



## **SuNDE Releases Statement on Voter Registration Process**

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JUBA - The Sudanese Network for Democratic Elections (SuNDE) and the SuNDE partnered with the Sudanese Group for Democracy and Elections (SuGDE) released a statement today on the conduct of the voter registration process.

SuNDE and SuGDE found that the registration process for the 2011 Southern Sudan Referendum was conducted free from violations that could significantly impact the integrity of the process, despite some shortcomings with key preparations and planning. SuNDE and SuGDE notes that the registration process as a whole showed marked improvement from the voter registration process of the 2010 General Elections in Southern Sudan.

Although observers did record some problems with the process, Referendum Centers were largely prepared with adequate materials and capable staff who understood the rules and regulations in time for the process to start on November 15. Scattered incidents of intimidation and obstruction were reported but did not seem to be part of a broader pattern, and potential registrants were generally able to participate in the process without constraint.

SuNDE and SuGDE did note that the process was significantly hindered by the late release of rules and procedures, which caused a delay in the start of voter education activities and other preparatory activities. Referendum Center lists were released late and never publicized widely. Accreditation procedures were also late, unclear and contradictory. There were attempts by the Southern Sudan Referendum Commission (SSRC) and Southern Sudan Referendum Bureau (SSRB) to mitigate the impact of the late release of procedures; however, it ultimately limited observers' ability to organize and access the process.

SuNDE and SuGDE are thankful for the cooperation and responsiveness shown by SSRC, SSRB and Referendum Center Officials and look forward to cooperating with all stakeholders for the remainder of the Referendum processes.

*SuNDE is a coalition of over 75 civil society organizations in all the 10 States of Southern Sudan whose objective is to promote and protect citizens' participation in electoral and democratic processes.*

*SuGDE is a joint effort of six independent, non-partisan civil society organizations working with community based organizations throughout North Sudan to encourage free, fair and non-violent elections.*