



SUDAN DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION

Breaking the cycle of poverty through community based development



A polling center in South Sudan



Vermont Sudanese vote in referendum



Sudanese from Burlington, VT voted in DC

SUDEF Newsletter

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An historic referendum to vote on independence for South Sudan is taking place this week. SUDEF's founder and President Abraham Awolich just returned from Washington DC where he coordinated registration of Sudanese living in the United States to vote.

Reflection on voting on referendum from Abraham Awolich

"It was a wonderful feeling to cast my ballot! It was a very emotional moment. I prayed to God before leaving for Washington DC and asked, "God, do not let anything happen to me before I vote." This vote is bigger than life itself for me and while I was voting I remembered my Dad who died and my brother who was killed in the battlefield. I also



remembered my stepsister who was kidnapped during the war and was in captivity for five years. Both she and her daughter from her captor voted yesterday

and so did my sister. All the hardships that we came through were all present in the moment I voted and I just cannot believe this day has finally come. I continue to pray to the Lord to make this exercise successful and peaceful and prepare us for a new country. We request that our American friends also pray for a peaceful transition in Sudan and stand with us as their support will be needed now more than ever before to build a new country. SUDEF's work is more relevant now that we know a new country will be created and the chances for lasting peace are real." Abraham Awolich

Historic Referendum to vote on independence for South Sudan taking place across the world

The referendum vote being held this week will determine the independence of South Sudan and begin a new era for this war stricken country. Voters throughout the country are turning out for this long awaited moment to declare South Sudan an independent state. For the most part voting has been peaceful throughout South Sudan. Thus far there have been only some minor outbreaks of violence between Misseria and Dinka Ngok in the Abyei border region.

Here in the United States there were thousands of Southern Sudanese eager to have a voice in their countries future. SUDEF's President Abraham Awolich



went to Washington DC to be a part of a team of Sudanese here in the United States registering voters from South Sudan to vote. He was in Washington DC for 4 weeks working round the

clock to register as many Sudanese as possible for this historic vote.

After returning to Vermont in early December, Abraham and several car loads of Sudanese from the Burlington,

Vermont area returned to Washington D.C. this past weekend and on Sunday, January 9, 2011 cast their votes. It was a powerful and long awaited moment for each of these men.

From Genocide to Independence

The people of Southern Sudan have endured more than five decades of civil war, which killed millions of Sudanese and displaced millions more living in refugee camps or in exile in Kenya, Uganda, Egypt and other surrounding African countries. Conditions in Southern Sudan today are extremely difficult. There has been some improvement since 2005 when South Sudan and the government of Sudan in the north signed a Comprehensive Peace Agreement. Since 2005 the Southern Sudanese have put together local government and agencies and have been able to make some modest improvements to the infrastructure, most noticeably in new roads, communications and the airport in Southern Sudan. There have been many jobs created by the rebuilding process but for the most part these jobs are going to people from Uganda and other surrounding countries due to the lack of skills and tradespeople within the Sudanese population. Additionally, South Sudan has struggled these past five years to attract the necessary investment and aid needed to rebuild a country that was so thoroughly devastated from decades of war.

Where we are today and what is next!

We have had a busy and productive winter thus far. We held several screenings of the film REBUILDING HOPE, one in New York City and another at the Big Picture Theater in Waitsfield, VT. Both of these events brought old and new friends and supporters to SUDEF. These events along with our year-end fund raising campaign were a great success. SUDEF is a locally run, community supported non-profit and this past year, which was SUDEF's first full year of operation, we raised over \$39,000. **This has kept the Kalthok Clinic operational and treating more than 12,000 Sudanese this past year alone.** Thank you everyone for your amazing generosity and help. These dollars will also support the start of our Maternal and Child Health Unit which is currently underway. Abraham will be traveling to South Sudan next week to put together the first stages for

construction of the new Maternal and Child Health Unit at our Kalthok Clinic.

We did this with the help and support of all of you, people who care deeply about the lives of the Southern Sudanese and who want to help them rebuild their lives and create a productive and peaceful nation. This coming year SUDEF's goal is to raise \$100,000 so we start SUDEF's first Community Vocational and Adult Education Training Center. The future is looking good for South Sudan, they are likely to become an independent nation which will bring foreign dollars and investment more readily to South Sudan. This makes SUDEF's programs more important than ever. Without adequate training and skill development the Southern Sudanese will remain in poverty and left out of the economic opportunities taking place in Southern Sudan. Many of the jobs needed to rebuild the country will go elsewhere unless the Sudanese learn the trades and skills needed to guide their own future. It is our mission to create opportunities for the people of South Sudan that allow them to be a part of this renaissance.

Please consider making a donation to the Sudan Development Foundation to celebrate the historic referendum for independence taking place this week. With your continued help we can achieve our fundraising goals for 2011 and continue to bring real change and opportunity to the people of Southern Sudan.

All donations should be made out to SUDEF and sent to:

**Sudan Development Foundation
139 Elmwood Avenue
Burlington, VT 05401**

Donate by credit card using PayPal at www.sudef.org.

To book a speaker for our Speakers Tour:

Southern Sudan: From Genocide to Independence

Or, to book a screening of the documentary film

Rebuilding Hope please contact us at:

info@sudef.org - (802) 264-4887

Thank you again for all you have done to improve the lives of the people of Southern Sudan.

“There is nothing greater than the feeling of being a part of making someone's life better and being able to say that there was a call to serve humanity and I was able to answer that call.”