

Sudan

Country Overview

Politics

The Republic of the Sudan is a presidential republic in northeastern Africa. After South Sudan seceded in 2011, there has been ongoing conflict between the Sudanese government and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement. As of 2020, Sudan and South Sudan had not demarcated a border. This impasse has contributed to armed and non-armed conflict as well as sovereignty disputes.¹ Additional conflict has been occurring in the Darfur region of northern Sudan since 2003, resulting in an estimated 1.2 million to 1.7 million internally displaced peoples.²

In 2022, the military of Sudan ousted the Prime Minister, and supplanted Sudan's collective Head of State with members of the military. In March of 2022, General Abdel Fattah Abdelrahman al-Burhan, the Commander in Chief of Sudan's Armed Forces, became the de-facto head of state.³

Economy

Sudan is classified by the World Bank as a lower middle-income economy.⁴ Sudan's largest exports consist of gold and livestock, which account for approximately 70 percent and 25 percent of total exports respectively.⁵ The Central Bank of Sudan has reported that Sudan's capital flows are at USD \$-913.06 million, with foreign direct investment (FDI) also in the negative at USD \$-108.05 million in 2022.⁶

Sudan has a low ranking of 162 out of 190 countries from the 2020 World Bank-International Financial Corporation's Doing Business Report – Ease of Doing Business.⁷

Social/Human Development

Approximately 70 percent of the population of Sudan are Sudanese Arabs.⁸ There are also over 500 documented ethnic groups within the country including Fur, Beja, Nuba, and Fallata.⁹

The World Bank reports that the Gross National Income (GNI) in 2018 was at USD \$1,560, with 47 percent of the population living below the national poverty line.¹⁰ The UN Human Development Index (HDI) ranked Sudan 168 out of 188 countries in 2019, with political risks presenting the greatest challenge for development and foreign direct investment (FDI).¹¹ Sudan's HDI value for 2019 was 0.510, marking it as a low human development category country.¹² Sudan has a low life expectancy at 65.3 years, as well as only 7.9 expected years of schooling, and 3.8 mean years of school reported in 2019.¹³



U.S. Department of State TIP Report Summary (2021)

U.S. Department of State TIP Ranking: Tier 2

According to the U.S. Department of State Trafficking in Persons Report, exported supply chains with a risk of trafficking include mining and agriculture. Children are vulnerable to forced child labor in brickmaking, gold mining, and agriculture. The report also noted that the Government of Sudan does not fully meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking. Nevertheless, the government has made significant efforts to combat human trafficking, including the military no longer recruiting child soldiers, the government passing an anti-trafficking law in 2014, and an increase in government investigations into trafficking cases. The country has also attempted to raise awareness of trafficking risk through its National Committee to Combat Human Trafficking program.

Read the full TIP Report at: <https://www.state.gov/reports/2021-trafficking-in-persons-report/sudan/>.

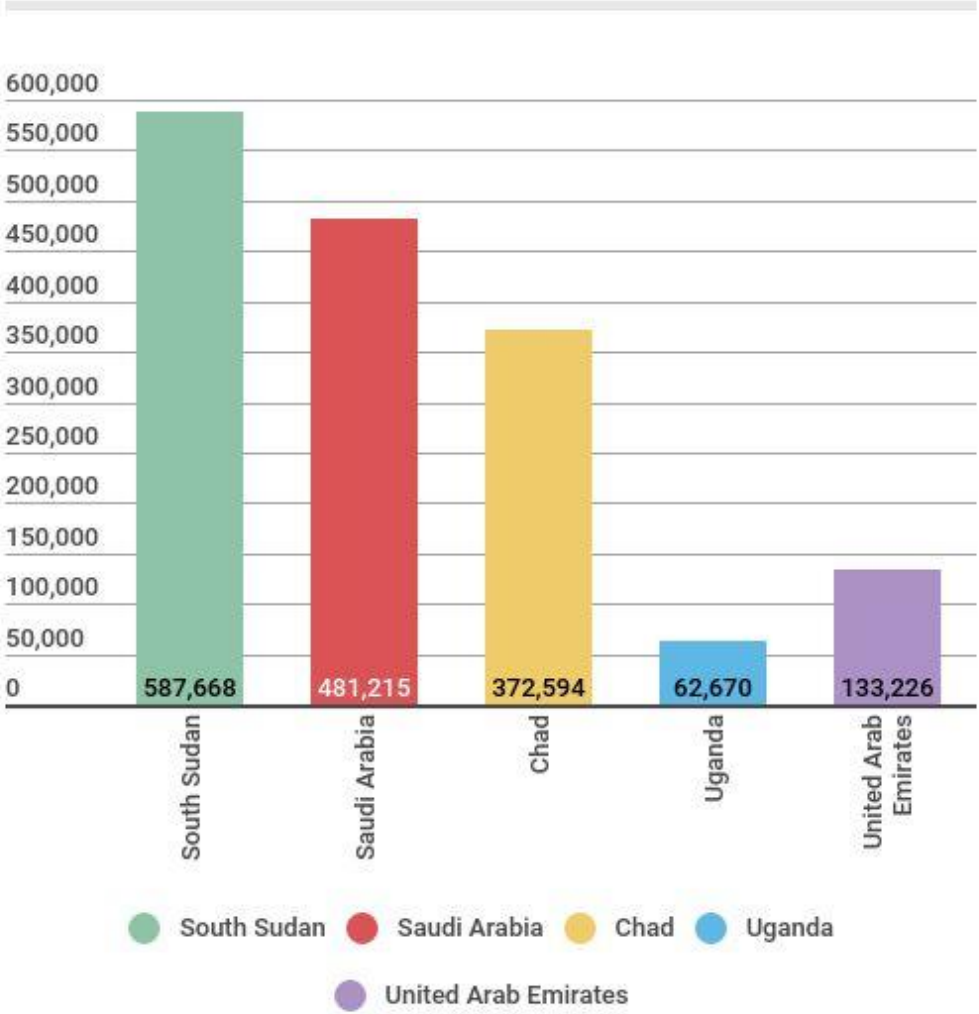
Migrants and Other Vulnerable Populations

Sudan has negative net migration. Due to the high incidence of conflict in Sudan, it is a source, transit, and destination country for refugees, displaced persons, as well as irregular migration.¹⁴

Emigrant destination countries include South Sudan, Saudi Arabia, Chad, Uganda, and the United Arab Emirates.¹⁵



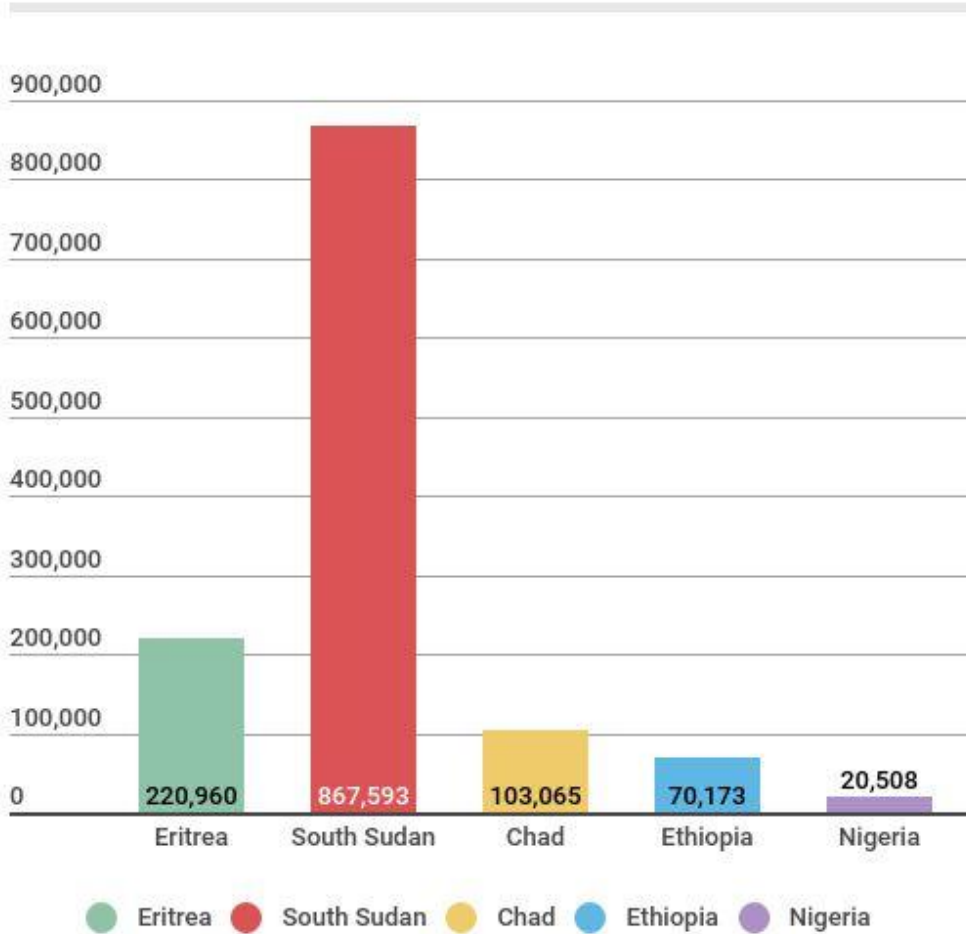
Migrants from Sudan



The largest source country for migrants to Sudan is South Sudan, followed by Eritrea, Chad, Ethiopia, and Nigeria.¹⁶



Migrants to Sudan



Exports and Trade



The top exports from Sudan include gold, live animals, mineral fuels, oil seeds, lac/gum/resins, and cotton.¹⁷

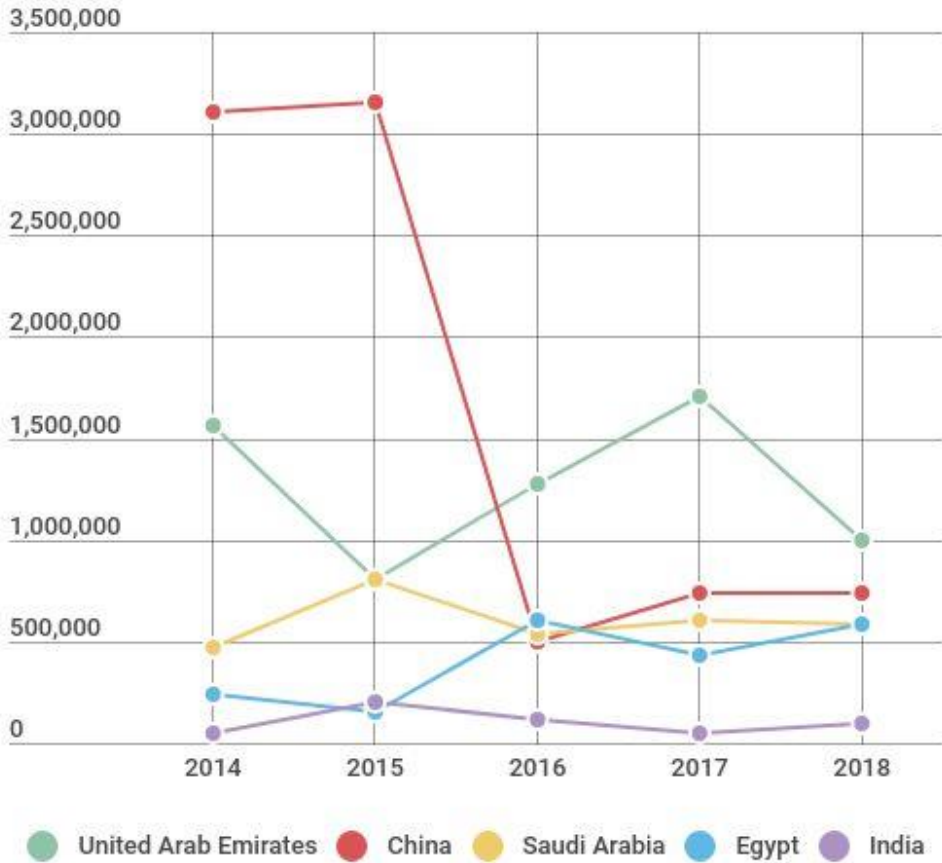
2021



The top importers of all goods from Sudan according to mirror data include Saudi Arabia, China, India, Egypt, and the United Arab Emirates.¹⁸



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

Although the Interim National Constitution and the law provide for freedom of association, this right is extremely restricted by the government. Sudan's government has used the state of transition to avoid and/or delay enforcing collective bargaining rights and freedom of association.¹⁹



According to the U.S. Department of State, very few trade unions exist, and those that do are co-opted by the government. Despite the 2019 constitution providing freedom of association rights, the Civilian Led Transitional Government (CLTG) sought to dissolve trade unions and freeze their assets and property.²⁰

Working Conditions

The legal hours for work are 40 hours per week or eight hours per day, with overtime limited to a maximum of four hours per day or 12 hours per week. A half hour paid break is required each day by law.²¹ Additionally, it is required by law to hire an industrial safety officer if an industrial company has between 30 and 150 workers.²² The government set minimum wage is below the national poverty line. However, the CLTG raised the minimum monthly wage for public sector workers.²³

Discrimination

The law prohibits discrimination regarding race, sex, gender, disability, tribe, and language. Foreign workers without legal status are not protected under the law, although all labor laws apply to migrant workers with formal legal status.²⁴ However, LGBTQI+ persons in Sudan are not identified as a "protected class under antidiscrimination laws."²⁵ Though protections exist for those with disabilities, the law "does not specifically prohibit discrimination."²⁶ Laws and legal practices, including Islamic jurisprudence, frequently discriminate against women, with some probate trials not recognizing a woman's testimony as equal as a man's.²⁷

The CLTG has not enforced anti-discrimination regulations, particularly against migrants and refugees, who lack access to documentation as well as remedies from the judicial system.²⁸ In 2020, there was a significant rise in reports of harassment and discrimination with the arrival of approximately 50,000 Ethiopian refugees.²⁹ For example, men and women were not compensated for their work, were forced to pay "kettle taxes" to the police, had their belongings taken, or were trafficked.³⁰ The U.S. Department of State reports that migrants and refugees fear discrimination and retaliation, and are subject to movement restrictions.³¹

Forced Labor

While the law prohibits and criminalizes forced labor, penalties and enforcement mechanisms are reportedly inadequate and ineffectively enforced.³² Sudan's National Committee to Combat Human Trafficking (NCCHT) has been expanding efforts to allow reporting and increased awareness about forced labor and trafficking.³³ However, the government inconsistently enforces sentencing and fines, and there have been reports of sexually exploited refugees in government camps.³⁴

There are approximately 2.5 million internally displaced persons in Sudan that are at the highest risk of forced labor and/or sex trafficking. Conflict areas and Darfuri armed groups also pose threats to exploiting migrants in forced labor.³⁵



Child Labor

Children are prohibited from working in hazardous jobs, jobs requiring significant physical effort, and jobs that may harm their morals. Children between ages 14 and 18 protected by child labor laws are also prohibited from working between 6 p.m. and 8 a.m.³⁶ It is reported that the CLTG does not effectively enforce punishment for violating child labor laws, with the highest incidences of child labor reported in mining, agriculture, and the informal sector.³⁷

Civil Society Organizations

The U.S. Department of State reports multiple occurrences of the government not allowing civil society organizations to operate or arresting civil society activists.³⁸ After the military takeover of the government in October 25th 2021, civil society groups organized demonstrations to protest. The military responded with force using live ammunition and stun grenades.³⁹

The CLTG's Dismantling Committee dissolves civil society organizations regularly if there is any perceived association with the previous regime. 64 organizations were reported to have been dissolved in 2021.⁴⁰

Immigration Policies Limiting the Employment Options or Movements of Migrants

The law protects the freedom of movement and migration; however, the CLTG and the military often restrict travel to and within conflict areas.⁴¹ In December 2022, the CLTG's Sovereign Council issued a temporary decree which would provide the intelligence services and the armed forces the power to search and seize possessions and restrict movement of individuals in Sudan.⁴²

Non-Sudanese individuals are required to have travel permits for free movement outside of Khartoum.⁴³ Bureaucratic bottlenecks present challenges to obtaining a travel permit.⁴⁴

Internally displaced persons, especially women, are at risk of sexual violence.⁴⁵

Refugee movement is protected by Sudan and South Sudan's "four freedoms" which includes freedom of movement, but it is not fully implemented and varies based on government relationships with local communities.⁴⁶ Restrictions of movement, and a lack of knowledge of their rights can prevent migrant workers from accessing employment in Sudan. The UNHCR reported that the movement of Ethiopian refugees to a different set of camps in the east of the country was "voluntary and dignified."⁴⁷

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	In force
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

Use of Export Processing Zones (EPZs)

The Red Sea Free Zone, located south of Port Sudan town, is the site of 41 percent of industrial activities, 15 percent of commercial activities, and 44 percent of service activities in the country.⁴⁸

The Garri (Al-Gaili) Free Zone, located north of the capital Khartoum, is used for oil refining, large importers, financial services, and automotive equipment, among others.⁴⁹ The Garri zone in Sudan is categorized as stagnant with limited employment opportunities. It reportedly has poor qualitative scores for legal and regulatory frameworks, government support, zone-level governance, industrial infrastructure, and location.⁵⁰

Political Risk Factors

Political Instability or Conflict

Sudan scored 107.1 on the Fragile States Index in 2022 and was placed in the “Very High Alert” category as the seventh most fragile state. The 2022 score marks an increase of 1.90 points from 2021.⁵¹ Ongoing armed conflict across the country has led to widespread human rights violations.⁵² The U.S. Department of State reports that approximately 2.5 million internally displaced persons and 1 million refugees are at risk of trafficking and forced labor due to political instability and conflict.⁵³



Tribal conflicts have also been a common humanitarian issue, resulting in displacement and food insecurity in Sudan. In 2022, communal conflict in Blue Nile state caused 97 deaths, and 14,000 internally displaced persons.⁵⁴

Level of Crime and Violence

While most of the violence in Sudan comes from armed conflict, the U.S. Department of State also reports that there is a lack of police or other forces to prevent violent crime in the Darfur region.⁵⁵

In 2020, the Overseas Advisory Council (OSAC) assessed Sudan at a Level 3 Travel Advisory due to crime, civil unrest, and armed conflict.⁵⁶ Reports of detention of nationals, and foreigners, present a threat to economic activity. Eastern Sudan is linked to higher instances of organized crime smuggling and trafficking between Eritrea and Ethiopia.⁵⁷ Khartoum is recognized as a medium-threat location due to crime being mostly petty theft. The most severe cases of assault have been related to inter-communal conflicts of tribal groups during the previous Bashir regime, as well as Darfuri groups against migrants and internally displaced persons.⁵⁸

State Persecution

The U.S. Department of State has reported that refugees and asylum seekers are vulnerable to arbitrary arrest and harassment outside of camps. Identification cards are challenging to obtain, thereby leaving individuals with an undocumented status for extended periods of time.⁵⁹

Human rights issues in Sudan include unlawful killings, as well as unlawful and cruel punishments by government agents, inhumane prison conditions, arbitrary detention, abduction, and violence against journalists, among others.⁶⁰ Following the military takeover of the government in October 2021, government security forces used stun grenades, live ammunition, and rubber bullets, among other methods, to disperse protesters and crowds, killing 52 people and injuring hundreds more.⁶¹

The U.S. Department of State has cited several reports of government forces, armed militias, and individuals raiding camps of internally displaced persons. UN aid agencies have reported harassment on multiple occasions by government and rebel forces. The government of Sudan has refused to recognize South Sudanese people as refugees. Persons of South Sudanese origin living in Sudan may be considered stateless, as they may lack Sudanese or South Sudanese nationality.⁶²



Level of Corruption

In 2021, the Transparency International Corruption Perception Index scored Sudan at 20 out of 100, where 0 signals “Highly Corrupt” and 100 signals “Very Clean.”⁶³ Sudan was ranked 164 of 180 on the same index. The Global Corruption Barometer (GCB) in 2019 reported that 82 percent of people in Sudan perceived corruption had increased, and 24 percent of public service users had paid a bribe in the past 12 months.⁶⁴

The U.S. Department of State reports widespread corruption throughout government institutions including the police, the judiciary, and other officials within the government. Although the law provides a legislative framework for addressing corruption, implementation and punishment are considered weak and lenient. The U.S. Department of State reported that the government in Sudan has a record of detaining, intimidating, and interrogating journalists who investigate government corruption.⁶⁵

Socio-Economic Risk Factors

Level of National Economic Development

The UN Human Development Index (HDI) ranked Sudan 168 out of 188 countries in 2019.⁶⁶ The World Bank classified Sudan in the lower income level.⁶⁷ Sudan's HDI score in 2019 was below the average for other countries in the same low human development group.⁶⁸ The Human Capital Index in Sudan falls at a score of 0.4.⁶⁹ The scores are reported on a scale of zero to one, with one indicating a high potential productivity of a future worker relative to the benchmark of full health and complete education.⁷⁰ GDP growth in 2021 was reported at 0.1 annual percent, which is a low, but positive growth compared to -3.6 percent GDP growth in 2019.⁷¹

Level and Extent of Poverty

When adjusted for inequality, Sudan's HDI score was 0.333 in 2020.⁷² This marks a significant 34.7 percent decline from the HDI score of 0.510 in 2019.⁷³

In 2020, income inequality was at 33 percent, inequality in life expectancy at birth was 27.4 percent, and inequality in education was at 42.4 percent in Sudan.⁷⁴

Although income per capita GDP is approximately 25 percent higher than the Sub-Saharan Africa average, 47 percent of the population lives below the poverty line overall, with 26 percent reportedly living in poverty in the city of Khartoum.⁷⁵ The most recent Multi-Dimensional Poverty Index score is reported from 2014, with 52.3 percent of the population living in Multi-Dimensional Poverty, and 17.7 percent being at risk.⁷⁶

Degree of Gender Inequality

The UNDP Human Development Report Gender Inequality Index value in 2019 for Sudan was 0.545, ranking it 138 out of 162 countries.⁷⁷



As of 2019, Sudan had ratified the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa.⁷⁸ However, it is reported that the law and traditional legal practices discriminate against women in housing, education, and economic opportunity, specifically in access to employment, equal pay, credit, and ownership of businesses.⁷⁹ Women in Sudan have been disproportionately subject to violence by state and non-state actors.⁸⁰

The Muslim Personal Status Law has been in place as a religious law since 1991. It restricts Sudanese women's ability to travel, and limits protections in cases of workplace harassment. The same law also states that women cannot work in the same industries as men, have limited access to credit, and cannot be the head of a household.⁸¹

Landlessness and Dispossession

It is estimated that 5 to 6 million people have been displaced from their homes due to conflict in Darfur and the southern part of Sudan since 2005.⁸² Government and rebel forces have continuously attacked populated villages in Darfur and inter-communal fighting over land has resulted in displacement.⁸³

Land tenure laws in Sudan are weak and frequently disputed between tribes, local communities, and the government.⁸⁴ The state has the majority share of control over the agricultural land and has reportedly sold millions of acres to foreign countries, including Saudi Arabia.⁸⁵ Large-scale land acquisition for commercial agricultural development has increased in recent years with hundreds of thousands of hectares leased to countries including Egypt, Jordan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and South Korea.⁸⁶ The government frequently does not reply to appeals of displaced persons attempting to return to their land. It has been reported that government militias have expropriated land without compensation.⁸⁷

Environmental Factors

According to the CIA, environmental issues in Sudan include inadequate supplies of potable water, soil erosion, desertification, and persistent droughts.⁸⁸ 100 percent of agricultural land is currently in use, though only 15.7 percent of it is arable land, and 84.2 percent is permanent pastureland.⁸⁹

Documented Trafficking Risk in Key Commodity Supply Chains

Gold

Gold Overview

Sudan produces gold via both artisanal and commercial mining, with artisanal mining making up approximately 85 percent of gold production since 2010.⁹⁰ The artisanal mining sector is highly unregulated, both in terms of environmental and social protections. The Ministry of Energy and Mining does not prohibit the use of harmful chemicals, leading government-owned and private



mines to use cyanide in gold extraction.⁹¹ Mining operations reportedly dump toxins including mercury and cyanide into rivers, which has led to increased cancer rates. Sudan's government inconsistently enforces supply chain due diligence in the gold sector.

After the secession of South Sudan, the CLTG doubled their efforts to recover lost GDP and exports by expanding the mining sector, though only 20 percent of the land is utilized for gold.⁹² The United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Russia are significant trade partners in the Sudanese gold sector.⁹³

The majority of gold from Sudan is exported to UAE both via officially recorded exports and smuggled gold. It is estimated that between 2010 and 2014, 105,822 pounds of gold were smuggled into the UAE from Darfur, amounting to USD \$123 million gained by armed groups.⁹⁴

In 2022, Russia increased gold smuggling from Sudan to support its war effort in Ukraine. From February to July in 2022, there were at least 16 reported gold smuggling flights to Russia from Sudan.⁹⁵ Journalists have suggested that there is collusion between Russia and Sudan's new military government to enable "billions of dollars in gold to bypass the Sudanese state."⁹⁶ *Africa News* reported that Yevgeny Prigozhin is the primary oligarch at the center of this gold smuggling scheme, apparently using the paramilitary group Wagner, and U.S.-sanctioned company Meroe Gold to extract gold, and supply weapons.⁹⁷

Documented TIP Risk in Gold

The U.S. Department of State reports that domestic and foreign victims, as well as homeless children, are exploited by human traffickers. In addition, trafficking is a reported risk in informal mining operators for gold mining.⁹⁸ In 2018, Interpol rescued nearly 94 human trafficking victims, 84 of which were minors, from illegal gold mines. It was believed these victims were taken as they were in transit to another country, traveling through Sudan.⁹⁹ The Bureau of International Labor Affairs (ILAB) reported that gold in Sudan is a commodity that exploits child labor.¹⁰⁰ The U.S. Department of State identifies River Nile, Blue Nile, West Darfur, and other Northern states as the largest areas where child labor is reported in gold.¹⁰¹ The ILO reported the worst forms of child labor in the gold sector. UNICEF additionally received reports of children as young as 10 working in dangerous, confined spaces, carrying heavy loads, with high risk of exposure to deadly mercury.¹⁰²





Gift of the United States Government

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Endnotes

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