

FOCUS ON

SUDAN



L'OSSERVATORIO

Associazione Nazionale Vittime Civili di Guerra
ONUS
RESEARCH CENTRE ON CIVILIAN VICTIMS OF CONFLICTS



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C.I.S.S. humanitarian tour to Sudan.

*Credit: CC BY 2.5, PierLuigiBertola
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THE COUNTRY AT A GLANCE

The Republic of Sudan is a country in the Nile Valley of North Africa. It is bordered by Egypt to the north, the Red Sea, Eritrea, and Ethiopia to the east, South Sudan to the south, the Central African Republic to the southwest, Chad to the west and Libya to the northwest. It is the third largest country in Africa. Sudan's region has been undergoing intermittent coups d'état and civil wars in different parts of its territory since its independence in 1956. The political, economic, religious and cultural marginalization of the peripheries by the central government in Khartoum led to a "civil war of interlocking civil wars" resulting in the perpetration of grave human rights and humanitarian violations, crimes against humanity and severe humanitarian crises. In 1988, in addition to intercommunal violence and the conflict, a famine hit Sudan and an estimated 250,000 persons died as food became a means of war. In 1989, when Omar al-Bashir assumed the presidency, the country continued to be torn by violence and instability. Following a genocide in 2004, with nearly half a million more people fleeing the fighting, and in reaction to the degrading humanitarian situation, in 2009 the International Criminal Court indicted President Bashir first on counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity, and then on three counts of genocide. However the violence did not subside, and in 2014, Darfur experienced the highest levels of violence and displacement since 2004. As of 2015, President Al Bashir is still in power, while the joint UN and African Union peacekeeping force (UNAMID) is under pressure to leave the country by the Sudanese government. According to the UN, 5.8 million, out of 38,8 million people in the country, are in need of humanitarian assistance.

FLAG

NAME	Republic of the Sudan جمهورية السودان Jumhūrīyat as-Sūdān
CAPITAL	Khartoum
OFFICIAL AND VERNACULAR LANGUAGE	Arabic English Nubian Ta Bedawie Fur
POPULATION	38.8 million
ETHNIC GROUPS	70% Arabs Nubians Copts Beja Fur Nuba Fallata
NEIGHBOURS	Egypt Eritrea Ethiopia South Sudan Central African Republic Chad Libya
TOTAL OF CIVILIANS AFFECTED (2015)	n/a
GDP (2016)	USD 253.2 billion
PEOPLE IN NEED OF ASSISTANCE (2014)	13.5 million
LIFE EXPECTANCY AT BIRTH	63,5 years
SUDANESE REFUGEES	637.000
HUMAN DEVELOPMENT INDEX	0.47 (167 / 188)
IDPS	3.2 million
GLOBAL PEACE INDEX	3.2 (155 / 163)
CORRUPTION PERCEPTION RANKING	165/168

INTRODUCTION

Geopolitical context

Agriculture remains the most important sector in Sudan, employing 80% of the workforce and accounting for 39% of GDP. Despite this, most farms remain susceptible to drought, instability, adverse weather and weak global agricultural prices, causing much of the population to remain at or below the poverty line. Apart from the social prominence of agro activities, big part of Sudan's geopolitical role is linked to the management of oil resources. In 2010, thanks to oil profits, Sudan was considered the 17th-fastest-growing economy in the world, in spite of international sanctions. These figures became more uncertain after 2011, as since the secession of South Sudan, the country has lost around 80% of its oil fields. Sudan has extensive economic relations with China, which obtains 10% of its oil from Sudan, and is allegedly Sudan's largest supplier of arms. At regional level, Sudan has a troubled relationship with many of its neighbors and the international community, owing to its radical Islamic stance and widely-criticized human rights record, but enjoyed friendly relations with Iraq and Iran. For much of the 1990s, Uganda, Kenya and Ethiopia with support from the United States formed an ad-hoc alliance, the "Front Line States", to oppose the National Islamic Front (NIF) government. On his side, the Sudanese Government supported anti-Ugandan rebel groups such as the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), which prompted the U.S. to list it as a State Sponsors of Terrorism. Apart from its internal, peripheral and intercommunal issues and the troubles with South Sudan, Sudan also has a territorial dispute with Egypt over the Hala'ib Triangle. In 2015, Sudan participated in the Saudi Arabia-led intervention in Yemen against the Shia Houthis and forces loyal to former President Ali Abdullah Saleh.

Peacekeeping missions: African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS, 2004 – 2007), United Nations Mission in the Sudan (UNMIS, 2005 – 2011), United Nations-African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID, 2007), United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA, 2011).

Main UN documents on Sudan

- [UNSC resolution renewing UNAMID's mandate for one year \[S/RES/2296\]](#), 29 June 2016
- [UN Secretary-General report on UNAMID \[S/2016/268\]](#), 22 March 2016
- [A Human Rights Council report on the human rights situation in Sudan \[A/HRC/RES/30/22\]](#), 2 October 2015
- [UNSC resolution renewing the mandate of UNISFA for an additional five months until 15 December 2015 \[S/RES/2230\]](#), 14 July 2015
- [UN Secretary-General report on UNISFA \[S/2015/439\]](#), 16 June 2015

The genesis of the conflict

After the February 1953 agreement by the United Kingdom and Egypt to grant independence to Sudan, the internal tensions over the nature of the north-south relationship built up and eventually spilled into 15 years of fighting, known as the first Sudanese civil war. Disputes over the

discovery of oil in the south in 1979, together with the Government's decision to enforce Islamic Sharia law in the country, and put an end to the southern autonomy, led to a new surge in civil violence in 1983. The agreement that in 1972 ended the First Sudanese Civil War, failed to address the original causes of the tensions and led to a rekindling of the north-south conflict during the Second Sudanese Civil War, which lasted from 1983 to 2005. After two coups, decades of army and militia-driven repression of the peripheries, intercommunal violence and a deadly famine, in 1989 Al Bashir took the power and started a new campaign against local armed groups. In 2013, in the face of the fusion of Southern rebel movements in the Sudan Revolutionary Front (SRF), the Government of Sudan formed the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), widely seen as the renewed Janjaweed paramilitary force, and deployed them to the southern peripheries to start a "Decisive Summer" offensive, with the purpose of settling the conflict militarily. Today, the Sudanese conflict in the South Kordofan and Blue Nile states (the Third Sudanese Civil War) between the Army of Sudan (SAF) and Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N), a northern affiliate of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) in South Sudan, is in fact intertwined with the War in Darfur, since in November 2011 SPLM-N established a loose alliance with Darfuri SRF rebels. Apart from the use of brutal paramilitary groups, Al Bashir has also been repeatedly accused of mounting heavy bombardments on areas inhabited by civilians, allegedly in violation of the principle of distinction and precaution. Roughly two million people died as a result of war, famine and disease caused by the conflict, making it one of the highest civilian death toll of any war since World War II.

Peace talks and agreements

The older phase of the conflict ended with the 1972 Addis Ababa agreement, and a vain promise of political autonomy for the South. After decades of violence, in 2005 the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (Naivasha Agreement) prepared the independence of South Sudan, but left unresolved tensions on issues on border and oil, leaving Sudan at war in the other regions, where the agreement was left largely unimplemented. In Darfur, for example, the 2006 Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) was concluded only by the Government of Sudan and one faction of the Sudan Liberation Movement/Army (SLM/A), thus losing its legitimacy. In 2011, the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur also secured partial implementation. In the same year the NCP and the Two Areas' Sudan People's Liberation-North (SPLM-N) proposed a new agreement, rejected by President al-Bashir. In June 2011, peace talks led to the Abyei Protocol including a referendum on the future of the contested oil-rich area of Abyei, and the establishment of a demilitarized border zone, although the referendum has been repeatedly delayed. In the same year, the rebel groups of Darfur and the southern provinces united into the Sudan Revolutionary Front (SRF), which agreed to the New Dawn agreement in January 2013, calling for a democratic, multicultural and multi-ethnic Sudan. The latest attempt was made at the end of 2014 by the SRF, NCF and the civil society, who signed the Sudan Call declaration, invoking the end of war, political pluralism and a peaceful and democratic transition. Nevertheless, with the continuation of war in Darfur and the Two Areas, disagreements over African-Union sponsored peace talks, and many political parties boycotting the 2015 elections, there seems to be no end in sight to the extreme violence.

THE VOICE OF THE VICTIMS – VIDEOS

The Guardian, Victims of Darfur atrocities find a voice
<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2008/jul/22/sudan>

HUMANITARIAN CONTEXT

The humanitarian situation in Sudan continues to deteriorate, despite years of assistance and the recent relative decrease in fighting. Humanitarian needs remain acute. The exacerbation of the current situation is due largely to the armed conflict which, in turn, drives displacement and food insecurity. Recurrent violence, widespread food insecurity, malnutrition, lack of access to basic services, and recurrent natural disasters, also led to years of large-scale internal displacement. Humanitarian members of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee estimate that at the end of 2015 there were 3.2 million IDPs in Sudan, including 2.6 million in Darfur and 600,000 in South Kordofan and Blue Nile. During the first six months of 2016, 76,000 people were newly displaced across Darfur, according to the UN and partners. In government-controlled areas of South Kordofan and Blue Nile an estimated 700 and 5,600 people respectively have been reportedly displaced since the beginning of the 2016. Although humanitarian needs in Sudan are overwhelmingly generated by armed conflict, they are not limited to conflict-affected areas. Food insecurity and malnutrition constitute a nationwide crisis. Environmental factors such as unpredictable rainfall patterns, desertification, and flash-flooding also exacerbate the humanitarian crisis in Sudan, driving displacement and food insecurity.



Internally displaced persons' camp in Sudan
Credit: CC, NA
Source: Wikipedia Commons

Shelter

The vast majority of the displacement in 2016 to date was triggered by the conflict in the Jebel Marra area, which started in January 2016, and efforts are ongoing to access areas reportedly hosting IDPs from Jebel Marra in South and Central Darfur in order to identify the number and needs of displaced persons. Of the 401,000 newly displaced people recorded in the first half of 2015, only about 13,000 have returned home. This new substantial displacement brings the overall figure up to a total of 3.2 million IDPs in Sudan, with 2.55 million of whom in Darfur, in 46 camps and 68 settlements. Assistance for these populations remains challenging in such a volatile security context as the IDP movement between areas remains fluid. Aid actors expressed concern for these numbers are close to figures of 2014, which saw the biggest displacement for a decade. Humanitarian actors have denounced that government policies aimed at preventing the creation of new camps poses an obstacle to the verification and registration of IDPs. On their side, displaced people in Darfur report insecurity as a major concern, followed by the lack of access to basic services such as water, food, shelter, and medicines. Other regions are no better than Darfur. In White Nile alone, for instance, 6,600 South Sudanese refugee families (46,200 individuals) are still in need of shelter and NFI assistance.



A mother with her sick baby at Abu Shouk IDP camp in North Darfur

*Credit: CC, John Scandling
Source: Wikipedia Commons*

Health

The overall health situation in the country remains critical, as medical infrastructures and personnel have been largely affected by decades of fighting. Mortality from acute respiratory infections, malnutrition, and diarrhea has increased, and although cholera seems to be under control, malaria and measles are still a major cause for concern. Notably, a measles outbreak began in late 2014, and as of 9 August, 3,013 confirmed cases and 67 deaths have been reported in 2015, in all 18 of Sudan's states. In 2016, an outbreak of Hepatitis E virus has also been declared in North Darfur. Access from and to health providers by local populations remains difficult, if not impossible. In Darfur, 12 functioning health facilities are inaccessible as of late 2015, while another 190 facilities in Darfur lack essential staff and are operating at severely reduced capacity. Aid agencies estimated in mid-December 2013 that 165,000 children in SPLM-N-controlled parts of South Kordofan and Blue Nile do not have access to basic health services.



Displaced persons with water tank in Geneina, West Darfur in 2007

*Credit: CC BY-SA 2.0, Nite Owl
Source: Wikimedia Commons*

Water and sanitation

Across Sudan, approximately one person in nine does not have access to a clean water supply. Estimates from 2016 identify 5.4 million of civilians in need of assistance in terms of water, sanitation and hygiene. The situation is especially critical in almost all refugee camps, which are below the standard of 20L of water per person per day. WASH conditions inside refugee camps have notably deteriorated with the recent influx of refugees from South Sudan, and the increased obstacles to regular humanitarian access by most actors. Refugee camps are also particularly exposed to diseases related to insufficient hygiene, as most camps are at dangerously low levels of sanitation.



A local woman at the market

*Credit: CC, USAID
Source: public-domain-image.com*

Food security

During the last lean season, food security has not deteriorated as much as previously predicted, mainly due to improved pasture conditions and abundant production of cereals. However, for seasonal reasons, food security is expected to worsen throughout September and improve again in October–December with the new harvest. Unfortunately, the most affected areas by food insecurity are also conflict-stricken, which hinders food distribution. Another causal factor is food price spike in White Nile in July since the presence of refugees from South Sudan has increased local demand. Both displaced and resident children suffer from acute and chronic malnutrition in Sudan. Emergency

level rates have been observed for the last decades. In 2016, an estimated 2.1 million children under 5 suffer from severe acute malnutrition, which is fueled by infectious diseases and other public health threats.



The Gordon College in Khartoum.
Credit: CC, Matson Photo Service
Source: Wikipedia Commons

Education

Education in Sudan is free and compulsory for children aged 6 to 13 years, with primary education consisting of eight years, followed by three years of secondary education. Schools are concentrated in urban areas, although many in western areas have been damaged or destroyed during years of civil war, and even where schools are accessible, enrollment rates vary widely, falling below 20 % in some provinces. Sudan has 19 universities, but education at secondary and university levels has been seriously hampered by the requirement to perform military service before enrollment. According to latest estimates, the literacy rate is 70.2% of total population (male: 79.6%, female: 60.8%). Currently, 3 million children aged 5–13 are not attending school in Sudan, of which 1.9 million are of primary-school age. The majority of out-of-school children are in Darfur, but the rate of early school exclusion is also high in Blue Nile and South Kordofan. Schools, as well as other public and communal infrastructures, are frequently used as shelter for IDPs. In some IDP camps in South Darfur, the average class size is 93 students, more than double the maximum 35–40 set by international standards.



A UN Peacekeeper in the Abu Shouk IDP Camp, September 2009
Credit: CC BY 2.0, Sudan Envoy
Source: Wikipedia Commons

Protection

In Sudan, human rights violations and humanitarian crises are persistent and widespread since years, and notably allegations have included torture, civilian attacks, rape, censorship and arbitrary arrest, among others. Overall, in 2016 around 3.3 million civilians are considered in need of protection. Some areas in Sudan have been contaminated with landmines and explosive remnants of war, and notably 250 locations covering an estimated 32km², with the heaviest concentrations in Kassala, Gedaref, Red Sea, Blue Nile, South Kordofan, and Darfur. According to 2016 data, over 300,000 people are exposed to Explosive Remnants of War in Blue Nile and Kordofan states alone. Access to proper documentation has also been a cause for concern, as the Sudanese Government repeatedly refused to recognize South Sudanese nationals as refugees, considering them to be Sudanese citizens instead. In addition, Sudanese government requires all foreigners in Sudan to register at the immigration administration by 1st April 2015, a measure denounced by aid organizations as an obstacle to humanitarian assistance.



Darfuris travelling along a road in West Darfur

*Credit: CC 2.0, Sudan Envoy
Source: Wikimedia Commons*

Access

Access constraints continue to impact the humanitarian response in 2016. Humanitarian operations are frequently restricted due to a confluence of factors, including travel permit denials/delays and insecurity in certain areas. A diminished humanitarian presence, caused by a reduction in funding, also limits the capacity of humanitarian programmes, especially in terms of Health and Protection. Opposition-held areas remain largely inaccessible due to ongoing violence or insecurity. Delays and denials of travel permits, but also delays of entry/exit visas and subsequent stay permits also continue to disrupt the effective and efficient conduct of operations in these areas.

TRUTH-SEEKING PROCESSES

The establishment of a Sudanese Truth Commission is under discussion since 2003, when most NGOs and civil society organizations became more and more vocal about the need to address and redress losses, hatred, and pain inflicted on Sudanese victims. In 2014, the head of Darfur Regional Authority (DRA) finally appointed the members of the bodies tasked with achieving justice and reconciliation in the region, as prescribed in the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur (DDPD). Notably, the DDPD set up the basis for an independent Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission (TJRC), to be composed of a Justice Committee, and by a Truth and Reconciliation Committee. In particular, the truth and reconciliation committee is entrusted with evaluating the root causes of the 11-year conflict and investigating human rights violations committed in Darfur since 2002, as well as to developing the culture of confidence-building and reconciliation in the region.



Children in the camps are encouraged to confront their psychological scars. The clay figures depict an attack by Janjaweed.

*Credit: CC, John Scandling
Source: Wikipedia Commons*

FIGHT AGAINST IMPUNITY AND REPARATION

To date, the Sudanese judiciary has only tried a small number of low-level suspects for Darfur crimes, mostly in ordinary courts. In 2005, upon referral by the UNSC, the International Criminal Court has launched an investigation into top ranking officials of the Government, forces, paramilitaries, and armed groups of Sudan. Notably, the ICC issued two arrest warrants against President Omar Hassan Ahmad Al Bashir. Most of the accused however, refuse to comply with ICC orders. One day after the opening of the ICC investigations, the Sudanese authorities established the Special Criminal Court on the Events in Darfur (SCCED) to demonstrate the government's ability to handle prosecutions domestically. However, in its first year, the Special court failed to prove its willingness and capacity to bring to justice alleged criminals of war, and the ICC refused to handle the cases. According to the 2011 Doha Document for Peace in Darfur (DDPD), a Special Court for Darfur and a Sudanese Truth Commission should have been established, but these provisions have never come into effect. The DDPD also set up a justice committee, assigned to receive claims submitted by victims, assess and determine the nature and amount of compensation. The victims would have the right to file their claims during a 10-year period. This Committee follows another tentative made in 2010 by the Darfur Compensation Commission (DCC), which, with the support of the Transitional Darfur Regional Authority (TDRA) and UNAMID, granted the compensation to victims of the conflict. A special case for reparation involved the banking giant BNP, condemned for violation of the US economic sanctions against Sudan for about \$8.8 billion. In theory, the money should have been used to compensate victims of the Sudanese government, but financial regulators claimed large portions of it, and the extremely demanding criteria for application to the remaining parts made it almost inaccessible to victims.

PEACEBUILDING

Ongoing efforts are being made in collaboration with community leaders, stakeholders, and local decision makers to support dispute resolution mechanisms, including training, community forums, roundtables with local and customary authorities, and radio programs. According to Search for Common Ground, an NGO involved in developing activities of this kind in Logone Occidental province, past initiatives have shown that once trained in conflicts transformation techniques, representatives from farmer and pastoralist associations and other civil society organizations are better equipped to resolve conflicts over natural resources. (Farmers and pastoralists have been widely identified as key actors, because they are often converging to areas with advantageous climate conditions, which leads to competition over natural resources, and ultimately violent conflicts.



Dancers in Kapoeta at an awareness building rally for the Naivasha Peace Agreement, 2006

Credit: CC, USAID

Source: Wikipedia Commons

“NO PEACE HAS BEEN POSSIBLE IN SUDAN AS NO JUSTICE PROCESS EVER EXISTS. AND IT IS CERTAINLY THE ACT OF INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE THAT HAS BROUGHT THE KEY PLAYERS BACK NEGOTIATION TABLE IN ORDER TO SETTLE THE CONFLICT.”

Osman Hummada, President of the African Center for Justice and Peace Studies¹

¹ The International Federation for Human Rights, The African Union defies the International Criminal Court and dares trample on the memory of Darfuri victims, 30 July 2010, <https://www.fidh.org/International-Federation-for-Human-Rights/Africa/sudan/sudan-darfur-icc/The-African-Union-defies-the> (last access: 14.09.2015)



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