



STATUS OF THE ELECTORAL PROCESS IN SUDAN – CONTINUED CONCERNS OVER THE ELECTORAL ENVIRONMENT AND PREPARATIONS; THE NATIONAL ELECTIONS COMMISSION MUST ACT IMMEDIATELY TO ACCREDIT OBSERVERS AND SPEED PREPARATIONS FOR VOTER REGISTRATION

This statement summarizes the observations of the Carter Center’s election observation mission in Sudan from August – October 2009 and follows public statements released on May 7 and Aug. 20, 2009. Further to the Center’s earlier reports and recommendations, these additional observations are provided in the hope of supporting and improving the administration of Sudan’s electoral process.

Overall electoral environment

The Center welcomes the Government of Sudan’s September 15 decision to lift pre-press censorship of the printed media. However, the National Congress Party and the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement must renew attempts to reach agreement on a number of key implementation issues in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, including revision of the National Security Forces Act and referendum legislation necessary for Southern Sudan and Abyei.

In addition, other steps are necessary to ensure that a genuinely inclusive electoral environment is created. In particular, the Center is very concerned about continuing reports of harassment of observers and political party and civil society activity, including instances involving some of the Center’s own international observers in Kassala, Eastern Sudan, as well as domestic election observation training activities supported by the Center in the same state.

The freedom of individuals, civil society organizations, and political parties to operate without fear or restriction is a constitutional right that must be respected.¹ In both Northern and Southern Sudan, governments at all levels must ensure that the rights and fundamental freedoms of association, assembly, and speech are fully protected and effectively exercised. These responsibilities extend to Sudanese authorities in the National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS), the Humanitarian Aid Commission (HAC), the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Sudan People’s Liberation Army (SPLA).

¹ Article 40, Section 1, Interim National Constitution of the Republic of the Sudan, 2005.

and the steps that follow registration. The NEC and the state elections committees must make every effort to inform citizens of the locations and schedules of voter registration centers, and where centers are mobile, publicize the routes, places, and contingency measures in place for a comprehensive registration process. Ensuring that there is transparency in decision-making for citizens⁴ and timely access to information is a fundamental obligation of the governments and

economic opportunity; preventing diseases; improving mental health care; and teaching farmers to increase crop production. The Carter Center began working in Sudan in 1986 on the Sasakawa-Global 2000 agricultural project and for more than 20 years its health and peace programs have focused on improving health and preventing and resolving conflicts in Sudan. Please visit www.cartercenter.org to learn more about The Carter Center.