

PRE DEPARTURE INFORMATION MANUAL

FOR WORKERS ON

TEMPORARY CONTRACTUAL EMPLOYMENT

TO

SUDAN

**EMBASSY OF INDIA
KHARTOUM**

COUNTRY NOTE

INTRODUCTION

Sudan is the largest country in Africa with a land area of 2.5 million sq. km measuring over 2,000 km from North to South and 1,600 kms from East to West. Bordered by nine countries it has a 700 km long coast on the Red Sea. The White Nile flowing from Uganda and the Blue Nile flowing from Ethiopia merge at Khartoum to become the Nile that meanders its way to Egypt.

The country has three main geographical regions. The northern part is mainly desert – an extension of the great Sahara to the east. The central, eastern and south-eastern parts are rocky lands close to the Ethiopian mountains. Fertile hard soil plains lie between the two rivers – the White and the Blue Niles and to the east of the Blue Nile. The highest point is in the West-Jebel Marra (3088m). The southern states have tropical forests and marshes. Sudan has been administratively re-divided into twenty-six States. While the northern states are dominated by the Afro-Arab Muslim population besides some Christians (particularly Coptics) the majority of the people in the southern states follow traditional religions as well as Christianity.

POPULATION

As per latest estimates, Sudan's population is about 43.3 million, consisting mainly of Muslim Arabs or Afro-Arabs in the north and Nilotic/ Negroid tribes in the south. The tribes in Sudan have close affinities with similar tribes in neighboring Kenya, Ethiopia, Uganda, Chad and Congo.

LANGUAGES

Most road signs, notices, public announcements, radio and television are in Arabic, the official language. Educated Sudanese speak English. However, taxi drivers, bus conductors, policemen and other public officials speak only Arabic. In South Sudan, English is the official language.

CLIMATE

Sudan is one of the hottest countries in the world with summer daytime temperatures breaching 50°C. Dust storms (haboob) are frequent from May-August. Power cuts are common in some areas.

MAIN CITIES AND PORTS

The principal towns of Sudan are Khartoum, Port Sudan, Atbara, Juba, Kassala, El Obeid, Nyala, Wad Medani, Gedaref, Kosti and El-Fasher. Port Sudan is the major port. The other port is Osman Digna in Suakin, about 50 km south of Port Sudan.

CURRENCY

The local currency is Sudanese Pound (SDG). One US \$ is approximately equal to 2.75 SDG.

HISTORY

Having spent 56 years in semi-colonial status as an Anglo-Egyptian condominium, Sudan became independent on 01 January 1956. Since then, its history has been marked by periods of instability and internal conflict alternating between military rule and democracy. Political power is monopolized by the Arab Muslim elite, with non-Muslims and non-Arabs being largely marginalized, a root cause of the frequent civil conflicts that have plagued Sudan for much of its history. President Jafer Nimieri seized power in May 1969 and was overthrown in a bloodless coup in April 1985. After a transitional period of military rule, the Parliamentary elections of April 1986 returned pro-Nimieri Prime Minister, Al-Sadiq Al Mahdi of the Umma Party who headed a series of coalition governments.

The installation of an elected Government after 16 years of Nimieri's dictatorial rule generated great expectations. Infighting, incompetence, inter-party rivalry and possibility of a dilution of Sudan's strict Islamic identity led to its overthrow by a military-Islamic movement led by Lt. Gen. Omer Hassan Ahmed Al Bashir and Dr. Hassan Al-Turabi on 30 June 1989. In Presidential elections in March 1996, Bashir was elected for a five-year term, officially winning 75% of the votes. In December 1999, he dissolved Parliament. President Bashir was re-elected in the April 2010 General elections for another term.

Southern Sudan became independent on 9th July 2011 following the January referendum on independence for the south, in which 98.8% of southerners voted for separation.

INTERNAL

The 1989 coup abolished Sudan's Constitution and banned all political parties. Executive and legislative power was vested in a 15-member Revolutionary Command Council (RCC), chaired by President Bashir. Following a constitutional conference in 1990, the regime established a Libyan model of government with a pyramid of elected popular congresses from local to national level. In early 1992, the regime appointed a 300-member Transitional National Assembly to take over the legislative functions of the RCC, until a new Parliament.

In 1994, Sudan was re-divided into 26 States as against nine (six northern and three southern) in order to de-centralize power and encourage peoples' participation in the day-to-day administration of the country. While Khartoum State remained unaffected, the other five Northern States were split into 15 States and the three former southern states into 10 states.

The 12th Constitutional Decree of August 1995 established a federal structure with division of powers between the Centre and States.

In December 1999, President dissolved the National Assembly. The General Election Commission announced Presidential elections for late 2000. All opposition parties boycotted the elections in which President Bashir won 86.5% votes.

The emergency imposed in end-1999 remained in place until January 2005, allowing the President to exercise absolute executive power, tempered only by the demands of his core supporters and the limited reach of the state outside the main urban areas. The President's long time rival, Islamist Hassan al-Turabi, the founding father of the ruling party and former speaker of Parliament, has been on the political sidelines since his arrest. He was in and out of the Jail on a number of occasions. Quite recently he was arrested and released after about couple of months in May 2011. Intra party differences in the ruling National Congress Party were evident in recent times. President Omer Hassan Al-Bashir dismissed his senior security adviser Salah Gosh in April 2011.

The South & civil war

The question of integrating the Arab and Arabised Muslim populations of the North and the Southern populace comprising several Negroid and Bantu tribes (mostly non-Muslims) has bedeviled Sudan for years. Trouble first erupted in Torit (South Sudan) in August 1955 when the Equatoria Corps, overwhelmingly composed of Southerners, mutinied against their forced move to the North. With British help, the North was able to quell the rebellion but the seeds of civil war had been sown.

The North-South issue has dogged every successive Sudanese Government. Jaafar Nimeiry's volte face on concessions for the South agreed at the Addis Ababa peace accord in 1972 led to the formation of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement and Army (SPLM/A) and the launch of a devastating civil war that intensified with the imposition of sharia law in 1983.

Many outside powers intervened in support of the rebels (Israel, Ethiopia, Libya and Western powers). Khartoum at different times received help from Egypt, Saudi Arabia and other Arab countries. Pressured by concerted Western efforts since 1990 to isolate the Government, Sudan turned to China (and Iran) for weapons and political support.

Sudan peace process

The Sudan peace process continued under the IGAD – Inter Governmental Authority on Development comprising Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Somalia, Kenya, Uganda and Sudan. In July 2002, GOS and SPLM/A signed the Machakos-II framework protocol to hold a referendum on the future of south Sudan. The referendum would be held six years after signing a comprehensive peace agreement.

In 2003, GOS and SPLM signed Agreements on Security Arrangements and on Wealth Sharing. Three protocols were signed between GOS and SPLM/A on the other outstanding issues: power sharing, conflict areas of Nuba Mountains, and southern Blue Nile; and Abeyie at Naivasha on May 26, 2004. The Nairobi Declaration of 05 June 2004 incorporated all the six protocols.

The Comprehensive Peace Agreement signed in Nairobi on 09 January 2005 ended Africa's longest civil war. Under the new political structure (one country with two Governments), a bicameral parliament was appointed in August 2005, with 52% of the 450 seats going to the National Congress, 28% to the SPLM and the remaining 20% divided between the other opposition parties of north and south. The 50-member Council of States with two representatives from each state was formed. A United Nations peacekeeping force (UNMIS) supervises the truce.

Inaugurated in September 2005, the Government of National Unity has 30 cabinet positions shared in terms of the CPA-agreed ratios. The new parliament and Government of South Sudan (comprising ten states) were also appointed in October 2005.

By October 2007, the CPA was being threatened again with the SPLM suspending its participation in the Government of National Unity, protesting Khartoum's non-seriousness about implementing it. Although the SPLM came back in late December 2007, the most contentious issue regarding the status of the oil rich Abyei region remained unresolved.

In January-February 2008, fierce clashes between Arab Misseriya tribes and the SPLA in the disputed Abyei region left hundreds dead. Near war broke out between the Sudanese armed forces and the SPLA in Abyei in May 2008 with dozens of fatalities leading to the total destruction of the town. The UN evacuated its staff. In 2009, many were killed in inter-tribal clashes in South Sudan. The SPLM blamed Khartoum.

By end 2009, the cold peace between the NCP and the SPLM got frostier. From 2010, as the possibility of secession came closer, Khartoum and the Arab League (goaded by an Egypt frantic with worry over having to deal with possibly another independent country astride the Nile) went into overdrive in 2010 to make "unity attractive". Do-gooders began talking of delaying the self-determination referendum. In an expensive PR exercise, the AL mobilized dozens of Arab investors for a one-day conference in Juba. Nothing came of it. Referendum was held as per schedule in January in which the south overwhelmingly voted in favor of separation. President Bashir gracefully accepted the outcome of referendum and congratulated the South. However, the post referendum issues related to wealth sharing, debt-burden sharing, demarcation of borders, and issue of Abyei etc are yet to be sorted out in a decisive manner. Clashes are taking place between different groups. The two main parties to the CPA continue to blame each other for the violence. Blaming NCP for the violence, SPLM withdrew from the talks in March 2011. Talks between the two resumed after some pressure from international powers, especially AU. Violence continued in the oil rich area of Abyei even as new rebel forces sprang up in South Sudan announcing their defiance of SPLM. In May 2011, Sudan Armed Forces personnel were killed in an ambush by the Southern forces. Khartoum retaliated by taking control of Abyei and dissolved the governing council. President Bashir declared that Abyei belongs to the North and rejected international calls for withdrawal. Tensions subsided a little with the fighting parties agreeing to form a joint committee to find a settlement for the crisis. An agreement governing the establishment of a joint political and security mechanism was signed. The agreement establishes a common border zone between north and south Sudan which will be demilitarized and jointly monitored and patrolled.

South Sudan formally proclaimed independence on 9th July 2011. Negotiations are continuing between North and South regarding unresolved issues like citizenship, oil revenue sharing, border demarcation, debt sharing.

DARFUR: In May 2006, the Government signed the Darfur Peace Agreement with a faction of the Sudan Liberation Movement. Efforts continued throughout 2007 to bring the non-signatories on board. In December 2007, a much-heralded hybrid UN-AU force (mandated by Security Council resolutions) formally assumed responsibility for Darfur, only to face an immediate attack from the Sudanese military. By mid-2008, the situation in Darfur had deteriorated. In May 2008, heavily armed Darfur rebels attacked Khartoum leaving hundreds dead. Referendum to decide the administrative status of Darfur is scheduled to take place soon. While the government of Sudan is determined to go ahead with conducting the referendum, the rebel groups have been warning that such a move by the government will have serious implications for further peace talks. In April 2011 Darfur mediator handed a draft peace agreement to the three Sudanese parties participating in the Doha talks. The All Darfur stakeholders' conference held at the end of May 2011 in Doha agreed that the draft peace agreement should constitute a ground for peace in Darfur. Government and a main rebel group, LJM signed an agreement in July 2011. However, the other rebel groups are yet to join the talks.

An Eastern Sudan Peace Agreement in September 2006 sought to end the low level insurgency in the Beja-dominated areas of Eastern Sudan bordering Ethiopia and Eritrea.

National elections - the first in 25 years – were held in April 2010 with expected outcomes. Boycotted by several opposition parties, the elections were free of violence but observers question their credibility. President Bashir returned to power for another term of 5 years.

ICC arrest warrants: The arrest warrants issued against Sudan's President for war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity remain un-executed so far. President Bashir has been cautious in travelling abroad to prevent any possible arrest. Recently he visited Djibouti. Sudan is not a party to the Rome convention and therefore doesn't recognize ICC and maintains that its decisions cannot be applied to it. In a recent interview to a newspaper, president Bashir alleged that the whole issue related to ICC and arrest warrants is political.

FACT SHEET: (AS IN June 2011)

Official name	Republic of the Sudan
Head of State	H.E. Omer Hassan Ahmed Al-Bashir
First Vice President	Lt. Gen. Salva Kiir Mayardit (also President of Government of Southern Sudan)
Second Vice President	Mr. Ali Osman Mohammed Taha
Minister of Foreign Affairs	Mr. Ali Ahmed Karti
Minister of Defence	Lt. Gen. Abdel Rahim Mohd Hussein
Minister of Foreign Trade	Mr. Elias Neyama Lel
Minister of Industry	Dr. Awad Ahmed Al-Jaz
Area	2,505,812 Sq. Km.

Population	43.3 million
Administrative structure	Divided into 26 states each headed by an appointed Wali or governor with its own appointed legislative assembly
National legislature	Bicameral National Legislature consists of a Council of States (50 seats; members indirectly elected by state legislatures to serve six-year terms) and a National Assembly (450 seats; 60% from geographic constituencies, 25% from a women's list, and 15% from party lists; members to serve six-year terms)
Main cities	Khartoum (comprising Khartoum, Khartoum North & Omdurman), Port Sudan, Wad Medani, El Obeid, Atbara and Juba (capital of South Sudan)
Religion	Sunni Muslims (70%), Christian(5%) mainly Southern Sudan, Indigenous beliefs 25%
Language	Arabic (spoken by 60% of population), English, and estimated 115 tribal languages
Currency	Sudanese Pound (SDG): US\$ 1 = SDG 2.75
GDP (PPP)	\$98.79 billion (2010 est.)
GDP Growth Rate	5.2% (2010 est.)
Inflation	11.8% (2010 est.)(official), but actual closer to 25%
GDP per capita	\$2,200 (2010 est.)
Life Expectancy	55.4 years
Adult Literacy	61%
Global Trade 2010 (US\$ bn)	Imports (FOB) US \$8.483 ; Exports (FOB) US \$ 9.777
Major imports from	China, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, India, UAE.
Main imports	Foodstuffs, manufactured goods, refinery and transport equipment, medicines and chemicals, textiles, wheat
Major exports to	China, Japan, Indonesia, India
Main exports	Oil and petroleum products, cotton, sesame, livestock, groundnuts, gum arabic, sugar
Imports from India 2010-11 (Apr-Sep)	US\$ 228.61mn
Imports from India	Engineering goods including machinery & equipments, transport equipment, drugs & pharmaceuticals, readymade garments, textile yarn, plastic and linoleum products, rice, paper & wood products, tea, pulses, cosmetics & toiletries
Exports to India 2010-11 (Apr-Sep)	US\$ 273.58 mn
Exports to India	Crude oil, raw cotton, hides & skins, sesame and gum arabic
