Sudan at War With Itself

Since gaining independence in 1956, Sudan has spent all but about 10 years in internal armed conflict. The current crisis in Darfur has become one of the worst human disasters in Africa. Shortly after the Darfur conflict erupted in 2003, a two-decade-long civil war in the southern provinces ended with a peace accord. But occasional flare-ups and recent complaints from the south point to many unsettled issues.

SOUTH SUDAN

Geography

The 10 southern provinces make up about one-third of Sudan's land area. It is a fertile area, fed by many tributaries of the Nile River.

Most of the people in the south are African and follow either traditional indigenous beliefs or Christianity. The majority of people live off agriculture.



■ Chad: More than

200,000 Darfurians have

Of the 41 million Sudanese, 6 million live in the 10 provinces of South

The region has long been neglected and has little infrastructure. But the discovery of oil changed the economic outlook of the south and that of all of Sudan.

Reserves, mostly in the south and center, are estimated at 1.6 billion barrels. In 2005, Sudan produced 410,000 barrels a day. Oil now makes up 70 percent of the country's export earnings. China is the principal investor in Sudan's expanding oil industry and buys about 40 percent. China has made discreet efforts to promote peace in Darfur and the south, but critics say it is shielding Sudan from U.N. Security

Roots of the conflicts

- Colonial legacy: During British-Egyptian colonial rule, the Arab elite living in the north was favored, leaving other groups marginalized, particularly people of African origin. This situation did not change after independence.
- Multicultural country: Two major cultural groups, Arab and African; many ethnic, linguistic and religious subdivi-
- **Economic interests:** Interests of settled farmers and mostly landless nomads collide in the west of the country. In the south, all groups vie for a share of recent oil riches.

DARFUR

Geography

Sudan is Africa's largest country in area, almost the size of the continental United States east of the Mississippi, Darfur constitutes about one-fifth of Sudan's land

Darfur consists primarily of an arid, sandy plateau with the Marra Mountains traversing the center. Seasonal rivers and boreholes for tapping deep aquifers provide water for farmers and herders.

Darfurians belong to many often squabbling tribes. While some tribes describe themselves as of African descent and others of Arab background, most share physical characteristics. Practically all people in Darfur follow Islam.

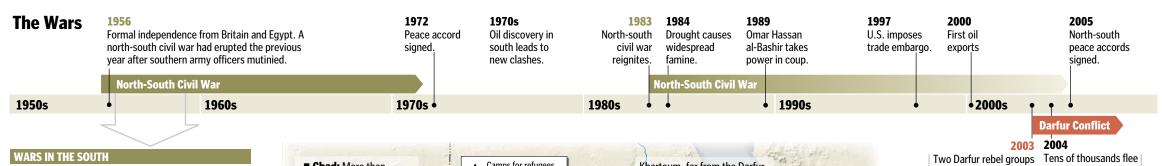


Economy

Khartoum, far from the Darfur

Subsistence farmers, who are mostly settled along the few reliable water sources, grow tobacco, millet and fruit. They include members of the Fur, Zaghawa and Mesalit tribes.

Nomadic or semi-nomadic herders tend camels in the north and cattle in the south. They include the Abala and Hotia. Herders and farmers have feuded for decades, among themselves and with each other, over grazing rights and water.



▲ Camps for refugees

WARS IN THE SOUTH

FIRST CIVIL WAR

People in southern Sudan, like their countrymen in Darfu had long resented Arab domination from Khartoum. In 1955, southern troops rebelled against the government. Their complaint was primarily that the government had not created a federal system as promised at independence. Fighting dragged on until 1972, when a peace agreement granted southern Sudan regional autonomy for internal matters.

SECOND CIVIL WAR

The war flared again in 1983 after then-President Jaafar Nimeri abrogated the peace accord and announced he would turn Sudan into a Muslim Arab state, where Islamic law, or sharia, would prevail, including in the southern provinces. Sharia can include amputation of limbs for theft, public flogging and stoning. The war, fought between the government and several rebel groups, continued for two decades.

After years of on-and-off peace-talks, in part sponsored by the United States, a peace accord was signed in 2005.

Under the deal:

- The south was given autonomy for six years, to be followed by a referendum on whether it should remain part of Sudan or secede.
- Oil revenue is to be shared equally between the central government and the south.
- Sharia remains in effect in the north; in the south, its application is to be decided by an elected assembly.
- The south formed an autonomous government and sent a national vice president to Khartoum. The first southern vice president was John Garang, the former rebel leader. But he died in a helicopter crash in 2005. His successor, Salva Kiir, recently accused Khartoum of refusing to share oil revenue equitably, continuing to back pro-government militias in the south and reneging on border agreements. U.S. experts have warned that fighting could break out again

fighting, has become a boom SAUDI ARABIA A Oil field **EGYPT** fled to Chad. Incursions by town. Oil revenue has fueled a surge in construction, and the Janiaweed and various Oil concession area living standards are much Chadian rebel groups have higher than elsewhere. driven about 100,000 Chadians from their Halfa homes in the border region. The Sudanese and Chadian governments Port Sudan have accused each other of supporting the other side's rebels. North Darfui ERITREA Asmara Khartoui DARFUR Α El Obeid South CENTRAL AFRICAN ETHIOPIA REPUBLIC SOUTH SUDAN ■ Central African Republic: Some anti-government rebel groups have seized several towns in the country, driving thousands of people from their homes. Chad says Sudan tries to destabilize Chad and the Central African Republic. **CONGO** UGANDA DARFUR PEACE EFFORTS ■ U.N. force: ■ AU force: ■ The government Sudanese President A 7.000-member African and one of the rebel al-Bashir has refused Union force is underfunded **groups** signed a peace

THE WAR IN DARFUR

BACKGROUND

Many people in Darfur, especially those of African descent, feel politically, economically and socially marginalized by the central government in Khartoum. This led to the formation of rebel groups among predominantly African settled farmers.

take up arms against Darfur for Chad.

government.

Fighting spills across

border.

THE REBELS

In March 2003, fighters from two rebel groups—the Sudanese Liberation Army and the Justice and Equality Movement—launched surprise attacks on government troops and facilities in North Darfur.

THE GOVERNMENT

The government of Omar Hassan al-Bashir responded by bombing villages whose residents were believed to support the rebels. Entire villages were destroyed, including mosques, although both government forces and rebels are Muslims.

THE JANJAWEED

tribes in Darfur, particularly the Abala tribe, whose members are herders and mostly landless. Young Abala, their way of life already threatened by drought and clashes with settled tribes, formed the core of the militia, which became known as the Janiaweed. The number of militiamen is estimated at 20,000. In a campaign to push African tribes off their land, the Janjaweed fighters frequently ride into villages on camels or horses. They kill residents, rape and sometimes abduct women, and burn dwellings. The Sudanese government says it

The government recruited a militia from among Arab

A member of the Janjaweed militia rides in northern Darfur in 2004.

PHOTO BY JAHI CHIKWENDIU—THE WASHIINGTON POST

does not control the Janjaweed.

Dead: 2 million, from famine, disease and fighting.

Displaced: At least 4 million, of whom many left for other countries. The United Nations has repatriated many refugees, and fewer than 400,000 remained in other African countries as of October 2005.

accord in 2006, but the

violence continues.

to allow a large U.N. force into Darfur.

and ineffective in halting the fighting.

Dead since 2003: 450,000, by many estimates, from fighting, famine and disease

Displaced from their villages: 2.5 million. including about 230,000 in Chad and 400,000 others in neighboring countries.