.org

We're on the Web!

See us at:  
[www.unmis.org](http://www.unmis.org)