

STAND | digest

MAY 2010 // standcanada.org

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HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS AND SECURITY ■ Sudanese government forces and the Justice and Equality Movement blamed each other for violating the ceasefire agreement signed in February. Joseph Kony, leader of the Ugandan rebel Lord's Resistance Army, has left western Sudan due to food shortages. In Darfur, the European Union's election mission withdrew its elections observers over safety concerns. Four peacekeepers were kidnapped during the elections week by the People's Democratic Struggle Movement which demanded a ransom and said they want to show the international community that security conditions in Darfur are not apt for elections. The elections took place in a generally peaceful context and the final results should be expected the last week of April.

NEGOTIATIONS AND PEACE PROCESS ■ Held over a five day time period, from April 11th to April 15th 2010, over 16 million Sudanese people were to vote for their president as well as their legislative and local representatives. Several opposition groups including Northern opposition parties as well the SPLM (the junior partner in the government of national unity boycotted the elections due to sentiments that the elections would be fraudulent. More groups have since suggested that they will boycott the election results due to fraudulence in the election process. The deputy chair people of the SPLM and the NCP pledged to accept the results at all levels despite any complaints from other parties in a meeting in Juba. Although partial results from the elections have been announced throughout Sudan, suggesting the victory and consequent re-election of the NCP, the announcement of the election results have been delayed and a new date has yet to be set.

DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTHERN SUDAN ■ Widespread controversy has been a feature of Sudan's National Elections, and activity in South Sudan has been substantially influenced as a result. Key opposition parties boycotted the elections, leaving the voting and counting processes in disarray. Among the major supporters of this ban was the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), Southern Sudan's main political party, which predictably campaigned on a secessionist platform. Abusive electoral practices were reported against both Northern and Southern parties. Food shortages appear to be reaching a critical level, and oil and trade take the center stage in economic news.

DARFUR AND CANADIAN POLITICS ■ For Darfur and Sudan as a whole, April was an historic month, with the first elections in 24 years being held. The elections were far from successful; though there is reason for optimism. Though largely silent on the elections, the Canadian government has proposed a major reform of the refugee system, while debate over the next deployment of Canadian Forces has emerged following the governments confirmation that combat operations in Afghanistan will end in 2011.

DRC: TROUBLE IN THE WEST ■ The eastern region of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) has long been portrayed as the sole flashpoint in the ongoing armed conflict in the country. Yet since October 2009, violence has flared in the province of Equateur, on the DRC's western border. The recent violence in Equateur points to the importance of taking a holistic approach to the country, with similar local-level conflict dynamics, and government responses to the violence, proving to be important factors in the conflict in the east and west.



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POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS //

- 1** Sudanese Elections: Stand's Reaction
 On April 11, 2010 the people of Sudan went to the polls to vote in their first multi-party election in 24 years. Despite this landmark event, it must be recognized that the elections were neither free nor fair, and fell significantly short of international standards. Serious irregularities undermined the process and it is clear that the government could have done more to ensure a more free and fair election process.

That said, the elections were a necessary step stipulated in the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), which ended decades of war and called for a referendum by 2011. Before the referendum on independence for South Sudan can take place, it is essential that progress be made to correct the shortcomings experienced and to expand the democratic space in Sudan.

Shortcomings:

- Most of the major opposition candidates boycotted the election (Sudan's People Liberation Movement (SPLA), Umma Party).
- Voter registration was unequal across the country.
- Insecurity in Darfur prevented a great number of people from voting.
- Census data did not accurately reflect large segments of the population in some regions of Sudan (e.g. Darfur).
- Too few voter education programs set up across the country.
- High incidence of intimidation and threats to voters coming from the South
- Lack of sufficient safeguards and transparency in the electoral process.
- Significant technical and logistical problems (inaccurate polling station lists, not enough ballots printed, late delivery) – result of weak preparation.

Steps Forward:

- Prohibitions on freedoms of speech and assembly under the 1997 emergency laws in Darfur need to be lifted to ensure fair campaigning and outreach
- The National Security Law which gives government authorities the "power of detention without cause," must be revised or suspended before any future elections take place.
- To improve the democratic deficit, increase voter education programs across the country through organizations like the Carter Centre and the National Democratic Institute (NRI).
- Support efforts to train domestic observers (it takes only 1 week to train a local observer).
- All parties must be encouraged to run in future elections and this encouragement will only materialize if the above stated shortcomings become addressed and the aforementioned steps are taken.

- 2** Civil society participation in the Darfur peace process is essential if a sustainable peace is to occur. The recent inclusion of Darfuri civil society in the Doha peace consultations in Nov 2009 was a positive step in the right direction but mired with impediments. As this process continues, the government of Canada should:
- 1) Ensure that Darfuri society is widely and fairly represented.
 - The first meeting was overrepresented with government National Congress Party (NCP) members as well as other war crimes perpetrators and underrepresented with Darfur diaspora, refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs), and northern Darfur leaders.

- 2) Make sure that the government of Sudan is not imposing restrictions of any kind or hampering civil society members in any way from participation in the consultations.
 - The first meeting was hampered by bureaucratic delays, airport and airline restrictions as well as threats from the government of Sudan against some program participants (the underrepresented).

The best way to avoid these problems is if the Doha organizers define what is meant by civil society and impose specific criteria for member participation. Canada has the capacity to share its expertise about including civil society in public consultations.

- 3** In order to effectively prevent, monitor and address grave human rights abuses and mass atrocities, the Government of Canada should create an institutional apparatus that is capable of carrying out this mission on a permanent basis. Stand calls on the government to:
- Create a Sub-Committee for the Prevention of Genocide and Other Crimes Against Humanity which should be attached to the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development.

NEGOTIATIONS AND PEACE PROCESS //

BY CHELSEA SAUVÉ

Commission, Security law, and ballot papers. The oppositions and SPLM parties did not feel they were ready for an election, and feel as though the election will weaken the SPLM platform, ultimately hindering the likelihood that a future referendum will result in the SPLM's projected separation of North and South Sudan.

Held over a five day time period, from April 11th to April 15th 2010, over 16 million Sudanese people were to vote for their president as well as their legislative and local representatives. Several opposition groups including Northern opposition parties such as the Umma Party, Sudan Communist Party, Umma Reform and Renewal Party (URRP), as well the SPLM (the junior partner in the government of national unity (GoNU)) boycotted the elections due to sentiments that the elections would be fraudulent. It has also been suggested that those Sudanese parties who chose to participate in the elections, announced that they will refuse to recognize the results of the elections. Such fraudulence includes ballot inconsistencies as well as logistical problems that led to a two day extension in the voting period. The ruling NCP have accused opposition leaders of seeking commence a campaign to delegitimize the recent elections, to "spoil the excellent results achieved in the recent elections through the media". However, opposition parties have accused Bashir of hosting a fraudulent election and have suggested that his bid for re-election is based on his desire to attain legitimacy given his indictment by the ICC- a charge which he rejects.

Following an assessment of the Sudanese Elections process completed by the European Union and the Carter Centre, it was suggested that the Sudanese Elections (the first multiparty elections to be held in Sudan since 1986 and the subsequent military coup which brought Bashir to power in 1989) have failed to meet Sudan's obligations to the international elections standards. Significant occurrences which negate the legitimacy of the Sudanese Elections include, the unequal resourcing and treatment by the authorities as well as boycotts of the election

process and late withdrawals by opposition parties in the North. However, the EU and the Carter Center have suggested that regardless of the fact that the Sudanese elections do not meet international standards they should still be recognized as their occurrence is quite significant. Both the Carter Centre and the EU said that they expect the international community to recognize the elections.

International reaction to the elections has varied. The African Union and Arab League Observation missions have praised on Sunday the Sudanese elections, while rejecting reports by Carter Center and EU observer teams who said it did not meet the international standards. They have suggested that the elections have been transparent, peaceful and free from fraudulence. Russian special envoy to Sudan Mikhail Margelov has suggested that while technical flaws occurred at the polls, they did not impact the integrity of the elections process as a whole. Margelov criticized the EU and the Carter Center's assessment of the Sudanese elections, as he reminded the international community that the elections in Sudan should be judged by African and not European standards. Despite peaceful and significant participation in the elections process, the US, Norway and Britain have suggested that while the elections process is positive step towards fulfilling the provisions established by the CPA, they share serious concerns about weak logistical and technical preparations and reported irregularities in the elections process. The US has now shifted its focus to the 2011 referendum to be held for South Sudan in accordance with the CPA, as they deemed the Sudanese elections to be 'neither free nor fair'.

The chairperson of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), Salva Kiir Mayardit and the deputy chairperson of the National Congress Party (NCP), Ali Osman Mohamed Taha, met in Juba on April 20th to discuss the pending election results. The two leaders pledged to accept the results at all levels despite any complaints from other parties. In addition to expressing the need for the immediate resumption of dialogue concerning the implementation of remaining issues in the CPA, the Juba meeting between Kiir

and Taha discussed the expected formation of the next elected Government of National Unity with participation or membership of the two parties. Kiir has already revealed that he cast his vote in favour of incumbent President Omar al-Bashir. The credibility of this accord is questionable as only the day before, Bashir stated that the post-election government will consist primarily of those parties that did not boycott the elections and the legitimacy that they maintained- therefore, dismissing talks of a national unity government. In Southern Sudan, SPLM agents reported that the withdrawn candidate for Sudan President Yasir Saeed Arman is leading the results of vote for the presidency despite his pulling out of the elections in March. The SPLM has encouraged the populace to vote for Arman regardless of this fact as his name remains on the balloting papers because he withdrew after the papers had been printed. Repeated reports of intimidations, threats, expulsion, physical abuse and arrests have been rampant and have led authorities from the regional government of Southern Sudan to increase the deployment of security forces.

Although partial results from the elections have been announced throughout Sudan (mainly the North), suggesting the victory and consequent re-election of the NCP, the announcement of the election results have been delayed and a new date has yet to be set. The Sudanese National Elections Commission (NEC) announced that it has not yet determined when final results will be released. The NEC has suggested that the issuant release of the election results is dependent upon obtaining all the valid votes from all states. The NEC has ordered stations across the country to stop entering the results into the designated software built for that purpose and start transmitting it manually in order to save time. This process has once again called into question the legitimacy of the entire election process.

HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS AND SECURITY //

BY SABRINA IRIARTE

The Government of Sudan's forces and the insurgent Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) blamed each other for violating the ceasefire agreement signed in February. JEM spokesman Ahmed Hussein Adam said Government forces bombed JEM's position near the Chadian border on April 5 wounding six civilians and killing their livestock. Sudanese forces deny launching the attack and Khartoum's main Darfur negotiator Ghazi Salaheddin said JEM has been "trying to establish themselves in Kulbus and Jabel Moun which is a violation of the ceasefire declaration". UNAMID spokesman Nouredine Mezni said the peacekeeping force cannot confirm the incident as it is not present in the area.

In early April, the Ugandan Army confirmed that Joseph Kony, leader of the Ugandan rebel Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), has left western Sudan due to food shortages. In mid-March 2010, Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni confirmed a report published by Enough Project saying that Kony had moved across the border into Sudan.

Sudan's first multi-party elections in 24 years took place between April 11 and 15, among confusion, delays and fraud accusations. Even before the day of the elections, its credibility was questioned as leading opposition parties withdrew their candidates blaming the government for widespread vote-rigging and intimidation. Veronique De Keyser, head of the European Union's (EU) election mission in Sudan withdrew election observers from Darfur over safety concerns and after president al-Bashir threatened to expel and to cut off the fingers and tongues of international observers insisting elections were delayed. The EU team is the largest international mission with over 130 observers, six of which were in Darfur. In general, the elections took place in a peaceful atmosphere. While ballots are still being counted, the National Election Commission (NEC) has been providing reports of the results as they become available. Al-Bashir is expected to win the presidential elections. Hadi Mohammed

Ahmed, senior NEC official, said the final results should be expected the last week of April. According to the EU and the United States Carter Center observers, Sudan's elections fell short of international standards. De Keyser said there had been "significant deficiencies" including logistical problems, complexity, confusion, intimidation, and the domination by the ruling parties in both the north and the south.

During the week of the elections, Agnes Lokudu, head of the northern-dominated National Congress Party (NCP) in south Sudan said the region's separate army murdered five of its party officials and four other people. South Sudan's army responded that it was an individual crime of passion by one of their soldiers who had found the local NCP chief in bed with his wife.

On April 14, the spokesman of the UNAMID force Nouredine Mezni, announced that four UNAMID police advisors, two men and two women, were missing. They were last seen leaving their base near Nyala in south Darfur on April 11. Ibrahim al-Dukki, of the People's Democratic Struggle Movement, demanded a ransom of \$400,000 dollars for their liberation and said their kidnapping was "to show the international community that security conditions in Darfur do not allow for elections."

DARFUR AND CANADIAN POLITICS // BY JOHN MATCHIM

April has been an historic and controversial month for the Republic of the Sudan. For the first time in 24 years, and only the fifth time in the republic's history, Sudanese went to the polls in a national election. However, in the north, competition was leveled after the withdrawal of major opposition parties, while in the south elections were mired by "clashes and intimidation." In Darfur, insecurity and insufficient information regarding the elections in rural districts forced the European Union Observation Mission to remove its observers. Despite these failures, the European Union's preliminary findings report that voting at 70% of polling stations was fair and free from intimidation and violence.

Unfortunately the Sudanese elections failed to garner serious attention from any Canadian political party. The only official acknowledgement came from Minister of Foreign Affairs Lawrence Cannon who issued a statement expressing Canada's concern over electoral flaws. Cannon expressed apprehension over "structural advantages enjoyed by the governing parties in both North and South, as well as of intimidation, limitations on political freedom and major problems in logistics and management of the elections." However, because the elections met a major objective of the Comprehensive Peace Accord, Cannon urged all participants to remain committed to the electoral process and the CPA.

With confirmation from the Conservative government that Canadian combat operations in Afghanistan would end in 2011, speculation over where Canadian troops will be deployed next has made its way into the press. Walter Dorn, a professor at the Royal Military College, suggested that Canadian forces may be deployed to Congo, Haiti, southern Sudan or even Darfur. However, Alain Pellerin, executive director of Conference of Defence Associations, argued that the next troop deployment would be strictly in accordance with national interests, for which neither Congo nor Sudan would qualify.

The Conservative government has announced plans to reform Canada's immigration system. As part of the reforms, Canada will annually accept 2,500 additional refugees living in refugee camps around the world. The Canadian government will sponsor 500 additional refugees while private sponsors will provide for the remaining 2,000. Immigration Minister, Jason Kennedy estimated the cost of the new program will amount to \$90 million; enough to feed and shelter new arrivals for up to two years until they become self-sufficient. Currently between 10,000 and 12,000 refugees are accepted into Canada each year.

DRC: TROUBLE IN THE WEST //

BY SARAH KATZ-LAVIGNE

The eastern part of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) has long dominated news reports about the country, as the focal point of the violent conflict still affecting the country despite the official end of the country's second war in 2006. In recent months, however, it's the province of Equateur that has made headlines. One of Congo's westernmost provinces, Equateur is on the opposite side of the country from the often-discussed eastern region.

In April, Congolese human rights group Asadho reported that the Congolese army had killed at least 11 civilians, with a possible 31 more killed, in operations it conducted around early April to retake Mbandaka airport from a rebel group thought to belong to the Enyele community, a sub-group of the Lobala. The attack in early April, in which the Enyele militia group entered the provincial capital of Mbandaka, briefly taking over both the airport and the governor's office in Mbandaka, was the most audacious it had carried out to date. The offensive was pushed back by the Congolese army, with the assistance of the United Nations Mission in the DRC (MONUC).

This is not the first time Equateur Province has been in the news of late. In the six months preceding April, almost 200,000 civilians were displaced from their homes as a result of fighting in Equateur. Last October, fighting broke out between youth from the Enyele community and members of the Boba tribe. At least 100,000 refugees still remain, displaced along the Oubangui River in the Republic of Congo, the DRC's neighbour to the west. At the heart of the violent conflict was said to be continuing tensions between the Lobala and Boba communities over local issues of socio-economic and political relevance, such as access to shared resources including fishing ponds. The rebel movement was then said to have swelled, leading to the April 2010 rebel attack on Mbandaka.

Despite the recent upsurge of violence in Equateur, the Congolese government is still continuing on its quest to have the MONUC mission

withdraw from the western region of the Congo as early as June 2010. This would be consistent with a focus on the eastern region as the major epicentre of conflict in the country and the only area still in need of intervention by the MONUC mission in its concluding phases. Yet, if anything, the violence in Equateur is indicative not that the situation in eastern Congo is unique, nor that it is exceptional. Rather a holistic approach is needed to examine the underlying issues leading to the outbreak of patterns of violence similar to those that have long held sway in the east. The importance of localised issues in leading to a larger dynamic of conflict and displacement is also a key factor in eastern Congo. So, too, is the evidence of abuses carried out against civilians by the Congolese army. In eastern DRC, the Congolese armed forces have long been known as one of the greatest human rights abusers in the region. Clearly, then, it would be unwise to consider the Equateur violence as an isolated outbreak without relevance for the eastern conflict – as the BBC does in a recent piece on the situation, noting that “the dispute in Mbandaka is separate from the unrest involving numerous armed groups in eastern DR Congo.” This may be so, but it would be unwise not to seek lessons from the east in understanding and dealing with the situation in Equateur.

DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTHERN SUDAN //

BY STEVEN CHUA

Amidst numerous accusations of vote rigging and unethical electoral practices directed towards the incumbent National Congress Party (NCP), the SPLM withdrew their candidate for the national presidency of Sudan and soon after proceeded to boycott all elections taking place in North Sudan. Predictably, such actions had adverse effects with South Sudan's relations to Khartoum. Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir threatened to revoke South Sudan's right to hold a vote of independence next January. However, the SPLM, alongside with the rest of the opposition have firmly stated that the elections can neither be free nor fair due to corrupt NCP practices. Such sentiments have been echoed by the Carter Center (the only long term electoral observer

mission present in Sudan) which has stated that crippling logistical issues surrounding the elections prevent accurate vote counts.

Northern army ballot escorts have also proven to be a great source of contention as well. South Sudan contests that Khartoum attempted to skew election results by asking the Northern army to transport ballot papers to the South. Furthermore, Salva Kiir, the SPLM leader and president of South Sudan has claimed that the still un-demarcated North-South border is yet another attempt of the North to seize oil assets present in South Sudan. Lastly, the SPLM has claimed that northern troop build-up occurring in the highly sensitive Blue-Nile region (the border between both Sudanese regions, and a former battleground in the North-South War) was a direct attempt to disrupt and rig elections in South Sudan.

With respect to political campaigning in South Sudan, the SPLM predictably had the largest presence as incumbent Southern President Salva Kiir campaigned on the basis of his long time service in the SPLM as a rebel fighter. With such an election campaign in mind, it is clear that Kiir aimed to establish himself as the premier pro-independence candidate in South Sudan. Electoral violence and intimidation was also a present factor there as well; South Sudanese authorities arrested and beat seven members of the only opposition party running against the SPLM.

In other news, the top UN official in South Sudan stated that the region is in danger of facing a food crisis so severe that half of all residents in the area will likely be completely reliant on aid this year.

In economic news, Presidential Affairs Minister Luka Biong Deng also stated that upon independence, South Sudan would extensively review foreign oil agreements, citing environmental degradation and profit distribution as the number one factors. Deng claims that due to the fact that these agreements were signed during the war, the companies received a disproportionate amount of profit and have operated in a manner detrimental to the environment.

Trade routes are also an increasingly pertinent matter; the rerouting of trade is being discussed in light of a probable secession next year. In an effort to attract investment, South Sudan recently announced intentions to build high-speed rail lines from Juba to Tororo. The route would ideally distribute goods from Juba to the East African region and back. However, many investors are still waiting to see the results of next year's referendum before jumping aboard. It is still dubious as to how attractive such an announcement would be, given that the World Bank recently stated that should South Sudan secede, its inherited debt from Khartoum would prevent it from attracting substantial investment of any sort.

DARFUR DIGEST STAFF //

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