

60th Anniversary of Independence

On New Year's Day 1956 the Republic of the Sudan was born. It stood on the foundations of many African kingdoms in Nubia, Darfur, Kordofan, Blue Sultanate and South Sudan.

The declaration of independence came about peacefully when the first elected parliament of 1953 voted unanimously for complete independence from the Anglo-Egyptian colonial administration.

Sixty years on, the Sudan maintains good relations with Britain (which has no sanctions on the Sudan) and Egypt, as well as the Republic of South Sudan which was inaugurated on 9th July 2011 as a result of an overwhelming vote for secession by the people of South Sudan.

This year's celebrations coincided with a very significant milestone : the Inclusive National Dialogue which started on 10th October last year together with a ceasefire in order to help reach a consensus on the most intractable national issues on the table. Many armed rebel groups were hesitant but have now joined the IND - the latest is the New Justice and Equality Movement (NJEM).

Another positive development was the successful sessions of informal talks in Addis Ababa with the SPLM-N, which is fighting the government in the Blue Nile area and South Kordofan. The talks will be resumed with a hope to reach an agreement that will allow the SPLM to join the Inclusive National Dialogue.

All this shows an all round political will to consolidate peace and stability. The government has already pledged to implement the recommendations of the Inclusive National Dialogue.

Many foreign dignitaries have attended this year's Independence celebrations. The Sudanese Foreign Minister Professor Ibrahim Ghandour welcomed his counterpart, the South Sudanese Foreign Minister Dr. Barnaba Marial Benjamin (who arrived as a representative of H.E. President Silva Kiir Myardit). The visit was an opportunity to address many issues, including implementation of the 2012 Cooperation Agreement, commercial exchanges, oil and future relations.

It was declared that South Sudanese pupils in the Sudan, will be exempted from foreign students' regulations and treated like Sudanese pupils.

The Sudan has celebrated the 60th anniversary of independence in an atmosphere of confidence because it is a relative oasis of stability and peace in the region, welcoming hundreds of thousands of displaced and refugees. It is a country which looks forward to the future with pride, dignity and optimism.

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