



## The Case for the Parliamentary System in South Sudan

### Advantages to the Parliamentary System:

1. **Parliamentarianism** has attractive features for nations that are [ethnically](#), [racially](#), or [ideologically](#) divided. In a uni-personal **presidential system**, all executive power is concentrated in the President. In a **parliamentary system**, with a **collegial executive**, power is more divided.
2. It can also be argued that power is more evenly spread out in the power structure of **parliamentarianism**. The **Prime Minister** seldom tends to have as high importance as a ruling **President**, and there tends to be a higher focus on voting for a party and its political ideas than voting for an actual person.
3. The Prime Minister is always under check by parliament whereas the President, short of treason, cannot be held to account by the people or their elected representatives except at the end of his term of office of four or five years.
4. It is faster and easier to pass [legislation](#). This is the case because the **executive branch** (being formed by the majority party or coalition of parties in the legislature) possesses more votes in order to pass legislation. In a **presidential system**, the executive is often chosen independently from the legislature. If the **executive** and **legislature** in such a system include members entirely or predominantly from different [political parties](#), then stalemate can occur. Accordingly, the executive within a presidential system might not be able to properly implement his or her platform/manifesto and would need what the French call “**cohabitation**” with the party that forms the majority in parliament. Normally, that party nominates the Prime Minister.
5. The will of the people is more easily instituted within a **parliamentary system**. **This is so because** an **executive** in any system (be it parliamentary, presidential or semi-presidential) is chiefly voted into office on the basis of his or her party's platform/manifesto.
6. **Parliamentarianism** has been praised for producing serious debates, for flexibility in the change in power, and for allowing elections at any time.
7. **The African experience is that the uni-personal presidential system came about following either military coups or one-party systems.**

## **The Sudanese Experience**

Sudan inherited the British system of government, that is, the parliamentary system known as the Westminster democracy. It has carried out elections under this system five times: in 1953, 1958, 1965, 1968 and 1986. In the first two elections there was an upper house of parliament (The Senate) which was done away with in subsequent elections. The presidential system was introduced by regimes that assumed power through a military coup; first time under Nimeiri in 1971 which was abolished after the March/April Uprising in 1985 which reverted to parliamentarianism in 1986, and then in 1995 under June 1989 coup. Presidential systems are, therefore, associated with the concentration of power in the hands of one person (the President) which is in line with totalitarianism. It is, therefore, not surprising, the critics of presidential system argue, that the system was born out of military coups. During the negotiations that culminated in the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, the presidential system was not challenged by the SPLM side and was therefore adopted, as it was in the 1998 Constitution with minor changes.

Southern Sudan was part of the parliamentary system above (1953-1986). Additionally, under the Self-government in the period 1972-1983, Southern Sudan experienced a system of elections of the parliamentary type, short only of declared political parties. Members of the People's Regional Assembly of Southern Sudan (The Regional Parliament) were directly elected in geographical and other special constituencies, and they in turn elected the President of the High Executive Council (chief executive of the Region). These elections took place in 1973, 1978, 1980 and 1982.

It is proposed that an independent South Sudan adopts the parliamentary system of government which has been tested and worked and is the most suitable for its conditions.

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