Dates and events

639 Arab Muslims invade Egypt, leading to Sudan’s gradual Islamisation
1504 Founding of the Funj Sultanate
1821 Turco-Egyptian invasion of central and northern Sudan
1881 Emergence of Mahdi as religious leader, opposed to Turco-Egyptian rule
1885 Siege of Khartoum ends with death of General Gordon, leader of Egyptian forces. Mahdist state founded

1898 Defeat of Mahdist forces by Sir Herbert Kitchener at Omdurman
1899 Establishment of Anglo-Egyptian ‘Condominium’ to run Sudan
1920s Closed districts established, to restrict contact between Muslim and non-Muslim areas
1926 Gezira cotton-growing scheme begins
1940s Pressure for independence
1955 Mutiny of the Equatorial Corps
1956 Independence
1958 General Abboud takes over from disorganised democratic government
1961 Civil war begins in the south
1964 Abboud gives up power after failing to solve economic problems and end war in the south
1965 Coalition civilian government formed
1969 Colonel Nimeiri takes power, promising socialist path
1970s Ambitious development programmes start
1971 Communist-inspired coup attempt; Nimeiri begins rightward shift
1972 Addis Ababa Accord signed to end civil war, promising development and autonomy for the south
1973 Arab oil prices rise
1980s Debts spiral, output falls, prices rise
1983 Southern soldiers mutiny; new rebellion begins; Nimeiri introduces *shar’ia* (Islamic law)
1985 Military takeover after Nimeiri
1986 deposed in popular uprising. Election leads to coalition government.
1989 30 June: Army coup, led by Brigadier el-Bashir, backed by the National Islamic Front
Sudan: facts and figures

Land area 2,376,000 sq. km

Population 27.3 million (1993 estimate), estimated to be growing at 2.8% each year

Ethnic groups 19 major groups, 597 subgroups

Religions c. 60% Muslim; c. 15% Christian; c. 25% traditional faiths

Languages Arabic (spoken by 60% of population) is the official language; English is the lingua franca in the south. 115 tribal languages are spoken.

Literacy 45% for men, 13% for women (1992 estimates)

Life expectancy 53 years (1993 estimate); infant mortality is 77 per 1,000


External debt $16.5 billion (1993)

Gross Domestic Product $456.20m (1993)

Inflation rate 143 per cent (1994)

Top three exports Cotton ($179m), sesame ($54m), gum arabic ($45m)

Top three imports Petroleum products ($315m), manufactured goods ($69m), machinery and equipment ($63m)

(Source: Country Profile, Economist Intelligence Unit, 1996)

Boys playing in Akot
Oxfam UK and Ireland was first active in Sudan in the early 1980s, with support for Ugandan refugees in southern Sudan. This programme was managed from Nairobi, but in 1984 a field office was established in Khartoum. The programme expanded rapidly during the 1984/85 famine, when Oxfam contributed to the international relief operations in Darfur, Kordofan, and Red Sea State.

In 1989, with the escalation of the civil conflict in south, Oxfam decided to extend its support into the non-government controlled areas of the south. This southern-sector programme operates under the umbrella of Operation Lifeline Sudan from Nairobi. A base at Lokichokio, in northern Kenya, provides logistical support, including air-lift capacity and a depot for supplies.

The overall aim of Oxfam UK and Ireland in its work in Sudan is to support and build the capacity of marginalised and vulnerable communities affected by the current conflict.

In Northern Darfur and Red Sea State, our relief operations are evolving towards long-term community-development programmes, working alongside village-development committees, in the sectors of water supply, health, education, and food security. In Juba, Bahr el Jabal State, Oxfam works on relief projects through a consortium of agencies, and is helping returning rural populations to re-establish themselves. In the Khartoum urban programme, partner agencies, working with displaced communities, are funded in the fields of income-generation, revolving credit schemes, and family reunification.

In non-government controlled areas, Oxfam works to rehabilitate the most vulnerable populations through an integrated programme combining water-supply, health-care, and food-security measures. In Western Equatoria, Oxfam concentrates on agricultural and social development, working alongside co-operatives and local women's groups. Throughout Sudan, with the support of Oxfam, paraveterinary programmes operate revolving drug funds for the benefit of pastoralist and agro-pastoralist communities.

In 1994/95, Oxfam made grants worth more than £2,650,000 to relief and development work in Sudan.
Further reading


Inclusion of a book or periodical in this list of suggested reading does not necessarily imply endorsement of its contents.

Acknowledgements

Many people in Sudan and the United Kingdom, too numerous to mention individually, contributed to the writing and production of this book. Particular thanks are due, however, to Dr Douglas Johnson for his invaluable advice on the first draft of the text, and to Crispin Hughes, for his generous provision of photographs.
Further reading


SPLM/A Update (bi-weekly), Nairobi
Sudan Democratic Gazette (monthly), London
Sudan Update (bi-weekly), London
Sudanow (monthly), Khartoum

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