

AEA



ASSOCIATION OF
EVANGELICALS IN AFRICA



WEA

World Evangelical Alliance

"One Body, One Voice" John 17:23

Association of Evangelicals in Africa –AEA

in collaboration with

World Evangelical Alliance - WEA

South Sudan Referendum 2011

Final Report

February 2011

Acronyms

AEA	Association of Evangelicals in Africa
ARDC	AEA Relief and Development Commission
ALARM	Africa Leadership and Reconciliation Ministries
AU	African Union
CAR	Central Africa Republic
CPA	Comprehensive Peace Agreement
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
EU	European Union
GOSS	Government of South Sudan
GS	General Secretary
IGAD	Inter-Governmental Authority on Development
IOM	International Office of Immigration
LIA	Life In Abundance International
NEFs	National Evangelical Fellowships
OCV	Out of Country Voting
PS	Polling Station(s)
ROT	Referendum Observation Team
SEA	Sudan Evangelical Alliance
SSRB	South Sudan Referendum Bureau
SSRC	South Sudan Referendum Commission
SPLA	Sudan People's Liberation Army
SLPM	Sudan People's Liberation Movement
SRF	Sudan Referendum Forum
USG	United States Government
WEA	World Evangelical Alliance

Executive Summary

The Association of Evangelical in Africa (AEA) represented by the General Secretary Rev. Aiah Foday-Khabenje and the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA) by Dr. Geoff Tunicliffe visited Juba, the capital of South Sudan in October 2010. This visit was at the request of the Sudan Council of Churches, their Evangelical partners and the Government of South Sudan. Pursuant to this visit, both AEA and WEA were requested to assist in;

- a) Referendum Observation – to provide a team of election monitors as part of an international impartial community to lend credence to the referendum process,
- b) To foster acceptance of the outcome of the referendum by the international community and
- c) To support the development of Southern Sudan in the new dispensation following the end of the interim period and referendum

In response to this request, AEA, WEA, and the network of National Evangelical Fellowships (NEFs) in Africa mobilized teams to join other international monitors within Sudan and Kenya. In addition Uganda and Egypt were also mobilized to participate in the Referendum 2011 organized to determine self determination for South Sudan in three distinct phases; before, during and after the Referendum. They were able to observe management of polling stations, the obtaining environment and the events surrounding the referendum in over fifty (50) different polling stations.

The teams were accredited by the Southern Sudan Referendum Bureau as international observers and allowed access to all polling centers in Southern Sudan, Kenya and Uganda. These teams were tasked with observing the Southern Sudan Referendum scheduled to begin on January 9, 2011, and which was one of the conditions of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement of January 9, 2005 between the Government of Sudan, based in Khartoum (The North) and the Southern Sudanese people represented then by the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM). The CPA was intended to provide a means to ending a civil war between the people of the North and the people of the South Sudan.

In Sudan, the teams visited 35 polling stations in Juba, Terekeka and Yei Counties, observing the polling conditions pertaining to security of the citizenry, polling agents, journalists, observers and the voters and found it to be adequate. They also observed the polling conditions that included confirmation of registration by the voters, polling documentation, ballot papers and polling booths. The

team also witnessed polling taking place in an urban set up, army camps, SPLM camps and as well as rural settings and attended the SSRB Media briefs to get the latest information on the process.

The voter turnout for the first two days of polling in all centers visited was overwhelming, though these numbers greatly reduced in the days that followed. The teams estimated the voter turn out to have scaled the 90% by comparing the number of registered voters to the actual number of those who cast their ballots at the centers. This information was given by the polling chairperson per each station visited. After the 4th day it was apparent that voter turnout had exceeded the 60% threshold needed to validate the process.

Tallying of votes started at the end of voting on the 15th of January 2011. The team in Sudan was able to witness this at three polling centers; Hai Sujuk, John Garang Mausoleum and 'Home and Away'. The Hai Sujuk center was able (within three hours) to have counted the votes with an overwhelming result of 98% for secession. The team departed Juba on the 16th January 2011. In Nairobi and Kampala Uganda, the team was on hand to witness the entire tallying process in select centers. Overall, the team concluded that the referendum voting went on peacefully and people were able to freely cast their votes without hindrance or intimidation.

1. Introduction



Sudan, Africa's largest country, has an unequal distribution of oil wealth, arable land, and water. Competition over these resources has, for decades, fueled conflict between the ruling National Congress Party (NCP) in the North and the Sudanese People's Liberation Army/Movement (SPLM), the main faction in the South left more than two million people dead, four million displaced inside the country, and over 600,000 refugees.

It neighbors nine countries; Egypt, Libya, Chad, Central African Republic (CAR), Democratic Republic of Congo, Uganda, Kenya, Ethiopia and Eritria and the Red Sea.

The Comprehensive Peace Agreement (or CPA), also known as the Naivasha Agreement, was a set of agreements culminating in brokered in January 2005 that were signed between the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) and the Government of Sudan. The Naivasha Agreement was meant to end the Second Sudanese Civil War, develop democratic governance countrywide and share oil revenues under the oversight of the United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS). It further set a timetable by which Southern Sudan would have a referendum for self determination.

At the behest of the Sudan Council of Churches, their Evangelical partners and the Government of South Sudan, the Association of Evangelicals in Africa (AEA) represented by the General Secretary Rev. Aiah Foday-Khabenje and the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA) visited Juba the capital of South Sudan in October 2010 and while there, attended a very important dialogue between the Church and the government of South Sudan dubbed "Kejiko 2" as a sequel to "Kejiko 1" held in 1997. The theme of the Church/Government dialogue on Peace and Reconciliation was "Let us Start Rebuilding" derived from Nehemiah 2:18. The deliberations of Kejiko 2 included;

- Transitional areas of concern, i.e. referendum, post referendum and governance,
- Vision of a new Sudan regardless of the outcome of the referendum and
- Nation building and national reconciliation.

It was after this and much consultation that both AEA and WEA put in motion the process of mobilizing organizations, mission agencies and individuals to participate as part of the global team of

International Observers. In addition, at the AEA Headquarters, several agencies i.e. African Inland Mission (AIM), Africa Leadership and Reconciliation Ministries (ALARM), World Relief, Life in Abundance International (LIA) among others were mobilized and formed the Sudan Referendum Forum (SRF). The Forum then undertook to coordinate observation of the Southern Sudan Referendum 2011 held from the 9th to the 15th of January in the respective countries. These efforts bore fruit and several Referendum Observation Teams (ROTs) were constituted to serve mainly in Sudan but also in Kenya, Uganda and Egypt. In Uganda, the exercise was undertaken through the initiative of the AEA Relief and Development Commission – ARDC.

2. Southern Sudan Referendum Preparations

2.1 Election Management

The Southern Sudan Referendum Bureau (SSRB) was officially mandated by the South Sudan Referendum Commission in Khartoum to have oversight for managing the origination and administration of the voting procedures. This included;

- ✓ Setting up of polling stations and staffing, voter registration within and without Sudan,
- ✓ Voter registration and issuance of voter cards,
- ✓ Distribution of the centers was based on population density but cognizant of socio-political realities,
- ✓ Facilitate adequate security for staff, voters and ballot boxes in collaboration with the host country government,
- ✓ Briefing the media and conducting frequent media briefs & developing press release and
- ✓ Accreditation of domestic monitors & observers, international observers and journalists.

Each polling station required by 4 or 6 election agents headed by a Chairperson, while about 2 to 16 international and domestic observers were allowed in the polling station during the entire voting period.

2.2 Media Mobilization and Involvement

In Sudan alone the Southern Sudan Referendum Bureau (SSRB) accredited over 1,000 international and domestic media personnel to cover the referendum; before, during and after voting. Upon accreditation media personnel were permitted;

- ✓ To interview community members, expectations and desires,
- ✓ To interview officials of the GOSS/SSRB, and Chairpersons at the polling stations,

- ✓ Freedom of movement, attend media briefs by the SSRB and disseminate their findings within and without Sudan,
- ✓ To monitor and observe the voting setup and procedures and the actual process

2.3 Presence and Role of Observers/Monitors

The Sudan Referendum Commission and the Southern Sudan Referendum Bureau (SSRB) accredited more than 20,000 domestic and international observers. Accreditation cards were issued for easy access to polling stations and movement countrywide. Observers were to be allowed to observe strict adherence to official voting procedures and standards by polling agents and officials in all polling stations as well as freedom of the citizenry to exercise their rights without undue interference or hindrance but with all necessary assistance where needed. Observers were to be on the lookout for any form of instigated coercion, intimidation or forced voting towards the registered voters.

2.4 Presence and role of Security Personnel

In all voting centers/stations adequate security was to be provided in and around the Adequate security personnel were to be provided to man all polling stations in order to protect polling agents and officials, the voters, observers, monitors and journalists. The main mandate was to ensure a peaceful environment in which the citizenry would be free to exercise their civic rights and responsibilities, while maintaining security of the voting boxes before, during and after voting. In the Southern Sudan referendum thousands of security personnel and police were deployed countrywide and there was a heavy presence at every polling station before voting took place.



Security Officer taking a break pose for a photo with AEA Observer

3 Methodology

The teams used different methods to undertake the task set before them; observation, interviews and questionnaires/discussion questions. The observation was generally to ascertain;

- ✓ Whether the SSRC/SSRB was autonomous, impartial and efficient in its administration of the referendum,
- ✓ Whether IOM was adequately prepared for the exercise,
- ✓ Whether the media enjoyed unfettered access to the SSRB, polling Stations and other places countrywide as expected by international standards,

- ✓ Whether the Media exercised professionalism in their duties,
- ✓ The presence and role of security personnel during the referendum and
- ✓ Voter turnout as compared to voter registration and noting any factors that the team observed that will affect this percentage.
- ✓ Observers attire – all international and domestic observers as well as Referendum Staff were at all times required to be clearly identifiable.



AEA Observers in white and brown T-shirts

3.1 Polling Station Criteria

At each polling station, the team was required to observe;

- ✓ Opening and Closing time - did the polling station open and close on time?
- ✓ Were there adequate materials for the voters?
- ✓ Administration - did the station cater for voters with special needs, i.e. literacy, disability, pregnant women?
- ✓ Did the officials use a valid voter register and corresponding registration card?
- ✓ What was the general order like at the polling station?
- ✓ What was security like at the polling station?

3.2 Additional Criteria

The team also elected to specifically observe additional criteria including:

- ✓ Were there any indications of voter intimidation or electioneering?
- ✓ Was the voter's privacy protected?
- ✓ Were the votes stored in a secure manner at closing?
- ✓ Did counting the ballots happen as scheduled?
- ✓ To note variables between different polling stations.
- ✓ To note discrepancies in the polling process.

4 Voting

Voting started on the 9th and ended on the 15th of January, 2011 in the Sudan and the other eight



President Salva Kirr casts his vote. Looking on are key government officials

countries. The turnout was overwhelming as most Sudanese were very eager to participate in this the first ever referendum, many casting a ballot for the very first time in their lives. The excitement was palpable, citizens came out in large numbers, men and women and the youth, and in many centers there was an evident air of celebration as voting continued.

The team received a list of every polling station in Central Equatorial from the SSRC office in Juba. During the referendum week, the team started with polling stations near the center of Juba, which is in Juba County typically observing from around 8:00 am. On January 13, 14 and 15, the team was able to observe stations before the stations opened and/or as they opened. On January 9, 10, 11, 12, 14 and 15 the team observed stations during closing and/or after closing. On January 11, the team was informed by the chairpersons at several stations that they had received word to close at 6 pm instead of the previously scheduled 5 pm. This change was confirmed by a SSRC representative.

4.1 Polling Procedure

In total the teams visited over 50 and at each of the centers the procedure was strictly adhered to as follows;

- ✓ Voter's card was checked by a polling agent to confirm if the voter was registered at that particular center.
- ✓ The voter's name was checked in the register and crossed out.
- ✓ The voter would thumb print against their name in the voter register.
- ✓ The polling agent would then stamp the ballot paper at the back and issue it to the voter, would explain what the symbols meant and advise where to place the thumb print on the ballot paper (against their choice).



AEA and WEA observers are keenly following the process

- ✓ The polling agent would punch the voter's card with SSRC logo (not all the centers had the punching machine so some punched a hole in the card while others cut the edge of the card with a scissor).
- ✓ The polling agent would then direct the voter to the polling booth (screen) where they would make their choice.
- ✓ The voter would then proceed to cast their ballot in the box
- ✓ The polling agent would dip the voter's index finger into the indelible ink.
- ✓ The polling agent would then direct the voter out of the polling station.

4.2 Irregularities/Discrepancies

At each polling station for 20 to 45 minutes, the team looked around the site for discrepancies on any of the criteria listed and specifically, but not limited to:

- ✓ Orderly lines that accommodated the special needs of voters.
- ✓ Extraneous or unofficial personnel loitering in the polling area.
- ✓ Campaigning activities in the polling area.
- ✓ Inconsistent practices from one station to the next.
- ✓ Secure area for storing the ballots at night.
- ✓ Properly sealed ballot boxes and organized materials.
- ✓ Accredited domestic observers staying at a designated spot.

4.3 Time management

The team observed the first day of voting at the John Garang Mausoleum which was one of the biggest polling centers in Southern Sudan and a few others. On the first day of voting, the queues of voters were overwhelmingly long and this added a lot of pressure on the polling agents. The time it took the voter from name verification on the register to casting the ballot varied from one voter to another. While some of the voters were able to move across the process without being aided, the majority of the voters needed guidance on what to do (in terms of what the two choices meant and how to place the thumb print on the ballot paper). Most voters outside of Juba and in the villages needed guidance more than those around Juba town.

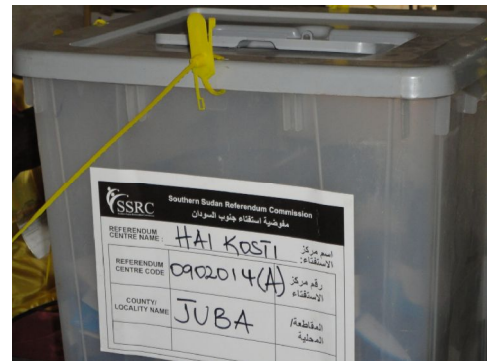
Overall, the polling agents were able to manage the queues and the voters. They displayed professionalism in handling the media and observers.

4.4 Voters with special needs (accommodating the needs of the special groups)

On the first press briefing on Monday 10th, the SSRB chairman directed polling agents to accord special attention to voters with special needs such as people with disability, the elderly and women. He also said that the bureau had organized for drinking water to be provided at the polling centers. All the polling centers the team visited had a special queue for women with children and people with disability were given priority whenever they came to the polling centre. In some centers chairs were provided for those not able to stand.

4.5 Security of ballot boxes/personnel/observers

According to the chairman of the SSRB, the bureau had engaged 16,000 security agents from the police, the military and other uniformed security agents, 2,000 more than the polling agents. At every polling center that the team visited, there were uniformed security agents maintaining order in voter queuing, guarding the ballot boxes and were vigilant. From the team's observation, the security of ballot boxes, the polling personnel, the media, the observers and the general public was adequate. After the end of each day, the ballot boxes were sealed in the presence of the observers and seal number duly recorded then safely kept away in guarded houses. At opening time the next day, observers were on hand to verify the seal number as per the previous day's records.



Sealed ballot box ready for overnight storage

4.6 Voter turn- out

The teams collated the figures of voter turn-out every day in the polling centers they visited. In all centers visited at least 60% of all registered voters cast their ballots on either the first or second days. Similarly in most centers, over 90% of the total number of registered voters cast their votes, well over the 60% threshold required to validate the referendum.

4.7 Vote Counting

As voting closed on the January 15, the teams observed the process of closing the polling stations, preparing the station for tallying and the actual tallying until preliminary results were announced with specific emphasis on;

- ✓ Did the chairperson's daily tally correspond with the final weekly tally?

- ✓ Did the polls close as scheduled?
- ✓ Did the vote counting start immediately?
- ✓ Were only authorized persons allowed in the counting area?
- ✓ Did the polling station have sufficient lighting and sorting materials?
- ✓ Did the station chairperson have control of the situation?
- ✓ Was the counting done in a consistent and transparent method?
- ✓ Were the ballots sorted and then stored properly.
- ✓ Was adequate and appropriate security maintained throughout the process?

5. Results

On Friday 11th February 2011, the South Sudan Referendum Commission announced the long awaited results; South Sudan had voted to separate from the North thus a new nation was born. An overwhelming majority of 98.83% voted for separation while only 1.17% voted for unity. As this announcement was made, euphoria hit the streets of Juba as well as other major towns where voting had taken place.

President Bashir reiterated that he would accept the outcome of the vote, allaying fears that the split could re-ignite conflict over the control of the south's oil reserves. "We accept and welcome these results because they represent the will of the southern people," Meanwhile, South Sudan's leader President Salva Kiir pledged co-operation with Khartoum in the future, saying there were "many things that connect the north and the south". "The (freedom) of the south is not the end of the road, because we cannot be enemies. We must build strong relations," said Mr. Salva Kiir, who is also Sudan's Vice-President.

5.1 Way Forward

As the South prepares for the declaration on July 9th 2011, of the Independent South Sudan, several issues still need to be addressed; border demarcation around the region of Abyei, citizenship, legal matters and sharing of resources i.e. oil, Nuba Mountains. Similarly the South Sudanese have very high expectations of their new status and managing these expectations of the post referendum will be no mean task for the government as well as seeing to the emergent humanitarian needs.

Post referendum, the observation teams were able to engage key religious leaders on building the nation of South Sudan. Some of the areas identified for possible interventions include; Agriculture,

Governance, Ethnicity and Nepotism, Leadership Crisis, Corruption, Education, Discipleship and Bible Training, Civic Education and Trauma Counseling. AEA sees the Local Church as the natural catalyst to bring about change and is therefore seeking to strengthen the Sudan Evangelical Alliance (SEA) to spearhead a sustainable response to the needs as identified by the Church.

6. Challenges

Despite all the merits noted there were challenges encountered namely;

- ✓ Registration – the process was marred by rumors that IOM was recruited by the Khartoum government to derail the referendum. Subsequently many potential voters shied away from registering.
- ✓ Duration of Voting – the extended period of voting was a strain as pertains to security especially on the ballot boxes at the close of each day. Community leaders and IOM officials were able to amicably solve this hurdle.
- ✓ Violence – In the Abiyei region bordering the North a similar referendum was scheduled. However this did not take place but instead the area was rocked with violence and over 20 people were reported to have lost their lives.
Conversely, in Malakal, fighting over resource sharing post referendum was reported to have erupted mainly among the security forces but spilling over to civilians. Here too several were reported to have been killed.
Along the borders there were reports of attacks on Southern Sudanese returnees ahead of the referendum.
- ✓ Humanitarian Needs – One cannot underscore the overwhelming humanitarian needs within the temporary reception centers as thousands made the journey southwards prior to the referendum.

7. Thanksgiving Prayers

As the rest of the world prayed with and for the South Sudanese before and during the Referendum, AEA facilitated a Thanksgiving Prayer Concert at the Nairobi Baptist Church along Ngong Road shortly after the final results were announced on 19th February 2011. The aim was to come back to God for a time specifically dedicated to thanksgiving for His provision and protection both to the Sudanese in Sudan as well as those in the Diaspora.

A low turnout was noted on this day and was largely attributed to concurrent events. On the same day, the Sudanese Women Association hosted a major prayer rally at the Uhuru Park. In addition it was noted that failure to provide free transport for the Sudanese community members also contributed to a low attendance rate.

8. Conclusion

In Kenya, Uganda, Sudan and Egypt, the teams noted after the voting exercise and the subsequent arrangements a credible referendum result. By international standards the SSRC was able to satisfy the requirements for establishing polling stations and the recruitment of adequate and professional personnel as agents. They subsequently were able to conduct the actual polling within a conducive environment with enough security to protect international observers, journalists, polling stations, polling agents and voters and ballots. There was a high presence of accredited international observers and journalists. The voter turnout during the referendum was overwhelming.

Cognizant to the above conditions prevalent during the referendum the AEAWEA team officially concluded that the elections were conducted in a peaceful, free and fair environment.