

Countdown in Sudan

The situation in Sudan is alarming. Worst case scenarios are unfolding – boycotts, vote rigging, intimidation, security breakdowns and increased levels of violence. Huge amounts of money and political energy are being spent on an exercise that may not yield benefits for her people or the region.

Mounting free and fair elections, the first in over two decades, in the face of massive logistical hurdles, and in Africa's largest country, was never going to be easy. Voters, a vast number of whom are illiterate, have to fill in a minimum of eight ballot papers, some 12, each one with a dozen or more candidates. The scope for confusion, manipulation and fraud is massive.

The result may be a foregone conclusion: the election of Omar al Bashir, which he badly needs to re-legitimize himself domestically and to send a signal to the International Criminal Court.

Analysts see the elections as part of a deal between northern and southern elites – one that allows leaders to sidestep, at least for now, more fundamental socio-economic and political problems. In return for cooperating on elections, the south would secure a commitment by Khartoum to go ahead with the referendum, scheduled for January 2011 under the terms of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. The referendum outcome is predictable too – a vote for independence by the South.

Sudan is famous for missing deadlines (the elections are already two years late) and last minute deals. But this time, things may unravel, with potentially disastrous consequences that go far beyond Sudan's borders.

The uncertainty that will follow disputed results will play into the hands of extremists- including those in the South advocating UDI, and those in the north who do not want the oil rich south to secede under any circumstances. Decades of civil war until 2005 resulted in millions of deaths and untold misery, particularly for women and children; the prospect of its resumption is ghastly, and real.

The need to avoid disaster in the run-up to the referendum, and to craft a vision of post 2011 arrangements acceptable to both sides, whichever way the vote goes, has not been met by sufficient high level concerted, international action. Darfur has deflected attention from a greater threat: resumption of civil war. Sudan-watchers have been sounding the alarm for some time; the international community now has no excuse for not making Sudan a top priority.

News Overview

[Following an aid strike](#) by donor nations, [G-19 nations guarantee aid for Mozambique's state budget](#) after they reached an agreement with the government on how to implement reforms to fight corruption and improve overall governance. An issue considered a serious threat to the country's overall economic performance and its ability to deliver basic services to its people.

[A recent coup attempt in Guinea Bissau](#) threatens to destabilize the country's already fragile political system. It comes at a time when the successful presidential election of July 2009 has created the required environment for ECOWAS and the international community to strengthen the democratic and national reconciliation process.

After nearly two decades of waiting, [Kenya has moved one step closer to reform with the parliament's approval of a draft constitution](#) that proposes major changes to Kenya's political and legal systems. Among the most significant reforms is the decentralization of the government's power.

Chaos and confusion reign in [Sudan](#) as [one of Sudan's main opposition parties says it will boycott this week's elections](#) because of fears of rigging in what was intended to be the country's first multi-party elections since 1986. [Will the elections actually be beneficial or fuel further conflict?](#)

According to U.S based researchers ["more than £1tn may have flowed out of Africa illegally over the last four decades,"](#) most to western financial institutions. This huge outflow explains why aid efforts to reduce poverty have underachieved in Africa.

[The Board of the Global Humanitarian has decided to shut down](#) the Geneva based organization due to lack of funds - defeating all the high hopes of helping developing countries adapt to the worst effects of climate change.

[Global Witness expresses concern over the UK Government's weak commitment to addressing corporate related human rights abuses in conflict zones](#) Global Witness's letter calls on the UK Government to act immediately to implement concrete reforms addressing serious human rights abuses contributed to by UK companies operating in conflict affected areas.



As featured in [Daily Nation](#) (Kenya): 8 April 2010

G20 Update

AUSTRALIA

[The Australian government pledges \\$13m financial aid to support the economic reconstruction process in Zimbabwe](#)

BRIC

[BRIC nations pledge to combat hunger and boost efforts to promote food security globally](#)

CHINA

[China has pledged to import more value-added products from South Africa to optimize bilateral trade](#)

GERMANY

[Germany grants the Ghanaian government a loan of €11m in support of the country's agricultural sector](#)

[Germany will participate in the world's first micro insurance fund with approximately €19.2m with the aim of reducing poverty for 25million people in Africa and Asia](#)

INDIA

[Trade with Africa is likely to reach \\$55 billion by 2012 from \\$5.2 billion in 2002-2003](#)

JAPAN

[Japan has pledged \\$10million worth of food aid to help improve Mozambique's food security situation](#)

[The Japanese government signs an agreement with Uganda to finance a road and power grid project in Uganda, Kenya and Rwanda to help increase cross-border electric power trade which will lead to socio-economic development for the east and central African region](#)

UNITED KINGDOM

[Statistics reveals that the UK spent 0.52% of Gross National Income on overseas aid in 2009 – the highest proportion since 1964](#)

[UK launches a new action plan on international climate change to build on progress made at Copenhagen in December 2009](#)

[The UK government launches a programme to improve conditions in slum areas in some of the world's biggest cities by providing better access to housing, transportation, energy, water and sanitation](#)

UNITED STATES

[Johnnie Carson, Assistant Secretary, Bureau of African Affairs presents the main areas of focus for the U.S. that is critical to the future success of Africa as declared in the U.S Policy in Sub-Saharan Africa](#)

[U.S. creates a new strategic partnership with Nigeria to strengthen bilateral ties on energy, regional security and good governance](#)

Multilateral Organizations

AfDB

[As the financial crisis is reducing, AfDB estimates it will sell fewer bonds to fund its lending for development projects, \\$2 billion less than in 2009](#)

AU

[African Ministers of Finance and Economic Development commit to placing agriculture at the core of growth policies](#)

[Africa Finance Ministers discuss climate change and development in Africa](#)

[AU calls for an integrated strategy to fight against piracy on the continent](#)

[AU member states launch a new campaign in the fight against human trafficking](#)

ECOWAS

[ECOWAS calls on its EU partners to assist regional efforts to limit the proliferation of small arms and light weapons in West Africa](#)

EU

[EU gives the government of Malawi \\$12m to improve food security](#)

[EU announces that it will start training about 2,000 Somali soldiers to help strengthen the country's shaky transitional government](#)

IMF

[IMF member countries reject Fund's involvement in green fund](#)

IPU

[More than 600 Parliamentarians from 124 countries resolve to legislate strictly against corruption and organized crime](#)

OECD

[Participants of the High Level Event on South-South Cooperation and Capacity Development commit to promote and implement good practices to tackle global development challenges and achieve the MDGs](#)

UN

[2010 Economic Report on Africa states that, due to the effects of climate change in the region, agricultural output is expected to decrease by 50% and will result in severe undernourishment](#)

[UN shows Kenya's links to both sides in Somalia- the Islamic militants and the Transitional Federal Government](#)

[Summary of key points emerging from the UN High Level Dialogue on Financing for Development: 23-24 March 2010](#)

WHO

[WHO will grant \\$3m for Angola's polio eradication program](#)

Opinions

[Pambazuka News: Paradigm Shift for the African Diaspora, 1 April 2010](#)

It is time for a paradigm shift in the relationship between African countries and its Diaspora. The author states that a collaborative position designed to promote good governance and improve domestic investment climate is essential.

[The African Executive \(Kenya\): Africa Can Learn from China, 7 April 2010](#)

Author states that "China offer lessons for Africa, if we take time to study how they are wrestling dominant global systems." The African continent should stop exchanging its wealth for goodies from western nations, but should learn from China and start to invest in the African person.

[Le Journal du Dimanche \(France\): "Aidez-vous, aidez l'Afrique!" 4 April 2010](#)

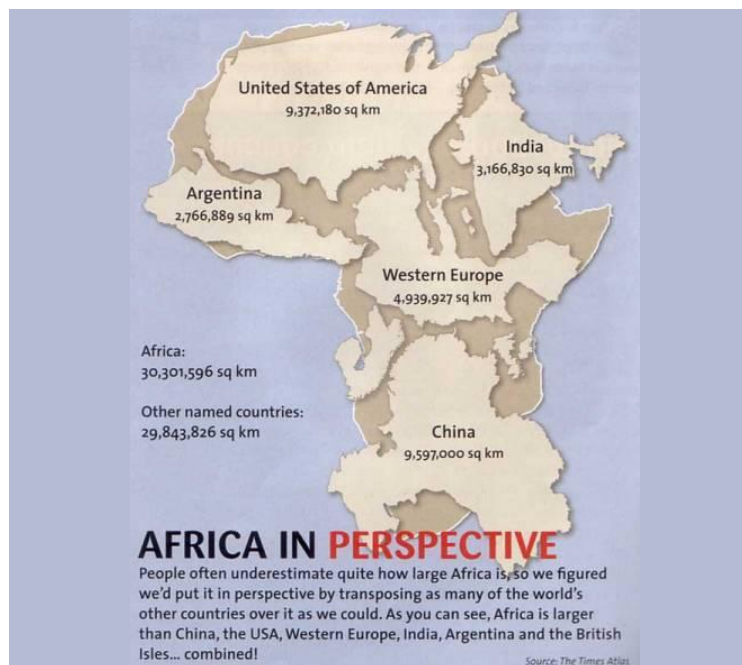
In an interview, Bob Geldof expresses disappointment with France and accuses the nation for forgetting Africa and not honoring its aid commitments. As France will be the hosting the G8/G20 next year, helping and investing in Africa will be crucial to be worthy of that status.

[World Resources Institute: "Associating" with the Copenhagen Accord: What Does It Mean? 25 March 2010](#)

Countries reluctant to associate with the Copenhagen Accord, including those in association with it have clearly noted that they are unhappy with its content and manner in which it was concluded. As the UNFCCC prepares for its next formal meeting, a specialist on international environmental law attempts to address issues relating to the status of the Accord.

[Business Daily \(Kenya\): Why oil should not be EAC's curse, 17 March 2010](#)

A Ugandan based journalist says "the big bucks of energy could help open up the forthcoming EAC Common Market or they could become entangled in state meddle and cronyism." The oil discoveries and exploration throughout the region should be a blessing instead of a resource curse.



“Today, a proactive African regime can more freely choose its diplomatic friends and financing...”

Patrick Smith, Editor of the Africa Report

In the blogs....

[Celebrating Progress Africa Blog: Africa deserves better leadership, 5 April 2010](#)- The author argues that poverty, unemployment, environmental degradation, corruption, famine and ethnic strife common in Africa is largely attributable to bad leadership and that "operationalised transformative leadership will steer the African continent to prosperity."

Calendar

- 12-13 April** [3rd COMESA Investment Forum](#): Sharm El Sheik, Egypt
- 12-16 April** [WMO African Ministerial Conference on Weather, Climate and Water Information](#): Nairobi, Kenya
- 12-16 April** UN Commission on Population & Development: New York, U.S.A.
- 15 April** 4th IBSA Summit: Brasilia, Brazil
- 19-21 April** Continental Conference on Maternal, Infant and Child Health in Africa: Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
- 20-21 April** High Level Meeting of the [Africa-EU Energy Partnership \(AEEP\)](#): Vienna, Austria
- 20-22 April** [2010 Montreal Millennium Summit](#): Quebec City, Canada
- 21-23 April** Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) Partnership Platform meeting, Johannesburg, South Africa
- 24-25 April** 2010 Spring Meetings of the IMF and the WB Group: Washington, D.C. U.S.A
- 26-27 April** Global Water Summit 2010 on "[Transforming the World of Water](#)": Paris, France
- 27-28 April** OECD/ China-DAC Study Group Event on "[Agriculture, Food Security and Rural Development for Growth and Poverty Reduction](#)." Bamako, Mali

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