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Sudan drawing referendum observers

by Christina S.N. Lewis



Franciscan Cardinal Wilfrid Napier, Archbishop of Durban, will be

in Sudan during the referendum on secession for the South of Sudan, scheduled for Jan. 9. He will be a guest of Archbishop Paulino Lokudu Loro, the Archbishop of Juba, and be part of an ecumenical monitoring team from all over Africa. The Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference has been strongly supportive of the people of Southern Sudan since 1994. Initially, they did this by hosting a Sudan desk as part of the Justice and Peace Department of the Conference at the conference Secretariat in Pretoria.

Later, with the formation of the Denis Hurley Peace Institute as an associate body of the conference, much work has been done to facilitate peace building in Sudan. Napier called the opportunity to test the will of the people "historic, as it allows ordinary people who have endured the brunt of civil war and development exclusion a chance to reclaim their own dignity."

I am on my way to Juba where I plan to spend the next week watching the election process and reporting on it on these pages.

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