

Sudan Democracy First Group

Sudan Elections: The Theatre of the Absurd and the Tomb of Democratization

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Tomorrow, April 11, all actors are readying for the absurd performance of voting in the Sudan elections, preparing the tomb for the democratization process, and enabling the rule of the National Congress Party (NCP) and its President Omar Al-Bashir to achieve a quarter century of oppression.

Polling centers will be open in the morning after the NCP has ensured that the design of the election will lack fairness, freedom and safety. The NCP has exploited the State institutions, employed the National Elections Commission (NEC) and managed to manipulate the many observer missions now arrayed in Sudan.

"All the elements of this pre-rigged elections have been in place the since the census results were manipulated, constitutionally inconsistent laws were deployed restricting basic freedoms, electoral constituencies were delineated to suit the interests of the NCP, the voter register was maneuvered around predictable and determined outcomes (places and votes), and State resources were monopolized, including access to the media and corrupt and unlimited expenditure during the campaign. The NCP has determined and ensured all these polling prerequisites and is now ready to declare its victory and the death of the democratization process in Sudan, with the support and participation of the international and regional community' said Omer Al Garai, co founder of the Sudan Democracy First Group.

The first statement of the SDFG, 'Elections in Sudan: In whose interest?', noted that the major Sudanese political parties and independent civil society groups had boycotted the elections. The political forces boycotted the elections after they had waited with patience and hope that the NCP would join the national consensus reached during the Juba Conference, and hold elections which would consolidate peace, democracy and respect for human rights, with the full trust and participation of the citizens, and in the presence of outside observers.

"It seems, however, as if the NCP simply wanted elections to win them a new legitimacy, especially for their President, legitimacy that could expand their control and power of repression, violence and reproduction of political Islam, including the possibility of turning against the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) and fulfilling its domination of Sudan for a quarter of a century in defiance of the will and the interests of the Sudanese people for peace, justice and democracy ", said Hala Elkarib, co founder of SDFG.

As the voting process begins in a completely corrupt electoral climate the international community is contributing, in a suspicious and conspiratorial manner - the US Special Envoy and the AU leadership are examples—to put pressure on political forces not to boycott the elections, elections that only serve the interests of NCP. They claim that participation in the elections protects the CPA and ensures implementation of the referenda next January.

"The referenda is the right that was achieved after precious blood was lost for so long. The international community has the obligation to protect the referenda and to implement them on time, however,

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without any compromise or connection with current corrupted electoral process. How does the international community trust a party like NCP—whose officials are accused of war crimes and crimes against humanity—too implement the fundamental right to self-determination? The CPA is the right agreement, but it has the wrong implementation partner- the NCP. The international community should therefore not be frightened by the threats of the NCP. It should not facilitate the legitimization of the NCP's expanded power through these elections," said Pam Issac, co founder member of SDFG.

The continued participation of international observer missions is also lending creditability to the pre-rigged elections as was detailed in SDFG's statement No.(2). As part of rigging the elections the NCP continues to arrest and harass political activists, including candidates and their agents. Censorship and restrictions on freedom of expression continues.

"Ironically on the same morning as the Sudanese people are supposed to be heading to polling centers to vote, Mr Alhaj Warrag, a member of SDFG, is under investigation by the National Intelligence Security Services. Why? For the simple reason that he wrote an article calling for a boycott of the elections, an article that was published in the Algrass Alhurria newspaper. Is this the kind of electoral process on which the international observer missions are bestowing their credibility? With the exception of the Carter Center, and the genuine and honorable position of the EU observer mission which withdrew its monitors from Darfur, shadows of suspicion and mistrust hover over many of the other missions such as the Arab League and African Union and some individual countries, in addition to the so-called the Arab-European non-governmental organizations network. Observer missions that came in overnight were not on the ground before to monitor and witness the majority of the most critical violations of the electoral process. Their concern now is to witness activities over the 7 days polling days and then to rubber-stamp the already rigged results of the elections' said Monim Eljak, co founder member of SDFG.

Sudan Democracy First Group is :

A coalition of democrats and for Sudan activists, trade unionists and academics men and women representing Sudan different cultural and ethnic backgrounds. The main agenda of the initiative is to voice the concerns of the voiceless Sudanese people across the country in the current critical moment the country is going through. The initiative is connected to other initiatives formed by Sudanese people in different centers across Sudan.

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