



MEPs in Sudan: standards for genuine democratic elections not met

The executive and legislative elections in Sudan of 11-15 April were not in line with international standards for genuine democratic elections due to numerous shortcomings. Nevertheless, the elections were a crucial step in the implementation of the Sudanese peace agreement as they enabled an unprecedented political debate in a war-torn country, concluded the EP delegation in Sudan.

"In the North there was no real competition after the withdrawal of several opposition parties, and too much organisation was with the ruling party, busy shuttling people to the polling stations. In the South there was competition, but voters were frustrated by poor organisation", said MEP Ana Gomes (S&D, PT), head of the European Parliament delegation.

The EP delegation worked closely with the broader EU Election Observation Mission headed by MEP Véronique De Keyser (S&D, BE). It fully endorsed the preliminary statement of the Mission stating that the elections were a crucial step in Sudan's Comprehensive Peace Agreement, but which also highlighted significant deficiencies against international standards.

Calm atmosphere and opportunity for political debate

Even though the EP delegation observed several irregularities and shortcomings during its mission, it took also note of the positive aspects of the elections. Ana Gomes pointed out: "Most importantly, these elections took place in a general climate of peace, which many thought impossible given the history of war in this country and the ongoing conflict in Darfur, which prohibited our observation there".

"We were, nevertheless, impressed by the commitment shown by the Sudanese to a democratic process in these complex conditions. Despite all problems, the elections enabled a lively political debate on which the Sudanese can hopefully build further as part of the democratic transformation they clearly need and aspire to. It was important we were here, and we appreciate the warm welcome we received everywhere".

The European Parliament election observation delegation to the Sudanese elections included head of delegation Ana Gomes and five other MEPs: José Manuel García-Margallo y Marfil (EPP, ES), Frank Engel (EPP, LU), Juan Fernando López Aguilar (S&D, ES), John Attard-Montalto (S&D, MT), and Jacek Włosowicz (ECR, PL).

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