KEY FACTS

Source: UN, Worldometer

41.1 million
estimated population

2003
genocide begins in Darfur

4.8 million
in need of humanitarian assistance

2.1 million
internally displaced in Darfur

322,900
Sudanese refugees living in Chad, some for more than 10 years

KEY ISSUES

• The Second Sudanese Civil War (1983-2005), fought between northern and southern Sudan, was one of the longest running civil wars ever and left 2.5 million dead and four million displaced.

• The war ended with the signing of the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement and the secession of South Sudan in 2011.

• Genocide and mass atrocities have been ongoing in Darfur since 2003. Government forces and militias have killed more than 400,000 in the Darfur region.

• Since 2011, armed resistance in South Kordofan and Blue Nile, led by the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N), has been met with indiscriminate aerial bombings and attacks against civilians by the government.

• President Omar al-Bashir has been in power since 1989, and is wanted for genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity by the International Criminal Court (ICC). He is the first sitting head of state to be indicted by the ICC.
Sudan has been at war for longer than it has been at peace. The country has been plagued by genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes since independence in 1956. Inequitable wealth sharing of revenues from resources, the struggle for southern self-determination, ethnic rivalries, and competing views on the role of religion in the state have all been drivers of conflict.

At the heart of Sudan’s protracted conflicts is the division between the Arab-dominated center in Khartoum, and the marginalized non-Arab populations in the geographic and socio-economic periphery.

In 2003, an uprising in Darfur by two rebel groups claiming inequitable treatment of the non-Arab population led the government to respond with a genocidal campaign to rid the region of non-Arab populations. It is estimated that over 400,000 Darfuris have been killed, and more than three million have been displaced.

Sudan’s two civil wars, fought between the north and the south, spanned decades and caused the deaths of millions. The Comprehensive Peace Agreement, signed in 2005, ended the war and led to southern secession and the birth of South Sudan, the world’s newest country, in 2011.

In 2011, the government responded to a rebel uprising in South Kordofan and Blue Nile (the Two Areas) with tactics that were similar to those used in Darfur – indiscriminate aerial bombardments and assaults from ground forces. These two states share a border with South Sudan, and many of the rebel forces in the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N) fought alongside the South Sudanese.

In the Two Areas, over one million people have been either internally displaced or forced to seek refuge in neighboring countries. However, with the recent civil war in South Sudan, there are fewer places to seek sanctuary. Those who remain in their homes are cut off from desperately needed food and medical care due to the Sudanese government’s refusal to permit humanitarian assistance from reaching these conflict-affected areas.

**RECENT DEVELOPMENTS**

President Bashir was re-elected in April 2015, garnering 94% of the vote in a poll boycotted by all of Sudan’s major parties and widely criticized for its lack of credibility. Despite being indicted by the International Criminal Court, President Bashir has been able to travel to a number of nations without fear of arrest.

After more than two decades of economic sanctions against Sudan, President Obama, in one of his last actions as President of the United States, lifted sanctions on Sudan through an Executive Order, with a six-month implementation delay. This move was opposed by many in the activist and Sudanese diaspora community, as Sudan continues to commit mass atrocities against its people. The Obama administration argued that years of sanctions had not yielded the intended result of reforming the Sudanese government. Re-opening the door to trade, however, will likely not benefit the majority of Sudanese but a few elites in the Bashir regime.

In October 2017, the Trump administration formally lifted sanctions on Sudan. Sudan, however, remains on the state sponsor of terrorism list. Sudan’s human rights record continues to be appalling even as ties with the U.S improve.