

## SUDAN

**Sudan** (officially the **Republic of Sudan**) is a country in northeastern Africa. It is the largest country in the African continent and, as a member of the Arab League, also the largest country in the Arab World and tenth largest in the world by area. It is bordered by Egypt to the north, the Red Sea to the northeast, Eritrea and Ethiopia to the east, Kenya and Uganda to the southeast, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Central African Republic to the southwest, Chad to the west and Libya to the northwest.

### History

Military regimes favoring Islamic-oriented governments have dominated national politics since independence from the UK in 1956. Sudan was embroiled in two prolonged civil wars during most of the remainder of the 20th century. These conflicts were rooted in northern economic, political, and social domination of largely non-Muslim, non-Arab southern Sudanese. The first civil war ended in 1972 but broke out again in 1983. The second war and famine-related effects resulted in more than four million people displaced and, according to rebel estimates, more than two million deaths over a period of two decades. Peace talks gained momentum in 2002-04 with the signing of several accords. The final North/South Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), signed in January 2005, granted the southern rebels autonomy for six years. After which, a referendum for independence is scheduled to be held. A separate conflict, which broke out in the western region of Darfur in 2003, has displaced nearly two million people and caused an estimated 200,000 to 400,000 deaths. The UN took command of the Darfur peacekeeping operation from the African Union on 31 December 2007. As of early 2009, peacekeeping troops were struggling to stabilize the situation, which has become increasingly regional in scope, and has brought instability to eastern Chad, and Sudanese incursions into the Central African Republic. Sudan also has faced large refugee influxes from neighboring countries, primarily Ethiopia and Chad. Armed conflict, poor transport infrastructure, and lack of government support have chronically obstructed the provision of humanitarian assistance to affected populations.

### Geography

Sudan is situated in northern Africa, bordering the Red Sea and it has a coastline of 853 km along the Red Sea. With an area of 2,505,810 square kilometres (967,499 sq mi), it is the largest country on the continent and the tenth largest in the world. It borders the Central African Republic, Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Libya and Uganda. It is dominated by the River Nile and its tributaries.

The terrain is generally flat plains, broken by several mountain ranges; in the west the Jebel Marra is the highest range; in the south is the highest mountain Mount Kinyeti Imatong, near the border with Uganda; in the east are the Red Sea Hills. The Blue and White Niles meet in Khartoum to form the River Nile, which flows northwards through Egypt to the Mediterranean Sea. Blue Nile's course through Sudan is nearly 800 km long and is joined by the rivers Dinder and Rahad between Sennar and Khartoum. The White Nile within Sudan has no significant tributaries.

The amount of rainfall increases towards the south. In the north there is the very dry Nubian Desert; in the south there are swamps and rainforest. Sudan's rainy season lasts for about three months (July to September) in the north, and up to six months (June to November) in the south. The dry regions are plagued by sandstorms, known as haboob, which can completely block out the sun. In the northern and western semi-desert areas, people rely on the scant rainfall for basic agriculture and many are nomadic, traveling with their herds of sheep and camels. Nearer the River Nile, there are well-irrigated farms growing cash crops

## **Climate**

Sudan's climate ranges from hot and dry in the north to humid and tropical in the equatorial south. September to April is the best time to visit. Northern temperatures can exceed 40°C year-round, but peak from April to July. The heaviest rains (rarely more than 150mm in Khartoum) are in July and August.

**Population:** 41,087,825

**Currency:** Sudanese pounds (SDG)

*note:* in October 2007 Sudan redenominated its currency by transforming 100 units of Sudanese dinar into one unit of Sudanese pound

## **Getting there and around**

The national carrier is the government-owned Sudan Airways. Other airline companies operate on local routes.

The railway system in the Sudan is extensive, with about 5,500km (3,420 miles) of track linking most of the major towns and cities.

Buses run between Khartoum, Kassala, Port Sudan, Gedarif. These boast air-conditioning, comfortable seats and shock absorbers, but most buses are a far cry from this class of transport. The vast majority has wooden bench seats, no shock absorbers and is very crowded and uncomfortable.

## **More information**

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