



# THE SUDD INSTITUTE

RESEARCH FOR A PEACEFUL, JUST AND PROSPEROUS SOUTH SUDAN

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## Weekly Digests

### *A Brief Look at the Two New Sudans*

#### **President al-Bashir's Planned Visit to Juba**

*Jok Madut Jok*

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This past week has seen a flurry of news in the local media, online discussions, and in many conversations among South Sudanese, all focusing on a select number of issues, including the continuing violence in Jonglei, the expulsion of United Nations human rights monitor from the country, and the increasing pain of the consequences of austerity policies in the lives of ordinary citizens of this country.

However, the development most talked about this week has been the planned visit of Sudan's president, Omer Hassan al-Bashir, to Juba, South Sudan. This piece of news has met with a great deal of attention among South Sudanese and has dominated the discussions for a variety of reasons:

- It comes on the heels of the nine agreements recently concluded in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, between the Republic of South Sudan and the Republic of Sudan, over which the two presidents, al-Bashir and Salva Kiir Mayar, presided.
- The visit and the summit between the two presidents will be an opportunity for the two countries to redraw each other's attention to the concept of two viable states living side-by-side in peace and harmony with each other, a concept that was largely the foundation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement that ended the protracted war between the two sides.
- The summit will be an attempt to build some trust to replace the current climate of mistrust due to Khartoum's tradition of signing agreements that it does not intend to implement. The climate of mutual suspicion that currently prevails between Juba and Khartoum needs to be addressed, to at least give trust a chance for the benefit of the future generations.

Above all, the planned visit, preceded by a meeting involving defense ministries of the two nations earlier this week in Juba, has reignited that old debate that began in 2009 about the outstanding warrant of arrest in the name of president al-Bashir by International Criminal Court (ICC). This puts Juba in a dilemma. As a non-state party of the Rome statute, South Sudan could choose to ignore that question and conduct business with al-Bashir as normally as has been the case so far. But by continuing to ignore the question, the young state projects itself as hypocritical, as South Sudan is a country that grew out of many deadly liberation wars and through a bitter critique of al-Bashir's government. Before independence, South Sudan had long accused Khartoum of genocide in South Sudan, and to ignore the question of the arrest warrant for al-Bashir, a man the country believes to have committed genocide, indeed looks increasingly bizarre.

However, we think that if the visit actually goes forward as planned, the question of the ICC indictment of al-Bashir will be overlooked in favor of the immediate interests of trying to revive the economies of the two countries. If the direct result of the summit allows resumption of oil production and shipping and cross-border trade, it is widely believed that the principle of justice would be easily dropped. The question of the ICC may not necessarily surface, as the two presidents and their aides will focus more on the Addis Ababa agreements of September 27<sup>th</sup>, to work out the means of implementation. The Juba summit would focus mainly on security issues, military buffer zones, oil and the other economic issues that ail the two countries. How the summit will be weighed down by border contests, especially those involving Abyei and other territories that South Sudan believes that Sudan has illegally occupied, remains to be seen.

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### **About Sudd Institute**

The Sudd Institute is an independent research organization that conducts and facilitates policy relevant research and training to inform public policy and practice, to create opportunities for discussion and debate, and to improve analytical capacity in South Sudan. The Sudd Institute's intention is to significantly improve the quality, impact, and accountability of local, national, and international policy- and decision-making in South Sudan in order to promote a more peaceful, just and prosperous society.

### **About the Author**

Jok Madut Jok is a co-founder and the Executive Director of the Sudd Institute. Jok is trained in the anthropology of health and holds a Ph.D. from the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). He is the author of three books and numerous articles covering gender, sexuality and reproductive health, humanitarian aid, ethnography of political violence, gender-based violence, war and slavery, and the politics of identity in Sudan. His book *Sudan: Race, Religion and Violence*, was published in 2007. Jok is co-editor of *The Sudan Handbook*, 2010.