

# Tensions building ahead of Sudan referendum

The United Nations will move peacekeeping troops to the border between northern and southern Sudan and consider creating buffer zones to deter violence ahead of a referendum that could break up Africa's largest nation



► **Jan 9 referendum:** Oil-producing South due to vote on whether it will remain part of Sudan or become independent

► **Abyei:** Residents of disputed oil-rich district will also vote on same day whether to stay with North or join South

► **Delays:** Preparations for votes are seriously behind schedule, raising fears of conflict between two sides

► **Divisions:** Mainly Christian and animist southerners are widely expected to vote to secede from Muslim-majority North

► **Peacekeepers:** UN has about 10,600 troops and police monitoring Sudan's 2005 peace agreement that ended two decades of civil war and called for vote on southern independence

