

ELECTORAL JIHAD IN SUDAN

One of the requirements of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) signed in January 2005 between the National Islamic Front government of Sudan and the Sudanese Peoples Liberation Army (SPLA) was free and fair elections in 2010.

Fraud and Farce

In April the citizens of Sudan were granted their first opportunity for voting for government representatives. Observers and participants alike condemned the Sudan elections as fraud and a farce.

Electoral Jihad

The National Islamic Front, which has been renamed the National Congress Party (NCP), clearly believes itself to be involved in a "holy war" with the rest of the world and with the Sudanese people themselves. From their own speeches and writings it would seem that they believe themselves justified in any crimes they commit. Even the election itself was described as a *Jihad* against infidels, in which any deception and intimidation were justified.

Overwhelming Failure

The Electoral Commission appeared to act as a puppet for the ruling NCP and was incompetent in managing the elections. The sheer scale of technical, logistical and administrative failures was overwhelming. Many of the errors could have been accidental, but most had to be the result of deliberate fraud to rig the elections in favour of the ruling NCP.

Some of the candidates, including those for the presidency, could not find their electoral symbols anywhere on the ballot papers. Many of the voters arrived at polling stations to find that other people had already voted on their behalf!

Secret ballot stations existed and different versions of the electoral register were circulated. Irregularities abounded, such as unregistered voters dipping their fingers in non-permanent ink.

On one occasion an individual had registered over 120 times in the same constituency.

The sheer scale of irregularities, discrepancies and fraud was staggering.

Immense Fraud

The Sudan Tribune described the elections as "Immense fraud." The BBC World Service reported "widespread evidence of vote rigging." Fox News reported that international monitors declared that Sudan's first multi-party elections "failed to meet international standards." Associated Press reported "fears that a flawed vote could fuel violence in the conflict strewn country, where some opposition parties challenging the fairness of the process boycotted all or some of the local and national races."

Voter Intimidation

A monitoring team from the European Union said: "Key aspects of the election process were undermined. Names were missing from voter registries, election resources were not evenly spread to all parts of the vast country and there were cases of voter intimidation."

Intimidation and Interference on All Levels

Even the Carter Institute observed: "It is obvious that the elections fall short of international standards, that people's expectations have not been met." The Carter Center reported subtle or forceful intimidation in many states and security agents interfering in the electoral process, particularly in the South. "Voters, candidates, polling staff, party agents and observers were the target of such intimidation."

Blatant Fraud

The opposition Islamic Popular Congress Party refused to accept the election results declaring them marred by "shameful fraud and blatant forgery."

Threats Against Observers

The incumbent, general Omar Ahmed el-Bashir, who came to power through a bloody revolution in 1989, and who has been charged with war crimes and crimes against humanity, publically expressed anger at the negative reports and declared that critical observers would be dismissed. If they tried to interfere in Sudan's domestic affairs, he would crush them and amputate their hands, noses and necks!

A Puppet Judiciary

Another NCP official responded to accusations concerning the NCP deliberate electoral fraud in a more restrained way, saying that anyone who disputed the election results could challenge

them in court. However, as opposition parties have pointed out, since the military coup in 1989, by the current leader of the NCP, the judiciary has not been independent.

Corruption

Even today, the NCP regime remains on the American list of rogue states that harbor terrorism. The blatant buying and selling of votes and loyalty by the NCP kleptocrats has been exposed by numerous studies. The ruling NCP leaders offered jobs and political offices to their opponents who dropped out of the elections. Some opposition parties which withdrew from the elections have been offered a coalition with the ruling NCP.

Fueling Corruption

Corruption has been described as “the norm in Sudanese public life” and the NCP and its supporters have a complete monopoly over the Sudanese economy. The actual income from the country’s oil over the last ten years remains a closely guarded secret. But it is estimated that oil revenue amounts to over 60% of the national budget. An estimated 90% of the oil fields are in the South (depending on where the border is drawn).

Entrenched Corruption

The 2009 report by Transparency International listed Sudan under the NCP dictatorship as “one of the world’s least transparent countries.”

Defective Beyond Repair

The Sudan Tribune described the elections as: “defective beyond repair” and “A pure formality that can only keep in power a corrupt dictatorship.”

The Referendum of 2011

In the eyes of the Black Christians in the South of Sudan, this fraudulent National Election was of far less consequence than the Referendum on Southern Independence to be conducted early next year, 2011. The Referendum in 2011 is a core requirement of the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement that ended decades of conflict between the SPLA and the NIF/NCP regime in Khartoum.

Southern Independence

As the vast majority of citizens in Southern Sudan voted for President Salva Kiir Mayardit of the Sudanese Peoples Liberation Army, who stands for the full independence of Southern Sudan, the result of the Referendum next year remains a foregone conclusion.

Border Disputes

Some of the key issues which will need to be negotiated over during the next year include border areas. There are five major border areas that are in dispute. The most explosive is around the oil producing region of Abyei. This region is to decide in a separate Referendum whether to join the North or the South. Northern troops have been raging a scorched earth campaign to racially cleanse these areas of Black Christians.

The northernmost border separating Renk County in Upper Nile from the North's White Nile state and the border line running North South between the South's Unity state and the North's South Kordofan will determine who controls the Heglig oil field. There are also disputes between the South's Bahr El-Ghazal and Darfur in the North and which river forms the exact westernmost dividing line between Western Bahr El-Ghazal and South Darfur.

Oil Revenue

Dividing the oil revenue from the oil fields, which are mostly in the South, will also be a major point of contention. The sole oil export route for the land-locked South is a pipeline running to the North to Port Sudan on the Red Sea.

Water Rights and Control

Water will also be a concern as, under a 1959 agreement between Egypt and Sudan, 90% of the water of the Nile (the longest river in the world - 6,600 km) belongs to Egypt. The question of whether Southern Sudan will recognize these old treaties, or negotiate new accords remains to be seen.

National Debt and Assets

In the event of the South choosing independence the NCP wants to apportion a high percentage of the national debt to the South. The SPLA rejects such suggestions, accusing the North of using that borrowed money to wage a genocidal war against the South. Also to be discussed are national assets and properties of state owned companies in the South.

Currency

Since the CPA in 2005, Sudan's official currency, the Dinar, was replaced with the Sudanese pound. If the South secedes, will the North and South continue under the pound, or will the newly independent South choose to create its own currency, or switch to an established foreign currency?

International Agreements

The matter of whether Southern Sudan will abide by international agreements entered into by the regime in Khartoum, or whether they will transfer, re-negotiate, or scrap, various international agreements will have to be determined.

Military Forces

Before independence it will also be necessary to agree on what happens to the Joint Integrated Units, and how they, and other military units, will be apportioned or de-mobilised.

A Long Overdue Redrawing of the Map

Many Southerners are pointing out that these matters should have been settled over 55 years ago. Many missionaries and national leaders from Southern Sudan pleaded with the British authorities not to condemn the Black South of Sudan to living in servitude under the Arab North in a unitary state. Many pleaded for a re-drawing of the map as the North and South were culturally, linguistically, religiously, and in every other way, separate nations. The Black South has a different alphabet, language, calendar, religion, culture and history from the North, and forcing them to be part of a unitary state was to condemn them to being second class citizens under Arab domination and exploitation. More than 2 million Sudanese have died, and many millions more have lost their homes, some being scattered throughout the world as refugees, as a result of the failure to redraw the map before independence on 1 January 1956.

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