How have the gains made during the Comprehensive Peace Agreement process facilitated/hindered women’s role in politics? How have the quotas for women’s participation worked? How are alliances and women’s struggles with political parties working now in the lead up to elections?

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NOBEL WOMEN INITIATIVE
WOMEN REDEFINING DEMOCRACY
FOR PEACE, JUSTICE AND EQUALITY
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Introduction

- The Republic of Sudan is the largest country in Africa, with an area of approximately 2.506 million square kilometers.

- International boundaries kilometers circumscribing it from nine neighboring countries five of which border Southern Sudan.
The country contains religious, ethnic and linguistic diversity with the majority of the population being Muslims. The rest include Christians, animists, and other minorities while up to 400 languages/dialects are spoken.

Despite the diversity of the Sudanese people, environment and the richness of resources such as oil, it remains one of the poorest countries in the world.
Drought, famine, civil strife and war in the southern part of the country and Darfur, have caused large numbers of its population to be displaced over the common borders with its neighbors.
Sharia in Sudan was introduced first in 1983 (September laws).

Sudan lived very short periods of democracy since its independence:
1. 1956-1957
2. 1964-1969
Since June 1989 up to date Sudan is ruled by Islamic fundamentalism which confirmed the construction of Sharia into social, economic, legal, and political life.

The Sudanese women movement was merged form the democratic anti colonization movement
Historical Background of Election

- election process have been introduced in Sudan for the first time during the British-Egyptian colonization, in 1948.
- the most prominent and important elections was in 1953 which have yield the formation of the first Sudanese government.
In 1958 another elections was conducted.
A third elections was conducted in 1965 after October revolution in 1964.
The last elections took place in 1986, after which no elections had taken place.
Sudanese women won their right to vote after October revolution in 1964, when the first women parliamentarian was appointed.
The women movement continued its struggle to widen women political rights in Sudan.
The Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA)

- After 22 years of civil war, hundreds of thousands died, and millions were displaced, the CPA not only brought peace, but established the parameter for Sudan’s democratic transformation such as the National election to be carried out in 2009, however, due to many hinders it is now planned for February 2010.
Why the quota

- The representation of women in the current appointed parliament that followed the CPA did not exceed 18%.
- In Oslo meeting in 2005 after the signing of the CPA the Sudanese women delegation urged the Government of National Unity to confirm the 30% of women representation at all governmental levels.
- The late Dr. John Garange confirmed 25% of South Sudan women (Affirmative Action) to be represented at all levels, and the delegation from the North refused the women’s request....
Sudanese women civil society groups in the North continued to struggle, and builds alliances working with political parties, political women forum, women civil society organizations, and the electoral law committee to push for the 25% to be represented in a unified list.

In 2008 the women were able to achieve the 25% representation for women at all governmental levels. This percentage has been achieved for the first time in history of the women’s movement.
Despite of the efforts exerted to achieve the 25% representation of women the electoral law of 2008 rejected the unified list for women within their political parties to assure the political parties commitment towards women agendas, however, the government approved the separate list for women in the election law.
Challenges Facing the Upcoming Election

- The general elections did not take place as planned in 2008, shifted to 2010.
- Remaining dispute on the key pillars of the agreement such as the following:
  - The census results are disputed
  - The north-south border has not been demarcated
  - The Abyei protocol has not been implemented,
The electoral procedures is complex, as each citizen will have to vote several times at national and state levels.

The lack of civic education among Sudanese people, especially among women increases the chance to make mistakes during the process.

The weak opposition political parties and civil society,

The continuous conflict in Darfur

The South Sudan self determination referendum in 2011

The ICC indictment against the president,
The lack of funding for the electoral processes for the opposition political parties and civil societies,
The patriarchal norms and its control over women,
The separate list for women needs a lot of building of alliances and women agenda with the political parties programme,
The security restrictions for both opposition political parties and civil societies to take any activities in relation to election till last week;
Conclusion

It is clear that the upcoming election and the process of democratic transformation in Sudan remain problematic and challenging. However, the Sudanese women’s movement should continue to dismantle the patriarchal norms that hinder their political, social, and economic rights to achieve deep democracy.