

Sudan - A brief history

Sudan's Independence in 1956 to Partition with South Sudan in 2011

A chronological examination of this portion of Sudan's history can be broken down into four main periods:

- Sudan's Independence: 1956
- First Sudanese Civil War: 1955-1972
- Second Sudanese Civil War: 1983-2005
- Peace Agreement & South Sudan Partition: 2006-2011



A map of Africa before South Sudan's independence in 2011

Sudan's Independence.

On January 1, 1956, Sudan gained independence from the *Anglo-Egyptian Condominium*, the joint British and Egyptian colonial government that administered the region. The new country came with a rich diversity of over 600 ethnic groups speaking more than 400 languages in an area roughly one-third the size of the United States. However, Sudan's founding constitution failed to address two crucial issues: First, it was not decided if Sudan should be a secular or Islamist state.

Second, the country's system of national governance failed to include the majority of Sudanese and protect the rights of large minorities. This has been a core driver of conflict in Sudan ever since. As the years went by and national governance became dominated by elite Arab tribal groups in Khartoum, the central government failed to fulfil its promises to create a federal system that was more inclusive.

First Sudanese Civil War

The consolidation of the two regions following independence caused fear across southern Sudan that centralizing political power in the north would soon rule over them.

In 1955, an unorganized mutiny by southern army officers began. The resulting war would last over a roughly 17-year period.

It is estimated that the First Sudanese Civil War claimed roughly 500,000 lives, with only 20% being war-related civilian deaths or armed combatants. The Sudanese government's violent counter-insurgency campaign left many southern Sudanese traumatized and deeply mistrustful of northern governments in Khartoum. Hundreds of thousands of southern Sudanese returned to reclaim their land; however, full reconciliation between the north and south never occurred. The seeds for the next war were planted at the end of the first, and the coming conflict would be one of the most destructive in human history.

Second Sudanese Civil War

While the war and genocide in southern Sudan had racial and religious origins with roots in oppressive marginalization, the primary reason for this conflict was the system of exploitative and extremist governance in Khartoum that began to emerge in the 1970s. The Second Sudanese Civil War progressed in four stages over a 22-year period.

Stage 1: Rise of Islamic Extremism and Sudan People's Liberation Army (1983-1989)

Stage 2: Bashir Regime Seizes & Consolidates Power (1989-1991)

Stage 3: War & Genocide Consumes southern Sudan (1992-2001)

Stage 4: International Intervention (2002-2005)

You can read about these in much more detail [here](#).

Peace Agreement & South Sudan Partition



On January 9, 2005, the Bashir regime and the SPLA signed the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA). The CPA secured a referendum vote on southern independence after an interim period of autonomy and provided a wide-array of potential solutions for a slew of other issues.

The implementation of the CPA deteriorated leading up to southern Sudan's vote for independence. The vote went ahead despite concerns of a renewed conflict and intense pressure from the international community on the Bashir regime.

After decades of war, the people of southern Sudan voted 99% in favour of independence. On July 9, 2011, mass celebrations swept across South Sudan as it became the world's newest country.

The three areas marked on the map above, which straddle the north-south fault line are Abyei, Nuba Mountains and Blue Nile. They were not considered properly as part of the CPA and severe unrest continued for those who lived there.