

## COUNTRY PROFILE: SUDAN

December 2004

### COUNTRY

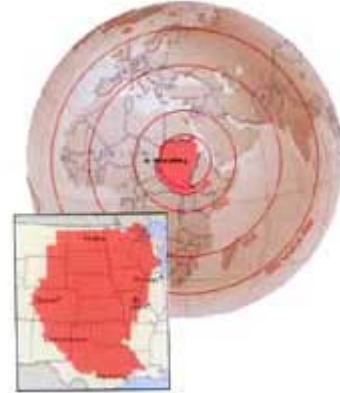
**Formal Name:** Republic of the Sudan (Jumhuriyat as-Sudan).

**Short Form:** Sudan.

**Term for Citizen(s):** Sudanese.

**Capital:** Khartoum.

**Other Major Cities:** Omdurman, Khartoum North, Port Sudan, Kassala, Al Ubayyid, and Nyala (according to decreasing size, 1993 census).



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**Independence:** Sudan gained independence from the United Kingdom and Egypt on January 1, 1956.

**Public Holidays:** Sudan observes the following public holidays: Independence Day (January 1, 2004), Feast of the Sacrifice/Id al-Adha (February 1, 2004\*), Islamic New Year (February 22, 2004\*), Uprising Day, anniversary of 1985 coup (April 6, 2004), Coptic Easter Monday/Sham an-Nassim (April 12, 2004\*), Birth of the Prophet/Mouloud (May 2, 2004\*), Revolution Day (June 30, 2004), end of Ramadan/Id al-Fitr (November 14, 2004\*), and Christmas (December 25, 2004). The asterisk indicates holidays with variable dates according to the Islamic or Coptic calendar.

### Flag:

Sudan's flag has three horizontal bands of red (top), white, and black with a green isosceles triangle based on the hoist side.



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### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

**Prehistory and Early History:** Northern Sudan was inhabited by hunting and gathering peoples by at least 60,000 years ago. These peoples had given way to pastoralists and probably agriculturalists at least by the fourth millennium B.C. Sudan's subsequent culture and history have largely revolved around relations to the north with Egypt and to the south with tropical Africa, the Nile River forming a "bridge" through the Sahara Desert between the two. The Ancient Egyptians sent military expeditions into Nubia, the region between the first and second Nile cataracts, and at times occupied Nubia as well as Cush, the land between the second and sixth cataracts, the population becoming partially Egyptianized. From the early eighth century to the mid-seventh century B. C., the Cushites conquered and ruled Egypt. By the early sixth

century B.C., a Cushitic state, Meroe, had emerged that eventually extended southward almost to present-day Khartoum. Meroe maintained commercial relations with the Roman world, developed a distinctive culture and written language, and became the locale of an iron-working industry. It succumbed to invasion in the mid-fourth century A. D.

By the sixth century, three states had emerged as the political and cultural heirs of the Meroitic kingdom. All were ruled by warrior aristocracies who converted to Christianity, accepting the Monophysite rite of Egypt. The church encouraged literacy, the use of Greek in liturgy eventually giving way to the Nubian language. Arabic, however, gained importance after the seventh century, especially as a medium for commerce. With the disintegration of the Christian Nubian kingdoms by the fifteenth century, Islamic civilization and religion spread throughout northern and eastern Sudan. Pastoralists from Egypt filtered into the land, gradually giving rise to a new population composed of local Nubians and Muslim Arabs.

**Islam and the Mahdi:** The coming of Islam gradually changed the nature of Sudanese society and facilitated the division of Sudan into northern and southern halves, one Arab, the other, African. In the sixteenth century, the Ottoman Turks, governors of Egypt, claimed Nubia as a dependency but exerted little authority beyond the Nile. Meanwhile, in central Sudan, a new state called Funj arose with its capital at Sannar on the Blue Nile. The Funj checked the expansion of the Arabs, in the process becoming devout Muslims themselves. In the west, the Fur people formed the state of Darfur and similarly adopted Islam. Both states engaged in the slave trade with Egypt.

Early in the nineteenth century, the Egyptians sent another military expedition into Sudan, establishing a new administration known as the Turkiyah, or Turkish regime. The Egyptians divided Sudan into provinces, and in 1835 Khartoum became the seat of a governor general. They fostered the growth of Islamic law and institutions and organized and garrisoned the new provinces of Bahr al Ghazal, Equatoria, and Upper Nile, home to the Nilotic Dinka, Nuer, and Shilluk as well as the non–Nilotic Azande. In 1874 Egypt conquered and annexed Darfur. Slavery and the slave trade, age-old practices in Sudan, intensified during the nineteenth century. Annual raids for slaves resulted in the capture of thousands of black Sudanese, the destruction of the region's stability and economy, and a deep hatred of Arabs among the Southerners.

In the early 1880s, an Islamic cleric, seeking to create a “purified” form of Islam and to throw off Ottoman rule from Egypt, took the title of “Mahdi” (“the rightly guided one”), and launched a revolt against the Ottomans as well as against the British, who in 1882 had assumed control of affairs in Egypt. By late 1885, the Mahdi's forces, the Ansar, had driven the Egyptians out of Sudan. Mahdist control of central and northern Sudan lasted until an Anglo-Egyptian army defeated the Ansar in 1898. The next year, the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium in Sudan was proclaimed, which provided for joint overlordship but which in effect placed control in British hands.

**Colonial Era:** British authorities created a new administration in Sudan under a governor general and provincial governors. Some economic development occurred, but it was confined to the Nile Valley's settled areas. In 1916 the British terminated Darfur's independence by annexing that sultanate. The three southern provinces, Bahr al Ghazal, Equatoria, and Upper

Nile, were separated from the North economically and politically to allow the South to develop in its own way, but in reality the region remained isolated and economically undeveloped. Western missionaries introduced Christianity, established mission schools, and provided some social services to the black population. Sudanese nationalism developed after World War I as an Arab and Muslim phenomenon with its support base in the northern provinces. The nationalists were divided between those who favored unification with Egypt and a pro-independence movement. The latter prevailed, and on January 1, 1956, Britain granted independence to Sudan.

**Independence:** Independent Sudan continued to be bedeviled by Southerners' fears of domination by the North and of the imposition of an Islamic and Arabic-speaking administration. Discontent flared as early as 1955. Rebellion began in earnest in 1963 and lasted through the 1990s except for a decade of peace from 1972 to 1983. Peace negotiations repeatedly foundered over the issues of self-determination for the South and the application of sharia (Islamic law). Beginning in 1983, Colonel John Garang assumed leadership of the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), the main opposition force. The Northerners were headed after mid-1989 by Lieutenant General Umar Hassan Ahmad al Bashir and his ally, Hasan Abd Allah al Turabi, of the National Islamic Front party. The regime became increasingly Islamist, in keeping with al Turabi's views, and remained so even after al Bashir ousted al Turabi from the government and imprisoned him in 2002. Sudan's financial prospects improved dramatically in the late 1990s with the export of petroleum from oilfields in the South.

Negotiations between the regime and the SPLA produced results only after international mediation. In June 2002, both sides agreed that a referendum on self-determination for the South would be held within six years of a peace agreement and that in the interim the sharia would not apply to non-Muslim Southerners. Subsequent negotiations produced a cease-fire in much of the South, provisions governing national institutions, security arrangements, a formula for sharing oil revenues, and a federal governing structure. These negotiations, however, were overshadowed by a separate rebellion in Darfur that began in 2003 over alleged economic and political marginalization. The al Bashir regime sent Arab militias into Darfur, whose atrocities drew international condemnation, threats of sanctions from the United Nations, and, in late 2004, emplacement of cease-fire monitoring troops from the African Union.

## GEOGRAPHY

**Location:** Sudan is located in northeastern Africa. It borders the Red Sea between Egypt on the north and Eritrea and Ethiopia on the southeast; it borders Chad and the Central African Republic on the west.

**Size:** The total area of the country is 2,505,813 square kilometers.

**Land Boundaries:** The length of Sudan's borders is 7,687 kilometers. Border countries are: Central African



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Republic (1,165 kilometers), Chad (1,360 kilometers), Democratic Republic of the Congo (628 kilometers), Egypt (1,273 kilometers), Eritrea (605 kilometers), Ethiopia (1,606 kilometers), Kenya (232 kilometers), Libya (383 kilometers), and Uganda (435 kilometers).

**Disputed Territory:** Two regions along the border with Egypt between the Nile River and the Red Sea are in dispute, but Egypt administers the larger of the two contested parcels.

**Length of Coastline:** The length of Sudan's Red Sea coastline is 716 kilometers.

**Maritime Claims:** Sudan claims a 12-nautical-mile territorial sea zone, an 18-nautical-mile contiguous zone, and jurisdiction over the continental shelf to a 200-meter depth or to the depth of resource exploitation.

**Topography:** The country is generally a broad, flat plain, with low mountains in the northeast near the Red Sea coast, in the west, and on the southeast. An outcropping of low mountains in the south-central region is known as the Nuba Mountains. The Nile River system divides the eastern third from the western two-thirds of the country. In the North, the Nubian Desert lies to the east of the Nile, the Libyan Desert to the west. Both are stony, virtually rainless, and dune-covered. South of Khartoum, the vegetation gradually changes from dry grassland and woodland to verdant savannah.

**Principal Rivers:** The Nile is the dominant geographic feature of Sudan, flowing 3,000 kilometers from Uganda in the south to Egypt in the north. Most of the country lies within its catchment basin. The Blue Nile and the White Nile, originating in the Ethiopian highlands and the Central African lakes, respectively, join at Khartoum to form the Nile River proper that flows to Egypt. Other major tributaries of the Nile are the Bahr al Ghazal, Sobat, and Atbarah rivers.

**Climate:** The climate varies from tropical wet and dry seasons in the South to arid desert in the North. Annual temperatures vary little at any single location. The rainy season (April to November) and the length of the dry season constitute the most significant climatic variables.

**Natural Resources:** Petroleum is Sudan's major natural resource. The country also has small deposits of chromium ore, copper, gold, iron ore, mica, silver, tungsten, and zinc.

**Land Use:** Sudan's total land area amounts to some 251 million hectares. About half of this land is suitable for agriculture, of which about 17 million hectares are actually cultivated.

**Environmental Factors:** Sudan suffers from inadequate supplies of potable water, declining wildlife populations because of warfare and excessive hunting, soil erosion, desertification, and periodic droughts.

**Time Zone:** Local time in Sudan is Greenwich Mean Time plus three hours.

## SOCIETY

**Population:** Sudan has not had a comprehensive census since 1983. The most recent survey occurred in 1993, which produced a population figure of 24.9 million, but it omitted the South because of insecurity. As a result, most if not all demographic and social statistics are based on dated and incomplete information. In 2003 the United Nations Population Division estimated Sudan's population at 33.6 million, a figure compatible with other estimates, although one or two estimates were higher by several million. According to the United Nations, the annual growth rate was 2.8 percent. The United Nations estimated the population density at 13.4 persons per square kilometer, a misleading measurement because half of the population lives on approximately 15 percent of the land, and the northern third of the country is quite thinly populated. Estimates of urbanization ranged from 31 percent to 37 percent, with the greatest concentration in the greater Khartoum area.

**Demography:** In 2004, 44 percent of the population (male 8,730,609; female 8,358,569) was less than 15 years of age; 54 percent (male 10,588,634; female 10,571,199) was between the ages of 15 and 64 years, and those aged 65 years and older accounted for slightly more than 2 percent (male 490,869; female 408,282). In the overall population, there were 1.02 males for every female. The number of births per 1,000 population was 38; the number of deaths, 10. The infant mortality rate per 1,000 live births was estimated at 69. The average number of lifetime births per female was 5.4. Life expectancy at birth was an estimated average of 57 years (56 years for men, 58 years for women).

**Ethnic Groups:** Ethnic identity is highly fluid in Sudan and depends upon the criteria by which individual groups of Sudanese distinguish themselves from other groups. The largest commonly recognized ethnic groups are Arabs, Nubians, Beja, and Fur (all Northerners and Muslims), and the Dinka, Nuer, Shilluk, and Nuba, all Nilotic peoples of the South. The Arabs and Dinka are the largest groups within their respective regions. All of these ethnic groups are subdivided into tribal or other units. In rough percentages, Sudan's population is composed of 50 percent black Africans, 40 percent Arabs, 6 percent Beja, and 3–4 percent other.

**Languages:** Sudan is home to a large number of languages. One authoritative source lists 134 spoken languages, with other estimates running up to 400, including numerous dialects. Arabic is the official language and is the primary language in northern and central Sudan. English is widely spoken as a second language in the North and to a lesser extent in the South. Other major languages in the North are Nubian and Ta Bedawie (Beja). A diverse collection of languages spoken in the South belong to the Niger-Kurdufian and Nilo-Saharan language families.

**Religion:** On the basis of rough estimates, more than half of Sudan's population is Muslim. Most Muslims live in the North; however, significant non-Muslim groups are found in the Red Sea Hills, the Nuba Mountains, and in the western part of the country. Estimates of the Christian population range between 4 and 10 percent; Christians live mostly in the South and in Khartoum. At least one-third of Sudanese, many of them Southerners, adhere to traditional religion.

**Education and Literacy:** Education is free and compulsory for children aged 6 to 13 years. Primary education consists of six years, followed by three years of middle school and three years

of secondary or technical instruction. The primary language at all levels is Arabic. Schools are concentrated in urban areas; many in the South and West have been damaged or destroyed by conflict. In 2001 the World Bank estimated that primary enrollment was 46 percent of eligible pupils and 21 percent of secondary students. Enrollment varies widely, falling below 20 percent in some provinces. Sudan has 19 universities; instruction is primarily in Arabic. Education at the secondary and university levels has been seriously hampered by the requirement that most males perform military service before completing their education.

According to World Bank estimates for 2002, the literacy rate in adults aged 15 years and older was 60 percent. In 2000 the comparable figure was almost 58 percent (69 percent for males, 46 percent for females); youth illiteracy (ages 15–24) was estimated at 23 percent.

**Health and Welfare:** Sudan is one of the poorest nations in the world, and what wealth the country possesses is not widely distributed. Poverty is widespread, particularly in rural areas. Outside urban areas, little health care is available, helping account for a relatively low average life expectancy of 57 years and an infant mortality rate of 69 deaths per 1,000 live births, low by standards in Middle Eastern but not African countries. For most of the period since independence in 1956, Sudan has experienced civil war, which has diverted resources to military use that otherwise might have gone into health care and training of professionals, many of whom have migrated in search of more gainful employment. In 1996 the World Health Organization estimated that there were only 9 doctors per 100,000 people, most of them in regions other than the South. Substantial percentages of the population lack access to safe water and sanitary facilities. Malnutrition is widespread outside the central Nile corridor because of population displacement from war and from recurrent droughts; these same factors together with a scarcity of medicines make diseases difficult to control. Child immunization against most major childhood diseases, however, had risen to approximately 60 percent by the late 1990s from very low rates in earlier decades. Spending on health care is quite low—only 1 percent of gross domestic product (GDP) in 1998 (latest data). The United Nations placed the rate of human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immune deficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS) infection in late 2003 at 2.3 percent for adults, quite low by regional standards. The United Nations suggested, however, that the rate could be as high as 7.2 percent. Between 400,000 and 1.3 million adults and children were living with HIV, and AIDS deaths numbered 23,000. As of late 2004, some 4 million persons in the South had been internally displaced and more than 2 million had died or been killed as a result of two decades of war. Comparable figures for Darfur were 1.6 million displaced and 70,000 dead since fighting began there in early 2003.

## ECONOMY

**Overview:** Sudan has significant natural resources, but since independence its economy has been constrained by civil war, debt, and mismanagement. Although it has recently turned its economy around with sound economic policies and infrastructure investments, it still faces formidable economic problems, one of them the low level of per capita output. Since 1997 Sudan has been implementing International Monetary Fund (IMF) macroeconomic reforms. In 1999 Sudan began exporting crude oil and in the last quarter of 1999 recorded its first trade surplus, which, along with improvements in monetary policy, has stabilized the exchange rate. Increased oil

production, revived light industry, and expanded export processing zones yielded gross domestic product (GDP) growth of an estimated 5.9 percent in 2003. Agriculture remains Sudan's most important sector; however, most farming is rain-fed and susceptible to drought. Oil production continues to rise annually and in 2003 constituted more than 80 percent of export earnings. Chronic instability, including the long-standing civil war between the Muslim North and the Christian/traditionalist South, the current rebellion in Darfur, adverse weather, and weak world agricultural prices ensure that much of the population remains at or below the poverty line. Sudan also suffers from endemic corruption, an undeveloped and neglected physical infrastructure, and a financial system still in need of major reform. Wealth is concentrated in the central Nile corridor region, the northern, eastern, southern, and western regions being markedly less prosperous.

**Gross Domestic Product (GDP):** GDP was US\$12 billion in 2001 and was estimated at US\$13.4 billion in 2002 and US\$15.4 billion in 2003. Per capita GDP was about US\$415 in 2002. Since 1999, economic growth has averaged about 6 percent annually, helping account for an estimated doubling in the size of the economy between 1996 and 2003. In 2003 estimates, GDP by sector was: agriculture, 39 percent; industry, 19 percent; and services, 4 percent.

**Government Budget:** The budget has been in chronic deficit from the early 1980s, largely as a result of outlays for military campaigns against the Sudan People's Liberation Army. With the advent of the structural adjustment program in 1997, new fiscal controls combined with new revenues from the oil sector reduced the deficit from nearly 13 percent of gross domestic product (GDP) in 1990 to less than 1 percent in and after the late 1990s. In 2002 total revenue amounted to Sudanese dinars (SD) 470.6 billion (US\$1.8 billion), and expenditures to SD503.4 (US\$1.9 billion), including capital expenditures of SD118.6 billion (US\$450 million). The deficit amounted to SD32.8 billion (US\$125 million).

**Inflation:** Sudan experienced high rates of inflation during the early 1990s, reaching 133 percent in 1996. Since then, rates have declined through double digits to 8.4 percent in 2002 and 7.8 percent in 2003.

**Agriculture, Forestry, and Fishing:** Agriculture is the most important sector in Sudan's economy, employing some two-thirds of the population and contributing about 40 percent of gross domestic product (GDP) in recent years. Grains (primarily sorghum) and livestock (camels, cattle, goats, and sheep) form the backbone of the traditional economy. Sudan also produces significant quantities of gum arabic, millet, peanuts, sesame, and sugarcane. Under the British, the al Gezira irrigation project was developed and became a cotton-producing and exporting region. More recently, dam and irrigation projects have been established at Kusti, Al Qadarif, and Kassala. In the early 2000s, sesame and livestock are Sudan's most important agricultural exports. Forest products include gum arabic and charcoal. The Nile and its tributaries contain abundant fish, Nile perch being commercially exploitable.

**Mining and Minerals:** Sudan's mineral endowment consists of oil as well as asbestos, chromite, copper, diamonds, gold, iron ore, mica, silver, talc, tungsten, uranium, and zinc. Aside from oil, gold is the most valuable mineral export. Oil was discovered in the early 1980s in the South but not exploited until the late 1990s because of insecurity. Although some petroleum is refined for

the local market, most is exported as crude. Production in 2003 was about 300,000 barrels per day, of which 200,000 barrels were exported and some 70,000 barrels per day consumed locally. Production is expected to reach 500,000 barrels per day by late 2005. Reserves total 800 million barrels, with estimates of up to three billion barrels.

**Industry and Manufacturing:** Despite recent investment and improved production, Sudan's manufacturing sector is quite small. Several refineries produce enough petroleum products to meet local demand, with some available for export. Refined sugar and textiles are the chief manufactures, sugar being a major export. Sudan also manufactures cement, cigarettes, edible oils, soap, and shoes. The industrial sector grew more than 11 percent in 2000 after sluggish growth during the 1990s.

**Energy:** In 2000 Sudan's total installed electrical generating capacity was rated at more than 2,500 megawatts, but actual production was lower than rated capacity. About 46 percent was produced by hydropower. New dams presently in the planning stage will increase hydropower significantly. Much of the country lies outside the national power grid and uses diesel fuel to generate power.

**Services:** Aside from banking and finance, communications, and transportation, Sudan's services sector is quite small. Despite considerable potential, tourism is restricted because of a lack of reliable transport, hotel facilities, and general insecurity. In 2001, 50,000 tourists entered the country, producing receipts of US\$56 million.

**Banking and Finance:** The banking and financial sector has been troubled since at least 1970, when all banks were nationalized and placed under control of the Bank of Sudan. Following the coup of 1989 that brought the al Bashir regime to power, banking and finance were conducted according to Islamic principles, which among other restrictions forbid payment of interest on deposits. These restrictions, problems with capitalization, and non-performing loans greatly reduced the profitability of banks and resulted in low levels of private investment during the 1990s. The sector was one of the targets of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) economic restructuring program in 1997, which has led to some improvements. There are 25 banks, and in the early 2000s half of them were wholly or partially privately owned. Since 2000, private-sector credit has grown markedly, but a planned merger of banks into six banking groups to improve financial strength and international competitiveness has not yet been implemented.

**Labor:** In 1999 the labor force numbered an estimated 9.7 million, of which two-thirds were employed in agriculture.

**Foreign Economic Relations:** Until the late 1990s, Sudan's external trade was largely confined to Middle Eastern countries, Saudi Arabia and Libya in particular. The development of the oil industry, however, reoriented Sudan's trading patterns. China and Japan have emerged as the chief destinations for oil, and China now supplies the majority of imports, with Saudi Arabia in second place. Refined petroleum imports from Libya have virtually ceased, and although Saudi Arabia continues as a major market for livestock and agricultural produce, the value of this trade is well below that of oil. France, Germany, and the United Kingdom supply essential manufactures. South Africa, South Korea, and Malaysia are other trading partners. Beginning in



1993, Sudan was denied access to loans and financial support from the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) because of unpaid debt arrearages. Although the IMF helped design the structural adjustment program in 1997, IMF financing remains in suspension. In 1997 the United States charged Sudan with violations of human rights and support for international terrorism and imposed economic sanctions, measures that were still in effect in 2004.

**Imports, Exports, and Trade Balance:** Development of the oil export industry drastically altered the structure of Sudan's foreign trade account, which has passed from average yearly deficits of more than US\$600 million during the 1990s to surpluses of US\$300 million annually from 2000 to 2002. In 2002 imports amounted to about US\$1.7 billion on a free on board basis, and exports totaled about US\$1.9 billion on a free on board basis, leaving a trade balance of more than US\$200 million. Sudan's major imports were machinery and equipment, manufactured goods, refinery and transport equipment, wheat, and wheat flour. Oil and oil products were the overwhelming export commodities at US\$1.1 billion, followed by livestock and meat at US\$103 million.

**Balance of Payments:** Sudan had a record of large balance of payment deficits averaging US\$621 million annually during the 1990s. In 2002 the deficit was US\$747 million, as positive balances in trade and current transfers (largely remittances from Sudanese working abroad) were more than offset by outflows for services and return of capital and profits to foreign firms in the oil sector. For 2003 the deficit was estimated at US\$1.4 billion. During the next few years, as repayment of foreign capital for development of the oil industry declines, analysts estimate that the balance of payments should approach equilibrium.

**External Debt:** Sudan accumulated a sizable foreign debt in the 1970s and 1980s, partly to finance a development program but also because of rising interest rates and prices for imported oil. Repayment has so far proven to be beyond the country's means. Between 1999 and 2002, total foreign debt averaged US\$15.9 billion. In 2003 the World Bank estimated the debt at US\$17.1 billion. The International Monetary Fund (IMF), however, placed the figure at more than US\$24 billion. Most of the debt represents government borrowings from bilateral and multilateral lenders, an estimated 90 percent of it in arrears.

**Foreign Investment:** In 2003 foreign direct investment rose to US\$1.4 billion, double the previous year's total and much higher than investments of the 1990s. Most of these funds were invested in the oil and electric power sectors.

**Foreign Aid:** Sudan receives a significant amount of relief aid from international organizations to alleviate the effects of civil wars in the South and in Darfur. Amounts vary according to the intensity of the conflicts and rainfall patterns, both of which affect food production. Much aid is channeled through the United Nations, which sought to raise US\$225 million for its programs in 2003–04.

**Currency and Exchange Rate:** Sudan's currency is the Sudanese dinar (SD). On March 1, 1999, the Sudanese pound was replaced by the Sudanese dinar, equivalent to 10 Sudanese pounds. The pound was withdrawn from circulation on July 31, 1999. In late 2004, the exchange rate per US\$1 was SD255.7.

**Fiscal Year:** Sudan's fiscal year is the calendar year.

## TRANSPORTATION AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS

**Transportation Overview:** Sudan's transportation system consists of waterways, railroads, roads, and air service. Facilities in general are in various stages of disrepair and neglect, and, aside from the waterways, all are inadequate for a country the size of Sudan. The Nile River and its tributaries—the Blue Nile and White Nile, the Atbarah, Sobat, and Bahar al Ghazal—form a natural transportation system that has long served as a funnel for commerce between tropical Africa and the eastern Mediterranean. The rail and road systems both date to the colonial era. Of the two, the rail system has been the more extensive and serves the more important population centers except for the southern provinces. Since the early 1980s, the road network has carried an increasing amount of traffic. It continues to undergo expansion, particularly in the North between Khartoum and the Red Sea, but most rural areas of the country remain inaccessible by wheeled transport. Sudan Airways, the national airline, which serves internal as well as international destinations, supplements the limited rail and road networks. The most recent addition to the transportation grid is an oil pipeline that connects the southern oil fields with Khartoum and Port Sudan. Beginning in the 1980s, Sudanese governments have sought to improve the transportation infrastructure, but both attention and funding have been limited, and progress has been slow.

**Roads:** Sudan has between 20,000 and 25,000 kilometers of roads. Of these, only about 3,500 kilometers are paved, and 4,000 kilometers are all-weather gravel roads; the remainder are tracks passable according to weather conditions. The main road, accounting for half of the paved surface, connects Port Sudan with Khartoum via Kassala.

**Railroads:** Sudan has 4,725 kilometers of narrow-gauge, single-track railroads that serve the northern and central portions of the country. The main line runs from Wadi Halfa on the Egyptian border to Khartoum and southwest to Al Ubayyid via Sannar and Kusti, with extensions to Nyala in Southern Darfur and Waw in Bahr al Ghazal. Other lines connect Atbarah and Sannar with Port Sudan, and Sannar with Ad Damazin. A 1,400-kilometer line serves the al Gezira cotton-growing region. A modest effort to upgrade rail transport is currently underway to reverse decades of neglect and declining efficiency. Service on some lines may be interrupted during the rainy season.

**Ports:** Sudan has two ports on the Red Sea coast, Port Sudan and Sawakin. Major inland ports, all on the White Nile, include Khartoum, Kusti, Malakal, Juba, and Nimule on the border with Uganda.

**Inland Waterways:** Sudan has more than 4,000 kilometers of navigable waterways centered on the Nile and its tributaries, but only about 1,700 kilometers are navigable year-round. Barriers to navigation include the six cataracts on the main Nile north of Khartoum, variations in seasonal flow, a series of dams, and the Sudd, the vast papyrus-choked swamp on the upper White Nile. Since the mid-1980s, security problems associated with the rebellion in the South have hindered navigation south of Malakal.

**Civil Aviation and Airports:** The national carrier, Sudan Airways, provides international service to Europe, Africa, and the Middle East as well as domestic service, over which it holds a monopoly. In the past, it has experienced problems with a lack of trained personnel, scheduling, and maintenance. Currently, efforts are underway to privatize the company. Sudan has an estimated 63 airports, but only 12 have paved runways. The most important is Khartoum International Airport, followed by Port Sudan, Al Ubayyid, and Al Fashir.

**Pipelines:** In August 1999, a 1,610-kilometer pipeline was completed to carry oil from oil fields in the South to an export terminal on the Red Sea near Port Sudan. By 2003 the pipeline had been extended by 600-plus kilometers, and an 810-kilometer line carried refined petroleum products. A 156-kilometer line carries natural gas.

**Telecommunications:** As a result of recent investment, telecommunications in urban and outlying regions have improved markedly compared with low levels of service before the late 1990s. In 2002 almost 672,000 telephone lines were in use, producing a ratio of 2.1 lines per 100 inhabitants. These figures compare favorably with just 75,000 lines in 1995 and a line per inhabitant ratio of 0.3. Mobile service has also seen a substantial increase in users, rising from 8,000 subscribers in 1999 to 190,000 in 2002. Internet usage, introduced in 1998, has grown along with the upgrades in lines and equipment from a mere 5,000 users in 1999 to 84,000 in 2002, still well below the number of users in some neighboring countries. Cost and unreliable service have constrained Internet growth. As of 2002, 5.8 million radios and 250,000 television sets were in use in Sudan. International communications are facilitated by two satellite earth stations, one Intelsat (Atlantic Ocean) and one Arabsat. Telecommunications service is a state monopoly exercised through the Sudan Telecommunications Company (SudaTel) and its subsidiaries, which have undergone some privatization since the late 1990s.

## GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

**Government Overview:** The national government is an authoritarian regime with the trappings of a parliamentary system. A new constitution, approved in 1998, provides for separate executive, legislative, and judicial functions and contains guarantees of freedom of association, religion, and thought. Some clauses have been in suspension since late 1999. The executive branch is headed by a president, who currently serves also as prime minister and commander in chief of the armed forces. Cabinet members are appointed by the president with approval by parliament. The legislative branch is composed of the 360-seat National Assembly, of which 270 members are popularly elected and 90 specially selected by a National Congress composed of influential interest groups. Parliamentarians serve four-year terms and have been supportive of the government. Sudan's government is run by an alliance of the military and the National Congress Party, formerly the National Islamic Front, and has generally pursued an Islamist agenda. The current president is Lieutenant General Umar Hassan Ahmad al Bashir, who came to power in a military coup in 1989. He was popularly elected in 1996 and 2000.

**Administrative Divisions:** Sudan is divided into 26 states (*wilayat*): A'ali an Nil, Al Bahr al Ahmar, Al Buhayrat, Al Jazirah, Al Khartoum, Al Qadarif, Al Wahdah, An Nil al Abyad, An Nil

al Azraq, Ash Shamaliyah, Bahr al Jabal, Gharb al Istiwa'iyah, Gharb Bahr al Ghazal, Gharb Darfur, Gharb Kurdufan, Janub Darfur, Janub Kurdufan, Junqali, Kassala, Nahr an Nil, Shamal Bahr al Ghazal, Shamal Darfur, Shamal Kurdufan, Sharq al Istiwa'iyah, Sinnar, and Warab.

**Provincial and Local Government:** Beginning in 1983, Sudan was divided into five regions in the North and three in the South, each headed by a military governor. In 1997 the eight regions were replaced with 26 states, whose senior officials are appointed by the president. State budgets are also allocated from Khartoum.

**Judicial and Legal System:** The constitution provides for a High Court, an attorney general, and civil and special religious courts; it also grants recognition to tribal courts. The legal system is based on English common law and Islamic law. As of March 1991, strict Islamic Law was imposed on the country except for the three southern provinces. It applies in the northern states regardless of religious affiliation.

**Electoral System:** A national electoral commission determines guidelines for elections and referendums. Voting eligibility is defined as 17 years of age. The last national elections, held in December 2000, were boycotted by opposition parties, who viewed them as unfair.

**Political Parties:** Following the military coup of 1989, all political parties were banned. The constitution of 1998 permits political “associations” provided that they register with the government, accept the legality of the 1998 constitution, and do not practice violence or advocate the overthrow of the present regime. More than 30 parties are registered with the authorities. Among the most important parties and their leaders are: the National Congress Party (NCP) under President al Bashir and party secretary general Ibrahim Ahmed Umar, successor to the former National Islamic Front (NIF); Popular National Congress (PNC) under Hassan al Turabi; Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) under Osman al Mirghani; and Umma Party (UP) under Sadiq al Mahdi. The National Democratic Alliance (NDA), a grouping of several opposition parties under the chairmanship of Osman al Mirghani, is based in Asmara, Eritrea. Among its members are the Sudan People’s Liberation Army (SPLA), under Colonel John Garang, and the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement (SPLM), under Mansour Khalid (the SPLM is the political wing of the SPLA).

**Mass Media:** Sudan has a large number of local and national newspapers. The major national dailies are published in Arabic or English. Sudan Television broadcasts 60 hours of programming a week. The Sudan National Broadcasting Corporation airs radio programming in Arabic, English, French, and Swahili. Radio and television stations are state-controlled entities and serve as outlets for the government viewpoint. Journalists and the papers they serve, although subject to government censorship, operate with more freedom and independence than in most neighboring countries or Arab states. The Voice of Sudan, sponsored by the National Democratic Alliance, broadcasts in Arabic and English. The Sudan People’s Liberation Army issues its own newspapers and journals.

**Foreign Relations:** Throughout the 1990s, Sudan’s foreign relations have been governed by the desire to spread Islamism throughout eastern Africa and the Middle East, in keeping with the program of the National Islamic Front, and by the course of the civil war between Northerners

and Southerners. Relations with Arab countries as well as its neighbors have varied from cordial and supportive to antagonistic and quarrelsome according to the degree that the regime pursued or relaxed its Islamist agenda or pressed or accommodated its Southern opponents. At times, Sudan has supported regional insurgencies against several of its fellow Arab states. In 1995 the government was accused of complicity in the attempted assassination of Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak. Although this action brought down international sanctions upon the country, Egypt eventually withdrew its charges and the matter passed. Relations with Libya, Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Uganda have experienced wide swings; in the case of the latter three, the degree of their support or opposition to the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) and other opposition groups has been the overriding consideration. By the late 1990s, Sudan's relations with its neighbors were either strained or broken. Since 2000, the al Bashir regime has sought to improve its standing through rapprochement and accommodation. Relations with several European nations have been relatively good, especially those with France. Relations with the United States have been far less so, although there has been some improvement since 2000.

**Membership in International Organizations:** Sudan holds membership in a number of international organizations. Among them are: the League of Arab States, the Organization of the Islamic Conference, and the Nonaligned Movement as well as the United Nations and its subsidiary organizations, including United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the World Health Organization, and the World Trade Organization (observer status). Within Africa, Sudan belongs to the African Union and the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development. It is a member of such international financial institutions as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (membership temporarily in abeyance), the African Development Bank, and the Islamic Development Bank, and is one of the Africa-Caribbean-Pacific group of states that receive economic aid from the European Union.

**Major International Treaties:** Sudan is a signatory of the Convention on Biological Diversity; Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna; Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling, and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction; Montreal Protocol on Substances That Deplete the Ozone Layer; Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons; United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea; United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa; and United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

Sudan is also a party to all twelve international conventions and protocols relating to terrorism, including the African Union's Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism; Convention of the Organization of the Islamic Conference on Combating Terrorism; and International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism.

## NATIONAL SECURITY

**Armed Forces Overview:** As of 2004, the Sudanese People's Armed Forces numbered an estimated 105,000 members. The army is by far the largest unit, the air force and navy being

much smaller. Irregulars, including former rebel militias and tribesmen, supplement the army's strength. The armed forces are charged with defense of Sudan's external borders and with preservation of internal security. Sudan's military forces have historically been hampered by limited and outdated equipment, poor maintenance capabilities, and inadequate training. Capabilities were further eroded during the 1990s by dismissals in the professional officer corps. These constraints are such that Sudan's army must rely on Arab militias and even former rebels as it campaigns against opposition forces in southern and eastern provinces and in Darfur. At least some of the rebels in these regions are former army personnel. Since the late 1990s, the government has used oil revenues to purchase modern weapons, most of which come from Libya, China, and Russia. Other sources of modest military support include Syria, Iran, and, in the past, Iraq. There is no evidence that Sudan has access to biological, chemical, or nuclear weapons.

**Foreign Military Relations:** China, Russia, and Libya are the major suppliers of military equipment, with lesser amounts coming from Iran and Syria. The Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) receives assistance from Kenya and Uganda; in the past, Zimbabwe and Namibia also supplied the SPLA with equipment. The National Democratic Alliance receives both military and political support from Eritrea. The extent of foreign assistance to the Darfur rebels is unknown at present.

**External Threat:** Although Sudan has had troubled relations with several of its neighbors in the past, Eritrea in particular, it faces no significant external threats at present.

**Defense Budget:** The International Institute for Strategic Studies estimated the defense budget for 2004 at US\$465 million.

**Major Military Units:** The Sudanese army numbers 105,000 soldiers, including 20,000 conscripts, organized into 10 divisions, including 1 armored, 1 mechanized, and 6 infantry divisions. The navy, with bases at Port Sudan and Marsa Gwiyai on the Red Sea and at Khartoum, has 1,800 personnel, and the air force, 3,000, including air defense forces. All figures are 2004 estimates from the International Institute for Strategic Studies.

**Major Military Equipment:** The army has 270 tanks, 218 reconnaissance vehicles, 316 armored vehicles, 470 artillery pieces, 635 multiple rocket launchers, 40 recoilless launchers, 40 attack guns, 1,000 air defense guns, and 54 surface-to-air missiles. The navy has 2 inshore patrol craft and about 16 river patrol boats. The air force has an estimated 27 combat aircraft (serviceability questionable), 10 armed helicopters, 25 unarmed helicopters, and 5 batteries of surface-to-air missiles.

**Military Service:** Eligibility for service begins at age 18 and runs to age 30. Conscripts serve for two years.

**Paramilitary Forces:** The Popular Defense Force, the military wing of the National Islamic Front, consists of 10,000 active members, with 85,000 reserves. It has been deployed alongside regular army units against various rebel groups.

**Foreign Military Forces:** Sudan and Uganda have agreed to allow their armed forces to operate across their mutual border in pursuit of various groups of insurgents. As of mid-2004, the Uganda People's Defense Forces were in pursuit of Ugandan rebel forces in southern Sudan. In mid-November 2004, the African Union had nearly 800 military observers and peacekeeping troops in Darfur to monitor a cease-fire between the government militia and local rebels. More than 3,000 peacekeepers are foreseen by early 2005.

**Police:** Sudan's police are composed of a number of separate units known collectively as the United Police Forces. These include the States' Police, who function on the federal level as well as in each of the 26 states, and the Utilities' Police, who work in various state utilities, institutions, and corporations. All are under the control of the Ministry of Interior.

**Internal Threat:** The central government faces armed resistance from a number of opposition groups, several of which have joined together in the National Democratic Alliance: the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), consisting of 20,000–30,000 men divided into four factions and located mainly in southern Sudan; Sudan Alliance Forces, with an estimated strength of 500 fighters, who operate along the Eritrean border; Beja Congress Forces, with an estimated strength of 500 men, who operate on the Eritrean border; and New Sudan Brigade, whose forces number some 2,000 and who are also located on the Eritrean border. Since February 2003, two guerrilla groups, the Sudanese Liberation Army and the Justice and Equality Movement, have taken up arms in Darfur. The SPLA's fortunes have waxed and waned, and at times it has controlled wide swaths of territory in the South. Its successes have helped compel the al Bashir regime to enter into peace negotiations on several occasions, most notably since 2002. The smaller groups along the Eritrean border are far less significant, but the Darfur groups control territory in the far West and attack government outposts and towns at will. Aside from these major groups, a number of smaller rebel units pursue their own agendas. Government control is tenuous outside the central populated region surrounding Khartoum.

**Terrorism:** Sudan has a long history of protecting terrorists and of condoning their actions. In March 1973, Palestinian terrorists murdered the American ambassador to Sudan. In the early to mid-1990s, Khartoum was home to several well-known international terrorists, including Abu Nidal and Osama bin Laden, and in 1995 the Sudanese government was accused of complicity in the attempted assassination of Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak in Addis Ababa. In 1993 the United States designated Sudan as a state sponsor of terrorism because of the National Islamic Front's reported links with international terrorist networks, and in 1998 the United States launched missiles at an alleged chemical munitions factory in Khartoum in response to terrorist attacks in East Africa. Sudan also has been accused of providing training facilities for various terrorist organizations. Since 2000, Sudan has reversed its policies and begun to cooperate with international counterterrorism efforts. Sudan is a party to all twelve international conventions and protocols relating to terrorism.

**Human Rights:** The government's attitude toward human rights has been conditioned by its Islamist convictions. The al Bashir regime has regarded Islam as a state religion and sharia as the law of the land without regard for other religious beliefs and practices. It has pursued policies of Arabization and Islamization, although recently there has been some relaxation of this stance with regard to Southerners. It has placed important restrictions on freedoms of assembly, speech,

religious practice, and political association. The media, although tightly controlled, operate with a greater degree of independence than in many neighboring countries. Personal rights are often not respected, especially with regard to women. The judicial system is not independent and is subject to government interference, including proceedings in the country's courts. Conditions in prisons are harsh and long sentences common. Security forces, including the police, routinely disregard basic human rights; similar abuses have been perpetrated by Southern opposition forces. Recent accords between Southerners and the government provide for respect of legal and religious differences in the South. In Darfur, soldiers and government-sanctioned militias continue to destroy villages and crops, engage in murder and rape, and drive the inhabitants into refugee camps. The al Bashir regime has restricted or blocked delivery of humanitarian aid in Darfur, but access to the South has improved significantly. Northerners continue their age-old practice of enslaving black Africans from the South; Southerners practice their own version of enslavement.