

SAAF Update 16-2010

December 15, 2010

Dear Sudanese Friends and Friends of the Sudanese People,

While it certainly was expected, as we approach the referenda in Abyei and Southern Sudan, the fear, threats, and interference with the referenda are increasing.

- * Bombing of Southern Sudan in border areas is a act of the Government of Sudan seemingly designed to provoke a reaction. To its credit, the GoSS/SPLM/A has not retaliated.
- * Christians who live in northern Sudan are increasingly intimidated and concerned about their status and safety.
- * It appears that the Abyei referendum will be postponed or altered in some way and the referendum in Southern Sudan will proceed as scheduled. It certainly does not bolster confidence when we see many Westerners leaving southern Sudan as the referendum there approaches.
- * The Darfur rebel group SLA(MM), which had signed a peace agreement, has responded to attacks on it by the government by declaring that it will now attack government forces.
- * The Khartoum government continues to restrict freedom of assembly and reporting efforts. The application of arbitrary, violent and abusive forms of Islamic justice has been exposed in the international media.

As Christians approach the season of the birth of Jesus Christ - the Prince of Peace, peace in Sudan is threatened. SAAF continues to believe that conflict is not inevitable. If wise leaders prevail, military forces are constrained by effective command and control, and leaders act in logical ways, the referendum in the South can be conducted in open and honest ways with the results respected by all.

We urge religious, military, and civil leaders throughout Sudan to exercise wisdom and leadership and seek the best outcome for the people of Sudan as they determine that outcome for themselves. Nations and organizations which have guaranteed the CPA must be alert and quick to reward those who honor the CPA and severely punish those who do not.

May all people join in this Season of Prayer for a just and lasting peace for all of Sudan beginning with the referendum in Southern Sudan.

In His Service,

Sudan Advocacy Action Forum

In this issue:

- * U.S. Sudanese Voter Information
- * Referendum delay possible in Abyei
- * Interview with Ramadan Chan
- * Voter registration extended after huge turnout
- * US lifts ban on export of computers to Sudan
- * Oil exploration starts in South Darfur
- * Khartoum: oil production in North to reach 200,000 bpd in five years
- * Khartoum closes Darfur radio station
- * Southern Sudan by the numbers (statistics)

U.S. Sudanese Voter Information. Sudanese in the United States who are eligible to register have additional registration centers available through December 22. [DALLAS, CHICAGO, SEATTLE, BOSTON and NASHVILLE](#) voter registration centers are open 7 DAYS A WEEK. . Registration hours for all centers is Monday through Saturday, 9:00am until 6:00pm and Sunday from Noon until 5:00pm. If you have questions, please email ssudanvote.usa@gmail.com or call (866) 898-0119. (IOM 12/14/10)

Referendum delay possible in Abyei. A referendum on Sudan's contested border town of Abyei might not happen January 9 as planned, said a representative of the Government of Southern Sudan December 14. Abyei, which has seen its share of violence, has become a potential flashpoint in the upcoming vote, and some say it is a political bargaining chip for both the north and the south. "Abyei is being held hostage. They are not moving forward," said Ezekiel Lol Gatkuoth, head of mission from the Government of Southern Sudan, at the U.S. Institute of Peace. "The SPLM is committed to move forward, even if we have to pay a ransom." Months of negotiations over the handling of Abyei, particularly who would be able to vote in the referendum, have yielded no definitive results. The question is whether the Misseriya, a nomadic tribe from the north who live in Abyei for part of the year while they graze their cattle, will be able to vote. The best solution, Gatkuoth said, would be to transfer Abyei to the south and guarantee grazing and water rights to the Misseriya. Ambassador Fatahelrahman Ali Mohamed, deputy chief of mission from the Embassy of Sudan in Washington DC, said the Khartoum government's stance is that the Misseriya have the right to vote, too, along with the Dinka who live in Abyei year-round. (PBS Newshour, 12/14/2010)

Interview with Ramadan Chan. Sudanese church leaders traveled to Britain and the United States in October, where they had high-level consultations with political, religious and UN officials, including Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. Since returning to Sudan, they have continued to press for peace, despite challenges. Representatives of the church leaders, who have been calling for international vigilance in the run-up to the referendum – and for international pressure to see that it takes place as scheduled and is fair and transparent in its conduct – talked to

AllAfrica about their concerns. Here are excerpts from conversation with the Rev. Ramadan Chan Liol, general secretary, Sudan Council of Churches: "My role as general secretary [based in Khartoum] is to work with the churches to build peace, reconcile the people on the ground, and help people to meaningfully participate in the referendum process. We are involved in civic education, peace building, and engaging the governments of north and south Sudan to work hard to make sure the referendum is carried out and is peaceful, free, transparent and fair. The Sudan Council of Churches is a member of the Inter-Faith Council, and through it we have tried to work with Muslims to live in harmony. We understand that it is difficult to differentiate between Islam and the government, while it is easy to differentiate between Christianity and the government. This is because the government [in Khartoum] is an Islamic government. That is not the case in the south. In the south, we – the Christians and Muslims – cooperate to talk to the government and ask the government to do things they are not doing right. But in the north, it's difficult. Having said that, as churches, we have no problem with Muslims. We have a religious forum where we can discuss things. Though we may agree to disagree, we have that forum. We are not fighting on the basis of religion. It is the impositions of Islam on Christians and everybody in Sudan that we don't accept." (All Africa, 12/09/2010)

Voter registration extended after huge turnout. Sudanese authorities said on November 26 they would give southerners an extra week to register for a referendum on the independence of their region, but promised the extension would not delay the Jan. 9 vote. The referendum's organizing commission told Reuters they would extend registration by a week because some registration centres in the south, overwhelmed by the huge turnout, had run out of forms and needed more time to restock. Registration will now end on Dec. 8, commission member Chan Reek Madut said. "It is not going to affect the Jan. 9 deadline ... We are going to reduce some days for reporting and complaints before then. It will be condensed," he said. "It was a political decision," he said, referring to the promise not to postpone the voting day. "We are working round the clock to make it happen on time." At least 1.3 million southerners had signed up at the end of the first week of registration on November 22, the commission said. The referendum commission has estimated that around 5.5 million southerners may be eligible to vote, including 500,000 in the north and half a million abroad. (Reuters, 11/26/2010)

US lifts ban on export of computers to Sudan. US president Barack Obama has issued an executive order allowing export of computers to Sudan in order to facilitate the referendum process in the South. In a memorandum released on November 19, Obama allowed "the export of computers and related equipment that enables the United Nations to facilitate the referendum in Southern Sudan pursuant to the Comprehensive Peace Agreement." The decision was based on Obama's determination that it is "in the national security of the United States" to suspend the section of the law prohibiting computer exports to the African nation. The US sanctions, originally issued in 1997, were in response to the Sudanese government's support for terrorism, destabilizing of neighboring governments and human rights violations, which President Bill Clinton said constituted an "extraordinary threat" to the national security and foreign policy of the US. President George W. Bush expanded those sanctions twice in 2006 to specifically target the war-torn Darfur region. (Sudan Tribune, 11/20/2010)

Oil exploration starts in South Darfur. Abdel-Hamid Mousa Kasha, Governor of

South Darfur state has announced that oil exploration started in the eastern part of the troubled state. Oil is seen as crucial to provide the necessary funds to develop the war ravaged region of Darfur. Discussions in Doha between the government and a rebel group have included for the first time this issue. Oil exploration has started in three locations in eastern South Darfur precisely: Addilla Barbar, Um-Radm Al-kori and Zarqa Um-Hadida, said Kasha today in a speech delivered at the inauguration of the Commercial Real Estate Bank branch in Nyala. The governor also said that local authorities have secured the area ending activities of "armed gangs" referring to rebel groups. However he did not disclose the name of the firm working in the areas. An Arab investment group, Ansan Wikfs, is working in partnership with Sudapet, on Block 12A in a remote area of North Darfur near the border with Libya. (Sudan Tribune, 11/01/2010)

Khartoum: oil production in North to reach 200,000 bpd in five years. The Sudanese government said that the North is expected to boost its production of oil to 200,000 barrels per day (bpd) within 3-5 years. About 75% of Sudan's proven reserves of 6.3 billion barrels are in the south but the pipeline that carries the oil to export terminals and refineries runs through the north. The south needs Khartoum's co-operation to sell its oil; the north needs revenues from its neighbor's resources.

Also more than 90 percent of Khartoum's foreign currency revenues derive from oil as well as some 45 percent of its entire budget. Azhari Abdel Gadir, head of exploration and production at the petroleum ministry, said 30,000 barrels per day of oil in CNPC-run Block 6 in Southern Kordofan state were being added, which will remain part of the north if the south separates. Abdel Gadir added that the west of Block 6, which stretches into Darfur, had also seen proven discoveries and a number of rigs had been established. He added that other new discoveries in the north included one in Block 7 in White Nile state, run by a consortium including Malaysia's Petronas and CNPC. He added a "significant" discovery had been made in Block 7 in basement rock which he called a "big addition to the reserves" but could not immediately provide figures. (Sudan Tribune, 12/02/2010)

Khartoum closes Darfur radio station. Khartoum has shut the office of Radio Dabanga, whose reports on Darfur have angered it, and arrested 13 staff from the radio station and a rights group that shares its offices, the group's chairman said on November 2.

Abdelmageed Salih, head of Human Rights and Advocacy Network for Democracy (HAND), told Reuters nine journalists and four HAND activists were detained during the weekend raids. "They also raided our office and took all the things inside like the computers and documents and Radio Dabanga equipment," he said from the United States where he now lives. Radio Dabanga, registered in Holland, is one of few media outlets still reporting on the Darfur conflict. It is not licensed in Sudan and the government continually writes to the Dutch government asking them to close the station, Salih said. HAND also has no legal status in Sudan. Analysts say Khartoum is using the January 9 referendum on secession as cover to end dissent in Darfur. Peace talks have made little progress, stifled by rebel divisions and ongoing military operations. Despite a 2004 ceasefire, Khartoum has gradually reasserted control over most former rebel-held towns and areas, marginalizing the insurgents. A recent rapprochement with neighboring Chad cut off major supply lines to the guerrillas. (Reuters, 11/02/2010)

Southern Sudan by the numbers:

Poverty: 50.6% of the population live on less than \$1.00 US a day. Poverty is highest in Northern Bahr el-Ghazal state with 75.6% of the population living below the poverty line.

Maternal Mortality: One out of seven women who become pregnant will probably die from pregnancy-related causes. 40.6% of mothers do not receive any prenatal care.

Child Mortality: One out of every 7 children will die before his or her fifth birthday.

Immunization: Only about 10% of children are fully vaccinated. Only 28% of children receive measles vaccination before their first birthday.

Malaria: Malaria is considered hyper-endemic in Southern Sudan, accounting for more than 40% of all health facility visits. 80% of households do not have treated bed nets.

HIV/AIDS: More than 70% of women aged 15-49 have no knowledge about HIV prevention.

Water and Sanitation: More than 50% of the population do not have access to improved drinking water. Only 6.4% have access to improved sanitation facilities.

Primary Education: Less than 50% of all children receive 5 years of primary school education. For every 1,000 primary school students there is only one teacher. 85% of adults do not know how to read or write.

Gender: 92% of women cannot read or write. Only 27% of girls are attending primary school.

Displacement: In 2010, approximately 215,000 people have been newly displaced by inter-ethnic or armed conflicts in Southern Sudan. In 2009, the figure was 391,400 - more than double the number for 2008 which stood at 187,000. (United Nations Mission in Sudan, 11/14/2010)