

Sudan Link Prayer Focus – Referendum Sunday 9 January 2011

Sudan will undergo a referendum vote on January 9th that will decide the political future of a nation the size of Europe, hosting at least 30million souls. The Referendum is open to all Southern Sudanese who have registered their intention to vote including more than a million Southern Sudanese Christians living in the North.

Whether the country decides to separate into two countries or remain as one, change is coming to Sudan. Alongside change comes opportunity, both for good and for evil. This is a very uncertain time for many ordinary Sudanese people who will see the fabric of their nation change overnight. Many people have chosen already to move from where they are to places where they feel they may be safe from religious or ethnically based violence. Some people sadly do not have the resources to make such a move.

It is clear that through this process there will be power struggles and also resource issues with communities struggling to cope with a migrating population in need of food and shelter. No doubt the outcome of the referendum will please some and offend others and this may also be another source of violence. Sudan is a country that has seen fighting for the whole of most people's lives and retains a strong gun culture. Violence may occur, particularly in the border areas between the North and South, which are home to many of Sudan's oil fields. The referendum brings the hope of stability and lasting peace but also brings a chill breeze of change.

Sudan needs prayer. Please pray for the many needs of the whole country through the time of the referendum and beyond. As a diocese, prayers for Sudan will be said hourly in our cathedral during the day every day. Electronically a daily prayer request is available on the Sudan Link Twitter page at this address: www.twitter.com/sudanlink

Bishop Graham Kings has requested that all the clergy of the diocese include Sudan in their prayers on Sunday 9 January as part of a Diocesan wave of prayer. Please join in with this wave where ever you are on that Sunday morning. On the Morning of Saturday 8 January, special prayers will be said for all Sudan in the Cathedral in the Trinity Chapel.

A resource leaflet has been created by St Thomas's Church in Salisbury which can be downloaded and used where ever you are, alone, in churches or prayer groups. Those people connected to the Sudan Link by our prayer network will already have this resource. Download a copy: www.salisbury.anglican.org/resources-library/mission/sudan/Sudan_Referendum_prayer_request.pdf

We share a concern for Sudan with AFRECS, the American Friends of the Episcopal Church of Sudan and resources from them may also prove helpful. www.episcopalchurch.org/sudan/

As well as our Sudan Link web pages with news and prayers available we also have a Facebook group page that can be seen without joining Facebook. Those on Facebook can connect with this page and interact. Click here to view: www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=236172094303

You can also e-mail your prayers to sudan.prayer@salisbury.anglican.org for our Referendum Prayer Wall: www.salisbury.anglican.org/mission/the-sudan-link/referendum-prayer-wall

On January 8th, White Hart Benefice and Wriggle Valley Benefice are hosting a team that recently went to Bentiu in Northern Malakal diocese, Sudan and a talk will be held at Leigh Village hall, to which all are welcome. **The address for the hall is Leigh Village Hall, Chetnole Road, Leigh, Sherborne, Dorset DT9 6HL.** After the talk, prayers will be said for Sudan and the referendum. Contact the Revd Ron Hart on 01963 23035 for more details.

Please remember Sudan and keep the needs of the people there in your hearts through prayer.

Dave Lewis