

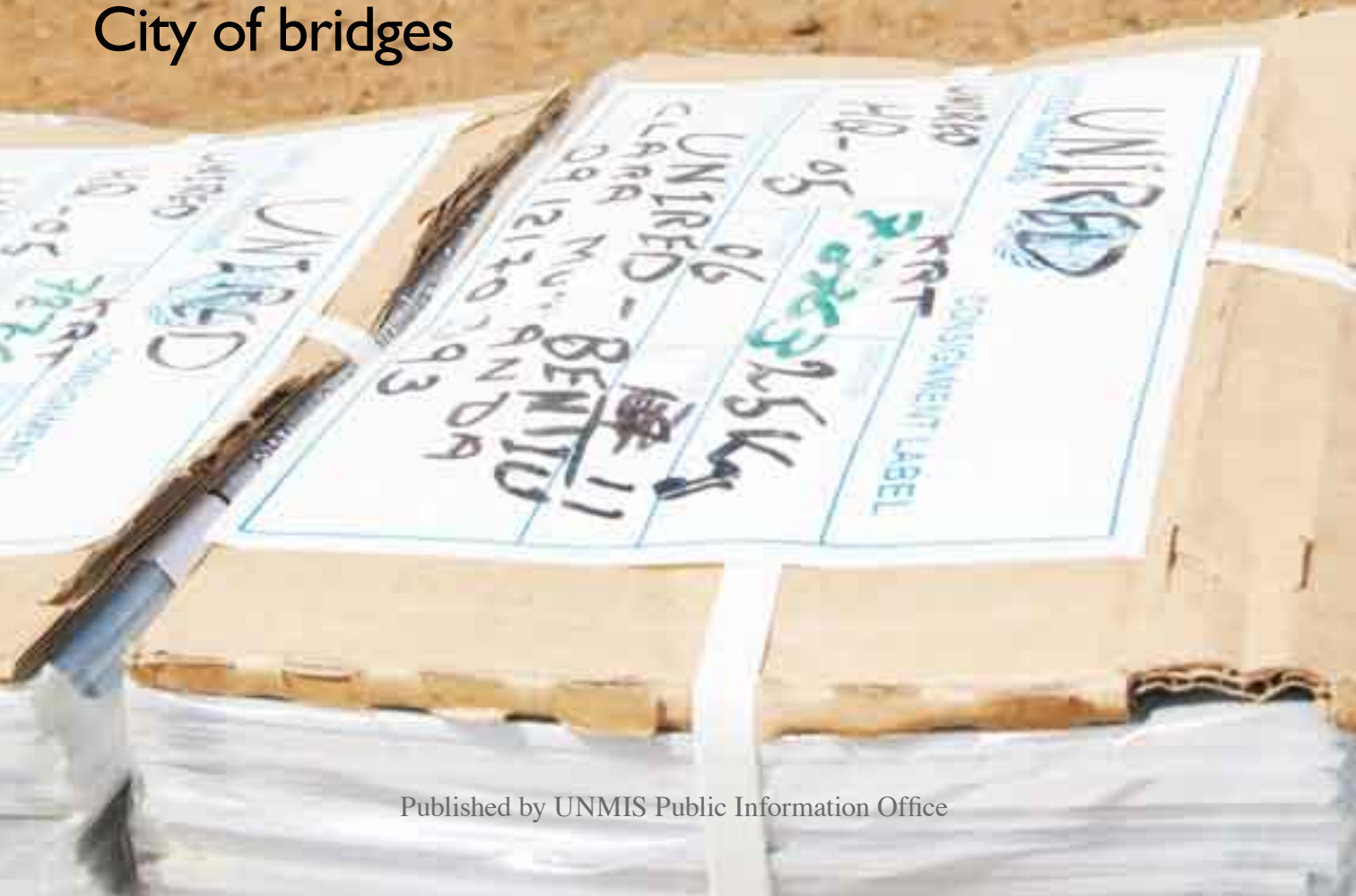


November 2010

In SUDAN

Special Focus: Referenda
Referendum watchdogs

Learning behind bars
City of bridges





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IN SUDAN is published monthly by the UN Mission in Sudan. Contents do not necessarily reflect the official position of the UN or that of UNMIS. Articles and contents may be freely reproduced, with credit to *In Sudan*.

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Diary

14 October: The UN Security Council extended the mandate of the panel monitoring sanctions imposed on Darfur until October 2011, with China abstaining from the vote. Established in March 2005, the panel monitors compliance with an arms embargo, travel ban and assets freeze.

15 October: The UN Secretary-General's Panel on the Referenda in Sudan expressed concern about the lack of progress in key areas, especially voter registration, at a press conference in Khartoum that concluded its first visit to the country. Chaired by former Tanzanian president Benjamin Mkapa, the three-member panel also includes the former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Portugal, Antonio Monteiro, and the ex-chairman of the Election Commission of Nepal, Bhojraj Pokharel. The body, mandated to enhance the credibility of the January 2011 referenda in Southern Sudan and the Abyei area, will return to Sudan on a monthly basis.

18 October: The UN pledged to increase its capacity to prevent confrontations that could derail the peace process, Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General to Sudan Haile Menkerios said at a press conference in Khartoum. He said this would be done in consultation with the parties to the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), but added that no decision had yet been made by the Security Council or the Secretary-General to deploy additional peacekeeping troops prior to the January 2011 referenda.

24 October: Commemorating the 65th anniversary of the United Nations Charter, UN Day was celebrated across Sudan with readings of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's message, refuse collections, free medical clinics, art exhibitions and other activities.

27 October: A seven-member UN team deployed to the referendum support base (RSB) in Gok Machar, Northern Bahr El-Ghazal State, to assist county-level officials with the upcoming self-determination poll in Southern Sudan.

28 October: A memorial service was held at the mission's Khartoum headquarters for Pakistani Corporal Muhammed Salim Akhtar, who passed away on 24 October while serving with UNMIS in Ed Damazin, Blue Nile State.

1 November: President Barack Obama extended the U.S. government's 13-year-old economic sanctions against Sudan for another year because its government's actions and policies "are hostile to US interests and pose a continuing unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States".

3 November: The United Nations-African Union Mission in Darfur expressed concern over the recent closure of the Khartoum office of the Dutch-based *Radio Dabanga* station and the arrest of several journalists and human rights activists.

3 November: A disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programme was launched at a new DDR centre in Khartoum. Under the programme, about 6,500 combatants from the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) and the Popular Defence Force (PDF) will begin their transition to civilian life. As of 2 November, approximately 31,600 ex-combatants from the SAF, PDF, SPLA and women associated with these forces had been demobilized nationwide.

5 November: On her five-day visit to Sudan, UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC) Valerie Amos in Juba asked for renewed commitment from authorities in Southern Sudan to ensure that the delivery of humanitarian aid is unimpeded and not subject to political, ethnic or religious considerations. Humanitarian agencies have reported 18 incidents of interference with aid work this year in the area.

6 November: Representatives of the National Congress Party and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement resumed talks on the disputed Abyei region and post-referendum arrangements in the Ethiopian capital of Addis Ababa. The UN's top peacekeeping official Alain Le Roy attended the meeting along with the Special Representatives of the UN Secretary-General for Sudan and Darfur, Haile Menkerios and Ibrahim Gambari respectively.

15 November: Referendum voter registration started in 165 voter registration centres in North Sudan and in 2,628 in the south. The process also kicked off in most of the eight countries outside Sudan where registration was designated to take place, but the exact number of registration centres was still being finalized as *In Sudan* went to print.

FRONT COVER: UNMIS assisting with delivery of referendum registration materials.
 Photo: UNMIS/Tim MuKulka.

BACK COVER: Southern Sudan referendum poster.



Participants attending SONAD workshop with the theme "Countdown to Southern Sudan Referendum" in Juba.

Educating the electorate

Local organizations in Southern Sudan have launched education campaigns ahead of what could prove to be the most important vote in the region's history.

Southerners are set to go to the polls on 9 January to begin voting in the region's long-awaited referendum on whether to remain united with the north or secede.

If southerners opt for separation, the credibility and transparency of the referendum would have a direct bearing on the degree of acceptance the world's newest nation-state might expect from the international community.

Without effective voter education, noted Zahra Said of the Sudanese Network for Democratic Election (SuNDE), the credibility of the referendum could be open to the same challenges and criticisms that marred the country's historic general election of last April.

The SuNDE programme officer said messages aimed at mobilizing eligible voters to register for the referendum were appearing on FM radio stations and other media throughout the 17-day registration period that began on 15 November.

At the same time, SuNDE messages are urging southerners to refrain from registering for the referendum if they do not plan to cast ballots next January.

Founded in April 2009 to monitor the general election and inform residents in the country's 10 southern states, SuNDE is also using public events such as market days and meetings of community

leaders to get out its message about the referendum.

"We shall also be targeting social gatherings, football matches (and) funeral rites, where we will get good numbers of people to pass messages that could target (the) community," said Ms. Said.

According to the Southern Sudan Referendum Commission's official timetable, media campaigns commenced on 7 November and will conclude on 7 January.

SuNDE has organized road shows that are taking its staff members to major towns across Southern Sudan to publicize the registration process and eligibility requirements prospective voters must fulfill.

Miraya FM is also staging a series of road shows, which began in Wau and will finish in Juba on 1 December, the day voter registration is scheduled to end.

A similar campaign is being mounted by the Sudanese Organization for Non-violence and Development (SONAD) to target youth, members of political parties and community leaders, according to its executive director, Moses Monday John.

SONAD has hosted workshops for northern Sudanese who live in the south and southerners who live in North Sudan to address their rights and freedoms under the 2009 Referendum Act.

The citizenship status of these two groups of Sudanese in their respective parts of the country may become unclear in the event of a southern vote for

secession. Mr. John said the workshops were intended to bring out expectations and fears of participants and highlight potential problems they may face during and after the referendum vote.

The Sudan Council of Churches (SCC) is conducting its own voter education campaign in all 10 southern states and the disputed region of Abyei, which is scheduled to hold its own self-determination referendum next January.

"As a church and civil society organization, we shall continue to provide our support to the process with a clear commitment to peace, justice, equality and respect to humans rights, so that people make their choice in a peaceful and responsible manner without any intimidation or conditions," said SCC Civic and Voter Education Officer Gemma Hellen Pita.

Comprising six Christian churches, the SCC has stationed voter education trainers throughout Southern Sudan and Abyei to provide detailed information about the referendum at the grassroots level.

"We believe that informed, responsible voters help safeguard electoral integrity," said Ms. Pita.

"It is now left for (the trainers) to go out and inform voters on what to do, how they are going to do it and explain in detail to voters why their votes are very important," she added.

Ojja Bosco

Photos: Isaac Gideon





Securing the referendum

When the John Garang Unified Memorial Police Training Academy opened its doors last January, the facilities awaiting the first group of 6,000 cadets were rudimentary, to say the least.

“Many were surprised when we established this training centre from nothing,” recalled the Inspector General of the Southern Sudan Police Service (SSPS), Lt. Gen. Tito Acuil Madut, during the visit of a UN Security Council delegation to the academy in October. “The grounds you are seeing were open savannah bush, shrub and trees back in January, (but) today we can clearly see where we are going.”

Located in the Central Equatoria State town of Rejaf, south of the regional capital of Juba, the academy is still a modest installation where police cadets live inside olive green tents and lack access to electricity or running water.

But its first class of aspiring police officers graduated earlier this month, and in addition to their basic police training many cadets have also received specialized instruction in referendum security as Southern Sudan heads towards its long-awaited vote on self-determination in January of next year.

As of 5 November, more than 14,000 SSPS officers throughout Southern Sudan had completed the three-day referendum security course that UN Police (UNPOL) advisers began offering last July. Over one-third of them attended that course at the Rejaf training academy.

UNMIS Deputy Police Commissioner Klaus-Dieter Tietz said earlier this year that at least 16,500 SSPS officers will have undergone referendum security training by the end of this year, and they will supplement the 10,600 SSPS colleagues who received similar instruction prior to last April's historic general election.

UN Police will offer the same training to the Sudan Police Force, which is responsible for securing the referendum process in northern Sudan.

Among the 5,500 cadets who recently graduated from the academy are approximately 1,250 who have also received advanced training in crowd and riot control techniques, VIP protection and special weapons and tactics.

They will be assigned to formed police units. About 100 of these law enforcement officers have received additional instruction to qualify as trainers within the SSPS.

Some of the formed police unit members demonstrated their specialized skills in front of the UN Security Council delegation by simulating the disarming and capture of a wanted bandit and surrounding the delegation members as though they were part of an unruly mob.

Making a good impression

The exercise made a favourable impression on the delegation's members. As US Permanent Representative to the UN Susan Rice surveyed the police academy and watched the cadets go through their steps, she asked her fellow diplomats at one point, “Why can't we have something like this in Liberia or Afghanistan?”

The SSPS will be responsible for maintaining law and order at voter registration centres and securing referendum ballot materials and voting centres in the run-up to 9 January 2011.

Often derided for the high percentage of illiterate police officers in its ranks, the SSPS now requires all job applicants to have graduated from secondary school.

“At the core of any successful state is a professional police service,” noted SSPS Inspector General Madut during his remarks to the Security Council members. “No matter what the outcome of the referendum, we need strong state structures here in Southern Sudan.”

He said that the SSPS needs another \$15 million to build classrooms and living quarters and provide drinking water to future groups of cadets.

“No matter what the outcome of the referendum, we need strong state structures here in Southern Sudan.”

The academy is supported by the UN Development Programme, the United States Agency for International Development, the German Agency for Development Cooperation and the Norwegian government.

Paiyo Charles Angelo
Photos: Paul Banks

Southern Sudan Police Service recruits at John Garang Unified Memorial Police Training Academy in Rejaf, Central Equatoria State.



Returnees and the referendum

Ayan Deng's return to the Warrap State capital of Kuajok last August was an occasion to celebrate.

The 49-year-old mother of four had spent the past 18 years living in the Northern Kordofan State capital of El Obeid, and the time had come for Ms. Deng to come home. "I am happy to see my village again," she said. "I will participate in the upcoming referendum and vote to decide my future and my children's future."

As the long-awaited self-determination referendum in Southern Sudan approaches, regional and state government officials are bracing themselves for a major influx of southerners who stayed in North Sudan after the Comprehensive Peace Agreement was signed in 2005.

The Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management of the Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS) has allocated 30 million Sudanese pounds for the return of an estimated 1.5 million internally displaced persons.

The future status of southerners living in the country's northern states was questioned after government officials made statements in September referring to limited access to hospitals, jobs and government benefits if Southern Sudanese voters opted for separation from the rest of the country in the January 2011 referendum.

Officials in the southern states of Northern Bahr El-Ghazal, Warrap and Western Bahr El-Ghazal said they were ready to welcome and re-settle the returnees.

"They are our people who have similar rights and obligations like others

who are residing here," said Warrap State Secretary General James Gabriel Khamis. "We will do whatever we can to accommodate (the returnees) and create a conducive environment for them to participate in the referendum process."

Returning Southern Sudanese citizens must register to vote in the 2011 referendum no later than 1 December. There are provisions to enable eligible southerners living in North Sudan to cast ballots there, but preparations are even farther behind schedule than is the case in the country's southern states.

A shortage of funds is hindering efforts to prepare a suitable reception for the returnees at the state level.

Northern Bahr El-Ghazal State Secretary General Garang Kuot Kuot said he is still waiting to hear back on a request for funding that the state government sent to the GoSS earlier this year.

"Different states like Northern Bahr El-Ghazal and Jonglei have submitted (requests for) 15 million pounds for the process," said GoSS Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management Minister James Kok Ruea, confirming Mr. Kuot's account. "We are dealing with that, and hopefully we will release the funds when they are available."

The sooner the better, as far as Marial Madit is concerned. He returned to his hometown of Aweil in Northern Bahr El-Ghazal State last June with his wife and six children after living in Khartoum for 27 years, and the adjustment hasn't been easy.

"Here everything is too expensive, and we didn't receive any assistance from the government side yet," he said. "We need immediate assistance to cope with our problems so we can participate in the

referendum properly."

The UN World Food Programme has already provided food assistance to returning southerners in Western Bahr El-Ghazal State, according to Mathew Chan Majok of the Southern Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Commission.

Officials are also trying to allay fears among some northerners living in Southern Sudan about their safety in the weeks leading up to the crucial vote in January.

"The state government is ready to make sure that the security and rights of the traders from the north are secured, whatever the result of the referendum is," said Mr. Kuot.

Some officials are warning prospective returnees against traveling by road to Southern Sudan. Western Bahr El-Ghazal State Deputy Secretary General Charles Uguak Apayo called on the UN and humanitarian aid agencies to facilitate movement by plane.

"The roads sometimes experience insecurity and can be misused by destructive forces for political reasons," he said.

Most returnees are expected to make their own arrangements for moving from North Sudan to the south. In the absence of any organized repatriation programme to date, state government officials have no reliable estimates on the number of returnees who have already relocated to Southern Sudan.

Story and photos:
Hailemichael Gebrekrstos

Northern Bahr El-Ghazal State Secretary-General Garang Kuot Kuot.



Warrap State Secretary-General James Gabriel Khamis.



Western Bahr El-Ghazal State Deputy Secretary General Charles Uguak Apayo.



101 days of prayer

With the countdown for the much-anticipated 2011 Southern Sudan referendum well underway, different religious groups have been converging all over the semi-autonomous region on a daily, weekly and monthly basis to pray for peace.

“Our intention in launching the 101 days of prayer was to change the heart of Sudanese people for a peaceful referendum,” said the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Juba, Paulino Lukudu Loro. “We want a future of hope for Sudan.”

As part of the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement that ended a two-decade civil war, Southern Sudanese are expected to exercise their right to self-determination in the referendum scheduled to begin on 9 January 2011.

“The options of unity or separation are both means for us to achieve the long-awaited peace in Sudan that we are looking for,” said Archbishop Loro.

People from the 11 parishes and prayer centres in the Catholic Diocese of Juba in Central Equatoria State gather each day for prayer.

“I pray for a peaceful and successful referendum because it is the only chance given to Southern Sudanese,” said Sister Georgina Nyayath of St. Joseph’s Church in Juba.

Although the Catholic Church is spearheading this initiative, Archbishop Loro noted that other Christian denominations and religions have joined the peace campaign.

“Peace is for everybody and every religion,” the archbishop said. “Religious leaders and followers of other churches as well as our Muslim brothers and sisters are praying for the same cause.”

“Peace is for everybody and every religion.”

Reverend Edward Ladu Waiwai of the Sudan Council of Churches, which is made up of six churches, said that organized religion had played a key role in supporting the peace process.

“When politicians asked for ‘let my people go’ the churches requested for ‘let my people choose what they want’ which is now the referendum,” the reverend said.

The imam of Juba’s Atiq Mosque said that Muslims are preaching peace to all people and praying to Allah to make the referendum peaceful and successful.

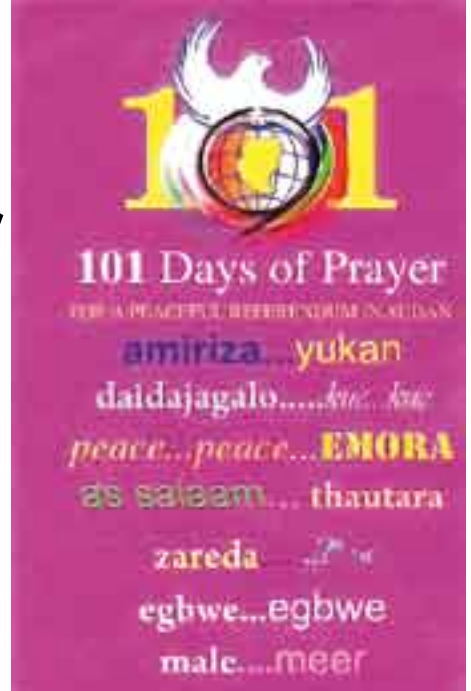
“Here in the South you can find people of different religions in the same family -- Christians, Muslims and followers of traditional religions living together,” said Ratib Imam Maawia Garang Kua. “They should all go for peace and harmony.”

Multi-denominational prayers in Malakal

In the Upper Nile State capital of Malakal, religious leaders have formed a committee chaired by Father Matthew Pagan of the city’s Catholic Diocese.

“We are happy that this programme is accepted not only by Catholics but also by other Christians and religions including Islam,” said Father Pagan, adding that committee members represent the Episcopal Church of Sudan, the Sudan Interior Church, the Evangelical Covenant Church, the Lutheran Church and the city’s Muslim community.

Reverend Evans Habeeban Stephen of the Episcopal Church of Sudan echoed



the priest’s words. “This is the first time in Sudan for Catholic, Christian and Muslims (to come together) hand-in-hand to convey peace to their people,” he said.

The Episcopal Church has been holding weekly referendum prayers and is sensitizing its flock to the need for a peaceful referendum.

“Since this programme commenced, people have started to change their attitude,” said Rev. Stephen. “Before, people were very suspicious of each other, and now people are more relaxed and a little bit open.”

Imam Abdallah Aziz Ogony, who sits on the ecumenical committee, said that every morning he leads a prayer in the mosque asking Allah for a peaceful referendum.

“As a Muslim, I call on God that (the) referendum will be done without any war. That is the same I call upon my Muslim brothers,” said Imam Aziz.

The 101 days of prayers in Sudan, which are scheduled to end on 1 January, began during this year’s International Day of Peace on 21 September.

Imelda Tjahja and Negus Hadera

Christian and Muslim participants of the 101 Days of Prayer programme marching in Malakal. Photo: Imelda Tjahja.

International Day of Peace being celebrated in Juba in September. Photo: Isaac Gideon.



Referendum watchdogs



SuDEMOP Secretary-General Merekaje Lorna.

Two Southern Sudanese non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that spearheaded domestic monitoring of last April's historic general election plan to repeat their role during voter registration and balloting for the southern self-determination referendum.

The Sudanese Network for Democratic Elections (SuNDE) and the Sudan Democratic Election Monitoring and Observation Programme (SuDEMOP) deployed thousands of monitors across the country's 10 southern states earlier this year to assess logistical conditions under which the general election took place and report any irregularities that arose during the campaign and voting.

Founded in April 2009 with help from the Washington-based National Democratic Institute, SuNDE is a non-partisan coalition of over 70 civil society organizations and faith-based groups. It plans to dispatch 3,500 referendum observers throughout Southern Sudan and another 200 to 300 in the north during the run-up to the start of referendum voting on 9 January 2011.

"When we are talking about elections, the voters should be confident about the process and results," said SuNDE coordinator Edmund Yakani. "This is only possible when the process is monitored by independent, non-partisan bodies."

SuDEMOP will send out two different groups of referendum observers.

One category of monitors will focus on the voting process from the start of registration on 15 November until the end of balloting in mid-January. The second category of observers will concentrate on outbreaks of violence in the coming weeks.

"We will deploy conflict-tracking observers to the hot spots to observe referendum-related violence," said SuDEMOP Secretary General Merekaje Lorna, who declined to issue any specific figures for the number of monitors the NGO plans to enlist.

Ms. Lorna said that SuDEMOP aims to have its observers present at all 2,000

registration centres in Southern Sudan, but she acknowledged that the daunting logistical challenges of traversing the region during the rainy season could impede blanket coverage of those installations.

Launched in March 2009, SuDEMOP joined six other civil society organizations and faith-based groups to form the Southern Sudan Civil Society Referendum Taskforce earlier this year. That body convened a two-day workshop in Juba in mid-October to discuss the assembled groups' concerns about the widely anticipated vote in January.

"We came up with strong resolutions urging the parties to the Comprehensive Peace Agreement to facilitate rigorous monitoring of the referendum process by civil society and international monitors," said Ms. Lorna.

In late September the Atlanta-based Carter Center announced the arrival of 16 foreign observers representing a dozen countries, who will monitor the referendum campaign and balloting from start to finish.

During a five-day conference in Juba in October, 23 political parties approved a code of conduct for the referenda in Southern Sudan and the disputed oil-rich Abyei region as well as popular consultations to be held in Blue Nile and Southern Kordofan states.

The document requires its signatories to "create an environment favorable to the democratic and peaceful conduct" of the referenda and popular consultations and forswear any resort to violence or inflammatory language during the campaign.

If any of the parties that endorsed the code of conduct violates its provisions, SuNDE and SuDEMOP can be relied upon to hold them accountable.

Both NGOs issued final reports in the aftermath of this year's general election that took the National Elections Commission to task for its poor organization of balloting and criticized representatives of certain political parties and individual candidates for harassing

their rivals and engaging in intimidation tactics at polling stations.

Story and photo:
Emmanuel Kenyi

The Secretary-General's panel

Following a joint request from the parties to Sudan's peace accord -- the National Congress Party and Sudan People's Liberation Movement -- UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon set up a three-member panel to monitor the country's upcoming referenda.

The parties sought a UN monitoring body to help enhance credibility of the country's two self-determination votes (in Southern Sudan and Abyei), and ensure acceptance of the results by their constituencies and the international community.

The referenda are Sudanese-led, but the panel will encourage the parties as well as relevant authorities to resolve any significant problems or disputes as they emerge. In so doing, the parties and authorities should take corrective measures if necessary.

The panel, which will be assisted by field staff across the country, operates completely independent of UNMIS. The mission is providing technical assistance to the referenda, so it cannot also monitor the process. The panel reports directly to the Secretary-General.

The UN monitoring body is chaired by Benjamin Mkapa, former President of Tanzania. The other members are António Monteiro, former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Portugal, and Bhojraj Pokharel, former Chairman of the Election Commission of Nepal.

The panelists will visit Sudan about once a month in the lead-up to and during the referenda.

Sudan's referenda

Frequently Asked Questions

What will be determined in Sudan's referenda?

The country's 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) stipulates that a referendum will be held in Southern Sudan to determine whether the region remains united with the north or secedes.

Another referendum in the Abyei Area of central Sudan will determine whether it remains part of the north or joins the south.

Who will be managing the referenda process?

The process will be managed by the nine-member Southern Sudan Referendum Commission (SSRC), which is based in Khartoum. SSRC members were nominated by Sudanese President Omar Al-Bashir and approved by First Vice-President Salva Kiir Mayardit as well as a majority in the National Assembly.

The Commission in turn appointed the four members of the Referendum Bureau on the recommendation of the Bureau chairperson, who is also the SSRC deputy chairperson. The Bureau is based in the southern capital of Juba.

The Bureau then recommended five members for each of the 10 referendum state high committees in Southern Sudan, who were officially named and sworn in by the SSRC. The state committees recommended five members for each of the 79 county sub-committees, who were endorsed and sworn in by the Bureau chairperson.

The SSRC is currently organizing a support structure for state high committees in the 15 northern states. One office will be opened in each state except Khartoum, where there will be three.

How is the UN assisting with the referenda?

It is assisting through the UN Integrated Referendum and Electoral Division (UNIRED), a joint team consisting of UNMIS and UN Development Programme electoral staff.

UNIRED has three main sections – operations, public outreach and programme management.

Operations will assist the SSRC and its subsidiary bodies on operational planning, logistics, procedures and training, and field coordination.

The outreach unit will mainly provide logistical advice to the Commission on voter information, public information,

stakeholder relations and accreditation of observers as well as media.

The programme management component relates to the UNDP Basket Fund for Support to Referenda 2011. This section is focusing on areas like security, judiciary and media training, as well as support to domestic observer organizations and civil society.

UNIRED will also assist in training Sudanese, who will then train registration staff in the south. UNMIS will be setting up referendum support bases throughout the south, dispatching and retrieving materials at the end of the referenda process and training Southern Sudan Police Service (SSPS) as well as Sudan Police Force officers in referenda security.

What are UNMIS Referendum Support Bases?

UNMIS has been setting these up in remote locations of Sudan, so that UNIRED can support the Commission at the county level in Southern Sudan. The UN Joint Logistics Operation Centre is working on establishing them.

In addition to its existing 15 sector headquarters and team sites, UNMIS plans to open many more new bases throughout Southern Sudan by the end of November. The bases will work closely with county sub-committees in overseeing referendum operations.

UNIRED staff is also in place in the 10 state capitals of Southern Sudan. UNIRED will support SSRC staff in the northern states from bases of operation in Khartoum, Kassala, Kadugli, Ed Damazin and El Fasher.

How extensive is UNMIS security training?

UN Police advisers have been training Southern Sudan Police Service (SSPS) officers in referendum security since last July. Over 14,000 SSPS personnel had been trained by early November, and at least 16,500 police officers should have completed UN Police security courses by the middle of December.

They will supplement the 10,600 SSPS officers who underwent similar training prior to last April's general election. UN Police will offer the same training to the Sudan Police Force, which is responsible for securing the referendum process in northern Sudan.

What are the greatest challenges so far?

Voter education will be a challenge, given the vastness of Sudan, the high rate of illiteracy in many areas, and the tight timeline.

The referendum law is also unclear on several provisions, which will require the Commission's interpretation. For example, the eligibility criteria, defining who may vote and where (North Sudan, Southern Sudan and out of country), require additional clarification from the SSRC. These must all be translated into civic education messages as well as materials and disseminated to potential voters.

Acquiring and distributing materials will also be difficult, as the country's infrastructure is lacking in many places, especially in the south. Another challenge is the security situation in the country. Pockets of tension and agitation could escalate and make the situation more difficult than it is already.

Finally, the timeline is very short. The Commission became operational only in early September. Managing all processes up to 9 January will be extremely difficult.

Is the Abyei referendum part of the referendum process in the south?

No, the Abyei poll is separate, but polling is supposed to take place at the same time as the Southern Sudan referendum. UNIRED staff is on the ground waiting to support the process once the Abyei Area Referendum Commission is formed.

Will registration happen outside Southern Sudan? If so, what kind of documentation is needed for Southern Sudanese living outside the region to prove their origin?

Registration will take place in the north, the south and in eight countries—Australia, Britain, United States, Canada, Egypt, Ethiopia, Uganda, and Kenya. The International Organization for Migration is working with the Commission to organize the referendum process outside the country.

There are several documents to prove one is Southern Sudanese, including a UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) document for refugees, but

Eligibility for the Southern Sudan Referendum

ultimately the Commission must make the decision.

How many eligible voters are there?

The estimated number of eligible voters, based on UNHCR and other data, is about 6.5 million in total.

Who will carry out voter education?

While the Commission is responsible for voter education, UNIRED is assisting with the development of strategies, plans and materials. In addition, the UNDP Basket Fund is providing financial assistance to support the design and production of posters, stickers, kangas, bracelets, and other promotional material, including radio and TV programs.

The Basket Fund is also providing funds for states and counties to hold forums and events to inform the public about the referendum process. All of these activities must be integrated within the timeline of the referenda procedures.

So far, the Commission is holding two weekly press briefings and has launched a website. In the south, the Government of Southern Sudan has networks of educators, who have penetrated to the *boma* (village) and *payam* (township) levels.

Will the UN be involved in monitoring the referenda?

At the request of the CPA parties themselves, the UN Secretary-General has set up a three-member high-level panel to monitor the referenda and make suggestions about corrective measures.

The panel is chaired by Benjamin Mkapa, former President of Tanzania. Its other members are Antonio Monteiro, former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Portugal, and Bhojraj Pokharel, former Chairman of the Election Commission of Nepal.

It should be noted that this panel is totally independent of UNIRED and UNMIS. As the mission is providing technical assistance, it cannot at the same time observe the referenda process. In other words, it cannot be party and jury at the same time.

The Southern Sudan Referendum Act determines voter eligibility for the Southern Sudan referendum. The Act mandates and authorizes the Southern Sudan referendum Commission (SSRC) to issue regulations and procedures necessary for the conduct of the referendum. This material reproduces the official document on eligibility criteria approved by the SSRC on 27 October 2010.

WHO CAN REGISTER AND VOTE WHERE

According to Article 25 and 27 of the Southern Sudan Referendum Act 2009, Voters are classified into three categories:

1. Voter who belongs to one of the indigenous ethnic communities residing in the Southern Sudan (on or before 1 January 1956).

This category of voter can vote in any referendum centre (Article 27(4)), i.e., in referendum centre in the South and other locations (North and 8 countries mentioned in the Act).

Explanation: "A" is a Dinka, which is one of the indigenous ethnic communities in Southern Sudan on or before 1st January 1956 and identifies himself/herself as part of this community whenever he/she may be. "A" is entitled to vote in the South or in any other locations (Northern Sudan and other 8 countries mentioned in the Act) irrespective of his/her current residence.

2. Voter who traces his/her ancestry to one of the indigenous ethnic communities in Southern Sudan, but has not permanently resided in the South (without

interruption) before or since January 1956.

This category of voter can only vote in the South (Article 27(3)(b), where he/she can be identified.

Explanation: "B" can trace himself through his/her ancestry as belonging to a Dinka community but "B" was not born in the South nor did he/she and his/her ancestry reside in the South since 1st January 1956. "B" lost touch with this community and can neither identify or be recognized as member of this community in other locations. "B" can only vote in the South after having identified himself/herself and accepted by the Dinka community to which he/she traces himself/herself.

3. Voter who does not belong to one of the indigenous ethnic communities in the Southern Sudan, but he/she or his/her parents or grandparents are permanently residing in the South (without interruption) since 1st January 1956.

This category of voter can only vote in the South (Article 27(3)(b), where he/she can be identified.

Explanation: "C" belongs to any other Sudanese communities than those indigenous ethnic in the South, but he/she or both or one of his/parents or grandparents have been resident in the South without interruption since 1st January 1956. "C" can vote only in the South where he/she, his/her parents or grand□ parents or one of them has been permanently residing.

Reproduced as received from SSRC.

Southern Sudan Referendum Commission

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Southern Sudan Referendum Commission (SSRC)?

The Commission is an ad hoc body created under the provisions of the Southern Sudan Referendum Act of 2009 to organize and conduct the Southern Sudan referendum on self-determination, as stipulated in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement.

How is the SSRC made up?

The Commission has nine members (Commissioners) who were appointed by Sudanese President Omar Al-Bashir with the consent of First Vice-President Salva Kiir Mayardit as well as the National Assembly.

The SSRC Deputy Chairperson is the Chairperson of the Commission's office in Juba, the Southern Sudan Referendum Bureau. The Commissioners' terms expire at the end of the interim period (once the referendum has taken place).

Who are the members of the SSRC?

The Commissioners are Mohammed Ibrahim Khalil, Chairperson, Justice Chan Reec Madut, Deputy Chairperson (and Chairperson of the Southern Sudan Referendum Bureau), Paulino Wanawilla Unango, Lt. Gen. (retired) Tariq Osman, Deng Awur Wenyin, Suad Ibrahim Eisa, Lual Chany Chol, Sabit Alley and Kamal Ali Mohamed Saleh.

What are the eligibility criteria for Commissioners?

The Commissioners must be Sudanese by birth; well-known for independence, competence, non-partisanship and impartiality; at least 40 years of age; of sound mind; literate; and not been convicted of a crime involving honesty or moral turpitude (even if pardoned).

Is the SSRC an independent body?

The SSRC is financially, administratively and technically independent. It performs its functions and duties independently, impartially and transparently, without interference from any other body in its affairs, business or functions, or any limitation of its powers.

Commission decisions are taken by majority vote of members present. The chairperson can break a tie vote as long as at least half of the members are present.

The Commission has an independent

budget prepared according to relevant principles observed by the state, which is subject to regular audits by the National Audits Chamber at the end of each fiscal year and at the end of the referendum.

What are the specific responsibilities of the SSRC?

According to the Southern Sudan Referendum Act of 2009, the SSRC is responsible for the:

- Referendum: Regulating and supervising the Southern Sudan referendum;
- Referendum register: Preparing, revising, approving and keeping the list of eligible voters and issuing registration cards;
- Rules and regulations: Issuing general rules for the referendum and taking executive measures to carry them out;
- Procedures: Issuing procedures for organization of the referendum and accreditation of observers;
- Referendum duration: Extending the polling period (set for seven days), if substantive reasons exist, to enable voters to exercise their right to vote with the utmost degree of freedom and secrecy;
- Sorting and counting: Controlling the sorting and counting of ballots, the aggregation of preliminary referendum results and declaration of final referendum results;
- Postponement of referendum procedures: Postponing any referendum procedures for any compelling situation with the consent of the Government of Sudan and the Government of Southern Sudan;
- Cancellation of results: Cancelling any referendum result in any referendum centre by an order of the court;
- Punishment: Taking necessary action against any person who violates the referendum law, including referendum officials or workers who violate the law or any rules or regulations established by the SSRC.

Who will be administering the referendum?

The SSRC is based in Khartoum and has a bureau (The Southern Sudan Referendum Bureau) based in Juba. The Commission has a staff (the Secretariat General) headed by a Secretary-General appointed by President Bashir with consent of First Vice-President Kiir on recommendation of the SSRC. The Secretary-General has two assistants, one in Khartoum and one in Juba.

On the recommendation of the Southern

Sudan Referendum Bureau (SSRB), the SSRC has formed high committees in each southern state, consisting of a chairperson and four members. The state high committees are totally independent from any executive bodies or legislative assemblies.

Each state high committee, with the consent of the SSRB, has formed a sub-committee in each county. On the recommendation of the sub-committees, state high committees will form referendum centres at the county level to conduct registration, polling, sorting, counting and declaration of the results.

Will the SSRC open referendum centres outside Southern Sudan?

The Commission will establish referendum centres outside the south, provided that the number of registered voters in each centre is at least 20,000. If the number is less than 20,000, a referendum centre will be open in the capital of the concerned state in North Sudan and the countries of emigration -- Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, Australia, Britain, United States of America, Canada and Egypt.

What is the timeline for the Southern Sudan referendum process?

The referendum timeline is as follows:

- 7 November:** Beginning of media campaign
- *15 November – 1 December** Voter registration
- 6 December:** Publication of preliminary voter register
- 7 -13 December:** Submission of objections
- 18 December:** Disposal of objections by SSRC
- 19 - 25 December:** Appeals to courts
- 26 - 30 December:** Disposal of appeals by courts
- 4 January 2011:** Publication of final rectified voter register
- 7 January 2011:** End of media campaign
- **9 - 15 January:** Polling period

*The Commission will officially announce the days and hours of operation.

**The beginning of the polling period – 9 January – is stipulated in the CPA.

Learning behind bars

When Eucharia Nzekwe was assigned to Juba Prison as a UN Corrections Adviser, one of the first things that caught her eye was the absence of a reformatory for its many juvenile prisoners.

Such a facility once existed in the Kololo district of the Southern Sudanese regional capital to help turn under-age inmates into law-abiding adults one day, but its building suffered extensive damage during the country's long civil war and was abandoned.

Before long, the Nigerian prison officer sat down with prison officials and proposed the introduction of educational instruction for the incarcerated youths inside the wing of the facility where they are housed.

Her initiative met with an enthusiastic reception, and subsequent meetings with officials at the state and regional government levels as well as UNICEF elicited similar responses.

But Ms. Nzekwe didn't just receive hearty words of encouragement for her idea. The Government of Southern Sudan's Ministry of Education assigned three teachers to give classes inside the prison.

The Central Equatoria State Ministry of Education offered to furnish textbooks and a curriculum and design certificates of attendance. UNICEF for its part was ready to deliver exercise books, pens, pencils and blackboards.

Ms. Nzekwe's brainstorm bore fruit in June 2009 when instruction began on the prison's premises, and she praises the assistance extended to her by the Ministries and UN children's agency. "Their support is immense," she said.

Most of the prison's juvenile population signed up for classes when the programme got underway, and 46 of them received diplomas when they completed their first course last February.

The 70 currently enrolled students

attend classes ranging from primary one to three, and level four will be added soon.

The inmates bring varying degrees of formal education to the classes, from some who have never attended a single class in their young lives to those who made it to the secondary school level.

Jacob Lual Lual was a primary two student when he left his hometown of Wau and ended his studies. "My parents were not aware of the usefulness of education so I started school late," said 16-year old Lual, who wants to become a medical doctor one day. "Now I am attending primary three in this prison and will never quit (school) again."

A lack of sufficient funds to cover his school fees forced Taban Peter to drop out of secondary school, and he is trying to make up for lost time.

"You always add something or remember things that you forgot already," said the youth, who helps some of his fellow prisoners with their homework after class. "Above all, we now have something to keep us busy in this prison."

Reducing the youths' daily contact with the facility's adult population is another benefit of the prison school, according to Sergeant Major Simon Kute, the prison official in charge of juvenile protection.

Three of the seven teachers who work in the prison school are on loan from the Central Equatoria State Ministry of Education. Three are prison staff members who have volunteered their services and time, and one is an adult prisoner who is also providing instruction for free.

The prison students learn at the same

pace as their peers outside the prison's walls. "We teach them in accordance with the standard curriculum so they will be able to continue their studies once they leave the prison," said Atem Chagai, a history teacher who was assigned to the programme by the state Ministry of Education last March.

The school faces its share of shortcomings such as insufficient textbooks and classroom space for the students. Empty stomachs are often blamed by teachers for shortened attention spans before the youngsters have their first meal of the day.

But the architect of the modern-day reformatory is convinced that the school, now in its second year of operation, is a viable project for the long term.

"The prison officials are the ones running it with our support," said Ms. Nzekwe of the UNMIS Corrections Advisory Unit. "They can run it any time by themselves because they already know the network of involved partners."

Negus Hadera

Photos: Tim McKulka



Juvenile inmates at Juba Central Prison receiving basic literacy education.

Juvenile inmates at Juba Central Prison receiving basic literacy education.



City of bridges

An explosion in the number of people and vehicles on Khartoum streets over the past few years has led to a frenzy of bridge building.

Divided in two by the Blue and White Nile rivers flowing through its centre, the Sudanese capital has increased its bridges from only two in 2000 – Shambat and White Nile -- to seven.

The city's population has been growing rapidly since the country's peace agreement was signed five years ago, with people pouring in to seek business and jobs. Before the new bridges were built, vehicles often came to a dead halt on the backed-up existing structures.

"They were completely crowded and congested," said student Mohamed Adem, a Bahri area resident who had to cross the river for classes at the University of Khartoum. "Now our city has many bridges so that we can reach any place on time."

The Khartoum state government had plans to build even more, according to Azhari Mohamed El Sanusi, Director of Roads, Bridges and Drains at the Ministry of Urban Planning and Development.

"Every month there are about 4,000 new vehicles coming into the city," the director said.. "You need either to enlarge the existing service or construct a new one."

"Every month there are about 4,000 new vehicles coming into the city."

One of the more notable, new bridges is Tuti Suspension Bridge, connecting an island at the heart of the city with the mainland. Consisting primarily of farmland, Tuti Island has been identified as an area with considerable development potential.

The bridge opened the island up to vehicles and was also a turning point in the city's infrastructure development, according to the company that built it, A & A Engineering and Construction Company.

"Construction of (Tuti) suspension bridge was a new technology in the history of the construction of bridges in Sudan and

it is the first suspension bridge in Africa," said engineer and A & A Project Support Office Manager Kamela Addul Baki Omar.

She added that the bridge was "a huge investment that would boost the local economy", noting that the 210 metre structure had cost about \$14 million to build.

"All labourers and engineers were Sudanese."

Although constructing a suspension bridge entailed an entirely new technology, her company had trained and used only local manpower, the engineer said. "All labourers and engineers were Sudanese."

Previously, Tuti Island could only be reached via a small ferry, limiting the transport of people as well as produce, and pushing up the price of local commodities.

Khartoum resident Mohammed Omar noted that produce from the island could be more readily found at lower prices following completion of the bridge. "Now one can find fresh vegetables and other food stuff on the market ... coming from Tuti Island."

He also observed that assistance for island residents in cases of emergency had previously been delayed due to lack of transport. "But now they can cross the bridge within five minutes and reach their area of destination in Khartoum."

Emphasizing the island's economic importance, urban planning and development director Sanusi said his ministry planned to continue building bridges around it. "We want to continue this cycle of bridging to cross from Tuti to Bahri on the other side."

Other structures were also in the offing, Mr. Sanusi added, including Soba Bridge, which would separate heavy traffic (transport trucks) from smaller, private vehicles, making for smoother movement.

According to the Ministry of Urban Planning and Development, companies contracted by the ministry to build bridges took part in open, international tenders inviting qualified builders inside



Azhari Mohamed El Sanusi.

or outside Sudan to bid. And all of the city's new bridges were constructed using international standards of materials and equipment.

Story and photo: Hailemichael Gebrekrstos

Khartoum bridges

Bridges crossing the Blue Nile from Khartoum to Khartoum North

- MacNimir Bridge
- Blue Nile Road and Railway Bridge
- Kober Bridge
- Elmansheya Bridge

Bridges crossing the White Nile from Khartoum to Omdurman

- White Nile Bridge
- Fitayhab bridge
- Al Dabbaseen Bridge (under construction)
- Omhuraz bridge (proposed)

Bridges from Omdurman to Khartoum North

- Shambat Bridge
- Halfia bridge

Bridges to Tuti from Khartoum, Omdurman and Bahri

- Khartoum-Tuti Bridge
- Omdurman-Tuti Suspension Bridge (proposed)
- Khartoum North-Tuti Bridge (proposed)

SPLA says no to child soldiers

As a child soldier in the ranks of the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), John Okulu first served in his native Eastern Equatoria State and was later transferred to Jonglei and Unity states in Southern Sudan.

By 2008 he decided he'd had enough of military life and was demobilized along with 20 other child soldiers in Unity state. Now 18 years old, John is studying to become an auto mechanic in the Eastern Equatoria State town of Narus.

He was one of the former child soldiers who participated in the official launch of the SPLA's Child Protection Units last August in Juba. Formed in collaboration with UNMIS, UNICEF and the Southern Sudan Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Commission (SSDDRC), the units have been charged with the tasks of lobbying the SPLA to discharge all of its remaining child soldiers and refrain from

recruiting juveniles in the future.

Under an action plan signed by the SPLA and the UN in 2009, the Southern Sudanese military pledged to release all children still in its ranks within 12 months, according to UNMIS Regional Child Protection Advisor Victoria Ngali.

The 2000 UN Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict urges state parties to ensure that persons under 18 years of age are not forcibly recruited into their armed forces.

Senior SPLA officers acknowledge that errors were made during Sudan's 21-year civil war. According to SPLA Child Protection Unit Director Lt. Gen. Kuol Deim Kuol, children were absorbed into the SPLA to act as sentinels and help the soldiers prepare meals and fetch water.

"We (SPLA) have forbidden the presence of child soldiers among our army," said Lt. Gen. Kuol during a

September training of 22 SPLA child protection officers in Juba.

But UNICEF Child Protection Officer Samuel Manyok said that abuses continue. He identified six types of serious violations of children's rights still occurring within the SPLA, including the conscription and rape of juveniles.

"Some SPLA officers still use children in their barracks, not as soldiers to fight their opponents, but as body-guards, messengers and co-workers," said Mr. Manyok.

Protecting children

The non-governmental organization Save the Children - Sweden is drafting binding guidelines for military personnel on appropriate behaviour towards children affected by military operations.

The initial group of 22 SPLA child protection officers will be bolstered by an additional 75 who will be trained in various parts of Southern Sudan by Save the Children - Sweden with funding from UNICEF, and those officers will be responsible for monitoring adherence to the military's child protection policies.

According to SSDDRC official Oluke Andrew Holt, an estimated 15,500 SPLA child soldiers were demobilized in Southern Sudan, Blue Nile State and the Abyei region between 2001 and 2004 under a memorandum of understanding that the military signed with UNICEF.

Another 3,000 under-age soldiers have been demobilized since the signing of the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement, leaving an estimated 150 juveniles who are still inside the SPLA.

"I am confident that once the SPLA is declared a children-free army, there will be no further recruitment of children into the army," said Mr. Holt. "No one would want his child to work in the army, given the consequences."

UNMIS Child Protection Officer Cephus Diggs said the mission and UNICEF will continue to support the SPLA and the SSDDRC with technical advice and joint field assessments of registration, family tracing and re-unification programmes for the Southern Sudanese military's remaining child soldiers.

Story and photos:
James Sokiri



UN and SSDDRC representatives during launch of SPLA Child Protection Units, Juba.



Former child soldier John Okulu during launch of SPLA Child Protection Units.



Steering Committee that coordinated launch of SPLA Child Protection Units.

The greening of Juba

A 300 square metre patch of ground near the banks of the Nile River is host to one of the quietest corners of the bustling Southern Sudanese capital of Juba.

Juba Central Nursery is an oasis of green seedlings, flower blossoms and tree shade that offers its visitors a welcome respite from the city's ubiquitous trash, exhaust fumes and traffic jams.

The nursery is an integral part of a campaign launched by the Central Equatoria State Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry to give Juba a greener cityscape.

"We want to transform Juba into a modern city by planting trees along the roads once they are paved," said the ministry's director for forestry, Wilson Lodiong Sebit.

The nursery sells seedlings at a discounted price to encourage city residents to plant more trees in their homes. Fruit and shade tree seedlings are on offer at two Sudanese pounds each (80 US cents) while flowering plants are priced at between five and 10 Sudanese pounds (between \$2 and \$4) apiece.

Customers can choose from a wide variety of plant species that includes mango and guava trees as well as teak and mahogany.

Local residents who have taken

advantage of the discounted prices at the nursery say they are delighted with the trees and plants that now adorn their properties.

"The flowers have made my compound beautiful and distinct," said Juba resident Yoasa Alexander, who also planted guava and mango trees two years ago. "I have started enjoying the fruits of my guava tree, which has reduced my expenses on buying fruit in the market."

A \$24,000 donation from the UN Environment Programme in November 2009 enabled the nursery to distribute 335,000 seedlings free of charge to area residents, according to Mr. Sebit.

The flora of Juba and its environs suffered heavily during the country's second civil war. In the absence of any effective regulating authority, residents could cut down trees with impunity to obtain charcoal and kindling.

Another victim of the conflict was the nursery itself, which was founded during Sudan's interlude of peace in the 1970s.

The state ministry of agriculture and forestry reopened the nursery in 2006, and it is now being used to train state government forestry officials from all over Southern Sudan.

The greening of Juba campaign is also urging schools and churches to plant trees

on their premises and set an example for their students and parishioners.

"We are trying to empower children to take the lead in tree planting through the various institutions," said Mr. Sebit. "They can go to their homes knowing well the importance of trees in the community."

Most of the nursery's 40 workers are women, in part because they handle the seedlings more carefully than do men, according to its manager, Michael Lazarus Lasu.

One of the problems hampering the nursery's operations is its relatively low profile in the city.

"Many people do not know there are seedlings here," said Mr. Lasu. "This nursery has not received enough media attention, and we want the government to advertise it on *Southern Sudan Television*."

Another is transport. Many prospective customers lack a vehicle to take home any plants or seedlings they might purchase.

Nursery employees hope to eventually set up distribution points around Juba to make the seedlings more accessible to residents who wish to give their homes a leafier look.

Story and photo:
Emmanuel Kenyi

Juba Central Nursery.



A better road to Kurmuk

The town of Kurmuk has long served as a hub for UN agencies and humanitarian organizations working in Blue Nile State and nearby parts of Southern Sudan.

But when the rains come in June and wash out roads connecting Kurmuk to the rest of Blue Nile State, its 110,000 residents become accessible only by air – and even the dirt road connecting the town to the local airstrip seven kilometres away can pose a challenge to motorists.

That changed after the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) finished upgrading the airstrip road earlier this year.

Completed in July of this year, the newly graveled road reduced travel time from the airstrip to Kurmuk and enabled villagers living outside town to reach its market more easily.

The upgrading of the road is one component of a \$5.9 million project funded by the United States Agency for International Development that also includes the rehabilitation of the airstrip itself, which got underway in July. A terminal building and warehouse at the airstrip were finished last March.

Captured briefly by the Sudan People's Liberation Army in late 1989 and again in January 1997, Kurmuk suffered extensive damage to its infrastructure and basic services during the country's second civil

war.

Its legacy of the fighting has hampered economic recovery in the town and surrounding area, which are located along the international border with Ethiopia.

"The development of the region, reintegration of returnees, access to services, and the continuation of humanitarian operations have been heavily affected by the poor infrastructure in Blue Nile State," said Surendra Singh, manager of the UNOPS Blue Nile Infrastructure Project.

The lack of road access to Kurmuk during the six-month rainy season has also hindered the relief operations of agencies like the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), which assisted in the repatriation and integration of 23,000 Sudanese refugees who had fled to Ethiopia during the war.

"This resulted in serious protection gaps in terms of accessibility to basic needs such as health, education, food security and water," said UNHCR field assistant Rabab Mekki.

The infrastructure rehabilitation project has generated jobs for local residents and also enhanced the capacity for UNOPS national staff members in fields like administration, procurement, logistics and engineering.

"I have learned about road construction technology, which is very beneficial for

future use," said UNOPS laboratory technician Eltahir Alti.

Besides the short-term benefit of creating temporary employment for hundreds of workers during the life of the project, the infrastructure improvements will also facilitate quicker delivery of medical supplies and educational materials to remote areas.

It will also boost the local economy

"This will improve the quality of goods and services and the overall development of the area."

in the long term by reducing the cost of transporting merchandise, according to Mr. Singh of UNOPS.

"This will improve the quality of goods and services and the overall development of the area," he added.

Many Kurmuk residents are inclined to agree.

"When communities get more facilities, they will realize and enjoy the peace in the area and the country as a whole," said local shopkeeper Ayub Ahmed.

Photos: UNOPS

Road construction being carried out in Kurmuk under UNOPS Blue Nile Infrastructure Project framework.





Nuer traditional dancing group, Maale, launching campaign for referendum voter registration. Photo: Isaac Gideon.



The Secretary-General's referenda panel chair, Benjamin Nkapa, signing condolence book at Juba Mausoleum of John Garang de Mabior. Photo: Paul Banks.

Going all out for the referendum

The logistical and technical support provided by the United Nations on behalf of the January 2011 referendum in Southern Sudan went into overdrive during the final countdown to the start of voter registration on 15 November. UNMIS and the UN Integrated Referendum and Electoral Division (UNIRED) are working directly with the Southern Sudan Referendum Commission (SSRC) and its Juba-based Referendum Bureau (SSRB).

During a seven-day period ending on 3 November, 39 commercial flights contracted by UNIRED moved 140,000 kilogrammes of voter registration kits, books and other materials from Juba to the remaining nine state capitals across Southern Sudan. A fleet of 35 trucks transported most of the cargo to registration centres that are accessible by road, and three UNMIS helicopters ferried registration materials to designated drop

off points in parts of Southern Sudan that can only be reached by air.

UNIRED has also deployed 47 teams to cover Southern Sudan's 79 counties from existing UNMIS team sites, other UN facilities and newly established Referenda Support Bases. UN Police advisers continue to provide referendum security training to thousands of Southern Sudan Police Service officers throughout the region.

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has also appointed an independent three-member panel on the referenda in Southern Sudan and the disputed Abyei region to enhance their credibility and ensure acceptance of the voting outcomes at home and abroad.

Photos: Tim McKulka, Paul Banks and Issac Gideon

Vehicles handed over by UNIRED to SSRC in Juba. Photo: Isaac Gideon.



Referendum security training, Juba. Photo: Tim McKulka.



UNMIS assisting with delivery of referendum registration materials. Photos: Tim McKulka.



Officials at ceremony for handover of referendum materials to SSRC and SSRB in Juba on 29 October. (From left to right) US Special Envoy to Sudan Scott Gratton, USAID Senior Advisor Larry Garbet, UN Development Programme Sudan Country Director Claudio Caldarone, SSRC Chairman Mohammed Ibrahim Khalil, UNIRED Director Denis Kadima, UNMIS Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General Jasbir Lidder, SSRC Head of Operations Awad Taha (behind). Photo: Paul Banks.



The Secretary-General's referenda panel meeting with Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS) President Salva Kiir Mayardit. From left: Mr Antonio Monteiro (former Foreign Minister of Portugal), GOSS President Gen. Salva Kiir Mayardit and Mr Bhojraj Pokharel (former Chair of Nepal Election Commission). Photo: Paul Banks.

Like oil and water

Standing in the floodlights on a luminous, white stage, a young woman with straightened black hair and glasses held the full attention of her audience in Bahri, Khartoum.

Reciting her poetry through a microphone in a melodious tone at the Bait Al-Finooon (The House of Art) cultural centre, Sara Elhassan turned her Sudanese-American identity into metaphors of multiculturalism.

"I am a product of freedom of speech, of direct eye contact," Ms. Elhassan's poem read, "I am a product of discretion, of *sutra*, of '*nazzili 'einik di ya gahra*' (discretion, 'lower your gaze')."

To a round of applause from the audience of fashionable, young Sudanese, expatriates, veiled women and older men in traditional *jallabiyas* (robes), the poem concluded, "I am a product of oil and water... and yet, I must mix."

Much of the poetry at Khartoum's open mic nights – live shows where the audience is invited to perform after signing up with the host – addressed the question of identity, said one of the organizers, Enas Suleiman.

While the majority of poets were Sudanese who had lived abroad and performed in English, the use of any language is encouraged.

"I also lived abroad for 11 years and I am finally able to connect to my roots," Ms. Suleiman remarked, while drinking juice in a Khartoum café. "I am happy to give something back to our community."

Along with Mustafa Khogali, she had been tasked by her friend Sulafa Khalid in January 2010 to keep the open mic running. It was the brainchild of poet Ms. Khalid, who was continuing her studies in the United States.

The monthly series had become increasingly popular over its one year of existence, co-organizer and host Mr. Khogali said. The first events at Khartoum's Universal Café were attended by some 20 listeners, while currently they draw about 100. The Khartoum open mic Facebook fan base has grown to over 2,600 people.

One of its biggest achievements was that poets brought their families along, making the event a true community gathering. "The youngest performer so far was six years old and the oldest sixty plus," Mr. Khogali said.

As more performers were signing up each time and the event had to end by 11.00 p.m., open mic was split into two. Alternating on a bi-weekly schedule, Spoken Word and Poetry (SWAP) features

writers, while the Music, Arts and Culture (MAC) is a forum for musicians.

"These people are thirsty for a stage," young guitarist and lyricist Bonez (stage name) said at an October MAC event, referring to the lack of performance opportunities in Sudan. His long-time friend and occasional stage partner Sporadic (stage name) added "The talent is there but getting it to the people was difficult."

Make it positive

While the organizers repeated that everyone was welcome to perform and the doors were open, Mr. Khogali said there were some rules.

The use of foul language was forbidden, and outright political messages were discouraged or it was suggested that they be framed in a positive way.

"If you have something bad to say about the NCP (National Congress Party), say something good about the SPLM (Sudanese People's Liberation Movement) instead," the host said as an example.

With Sudan's self-determination referendum looming around the corner, Mr. Khogali acknowledged that poets were increasingly voicing political messages.

"We cannot separate community and politics," he said.

The biggest applause at the late October SWAP was received by a reflection on separation and unity. University student, writer and film maker Ahmed Mahmoud confessed in his poem "Otherlogy" his lack of in-depth knowledge of Southern Sudanese culture.

"I learned more about Greek mythology than Dinka mythology / and oh, the ghost of Che follows me, / but I hardly know of any southern prodigy," the poem read.

"People keep saying unity is cool but don't take the time to get to know the other people," Mr. Mahmoud commented. "There is a lack of understanding of southern culture," he said, adding that it was only on the day of open mic he learned to say "thank you" in the Dinka tongue.



Young Sudanese poets performing at Spoken Word and Poetry event in Bahri, Khartoum.

Story: Eszter Farkas
Photos: Paul Banks

Coming events

Khartoum

The Walls Talk: The ROOTS Group of students and graduates of the College of Music and Drama improvise on the basis of ancient stories related by the walls of the National Museum on 7 December at the museum on Nile Street.

Open mic nights: Showcase your talent at Khartoum's open mic nights at Bait Al-Finooon in Bahri. Sing some tunes on 3 December for Music, Arts and Culture night and have a poem ready for Spoken Word and Poetry night on 17 December. Entry fee: SDG 5, free for performers.

Juba

European Film Festival: Watch a selection of recently produced comedies and dramas from nine European countries at the film festival between 29 November and 3 December at the University of Juba. Website: http://ec.europa.eu/delegations/delsdn/en/eufilm/Index_Film.htm

News Briefs

UNSG Ban: Outstanding issues need quick solution

The next months were critical for safeguarding achievements made since the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), UN Secretary-General (SG) said in his latest report on Sudan, covering the period from 19 July to 30 September.

Mr. Ban warned that failure to meet the 9 January 2011 deadline prescribed by the CPA for holding the referenda in Southern Sudan and the Abyei area could have severe consequences. He called on the national government of Sudan and the regional government of Southern Sudan to redouble their efforts to ensure the referenda occur on time.

As part of the ongoing technical and logistical support that is being provided to the Southern Sudan Referendum Commission, the report said the United Nations was deploying an additional 596 security, logistics and technical personnel to UNMIS.

Mr. Ban identified an urgent need to establish the Abyei Area Referendum Commission and cautioned that the "continued lack of progress is exacerbating an already tense and volatile situation" in that part of the country. Mr. Ban called upon the CPA parties to make immediate progress on issues including wealth sharing, access to water and grazing land, and residence and property ownership.

The report drew attention to the upcoming popular consultations in Blue Nile and Southern Kordofan states as critical milestones in the implementation of the CPA and Sudan's democratic transformation.

The report also expressed concern about the delay in border demarcation and urged the parties to the CPA to resolve political questions that would enable technical bodies to complete their tasks.

Referendum materials handed over in Khartoum and Juba

The international community presented voter registration kits, registration training books and other materials to Sudanese referendum authorities in Juba and Khartoum last month.

To support voter registration in North Sudan, the UN Integrated Referendum and Electoral Division (UNIRED) and International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) delivered approximately 3,700 registration books and 3,800 training kits to the Southern Sudan Referendum Commission at the National Elections Commission warehouse in southern Khartoum on 30 October.

On the previous day, UNIRED and IFES handed over 3,160 registration kits to the Juba-based Southern Sudan Referendum Bureau along with 29,106 voter registration books, 5,918 banners and other materials. Registration of eligible voters for the Southern Sudan referendum commenced throughout the country on 15 November and is scheduled to end on 1 December.

Addressing the handover ceremony in the national capital, United States Special Envoy to Sudan Scott Gration commended the international community and Sudanese authorities for their team effort, adding that the delivery of the materials was an important step towards full implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement.

Gressly: UN to transport referendum materials, personnel

The United Nations will help the Southern Sudan Referendum Commission deliver 120 tons of equipment and materials ahead of next year's self-determination referendum, UNMIS Regional Coordinator for Southern Sudan David Gressly said on 19 October at a press conference in Juba.

The mission's 24 helicopters in Southern Sudan will be used to transport personnel, equipment and referendum material, Mr. Gressly said. UN Police advisers are providing



referendum security training to thousands of Southern Sudanese Police Service officers who shall be primarily responsible for securing polling centres and ballot boxes during the seven-day poll scheduled to start on 9 January 2011.

Mr. Gressly noted that the mission was in the process of establishing Referenda Support Bases throughout the 10 southern states to support county-level referendum sub-committees with preparations for the vote.

Recognition for the Southern Sudan Prisons Service and UNMIS

UNMIS and the Southern Sudan Prisons Service received a prestigious management and staff training award from the International Corrections and Prisons Association (ICPA) at the second United Nations International Conference on Corrections in Peacekeeping Settings in the Belgian city of Ghent last month.

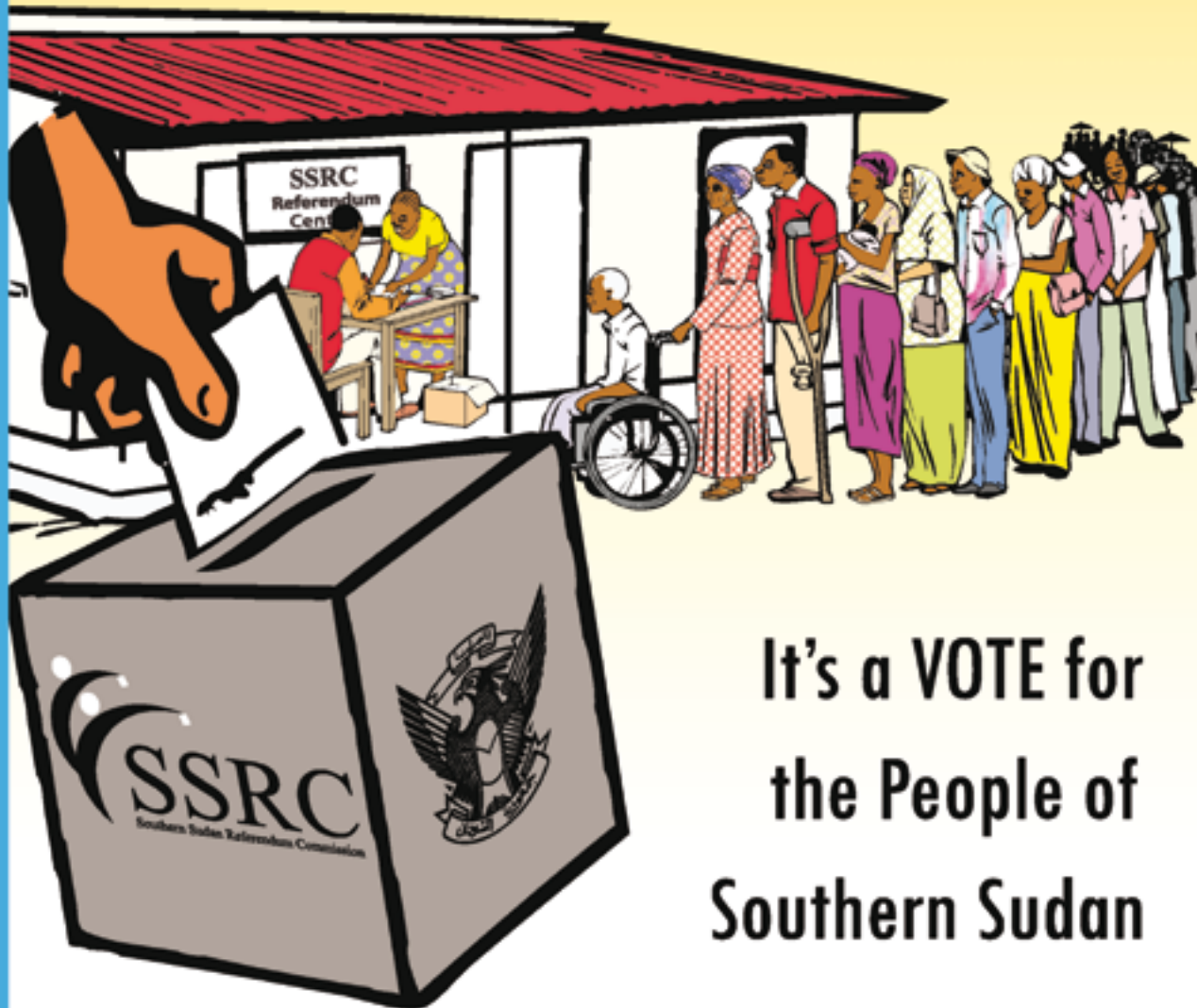
Robert Leggat of the UNMIS Corrections Advisory Unit for Southern Sudan accepted the award and thanked the UN Office on Drugs and Crime, Canada's International Centre for Criminal Law Reform and various donors for their support of efforts to strengthen the Prisons Service.

"It's the first award won by the Prisons Service," noted Mr. Leggat. "That gives it international recognition for the reforms the Service is trying to undertake with the assistance of UNMIS."

Over 500 participants from 80 countries attended the event, which was held in conjunction with the ICPA's annual conference.



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