

# **MEDIA MONITORING OF POST REFERENDUM PERIOD**

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*MEDIA COVERAGE FINDINGS*

PERIOD 26 JANUARY – 20 FEBRUARY 2011



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## Foreword

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The Sudan Media and Elections Consortium (SMEC) was established in January 2010 to implement a project on media and elections in Sudan. Following the successful completion and reporting on the Media coverage of the April 2010 elections, the SMEC was once more contracted to undertake a number of media related activities in relation to the South Sudan Referendum of January 2011. Monitoring media coverage of politics and referendum is one of the two components of the project in parallel with training and mentoring programme for the journalists and media houses.

This second report contains the main findings concerning media coverage of the post referendum period<sup>1</sup>. Monthly reports will be published at the end of March and April 2011.

Starting from mid-December 2010, the SMEC has been carrying out a targeted monitoring focusing on referendum coverage, agenda setting, offensive speech related to referendum as well as media developments during and after the campaign period. The methodology includes both quantitative and qualitative tools for media analysis. The monitoring takes place in two joint media monitoring units, one in Khartoum and one in Juba. The SMEC observes three TV stations during prime time, six radio channels during peak times and fifteen newspapers on a daily basis<sup>2</sup>. The media included in the sample have been selected according to a number of criteria, including territorial reach, estimated audience and circulation.

All selected media are monitored according to a standard methodology of content analysis used in a number of elections since 1997. International organisations and civic society groups adopted and tested it in a number of countries.

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This report is a part of the Strengthening of Media component 'Support to Southern Sudan Referendum Project (SSRP)', funded by United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and implemented by the Sudan Media and Elections Consortium, a group of national and international organisations with expertise in media support. These are Sudanese Development Initiative (SUDIA), International Media Support (IMS), Norwegian Peoples Aid (NPA), Osservatorio di Pavia, Arab Working Group for media monitoring and Fojo media institute.

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<sup>1</sup> The First Report prepared by SMEC was issued on 25 January 2011 and it covered the referendum campaign period as well as the voting days.

<sup>2</sup> The sample included:

a. Khartoum Unit

Press: Ajas Alhurria, Akir Lahza, Alyaam, Eltayer, Al-Sudani, Akbar Alyoum, Al-Sahafa, Al-Rai Alaam and Al-Intibaha

Audiovisual: Omdurman Radio, Peace Radio, Sudan TV and Blue Nile TV

b. Juba Unit

Press: The Citizen, Sudan Tribune, Sudan Vision, Khartoum Monitor, The Democrat and Juba Post

Audiovisual: South Sudan Radio (SSR), Miraya Radio, Bakhita Radio, Voice of People Radio (VoP) and South Sudan TV (SSTV).

## I. Media Developments after the Referendum

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### a. An overview of media bills in Southern Sudan

In 2007 new media bills for Southern Sudan were developed by a consortium of national and international organisations, including the Association for Media Development in Southern Sudan (AMDISS) formed by representatives of the media sector. After a withdrawal of the bills in Parliament, amendments and different phases of discussions, in 2010, AMDISS engaged with Government of South Sudan (GoSS) so to have the media bills passed before the Referendum would take place in January 2011.

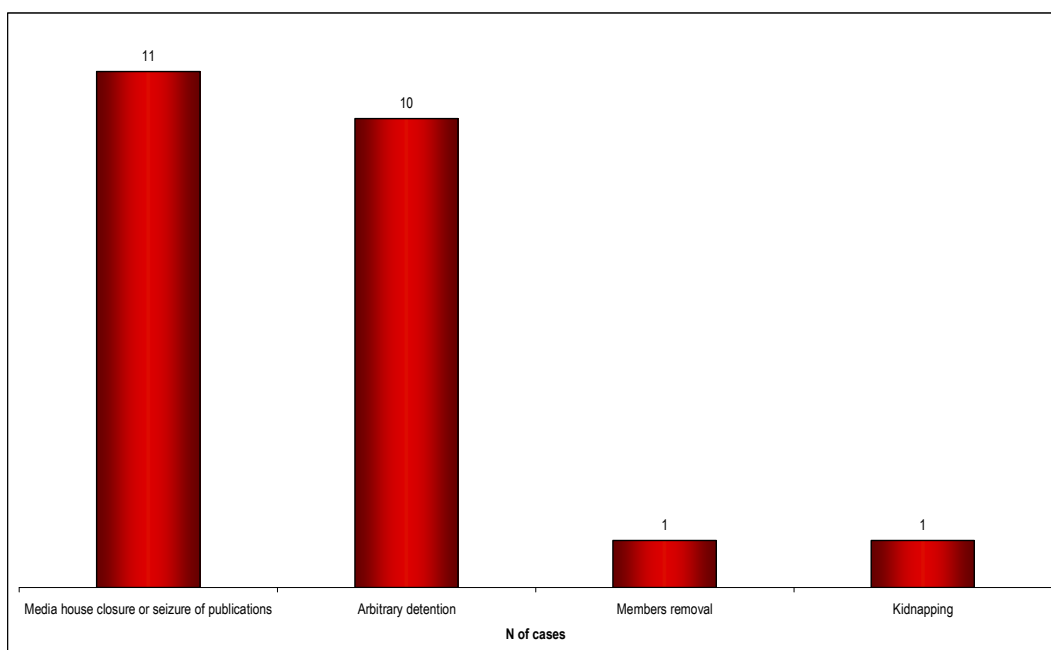
The Right to Information Bill was prioritised and, in a consultative meeting held in December 2010, a draft was completed to prepare a text serving as a provisional order by presidential decree. The provisional order for the Right to Information was not signed by the president as such since provisional orders cannot include punitive measures and it was said that the bill would include these. Since the media bills were officially withdrawn in 2009, they might now have to undergo the whole process of approval again. Currently the bills are deposited at the Ministry of Legal and Constitutional Affairs.

On 24 February 2011 in a meeting held in Juba with AMDISS and media practitioners, GOSS Vice President Riak Machar, Joyce Kwaje, chair of the Parliamentary Committee of Information, and the GOSS Minister of Information Marial Benjamin, the Minister of Information stated that the media bills would be endorsed before July 2011, the official day for South Sudan's independence.

### b. Media environment

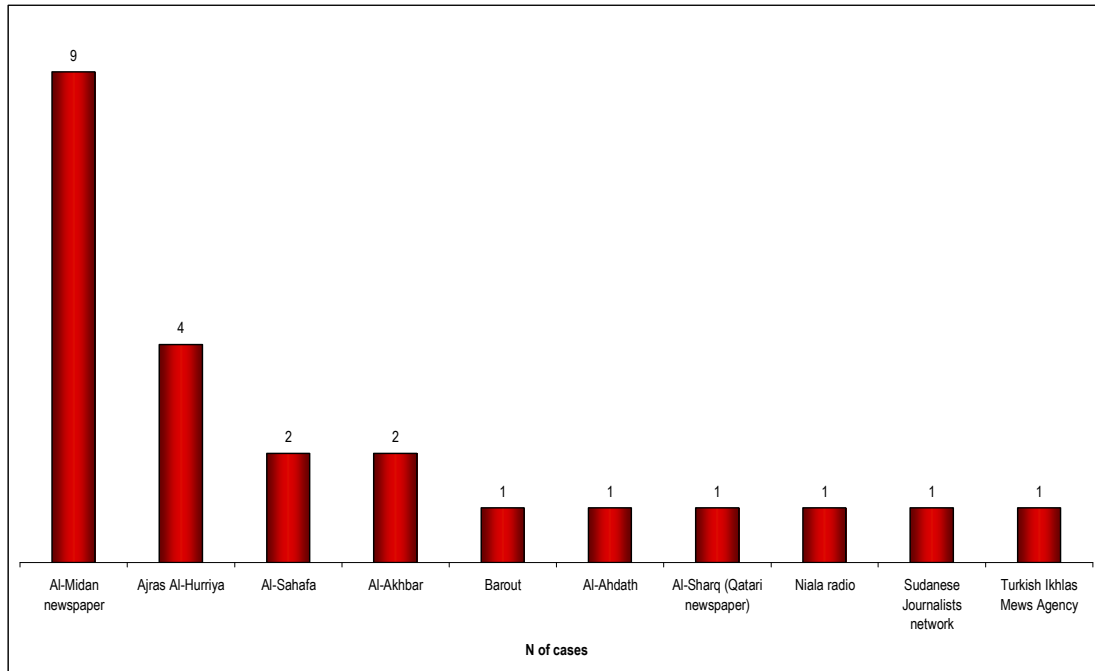
In the North, several cases of arbitrary detentions and harassments were reported, particularly all through and in the aftermath of the demonstrations against the Government held at 30 January in Khartoum. During the protests several journalists were detained and the National Intelligence Security Forces carried out arrests and closure of media houses which covered the dissent against the ruling forces.

Chart 1 Episodes of violations of freedom of the press in the North (30 January – 2 February)



Newspapers were the target of this repression both in Khartoum and in the States. Several journalists were detained when covering January's protests and media houses were seized for a day. The police prevented the members of the Sudanese Journalists Network from protesting in front of the National Press Council to demand to release of Al-Midan newspaper editors and seven journalists were then arrested.

**Chart 2 Newspapers victims of harassment in the North (30 January – 2 February)**



In the South, a number of media professionals raised serious concerns about the possibility for the media to freely operate in the aftermath of referendum. As a matter of fact several episodes of harassment were observed during this period in the Southern area.

Bhakita Radio received a visit from a security officer after the Referendum with the warning '*They should not get into politics*' according to the management of the station. As the security officer could not deliver the warning on paper as requested by the radio, the warning should not be considered as an official warning.

The English-language Khartoum Monitor experienced various challenges regarding to freedom of the press since the referendum is over. According to editor-in-chief, Alfred Taban, there is a financial form of censorship as the taxes considerably increased. In addition, the paper has been facing staff 'challenges' since the Northern staff does not want to move to the South as planned by the newspaper management and insist on financial compensation.

On 20 February, the premises of the Juba-based newspaper The Citizen were attacked by armed men in plainclothes waving pistols and shouting threats. According to editor-in-chief Nhial Bol these were security officials. He suspected that this incursion was the reaction to an editorial he wrote about the police. The GoSS Information Minister Barnaba Marial Benjamin labelled the episode as 'isolated incident'. A few days later Mr Bol was arrested himself in relation to the same issue and was released four hours later.

In a positive development, the Citizen took its printing press in Juba in operation; it is Juba's first independent printing press for newspapers.

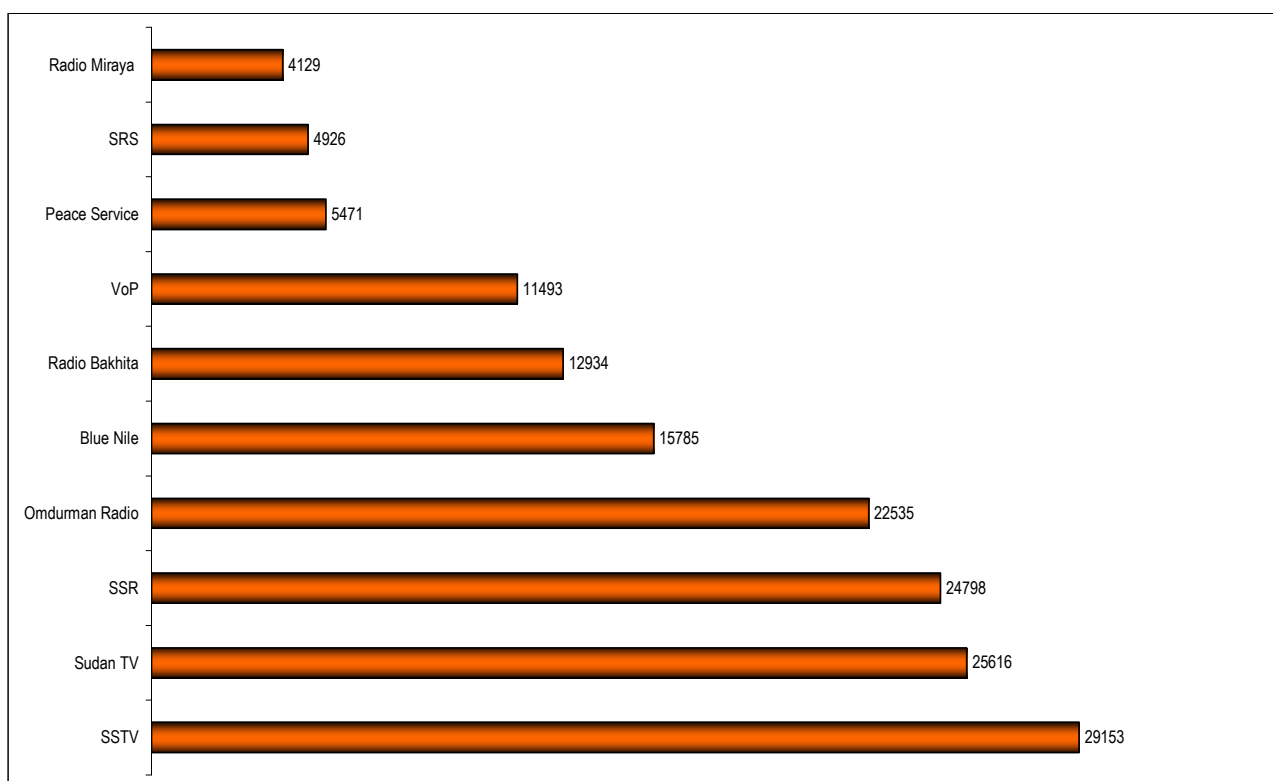
## II. Monitoring Media Coverage of the Post Referendum Period: main findings and conclusions

### 1. General Media Offer

During the present period, the volume of the coverage concerning politics and issues of public interest – including post referendum matters - was generally high although levels of attention for these issues differed in the various outlets observed.

Omdurman Radio, South Sudan Radio and Television (SSR and SSTV). Blue Nile TV and Sudan TV were the media houses devoting the widest attention to political communication. Media coverage resorted to different formats to cover politics and referendum: news, reports and analysis focusing on referendum results. Radio stations broadcasted several programmes in many local languages.

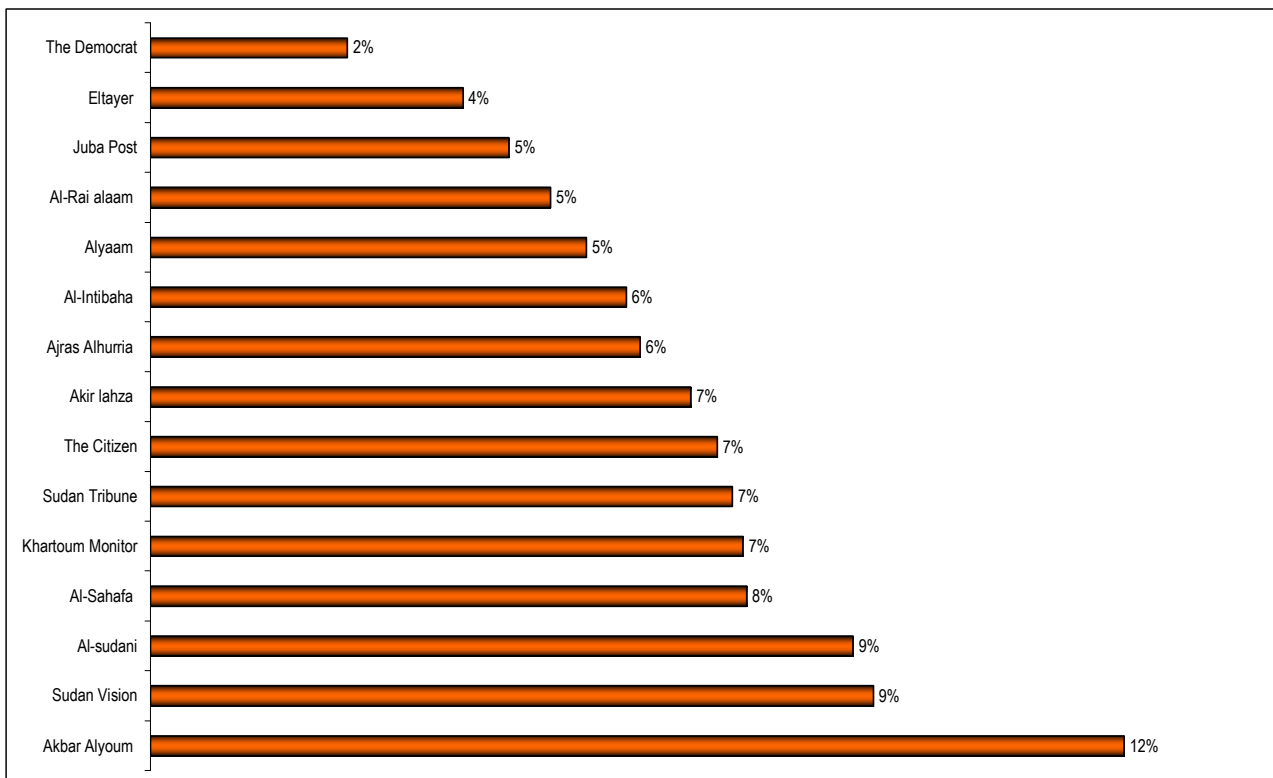
**Chart 3 Volume of political communication in newscast on radio and television**



Base: 156840 seconds

The press showed different levels of attention to politics, with Akbar Alyoum, Sudan Vision, Al-Sudani and Al-Sahafa being the outlets with the highest level of coverage.

Chart 4 Volume of political communication in news coverage of the press



Base: 495030 cm2

After voting days and post voting period, the overall volume of the coverage for referendum sensibly decreased although its journalistic relevance differed in Northern and Southern outlets, with the latter still devoting large part of their reporting to post-referendum matters.

In relation to referendum issues, media houses broadly covered results announcement at all administrative levels: local, states, South and national. No complaints or doubts about the fairness of referendum were reported and news coverage paid large attention to the positive assessment of the referendum process on behalf of the various international and national observers. The media also ensured constant information regarding all the activities and press conferences of South Sudan Referendum Commission including results proclamation, the announcement of the end of the referendum process, the challenges faced by the referendum administration. Relevant space was also ensured to post referendum discussions regarding boundaries delimitation, nationality and transitional period arrangements between North and South.

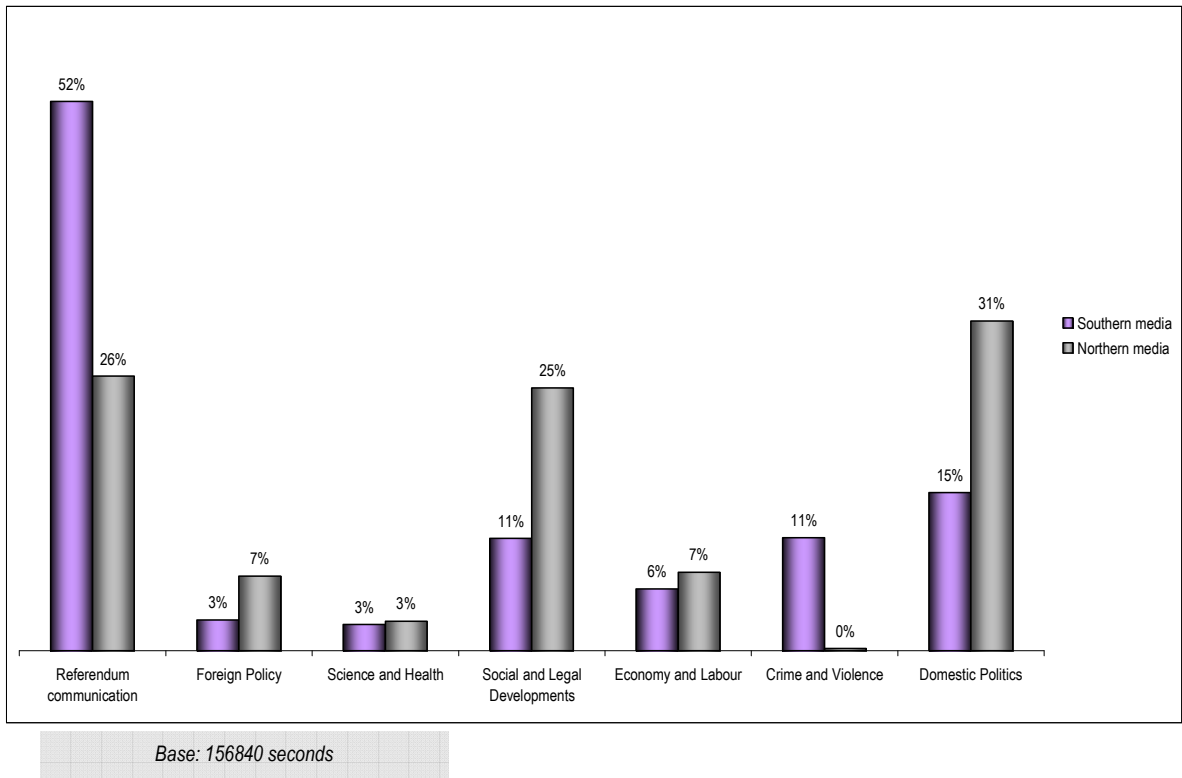
Audiovisual media targeting Southern audiences<sup>3</sup> showed a higher level of referendum-related coverage than media addressing the Northern public<sup>4</sup> with the former allotting referendum an average of 52% of the total coverage devoted to politics, and the latter giving to this theme 26%. As a matter of fact, Arab-language media focused on a broader array of issues, among which domestic politics and social and legal developments were the most relevant.

<sup>3</sup> These include: SSTV, SSR, Radio Miraya, Radio Bakhita, VoP, and SRS.

<sup>4</sup> These include: Sudan TV, Blue Nile, Omdurman Radio, and Peace Service Radio.

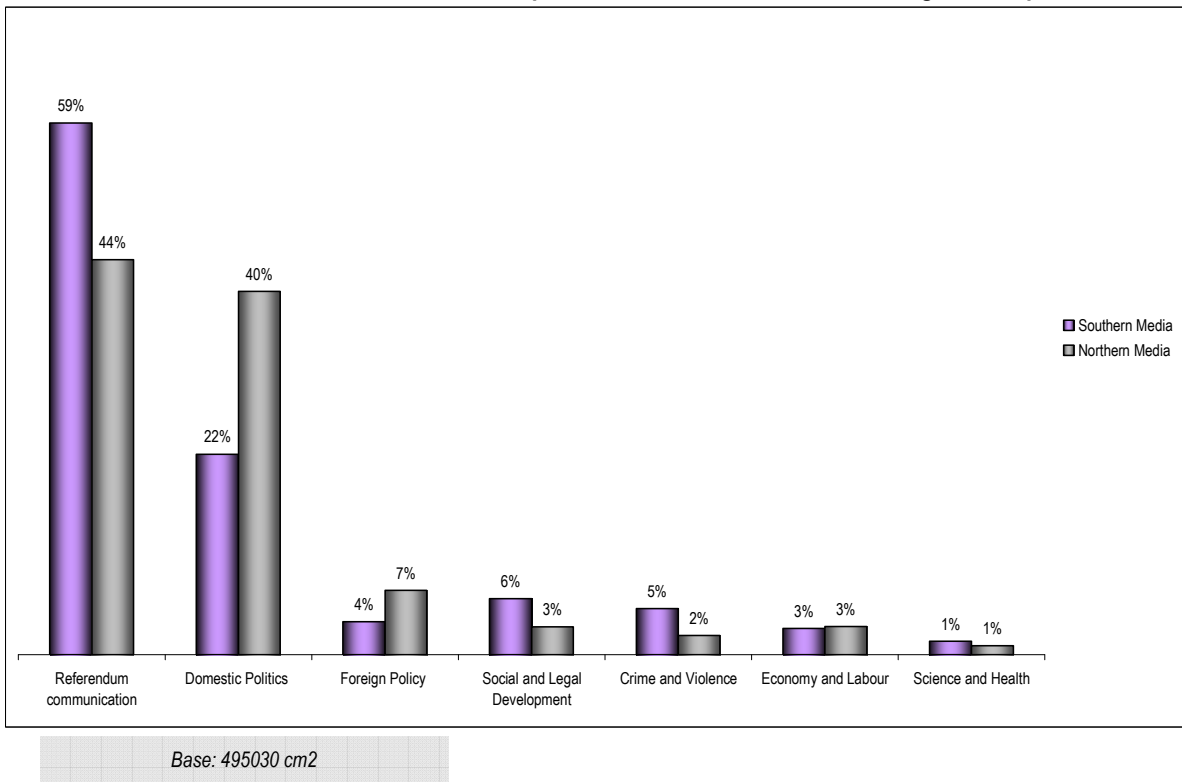


**Chart 5 Volume of referendum and other political issues in news cast on radio and television**



A similar trend was present in the print media although with less relevant differences between Northern and Southern media: those newspapers targeting the South<sup>5</sup> allotted to referendum-related issues 59% to politics, while the Arab-language press devoted 44% to the same kind of topic.

**Chart 6 Volume of referendum and other political issues in the editorial coverage<sup>6</sup> of the press**



<sup>5</sup> These include: The Citizen, Khartoum Monitor, Sudan Tribune, Sudan Vision, Juba Post, The Democrat.

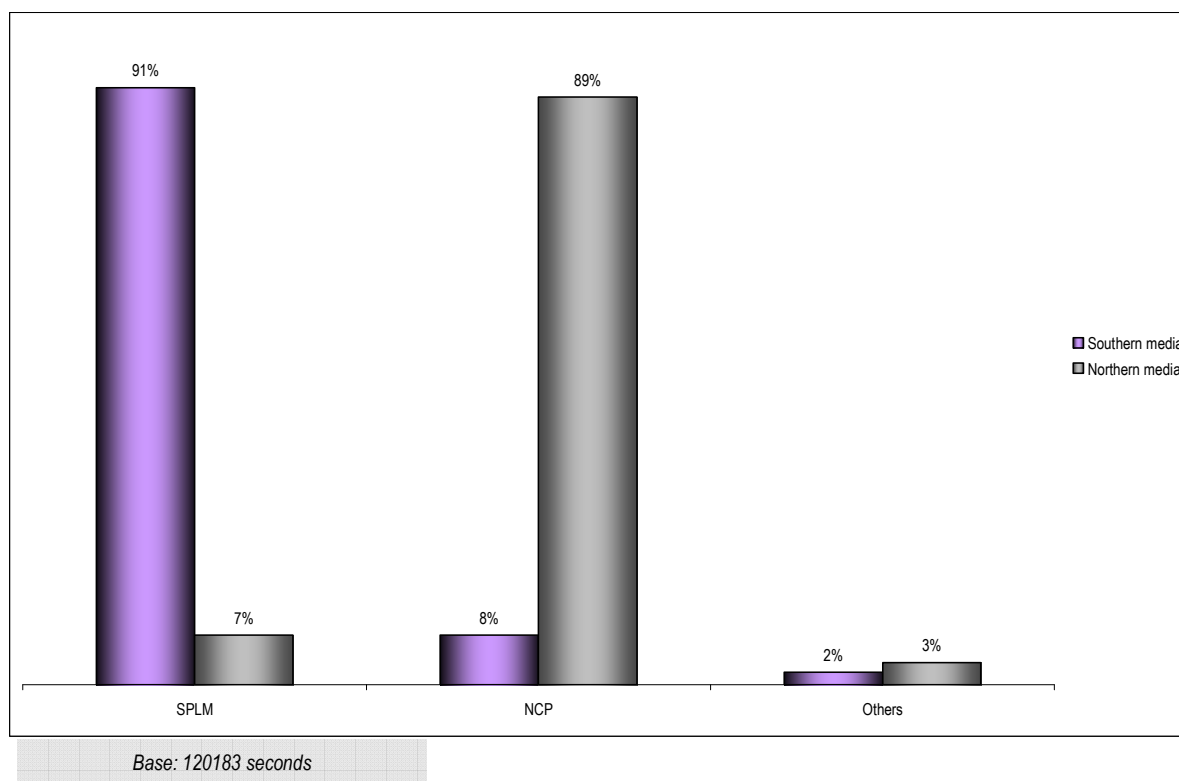
<sup>6</sup> Editorial coverage includes all the formats that are directly under the editorial responsibility of the media house like: news coverage, editorials, analysis, interviews, and comments.

## 2. Referendum Coverage on Television and Radio

The polarisation of the coverage between the two main parties, the National Congress Party (NCP) and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), which was the main feature of the coverage over the past year, increased further on. This trend dominated the coverage of audiovisual media where the two main parties received more than 97% of the overall news airtime while all the other parties together were allotted 3%.

The allocation of airtime was correlated with the geographical targets of each media outlets; media focusing on Northern audiences devoted the largest coverage to the NCP, while the media based in the South or addressing Southern issues allotted almost their entire airtime to the SPLM.

Chart 7 Allocation of airtime among parties in newscast on radio and television<sup>7</sup>



The allocation of airtime by individual media outlet showed that the dominance of the two main political forces was a constant feature; although higher levels of pluralism were observed on Peace Service, VoP and Radio Miraya, where a more balanced coverage between the SPLM and the NCP was present.

Table 1 Allocation of airtime among parties in newscast by channel

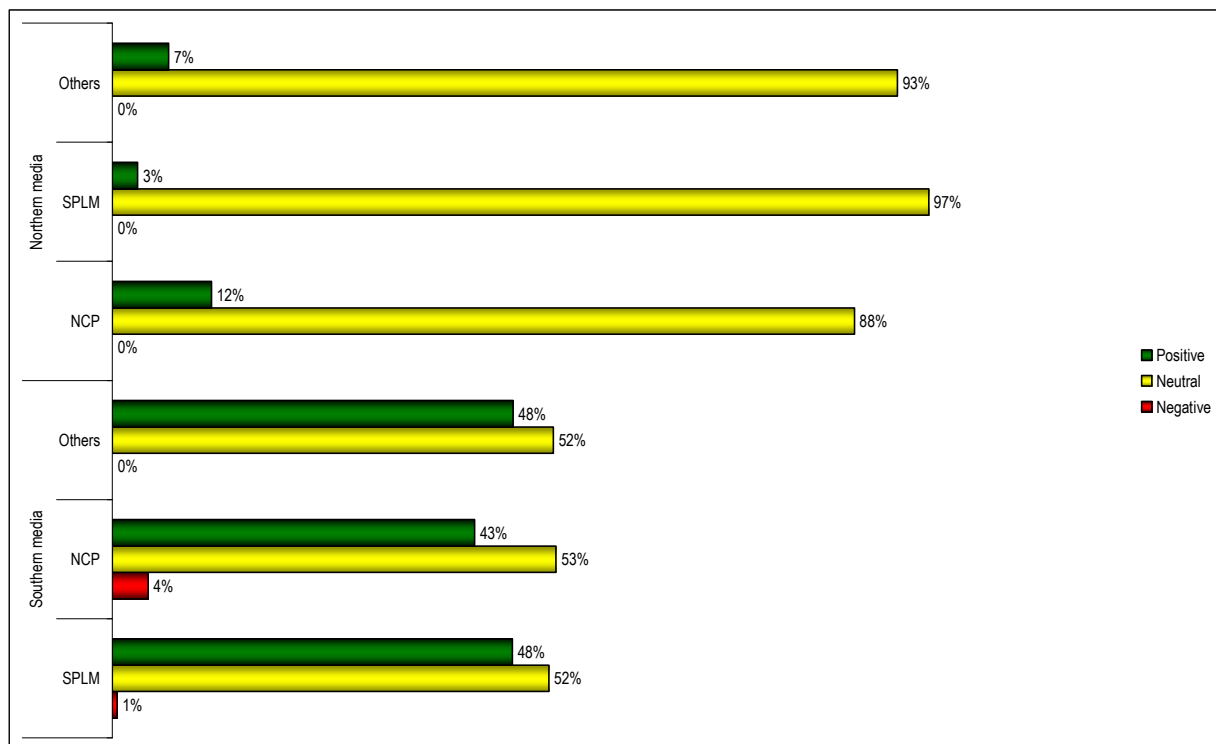
MEDIA SECTOR	CHANNEL	SPLM	NCP	Other	Total
Radio	Omdurman Radio	8%	87%	4%	100%
	SSR	93%	5%	2%	100%
	VoP	75%	23%	2%	100%
	Radio Bakhita	85%	7%	7%	100%
	Peace Service	29%	70%	0%	100%
	Radio Miraya	77%	21%	2%	100%
	SRS	91%	7%	2%	100%

<sup>7</sup> The category Other includes: UNP, NUP, DUPO, UPRD, DUP, UDF, SPLM-DC, UDSF, SA, USAP, Other, UNPM, URRP, SSDF, NASP, NDA.

TV	SSTV	99%	1%	0%	100%
	Sudan TV	4%	90%	5%	100%
	Blue Nile	3%	97%	0%	100%
Grand Total		54%	44%	3%	100%
<i>Base in absolute values (seconds)</i>		64468	52680	3035	120183

The tone of the journalists was generally either neutral or positive in all outlets monitored, with the SPLM receiving the widest positive visibility (45% of their total news airtime). Southern media tended to use positive tones in their coverage, while Arabic-language radios and televisions adopted a more neutral reporting style. Despite the limited episodes of patent partiality, Northern media houses showed an inner bias by using misleading headlines and pictures, mixing opinion with news, electing news and experts to promote opinions or ideology of the writer. In the South, media coverage was negatively affected by a number of issues hampering proper coverage of issues of public interest including the resort to politicians and government officers as the only sources of information and the consequent lack of alternative voices.

**Chart 8 Tone of the coverage for parties in news cast on radio and television**

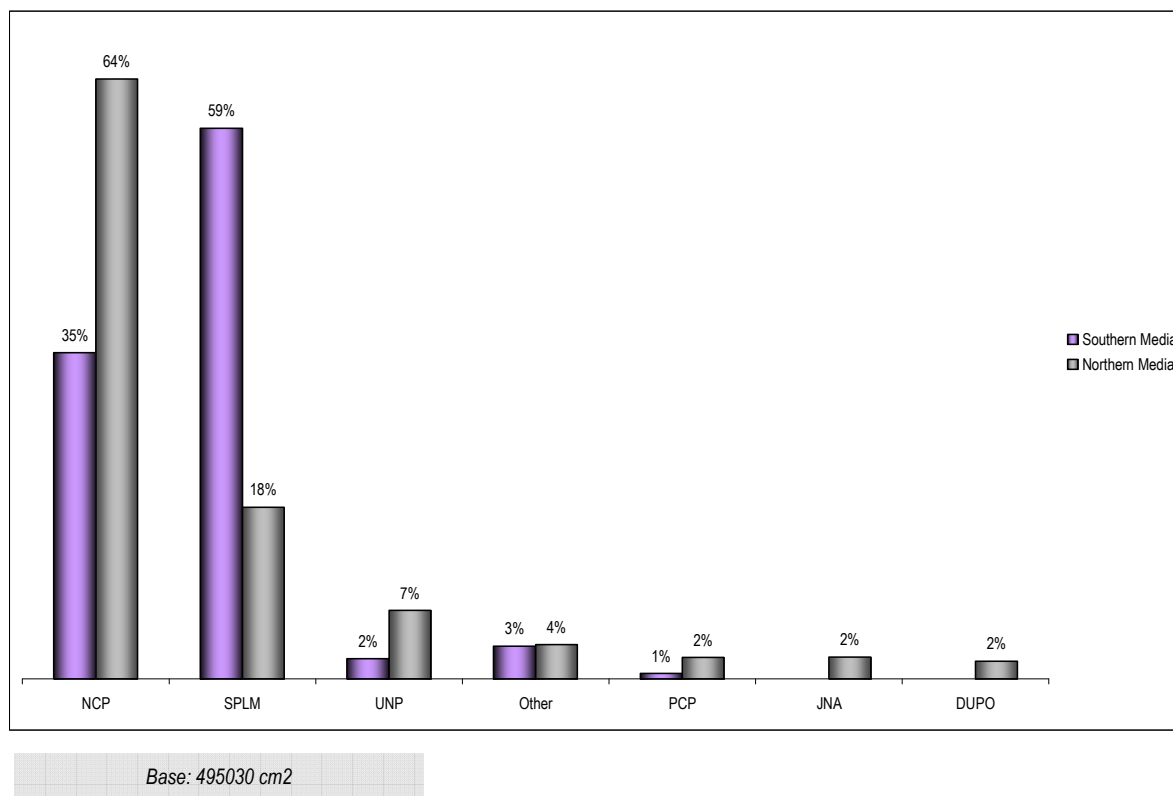


Base: 120183 seconds

### 3. Referendum Coverage in the Press

The NCP and the SPLM dominated the political coverage of the press although newspapers showed a higher level of pluralism than radio and television. As a matter of fact, overall, a wider range of parties received some visibility in print media. However, the ruling parties were given an average aggregated space of more than 85% of the total space devoted to politics. Clear-cut differences based on geographical targets of each media outlet emerged here too: newspapers based or addressing North Sudan<sup>8</sup> devoted the largest amount of space to the NCP while media houses targeting the South<sup>9</sup> devoted to the SPLM more than half of their coverage.

Chart 9 Allocation of airtime among parties in the editorial coverage of the press<sup>10</sup>



The allocation of space by newspaper showed the constant tendency to ensure the largest visibility to one of the two main parties; however, other forces – particularly the Umma National Party - received some attention. A few newspapers adopted a more balanced approach to political coverage and ensured that a wider variety of voices could reach the public; these include: Al-Sahafa, Khartoum Monitor, Ajrass Alhurria, Al-Intibaha, Sudan Tribune, Alyaam and The Democrat.

Table 2 Allocation of space among parties in editorial coverage by newspaper

NEWSPAPER	NCP	SPLM	UNP	Other	PCP	JNA	DUPO	Total
Akbar Alyoum	67%	13%	11%	4%	1%	2%	2%	100%
Al-Sudani	73%	14%	6%	2%	1%	3%	1%	100%
Sudan Vision	68%	27%	1%	4%	0%	0%	0%	100%
Al-Sahafa	61%	19%	5%	2%	7%	2%	3%	100%
Akir lahza	74%	12%	4%	4%	2%	2%	2%	100%

<sup>8</sup> These include: Ajras Alhurria, Akir lahza, Alyaam, Eltayer, Al-Sudani, Akbar Alyoum, Al-Sahafa, Al-Rai Alaam, Al-Intibaha.

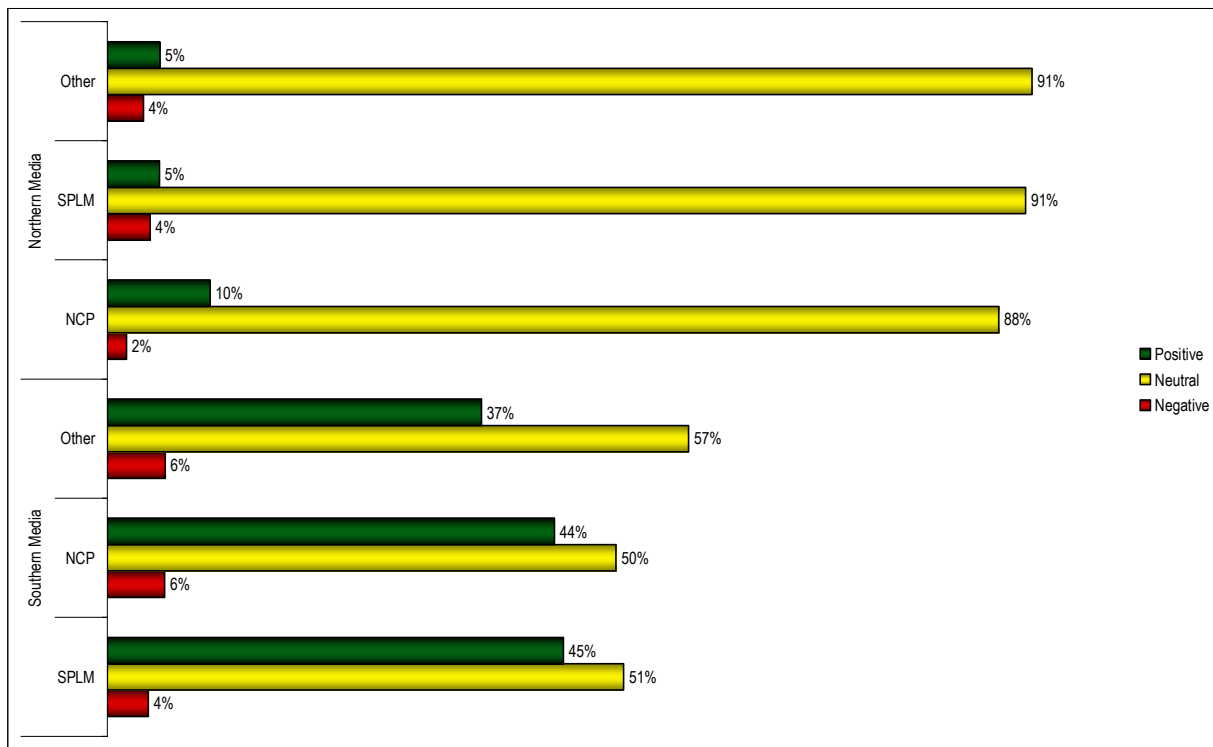
<sup>9</sup> These include: The Citizen, Khartoum Monitor, Sudan Tribune, Sudan Vision, Juba Post, The Democrat.

<sup>10</sup> The category Other includes parties with less than 1% coverage: SCP, BCP, SPLM-DC, DUP, USDF, UNPM, JFPF, SA, Other, URRP, MBO, SLM, NUP, UDF, SSDF, SANU, UPRD, PFJP, AA, DUSP, NJP, LDP, SAP, ANCP, UFP, NUDP, ADP, NSP, IMP, FWP, NRP, NDFP, ABP, UDUP, SBP, UP-C, RCP, ILP, NDUF, USSP, ANC, MSOP, USAP, SLFOP, SNFGUP, SNLP, SDESCP.

The Citizen	13%	83%	1%	3%	1%	0%	0%	100%
Khartoum Monitor	36%	58%	3%	2%	2%	0%	0%	100%
Ajras Alhurria	32%	36%	17%	4%	4%	5%	1%	100%
Al-Intibaha	59%	26%	3%	8%	1%	2%	1%	100%
Al-Rai alaam	79%	11%	4%	4%	1%	1%	1%	100%
Sudan Tribune	24%	67%	7%	2%	0%	0%	0%	100%
Juba Post	8%	87%	0%	5%	0%	0%	0%	100%
Eltayer	73%	17%	2%	3%	2%	1%	2%	100%
Alyaam	49%	28%	11%	2%	2%	4%	3%	100%
The Democrat	43%	42%	0%	14%	1%	0%	0%	100%
Total	54%	33%	6%	4%	2%	2%	1%	100%
Basis in absolute values (cm2)	200986	121204	20639	13422	6310	5696	4554	372811

Tones of the coverage were generally neutral and positive, with Southern media showing the tendency to largely use a positive style of reporting.

Chart 10 Tone of the coverage for parties in editorial coverage of the press



Base: 495030 cm2

In spite of this general lack of critical coverage, a number of episodes of inflammatory language were observed (a total of 48 cases evenly distributed between Southern and Northern media houses): they mainly involved cases of discrimination, particularly in the Southern press. In Northern newspapers several cases of defamation among politicians were observed.

## Annex I – List of abbreviations

ACRONYM	FULL NAME
AA	Ansar Alsona Party
ABC	Abyei Borders Commission
ADP	Awareness Democratic Party
AMDISS	Association for Media and Development in South Sudan
ANCP	African National Congress Party
AWG-MM	Arab Working Group for Media Monitoring
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BCP	Beja Congress Party
CPA	Comprehensive Peace Agreement
DUP	Democratic Unionist Party - Al Digair
DUPO	Democratic Unionist Party - Original
DUSP	Democratic United Salvation Party
EDG	Electoral Donors Group
EDP	Eastern Democratic Party
EPJD	Eastern Party - Justice and Development
FotS	Front of the South Party
FWP	Free Will Party
GOS	National Government of Sudan
GOSS	Government of Southern Sudan
HDP	Hagiga Democratic Party
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ILP	Islamic Liberation Party
IMP	Islamic Moderate Party
IMS	International Media Support
JAP	Juba Alliance Party
JMM	Joint Media Mechanism
JNA	Juba National Alliance
JSN	Journalists' Solidarity Network
LDP	Liberal Democrats Party
MBO	Muslim Brothers Organisation
MP	Movement Party
MSOP	Modern Sudan Organisation Party
MSUP	Maoyst Socialist Unionist Party
NASP	Nassiri Arab Socialists Party
NCP	National Council for Press and Publications
NCP	National Congress Party
NDA	National Democratic Alliance Party
NDFP	National Democratic Front Party
NDP	National Democratic Party
NDUF	National Democratic United Front
NEC	National Election Commission
NFDM	New Forces Democratic Movement
NIF	National Islamic Front
NISS	National Intelligence and Security Services
NJP	National Justice Party
NLP	National Liberation Party
NNDP	New National Democratic Party
NPA	Norwegian Peoples Aid
NPAP	National People's Alliance Party

NPC	National Press Council
NPP	National Popular Party
NRenP	National Renaissance Party
NRP	National Reform Party
NSP	New Sudan Party
NUDP	Nassiri Unionist Democratic Party
NUP	National Unionist Party
PCA	Permanent Court of Arbitration
PCongP	People's Congress Party
PCP	Popular Congress Party
PFDR	Peoples' Forces and Democratic Rights Party
PP	Pre Publication censorship
PSJP	Progress and Social Justice Party
RCP	Revolutionist Committees Party
SA	Sudan Ana Party
SANP	Sudan African National Party
SANU	Sudan African National Union
SAP	Sudan Alliance Party
SBP	Sudanese Baath Party
SConP	Sudanese Congress Party
SCP	Sudanese Communist Party
SDCMP	Sudanese Democratic Change Movement Party
SDPCES	Social Democratic Party Congress Eastern Sudan
SFLP	Sudanese Free Lions Party
SFNP	Sudanese Free National Party
SJN	Sudanese Journalists Network
SJU	Sudanese Journalist Union in Khartoum
SLFOP	Sudan Labour Forces Organisation Party
SMEC	Sudan Media and Elections Consortium
SNFGUP	South and North Funj General Union Party
SNFO	Sudanese National Front Organisation
SNLP	Sudanese National Labour Party
SPLM	Sudan People's Liberation Movement
SPLM-DC	DC - Sudan People's Liberation Movement
SRTC	Sudan Radio and Television Corporation
SSDF	South Sudan Democratic Forum
SSDP	Sudanese Socialist Democratic Party
SSolidP	Sudanese Solidarity Democratic Party
SSOUJ	Southern Sudan Union of Journalists
SSR	South Sudan Radio
SSRA	South Sudan Referendum Act
SSRC	South Sudan Referendum Commission
SSRB	South Sudan Referendum Bureau
SSTV	South Sudan Television
SSUDF	South Sudan United Democratic Front
SUDIA	Sudanese Development Initiative
SUDPC	Sudanese United Democratic Party Congress
SUFP	Sudanese United Forces Party
SUNP	Sudanese United National Party
UDF	United Democratic Front
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UDP	United Democratic Party
UDSPF	Union of Democratic Socialist Party - Fatma
UDUP	United Democratic Unionist Party
UFP	Umma Federal Party

UJOSS	Union of Journalists of Southern Sudan
UNP	Umma National Party
UP-C	Umma Party - Collective
UPopF	United Popular Front
UPRD	Umma Party - Reform and Development
URRP	Umma Renewal and Reform Party
USAP	Union of the Sudanese African Parties
USDF	United Salvation Democratic Front
USNP	United Sudan National Party
USSP	United South Sudan Party
WANUP	Wadi Al-Neel Unionist Party
WBP	White Brigade Party