

THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION

PEACE IN SUDAN: IMPLEMENTING THE COMPREHENSIVE PEACE
AGREEMENT

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PARTICIPANTS

Introduction and Moderator:

KHALID KOSER
Fellow, Foreign Policy
The Brookings Institution

Panelists:

DR. MUDAWI ALTURABI
Parliament Member, Foreign Relations Committee
Government of Sudan

DR. LAM AKOL
Former Minister of Foreign Affairs
SPLM National Liberation Council

PAMELA FIERST
Senior Desk Officer, Sudan Programs Group
U.S. Department of State

LYNN FREDRIKSSON
Africa Advocacy Director
Amnesty International US

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PROCEEDINGS

MR. KOSER: Well, good afternoon, everybody, and welcome to the Brookings Institution. My name is Khalid Koser. I'm a fellow in Humanitarian Affairs in the Foreign Policy Studies Program at the Brookings Institution, and also Deputy Director of the Brookings-Bern Project on Internal Displacement.

The topic for our panel discussion today is "Peace in Sudan: Implementing the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, the CPA."

I think the fact that some 150 of you have taken the time to come this afternoon is an indication of how important this issue is for a wide range of constituencies and for a wide range of reasons.

The CPA, as many of you know, was signed on January the ninth 2005. It's comprised of a series of protocols concerning power-sharing, the right to self-determination in the South, the administration of the Nuba Mountains in Southern Blue Nile state, wealth sharing, the future of Abyei State, and security arrangements.

Significant milestones were identified as a national census, a referendum on the future status of the South, and local and national elections.

Gradual progress has been made towards achieving and implementing the CPA, but significant obstacles still remain. Perhaps the three most important outstanding issues concern the Abyei District, carrying out free and fair national elections, and completing the referendum for self determination for southern Sudan.

There are a number of reasons why hosting a panel on the implementation of the CPA is particularly important for our project on internal displacement. The project seeks to promote the protection and human rights of internally displaced people and civilians around the world. And this panel is one of a series of panels will be held at Brookings to promote a dialogue between all the sides involved in Sudan and try to keep attention focused on achieving peace in Sudan.

First, Sudan has one of the highest numbers of IDPs in the world, at least two million, and most of them are poorly protected.

Secondly, not only is implementing the CPA essential for sustaining peace in the South, it also has important implications for negotiating peace in Darfur.

And third, the impasse over the CPA threatens to displace still more people, as witnessed in Abyei earlier this year.

To explain progress and obstacles to the implementation of the CPA and the wider implications, we have four speakers this afternoon.

We think it's important to allow for the expression of very different viewpoints and to create an atmosphere where, in spite of very strong feelings, we are able to accord each other the necessary space to air divergent views. Dr. Mudawi al-Turabi is a member of the National Assembly in Sudan, and Chairman of the Subcommittee on Defense and Security at the House of Representatives. He will speak first.

Pamela Fierst is Senior Desk Officer for the Sudan Programs Group at the U.S. Department of State. She will speak second.

Third, we have Dr. Lam Akol, who is former Minister of Foreign Affairs in the Government of National Unity in Sudan, a post he held from 2005 to 2007.

And concluding with some remarks, we'll have Lynn Fredriksson, who is Advocacy Director for Africa at Amnesty, International USA.

I've asked each of the panelists to speak for about 10 minutes, which should allow about 45 minutes of questions and discussion.

To make sure we do have time for discussion, I'll be quite strict in my time keeping. I ask the panelists for my forgiveness in advance if I seem to cut you off quite quickly when you approach the 10 minute mark.

So, Dr. al-Turabi, could I please invite you to begin our discussion this afternoon.

DR. ALTURABI: Thank you very much indeed, Khalid, and thanks also for the Brookings Institute of letting have this opportunity to give a very brief idea about how the implementation of the CPA is going on from our perspective.

To start with, I am member of the National Assembly, which is the parliament, and there are more than 14 parties in this parliament, not only the two partners of the CPA, which is the NCP and the SPLM. I belong to the DOP myself.

So for us in the House of Representatives, we concentrate

that the CPA have got two main objectives for us: number one, to achieve peace in the country, and to be a model for other conflicting areas in the country, of course, with a slight modification, as it happens in the DPA, as it happens in the APA in the East; and secondly, to transform the country from the totalitarian system which ruled the country in the last 13 years, as from 1989, 'til the time of the CPA.

So transforming the country into a democratic country, we think it will lead to solve our conflicting problems in the area as regarding wealth sharing and power sharing as well.

The observation which we have in the House of Representatives is that there is a will, a real will, from the two partners of the CPA in continuing implementation of the CPA 'til the referendum in 2011.

Of course, there is some hiccups here and there, but always manageable.

As regards to the democratic transformation of the country from an authoritative country to a multi-party system democratic country, there is plenty of acts and laws in the parliament which should be changed, altered, or rewritten, among which the Parties Act, the Armed Forces Act, the Police Act, the Electoral Act, the Media and Publication Act, the National Security Act, and the Act for NGOs.

Thanks God, today, of course, after a very painful process, which sometimes is taking us more than nine months or 12 months, as it happens in the Electoral Law, we used to manage by consensus for those

14 parties inside the parliament, and the six parties outside of the parliament to come to a consensus where these laws can be passed paving the way for the democratic transformation of the country to take place on ground and not just in words or in papers.

We have got still, thanks God, now in from the coming Monday the Election Act is going to be pledged on the parliament, and I think in two weeks time, it's going to be passed, because I had been following the process from the beginning.

To remain to us in the next session, which is going to take part in October, is to have the National Security Act passed, as well as the Media and Publication Act.

As it is well known to most of you that the state of emergency, which will (inaudible] in the country from time to time during the last 15 years have been lifted just one year after the implementation of the CPA.

And now, for two years, the country is not living in a state of emergency except in war zones, which is the district of Darfur for a time being.

But after signing the CPA, going into all this process of the democratization achieving process, the problem of Darfur unfortunately overshadowed the peace process. And in my opinion, it is going also to overshadow the most significant action which you are going to have -- having a free election by the 2009.

For those areas affected by war, the international community

has got some of responsibility to help and to work with Sudan government. This, I think, is the question which later my friend Dr. Kijani (ph), who is the Minister of International Cooperation, will have a time, I think, to elaborate on this.

But all the aids and all the promises of the international community, of development of areas affected by war, was hindered because there is a condition that no aids, no embargo is going to be lifted, no situation can be normalized unless the peace in Darfur is going to be achieved.

So we have been completely in a kind of a deadlock, whichever come first, to develop the area affected by war, to go into the implementation of the CPA, or to focus on Darfur issue.

And the issue of Darfur, of course, there is also some problems. Having no coherent leadership, no defined political agenda with the fighting groups, the government of Sudan have undergone six or seven rounds of negotiation -- Abashi I, Abashi II, Injamenal, Injamena II, Addis Ababa, Aboujal, Abouja II, then Cert I, Cert II, and then at last Dakar.

And every time, we are facing the multiple divisions between the rebels and the fighting groups so that there is no one really to talk to.

I think the international community has got a responsibility. Our friends from the SPLM, I don't blame them too much because they tried also in the South to try to organize all these groups into one coherent group, use one political agenda so that the negotiation will take place

progressively to come to terms.

But unfortunately, from time to time, we used to receive some wrong signals from the international community, from certain powers outside of the country, where the fighting groups understand it as a kind of support and the negotiation break.

The census in Darfur, which is one of the most important elements for the election get into place because of the fighting groups really did not allow the Census Committee and members to do whatever they are supposed to do.

That means if any election is going to take place, which I hope so in 2009, Darfur might be outside of that, which will lead Darfur not represented in the House of Representatives and will have a kind of not completing democracy.

So all these kinds of issues should be taken into consideration if really we want peace in the country.

So there is a links between the implementation of the CPA and ending the war in Darfur. There is an impact definitely of the war in Darfur and the implementation of the CPA. And now the wars in Darfur, the disaster, is causing some people inside the country and outside the country to have the overshadow of this war on the CPA implementation. Thank you very much.

(Applause)

MS. FIERST: Good afternoon. Thank you to the Brookings Institution for the invitation to participate in today's discussion.

I have some remarks prepared and I look forward to any questions or discussion that happens after we've all presented various statements here today.

My name is Pamela Fierst, and I'm part of the Sudan Programs Group at the Department of State, where we work on programs and policy related to Sudan.

And I've been following North-South relations specifically as a larger part of my portfolio for some time.

Today, as we focus on issues of CPA implementation, I would like to start by underscoring the commitment of the United States Government to the full implementation of the CPA and to state that now more than at any time since its signing in 2005, the CPA is central to a better future for the people of Sudan.

Although we as part of the international community are often frustrated by the slow pace of CPA implementation and its setbacks, including the continuing violence in Darfur, we must remember that the CPA is an achievement in and of itself. It is an achievement for what it did, for what it brought, and what it is capable of providing.

It can be as strong or as weak as the parties that signed it.

In 2005, the CPA ended 21 years of bloody civil war. We all know this -- one of Africa's longest civil wars. And yet, since that time, peace between the parties has largely held.

The CPA had a tall task of providing an outline for peace and for democratic transformation in a very inhospitable environment. It

provides for a path to elections. It makes provisions for power sharing and a process of national reconciliation. It outlines wealth sharing protocols and moves forward measures to improve security and development, along with many other accomplishments.

The CPA has the full backing of the international community, and we continue to reach out to our friends and partners to muster additional support when and however we can.

But there is still much to be done for the CPA, a tune we all know too well. Now that we're halfway through the six-year interim period, there remains a lot on the line.

The parties must dedicate themselves to reaching a lasting solution to the Abyei impasse, for example. The conflict in May between the staff and the SPLA left Abyei in ruins, and the complete destruction of a town and the forced displacement of so many thousands of people should be completely unacceptable to both parties. It is a positive sign that both parties agreed to the U.N.-brokered cease fire and are finding mutually acceptable approaches to the political and social impasses that have defined this situation, as was outlined in their June 8th roadmap agreement and the subsequent June 21st terms of reference agreement referring the situation to arbitration.

The CPA called for elections to take place in 2009, and these elections are likely to be historic and a defining event for Sudan.

But as we all know, the timeline for elections preparation is rapidly closing in. While we applaud the efforts of the census and the

recent agreement to move quickly on the electoral law, the Government of National Unity needs to move much, much more quickly on elections preparations.

Once the law passes through the National Assembly, the National Electoral Commission, for example, must be established as quickly as possible so that the national and international planning efforts can continue and, in some ways, begin in earnest.

We are concerned about the efforts to prepare Darfur for elections. The elections called for in the CPA are to benefit all of Sudan, not just to the people in the South. Darfuris have a prominent role to play in ensuring successful elections in their country and ultimately to contributing to the vision of a peaceful Sudan. Their participation in these elections is crucial to ending their marginalization from the political process.

We must find a way to secure their participation, as their exclusion from it will only serve to further silence their voices.

There are significant logistical and political obstacles to these elections. But the U.S. remains committed to the 2009 elections and is hopeful that the Sudanese people have the will to carry them out.

Security in Sudan is essential to facilitating humanitarian aid, as well as to preparing the backdrop for these aforementioned elections.

As part of our efforts to facilitate full CPA implementation, the U.S. has played a key role in supporting peacekeeping efforts in Sudan. The U.S. continues to be the largest donor to peacekeeping

efforts. We supported the United States -- excuse me -- the United Nations Security Council resolutions that authorized deployment of the United Nations missions in Sudan and the United Nations African Union hybrid mission in Darfur.

Like all of you, however, we, myself very much included, are disappointed with the slow pace of deployment of those troops, particularly in Darfur.

Obstacles, whether put in place by the host government or caused by delays in planning and provision of assistance, must be removed and worked through.

Security is an issue that must work in tandem with our efforts towards democratic transformation, but neither can be sacrificed. We must work with our friends in the international community to make the best effort possible on both fronts.

Finally, I think most of us here in this room are very focused on the challenges confronting Sudan on a daily basis. But as we look towards the three-year anniversary of the CPA on July 9th, it is important also to recognize the significant accomplishments that have taken place already.

I imagine that we will further discuss these. Some of them were outlined before. There is still much work to be done in Sudan. This is absolutely critical and serious, and we all understand that.

But if all of the parties are committed, which, in some bright ways -- sometimes I really, really hoping for that -- we can see that if they

are committed to full implementation of the CPA, then there is much to continue to hope. Thank you.

(Applause)

DR. AKOL: First of all, I must thank the Institution for giving out this opportunity to be able to exchange views on the very important issue for Sudan, and beyond Sudan; that is, a comprehensive peace agreement.

First of all, I should point out the few facts about the agreement that are important for our discussion and evaluation of whether the agreement is on the right track, whether it's going in the right place, or whether it is failing at all.

First, it is important to mention that the CPA took about 11 years to negotiate. It started in September 1993 until its conclusion on the 31st of December 2004. This is indicative of the fact that it is addressing a complicated problem, and the issues that were being debated were not easy, and, therefore, we should also see that the parties who have signed the agreement and the friends who have supported the process need a big encouragement.

It was not the work of the Sudanese alone. The Egot were the mediators, but most importantly also were the friends of Egot later on called the Egot Partners Forum and the troika and the rest of them.

So it is an effort that involved all of us at the beginning. The CPA also, in my view, was included in Machakos, because the Machakos Protocol set out the elements of agreement that were to be expanded

later. The discussion that followed in all the Kenyan towns you know until we ended up in Naivasha were to work out the details of the principles that were agreed upon in Machakos.

You remember Machakos Protocol resolved the most contentious issue in the debate, which were the issues of self-determination for the South and the issue of sharia law for the North.

In Machakos, it was agreed that the South will exercise the right of self-determination in the exchange of the North continuing to have the sharia law which they see as very important for them.

Without resolving that issue of self-determination and sharia, it would not have been possible to the agreement at all.

Also Machakos set out frameworks for governance in Sudan, because it was very clear from the beginning that the country cannot only be run by addressing the concerns of the South alone, because some of the concerns of the South are in the center, because it is the central government, where decisions are made. And Southerners are part of the Sudanese system.

Additionally, the parties then negotiated the agreement committed themselves to a united Sudan. The SPLM, the National Congress Party said very clearly that they will work for a united Sudan, and that is why we talk of making unity attractive to people who will decide on the unity or lack of it. Those are the Southerners.

And, therefore, the challenge to the parties by then was, how do we implement the CPA in the best way possible so that the

Southerners can see that there is light at the end of the tunnel in a united Sudan.

So actually, this is the last opportunity for the Sudanese to prove that they could live together under conditions that are acceptable to the population.

The CPA also does not and open-ended agreement. It is an agreement that is tied up with timelines, and, therefore, the parties are not free to have their pace as they want. The parties are governed by the fact that the schedules of the CPA are timed on a specific period X or Y should happen, on such a date that should happen, and 2011, there must be a referendum for the South.

Therefore, there have no time. If they want to impress the southern Sudanese that Sudanese state is the viable option they should take, then they should prove the period that is available that there is good to be counted for that.

Also, the Darfur problem was not absent in the minds of people when they were negotiating the CPA. If you remember, in November 2004, the Security Council held a meeting in Nairobi, one of the rare occasions where it holds meetings outside New York. It was under the chairmanship of the USA, the able leadership of Danforth, Senator Danforth at that time. And the moral of that meeting was to impress on the parties that they should not wait for Darfur. They must sign the agreement in December.

But it was also acknowledged that the conclusion of the CPA would help in solving the other problems that were still outstanding in Sudan -- the east and Darfur.

Finally, there was a promise of assistance from the donors and the friends of Sudan who helped negotiate the peace agreement. People are conscious and have been aware from the beginning that such a big agreement involving the kind of promises that were given cannot be met by the resources of the Sudan alone. That is why there was the Oslo Conference and the other pledges that were made for the CPA to be able to deliver the dividends.

At the end of the day, what the common man wants is to see that there is a difference between war and peace. And peace for the common man means that there are services to be delivered -- the schools, the health services, the water, the infrastructure. All these must be there for them to see that there is peace to be enjoyed.

All this cannot be met by the limited resources of Sudan alone, regardless of the oil. I mean, too much is being made about the oil, but the Sudanese production of oil is only about 400,000 barrels per day, nothing compared to the millions defined in Saudi Arabia or Iran or Nigeria or the other places.

So that alone cannot be enough to address the expectations of the people, and people have great expectations.

How did the CPA go in terms of implementation? It is difficult to give a percentage, because the percentage can also be

misleading. If you are counting events or certain issues, maybe one percent is more important than the 99 percent. But what you can say is that first of all in terms of putting in place the structures that are needed to implement the CPA, I think this was done fairly quickly. We must admit that we -- the first six months went without doing anything in the CPA except probably the Constitution. And, on the last day of the six month, the presidency was instituted.

But the six-month pre-interim period was supposed to do a lot of things to the parliaments, the governments. The rest should have been formed in that six-month period, but that did not happen.

But fairly quickly after that, it picked up, and then it was able -- we were able to set in place all the government institutions that are stipulated in the CPA.

So that part went well. There have been delays, as mentioned. Yes, the pace has not been fast enough for all of us in the implementation of the CPA. There have been delays in the implementation. The only area where there has been no implementation at all was the Abyei Protocol. Three years now down the line is a time where you had finally an agreement between the two parties in order to agree on the interpretation of the ABC Report.

I think you are aware of the Abyei Band Commission. They reported in July 2005. The two parties differed. The SPLM had a view. The National Congress has a different view. And, as we all know, this is why there has not been an interim administration in Abyei. But now, at

least there is agreement to go to arbitration to give us an interpretation that all of us can agree on regarding the ABC Report.

So quickly I am told that I'm left with about one minute. What needs to be done for the CPA to be implemented in the way possible?

One, there should be more frequent engagements between the two parties that are signed the agreement. There is no way that the CPA can be implemented if the two parties are not working together. There is no way.

And the two parties realize this: that they must improve their communication so that they can go ahead with implementation as soon as possible.

Secondly, the international support for the implementation of the agreement should be improved. Maybe in the last three years, there has been a problem. Most of it, I must admit, had to do with the body that has been chosen as the implementing agent, through which the monies will flow to the two development funds. I don't need to mention the name. You know it in the CPA. It is not known for being fast in passing money around.

We have now finally agreed on the election law. This is a very important aspect. As had been mentioned, the CPA which actually came about brought three important things to Sudan -- or promised to bring about three important things to Sudan.

One, it brought about peace, and that is very important and very essential. Secondly, it promised to bring about democratic transformation in the country so that the people are free to express their views and associate in the way they want and so on. Thirdly, it promised to bring about sustainable development to the country.

So without this list, the CPA will have no meaning if we don't -- if it doesn't do that.

So one of the aspects of democratic transformation is the election. So there has been a lot of discussion hold this time of the election law. It took the longer time it did because, as somebody mentioned before, people were keen to arrive at consensus regarding the law that will govern the elections. I am glad to announce that finally there is agreement on that. On Thursday, yesterday, the Council of Ministers passed the election law. Tomorrow there will be a special session of parliament in which it will be tabled so that the discussions is (inaudible).

Another law which is important as far as the CPA is concerned, and the Southerners also are very keen about, is the self-determination referendum bill. And people tend to overlook this. In the next two weeks in which the people are going to discuss the election law, it is our intention, as Southern members in parliament, to be able also to table the self-determination bill. We had extensive discussion on it with many parties, and I think the crux of it is agreed. Maybe the smaller details are the ones left, because the whole interim period is supposed to lead to self-determination, and that is why you talk of an interim period.

An interim period must lead to something. What is it leading to? It's leading to the exercise of the referendum in 2011. The CPA says in the third year that this law must be tabled, and we make sure that it will go ahead.

The other challenge is the IDPs, because we have a big number of them in northern Sudan who went there as a result of the war. We also work hard to see that they come back. I am told that my time is up. I must thank you before I leave and thank the Institution.

(Applause)

MS. FREDRIKSSON: Good afternoon. Amnesty's thanks to the Brookings Institute for allowing us to participate in this panel. Thank you to the organizers.

I'd like to present a little broader context of CPA implementation and to put it in relation to human rights concerns and perhaps a starker set of terms that you've heard so far this afternoon. I think it's my role on this panel to be the constructive critic, but to be the critic nonetheless or I wouldn't be Amnesty International.

I have eight specific concerns I'd like to raise in relation to broader Sudan issues, which all come back in relation to CPA.

First I'd like to start with Darfur, because that has been the primary focus of Amnesty International, USA, and Amnesty International, Worldwide for the past several years. And I want to simply mention that in relation to the crisis, the resolution requires the cooperation of all parties to the conflict, including the government of Sudan on deployment of

UNIMED, full and speedy deployment on full access for humanitarian assistance, and on accountability for those who have committed atrocities in Darfur.

Amnesty has also been focusing specifically on limitations on freedom of expression and assembly. Recent crackdowns in the wake of the rebel attack in N'djamena in Chad and press reporting about possible government of Sudan involvement, and also in the wake of the JEM attack on Omdurman.

Since February, direct censorship has been going forward, off and on. Reinstatement of old practices in violation of the CPA and the interim national Constitution, which includes a bill of rights, and the international covenant on civil and political rights. There is a very real need to ensure freedom of expression, association, right to liberty, security, and fair trial throughout the country.

From a legal reform perspective, we've heard mentioned a number of laws in process. The CPA and the Constitution demonstrated very significant change and started a real process of modernization of these laws, but the Media Law, the Press and Printed Materials Act completely allows the government of Sudan authorities to act in many cases completely outside of the law, using national security as a justification to protect the interests of the state for institutionalized censorship, controls on licensing, and lack of independence on the part of Press Council.

In terms of the Police Forces Law, and a first draft, as we understand it, police abuse is only investigated by the military and police courts with no oversight.

And then there's the National Intelligence and Security Forces Law. According to our findings, ongoing torture and ill-treatment are more likely to take place when Article 31 is invoked. And this allows for up to nine months detention outside of international legal standards.

We also expect that as the elections approach, there may be increasing repression. But even now, many of the authorities are working outside of their own legal system.

A third point related to arrests and detentions after the attack on Amderman (ph). Amnesty International is asking the government of Sudan to disclose the locations of those who have been detained, to release those are not formally charged, and to allow access to counsel, families, and human rights monitors.

Targeting appears to have been done on the basis of age and also on the basis of ethnicity by the security forces.

And there is a need for investigations into these abuses.

The fourth point. We had a great concern about refugee return to southern Sudan and the rights of displaced persons. This is a huge repatriation operation, with returns from Ethiopia, northern Uganda, Kenya. All reports are that this has been going relatively well, but international financing has not been there to "win the peace." And international funding has been difficult and complex to access. Those who

return, they need to ensure -- they need the assurance of sustainability of the process, including infrastructure, with education, skills training, livelihoods. And these individuals have not received that type of assistance.

We also need to look at the training of local administrative assistants at the county and local level, according to our operational partners. And women have been particularly vulnerable and disproportionately affected. How are Sudanese authorities addressing this concern?

Fifth, the ESPA is the unrecognized agreement in most of our discussions in Washington. How is the Eastern Sudan peace agreement being implemented on wealth sharing, the development fund, on power-sharing, on the reconciliation process, on the DDR process and security?

Sixth, how -- there is a lack of national perspective combining the interrelated concerns of political and economic marginalization in Darfur, in south Sudan, and in eastern Sudan and how this is simultaneously contributing to an unraveling of the CPA and the continuation of the crisis in Darfur.

There is a need to come together for those 2009 elections, a need to bring security and access to Darfur to bring it to a national level. And the CPA includes a provision with conditions that would allow postponement of the elections. Could Darfur would be used to justify that?

Number seven. Returning focus is necessary for the CPA itself and for arbitration of Abyei clearly. There has been a lack of implementation on demarcation of borders, obstruction of democratic transformation, delays in the national reconciliation process, lack of transparency in distributing oil revenues.

The CPA also needs international attention at a much higher level proper -- investment, monitoring, and that it's a sustained attention. Is there a political will in Khartoum, in the south, and in the international community to carry this forward?

Consider CPA implementation within a common set of problems throughout all of Sudan, including Darfur.

In terms of Abyei specifically, Abyei is symbolic of implementation of the entire CPA. Provision of assistance to the people by both the government of southern Sudan and the national government is lacking. There was a binding agreement prior to this new agreement. What happens if the parties dismiss the new one as well?

There is no sign of a pull-out of the Sudan armed forces by the deadline, the end of this month. Omiss has been, for all intents and purposes, hamstrung, as was shown during the recent fighting.

Killing of civilians, several directly, and many in crossfire and the displacement of some 50,000 has happened within the last month. Distrust is at an enormously high level. There is no access for investigations. These are desperate conditions.

Six to 7,000 recent returnees to Abyei from other countries have been newly displaced by the fighting as well.

How to go forward with elections. How do we go forward with elections, when they're already behind schedule and there are significant problems with the census? What will the government of Sudan do if there is a referendum and the people choose to separate? How is the international community going to approach this component of the CPA in an equal and open fashion?

Finally, my last point. What is the international community's role and responsibility to ensure CPA and ESPA implementation and to resolve the Darfur conflict? And what is the U.S. Government going to do and when in terms of opening its policy to possible carrots as well as sticks? Are they going to require that UNIMED is fully deployed? Is the Administration also going to require that the CPA is fully implemented?

The steps that are being discussed now cannot be put forward without significant demonstration of meeting these benchmarks. Thank you.

MR. KOSER: Thank you very much indeed. Our panelists have some lapel microphones. If they could attach those for discussion. We've heard a wide, diversity of viewpoints there. I am very grateful for our speakers to extending courtesy to one another, and I trust that we'll extend that courtesy to the question and answer session, too.

When I invite you to speak, if you could please introduce yourself. Keep your interventions short, and try to make your interventions a question as opposed to statements, I'd be very grateful.

MR LYMAN: Thank you. A question for Ms. Fierst.

MR. KOSER: Sorry. Could you introduce yourself?

MR. LYMAN: Oh, I'm sorry. Princeton Lyman from the Council on Foreign Relations.

Mr. Al-Turabi had said that because of Darfur, assistance hasn't been flowing to the south as a result of the CPA. And I wonder if you can clarify what kind of assistance is falling, not only from the U.S. but elsewhere? And how much is it dark for an impediment to assistance?

MS. FIERST: Thank you for the question. Roughly speaking, the United States government has given approximately \$4 billion to Sudan over the last three years, something like that.

The bulk of our systems has taken the form of food aid to both Darfur and to the South, as well as significant contributions to the African Union Mission in Sudan, the UNIMED predecessor. United States was the largest funder of that operation, and significant efforts now for train and equip for those efforts in Darfur.

So Darfur is a substantial portion of aid focus. And this is kind of where it gets into -- and excuse me, I'm not skirting the question -- it just gets into technical aspects related -- more suited for my USAID colleagues. But significant amounts of aid do flow to the south in the form

of Reconstruction and development. Infrastructure projects are starting to take shape.

Unfortunately, the planning that goes into those processes, particularly in an area as logistically complicated as southern Sudan, adds significant time to planning and seeing the benefits of much of that reconstruction activity.

But I think it's fair to say that Darfur does take up a significant amount of resources; yes.

MR. KOSER: Please.

MR. DAIN: My name is Santino Dain (ph). I'm from Iowa, and most importantly from Abyei. I'm going to direct my question to Dr. Lam Akol, because I think he read Mr. Abel (inaudible] books about (inaudible] in Sudan too many agreements dishonored.

Mr. Lam Akol, as a member of the SLA, how as we talking today -- many things have been agreed upon, not in 2005 but as we were born, we found many things have been agreed upon between the North and the South. And always the part who negate from implementing them is the North.

And above all, there worst northern part ever to come and abolish all the previous and the newly agreed upon agreements is the NCP. How, as you sit there in that government, how you believe the NCP going to implement this agreement?

DR. AKOL: Okay. Well, thank you very much. I think Abyei's experience and the rest of the experiences in southern Sudan are

behind the fact that it took 11 years to negotiate the CPA. And the CPA has both internal and external guarantees for its implementation.

If I were not convinced -- as SPLM -- I'm talking on behalf of SPLM now -- if the SPLM were not convinced that it could deliver the piece, it could not have signed it. And the SPLM is a partner in the implementation of the peace agreement. And that's why it will not relinquish its responsibility to see that when it has negotiated is implemented. And you, yourself, have seen why there has been a lot of discussion on all the issues, including the Abyei issue, which is the last issue that was resolved.

We are not afraid of any government or any party to agree with. We don't choose who rules in Khartoum. This is -- the SPLM has very clear from the beginning that we will always talk with the government of the day in Khartoum to discuss peace with it. If we reach a peace agreement, well and good. If we don't reach peace agreement, then the status quo continues. So we don't choose who is in power in Khartoum, but we'll agree with whoever agrees to the points we think are important for us, because, as you know, of course, any peace agreement means you -- is a compromise. You have to give and take.

But there is always what you consider as key elements in any agreement that you cannot do away with.

This is what happened in Machakos. The Southerners said there is no way or the SPLM said there is no way we can do away with

self-determination. It is important for us. The government said the sharia is also important for them.

So we said, okay, what is important for you, you take. What is important for us we take, and then discuss the rest of the issues.

So we are not worried that there will be delay in implementation. There has been even lack of implementation, as I've mentioned before. But things are moving, you see. Things are moving, and we have not yet given up that the CPA will not be implemented.

MR. KOSER: Thank you. I think there's one there first. Please.

MR. THOMAS-JENSON: Yeah. Hi, my name is Collin Thomas-Jenson (ph). I'm a policy adviser with the (inaudible] Project.

The National Democratic Institute has done some polling in southern Sudan, and the findings are that well over 90 percent of southern Sudanese would vote for independence in a referendum.

The onus to make unity attractive in implementation of the CPA is clearly placed on the National Congress Party and to a lesser extent on the donors. And I wonder, from your perspective, what, if anything, has the NCP done in the past three years to convince over 40 percent of Southerners that if they get a referendum, they shouldn't vote for independence.

And a quick follow up: if we don't get to a referendum, it's highly likely that the government of southern Sudan and the SPLM in particular will be put under immense pressure by Southerners to simply

declare independence unilaterally. How would the National Congress Party react to that? Thanks.

MR. KOSER: Dr. Al-Turabi, you want to take.

DR. ALTURABI: I'm not part of the National Congress. I'm part of the national government.

MR. KOSER: You have no comments?

DR. ALTURABI: This is not for me.

MR. KOSER: Any (inaudible)?

DR. AKOL: For me? Thank you. Well, of course, the issue is addressed to the National Congress, but there is a part that connects us. When you say 90 percent of the Southerners would vote for independence, you see, as I said in my small contribution, that the vote at the end of the day will be the vote -- the Southerners are the ones who will vote for secession or lack of it.

The parties to the agreement are committed to the unity of Sudan, whether it is SPLM or whether it is the National Congress Party. Both are committed to the unity of Sudan, and this is why both of them said they would want to make the unity attractive. Attractive to whom? It's attractive to the person who will vote.

At the end of the day, it's not a National Congress who will decide the unity of Sudan alone, or the SPLM alone to decide the unity of Sudan. It is the Southerners who will vote at the end of the day, and see whether or the arrangements under the CPA could be pursued within the

United Sudan after 2011, or they are not satisfied and then they vote otherwise.

The question of UDI does not arise. The UDI is a violation of any constitutional order. When the Ian Smith did it, he had to go at the end of the day. He could not sustain it. The South and the SPLM are wise enough not to think of UDI. We have a framework within which the agreement can be implemented. We are not frightened about the secession or the unity, because these are the possibilities in the agreement.

If it is unity, we respect it. If it is secession, we respect it. It is not something that scares us, that, you know, look this is happening or they might do this and that. But as responsible parties that are running the state in Sudan, we should be working hard to see that unity is made attractive.

And the biggest contributor to that is the international community, as I said. The money needed for all these projects cannot come only from Sudan. And as she answered before, most of the countries had diverted the funds they have earmarked for southern Sudan to the situation in Darfur.

Understandably so, you would now say, of course, this is a humanitarian situation. It cannot be left like that. We must address the emergency and so on, but also within that, the CPA is an agreement that if it is allowed to collapse for the lack of the developmental aspect that goes

with it, it could also pose a more dangerous emergency than what we have. You want to comment?

MR. KOSER: Please.

DR. ALTURABI: There is one comment also. Because the CPA have set up a set of institutions for both parties, in the north and in the south, for me as a member of the National Unity Government in the parliament, but not a member of the NCP. I'm not a member of the SPLM. I have with other colleagues in other parties to follow these institutions whether they have been formed properly or not.

For example, the southern government and the government of the South, which had been done in due time, the part or the share of the South in the central government, which had been done in time, the share of the SPLM in the parliament, the national parliament, which had been there in time, and I'm very pleased indeed about their performance really in the parliament.

The bill of rights how it is transformed from just a constitutional to bills on the ground, and we are working collectively with the NCP and with the SPLM and other parties to make that be a reality.

The share in wealth with -- there is joint committee, which is also very transparent indeed, and there is one friend here from the central government who can later elaborate on this measure.

So this is what we are following. Then whether the unity is going to be attractive to the Southerners or not, it depends exactly how are they satisfied about the implementation of what they had been agreed

upon in the CPA. If they are satisfied, the unity could be a unity; if not, that is something else.

MR. KOSER: The lady at the back.

MS. LOFIRS: Hi, my name is Belkis Lofirs (ph). I'm project manager for the Sudan Ark. It's a program to help resettle IDPs and refugees into Abyei.

And my question is for Pamela Fierst. I'm sorry if pronounce your surname wrong.

But my question is regarding the recent agreement and the ABC Report and Abyei Protocol. The recent agreement is still a concern. As recently as today, I received a report that the military is firmly in place in Abyei. The people are afraid to return. You know, we have wailing mothers in the area that -- approximately 200 children are missing. Atrocities were committed. People are concerned, and it doesn't appear as if the recent agreement will be implemented.

So my question is, how is the U.S. prepared to help enforce the implementation of the recent agreement? How is the U.S. prepared to enforce the implementation of the Abyei Protocol and the ABC Report, because, as we know, the ABC Report still stands and it was a binding agreement?

MS. FIERST: Mm-hmm. Thank you for the question. There's kind of a lot packed into there, so let me break it down just a little bit.

Speaking broadly about the June 8th roadmap agreement and then the subsequent arrangements and agreements that have been made, I am at once hopeful and skeptical of what has taken place.

As we all know, there has been no shortage of agreements and discussions that have or have not been lived up to in the past.

The June 8th roadmap continues to show signs of momentum. That is the reality. Things called for under the roadmap have actually come to pass. The GIUs have been reconstituted. The interior ministers are discussing policing arrangements. Both sides are paying lip service at least to issues of unmissed access.

These are encouraging signs that previously were not being broached under any circumstances. It is very concerning that the 31st Brigade is still hunkered down in the school in Abyei Town; yes. And we continue to push the parties, specifically the north, to request that they comply with their agreements under the roadmap.

As far as the arbitration aspect included in the June 8th agreement, that is also slightly troubling, given our preconceptions about what already had been agreed to under the protocols.

Subsequent clarifications of what was agreed to indicate that the parties are going to ask the Permanent Court of Arbitration at the Hague, which is a facilitating body, not a judicial body, to determine whether or not the Abyei Boundary Commission did indeed exceed its mandate in reaching its conclusion under the report, which would the

National Congress Party has thus far continued to claim and cited as grounds for rejecting the report.

The next step is that the parties are planning for their arbitrators and choosing according to the agreement. They each get to choose two, and then the four pick a fifth one, and that process is still showing momentum.

We are providing legal advisers to be Sudan Peoples Liberation Movement. Some of our colleagues in the international community are also providing legal advisers. We were nervous about this, because it does present another opportunity for abrogation of whatever might have been agreed to.

The best thing that the parties can do for establishing some faith runs along the lines of the theme you highlighted, which is faith on the ground for the people living there, what can be done, namely establishing the interim administration.

And so we are pushing both sides to live up to their responsibilities in establishing the administration once and for all of bringing services to the people of Abyei, so that we do not face these kinds of conditions that allow this tension to kind of grow.

And so we are very engaged in the technical aspects of these agreements and watching it as hopefully and as skeptically. I hope that answers your question.

MR. KOSER: I'm conscious that Lynn Fredriksson hasn't had a chance to speak. Are there any questions directed at Amnesty specifically? Please.

MR. MULA: Yes. My name is Jimmy Mula (ph). I'm the president of Southern Sudan Voice of Freedom. We are nonprofit advocacy organization here in Washington, D.C.

You talked about the patriation of IDPs and refugees, and you also mentioned that there needs more funding to help in the process. But in Khartoum Mekempl don't know if you are aware about that there has been so many of the schools that in Khartoum Mekemp have been closed. And actually Sudanese children have been stopped from going to school since January 2008. And also so many health clinics have been closed.

Could you comment on that?

MS. FREDRIKSSON: Yes, of course, I can comment on this. So is there a more specific questions regarding changes that need to be made to address the situation?

MR. MULA: Yeah, I mean, first of all, are you aware of that; that the UNHC has instructed the schools there not to enroll in Sudanese children in some levels?

MS. FREDRIKSSON: No, I was not aware of that.

MR. MULA: Yeah, well, this is a big problem that is affecting the people in the camp. And secondly, also the health clinics, they have like that-they have reduced it from seven to only three health clinics -- I

think only one health clinic, and that is really not providing the kind of services that will sustain or improve the health condition of the people.

MS. FREDRIKSSON: Okay. Thank you. We'll look into it.

MR. KOSER: Please.

MR. SALLAH: Thank you. My name is Sallah (ph). I'm from Embassy of Sudan. My question is for the Amnesty International.

You have (inaudible] around eight points of concerns for the government. And it implies that you are speaking about the government -- the National Unity Government.

Do you have any concerns from the South, from the (inaudible] the southern government or does it apply to both of them, the southern government and the government in the north?

Just a follow up for Pamela in the State Department, what is the rationale of the State Department concerning the signing of the Abyei Roadmap? Is it -- if I understand that, she says hopeful and skeptical. Is this a position or just a speculation? What is it?

Because Abyei has been very instrumental in central in the dialogue between the government of Sudan and the United States of America?

Is it just you can summarize it just two -- these two words? Or there is something else cited?

MR. KOSER: Thank you.

MS. FREDRIKSSON: Yes, of course, we do have human rights concerns about the government of Southern Sudan's behavior as

well, particularly when there is an armed conflict, we're very much concerned that there are violations of human rights and international humanitarian law against civilians who are in the general area, and this is particularly true in Abyei most recently.

We're also -- the most recently calling for an extension of the arms embargo on Darfur to all of Sudan, including the South, and we're doing that specifically because we are concerned about the use of weaponry throughout the country.

MS. FIERST: Yes, to answer your question, the United States government applauds the June 8th Roadmap. We immortalized those words in the PRST that we fought for in the U.N. Security Council. We very much welcome it.

However, we continue to underscore the need to live up to all terms agreed in the agreement.

MR. KOSER: Further questions. The gentleman there with the glasses.

MR. FREEMAN: Thank you. Lawrence Freeman from Executive Intelligence Review.

Dr. Akol, the other day at another conference you said that the donors were supposed to supply \$1.4 billion in assistance to the south outside of their \$3 billion to \$4 billion in humanitarian aid. And you also said that they've supplied about \$300 million of that.

How much is the lack of aid coming from the United States and other countries to actual infrastructure development and economic development endangering the CPA?

DR. AKOL: That is a good question. Actually, the issue of funds were not only made at (inaudible]. You know after the signing of the peace agreement, the two parties formed what they call the joint assessment mission. And that joint assessment mission worked out projects that needed to be funded in order to be implemented after the peace. And this is the background to the Oslo conference.

And you had two terms; that is, 2005 to 2007, and 2008 to 2011. For the first period, the pledges, as we all know, went to billions. At the end of the day, the amount that was paid was small. In that discussion, I gave figures and that for the south alone the anticipated sum was \$1.4 billion. And what went to the South was less than \$3 million -- \$300 million, less than a quarter.

So this is a reflection of the general statement that I said before that there is a slowness I would put it mildly, there is a slow pace from the (inaudible] community in trying to fulfill its commitment towards implementation of the CPA.

And the CPA is, as I said, at the end of the day, the common man on the ground would want to see what dividends have you got or she has got from the implementation of the CPA. How does the CPA translate in terms of schools, in terms of health services, in terms of water, in terms of infrastructure, in terms of things that they can see that were lacking

during the war? Otherwise, there will be no difference between war and peace.

So that is very, very important aspects of the CPA. We tend to only talk about the political, you know, the political make headlines; that, you know, this one has not been done, this and another has not been done. But the real crux of the CPA is to deliver these dividends in terms of developmental aspects and rehabilitation.

MR. KOSER: Thank you very much. I think Pamela, did you have a --

MR. FIERST: I merely wanted to comment on one aspect of the pool of international donor funds. What's -- I won't refer to at either citing my fellow panelists. The United States does not participate in pooled donor funding mechanisms, and if you have more specific questions, I refer you to my USAID colleagues, but all of our assistance is done on a bilateral basis.

MR. KOSER: Thank you. Please.

SPEAKER: I just would add some information about this economic side. Adjani Fidel (ph), Minister of International Cooperation in the Government of National Unity.

The government is supporting the international community to the peace process in Sudan. It is not only political. It is also economic. According to the estimation made in 2005, it was -- the needs were estimated at \$7.9 billion. And it was agreed that the Government of

National Unity and the government of Southern Sudan page two thirds of that sum. And the donors pay one third.

The Government of National Unity paid about 80 percent of its commitment. Regarding the donors, because there are two funds -- one in the North and the other in the South. For the South, the needs are worth up to 1.4; for the North, 1.2 that should be paid by the donors.

The amount paid is far less than that. Not only that, the amount paid already is not implemented due to the procedural mechanism and bureaucracy and a slowness, which you don't understand why. Some donors they don't pay for the fund in the north, and that's also some kind of political decision of these partners. They support the political process and not the economic one, because they have some problems with the government.

Regarding the unity north and south, the last donors conference in Oslo in May, you agreed with the government of Southern Sudan to agree on joint projects, joint projects between the North and the South. And that, whether there is unity or secession, but we have to live together in the same area.

That's why we decided to present joint projects, mainly of infrastructure, river transport, roads, railways between North and South; and to rehabilitate the border areas, grazing areas, forests and so forth and water harvesting and so, because we believe that even if we come up with this secession, people will live together. These people will move across the borders, and they have an interest to share. And that is why

we are working for the unity, but if we have the results as secession of the South, I think that we are also keen to have peace along these borders.

Thank you.

MR. KOSER: Minister, thank you very much. Please, if it's (inaudible].

MR. MCCOY: My name is Abraham McCoy (ph), a graduate student at Johns Hopkins.

My first question goes to Dr. Lam Akol. What has the SPLM as a political organization learned from elections in the Arab world, the one that took place in Algeria, in which the Muslim Brotherhood won the election, but deny? And the one that took place in Palestine, in which Hamas won the election in Gaza. How much does the SPLM prefer if, for instance, the election surprises you?

My second question goes to --

MR. KOSER: Sorry. There's only one time for one question, because there's a few people still waiting. So if we could leave it with that question, and let Dr. Akol respond?

DR. AKOL: All right. Well, it's very interesting, my brother wants how to learn from the experience of the Arab world. Well, what have we learned from the African world?

Also we had elections in Kenya. We had elections in Zimbabwe. We had elections in other places. But I think the gist of your message is clear that somebody who is supposed to win is denied the chance of running the power.

The case of Algeria, of course, is straightforward that you had a party that went for elections and then during the process, it was stopped.

The case of Palestine is more complicated in the sense that Hamas doesn't recognize Israel, but then the system itself under which it went for election is the system that was agreed upon by the two parties.

But what we need as SPLM and as Southerners and as Sudan is a transparent and open election, free and fair election.

And the election is not only about voting. The election actually starts even from the law, which we are talking about. It's also connected with the -- how the security apparatus is being run in the country and so on.

So the only thing I can say is that we are determined to have a transparent, free and fair election, and would invite all concerned to start monitoring the process. It's not just -- the process is not that when we come and later on nominate ourselves and go and campaign. No, the election starts with the law. It starts with other things.

So the discussion on the law I think that many concerned people have been following it. We hope that they are satisfied with that. The National Assembly will debate this law for the next two weeks. And we also stand to benefit from the comments of other people.

But we are prepared as a party for whatever results the election comes out with. We'll recognize it.

MR. KOSER: Please. We're getting quite close to time, so if you can keep your question quite short, please.

MS. KIM: Sure. My name is Suzie Kim. I'm from the New Republic.

A number of the panelists have spoken the importance of the role of the international community in implementing the CPA.

I was wondering which specific members of the international community, which countries, you believe would be most influential and the best way to appeal to them to act, especially given the fact that so much of the attention, at least in the media, focuses on Darfur and that the appeals to China with regard to the Olympics, you know, there's a divergence of opinion as to just how effective those kinds of more aggressive condemnatory appeals have been. Thank you.

MR. KOSER: Would you like to take that, Pamela.

MS. FIERST: Feel as though that's probably my question.

Generally speaking, when -- in terms of international community with respect to donor countries, I'm more specifically referring to the U.K., the Netherlands, Norway, France, Canada and probably a few others that are escaping me which are kind of the core countries that have -- Italy has played a role in monitoring and kind of guaranteeing the CPA and has carried that torch into Darfur.

On -- expanding that out more broadly, of course, the role of China in Darfur and the influence that it could be exerting or has exerted in Sudan is of popular interest, of course. And, to a great extent, we've been

encouraged by some of the signs that the Chinese government has demonstrated, and their willingness to discuss the issues with us and to play a helpful role where they feel they can.

We have not been bashful about pointing out we are always hoping that they can be and should be doing more.

MR. KOSER: The gentleman there with the -- sorry, were you waiting? Let the gentleman speak. Then you can come -- we'll come next to you.

MR. VINONARI: My name is Daniel Vinonariwith (inaudible]. And my question is for Lam Akol, and I suppose actually Lynn Fredriksson could comment as well, but the question is for Lam Akol.

Since you are a SPLA field commander, I think you're in a position may be where you could comment on the military situation in Darfur, and on the implications of it for displaced populations there, and what you think the future is for those populations.

DR. AKOL: Unfortunately, we are not debating Darfur, are we?

MR. KOSER: Not directly, but do you have a response or do (inaudible]?

DR. AKOL: Yeah. Well, the military situation in Darfur is very complicated in the sense that there are many parties involved in the conflict there. You have government troops. You have the various factions of the rebels. You have local militias and all that.

And such a situation evolves in a very rapid way. Today, you can assess that this is -- what is tomorrow you find something else.

Of course, the military situation has a bearing on the humanitarian situation in and on the peace process. And what is important is not just to monitor the military situation. What is important is to continue the efforts that have started so far, to push forward with the peace process.

It is true peacekeeping has gone a long way, despite the complaints that are being made at the about the slowness of UNIMED, but more of it is connected with the logistics, the pledges that have been made to support the UNIMED in terms of helicopters, in terms of transport vehicles, in terms of compounds as opposed to stay-in in terms of water points. These things are the ones that are today.

So the military situation must be dovetailed with the peace process, because the military situation alone -- actually, as we say, the war is the cost of all this. In order to contain it, you must address the issue from all the angles -- from the military point of view, from the humanitarian point of view, from a political point of view. And I think the political is the most important, because without arriving at a political settlement, there will be no peace for the peacekeepers to keep, and there will be no way that the humanitarian assistance can reach the needy populations

MS. FREDRIKSSON: I would like to comment. I think the price that the civilians in Darfur have paid is almost unimaginable. We can

look at the numbers -- hundreds of thousands who have died as a result of the conflict, possibly 90,000 directly killed within the conflict. We can look at the numbers of displaced, 2.5 million approximately, including 240,000 or more in Chad. Those displaced from Chad ironically back into Darfur and the disruption of civilian life in Chad and the Central African Republic, in part because of domestic issues in those countries, but also of spillover from Darfur conflict.

And we need to look at the solutions not only in terms of the problems of the international community not fulfilling obligations to provide troops and hardware and logistical support and so forth, but also the problems in that the government of Sudan continues to play a very active role in this conflict; that it is responsible for very recent bombings and other attacks, particularly in North Darfur and that we can look at the specific consequences of those attacks on communities, on marketplaces, on schools that have been subject to the bombing and to be subsequent Janjaweed related militia attacks. And then I think we also need to bring this back to the fact that what Darfur has suffered, southern Sudan has suffered as well.

MR. KOSER: Thank you. I'm afraid this will have to be the last question. If you could keep it brief, please.

MS. TCHABU: Hi, my name is Sundi Tchabu (ph), and I work for the government of Southern Sudan mission. I would like to commend Dr. Lam Akol for taking a balanced stand on this -- the views of the SPLM.

However, I'm very concerned when my brother from the embassy raised a question about how did the international community -- are they monitoring violations by our government. And that brings to mind that we, as a young government, of course, the government of Southern Sudan is just a three-year old. And I would say that it is a toddler. And then now it's compared to a government that has been in place for over years.

So the danger is that in this agreement over the CPA, of course, the international community will be looking at two governments to contribute equally, but the fact is that the government of Southern Sudan is young, and the bigger brother should be able to contribute more than the younger brother.

So whether we have violations, these violations are due to lack of infrastructure or lack of money to implement what we have in place. So my concern is that the international community also should look into that; that we are not an equal table, at even table. Thank you.

MR. KOSER: (Inaudible] comment? Thank you. Any (inaudible] please?

DR. ALTURABI: I think the (inaudible(you are absolutely on equal tables, because I am the one who suffering because we in the North are governed by the government in the north, which 52 percent of it is NCP and 28 percent of it is SPLA. Sorry, SLF.

So that is absolutely -- you are absolutely responsible also from what is going on in the north, because you are a participant of a

National Unity Government. My share in that government is only six percent.

MR. KOSER: Haven't got time for the response. Any final short comments for the people in the audience.

MS. FREDRIKSSON: One final short comment to my colleague, Lam Akol. You said you would welcome human rights monitors around the elections. Amnesty International and other human rights groups would be very pleased to be invited back into the country.

MR. KOSER: Final (inaudible).

DR. AKOL: I did not only say human rights monitors. I said all the monitors, journalists, parties, government NGOs -- those who are interested to see a transparent and free and fair election.

MR. KOSER: So the invitation is on record.

DR. AKOL: And you're not limited only to the human rights.

MS. FIERST: I would only hope to support that and see it come to pass in the next couple of years.

MR. KOSER: Great. We'll we've had a sometimes rather delicate, but I think very constructive discussion around some very difficult issues. Thanks to you for taking the time and thanks especially to our panelists.

(Applause)

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