

UNMISS PROVIDES STATE HIGH ELECTION COMMITTEE OFFICE – WESTERN EQUATORIA STATE TO SUPPORT INSTITUTIONAL READINESS FOR THE ELECTORAL PROCESS

written by NEC Press | July 22, 2025



As part of a joint partnership between the National Elections Commission (NEC), UNDP and UNMISS to operationalize all ten State High Election Committee (SHEC) offices in order to lay the institutional foundations for electoral preparations around the country, UNMISS handed over a newly constructed office complex to the NEC and SHEC in Yambio, Western Equatoria State. The UNMISS-supported construction project was utilizing the Quick Impact Projects (QIPs) funding and carried out through the implementation by the local Western Equatoria State organization, Community Organization for Peer Educators (COPE).

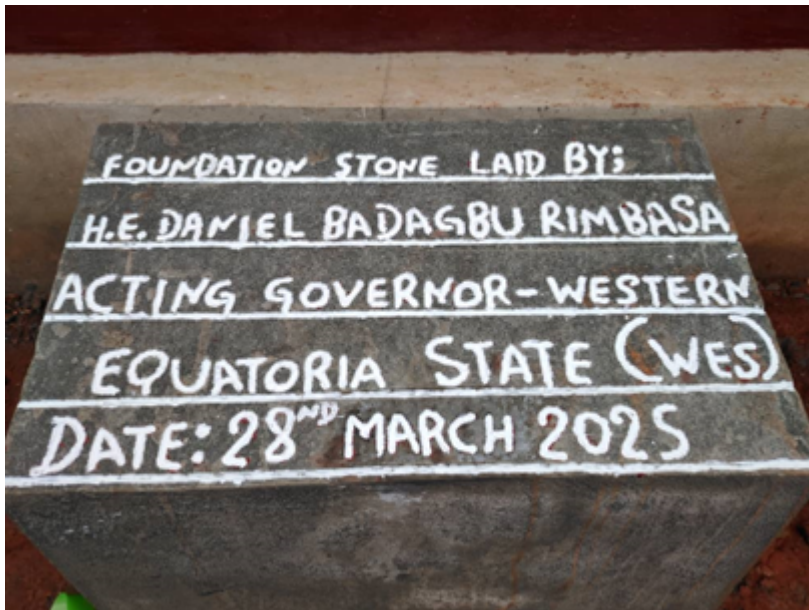


Planning of the project first began in December 2024, based on a needs assessment and later designed and implemented in collaboration with the NEC and SHEC. The office complex was built from the ground up and includes seven offices, a conference hall with storage, security post and pit latrines. Additionally, the project provided office furniture and solar panels for electric sustainability.



The handover ceremony was attended by the NEC Chief Electoral Officer, NEC Secretary-General, Acting Governor of Western

Equatoria State, the Chairperson of the SHEC-Western Equatoria, in addition to other representatives of the SHEC, UNMISS, and civil society, among others.



In addition to providing a functional office in order to begin election preparations and conduct election activities at the state level, the office will also facilitate the engagement of the SHEC with diverse electoral stakeholders, including voters, candidates, political parties, civil society organizations, the media, and observer groups, enabling them to perform their roles effectively in building an inclusive, conducive environment for elections to take place.

“For any election management body, the establishment of a functional office is key to its ability to plan and prepare for an electoral process, in addition to being able to have a space to engage with electoral stakeholders. The construction of this State High Election Committee office here in Western Equatoria State is a positive step in creating the environment for elections to take place. The NEC appreciates UNMISS for its continued support in building NEC’s institutional capacity,” reflected Mr. Gabriel Bol Deng, Secretary General of the National Election Commission during the handover ceremony.

“The State High Election Committee in Western Equatoria State

looks forward to working with all electoral stakeholders in preparing for elections and appreciates the work of UNMISS, not only for providing this office, but also for the multiple trainings to support our understanding and ability to prepare for elections and effectively engage with stakeholders,” said the Chairperson of the State High Election Committee-Western Equatoria State.

COMMENCEMENT OF CONSTRUCTION OF STATE HIGH ELECTION COMMITTEE OFFICE – JONGLEI STATE

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On the 4th of June 2025, A delegation from the National Elections Commission (NEC) visited Bor, Jonglei from 3-5 June 2025 to mark a ground-breaking ceremony for the construction of the State High Election Committee (SHEC) office. The office is being constructed with support from the United Nations Mission in South Sudan’ (UNMISS) Quick Impact Projects (QIPs). The project includes the construction of the office from the ground up, installation of a solar system, sanitation facilities, and a perimeter wall fence.



The delegation, led by Honorable Commissioner William Kolyin Deng and Secretary-General Mr. Gabriel Bol Deng of the NEC, held consultation meetings with the State Government, SHEC Jonglei, UNMISS Field Office and other electoral stakeholders.

The construction of the SHEC office in Bor is part of a broader collaborative effort between the UNMISS and the National Elections Committee, utilizing NEC and UNMISS resources, to refurbish and construct the offices of the State High Elections Committees so they are operational and functional in all ten states of South Sudan. The SHEC office construction will contribute to an enabling environment for elections, providing working space for electoral officials, and enhancing the capacity of the SHEC to manage inclusive and credible electoral processes. Furthermore, it will facilitate the engagement with electoral stakeholders, including voters, candidates, political parties, civil society organizations, the media, and observer groups, supporting an engaged,

conducive environment for elections and enabling pre-electoral activities to begin.

Following the reconstitution of the NEC and the appointment of the State High Election Committees in 2024, one of the main priorities of the NEC has been to make its offices in the states operational. Since early 2024, NEC has engaged in consultation meetings with the Government of South Sudan and State Governments in order to secure funding, land, and/or office premises in order to construct or refurbish offices for use by the SHEC in each state.

The NEC would like to thank the government of Jonglei State for availing its land and acknowledge the United Nations Mission in South Sudan for their efforts in building NEC's institutional capacity, and for their contribution to making the SHEC offices operational across the country.

"I would like to express my enthusiasm to see this project finally come to fruition and I look forward to the benefit it will yield to electoral stakeholders and the community of Jonglei state, as we lay the foundations to advance on election preparations", highlighted Mr. Gabriel Bol Deng, Secretary-General of the National Elections Commission.

**NEC CONVENES ROUNDTABLE
DIALOGUE WITH CIVIL SOCIETY
REPRESENTATIVES TO DISCUSS**

SUPPORT FOR A CONDUCTIVE ENVIRONMENT FOR CREDIBLE ELECTIONS

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The National Elections Commission (NEC) convened a roundtable discussion on 29th May 2025 in Juba with civil society representatives from across South Sudan to engage in an interactive dialogue on the legal, technical, financial and security challenges that must be urgently addressed in order to make positive progress toward preparations for a credible and inclusive electoral process. Over 50 civil society representatives from all ten (10) states, Administrative Areas Ruweng and Pibor participated in the discussion – in addition to Juba-based representatives and faith-based groups.



With support from the UN Integrated Electoral Assistance Team (UN IEAT), the dialogue provided an opportunity for discourse on electoral timeline challenges, in addition to legal and political clarity needed for the electoral process to move forward.

The three thematic panel discussions, including panelists from NEC, UN IEAT and civil society, were moderated by Mr. Edmund Yakani, Executive Director of Community Empowerment for Progress Organization (CEPO), which focused on: (i) political decisions and legal clarifications needed, taking into account clarity needed on the Constitution-making Process timeline, population data and census related issues; (ii) technical challenges on options and timing considerations for voter registration, boundary delimitation, candidate nomination and urgent need for financial resources; and (iii) the conditions of creating an environment conducive for elections, including the necessity of civic, political space and its relation to

election security and the prevention of electoral-related violence.

The roundtable dialogue concluded with the NEC and CSOs agreeing to a set of calls to action outlined in a Communiqué. The crux of these action points centered around the need for the transitional government and parties to the R-ARCSS to urgently meet and discuss key issues related to the way forward, including: clarity on legal framework and political decisions to be taken on issues such as the sequence of constitution-making process vis-à-vis electoral timeline, and what population data to be used for constituency delimitation. The civil society representatives called for actions to be taken to open civic and political space, including guaranteeing the security conditions for the process to advance with full and free participation of all electoral stakeholders.

The National Elections Commission inaugurated the State High Electoral Committee office for Central Equatoria State in Juba

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The National Elections Commission (NEC) on the 26th of May 2025, officially inaugurated the State High Electoral Committee (SHEC) office for Central Equatoria State in Juba, marking a significant step toward South Sudan's long-awaited general elections scheduled for December 2026.



The event, held in Hai Game, was officiated by Chief Electoral Officer Hon. Mac Maika Deng and brought together senior national and international dignitaries. In attendance were H.E Gen. Kuol Manyang Senior Presidential Advisor and chairperson of the National Transitional Committee (NTC), H.E. Paulino Lukudu Obede, the Deputy Governor of Central Equatoria State;

Hon. Prof. Abednego Akok Kacuol Chairperson of NEC, Hon Eng, James Akol Zakayo the Chairperson of the Political Parties Council (PPC), Amb. Maj. Gen. (Rtd) George Owinow, Chairperson of the Reconstituted Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission (RJMEC); and Mr. Darren Nance, Head of the United Nations Integrated Electoral Assistance Team (UNIEAT).

The Chairperson in his remarks, Prof. Akok emphasized the importance of the new office in enhancing coordination at the state level and engaging with electoral stakeholders, including voters, political parties, civil society, media, and observer groups.

Akok also mentioned that the commission has renovated offices in several states, including Central Equatoria, Western Equatoria, and Warrap, with plans to open them soon. The Central Equatoria office is one of six SHEC offices completed as part of NEC's national renovation program supported by UNIEAT.

He also cited a recent meeting with President H.E Gen Salva Kiir, who he said reaffirmed the government's commitment to holding elections before the end of the transitional period.

While acknowledging these achievements, Prof. Akok also noted the challenges ahead, particularly in terms of legal clarity and resource mobilization. He reiterated the Commission's call for collective responsibility among national actors and support from international partners.

"The opening of this office is more than symbolic—it is a concrete step toward delivering free, fair, and credible elections for the people of South Sudan," he said. "Together, we can ensure a peaceful and democratic transition before the end of the transitional period.

Each of the dignitaries delivered remarks highlighting the significance of the office and reaffirming their support for peaceful, transparent, and inclusive elections. The ceremony

concluded with a keynote address by Gen. Kuol Manyang Senior Presidential Advisor and chairperson of the National Transitional Committee (NTC).

NEC and the Central Equatoria State High Committee boost awareness of the electoral process among CSOs in Juba

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On 8 April 2025, the National Elections Commission (NEC) held a consultative meeting with civil society organizations (CSOs) in the Central Equatoria State (CES) to discuss the NEC's electoral mandate and potential areas for cooperation between the NEC and CSOs. This meeting, hosted by the NEC State High Election Committee (SHEC) in CES, was the first convened by the NEC with state-level CSOs in this state. It followed a national-level consultative meeting between the NEC and CSOs in January, as well as nine (9) similar meetings held in each state of South Sudan during March 2025.

This one-day event brought together 48 representatives from state-level CSOs such as community and faith-based groups, youth and women's organizations, networks for persons with

disabilities, and media representatives. The primary objective was to enhance public awareness of the electoral process and to strengthen relationships and partnerships between the NEC, SHECs, and CSOs. Notably, the event exhibited excellent inclusiveness, with 50% of participants being women.



The NEC Chief Electoral Officer, Hon. Mac Maika Deng, officially opened the meeting and shared the progress and challenges of the election preparations. These challenges primarily relate to aligning the electoral timeline, the constitution-making process, and census timelines, as well as the necessity for political and legal clarity and financing.

The Chairperson of the CES SHEC, Alphayo Philip Lako, introduced participants to the meeting agenda, which covered topics such as civic and voter education, voter registration, and overall election preparations at both the national and state levels. Additional subjects included the inclusiveness of the electoral process, the neutrality of NEC and SHEC members, capacity building for electoral stakeholders, and collaboration in the electoral process.

After the NEC and SHEC presented the framework for the electoral process, the CSO representatives discussed their activities and potential areas for support and collaboration with the NEC and SHEC.

During group work sessions, participants identified challenges regarding the upcoming elections and proposed collaborative solutions. Subsequently, these points were presented and discussed with the entire plenary. The discussions yielded valuable insights that the SHEC members gratefully received.



At the end of the meeting, the NEC and SHECs committed to convening regularly to share information on the electoral process and to maximise the essential role of CSOs as extended arms for civic and voter information, as well as being observers and watchdogs of the process. The CSO participants pledged to strengthen their collaboration with the election

management body to ensure transparency and a coordinated approach to the electoral process. They also committed to supporting comprehensive public awareness campaigns related to civic and voter education once they receive clarity on the way forward.

The UN Integrated Electoral Assistance Team (UNIEAT), which includes the UNMISS Electoral Assistance Division and the UNDP South Sudan Electoral Support Project, provided both technical and financial support for the meetings.

NEC attends BRIDGE training on Boundary Delimitation and Voter Registration

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The National Election Commission (NEC) attended two customized modular workshops on Boundary Delimitation and Voter Registration in Juba supported by the United Nations Integrated Election Assistance Team (UN-IEAT). The trainings, held between 25-28 March and 1-4 April 2025, utilized the BRIDGE (Building Resources in Democracy, Governance and Elections), a comprehensive capacity development curriculum for election management bodies worldwide.



The two workshops brought together over 50 participants NEC Commissioners, members of the secretariat as well as members of the State High Election Committees (SHECs) from all 10 states.



The trainings were designed to equip NEC and electoral stakeholders with the knowledge to analyze implications of electoral boundary decisions and shed light on foundational principles of effective voter registration systems. The workshops are part of a capacity building series that provide platforms for electoral administrators to continue preparing South Sudan for its national elections scheduled in December 2026.

NEC Consults with Civil Society in Bor and Yambio to Enhance Electoral Awareness

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On 26 March 2025, the National Elections Commission (NEC) and the State High Election Committees (SHECs) of Jonglei and Western Equatoria states organized consultative meetings with civil society organizations (CSOs) in Bor and Yambio.



The one-day event brought together 79 representatives of state-level CSOs (45 from Bor including 19 women, and 34 from Yambio including 13 women), including community and faith-based organizations, youth and women's groups, as well as media representatives, to raise public awareness of the electoral process and strengthen relationships and

partnerships between the NEC, SHECs, and CSOs. The NEC Board and Secretariat members from Juba also participated in these events. The NEC and SHECs informed of challenges associated to the electoral timeline – namely as related to the Constitution-making process timeline, political and legal clarity needed, in addition to financing. The discussion included topics and coordination on civic and voter education, voter registration, and overall election preparations at both national and state levels. Other topics covered included the inclusiveness of the electoral process, the neutrality of NEC and SHEC members, the roles of and capacity building for electoral stakeholders, and collaboration in the electoral process, among others.



After the two events, the NEC and SHECs agreed to meet regularly to share information on the electoral process and coordinate the essential role CSOs play in the electoral process – as extended arms for civic and voter information,

and as observers and watchdogs of the process. The CSO participants committed to strengthening collaboration with the election management body to ensure transparency and a coordinated approach to the electoral process. They also pledged to support comprehensive public awareness campaigns associated with civic and voter education upon clarity on the way forward. The UN Integrated Electoral Assistance Team (UNIEAT), which includes the UNMISS Electoral Assistance Division and the UNDP South Sudan Electoral Support Project, provided both technical and financial support for the meetings.

NEC LAUNCHES TWO FIRST STATE-LEVEL ENGAGEMENTS WITH CIVIL SOCIETY IN BENTIU AND MALAKAL

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UN-IEAT supported the NEC to conduct the first two state-level engagements with CSO, i.e., in Bentiu (Unity State) and Malakal (Upper Nile State) on 05 March 2025. The events were hosted on UNMISS premises in the two states with key logistical and administrative support provided by the UNMISS field offices and UNIEAT UNVs recently recruited and deployed to the two states.



The events were well attended by about 45 invited participants from each state. The meeting in Unity State was held at on the UNMISS premises in Rubkano and was attended by 33 CSO representatives including 7 women, while the one in Upper Nile was held in the Legislative Assembly Chamber in Malakal town and was attended by 47 CSO representatives including 11 women. Each meeting was convened and moderated by the respective chairperson of the State High Committee (SHEC) of the NEC, Honorable Peter Mayom Pur for Upper Nile, and Honorable George Kuong Gattang for Unity. The meetings started with opening remarks read out on behalf of the Chairperson of the NEC, Honorable Professor Abednego Akok Kacuol, who commended CSOs for their active engagement with the electoral process and support to the NEC in the preparations for the next elections including their participation in the first two NEC state-level engagements with CSOs. “The NEC remained committed to creating an enabling environment based on, among other things, stakeholder

trust and confidence in the electoral process and institutions. This will go a long way to guarantee credible elections which will serve as a firm foundation for sustainable peace, democracy, and development in South Sudan", he pointed out.



The meetings sought to bring state-level CSOs including community and faith-based organizations, and media with the SHEC to raise public awareness and foster working relations between the NEC and SHECS on the one hand, and CSOs as key electoral stakeholders. The meeting also sought to discuss NEC preparations for December 2026 based on the revised transition timeline of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS) of 2018. Among related issues discussed were the election timelines, funding, legal and political issues impacting election preparations. The SHECs used this platform to inform CSOs about ongoing NEC activities such as NEC institutional strengthening including training and capacity building most of which is provided by the UNIEAT; ongoing legal reform, establishing the NEC presence at the state level through office construction and refurbishment, support to NEC business processes and policy development covering areas such as civic

and voter education, stakeholder engagement, gender and inclusion, corporate branding and communication also engagement with key national stakeholders including the presidency to discuss the NEC funding, organogram, legal reform; CSOs to discuss civic and voter education, election observation; and NPS on election security issues; also regional and international partners on technical and financial support.

Among the comments and questions from CSOs in the two meetings were: concern about the lack of NEC and election funding and the impact this has on NEC credibility and capacity to deliver elections in two years; continued insecurity including the recent upsurge in violence in Upper Nile and how these could adversely impact the country preparedness for elections. Participants in the two meetings resolved to work closely with the NEC and the SHECs in areas such as civic and voter education and to actively participate in relevant coordination structures once the NEC has set them up at state and local levels. An issue raised in the meetings was the concern about the increasing number of internally displaced persons due to conflict and flooding – the latter has rendered many communities inaccessible by road and without access to many government services. Reaching out to water-locked communities may be a challenge when it comes to civic and voter education, voter registration, election campaigning, and the voting process itself.

The NEC used these two occasions to validate the database of CSOs working on democracy, human rights, inclusive participation and elections and the meetings agreed to regularly update the database with the support of the SHECs and UNIEAT in each state.

NEC Successfully Completes Induction Training for State High Election Committees

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Juba, South Sudan – The National Election Commission (NEC) has successfully concluded the induction training for the State High Election Committees (SHECs), marking a significant achievement in preparation for the upcoming national elections scheduled for December 22, 2026. The workshop, held from October 8-11, 2024, in Juba, was organized with the support of the UN-Integrated Electoral Assistance Team (UN-IEAT) and aimed at equipping the SHEC members with the skills and knowledge necessary to ensure a smooth electoral process.

The training is a culmination of months of meticulous planning and consultations that began earlier this year. In April and May, NEC officials visited all ten states to engage with stakeholders and discuss the establishment of the SHECs. The committees, comprising 50 members, were officially announced on June 17, 2024, by NEC Chair Prof. Abednego Akok Kachuol, and took their oath of office on July 11, 2024.

The induction workshop covered a comprehensive curriculum that included electoral laws, ethical standards, and operational procedures for managing elections. Participants were also trained on logistical coordination, stakeholder engagement, and conflict resolution strategies to handle potential challenges during the electoral period. The NEC, along with

the UN-IEAT, emphasized the importance of transparency, integrity, and inclusiveness in the electoral process.

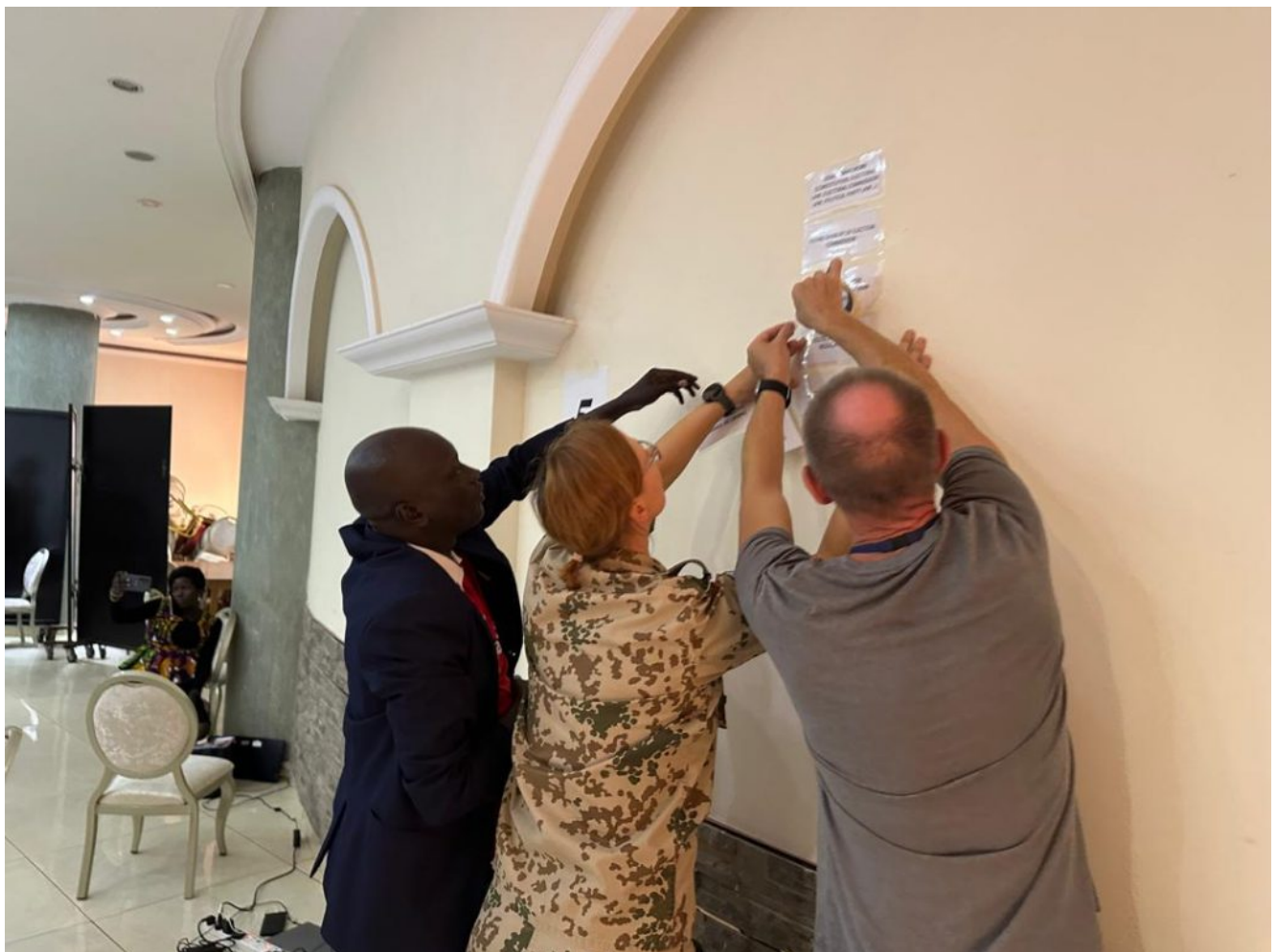
Speaking at the closing ceremony, Prof. Abednego Akok Kachuol commended the commitment and dedication of the SHEC members. "The completion of this training marks a critical milestone in our journey toward a fair and credible election in 2026. With this induction, our State High Election Committees are well-prepared to uphold democratic values and oversee the electoral process effectively," he stated.

Participants expressed their readiness to apply the training in their respective states, where their immediate focus will be refurbishing and setting up local offices to facilitate election-related activities. The NEC and the UN-IEAT will continue to provide technical support and monitoring as the SHECs carry out their mandate in the lead-up to the 2026 elections.

The successful completion of this induction training is a promising step toward strengthening South Sudan's democratic framework, as the country gears up for its national elections. The NEC's proactive measures, supported by international partners, underscore a commitment to enhancing the electoral process and ensuring that the voices of the South Sudanese people are heard.







BRIDGE Training for SHEC

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The newly appointed members of all ten State High Election Committees in South Sudan met in Juba to strengthen their knowledge on the principles of electoral administration with the support of the UN Integrated Electoral Assistance Team (UNMISS and UNDP).

The training utilized BRIDGE (Building Resources in Democracy, Governance and Elections), a comprehensive capacity

development curriculum for election management bodies worldwide. This training is one of many capacity building programmes planned to support South Sudan's electoral process.

This foundational BRIDGE training on Electoral Administration was launched on 1 October and will continue through 17 October, with the participation of the National Elections Commission, all State High Election Committees, and representatives of civil society organizations.