

## **The Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA)**

*Adapted from the broadcast audio segment; use the audio player to listen to the story in its entirety.*

In January 2011, the South Sudanese will vote on whether to break off from the north and create their own nation. But how did violence and a vote for independence come about? General Lazaro Sumbeiywo, Kenya's Special Envoy to the Sudanese peace process; Senator John Danforth, former Special Envoy for Peace in Sudan; and Ambassador Alan Gouly, former UK Special Representative for Sudan, devoted nearly three years of their lives to help North and South Sudanese officials agree on a peaceful end to a bloody war.

It began when General Sumbeiywo got a call from the Kenyan president Daniel Arap Moi.

"I want to give you a task and I don't want you to refuse it.' He already put me in a position where it was difficult. He says, 'Okay, I want us to negotiate a peace agreement in the Sudan in the next six months.'"

At the time Sumbeiywo was busy running Kenya's army.

"I said, 'Mr. President, can I come and discuss this with you? Because you know I already have my hands full in the army.' He said, 'No, I have decided.' That was the end of the story."

But it was just the start of the general's attempt to bring peace to Sudan. Sumbeiywo's new initiative attracted the attention of Alan Gouly, a long time British diplomat with years of experience in Sudan.

"I remember talking to the British Secretary of State for International Development and she asked me what are the chances of success of this venture? I said, 'Less than 10%.' She said, 'As much as that? Let's go for it.'"

The reason for at least a glimmer of hope came from the U.S. and the recognition that the newly elected president George Bush cared about Sudan. Evangelical leaders close to him were alarmed at the suffering of the Sudanese Christians. They wanted it stopped.

The president announced former Senator John Danforth as special envoy to Sudan. Danforth remembers one conversation with the president in particular.

"I think this is pretty close to an exact quote, 'If they can figure it out, anybody can.' From his standpoint the 'it' was how in Africa – the fault line between Arab-Africa and non-Arab Africa – how do two groups live together and work out their difficulties?"

To help answer that question, Danforth traveled to Sudan. After seeing that both north and south were serious about peace, he threw his support behind the talks Sumbeiywo was conducting. Even with this momentum this Sudanese had huge obstacles to overcome.

Alan Gouly remembers that early on in the peace talks, tempers flared.

"Northern Sudanese tend to look down on the southerners as second class. There was one occasion when a northern delegate referred to the southern team across the table as 'Abd' which means slaves, a reference to the slaving history of northerners into the south. Of course the southerner wasn't going to stand for that. Waving his finger at the northerner, he said, 'Look in a mirror. You're as black as I am.'"

Southerners resented their second-class status and efforts by the Muslim leadership in Khartoum to impose Islamic law and Arab customs.

After weeks of back and forth a major breakthrough came. The north agreed to allow a referendum in the south on self-determination but only after both sides agreed to make continued unity with the north attractive. But then negotiations bogged down over this sticky issue of oil revenues, and how the Islamic laws of the north and the secular south would co-exist? By late 2003 the north-south negotiations had been eclipsed by events in Sudan's western territory of Darfur.

As the horror of Darfur unfolded and the charges of genocide entered the debate, the U.S. scrambled to salvage the north-south peace deal. In late 2004, Senator Danforth got the talks back on track.

Danforth ushered fellow UN Security Council representatives on a journey from New York to Nairobi. In the Kenyan capital, they passed a special resolution urging both the representatives from North and South Sudan to seal the agreement. General Sumbeiywo applauded the success.

"It stopped the war that is the major achievement. It gave the people of Southern Sudan the right at the referendum to decide what their destiny would be."

That referendum on southern independence was to take place in six years. In the meantime, the south was granted autonomy and freedom from Islamic laws in the north. There were interim deals on the disengagement of armed forces and an agreement to split the south's oil fifty-fifty for the next six years.

But for all its accomplishments, a host of long term issues remained unresolved – how to share the south's oil, the fate of several provinces along the north south border, and where that border would be drawn.

The legacy of missed opportunities since the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) was signed overshadows the upcoming referendum. The north and south are still struggling to resolve the outstanding provisions of the CPA and failure could lead to conflict.

---

*Deborah Amos speaks with Sean Carberry about the unresolved details of the split between north and south that could prompt conflict.*

**Deborah Amos (DA):** When the CPA was signed six years ago, there was an idea of a united north and south. That was still a possibility. Why wasn't a united Sudan made more attractive to the southerners?

**Sean Carberry (SC):** Probably the single biggest factor behind that was the death of John Garang soon after the CPA was signed. He was the moral and spiritual leader of the south. He was the one who was driving a vision. When he died, he left a tremendous vacuum and the south started to fracture in terms of its focus. In addition, this six-year time window allowed for a lack of urgency. Over time, inertia just started pulling the two sides apart. It got to the point where unity is simply not an option or consideration for the south now.

**DA:** There are several provisions of the CPA that should have been resolved by now. Why last minute negotiations and can they fix it in time?

**SC:** This isn't really that much of a surprise even though it is a frustration. Historically, there has been a lot of frustration that these issues haven't been resolved. I remember being in Khartoum in 2007 talking to the top U.S. diplomat there at the time. He was saying that there was not enough pressure on resolving the CPA issues. He was concerned in particular that Darfur was eclipsing the CPA and allowing these provisions to just get kicked down to the road to the point where they are now. Today, a lot of people believe that there will be a last minute deal that will emerge before the referendum but there is also a belief it might not happen. The referendum will go forward and then the two sides will try to hammer out these final details afterwards.

**DA:** Let's talk a little bit about this issue of borders and agreements over grazing. This is going to become a much bigger issue if there are two Sudans. Have the north and the south figured their borders out and have they figured out the grazing rights?

**SC:** Borders is another long-standing issue of contention. It's one of those issues that many people believe has to happen for the referendum. In Sudan, herding and livestock is a main way of life for people. People from the north often graze into the south and that's a huge concern whether or not that will continue. It's clear that the south plans to go ahead with the referendum regardless of whether this issue is resolved.

**DA:** There are also reports of massive shifts of population coming south. These are southerners who have lived most of their lives in the urban centers of Khartoum. They are coming home to a more rural economy and to less opportunities perhaps. How is the southern government managing these returnees?

**SC:** Right now they are struggling to manage that. You have a lot of people who have been outside of the south and ended up getting education and skills. They are coming back with better skills and experience than a lot of people in the south. They are viewed as an asset and the hope is that they are going to come in and help build the new South Sudan. You have a lot of poor, uneducated, and unskilled people who are coming back and many of them are arriving at places like the port in Juba. They get off a boat with their possessions and their families. They end up sitting under the trees along the banks of the river waiting for distant families still living in the south, or possibly the government, or an NGO to help them relocate back to wherever it was that they fled in the past.

**DA:** In some ways, the referendum on January 9th is the easy part. It's all the issues that have to be settled afterwards that are the hard part...

**SC:** That's true because certainly the more they don't settle before January 9th, the more they have to settle after. There is a six-month period between January 9th and the actual end of the CPA in July when South Sudan would actually become an independent nation. In that time, they are supposed to work out all these issues and many other issues on top of that. For example, the share of the country's debt – how is that going to be allocated between north and south? What's the south going to do for currency? There's a host of issues and a lot of questions. If these are negotiated after the referendum, would there be the same sense of urgency and pressure on both sides to get these done? Could these things linger and take years the way it's been seen in some other post-colonial situations in Africa where some borders have still not been resolved for decades?