



Sudan

Introduction

Official Name: Republic of the Sudan

Nationality: Sudanese

Area: 2,505,810 square kilometers (967,499 square miles)

Languages: Arabic (official), Nubian, Ta Bedawie, dialects of Nilotic, Nilo-Hamitic, and Sudanic languages, English

Currency: Sudanese dinar (SDD), New Sudanese pound (South Sudan)

Location: North Africa, bordered by the Central African Republic, Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Libya, and Uganda with coastline on the Red Sea

Statistical Information

Population	39.4 million
0-14 years	41.6 percent
15-64 years	56 percent
65+ years	2.4 percent
Birth rate	35 births/1,000
Death rate	14 deaths/1,000
Fertility rate	4.7 children/woman
Pop. growth rate	2.082 percent
Life expectancy	49.1 years
Literacy	61.1 percent
HIV/AIDS rate	2.3 percent
Below poverty line	40 percent
Ethnic groups	52 percent black 39 percent Arab 6 percent Beja 3 percent other
Religion	70 percent Sunni Muslim 10 percent Christian 20 percent indigenous beliefs

Economy

Sudan's economy is rapidly growing due to increases in oil production, high oil prices, and large amounts of foreign investment. Beginning in 1997, Sudan's government began working with the International

Monetary Fund to implement economic reforms.

Eighty percent of Sudan's workforce is employed in the agriculture sector. Despite significant increases in Sudan's average per capita income, large portions of the population remain at or below poverty levels due to the Darfur conflict, the aftermath of nearly twenty years of civil war in the south, the lack of sufficient infrastructure in many areas, and the reliance on subsistence agriculture by much of the population.

Government

Capital: Khartoum

Sudan's government is known as a government of national unity—it is a coalition government between the National Congress Party (NCP) and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM). The NCP, which came to power by a military coup in 1989, is the majority partner in the coalition. Under the current agreement, national elections are to be held in 2009. The president is both chief of state and head of government, and is elected by popular vote, though the last election was widely believed to be rigged. Sudan also has a first vice president and a vice president. The legislature consists of the bicameral National Legislature. The 50 members of the Council of States are elected by state legislatures to serve six-year terms, while the 450 members of the National Assembly are currently appointed. In the future, 75 percent of National Assembly members are to be directly elected and the remaining 25 percent are to be chosen in special elections.

Climate

Sudan's seasons are defined more by rainfall than by temperature differences. In the northern plains and desert region, temperatures range from 90° F in the winter (November to February) to 108° F in the summer (March to June). In the central and southern regions, temperatures hover around 80° to 85° F year-round. Rainfall decreases from south to north; northern regions can receive less than ten centimeters

of rain per year. The *haboob*, a desert sandstorm, can disrupt railroad traffic.

Environmental Concerns

Sudan's supplies of water suitable for drinking are inadequate. The country also experiences soil erosion, desertification, and periodic droughts. Wildlife populations are threatened by excessive hunting.

History

Northeastern Sudan was known as Nubia in ancient times. It was first settled by Egypt around 2000 B.C. The Egyptian colony extended as far south as the fourth cataract of the Nile, around present-day Karima.

From the eighth century B.C. to the fourth century A.D., Sudan was ruled by the Cush kingdom, which was first centered at Napata. Around 600 B.C. the center of the Cush kingdom was moved to Meroë. By the first century A.D., Meroë was a great center for ironworking, and iron technology may have spread from Meroë to other parts of Africa.

Most Nubians converted to Coptic Christianity in the sixth century A.D. By the eighth century, three separate states ruled Nubia. These states continually resisted invasions from Egypt, which had converted to Islam in the seventh century and was now ruled by Muslims.

From the 13th to the 15th centuries, the Nubian kingdoms were overrun by waves of invaders from the Muslim north. Nubia gradually became Muslim, although the southern regions continued to resist the encroachment of Islam, carrying on their traditional religions through today. The northern part of Sudan was ruled by the Muslim state of Funj beginning in the 16th century.

In 1821, Funj was conquered by Egyptian armies sent by Muhammed Ali. In 1823, the Egyptians established Khartoum as their headquarters in Sudan and began to build the region's trade in ivory and slaves. Egyptian ruler Ismail Pasha tried to extend Egypt's influence further south during the 1860s and 1870s, but Muhammed Ahmed, a Muslim religious leader known as the Mahdi, began a revolt in 1881. The Mahdi desired to end Egyptian influence in Sudan and purify Islam. The Mahdists defeated English and Egyptian forces, leading Britain and Egypt to abandon Sudan. Charles Gordon, sent to evacuate British and Egyptian troops, was killed by the Mahdists in Khartoum in early 1885.

In the 1890s, the British decided to take control of Sudan. In a series of campaigns from 1896 to 1898, Anglo-Egyptian forces wrested power from the Mahdis. An 1899 agreement established the government of Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, ruled by a governor-general appointed by Egypt and approved by Britain. Although the idea was for Britain and Egypt to share power, in reality Britain controlled the government of Sudan. The Sudanese strongly opposed colonial rule, and Egyptians grew resentful of their subordinate role to the British.

In 1924, the British began administering southern Sudan separately from northern Sudan. In 1948 a mostly elected legislature was set up for the entire territory. In the 1948 legislative elections, the Independence Front, which favored Sudanese independence, won a majority over the National Front, which favored the unification of Sudan with Egypt. After Egypt's 1952 revolution, Britain and Egypt agreed to begin preparing Sudan for independence in 1956. Southern Sudanese, fearing that an independent Sudan would be dominated by the Muslim north, began a revolt that would last 17 years.

Despite the revolt, Sudan was given its independence and established as a parliamentary democracy in 1956. In 1958, General Ibrahim Abboud led a military coup which ousted the parliamentary government. Abboud was unable to improve the economy or end the southern revolt; in 1964, he agreed to return the country to civilian government. The new civilian government had no more success dealing with Sudan's political and economic problems.

In 1969, Colonel Muhammed Gaafur al-Nimeiry took control of the government in a coup. He banned all political parties and nationalized banks and industries. The government signed an agreement with the Southern Sudan Liberation Front in February 1972, ending the civil war. Nimeiry's regime was strongly criticized in Sudan because of the worsening economy and for its support of Egypt's role in the Camp David accords with Israel. In the late 1970s, Nimeiry closed universities and fired his cabinet in an attempt to stifle opposition.

During the 1980s, southern Sudan grew more politically unstable, as the largely Christian and animist Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) stepped up resistance. In 1983, Nimeiry instituted strict Islamic law, further angering non-Muslims in the south. Nimeiry was overthrown in 1985 and replaced by General Abdul Rahman Swaredahab.

Elections were held in 1986, and a civilian government ruled until 1989, when it was overthrown in a coup.

The new military regime, led by Lieutenant General Omar Ahmed al-Bashir, strengthened Sudan's ties with Libya, Iran, and Iraq. It also increased enforcement of Islamic law, banned opposition parties, and continued to fight southern opposition. Bashir diverted relief aid, mostly food, from the famine-stricken south to the Muslim north, causing the United States to stop relief efforts in Sudan in 1990. Relations with the U.S. grew more strained after Sudan backed Iraq in the Persian Gulf War.

In 1998, the U.S. destroyed a pharmaceutical plant in Khartoum suspected of manufacturing chemical weapons to be used in terrorist activities. International investigators were unable to find evidence to support the charges.

Civil war dragged on throughout the 1990s. By then, it had resulted in nearly two million deaths, most caused by war-related starvation and disease. The U.N. Human Rights Commission accused Sudan of human rights violations in the form of widespread slavery and forced labor. Other human rights groups accused the Sudanese government of ethnic cleansing in the south, and the government was also accused of supporting terrorist activities overseas. In July of 1998, a temporary cease-fire was negotiated to allow relief organizations to deliver food shipments to the starving south. The cease-fire lapsed in July 1999 after peace talks in Nairobi fell apart.

In 1999, the parliament voted to increase the prime minister's powers while limiting the president's. In response, President Bashir declared a state of emergency and dissolved the parliament. He also replaced his entire cabinet. Bashir worked to improve foreign relations; he was reelected in December of 2000.

In January 2002, a cease-fire was negotiated in the Nuba Mountains region to allow relief aid to be brought to the drought-stricken central south. Fighting continued in other regions. In the same month, the SPLA formed an alliance with another southern rebel group, the Sudan People's Defense Force.

In July 2002, the Sudanese government and the SPLA made a peace agreement, but the agreement did not cover three rebel-controlled southern regions. A truce was called in October 2002. In September 2003, an accord between the north and south called for the north to remove its troops from the south and

for the south to remove rebel forces from the north. It also provided for joint governance of the south and two central regions by the rebel group and the northern government.

In 2003, a separate rebellion broke out in the region of Darfur, in western Sudan. Despite the signing of a cease-fire in September, fighting continued. Government forces, as well as militias allied with the government, were accused of ethnic cleansing in Darfur. Many Sudanese were displaced by the fighting, and some fled to neighboring Chad. A new cease-fire was signed in April 2004, but it was no more successful than its predecessor.

In mid-2004, the United States, the United Nations, and the European Union put increasing pressure on the Sudanese government to end the attacks in Darfur. In July 2004, Bashir promised that the militias would be disarmed. In July and September, Bashir's lack of progress toward disarming the militias and stopping the fighting led to U.N. resolutions against Sudan. The September resolution called for investigations into whether the Sudanese government's attacks were genocide. The investigating commission later decided that the attacks were war crimes and crimes against humanity but not genocide.

In August 2004, the African Union began sending peacekeeping troops into Sudan. A November peace accord fell apart when a new rebel offensive was launched, and fighting continued into 2005, sometimes spilling over into Chad. By early 2005, an estimated two million Sudanese had been displaced by the Darfur violence. The area became a base for rebel attacks against the Chadian government later in 2005, straining relations between Sudan and Chad. At the same time, attacks against southern Sudanese by the Ugandan rebel group the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) led the Sudanese government and southern rebels to join forces against the LRA.

A final peace agreement between the SPLA and the Sudanese government was signed in 2005. The agreement called for Islamic law to be restricted to the north, for the south to be given autonomy (with a vote on independence set for 2011), and for central government power and southern oil revenues to be shared between the north and south.

A government for autonomous South Sudan was established in Juba in October 2005. Since then, there has been fighting in south Sudan between the SPLA and smaller rebel groups who refuse to be integrated into the SPLA.

In 2006, attempts were made to enforce the much-violated A.U.-monitored peace agreement in Darfur. The A.U. was unable to win an agreement on a new cease-fire, and Sudan objected to the proposed replacement of A.U. monitors with U.N. peacekeepers. Chadian rebels mounted an offensive which reached the Chadian capital, Ndjamena, in April 2006. Since the Chadian rebels mounted their campaign from Sudan, Chad broke off diplomatic relations with Sudan and accused Sudan of supporting the rebels. In May, a peace agreement was reached with one group of rebels in Darfur, but fighting continued among ethnically divided rebel factions as well as with government forces.

In August 2006, Sudan rejected a U.N. Security Council resolution which established a U.N. peacekeeping force for Darfur. The A.U. agreed to extend the mandate for its forces until the end of 2006. In October, Chad again accused Sudan of supporting a rebel campaign, and claimed that the Sudanese air force had bombed several towns in eastern Chad. In early 2007, Chadian and Sudanese forces clashed after the Chadian military pursued rebels across the Sudanese border.

In January 2007, both sides in Darfur reportedly agreed to a 60-day cease-fire and peace summit, but both sides violated the cease-fire later that month. In March, the International Criminal Court accused Ahmed Haroun, a Sudanese government official responsible for Darfur in 2003 and 2004, of war crimes. In April, Sudan agreed to allow 3,000 U.N. peacekeepers into Darfur following pressure from China. In June it agreed to a joint A.U. and U.N. peacekeeping force.

Ethnic Groups

There are 597 ethnic groups in Sudan, speaking over 400 different dialects. There are two major cultures: Arabs with Nubian roots and non-Arab Africans. Some of the largest people groups are the Dinka, Beja, Fur, Nuer, Luo, and Nubian peoples.

There are around 4.5 million Dinka in Sudan, making them the largest ethnic group in south Sudan. They are a very dark African people who are sometimes noted for their height. Dinka are farmers and shepherds. Many Dinka still follow their traditional religion, which includes a belief in one god, known as Nhialic. Some Dinka are Christians.

Many Sudanese Beja live in Sudanese states near the Red Sea. The Beja speak Ta Bedawie, usually classified as a Cushitic language. The Beja attach a high value to their hair; they have been characterized

by their distinctive hairstyle for centuries. Many Beja converted to Christianity in the sixth century A.D., but today most are believed to be Muslims.

The Fur people are the largest ethnic group in the region of Darfur. Many Fur are herders. Their society is a highly traditional one governed by village elders. The Fur people are Muslim, and many can speak Arabic in addition to their native Fur. They are well known for both their Muslim piety and their pride in their African identity. The Islam of the Fur people has been heavily influenced by their traditional religion.

The Nuer are the second-largest ethnic group in south Sudan. They are pastoral, and rely upon grain products. During colonial times, Nuer warriors were known as some of the most skilled in East Africa, with finely crafted iron weapons. Cattle have high symbolic, religious, and economic value among the Nuer. The Nuer receive facial markings, called *gaar*, as part of their initiation into adulthood.

The Luo are a family of affiliated ethnic groups. Luo languages are part of the Eastern Sudanic family. Luo sub-groups in Sudan include the Shilluk, Pari, Thur, Acholi, Jo-Luo, and Anuak. The Shilluk sub-group is the third largest minority group in south Sudan.

The Nubian homeland is the Nile River Valley in northern Sudan. They speak various dialects of the Nubian language; nearly all Sudanese Nubians speak Arabic as a second language. Nubians are predominantly Sunni Muslim, although some are Coptic Christians. Ancient Nubians were renowned for their skill with bow and arrow.

Religion

According to estimates, around three-quarters of Sudan's population is Muslim. Muslims predominate in northern Sudan. Most Sudanese Muslims are Sunnis. Sufism, a mystic form of Islam, is influential in areas of Sudan, but most members of Sufi brotherhoods are also Sunni Muslims. Sudanese Islam often includes a belief in spirits that cause illness or other afflictions. Many Sudanese Muslims believe that the words of the Qur'an can ward off the evil eye and guard against the actions of evil spirits.

Christianity is most prevalent in southern Sudan, mainly in the states of Madi, Moru, Azande, and Bari. Perhaps ten percent of Sudan's population consider themselves Christians. It is estimated that about half of Sudanese Christians are Protestants. Other Sudanese Christians belong to Catholic or

Anglican churches. The Coptic Orthodox Church also has a strong influence on Sudanese Christianity. Indigenous religions are still the primary religion of at least 15 percent of Sudanese. Indigenous religions hold the most sway in South Sudan, where Islam has made fewer inroads. Each ethnic group has its own traditional religion, though they have some shared traits. Most Sudanese traditional religions share the concept of a high spirit or divinity, usually seen as a creator. Often the high spirit is remote, and religious rituals focus more on other spirits, which may be forces of nature or spirits of ancestors.

Culture

Food—Sudanese often begin their day with a cup of tea. Breakfast is eaten in mid- to late morning, and typically consists of beans, salad, liver, and bread. Millet is a staple, and is prepared in a variety of ways, including as a porridge known as *asida* or a flat bread called *kisra*. Vegetables are made into stews or salads. *Ful*, broad beans cooked in oil, is a common dish, along with cassavas and sweet potatoes. Nomads in the north rely on dairy products and meat from camels. Most Sudanese do not eat meat regularly, as it is expensive. A special dish called *marara* consists of the intestines, liver, and lungs of an animal cooked with chili pepper. Sudanese cook outside their houses, on a tin charcoal grill called a *kanoon*. Tea and coffee are both popular drinks. Coffee beans are fried, then ground with cloves and spices. Liquid coffee is strained through a grass sieve and served in small cups.

Social status—In the north, Sudanese have more access to education and economic opportunities. In the south, members of the upper class are usually Christian and have attended missionary schools. In many Sudanese tribes, social status was traditionally determined by birth.

Marriage—Marriages are traditionally arranged by a couple's parents. Arranged marriage is still the norm today. Common matches are cousins, second cousins, or other family members, or at least members of the same tribe and social class. There is generally a significant age difference between men and women. A man must be able to financially provide for a wife and family. He must also be able to furnish a bride-price to the family of the bride. Women often marry when they finish school, at 19 or 20. In poorer rural areas, the marriage age is often younger.

Education—The overall education level of the population has increased since independence. The south has fewer schools than the north. Most schools in the south were established by Christian missionaries during colonial times, but the government closed the missionary schools in 1962. In villages, children often attend Islamic schools known as *khalwa*. Boys attend between ages five and 19, and girls attend until around age 10. As payment, parents contribute labor or gifts to the school. The state-run school system consists of six years of primary school, three years of secondary school, and either three years of college preparatory or four years of vocational training.

Etiquette—Greetings often have religious overtones; common expressions among Muslims have references to Allah. Food is an important part of many social interactions. Visits often include, if not a meal, at least coffee, tea, or soda.

Dress

Western clothing is common in the cities. Muslim women in the north cover their heads and their entire bodies to the ankles. They wrap a semi-transparent length of fabric known as a *tobe* over their other clothing. Men often wear a long white robe called a *jallabiyah* with a small cap or turban as a head covering. In rural areas and among certain ethnic groups, people wear little clothing.

Facial scarring is an ancient Sudanese tradition. Although it is growing increasingly less common, it is still practiced. Facial scarring is a sign of bravery among men, and a sign of beauty among women. Members of the Shilluk tribe have a line of bumps along their forehead, and the Nuer people have six parallel lines on the forehead. The Ja'aliin place lines on their cheeks. In the south, women sometimes have their entire bodies marked in patterns which tell their marital status and the number of children they have borne. In the north, women often have their lower lips tattooed.

Travel/Transportation

Road conditions throughout Sudan are hazardous. Pedestrians and animals in the road and poorly maintained vehicles present hazards for drivers. Many vehicles operate without headlights at night, making night driving especially risky. Only major highways and some city streets are paved; unpaved roads are often narrow, rutted, and poorly maintained.

In the north and west, dust and sand storms known as *haboobs* greatly reduce visibility and can quickly cover roads with shifting sand at any time of year. Public transportation is limited to within and between major cities. Buses tend to be very crowded, especially during rush hours. Bus service between major cities is regular and inexpensive. Bus service within major cities is regular, but buses and bus stops are often privately owned and unmarked. Taxis are available in major cities at hotels, government buildings, and tourist sites.

U.S. or Canadian driver's licenses are acceptable in Sudan for 90 days. Visitors who remain in Sudan longer than 90 days must either obtain a Sudanese driver's license or an international driving permit (IDP). An IDP is a document which allows a motorist to operate a vehicle in another nation when accompanied by a valid driver's license from his or her own country.

You can apply for an IDP in the United States or Canada before you travel. The American Automobile Association (AAA) and the American Automobile Touring Alliance are the only organizations in the U.S. authorized by the State Department to issue IDPs. The Canadian Automobile Association (CAA) is authorized to issue IDPs to Canadian citizens. The cost of an IDP is under \$20; the application will need to be accompanied by two passport-sized photos.

Illness/Injury

Medical facilities in Khartoum are inadequate. Outside the capital, very few medical facilities exist; hospitals and clinics that do exist tend to be poorly equipped and short of supplies. Cash payment is expected in advance of medical service. Many medicines are not widely available in Sudan.

Crime

Crimes against individuals are not common in Khartoum. Carjacking and armed robbery are a problem in western and southern Sudan.

Safety and Security

Terrorist groups in Sudan target Western interests. This may include bombings and kidnappings. Outside major cities, infrastructure is very poor and travel can be hazardous.

Conflict between government forces and various armed groups continues in western Sudan, in the states of North Darfur, West Darfur, and South Darfur. Banditry and lawlessness are common, and many residents live in camps for internally displaced

persons. Humanitarian workers in these camps have been targeted by rebel groups.

Land mines are a hazard in southern Sudan, especially south of the city of Juba. Remain on marked roads unless a de-mining authority such as the United Nations has marked an area clear of mines. The Ugandan group known as the Lord's Resistance Army operates along the southern border of Sudan, and has indicated that it will target Americans.

Sudan's borders with other African nations, including Chad, Uganda, the Central African Republic, and Zaire, are porous, and conflict in other nations may spill over into Sudan.

Entry/Exit Requirements

A valid passport and visa are required to enter Sudan. Most travelers must obtain a visa in their home nation before traveling to Sudan; the only exception is American citizens who also possess a Sudanese passport or national identification card. Those with official Sudanese identification may obtain an entry visa at Khartoum International Airport.

Travelers with passports which contain Israeli visas or other evidence of travel to Israel, such as entry or exit stamps, may be denied Sudanese visas.

The semi-autonomous Government of Southern Sudan issues travel permits for areas of South Sudan. Travelers who wish to travel in South Sudan must obtain a permit. Permits may be obtained in Nairobi, Kenya, or in some major Sudanese cities, such as Yei.

To exit the country, visitors must obtain an exit visa and pay an airport departure tax if it is not included in the price of the plane ticket.

For more information concerning visas, contact the Embassy of Sudan at 2210 Massachusetts Ave. NW, Washington, D.C. 20008.

Immunizations

Travelers entering Sudan from a country where yellow fever is endemic must present proof of yellow fever inoculation. The CDC recommends that every traveler to Sudan nine months and older receive a yellow fever vaccination.

Malaria is a risk in all areas of Sudan. Consult a travel health professional at least four to six weeks before traveling to determine a course of antimalarial drugs, such as atovaquone, doxycycline, or

mefloquine. Chloroquine is not an effective antimalarial drug for Sudan.

Other vaccines travelers may wish to consider include hepatitis A, hepatitis B, typhoid, meningitis, and polio.

There is a high risk of insect-borne disease transmission in Sudan. This includes African trypanosomiasis (African sleeping sickness) and dengue fever. Use insect repellent to reduce the risk of contracting an insect-borne disease.

Special Circumstances

The Sudanese government requires anyone who wishes to enter the Darfur area to obtain a special travel permit. This includes journalists, photographers, and humanitarian workers.

Travelers must obtain a photography permit from the Sudanese Ministry of the Interior in order to take photographs, even for personal use. Even with a permit, military areas, bridges, drainage stations, public utilities, slum areas, and beggars may not be photographed.

Personal baggage, including computers, is routinely searched upon arrival in and departure from the country. Authorities may confiscate material they deem objectionable. Restrictions apply to many electronic devices, including video cameras, satellite phones, fax machines, televisions, and telephones. Customs information can be obtained from the Embassy of Sudan (see contact information under Travel/Transportation section).

Travelers will need to pay cash for all purchases, including hotel bills, airfare, and other travel expenses. Major credit cards cannot be used in Sudan due to economic sanctions against the country. There are no international ATMs in Sudan; local ATMs draw only on local banks.

Sudan is a conservative society, especially in areas where Muslim populations are the majority, such as in Khartoum. Alcohol is illegal, and both women and men are expected to dress modestly. Women should wear loose, long sleeved shirts and long pants or skirts. Men may wear short sleeved shirts but shorts are not acceptable in public. Female visitors who are not Muslim do not need to cover their heads.

Electricity

Sudan uses 230V/50Hz power, so a power converter will be necessary to use most American appliances in Sudan. Many recently made cell phone chargers and

laptop computers are designed to work with different types of power, so they will not require a converter. Sudan uses plug types C and D, so a set of plug adapters will also be required to convert American types A and B plugs to fit in Sudanese outlets.