

South Sudan

May 2022



Country – capital	Republic of South Sudan - Juba
Population	Dinka/Jieng (35-40%), Nuer/Naath (15%), Shilluk (Chollo), Azande, Bari, and many smaller groups. Total population 11.5 million (estimation 2022). ¹
Geography	South of Sudan, north of Uganda/Kenya, west of Ethiopia ²
Languages – official / lingua franca	English (official), Arabic (includes Juba and Sudanese variants), ethnic languages include Dinka, Nuer, Bari, Zande, Shilluk. ³
Writing system	Latin, Arabic ⁴
Education and literacy	<p>34.5% is literate – women even less (29% in 2018), and about 70% of children are out of school – the largest group being girls.⁵ Educational attainment is extremely poor due to the lack of schools, qualified teachers, and materials. Teachers and students are struggling with the switch from Arabic (Sudanese system) to English (since independence) as the language of instruction. Many adults missed out on schooling because of warfare and displacement.⁶</p> <p>South Sudan’s current system consists of two educational tracks. The formal track includes eight years of primary education, beginning at six years of age, followed by four years of secondary education and then postsecondary training or four years of tertiary education. There is also a provision for three years of pre-primary schooling, but implementation of this option has been slow. An alternative track, in which eight years of primary education are condensed into four years of instruction, exists for students of all ages who have or have had limited access to schooling.⁷</p>
Religions	Christian (60%), ‘folk’ religion (33%), Muslim (6%), other/unaffiliated (1%). ⁸
Conflict history and overview	<p>2011 Independence from Sudan after long and bloody civil wars (1955-1972 and 1983-2005); 2.5 million died. Since independence, the country has seen political conflicts, widespread corruption, communal violence, criminality.</p> <p>In December 2013, a conflict erupted between forces loyal to President Salva Kiir, a Dinka, and forces loyal to Vice President Riek Machar, a Nuer. The conflict quickly spread throughout the country and unfolded along ethnic lines, killing tens of thousands and creating a dire humanitarian crisis, with millions of South Sudanese displaced and food insecure. Cease-fire was reached in September 2018. On 22-2-2020 a transitional government of national unity was formed. However, since then power conflicts flared up again, leading to increased communal violence and worst food security crisis since its independence.⁹</p>
Humanitarian situation	<p>Life expectancy at birth: 58.6 yrs. Population below poverty line: 76.4 % (2016 est).¹⁰</p> <p>In 2021/22, 8.3 million were in need of humanitarian / food aid. Continued conflict and instability in the country combined with flooding have resulted in large-scale internal and cross-border displacement.¹¹</p>
Human rights situation	Human rights organisations report violence against civilians, extrajudicial killings, torture, kidnappings, sexual violence, arbitrary arrests and detention, looting, impunity by security forces, opposition forces, armed militias affiliated with the government and the opposition, and ethnically based groups. The government has arbitrarily detained critics, civil society members, journalists and politicians often holding them for extended periods. ¹²
Situation of women FGM – early marriages	<p>Maternal mortality rate: 1,150 per 100,000 live births = the world’s highest (2017).¹³</p> <p>Early marriages and childbirth prevail. FGM prevalence: 1%¹⁴</p>
Situation of LGBTI	<p>Same-sex activities illegal, punishable max 10 yrs prison.¹⁵</p> <p>In 2017, an Amnesty International researcher reported on the situation: “No one can be openly homosexual in South Sudan. Given the lawlessness, it’s the kind of place where you could easily end up dead because your actual or perceived sexuality.”¹⁶</p>
Asylum / migration / internally displaced persons (IDPs)	<p>IDPs (within South Sudan) total 2.3 million; 55% are women and girls.¹⁷</p> <p>2.3 million refugees, 63% of them <18 yrs, fled to neighbouring countries.¹⁸</p> <p>Malta sea arrivals: 2020 and 2021 unknown.¹⁹</p>

- ¹ <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/south-sudan/>
- ² <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/south-sudan/>
- ³ <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/south-sudan/>
- ⁴ <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/south-sudan/>
- ⁵ <https://www.unicef.org/southsudan/what-we-do/education>
- ⁶ <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/south-sudan/>
- ⁷ <https://www.britannica.com/place/South-Sudan/Education>
- ⁸ <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/south-sudan/>
- ⁹ <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/south-sudan/>; <https://www.internal-displacement.org/countries/south-sudan>
- ¹⁰ <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/south-sudan/>
- ¹¹ <https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/south-sudan/document/south-sudan-humanitarian-needs-overview-2022>; <https://www.internal-displacement.org/countries/south-sudan#displacement-data>
- ¹² <https://www.hrw.org/africa/south-sudan>; <https://www.state.gov/reports/2021-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/south-sudan/>
- ¹³ <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/south-sudan/>
- ¹⁴ <https://www.28toomany.org/country/south-sudan/>
- ¹⁵ <https://ilga.org/state-sponsored-homophobia-report>
- ¹⁶ <https://ilga.org/state-sponsored-homophobia-report>
- ¹⁷ <https://www.internal-displacement.org/countries/south-sudan>
- ¹⁸ <https://www.unrefugees.org/emergencies/south-sudan/>; <https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/southsudan>
- ¹⁹ <https://www.unhcr.org/mt/figures-at-a-glance>

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