



South Sudan

Country Overview

Politics

The Republic of South Sudan is located in Central Africa. Shortly after the country's independence in 2011, Salva Kiir Mayardit was elected president.¹ Elections are supposed to occur every four years, but were postponed from 2015 to 2023 due to instability and violence across the country.² The conflict between the government and oppositional forces subsided following peace agreements signed in August 2015 and September 2018. A transitional unity government was formed in February 2020 led by President Salva Kiir, first Vice president Riek Machar and four other vice presidents from opposition groups.³

Economy

South Sudan is classified by the World Bank as a low income economy.⁴ The South Sudanese Pound (SSP) has one of the highest inflation rates in the world at 187.90 percent.⁵ It is the most oil dependent country in the world; the commodity accounts for almost all the country's exports and 80 percent of the country's GDP.⁶ Low domestic production, declining crude oil prices as well as domestic conflict caused a significant decline of the GDP between 2014 and 2017. Recently, the economy had shown signs of recovery with 9.5 percent GDP real growth in FY2019/20, primarily driven by the oil sector.⁷ Despite the country's large oil reserves, 85 percent of the working population is engaged in non-wage work such as agriculture.⁸

Threats to South Sudan's economy include underdeveloped infrastructure, debt from considerable military spending, oil price fluctuations, severe weather events, hyperinflation, lack of economic diversification, and reliance on foreign aid.⁹

Social/Human Development

There are a diverse number of ethnic groups in South Sudan, including the Dinka people, who make up 35.8 percent of the population. The Nuer ethnic group is the second largest, at 15.6 percent of the population. The Shilluk, Azande, Bari, Kakwa, Kuku, Murle, Mandari, Didinga, Ndogo, Bviri, Lndi, Anuak, Bono, Lango, Dugotona, Acholi, Baka, and Fertit groups are also represented in the country's population. The country's official language is English, but Juba and Sudanese varieties of Arabic are widely spoken, as well as indigenous languages such as Dinka, Nuer, Bari, Zande, and Shilluk.¹⁰

The South Sudanese population is experiencing growth at a rate of 5.05 percent, with 62.86 percent of the population under the age of 25.¹¹ Yet, educational attainment is poor as only 40.3 percent of men, and 28.9 percent of women above the age of 15 are literate.¹² Due to years of political instability, poverty levels have remained high with 91.9 percent of the population living in multidimensional poverty.¹³ Over one third of the country's population faces severe food insecurity.¹⁴ The majority of the population lives in rural areas and subsists of farming, with an urban population of 20.5 percent.¹⁵

U.S. Department of State TIP Report Summary (2020)

U.S. Department of State TIP Ranking: Tier 3

The U.S. Department of State 2020 Trafficking in Persons Report, identifies trafficking vulnerability in the country. The report highlights gender-based violence towards Sudanese women and girls, including trafficking, sex slavery and domestic servitude. The report also places South Sudan on the 2020 Child Soldier Prevention Act List identifying the recruitment of child soldiers by government security and law enforcement. Children are further vulnerable to trafficking in construction, cattle herding, rock breaking, and brick making.

Read the full TIP Report at: <https://www.state.gov/reports/2020-trafficking-in-persons-report/south-sudan/>

Migrant and Other Vulnerable Populations

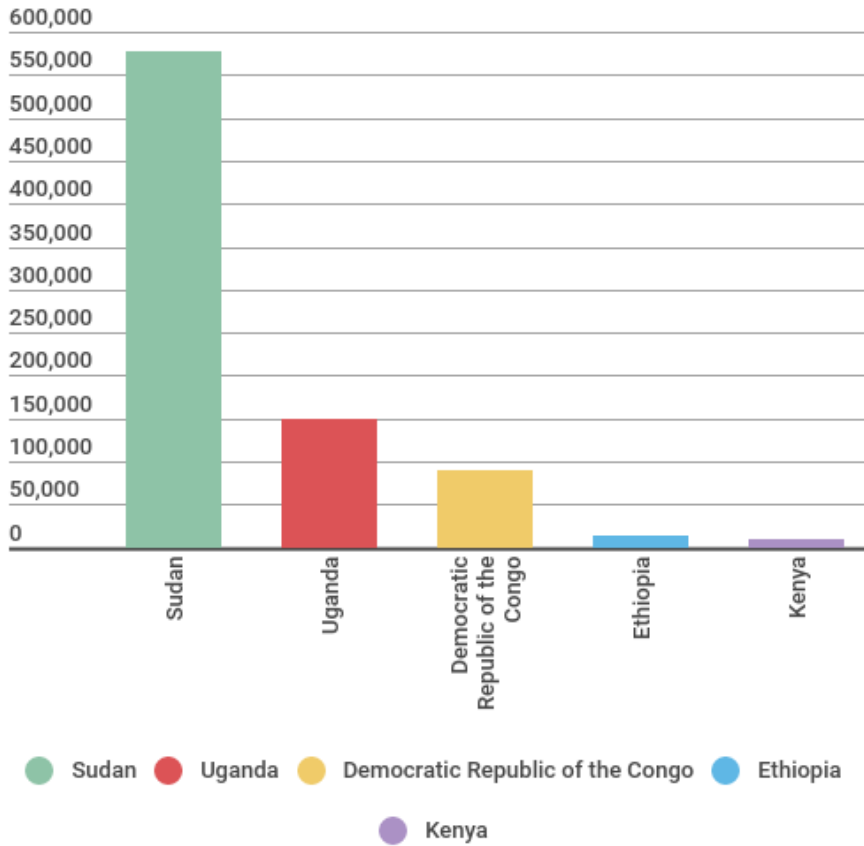
Since 2013, more than two million South Sudanese have left the country due to violent conflict.¹⁶ The most common destination countries for migrants from South Sudan are Uganda, Sudan, Ethiopia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Kenya.¹⁷ An estimated 231,000 South Sudanese nationals were living in Uganda's Bidibidi refugee camp as of 2020.¹⁸

The top sending countries for migrants to South Sudan are Sudan, Uganda, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, and Kenya.¹⁹

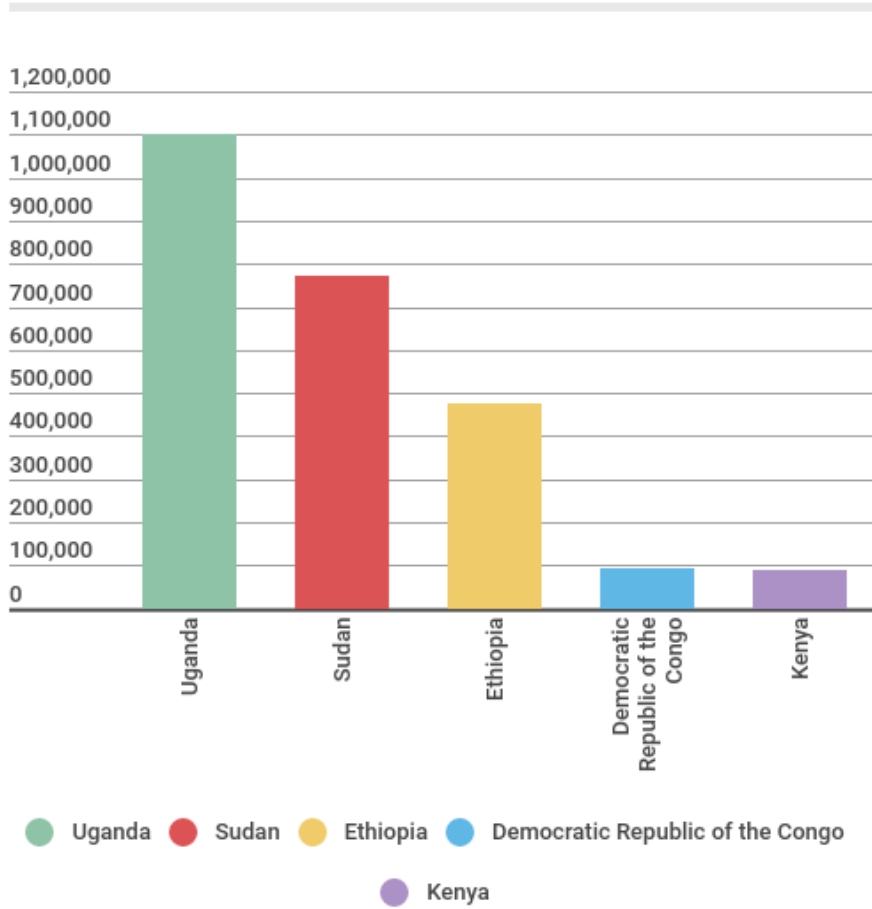
There were an estimated 2.35 million persons of concern in South Sudan in 2019, including over 298,000 refugees and over 1.67 million internally displaced persons.²⁰



Migrants to South Sudan



Migrants from South Sudan



Exports and Trade

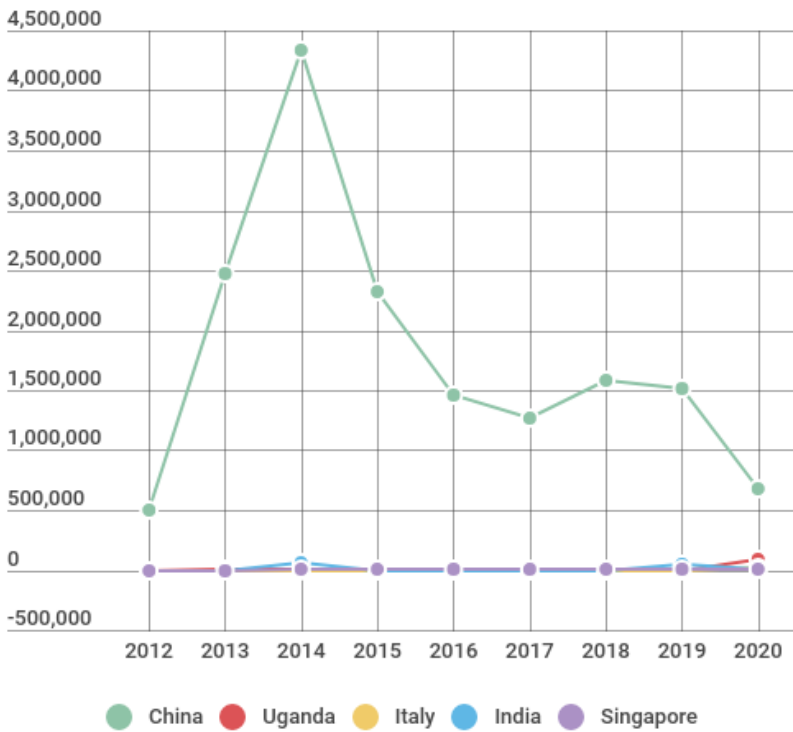
South Sudan's top export in 2020 was mineral fuel, specifically petroleum oils, by a large margin, followed by gold, iron and steel, wood and articles of wood, as well as machinery.²¹

Top Commodity Exports (USD/Thousands)



As of 2020, the top importers of all goods from South Sudan include China, Uganda, Italy, India and Singapore.²²

South Sudan Export Partners (USD/Thousands)



Trafficking in Persons Risk Factors Analysis

Legal/Policy Risk Factors

Level of Legal Protection for Civil Liberties and Workers' Rights

Freedom of Association

The South Sudanese transitional constitution provides the right of workers to organize, but the U.S. Department of State has reported that the government does not respect these rights. In 2016, the South Sudanese president signed a bill into law that places severe restrictions on the ability of civil society organizations to engage with the public, and created difficult registration requirements and heavy fines for non-compliance.²³

Working Conditions

South Sudan has no laws to stipulate a national minimum wage. There is a Civil Service Provision Order that outlines the rights and obligations of public sector worker, and gives the Ministry of Labor, Public Service, and Human Resources the ability to set the schedule of salary rates. Only unskilled workers are legally required to receive overtime pay after working more than 40 hours a week. There is no standard workweek for private sector employees. There are no laws to dictate what working conditions are considered to be acceptable. The government has not investigated or prosecuted any cases of labour violations.²⁴

Discrimination

The law prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, political opinion, national origin or citizenship, social origin, disability, age, language, or HIV-positive status. Discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity is not prohibited. Further, the Penal Code Act No. 9 of 2008 criminalizes sodomy. The U.S Department of State has reported that discrimination has occurred on all of the above listed characteristics. Discrimination along ethnic lines is especially noted in public sector employment , as the Dinka and Nuer occupy most governmental positions.²⁵

Forced Labor

The law prohibits all forms of forced labor except for compulsory military or community service. However, the U.S Department of State reports that these laws are not effectively enforced, as the government has never conducted an investigation or prosecute any reported cases of forced labor or trafficking.²⁶



Child Labor

The law sets the minimum age for employment at 14 years generally, but at 18 years for “hazardous work,” and 12 for “light work.” Hazardous work includes mining, working in factories, night shift work, and employment in prisons and the military. The U.S Department of State has reported that penalties for violating child labor laws are not a sufficient deterrence to violations and that the government does not enforce child labor laws. Consequently 45% of children between the ages of 10 and 14 had been reported to be engaged in child labor, primarily in farming, herding and firewood gathering.²⁷

Civil Society Organizations

The U.S. Department of State has reported that human rights groups and NGOs are provided significant rights and access to some branches of government but not others. NGOs have reported “increased entry of government representatives without judicial authorization into their properties,” and that these officials have “often confiscated personal documents and equipment.”²⁸ Two laws implemented in 2016, the Non-Governmental Organizations Act and the Relief and Rehabilitation Act have been reported to give the government further justification to intimidate civil society organizations and activists.²⁹

Ratification of ILO Conventions Related to Human Trafficking or Rights of Workers and Migrants

Conventions	Status
ILO 29 Forced Labor	In force
ILO 87 Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organize	Not ratified
ILO 98 Right to Organize and Collective Bargaining	In force
ILO 100 Equal Remuneration	In force
ILO 105 Abolition of Forced Labor	In force
ILO 111 Discrimination	In force
ILO 138 Minimum Age	In force
ILO 181 Private Employment Agencies	Not ratified
ILO 182 Worst Forms of Child Labor	In force
ILO 97 Migration for Employment	Not ratified

30



Political Risk Factors

Political Instability or Conflict

South Sudan scores a 109.4 on the Fragile State Index, making it the 4th most fragile state in the 2021 index.³¹

Millions have been killed and tens of thousands have been displaced by conflict since 2013. The civil war stems from a political struggle between President Kiir, associated with the Dinka ethnic group, and first Vice President Riek Machar, associated with the Nuer ethnic group. A peace agreement was signed in 2015, with amended agreements established in 2018, but violence has continued. Parties to the conflict have committed grave human rights violations and violence against civilians.³² According to the Council on Foreign Relations, “armed groups have targeted civilians along ethnic lines, committed rape and sexual violence, destroyed property and looted villages and recruited children into their ranks.”³³ The conflict has also caused food shortages that have been exacerbated by severe weather events, causing a severe food crisis.³⁴ The truce signed in September 2018 alongside the formation of the new unity government in 2020 had decreased instances of subnational violence, however the World Bank noted increasing violence in 2020.³⁵

Level of Crime and Violence

The U.S. Department of State notes widespread sexual and gender-based violence, abuse of power by security forces, trafficking of persons and the persecution of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender individuals.³⁶ The UN Human Rights Commission has identified 40 South Sudanese officials responsible for war crimes and crimes against humanity.³⁷ The U.S. Department of State has reported that crime in South Sudan’s capital, Juba, is critical.³⁸ The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime reported a homicide rate of 14.9 homicides per 100,000 people, higher than the African average.³⁹ The UN Mission in South Sudan finds that community-based militias were responsible for 78% of the killings, injuries, abductions and sexual violence in 2020.⁴⁰

Level of Corruption

The Transparency International Corruption Perception Index scores South Sudan as a 12 out of 100, where a 0 signals “Highly Corrupt” and a 100 signals “Very Clean.” South Sudan is ranked 179 out of 180 on that index.⁴¹ The U.S. Department of State has reported that corruption is endemic in all branches of government.⁴² Freedom House reports that corruption is extremely common among political and military leaders, who control most of the country’s oil revenues.⁴³ A 2020 UN investigation revealed that government officials had embezzled over USD 36 million since 2016.⁴⁴

Socio-Economic Risk Factors

Level of National Economic Development

South Sudan is scored in the low human development category, according to the UN Human



Development Index (HDI), with a rank of 185 out of 189 and a score of .433. South Sudan's Human Development Score has increased by 5.6% since 2010. This growth was primarily driven by a 12.9 percent increase in GNI per capita and the improvement in life expectancy which stood at 57.9 years in 2019 compared to 54.8 in 2010. South Sudan's HDI value is lower than all of its neighbors with the exception of the Central African Republic. When adjusted for inequality the HDI decreases to 0.276, with the human inequality coefficient standing at 36 percent.⁴⁵

Level and Extent of Poverty

South Sudan has a high level of poverty scoring 0.58 on the UN's Multidimensional Poverty Index, ranking 185 out of 189 countries.⁴⁶ The UN gives South Sudan an inequality adjusted Human Development Index score of 0.276 for 2020.⁴⁷ South Sudan's gross national income (GNI) per capita was USD 2,003 in 2019, a 12 percent increase from the country's 2018 GNI per capita of USD 1,856, and an even greater increase from the country's 2010 GNI per capita of USD 1,005.⁴⁸ The World Bank reports that as of 2016, 76.4 percent of the population lived at USD 1.90 a day.⁴⁹

Degree of Gender Inequality

The UNDP Gender Inequality Index did not score South Sudan in 2020, nor did the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report. The maternal mortality rate in 2019 was 1,150 deaths per 100,000 live births, ranking at the highest level globally. This represents a decrease from 2017, when the number stood at 2,054 per 100,000 live births.⁵⁰ The adolescent birth rate (births by women between the ages of 15 and 19) is 62.0 per 1,000 women. Women hold 26.6 percent of seats in parliament.⁵¹

The transitional constitution provides for gender equality, but widespread societal discrimination, as well as pervasive gender-based violence limited practical implementation.⁵² The transitional constitution provides women with the right to own property, but this right may not be respected in traditional justice systems. Rape and sexual harassment are both illegal, but the law is reportedly rarely enforced. Domestic violence is not prohibited by the law. Access to information and tools regarding reproductive health is extremely limited, both due to societal stigma and low female literacy rates. The U.S. Department of State has reported that women experience discrimination in employment, pay, credit, education, inheritance, housing, and ownership and management of businesses or land.⁵³

Only 30.4 percent of primary school students and 7.6 percent of secondary school students are girls.⁵⁴ Barriers to education for girls include child marriage, domestic labor, and gender-based violence present at schools.⁵⁵

Landlessness and Dispossession

Since the start of the civil war in December 2013 the UN High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) reports 4 million people have fled their homes due to violence. While many remain internally displaced, nearly 2.3 million individuals have fled to neighboring countries.⁵⁶ The UN High Commissioner for Refugees has declared the forced displacement in the region as a humanitarian emergency, exacerbated by food insecurity, flooding and disease.⁵⁷



Environmental Factors

According to the World Health Organization, 48 percent of the population of South Sudan is severely food insecure.⁵⁸ The lack of access of food is a consequence of civil insecurity, widespread floods, soil degradation, deforestation, and economic downturn.⁵⁹ In February of 2017, the U.N. declared a famine in two parts of the country due to prolonged drought.⁶⁰ In 2020 floods alongside economic insecurity brought on by the Covid-19 pandemic had particularly exacerbated the critical nutritional situation in the Jonglei State, where 78% of the population are estimated to be severely food insecure.⁶¹

Documented Trafficking in Persons Risk Factors in Key Commodity Supply Chains

Mineral Fuels

Mineral Fuels Overview

Oil accounts for nearly all of the nation’s revenues. Although oil production is located in South Sudan, the pipelines run through Sudan and are exported through Port Sudan on the Red Sea. The existing oil infrastructure leaves South Sudan’s crude oil export dependent on its northern neighbor.⁶²

Documented Trafficking in Persons Risk Factors in Mineral Fuels

Parties to the conflict have focused on taking control of oil fields and oil producing regions.⁶³ A UN panel of experts noted that the conflict has become a “multi-faceted war where allegiances shift rapidly,” in part due to “access to resources.”⁶⁴ The large-scale displacement – over four million people in total – caused by the conflict creates a risk for trafficking. The conflict has also been linked to trafficking and forced recruitment of child soldiers by both government and rebel forces.⁶⁵ The U.S. Department of State reports that an estimated 19,000 children have been exploited by the parties to the conflict since 2013. According to Human Rights Watch, child soldiers in the Sudanese conflict are starved, denied an education, traumatized and killed.⁶⁶ Armed groups recruit children for combat, cattle care, cooking, cleaning, scouting and carrying heavy loads.⁶⁷ Child soldiers are most present in the Greater Equatoria, Greater Bahr el Ghazal, and Greater Upper Nile regions.⁶⁸



Gift of the United States Government

This report was funded by a grant from the United States Department of State. The opinions, findings and conclusions stated herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the United States Department of State.



²⁵ U.S. Department of State. “Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2020: South Sudan.” 2020. <https://www.state.gov/reports/2020-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/south-sudan/>

²⁶ U.S. Department of State. “Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2020: South Sudan.” 2020. <https://www.state.gov/reports/2020-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/south-sudan/>

²⁷ U.S. Department of State. “Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2020: South Sudan.” 202. <https://www.state.gov/reports/2020-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/south-sudan/>



- ²⁸ U.S. Department of State. "Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2020: South Sudan." 2020. <https://www.state.gov/reports/2020-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/south-sudan/>
- ²⁹ Goitom, Hanibal. "Global Legal Monitor." February 16, 2016. Accessed June 29, 2021. <https://www.loc.gov/law/foreign-news/article/south-sudan-laws-regulating-non-governmental-organizations-enacted/>.
- ³⁰ International Labour Organization (ILO). Ratifications for South Sudan. 2021. http://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=1000:11200:0::NO:11200:P11200_COUNTRY_ID:2697100
- ³¹ The Fund for Peace. *Fragile States Index 2017: South Sudan*. 2021. <http://fundforpeace.org/fsi/country-data/>
- ³² Council on Foreign Relations. *Civil War in South Sudan*. <https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/civil-war-south-sudan>
- ³³ Council on Foreign Relations. *Civil War in South Sudan*. <https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/civil-war-south-sudan> <https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/civil-war-south-sudan>
- ³⁴ Council on Foreign Relations. *Civil War in South Sudan*. <https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/civil-war-south-sudan>
- ³⁵ World Bank. "South Sudan Overview." 2021. <http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/southsudan/overview>
- ³⁶ U.S. Department of State. "Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2020: South Sudan." 2020. <https://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/index.htm#wrapper>
- ³⁷ United Nations Human Rights Council. *Report of the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan*. 2018 <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/Pages/NewsDetail.aspx?NewsID=22691&LangID=E>
- ³⁸ U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Diplomatic Security (OSAC). *South Sudan 2020 Crime & Safety Report*. 2020. <https://www.osac.gov/Country/SouthSudan/Content/Detail/Report/375e9a73-fca0-48cb-81a6-18906cf51fe3>
- ³⁹ UNODC. *Global Homicide Study*. 2014. https://www.unodc.org/documents/gsh/pdfs/2014_GLOBAL_HOMICIDE_BOOK_web.pdf
- ⁴⁰ Human Rights Division United Nations Mission in South Sudan. *Annual Briefing on Violence Affecting Civilians*. 2021. https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/UNMISS%20annual%20brief_violence%20against%20civilians_2020.pdf
- ⁴¹ Transparency International. *Corruption Perceptions Index 2020: South Sudan*. 2020. <https://www.transparency.org/country/SSD>
- ⁴² U.S. Department of State. "Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2020: South Sudan." 2020. <https://www.state.gov/reports/2020-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/south-sudan/>
- ⁴³ Freedom House. "Freedom in the World: South Sudan." 2020. <https://freedomhouse.org/country/south-sudan/freedom-world/2020>
- ⁴⁴ United Nations Human Rights Council. *Statement by Yasmin Sooka Chair of the UN Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan to the Human Rights Council*. September 2020. <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/Pages/NewsDetail.aspx?NewsID=26281&LangID=E>
- ⁴⁵ United Nations Development Programme. *Human Development Reports: International Human Development Indicators*. June 2021. <http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/Country-Profiles/SSD.pdf>
- ⁴⁶ United Nations Development Programme. *Human Development Reports: South Sudan*. June 2021. <http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/SSD>
- ⁴⁷ United Nations Development Programme. *Human Development Reports: South Sudan*. June 2021. <http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/SSD>
- ⁴⁸ United Nations Development Programme. *Human Development Reports: South Sudan*. June 2021. <http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/SSD>
- ⁴⁹ World Bank. *Country Profile: South Sudan*. 2021. <https://data.worldbank.org/country/south-sudan>
- ⁵⁰ United Nations Development Programme. *Human Development Reports: South Sudan*. June 2021. <http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/SSD>
- ⁵¹ United Nations Development Programme. *Human Development Reports: South Sudan*. June 2021. <http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/SSD>
- ⁵² U.S. Department of State. "Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2020: South Sudan." 2020. <https://www.state.gov/reports/2020-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/south-sudan/>



- ⁵³ U.S. Department of State. “Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2020: South Sudan.” 2020. <https://www.state.gov/reports/2020-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/south-sudan/>
-
- ⁵⁴ World Bank. *Country Profile: South Sudan*. 2021. <https://data.worldbank.org/country/south-sudan>
- ⁵⁵ U.S. Department of State. “Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2020: South Sudan.” 2020. <https://www.state.gov/reports/2020-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/south-sudan/>
- ⁵⁶ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). *UNHCR Statistics: The World in Numbers*. 2021. <http://popstats.unhcr.org/en/overview>
- ⁵⁷ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). *South Sudan Emergency*. 2021. <https://www.unhcr.org/south-sudan-emergency.html>
- ⁵⁸ World Health Organization (WHO). *South Sudan Humanitarian Situation Report 2021*. May 2021. <https://www.afro.who.int/publications/south-sudan-humanitarian-situation-report-2021>
- ⁵⁹ Central Intelligence Agency. *The World Factbook: South Sudan*. June 2021. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/od.html>
- ⁶⁰ Beaubien, Jason. “Why the Famine In South Sudan Keeps Getting Worse.” *NPR*. March 14, 2017. <https://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2017/03/14/520033701/why-the-famine-in-south-sudan-keeps-getting-worse>
- ⁶¹ Central Intelligence Agency. *The World Factbook: South Sudan*. June 2021. <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/south-sudan>
- ⁶² Central Intelligence Agency. *The World Factbook: South Sudan*. June 2021. <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/south-sudan>
- ⁶³ Cumming-bruce, Nick. “Oil Companies May Be Complicit in Atrocities in South Sudan, U.N. Panel Says.” *The New York Times*, The New York Times, 20 Feb. 2019, www.nytimes.com/2019/02/20/world/africa/south-sudan-oil-war-crimes.html.
- ⁶⁴ United Nations Security Council. *Letter dated 22 January 2016 from the Panel of Experts on South Sudan...to the President of the Security Council*. January 22, 2016. http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/2016/70.
- ⁶⁵ U.S. Department of State. “2020 Trafficking in Persons Report: South Sudan.” 2020. <https://www.state.gov/reports/2020-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/south-sudan/>
- ⁶⁶ Human Rights Watch “Submission to the Committee on the Rights of the Child’s Review of South Sudan.” 30 Nov. 2020, www.hrw.org/news/2020/11/30/submission-committee-rights-childs-review-south-sudan#_ftn5.
- ⁶⁷ UNICEF South Sudan “Stolen Childhoods.” www.unicef.org/southsudan/stolen-childhoods.
- ⁶⁸ U.S. Department of State. “2020 Trafficking in Persons Report: South Sudan.” 2020. <https://www.state.gov/reports/2020-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/south-sudan/>
- ⁶⁹ U.S. Department of State. “2020 Trafficking in Persons Report: South Sudan.” 2020. <https://www.state.gov/reports/2020-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/south-sudan/>

