

During Sudan referendum, a goat sacrifice (Warning: graphic images)

Christina S.N. Lewis | Jan. 13, 2011

Editor's Note: The following post includes graphic descriptions and images of a goat sacrifice in Sudan.

JUBA, SUDAN -- On the third day of voting here on the historic referendum which would split the country's south from the north, a Dinka wise man led a group of men and women out to the edges of Juba's main polling center and slaughtered a goat and chicken in a ritual sacrifice.



After a period of call and response chants, two men held the goat by its hooves, with one pulling something across its throat to silence its cries. Then a man sawed into its mid-section, disemboweling it. The men twisted the body around.

A crowd of people, both western and Sudanese, watched alternately transfixed and disgusted. When the goat was split into two, the gray-haired man grabbed the hind part and threw it over the fence and into the street. It represented Northern Sudan. The crowd cheered.

Then, a chicken was decapitated and its head was thrown into the street. The crowd dispersed quickly, the dead animals left where they lay.

According to a local journalist, on the first day of voter registration late last year, five bulls and five rams were slaughtered in the middle of the square, which is the mausoleum of John Garang, who signed the 2005 peace agreement months before dying in a helicopter accident and is considered southern Sudan's founder.

The journalist pointed out dark patches in the dusty ground, created from the animals' blood.

For video of the what the scene looked like once the goat had been sacrificed, see below:
