

**17th Pre-Summit Consultative meeting on
Gender in the African Union**

21-26th January 2011

**THE REFERNDUM OF SOUTHERN SUDAN,
WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR WOMEN PEACE
AND SECURITY?**

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HIGHLIGHTS ON THE REFERENDUM

The Southern Sudan Referendum could mark the beginning of a new era in Africa. The people of Southern Sudan have waited patiently and tirelessly through difficult circumstances for this promised opportunity.

For over fifty years the people of Southern Sudan had desired to become free of any oppression as was seen in the wars (fight against the colonials, 1955 Anya-nya 1 which led to signing of the 1972 Addis Ababa Agreement; then the 1983 SPLA/M which led to signing of the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) on January 9th

According to the CPA, Southern Sudanese are to vote in a referendum six years after the signing of the agreement, to determine whether to become a separate country or remain united with the North.

On Women, Peace and Security during the referendum, there were a lot of fears of :

- 1. That the referendum would not take place in time, thus the people of South Sudan would up rise leading to insecurity**
- 2. That the Govt. of the Sudan would create insecurity in the Sudan in order for the referendum not to take place**
- 3. That armed groups would create insecurity during the referendum exercises**

Steps taken to combat these fears:

- President of Southern Sudan Lt. General Salva Kirr Mayar-dit appealed to GoNU, the UN Security Council, AU and others to support a timely and peaceful referendum in SS.**
- Women demanded from the government and the UN, to continue with an effective**

DDR process taking into account a gender perspective and peaceful disarmament.

A total of 3,051 DDR ex-combatants and members of the Special Needs Groups, including 741 women were demobilised.

- **Demining operations continued in Blue Nile and Southern Kordofan States as well as in large parts of Southern Sudan. In Central and Western Equatoria States, over 376,058 sqm were released to the local communities.**
- **UNPOL continued to conduct referendum security training for the Southern Sudan Police Service. UNPOL trained 4,068 SSPS officers, including 390 female officers in 31 training courses.**
- **UNMIS PIO organised a workshop relating to referendum coverage for Sudanese journalists, as well as a number of**

workshops on referendum awareness throughout Southern Sudan

- **The UN Missions increased their support in training of women in the various fields in collaboration with each other (UN Peace Keeping Mission, UNDP, UNIFEM and civil societies) which intern increased the level of the women empowerment in the relevant areas**
- **The Govt of Southern Sudan made key investments to guarantee women's security and prevention of VAW by training and deploying the graduated police everywhere and in some places the UN helped to establish women's desks in Police stations.**
- **All the Parliamentarians at all levels of government were released to go to their various constituencies to conduct civic education and call for peace and security.**

- **Youth supported the government in keeping law and order and ordered all local bars to be closed during the referendum voting period.**
- **Women CBOs continuously advocated for the urgent need for National Security Sector reform specifically focusing on the needs of women including and addressing GBV; the need to increase the number of women recruited in the security sector.**
- **Increased media programmes focusing on peace and security, during the referendum**
- **A special programme on the TV called Women's Forum was initiated and women used it to advocate for women, peace and security.**
- **All these were accompanied by resources allocation for the Referendum exercises**

The Referendum Exercise:

On Women Promotion and Participation:

- Women were appointed in all Referendum Commissions and Committees and they were instrumental in informing CBOs how they can participate effectively.
- Women activists and CBOS participated effectively in civic education on referendum



- **Women registered highest and were the highest voters**

Although there were difficulties and security fears which clouded the referendum process in the beginning as seen above however, pressure from the Government of Southern Sudan and various fronts enabled the Government of Khartoum to yield in to the pressure and conduct the referendum on time.

Therefore,

- **Voters Registration began on the 14th of November 2010**
- **On 8 December, the voter registration period ended in the Sudan with the exception of Out-of-Country Voter (OCV) registration in Egypt and the U.S., which ended on 20 December.**

- **On 8 December, the Chief of Justice issued a decree, establishing a court to deal with referendum-related appeals, in accordance with the Southern Sudan Referendum Act.**
- **On 22 December, the exhibition and objections exercise of the voter registration was completed with 150 cases reported in the South and 33 cases in the North.**
- **On January 9, 2011 voting began**

The first day of the Referendum Southern Sudanese lined up at polling centers across Sudan and in host countries to cast their historic ballots. Over the following seven days, millions of Southern Sudanese turned out to vote.

Voters travelled long distances and in some cases through floods and heavy snowfalls. They endured standing in long lines for hours

despite very hot weather or freezing temperatures.

The high emotions of both sorrow and joy brought many of us to tears as we observed the polling process. What an incredible moment for the people of Southern Sudan to collectively decide their destiny.

We are pleased that, the Referendum exercise went on very peacefully in secure environments. No violence or death cases were reported!

The Preliminary results:

State	Votes	Unity	Secession	Invalid	Blank
North	69,597	27,918 (42.35%)	38,003 (57.65%)	2,230	1,446
OCV	58,203	841 (1.45%)	57,048 (98.55%)	201	113
Central Equatoria	437,427	4,746 (1.09%)	429,729 (98.91%)	1,401	1,551
Eastern Equatoria	283,656	208 (0.07%)	282,807 (99.93%)	48	593
Western Equatoria	207,395	997 (0.48%)	205,087 (99.52%)	360	951
Jonglei	112,388	74 (0.07%)	112,217 (99.93%)	50	47
Lakes	296,851	226 (0.08%)	296,048 (99.92%)	149	428
Northern Bahr El Ghazal	202,872	144 (0.075%)	202,381 (99.93%)	66	281
Upper Nile	228,300	1,720 (0.075%)	225,775 (99.24%)	359	446
Warrap	393,956	150 (0.04%)	393,333 (99.96%)	88	385
Western Bahr El Ghazal	161,078	7239 (4%)	153,839 (95%)	790	728

Source: The Southern Sudan Referendum Commission (SSRC), 20th January 2011

Post referendum Expectations

- **That the South will separate and become African's newest Nation**
- **The Government of Southern Sudan would continue to provide an enabling environment, which will attract investors in all sectors of development, in order to speedily meet the people's expectations in the new independent state.**
- **South Sudan, currently among the world's poorest regions in terms of development, will have to face the challenges of building new hospitals, schools, roads, decent housing, producing food while providing security and a peaceful political environment.**

A vote of thanks

I would like to express appreciation to the National Congress Party (NCP) and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) for their support in conducting a successful, free, fair, transparent and credible South Sudan Referendum in accordance with the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement.

I would also like to extend our gratitude to the Southern Sudan Referendum Commission, the Southern Sudan Referendum Bureau, the United Nations Integrated Referendum and Electoral Division (UNIRED), and the International Organization of Migration (IOM) for fulfilling their obligations accordingly.

We sincerely regret that Abyei was not able to participate in its own referendum on January 9th 2011 as provided by the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. We stand in solidarity with the people of Abyei and pledge to work tirelessly to uphold their rights.

We look forward to the full implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement including Popular Consultation in South Kordofan and the Blue Nile State.

In addition, we pray for peace throughout all Sudan, especially in Darfur.

We are also calling for more inclusive of gender expert consultation in the ongoing post referendum negotiation

Sudanese women are more than half of the population, their consultation and inclusion is critical to every steps of the negotiation in particular at the four clusters, in order to keep the peace in the two regions

We hope that people of the north and south would continue to maintain and cherish the historical and cultural relations that have existed between them and shared for centuries.

Finally, I would like to appeal for a Global solidarity Mission by the women of the world to the women of the Sudan.

In October 2010, During the DURBAN, South Africa Conference on 1325, delegates from Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo challenged the Seminar to help prevent and curtail sexual violence against women and girls in both countries. In the particular case of the Sudan, the prevailing volatile security environment in the run-up to the forthcoming referendum on the status of South Sudan generated calls for early action to prevent possible widespread sexual violence against women and girls from South Sudan living in North Sudan.

In response to this call, the Seminar recommended the immediate deployment of a solidarity mission to Sudan by African

women, and also called on the recently appointed Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict to urgently mobilize international support and initiate high-level political advocacy to South Sudan.

In October and November 2010, I repeated the appeal at the 10th Anniversary of the UNSCR 1325 in New York for World women leaders' solidarity mission to the Sudan.

I am again appealing here, that the world women leaders gathered here and beyond, show solidarity with the people of the Sudan especially Southern Sudanese women and come for a solidarity mission as we prepare to celebrate the results of the Southern Sudan Referendum.



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Thank you