

Uncover Sudan - Voter Registration

TRAILER

Uncover Sudan is a series of programs that showcases the work of the United Nations and its partners to the comprehensive peace agreement. Voter registration is underway across Sudan ahead of the country's first presidential and legislative elections in nearly a quarter of a century. The process will run for a month ahead of the scheduled April 2010 general elections.

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COMMENTARY

Voter registration is underway across Sudan ahead of the country's first presidential and legislative elections in nearly a quarter of a century. The process will run for a month ahead of the scheduled April 2010 general elections. The general elections will be the first in Sudan since 1986, three years before a bloodless military coup that brought President Omar Al- Bashir 's government into power.

The first vice- president of the Republic of Sudan and the president of the government of Southern Sudan, Salvar Kiir, called on all people of voting age to take the process seriously and register to vote.

ITV, Salve Kiir, Southern Sudanese President (English)

"We have struggled for long to bring about the democracy in our country. The forth coming general elections will be a great achievement in our continued march towards real democratic transformation in our country."

COMMENTARY

The comprehensive peace deal signed in 2005, ended one of Africa's longest running civil wars between the North and Southern Sudan. As a result only a few states of the South have ever experienced the election process.

ITV, Peter Santino, Student (English)

“In the election we are going to vote for people who can bring for us change because we have been suffering for a long time. Since God created the earth or this country, we have been suffering. There is no good leadership in our country. There is no good administration. We have died a lot, so we need to abolish all those things, which were happening in the past. There is slavery in this country. There is cheating and all this ... so with this elections we can bring change.”

COMMENTARY

Susana is 24, and a mother of two. This is the first time she is going to vote.

ITV, Susana Erestos (Native)

‘I am voting because it is going to help me express my rights.’

COMMENTARY

Across the country registration centres are open for business, but very few residents are coming out to register. Officials and voters blame the poor attendance on lack of information on the location of the centers and how to get registered.

At this registration centre, in Khartoum's Al -Qawit area, we caught up with a few residents braving the harsh sun to get registered. 60 year- old Abdul Rahman Mohammed

is an ex- employee of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He remembers voting in the 1986 elections and has a message for young voters.

ITV, Abdul Rahman Mohammed, Ex- employee of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (English)

“You are not going to live for long, you know. S people who are youth ...they should be more concerned about this. This will shape the future for the next years. ‘

COMMENTARY

As the days go by, the numbers are slowly increasing. With various political parties encouraging their supporters to come out and get registered.’

ITV, Disarah Abdul Wahab (Arabic)

“I registered and voted in 1986 during the general elections. These elections are important. People should look forward to a better future for Sudan, through national unity and a peaceful life for the civilians.’

COMMENTARY

For over 20 years the people of Sudan have not been able to decide on their leaders. A democratic election process is one of the benchmarks of the comprehensive peace agreement, signed between the National Congress Party and the Sudan’s People Liberation Movement.

ITV, Mukhtar Al-Assam, Representative, National Elections Commission (English)

“We have registered right now in this centre more than 1600, which is equivalent to about 400 a day. We were hoping to register only 200 a day but now we are 100% more than our expectations. The same is true about Darfur and Southern Sudan, and we are quite hopeful that by the end of this month, we will have registered the majority of Sudanese who are eligible to register for t his election.’

COMMENTARY

The head of the United Nations Mission Sudan, Ashraf Qazi, visited this registration centre to have a first hand view of how the process was going.

ITV, Ashraf Qazi, Special Representative to the Secretary General, UNMIS (English)

‘This voter registration period of course is crucial, because this enables people to vote. People have the right to vote but without being registered they will not be able to vote. So this registration process which is expected to last throughout November and possibly go out until December a bit is a very crucial initiation of the electoral process.’

COMMENTARY

The United Nations Mission in Sudan and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), are supporting the National Elections Commission with the largest ever delivery of voter registration materials to inaccessible and remote locations in Sudan. For many young people in Sudan, next year’s elections will be the first opportunity to exercise their right to vote.

Nineteen-year-old Ismail Mohammed, a student, is excited to be a part of the process.

ITV, Ismail Mohammed, Student (Arabic)

‘I am nineteen years old and this will be my first tie to vote. It’s a feeling I cannot express, I am really looking forward to it.’

COMMENTARY

Sudan is on the road to democratic transformation, with voter registration being a step in the right direction. But more work needs to be done to educate the population on the different processes involved, to insure that the elections are carried out in a free and fair manner, that truly represents the choice of the Sudanese people.’

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