

Kajo Keji Leaders' Forum

25-27 January, 2010



Hosted by the Ecumenical Training Center, Kajo Keji

Sponsored by IKV Pax Christi through the request of Rt. Rev. Bishop Anthony Poggo, Episcopal Church of Sudan-Kajo Keji Diocese

Facilitated by: RECONCILE International and IKV Pax Christi



INTRODUCTION

In 2005, the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) was signed between the Sudanese ruling National Congress Party (NCP) in the North and the former rebel Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) from the South. The signing of the CPA brought an end to Africa's longest-running civil war, which killed over 2 million people and displaced countless others. The CPA stipulates steps to be taken to transform the country from a war-torn region to a peaceful and democratic society. These steps include national elections and a referendum for southern Sudanese self-determination and possible secession from the North. 2010 approaches as a crucial year for Sudan. The country is to hold its first national multi-party democratic elections in over two decades, and southern Sudan will be confronted by the referendum on self-determination less than a year later. For these reasons civic education, specifically targeting the two voting periods, is more important than ever. By the invitation of Rt. Rev. Anthony Poggo—Bishop of the Episcopal Church of Sudan Kajo Keji Diocese—and through the generous sponsorship of IKV Pax Christi, a forum was conducted for the political leaders of the county. The event was facilitated by the Resource Centre for Civil Leadership (RECONCILE) Executive Director, Rev. Peter Tibi, and two members of IKV Pax Christi, Mr. John Ashworth and Mr. Andrea Minalla.

The event was entitled the Kajo Keji Leaders' Forum. Participants were largely from Kajo Keji county, and included 52 political leaders, church leaders, and aspirants for the upcoming elections in April. Additionally, the Forum was honored to host the Deputy Governor of Central Equatoria State, Mr. Manase Lomole Waya, and the Commissioner of Kajo Keji County, Mr. Muki Batali Buli.

The Forum was split into three primary focuses: context analysis, elections procedures, and the creation of a code of conduct. These three focuses were used as the primary guidelines for conducting the seminar.

Day 1

The first day of the Forum started with an address by the Bishop of the ECS Kajo Keji Diocese. He thanked the facilitators and participants for making the event possible, and stressed the importance of making sure community leaders have a proper understanding of the election process before the upcoming elections. The Kajo Keji County Commissioner then officially opened the event. He additionally stated that these elections are to be the first than most people in the room had ever voted in, and it is for this reason that functions such as the one he just opened were so important. The facilitators then introduced themselves, and the Forum began.



Reasoning for the Forum

Mr. Minalla started the Forum by asking the participants why they had come to the event. Responses were numerous and included the following:

- To learn about leadership qualities.
- To learn about government and political systems.
- To learn the proper procedures of, tools of, and how to conduct oneself during a free and fair democratic election.
- To create unity among leaders ultimately interested in a common goal.
- To equip oneself to speak knowledgeably about the upcoming elections to the people of the community.

After the participants expressed their reasoning for attending the Forum, Mr. Ashworth assured the participants that their expectations were very much in line with what was planned.

Context Analysis

A great portion of the first day was devoted to a context analysis—both of Kajo Keji and the country of Sudan as a whole. The context analysis was run by Mr. Ashworth. He started out the segment by inquiring as to how many of the participants had actually read the CPA, the Interim Sudanese Constitution, the Southern Sudanese Interim Constitution, or the National Election Act of 2008. Of all those present, only approximately a dozen had read the documents. Mr. Ashworth explained that although

the number looks low, it is a fairly common representation of the nation as a whole. He then told the participants that the documents that were just mentioned were available for distribution at the Forum. The documents were later distributed to the participants.

Mr. Ashworth then proceeded to try to compile a thorough analysis of the situation in Kajo Keji. To do this, he asked the participants for their thoughts on the political situation in the area. Many responses were given, but they all circled around a few general themes:

- 1) General confusion. Observations of confusion by the general population regarding elections, and disconnect between the average citizen and political leaders were both expressed. It was admitted that many people have little understanding of government and political institutions, including the election process. Dissemination of relevant information from political leaders to the general population can be slow or non-existent, for various reasons.
- 2) Single-party dominance. The SPLM has a monopoly on political power in the Kajo Keji area. This dominance creates fear among possible opposition candidates, especially with the weight of the military behind the ruling party. It was mentioned that voters may also feel a degree of fear or intimidation simply through the presence of such a strong military wing of the ruling party.
- 3) Confusion and anger of political aspirants. Aside from the general public, political aspirants were additionally confused by the nomination process, especially within the SPLM. Nominations and application denials on the part of the SPLM have created some resentment within the party. A need for an intra-party conflict resolution mechanism was expressed. Independent candidacy was thought of as a popular option, and it became a big topic of discussion.

Mr. Ashworth elaborated upon the points that were expressed. Firstly, he underscored the seriousness of the above-mentioned problems, stating, “If there is a perception of a problem, then there is a problem, even if the perception is wrong.” He went on to express that it



is not unreasonable to believe that political leaders may not have been properly trained for transition into a democratic society. This, in part, has led to the dangers of “ethnic politics.” Love and hate for politicians could merely surface due to tribal and regional reasons, instead of the quality of policy positions. The region must be careful not to splinter through ethnic divides. Transparency, both at the local and national levels, is necessary to prevent and respond to the problems mentioned.

Next, Mr. Ashworth used his years of experience in Sudan, as well as his contact with numerous sources, to present a context analysis of Sudan as a whole. First, he mentioned his

observations concerning the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), arguing that the document's failure to attend to all Sudanese parties, conflicts, and grievances between the signatories makes it neither *comprehensive*, *peace*, or an *agreement*. Second, he addressed the struggle of the SPLM to transition from a rebel movement to a democratic political party—drawing comparisons to the South African ANC party, which took many years to transition, and is still struggling to do so. Third, Mr. Ashworth discussed three key provisions of the CPA: the disputed national census, the delayed national elections, and the referendum on southern self-determination. The sequence of events pertaining to these provisions can be discouraging, and a return to war was described as a real possibility. A few potential scenarios for such a war were presented. Finally, Mr. Ashworth acknowledged complications that have arisen out of inter-ethnic conflict, and the threatening evolution these conflicts seem to be going through in recent months.

Discussion of Context Analysis

At the conclusion of Mr. Ashworth's facilitation of the context analyses, Mr. Minalla stated, "We each have a duty and responsibility. Each of us has a duty to perform." He then led a response/discussion time for the participants. Again, many concerns were voiced by the participants about the upcoming national elections and the subsequent run-up to the referendum. One of the participants stated that the SPLM was still working on a need-to-know basis using a military mindset. He said that this was necessary during the war, but is detrimental for the transformation into a democratic party. However, another participant argued that if the SPLM tried to transition too quickly, it would not be prepared for a war. He stated that the SPLM/A *must* be prepared for war. A third participant mentioned the SPLM presidential candidate nomination could be a pro-secession move amidst propaganda that the South is not ready for independence. Mr. Ashworth added to this debate, stating that at one point the SPLM looked to have a very promising political mandate through the late Dr. John Garang. Northerners could have rallied around Dr. Garang, and it is possible he could have defeated President Bashir in the upcoming elections, but now the future of the South and the SPLM are more uncertain than ever. He stated that it is remotely possible that the SPLM candidate could win the national presidency, which would help the referendum, but that the whole situation must be approached carefully and realistically. There are definite ethnic tensions within the South that must be dealt with, but the international community cannot look at southern secession as a looming disaster. Mr. Minalla then pressed the group to start addressing the political needs from the roots-up: "We must open our eyes to determine our destiny...the leadership in Kajo Keji can set an example."



Worldwide Election Comparisons

Mr. Ashworth then began a forum segment comparing the upcoming elections in Sudan to past elections elsewhere in the world. The following is a list of some of the worldwide elections used as examples:

1. USA Presidential Election 2000: The American presidential election Bush v. Gore was used to explain that there can be problems in the election process, even in what is arguably the most advanced democracy in the world. Accusations of nepotism and registration biases surfaced, and the outcome of the vote was highly disputed. However, when the election made it all the way to the Supreme Court and a decision was made, the result was ultimately respected. In the end, the rule of law was followed, offering a good example for possible tense elections in Sudan.
2. Kenya of the 1990s: Elections here were decidedly peaceful, free, and fair, but only after problems of “flushing out” some ethnic groups from certain areas. This is a possible situation Sudan could find itself in.
3. The Recent Kenya and Zimbabwe Situations: Both Kenya and Zimbabwe faced disagreement concerning who had won presidential elections, and in both countries the ultimate losers had probably won in reality. Unlike in the United States, the rule of law did not take precedence; conflict ensued, and uneasy power-sharing agreements were eventually made in both countries. At this point, Mr. Ashworth explained the difference between a *competitive democracy* based purely on mathematics, and a *consensual democracy* that could lead to the sharing of power. He stated that African states seem to run into issues when attempting *competitive democracy*, which can sometimes lead to intense ethnic politics. Mr. Ashworth suggested, however, that perhaps peace should be given more importance than mathematics. Northern Ireland was able to eventually come to peaceful terms through a type of *consensual democracy*. Sudan may find itself in a comparable situation in which it will need to make a similar choice.
4. South Africa: The country of South Africa offers good and bad examples. South Africans were incredibly excited to vote, and stood in lines for hours to do so. The transition from the white government to the ANC was relatively peaceful as well. However, South Africa had more time to prepare for elections. Also, it should be noted that the change in economic power did not necessarily correlate with the change in political power. Although the black ANC had won the elections, whites still controlled most of the economy. Southern Sudan could potentially see a similar situation in the near future.

Mr. Ashworth then asked for reactions to the preceding examples. One participant drew a comparison between South Africa and southern Sudan, stating that the South of Sudan does not have a solid economy, and that the North may continue to hold economic power in the South, even after a possible secession. Another participant asked how ethnic politics could be avoided.

Mr. Ashworth responded that we should all strive to vote based on policy, not ethnicity, and should work for equality once elected to office. One other participant took this opportunity to speak: “This forum is so very important. We must have one spirit, one heart, one nation.”

Day 2

The second day of the Forum started with a welcome to the new participants. The Bishop read Colossians 3 from the Bible, stating that during this workshop, we must look to things above, and not earthly things. Shortly after the opening, the Deputy Governor of Central Equatoria made an entrance, and he was welcomed as well. Mr. Minalla commenced a short review of the previous day. Next, Rev. Tibi briefly explained the work of RECONCILE and the programs it has conducted as civic education in the run-up to the elections. He then introduced a timetable of the elections, which was also a distributed handout. Another handout, a guide to the upcoming elections, was also distributed.

Why Elections?

In this segment of the Forum, Rev. Tibi explained why elections are pursued in Sudan. He explained that in the past, “we have been fighting with bullets. We now must fight with ballots.” He continued to explain why elections are held in the first place. He stated that elections connect citizens to the political process and government. Elections also help to safeguard democratic freedoms by providing a means for the people to change their leadership and providing government accountability. But in order for elections to accomplish their intentions, the election process must be free and fair; meaning the existence of an impartial electoral commission, free choice for voters, adequate security, equal access to media for candidates, and other mechanisms contributing to a level playing field.

Why Elections are Important in Sudan

Rev. Tibi then explained why elections are exceptionally important in Sudan. Firstly, the elections and referendum are a requirement as prescribed by the Comprehensive Peace



Agreement and the Interim Constitution. The national elections have been delayed multiple times now, but the referendum cannot be delayed a single day. These upcoming elections and the referendum are a way to close the CPA and realize the potential for democratic transformation of society.

At this point, Rev. Tibi asked if anyone had comments or questions. A couple participant expressed concern over what they viewed as elections that are neither fair nor free. Another participant raised doubts over the fact that the signatory parties of the CPA have not made key border and resource agreements ahead of elections. Other

participants repeated their discouragement over the nomination process, especially on behalf of the SPLM. At the end of the commenting, Mr. Minalla stated that, “Unfortunately, just as within the country as a whole, many of these grievances are coming to the forefront of discussion at a time that may be too late.”

Causes of Election-Related Violence

Next, the participants were split into five groups. Each group was asked to discuss what they thought some of the causes of violence might be during the election process: before, during, and after elections. They were also asked to brainstorm some possible preventative solutions to these causes. Each group presented what they discussed, which has been compiled into a chart below.

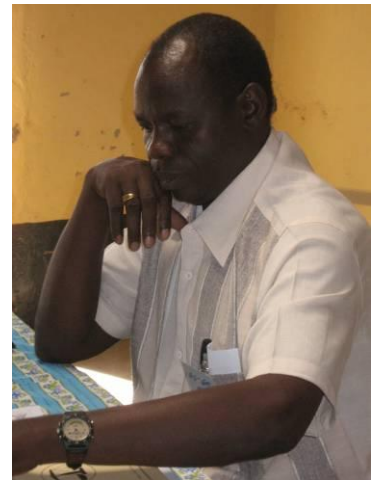
Possible Sources/Causes of Election-Related Violence		
Negative mindsets/attitudes	Election panic	Personality attacks and insults among candidates
Incitement of violence by candidates	Election malpractice/mismanagement by governing institutions and political parties/candidates	Strained relationships during the election process
Intra-party strains due to nominations, lack of party unity	Lack of proper security	Voter intimidation
Historical grievances	Nepotism	Tribalism, racism, ethnic biases
Lack of democratic experience as a whole	Lack of inclusiveness of possible candidates	Poor CPA implementation
Unequal access to media during campaigning	Unwillingness to accept election results	Lack of voter/civic education
Ignorance of government and government processes	Election rigging	Constitutional violations
Candidate/party selfishness	Bribery	Political mistrust
Fear	Ethnic political domination	Media censorship
Media misinterpretation	Lack of pre-election agreements (eg. border demarcation)	Unhealed wounds of trauma
Unequal distribution of services	Delayed announcement of results	General electorate misunderstandings
Possible Preventative Solutions		
Proper security	Responsible campaigning	Unity within parties
Continuous political dialogue	Efficient and effective election monitoring	Fair distribution of political seats/positions
Inclusiveness of possible candidates	Proper and timely elections	Proper implementation of CPA

Adequate levels of civic/voter education	Adequate access to counseling (both mental and spiritual)	Creation of post-election social activities
Focus on common destiny (referendum)	Accurate information concerning candidates and processes	Strong but neutral civil society and church presence
Empowerment of women and youth in education and peace processes	Acceptance of election results	Reconciliation mechanism in place for post-election period
Respect for rule of law	Equal access to media during campaigning	Transparency in election process
Timely announcement of results		

After the groups presented their thoughts, Rev. Tibi expressed his own thoughts concerning possible election violence, reflecting much of what the Forum participants presented.

Mock Election Nominations

It was announced to the participants of the Forum that there would be “mock elections” conducted the following day. Nominations for these elections then took place. Candidates from each of two hypothetical parties (Liberal and Labor) were nominated to run for the office of President, Governor, and Member of Parliament (MP).



Day 3

The third and final day was opened by the Bishop, who read Jeremiah 1:1 from the Bible. He stated that as leaders, we must be the salt and light of this earth. We have a responsibility—there is currently peace, but we must bring more.

As an additional note, the State Investment Minister joined the participants for the final day of the Forum.

Election Process Cont.

After the Bishop had finished, Rev. Tibi proceeded to address a couple more items regarding the election process. First, he reiterated some of the possible offences and needs related to the elections. He mentioned that corruption and bribery must be avoided, campaigning must be fair, and there must be proper security and monitoring throughout the entirety of the election process.

Next, Rev. Tibi presented information about the 8-day voting week itself. Unfortunately, there is still much confusion over the actual balloting procedure, such as where to vote and what the ballots will look like. Balloting may be further confused by the sheer number of elected positions that need to be voted on, especially in the South. At this point, Rev. Tibi did state that voters had rights, and he explained what some of these rights were.

Mock Elections

Mock elections were held during the final hours of the Forum. As was stated above, nominations for the positions up for election were made on the second day of the Forum. The facilitators acted as election officials and international observers. The participants went through the process in its entirety—from voter registration, to campaigning, to voting, to the counting of ballots, to the official announcement of results. The “international observers” declared the elections free and fair, and the participants applauded.

Drafting of a Code of Conduct

After the conclusion of comments concerning the election process, the Forum drafted a code of conduct. First, the group brainstormed ideas pertaining to how, as candidates and political leaders, they should conduct themselves throughout the election process. Mr. Minalla wrote the ideas down in two categories: actions to be avoided and actions to be taken. After the brainstorming session, a small group of participants joined the RECONCILE Documentation Officer to form the ideas into a drafted Code of Conduct. All the participants then reconvened and the draft was read out loud. The Forum then made suggestions and revisions to the document. The final Code of Conduct can be found attached to the end of this report.



Closing Ceremony

The Forum was closed with a series of speeches by Rev. Tibi, Mr. Minalla, the Bishop of the ECS Diocese of Kajo Keji, the Kajo Keji County Commissioner, and the Deputy Governor of Central Equatoria State. There was much praise for the Forum, the participants, and the facilitators from RECONCILE and IKV Pax Christi. The Forum was referenced multiple times as an event that must take place in a wide variety of areas and at a high frequency. The importance of voter education and civic education, both for voters and political leaders, could not be stressed enough. After the remarks were completed, copies of the Code of Conduct were distributed.

Overall, the Kajo Keji Leaders’ Forum was a great success. After some initial skepticism, turnout at the event was substantial. The political leaders and election hopefuls grasped both the complications of the upcoming elections and the measures to take to help the election process run smoothly. The participants understood that they were capable of being the example needed for

the region, and they could take the lead in showcasing how successful democratic processes can proceed. The only downside to the conference is the ever-challenging fight against time. Further civic and voter education, both for potential voters and political leaders, is absolutely essential at this juncture of Sudanese history. Further organizational and international partnerships, such as what was displayed in Kajo Keji, can help usher in a successful democracy to the society of the region, but we must act quickly.

Kajo Keji Leaders' Forum
25-27 January, 2010
Code of Conduct

The Kajo Keji Leaders' Forum was conducted 25-27 January, 2010, under the auspices of the Diocese of Kajo Keji (Episcopal Church of Sudan), and facilitated by the Resource Centre for Civil Leadership (RECONCILE) and IKV Pax Christi, on the request of Rt. Rev. Anthony D. Poggo, the Bishop of the Diocese. After a context analysis of southern Sudan and Kajo Keji County, proper election procedures and good conduct during these procedures were discussed. On the last day, a Code of Conduct was compiled. This can be read in the following text:

We, the participants of the Forum, agree to adhere to the following:

- I. During the time of political campaigning for the upcoming election in 2010, we agree to:
 - a. Abide by the electoral laws prescribed to us by governing authorities.
 - b. Avoid the use of derogatory language and speech that incites violence.
 - c. Promote only factual information in campaigning.
 - d. Respect our political opponents, and respect the diversity of political and religious opinions expressed by these opponents.
 - e. Respect cultural and gender sensitivities.
 - f. Tolerate constructive criticism by opponents, and avoid destructive criticism of opponents.
 - g. Promote civil order.
 - h. Respect freedom of expression and association.
- II. During the eight-day polling period, we agree to:
 - a. Abide by the electoral laws prescribed to us by governing authorities.
 - b. Not campaign at polling stations.
 - c. Avoid use of voter intimidation.
 - d. Avoid the inciting of violence among supporters and opponents.
- III. After results have been announced for the upcoming election, we agree to:
 - a. Abide by the electoral laws prescribed to us by governing authorities.
 - b. Accept the ballot results, including a possible loss.
 - c. Avoid the inciting of violence among supporters and opponents.

The Forum urges those aspirants not present at the Forum to realize and strive to adhere to the same principles.

I, _____ agree to the above Code of Conduct of the 2010 Kajo Keji Leaders' Forum.

Signed,

Date: