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Research

# South Sudan: Full Country Dossier

February 2023



**OpenDoors**

Serving persecuted **Christians** worldwide

Open Doors International / World Watch Research

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# Introduction

## World Watch List 2023

Rank	Country	Private life	Family life	Community life	National life	Church life	Violence	Total Score WWL 2023	Total Score WWL 2022	Total Score WWL 2021	Total Score WWL 2020	Total Score WWL 2019
1	North Korea	16.7	16.7	16.7	16.7	16.7	14.4	98	96	94	94	94
2	Somalia	16.5	16.7	16.6	16.6	16.6	8.7	92	91	92	92	91
3	Yemen	16.7	16.7	16.7	16.7	16.7	5.9	89	88	87	85	86
4	Eritrea	14.6	14.9	15.5	15.9	15.7	12.2	89	88	88	87	86
5	Libya	15.6	15.5	15.9	16.1	16.3	9.1	88	91	92	90	87
6	Nigeria	13.8	13.8	14.6	14.8	14.4	16.7	88	87	85	80	80
7	Pakistan	13.4	13.8	14.8	14.8	12.9	16.7	86	87	88	88	87
8	Iran	14.5	14.6	13.8	15.8	16.5	10.7	86	85	86	85	85
9	Afghanistan	15.4	15.7	15.4	16.1	16.6	4.6	84	98	94	93	94
10	Sudan	14.1	14.2	14.9	14.9	15.5	9.4	83	79	79	85	87
11	India	12.3	13.1	13.0	14.8	13.3	15.7	82	82	83	83	83
12	Syria	13.2	14.1	13.6	14.1	14.1	11.3	80	78	81	82	82
13	Saudi Arabia	15.2	15.3	14.9	15.8	16.7	2.4	80	81	78	79	77
14	Myanmar	12.5	11.6	13.9	13.9	12.9	15.4	80	79	74	73	71
15	Maldives	15.4	15.3	13.8	16.0	16.4	0.2	77	77	77	78	78
16	China	12.9	10.0	12.7	14.5	15.6	11.1	77	76	74	70	65
17	Mali	11.1	10.1	14.7	10.3	15.1	15.0	76	70	67	66	68
18	Iraq	14.1	14.6	14.0	14.8	13.9	4.6	76	78	82	76	79
19	Algeria	14.1	14.1	11.5	13.7	15.1	4.8	73	71	70	73	70
20	Mauritania	14.5	14.2	13.3	14.1	14.2	1.3	72	70	71	68	67
21	Uzbekistan	14.9	12.7	13.9	12.7	15.6	1.5	71	71	71	73	74
22	Colombia	11.8	8.9	13.1	11.3	10.4	15.4	71	68	67	62	58
23	Burkina Faso	9.4	9.7	12.5	9.6	13.8	15.6	71	68	67	66	48
24	CAR	10.3	8.6	13.9	9.6	12.2	15.6	70	68	66	68	70
25	Vietnam	11.8	9.6	12.8	14.6	14.4	6.9	70	71	72	72	70
26	Turkmenistan	14.5	11.3	13.6	14.1	15.7	0.6	70	69	70	70	69
27	Cuba	13.1	8.3	13.1	13.2	14.9	7.0	70	66	62	52	49
28	Niger	9.4	9.5	14.5	7.7	13.1	15.4	70	68	62	60	52
29	Morocco	13.2	13.8	10.9	12.2	14.5	4.8	69	69	67	66	63
30	Bangladesh	12.6	10.7	12.8	11.3	10.6	10.7	69	68	67	63	58
31	Laos	11.7	10.2	13.3	14.2	14.0	5.0	68	69	71	72	71
32	Mozambique	9.3	8.5	13.9	8.4	12.5	15.6	68	65	63	43	43
33	Indonesia	11.3	12.0	11.6	11.1	9.2	12.8	68	68	63	60	65
34	Qatar	14.2	14.1	10.5	13.2	14.4	1.5	68	74	67	66	62
35	Egypt	12.7	13.5	11.6	12.1	10.8	7.0	68	71	75	76	76
36	Tunisia	12.0	12.8	10.4	12.0	13.5	6.5	67	66	67	64	63
37	DRC	8.0	7.9	12.6	9.7	13.0	15.6	67	66	64	56	55
38	Mexico	10.3	8.3	12.5	11.0	10.5	13.9	67	65	64	60	61
39	Ethiopia	9.9	10.3	13.1	10.4	12.1	10.6	66	66	65	63	65
40	Bhutan	13.2	12.3	11.6	13.9	14.2	1.1	66	67	64	61	64
41	Turkey	12.8	11.5	11.8	13.0	11.5	5.7	66	65	69	63	66
42	Comoros	12.7	14.0	11.2	12.4	14.2	1.5	66	63	62	57	56
43	Malaysia	12.8	14.3	11.4	12.2	11.1	3.9	66	63	63	62	60
44	Tajikistan	13.8	12.2	12.3	12.8	13.4	1.1	66	65	66	65	65
45	Cameroon	8.8	7.6	12.6	7.2	13.1	15.9	65	65	64	60	54
46	Brunei	14.8	14.6	10.1	10.9	14.4	0.4	65	64	64	63	63
47	Oman	14.0	14.1	10.3	13.3	12.9	0.6	65	66	63	62	59
48	Kazakhstan	13.2	11.6	11.9	12.7	14.2	1.1	65	64	64	64	63
49	Jordan	13.0	14.0	10.5	12.3	12.7	2.0	65	66	64	64	65
50	Nicaragua	10.8	5.9	11.9	12.8	13.6	9.4	65	56	51	41	41

Rank	Country	Private life	Family life	Community life	National life	Church life	Violence	Total Score WWL 2023	Total Score WWL 2022	Total Score WWL 2021	Total Score WWL 2020	Total Score WWL 2019
51	Kenya	10.3	9.2	11.4	8.0	11.5	13.3	64	63	62	61	61
52	Kuwait	13.5	13.7	9.8	12.3	13.1	1.1	64	64	63	62	60
53	Tanzania	9.3	10.8	10.3	8.6	8.7	15.6	63	61	58	55	52
54	UAE	13.4	13.4	9.9	11.2	12.8	1.1	62	62	62	60	58
55	Nepal	12.0	9.8	9.4	13.0	12.6	4.4	61	64	66	64	64
56	Djibouti	12.3	12.6	12.7	10.1	12.3	0.6	60	59	56	56	56
57	Palestinian Territories	13.0	13.3	9.7	10.3	12.0	2.0	60	59	58	60	57
58	Azerbaijan	13.2	10.0	9.5	12.0	13.6	0.6	59	60	56	57	57
59	Kyrgyzstan	12.9	10.2	11.0	10.4	12.0	2.0	59	58	58	57	56
60	Chad	11.6	8.2	10.2	10.2	10.3	7.6	58	55	53	56	48
61	Russian Federation	12.3	7.9	10.3	11.8	12.8	2.0	57	56	57	60	60
62	Sri Lanka	12.8	9.1	10.6	11.3	9.5	3.9	57	63	62	65	58
63	Rwanda	9.4	7.7	9.0	10.4	11.7	8.9	57	50	42	42	41
64	Venezuela	6.0	4.6	11.7	10.2	11.4	11.7	56	51	39	42	41
65	Burundi	7.6	7.8	9.4	9.8	9.7	11.1	55	52	48	48	43
66	Bahrain	12.7	13.3	8.7	10.7	8.8	0.9	55	57	56	55	55
67	Honduras	7.1	5.0	11.9	7.6	9.8	11.9	53	48	46	39	38
68	Angola	6.8	6.7	8.1	11.5	11.4	7.2	52	51	46	43	42
69	Uganda	8.1	5.0	7.4	6.7	9.2	14.8	51	48	47	48	47
70	Togo	9.2	6.7	9.3	7.1	11.0	5.4	49	44	43	41	42
71	Guinea	10.3	7.5	8.3	8.3	10.5	3.0	48	43	47	45	46
72	South Sudan	5.7	4.4	7.0	6.3	7.6	15.0	46	43	43	44	44
73	El Salvador	7.7	4.2	10.6	7.4	9.1	6.7	46	45	42	38	30
74	Ivory Coast	12.0	6.5	8.7	5.9	8.0	3.3	44	42	42	42	43
75	Gambia	8.3	8.2	8.9	8.8	8.9	1.1	44	44	43	43	43
76	Belarus	9.5	3.8	4.8	9.4	12.1	3.3	43	33	30	28	35

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## Sources and definitions

- This country report is a collation of data and analysis based around Open Doors World Watch List (WWL) and includes statistical information on world religions, Christian denominations and people groups prepared by the World Christian Database (WCD).
- Highlighted links in the text can be found written out in full at the conclusion of each main section under the heading “External links”. In order to reduce the length of these reference sections, a table containing links to regularly used sources can be found at the beginning of the “Keys to Understanding” chapter under the heading “Links for general background information”. Where one of these sources has been quoted in the dossier text, a quote reference is supplied as indicated in the second column of the table.
- The WWL 2023 reporting period was 1 October 2021 - 30 September 2022.
- The definition of persecution used in WWL analysis is: “Any hostility experienced as a result of one’s identification with Christ. This can include hostile attitudes, words and actions towards Christians”. This broad definition includes (but is not limited to) restrictions, pressure, discrimination, opposition, disinformation, injustice, intimidation, mistreatment, marginalization, oppression, intolerance, infringement, violation, ostracism, hostilities, harassment, abuse, violence, ethnic cleansing and genocide.
- The latest update of WWL Methodology including appendices can be found on the [World Watch List Documentation](#) page of the Open Doors Analytical website (password: freedom).

# WWL 2023 Situation in brief / South Sudan

## Brief country details

South Sudan: Population (UN estimate for 2022)	Christians	Chr%
11,619,000	7,082,000	61.0

Data source: Johnson T M and Zurlo G A, eds, World Christian Database (Leiden/Boston: Brill, accessed April 2022)

## Map of country



South Sudan: World Watch List	Points	WWL Rank
WWL 2023	46	72
WWL 2022	43	74
WWL 2021	43	69
WWL 2020	44	65
WWL 2019	44	64

Ranks are shown above whenever the country scored 41 points or more in the WWL 2019-2023 reporting periods

## Dominant persecution engines and drivers

South Sudan: Main Persecution engines	Main drivers
Organized corruption and crime	Revolutionaries or paramilitary groups, Government officials, Organized crime cartels or networks
Clan oppression	Revolutionaries or paramilitary groups, Ethnic group leaders, One's own (extended) family
Dictatorial paranoia	Government officials

*Engines and Drivers are listed in order of strength. Only Very strong / Strong / Medium are shown here.*

### Brief description of the persecution situation

The ongoing fighting (despite the February 2020 peace agreement) has left the country devastated and prone to organized banditry and violence between armed groups. The persecution of Christians by state authorities, rebel groups and tribal leaders have become a common occurrence. Churches have been targeted by armed groups for looting. Speaking out against corruption and injustice can invite reprisals. There is also widespread fear among Christians due to the general climate of impunity.

### Specific examples of violations of rights in the reporting period

- [February 2022](#): A church elder was killed by the Tuj Ajakjch tribe in Twic county of South Sudan bordering Abyei region of Sudan (CSW, 23 February 2022).
- Church property was destroyed in an attack by Tuj Ajakjch tribe.
- Over 100 Christians were forced to flee their homes.

### Specific examples of positive developments

The February 2020 peace agreement that ended the civil war has more or less been kept in place.

### External Links - Situation in brief

- Specific examples of violations of rights in the reporting period: February 2022 - <https://www.csw.org.uk/2022/02/23/press/5586/article.htm>

# WWL 2023: Keys to understanding / South Sudan

## Links for general background information

Name	Quote Reference	Link	Last accessed on
Amnesty International 2021/22 country report – covering 154 countries	AI country report 2021/22 – pp.338-341	<a href="https://www.amnesty.org/en/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/POL1048702022ENGLISH.pdf">https://www.amnesty.org/en/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/POL1048702022ENGLISH.pdf</a>	14 September 2022
BBC News country profile	BBC country profile	<a href="https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-14069082">https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-14069082</a>	14 September 2022
Bertelsmann Transformation Index country report 2022 – covering 137 countries	BTI report 2022	<a href="https://bti-project.org/en/reports/country-dashboard/SSD">https://bti-project.org/en/reports/country-dashboard/SSD</a>	14 September 2022
CIA World Factbook	CIA Factbook	<a href="https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/south-sudan/">https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/south-sudan/</a>	14 September 2022
Crisis24 country report (Garda World) – covering 193 countries	Crisis24 country report	<a href="https://crisis24.garda.com/insights-intelligence/intelligence/country-reports/south-sudan">https://crisis24.garda.com/insights-intelligence/intelligence/country-reports/south-sudan</a>	14 September 2022
Economist Intelligence Unit Democracy Index 2021 – covering 167 countries (South Sudan not included)	EIU 2021	<a href="https://pages.eiu.com/rs/753-RIQ-438/images/eiu-democracy-index-2021.pdf">https://pages.eiu.com/rs/753-RIQ-438/images/eiu-democracy-index-2021.pdf</a>	14 September 2022
FFP's Fragile States Index 2022 – covering 179 countries	FSI 2022	<a href="https://fragilestatesindex.org/country-data/">https://fragilestatesindex.org/country-data/</a>	14 September 2022
Freedom House's 2022 Democracy index – covering 29 countries (South Sudan not included)	Democracy Index 2022	<a href="https://freedomhouse.org/countries/nations-transit/scores">https://freedomhouse.org/countries/nations-transit/scores</a>	
Freedom House's 2022 Global Freedom index – covering 210 countries	Global Freedom Index 2022	<a href="https://freedomhouse.org/country/south-sudan/freedom-world/2022">https://freedomhouse.org/country/south-sudan/freedom-world/2022</a>	14 September 2022
Freedom House's Freedom on the Net 2022 report – covering 70 countries (South Sudan not included)	Freedom on the Net 2022	<a href="https://freedomhouse.org/countries/freedom-net/scores">https://freedomhouse.org/countries/freedom-net/scores</a>	
Human Rights Watch World Report 2022 (country chapter) – covering 100+ countries	HRW 2022 country chapter	<a href="https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2022/country-chapters/south-sudan">https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2022/country-chapters/south-sudan</a>	14 September 2022
Internet World Stats 2022	IWS 2022	<a href="https://www.internetworldstats.com/africa.htm#ss">https://www.internetworldstats.com/africa.htm#ss</a>	14 September 2022
RSF's 2022 World Press Freedom Index – covering 180 countries	World Press Freedom 2022	<a href="https://rsf.org/en/south-sudan">https://rsf.org/en/south-sudan</a>	14 September 2022
Transparency International's 2021 Corruption Perceptions Index – covering 180 countries	CPI 2021	<a href="https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2021/index/ssd">https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2021/index/ssd</a>	14 September 2022
UNDP's Global Human Development Indicators (country profile) – covering 189 countries	HDI profile	<a href="https://hdr.undp.org/data-center/specific-country-data#/countries/SSD">https://hdr.undp.org/data-center/specific-country-data#/countries/SSD</a>	14 September 2022
US State Department's 2021 International Religious Freedom (country profile)	IRFR 2021	<a href="https://www.state.gov/reports/2021-report-on-international-religious-freedom/south-sudan/">https://www.state.gov/reports/2021-report-on-international-religious-freedom/south-sudan/</a>	14 September 2022
USCIRF 2022 country reports – covering 15 CPC / 12 SWL (South Sudan not included)	USCIRF 2022	<a href="https://www.uscifr.gov/countries">https://www.uscifr.gov/countries</a>	
World Bank country overview – covering 178 countries	World Bank overview 2022	<a href="https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/southsudan/overview">https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/southsudan/overview</a>	14 September 2022
World Bank country profile data – covering 222 countries	World Bank country profile (2020 data)	<a href="https://data.worldbank.org/country/south-sudan?view=chart">https://data.worldbank.org/country/south-sudan?view=chart</a>	14 September 2022
World Bank Macro Poverty Outlook 2022 – covering 147 countries (divided per region)	Macro Poverty Outlook 2022 - Sub-Saharan Africa pp.84-85	<a href="https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/bae48ff2f2fc5a869546775b3f010735-0500062021/related/mpo-ssa.pdf">https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/bae48ff2f2fc5a869546775b3f010735-0500062021/related/mpo-ssa.pdf</a>	14 September 2022

## Recent history

The Republic of South Sudan is a land-locked country in east-central Africa that is part of the United Nations sub-region of Eastern Africa. Its current capital is Juba, which is also its largest city, but there are plans to move it to the more centrally located Ramciel in the future. South Sudan is bordered by Ethiopia to the east, Kenya to the southeast, Uganda to the south, the Democratic Republic of the Congo to the southwest, the Central African Republic to the west and the Republic of Sudan to the north. It includes the vast swamp region of the Sudd, formed by the White Nile and known locally as the Bahr al-Jabal.

South Sudan became an independent state on 9 July 2011, following a referendum that passed with 98.83% of the vote. It is a United Nations member state, a member state of the African Union, and a member state of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development. In July 2012, South Sudan signed the Geneva Conventions.

South Sudan has an estimated population of under 12 million and the economy is predominantly rural, relying chiefly on subsistence farming. Around 2005, the economy began a transition from this rural dominance, and urban areas within South Sudan have seen extensive development. However, the region is still suffering from the effects of two long-lasting civil wars: The First Sudanese Civil War (1955-1972) in which the Sudanese government fought the Anyanya rebel army; the Second Sudanese Civil War (1985-2005) during which the Sudanese government fought the Sudan People's Liberation Army/Movement (SPLA/M). Unlike the civil strife of the 1960s and 1970s, the insurgency in the 1980s and the 1990s took on a more religiously confrontational character. Due to the many years of war, the country suffered serious neglect,



a lack of infrastructural development, and major destruction and displacement.

Right after independence, the conflict between the two independence leaders, President Salva Kiir and Vice-President Riek Machar, led to the outbreak of civil war in 2013. The two leaders were supported by the two major ethnic groups in the country, the Dinka and Nuer respectively. This South Sudan civil war has led to a major socio-economic disaster and to the deaths of nearly 40,000 people. On [12 September 2018](#), the two factions signed an agreement to end the civil war (BBC News, 13 September 2018). However, there are multiple unresolved issues following the accord and there were some areas in the country where fighting continued. Many other agreements were signed (see below: *Political and legal landscape*) but were not honored by the parties involved. Eventually, in [February 2020](#), a unity government was formed and an end to the civil war (2013-2019) was declared (Lemon Wire, 22 February 2020). It was hoped this would end all hostilities between the Nuer and Dinka.

The agreement that led to the formation of the unity government in February 2020 brought high hopes for peace both in the country and in the international community. However, certain armed groups were left out of the peace agreement which then led to the formation of the unity government. In April 2021, [UN experts](#) warned: “[P]olitical, military and ethnic divisions in South Sudan are widening, leading to multiple violent incidents between the main signatories to last year’s cease-fire, the possibility of renewed war, and nearly 100,000 people facing ‘famine-like conditions’” (AP News, 27 April 2021).

Intra-group fighting and growing intergroup violence threatened to derail the peace agreement, even as South Sudan celebrated 10 years of independence with [President Salva Kiir pledging not to return the country to war](#) (Al-Jazeera, 9 July 2021). In early August 2021, rival military leaders announced that South Sudan’s Vice President Riek Machar, who played a major role in pushing his partner President Salva Kiir to the 2018 peace deal, was deposed as head of his party and its armed forces, a claim he later disputed by claiming that [‘peace-spoilers’ had been removed from his party](#) (Al-Jazeera, 5 August 2021). Unfortunately, this was followed a few days later by deadly fighting between rival factions of Vice President Riek Machar’s SPLA-IO, forcing regional African trade body IGAD [to urge](#) the two rival military factions to enter into dialogue to ease the tension (Al-Jazeera, 10 August 2021).

In 2022, after weeks of escalating conflict, President Kiir and Vice President Machar agreed to resume talks about integrating their rival forces under a unified command as part of implementation of the 2018 peace deal. In mid-April 2022, this resulted in President Kiir ordering military officers loyal to Vice President Machar to be [officially integrated into a unified command of the army](#), with the announcement touted as being a central pillar of the peace process (Al-Jazeera, 13 April 2022).

## Political and legal landscape

Under the [2011 Transitional Constitution](#), South Sudan is a republic with executive power vested in the president and vice president, who was appointed by the president (Britannica, accessed 14 September 2022). Hence, in July 2011, Salva Kiir Mayardit became president of the new independent state of South Sudan. However, seven years of civil war erupted when President Kiir sacked his cabinet and accused Vice President Riek Machar of attempting a failed coup. In

September 2018, a power-sharing agreement was signed by President Kiir and opposition groups in a bid to end the brutal conflict. As a first step, the accord called for all armed groups to withdraw from all cities and civilian areas such as schools and refugee camps in the run-up to the country entering into a three-year-long political transition.

However, the [UN Human Rights Council](#) (UNHRC, 21 January 2020) expressed its 'grave concern' about the sustained lack of political will to end the fighting in the country and reported:

- "Beyond the fragile peace at the national level, localized and often ethnically-based tensions intensified, leading to an increase of nearly 200 percent in the number of civilian casualties over 2018. Between late February and May 2019, the United Nations Mission in South Sudan recorded some 531 deaths and 317 injuries in 152 incidents of localized violence. Of grave concern, brutal attacks, often premised on cattle raiding, involved members of the State apparatus or the Sudan People's Liberation Army in Opposition (pro-Riek Machar) (SPLA-IO (RM)) and drove displacement at alarming rates, including in Western Bahr el Ghazal, Unity and Jonglei States."

This meant that even if the peace treaty was honored, there were issues of human rights abuses and atrocities that still had to be resolved.

In February 2020, the rival leaders [succeeded](#) in forming a coalition government: A day after President Salva Kiir dissolved the previous government, opposition leader Riek Machar was sworn in as his deputy (Lemon Wire, 22 February 2020). As a first step towards durable peace and a transition to civil rule, on 22 February 2020, the Revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity (R-TGoNU) was formed in accordance with the 2018 "Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan" ([R-ARCSS](#), 12 September 2018), marking the start of a 36-month transitional period. So far, the parties have made progress in certain key areas such as the number of states and boundaries in South Sudan, and the unification of the armed forces.

In October 2021, a UN-appointed independent body of experts reported that prevention of dissent by ['overzealous' security forces](#) was causing dramatic erosion of civic space and undermined South Sudan peace (UN News, 20 October 2021). In February 2022, UN-appointed fact-finding human rights experts revealed [increasing political violence](#) and polarization between communities (UN News, 11 February 2022), with widespread outbreaks of fighting between the SPLA-IO and armed gangs of youths. In 2022, even a [UN convoy carrying food and humanitarian assistance](#) was attacked in an ambush by gunmen (UN News, 1 March 2022). Human rights organizations also reported a [surge in attack against aid workers](#) in South Sudan (Human Rights Watch, 4 March 2022). Violence against civilians remains unacceptably high, even though it [has decreased in comparison to previous years](#) (UN News, 17 February 2022).

## Religious landscape

South Sudan: Religious context	Number of adherents	%
Christians	7,082,000	61.0
Muslim	774,000	6.7
Hindu	250	0.0
Buddhist	300	0.0
Ethno-religionist	3,703,000	31.9
Jewish	0	0.0
Bahai	810	0.0
Atheist	5,500	0.0
Agnostic	51,500	0.4
Other	600	0.0
<i>OTHER includes Chinese folk, New religionist, Sikh, Spiritist, Taoist, Confucianist, Jain, Shintoist, Zoroastrian.</i>		

Data source: Johnson T M and Zurlo G A, eds, *World Christian Database* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, accessed April 2022)

When South Sudan gained independence from Sudan in 2011, the demography changed from being a Muslim-majority country (when it was part of Sudan) to being a Christian-majority one. A substantial part of the population in isolated areas adheres to Traditional African religions (ATR, over 31% of the population) or combines Christian and indigenous practices. Although Christians have become a majority and no longer face the persecution they experienced under a conservative Islamic Sudanese government, their socio-economic conditions have not significantly improved to date.

Christianity is most prevalent among the peoples of Al Istiwai state, namely the Madi, Moru, Azande and Bari.

According to the US State Department (IRFR 2021):

- "The transitional constitution stipulates the separation of religion and state. It prohibits religious discrimination, even if the President declares a state of emergency. It states that all religions are to be treated equally and that religion should not be used for divisive purposes."

According to Freedom House's Global Freedom Index 2022 (D2):

- "The interim constitution guarantees religious freedom, but houses of worship - used as places of refuge for civilians - have been attacked by gunmen seeking members of rival ethnic groups."

## Economic landscape

The Republic of South Sudan became the world's newest nation and Africa's 55th country on 9 July 2011. The renewed conflicts in December 2013 and July 2016 undermined the development gains achieved since independence and worsened the humanitarian situation. Close to 400,000 people have been killed since 2013, more than 4.2 million people have been displaced both internally and to neighboring countries, and about 5.3 million (nearly half the population) still face severe food insecurity. Much of the population is dependent on subsistence agriculture and humanitarian assistance. Property rights are insecure and price signals are weak because markets are not well-organized.

According to World Bank's 2022 Macro Poverty Outlook for Sub-Saharan Africa (pp. 84-85):

- **Economic growth:** “South Sudan faced significant headwinds in FY2020/21, with the pandemic, floods, and violence flare-ups affecting economic activities. Consequently, the economy is estimated to have contracted by 5.1 percent in FY2020/21. Oil production declined by 0.3 percent, as floods affected production and the COVID-19 pandemic delayed new investments to replace exhausted wells. In the agriculture sector, cereal production declined by 4 percent as flooding precipitated estimated losses of 38,000 tons of cereals and 800,000 livestock according to FAO estimates. These events had detrimental effects on household wellbeing as flooding was concentrated in areas that were already facing high levels of food insecurity.”
- **Economic projection:** “South Sudan's economy is projected to contract by 0.8 percent despite higher oil prices and improving macroeconomic conditions in FY2021/22. These developments reflect falling oil production, which is projected to decline by 7.2 percent in FY2021/22, and the impact of climate shocks on agriculture.”
- **Total public debt:** South Sudan remains at a high risk of debt distress for both external and overall public debt, which was 57.6% at the end of 2021 and estimated at 53.7% by the end of 2022.
- **Inflation:** “Inflation averaged 43 percent in FY2020/2021 (compared to 33 percent in FY2019/ 2020) but was on a declining path in the first half of FY2021/2022. According to official CPI data, the 12-month inflation rate for Juba declined to 1.6 percent in December 2021, from a peak of 93.8 percent in January 2021. This brings some degree of relief to households amid stalled disposable incomes.” “High frequency data indicate that food prices started increasing in February 2022. Nevertheless, inflation is expected to decline gradually over the medium term and will benefit from improved fiscal and monetary discipline, exchange rate market liberalization, and deepening public financial management reforms.”
- **Poverty:** Given the pandemic, floods, and violence flare-ups affecting economic activities and the economy contracting in FY2020/21, poverty was projected to have increased by 2.3 percentage points. Poverty is expected to remain at 80 percent in the coming years.
- **Impact of COVID-19:** “South Sudan's economy is set to contract by 3.4 percent in FY2020/21 primarily due to a decline in oil production and slower recovery of the non-oil economy. The COVID-19 pandemic has delayed new investments in the oil sector, with oil production expected to decline by 5.8 percent to 58.4 million barrels in FY2020/21. The non-oil economy is expected to contract by 1.9 percent owing to a combination of conflict and

COVID-19, with new lockdown measures imposed in early February 2021. A gradual recovery is expected in the near term, assuming a rebound in the global economy and domestic containment of the pandemic.”

According to the World Bank's country overview:

- The country "faces the risk of the gains from previous years being reversed, with increasing incidents of subnational violence in 2021 and early 2022, flooding and the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbating an already dire situation. Some two-thirds of South Sudan's population, 8.9 million people, is estimated to be in need of humanitarian assistance in 2022, an increase of 600,000 since 2021."
- "Due to lower oil exports, government revenues, and disrupted agricultural production, the economy contracted by an estimated 5.4 percent in FY2020/21, while 4 in 5 individuals remain under the international poverty line. In the agriculture sector, flooding precipitated estimated losses of 38,000 tons of cereals (3.6% of 2021 gross cereal production) and 800,000 livestock according to FAO estimates."

According to [World Bank's Press Release](#) on 15 June 2022:

- **Exports:** "Oil and agriculture are the most important sectors of South Sudan's economy, with oil contributing to 90 percent of revenue and almost all exports, while agriculture remains the primary source of livelihood for more than four in five households."

## Social and cultural landscape

According to the CIA Factbook and UNDP's Human Development Indicators (HDI profile):

- **Main ethnic groups:** Dinka (Jieng) 35.8%, Nuer (Naath) 15.6%, Shilluk (Chollo), Azande, Bari, Kakwa, Kuku, Murle, Mandari, Didinga, Ndogo, Bviri, Lndi, Anuak, Bongo, Lango, Dungotona, Acholi, Baka, Fertit (2011 est.)
- **Main languages:** English (official), Arabic (includes Juba and Sudanese variants), regional languages include Dinka, Nuer, Bari, Zande, Shiluk
- **Median age:** 18.6 years (2020 est.)
- **Urban population:** 20.8.% (2022 est.)
- **Expected years of schooling:** 5.3 years
- **Literacy rate, adult (ages 15 and older):** 34.5%
- **Employment to population ratio (ages 15 and older):** 63.5%
- **Unemployment, total:** 12.2% of labor force
- **Unemployment, youth (ages 15-24):** 18.8%
- **Human Development Index (HDI) score and ranking:** South Sudan ranked 185th out of 189 countries with a human development value of 0.433
- **Life expectancy at birth:** 59.6 years (2022 est.)
- **Gender Development Index (GDI):** 0.842
- **Gender Inequality Index (GII):** No data

According to the World Bank country overview i) South Sudan; ii) Sudan:

- **Refugees/IDPs:**

i) "South Sudan remains in a serious humanitarian crisis. Some two-thirds of South Sudan's population, 8.9 million people, are estimated to be in need of humanitarian assistance in 2022, an increase of 600,000 since 2021. Extreme levels of acute food insecurity persist across the country and an estimated 8.3 million people, including refugees, are expected to experience severe food insecurity in the coming lean season. Almost 4 million people remain displaced by the humanitarian crisis, with nearly 1.6 million people displaced internally and some 2.3 million refugees in six neighboring countries. Women and children continue to be the most affected. The increase in needs is largely driven by the rising food insecurity, the triple shock of sub-national violence, a second consecutive year of major flooding, and the impacts of COVID-19, deepening an already dire humanitarian crisis. ... A significant proportion of IDPs do not have adequate access to safe water and sanitation infrastructure and healthcare services, with a high level of food insecurity."

ii) "The high incidence of conflict, particularly past fighting that led to South Sudan's secession has led to a large population of refugees and internally displaced persons. Sudan is now a source, destination and transit country for irregular migration, including refugees and asylum-seekers using the East African North-bound migratory route through Libya to Europe. The country hosts an estimated 800 thousand South Sudanese refugees and 330 thousand refugees and asylum seekers from Eritrea, Syria, Ethiopia, CAR, Chad, and Yemen."

In general, the new nation has been facing multiple challenges, all exacerbated by the 2013-2019 civil war. According to the CIA Factbook:

- Educational attainment is extremely poor due to the lack of schools, qualified teachers and materials.
- Teachers and students are also struggling with the switch from Arabic to English as the language of instruction.
- Many adults missed out on schooling because of warfare and displacement.

According to Transparency International's 2021 Corruption Perceptions Index, South Sudan ranked as the most corrupt country in the world:

- "[L]eaders who are accused of corruption are not arrested, charged or prosecuted. At the higher levels, the UN reported that millions of dollars have continued to be siphoned out of the country by the elites. President Salva Kiir acknowledged that the country is not getting enough from the non-oil revenue following the decline in oil production and sales. Some civil servants, including security officers, have admitted that they demand bribes from the public due to delayed salary payment and the economic meltdown. The common forms of corruption in the security sector include freeing of suspects in exchange for money, conspiring with criminals and organized crime gangs in the trafficking of drugs, humans and weapons. A report conducted by the Sentry in 2019

showed top government officials as profiteers in the South Sudan conflict." ([Eye Radio, 26 January 2022](#))

## Technological landscape

South Sudan has little infrastructure - about 10,000 kilometers of roads, but just 2% of them paved. Electricity is produced mostly by costly diesel generators, with less than 2% of the population having access to electricity. Indoor plumbing and potable water are scarce. About 90% of consumed goods, capital, and services are imported from neighboring countries (mainly Uganda, Kenya and Sudan).

According to Internet World Stats (IWS 2022):

- **Internet usage:** 7.9% of the population – survey date: December 2021 (Most recent survey available at time of writing.)
- **Facebook usage:** 4.7% of the population – survey date: January 2022

According to the World Bank country profile:

- **Mobile phone subscriptions:** 12 per 100 people

According to [BuddeComm Research](#) (Publication date: February 2023):

- "South Sudan has one of the lowest mobile penetration rates in Africa. Growth in the sector in coming years is premised on a resolution to the political crisis and recovery of the country's economy. The virtually untapped Internet and broadband market also depends to a large extent on the country gaining access to international fiber optic cables and on a national backbone network being in place. Sophisticated infrastructure solutions are needed to reach 80% of the population that live outside of the main urban centers. With a negligible rate of bank account ownership, mobile payment and banking solutions also have a strong potential once a reliable mobile infrastructure is built."
- "Some improvement has followed from the cable link completed by Liquid Telecom in February 2020 which connects Juba directly to the company's submarine landing station at Mombasa. The cable was South Sudan's first direct international fiber link, and has helped drive down the price of retail internet services for residential and business customers. A second cable linking to the border with Kenya was completed in December 2021."

According to RSF's World Press Freedom Index 2022:

- "Radio is the most popular media in South Sudan, with more than 40 radio stations operating in the country's 10 states. The main ones – *Miara*, *Eye Radio*, *Catholic Radio Network* face intimidation from the authorities and censorship. There are two state-owned television networks, the national *South Sudan Broadcasting Corporation* and the regional *EBC*, and six newspapers, four published in English and two in Arabic. Only two of the English-language newspapers – *No. 1 Citizen* and *City Review* – are free of government influence."



- "Most political leaders impose their agenda on the media, exerting great pressure. National television and radio suffer greatly from a lack of independence. They face threats and sanctions if their programs don't adhere to the government line. However, since the Media Authority of South Sudan, the country's regulatory agency, was established in 2017, media shut-downs are less frequent. It is common for agents of the National Security Service (NSS) to intervene directly in newsrooms or printing plants to censor specific content."

## Security situation

According to the Crisis 24 country report:

- "Defections since 2016 have weakened the SPLM-IO, leaving it unlikely to initiate all-out armed conflict with the army. If it did, fighting in the capital, Juba, would probably only last for several days, with oil exports probably disrupted only briefly. However, the SPLM-IO sporadically fights with forces loyal to Simon Gatwech Dual and Johnson Olony in Upper Nile state using small arms, RPGs, and, albeit less often, tanks. The National Salvation Front periodically fights against government troops and SPLM-IO fighters in the Equatoria regions. The transitional period is due to end in February 2023, when elections are to be held, although this deadline is unlikely to be met. As that date approaches, skirmishes will probably become more frequent, but a return to civil war is unlikely."
- "The long route from northern Uganda that hauliers travel to transport imports to South Sudan means that consumer goods are expensive. Higher export taxes on food products in Uganda introduced in May 2022 will increase food prices further, encouraging frequent violent robbery of road cargo and aid convoys."

The US State Department's [South Sudan Travel Advisory](#) updated on 29 August 2022, states:

- "Violent crime, such as carjackings, shootings, ambushes, assaults, robberies, and kidnappings is common throughout South Sudan, including Juba. Foreign nationals have been the victims of rape, sexual assault, armed robberies, and other violent crimes."
- "Armed conflict is ongoing and includes fighting between various political and ethnic groups. Weapons are readily available to the population. In addition, cattle raids occur throughout the country and often lead to violence."

"Reporting in South Sudan without the proper documentation from the South Sudanese Media Authority is considered illegal, and any journalistic work there is very dangerous. Journalists regularly report being harassed in South Sudan, and many have been killed while covering the conflict."

According to a report by UN-appointed rights experts, the widespread rape and sexual violence perpetrated on women and girls by all armed groups across the country amounted to a '[hellish existence](#)' for the victims (UN News, 21 March 2022).

Further examples:



- **May 2021:** 12 people were killed by suspected armed Misseriya pastoralists in Dunguop village East of Abyei town. Seven other people were also wounded in the attack (Eye Radio, 17 May 2021). A statement issued by the Episcopal Church of South Sudan points out that Abyei is located in 'an area that [experiences Islamic encroachments](#) followed by harassment, intimidation and frequent attacks carried out by Arab Islamic militias' (ENS, 18 May 2021).
- **August 2021:** "Following the killing of three persons, including two nuns, in August along the Juba-Nimule road, the South Sudan Catholic Bishops' Secretariat released a September 15 pastoral letter criticizing the government for its inability to guarantee law and order and for not fully implementing the 2018 peace agreement" (IRFR 2021).

Many aid workers have also been killed in the past months and years:

- **June 2021:** Two aid workers were ambushed as their convoy returned from delivering food relief in a village some 64 kilometers (40 miles) from Rumbek, in the conflict-prone Lakes State. They were working for the Italian charity Doctors with Africa CUAMM (VOA News, 8 June 2021).
- **July 2021:** Eight Red Cross staff members were injured when armed youths stormed the South Sudan Red Cross (SSRC) office in Torit (BBC News, 3 July 2021).

## Trends analysis

### 1) Disregard of human rights and prevalence of impunity continues

It has been a great challenge for the government to bring together over 60 often feuding tribes during an ongoing civil war based along ethnic lines. The situation has been made even more difficult by the dictatorial nature of the regime. Other factors that threaten the lives of all citizens in South Sudan, Christian and non-Christian alike, are the presence of drought and the impossibility of farming arable land in areas affected by fighting. This has resulted in a food crisis threatening almost half of the population of South Sudan.

In February 2020 a new coalition government was formed and a declaration was made that the civil war was now ended. This end to the conflict is expected to result in a much-needed improvement in the situation for Christians and their church activities. However, what the past 10 years since independence have shown is that impunity, anarchy and complete disregard of human rights have become a pattern. The formation of the unity government, even though it might signal the end of a full-blown civil war, may not result in the protection of human rights and accountability. This needs a profound change in the culture and will of the government which is unlikely to be achieved in the short-term.

### 2) Armed groups are posing threats

In the past years, various armed groups have launched attacks against civilians, especially humanitarian workers. Killings, rape, kidnapping and destruction of property has continued. These attacks are at times targeted at Christians. What makes it worse is that these armed groups are often unidentifiable. It is unlikely whether this situation can be changed in the short-term.

## External Links - Keys to understanding

- Recent history: 12 September 2018 - <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-45511352>
- Recent history: February 2020 - <https://lemonwire.com/2020/02/22/south-sudans-rivals-form-unity-government-meant-to-end-war/>
- Recent history: UN experts - <https://apnews.com/article/famine-sudan-africa-middle-east-south-sudan-9704f524380e58a623f76bc648d68bf7>
- Recent history: President Salva Kiir pledging not to return the country to war - <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/7/9/kiir-pledges-peace-as-south-sudan-marks-decade-of-independence>
- Recent history: 'peace-spoilers' had been removed from his party - <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/8/5/south-sudans-machar-says-peace-spoilers-backed-his-removal-as>
- Recent history: to urge - <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/8/10/regional-states-urge-dialogue-to-ease-south-sudan-tensions>
- Recent history: officially integrated into a unified command of the army - <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/4/13/south-sudan-president-kiir-integrates-rivals-officers-into-army>
- Political and legal landscape: 2011 Transitional Constitution - <https://www.britannica.com/place/South-Sudan/Government-and-society#ref300747>
- Political and legal landscape: UN Human Rights Council - [https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/A\\_HRC\\_43\\_56.pdf](https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/A_HRC_43_56.pdf)
- Political and legal landscape: succeeded - <https://lemonwire.com/2020/02/22/south-sudans-rivals-form-unity-government-meant-to-end-war/>
- Political and legal landscape: R-ARCSS - <https://docs.pca-cpa.org/2016/02/South-Sudan-Peace-Agreement-September-2018.pdf>
- Political and legal landscape: 'overzealous' security forces - <https://news.un.org/en/story/2021/10/1103512>
- Political and legal landscape: increasing political violence - <https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/02/1111752>
- Political and legal landscape: UN convoy carrying food and humanitarian assistance - <https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/03/1113012>
- Political and legal landscape: surge in attack against aid workers - <https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/03/04/surge-attacks-aid-workers-south-sudan>
- Political and legal landscape: has decreased in comparison to previous years - <https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/02/1112172>
- Economic landscape: World Bank's Press Release - <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2022/06/15/world-bank-report-with-peace-and-accountability-oil-and-agriculture-can-support-early-recovery-in-south-sudan>
- Social and cultural landscape: Eye Radio, 26 January 2022 - <https://www.eyeradio.org/south-sudan-ranked-the-most-corrupt-country-in-the-world/>
- Technological landscape: BuddeComm Research - <https://www.budde.com.au/Research/South-Sudan-Telecoms-Mobile-and-Broadband-Statistics-and-Analyses>
- Security situation: South Sudan Travel Advisory - <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories/south-sudan-travel-advisory.html>
- Security situation: hellish existence - <https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/03/1114312>
- Security situation: May 2021 - <https://eyeradio.org/armed-men-kill-12-people-in-abyei/>
- Security situation: experiences Islamic encroachments - <https://www.episcopalnewsservice.org/2021/05/18/primate-of-south-sudan-urges-prayer-for-bishop-of-abyei-after-barbaric-attack-at-dungob-alei/>
- Security situation: June 2021 - <https://www.voanews.com/africa/two-aid-workers-killed-ambush-south-sudan>
- Security situation: July 2021 - <https://www.bbc.com/news/topics/c302m85q54lt/south-sudan>

## WWL 2023: Church information / South Sudan

### Christian origins

Christianity was very influential in the Sudan region from the 4th century onwards; for nearly a millennium the majority of the population was Christian. Christians suffered when invading Arabs brought Islam and gradually Islamized the northern part of Sudan by the 15th century. Following the defeat of the self-proclaimed Islamic Mahdi and his supporters by the British in 1898, many Christian groups entered the country. Roman Catholics, Anglicans (via the Church Missionary Society) and American Presbyterians also came from their base in Egypt. The Anglican Sudan United Mission, the Africa Inland Mission, and the Sudan Interior Mission all followed. Several African-initiated churches have also become established.

### Church spectrum today

South Sudan: Church networks	Christians	%
Orthodox	3,000	0.0
Catholic	5,932,000	83.8
Protestant	3,398,000	48.0
Independent	184,000	2.6
Unaffiliated	46,900	0.7
Doubly-affiliated Christians	-2,482,000	-35.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,081,900</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<i>(Any deviation from the total number of Christians stated above is due to the rounding of decimals)</i>		
Evangelical movement	1,733,000	24.5
Renewalist movement	1,007,000	14.2

Data source: Johnson T M and Zurlo G A, eds, *World Christian Database* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, accessed April 2022)

**Orthodox:** Eastern (Chalcedonian), Oriental (Pre-Chalcedonian, Non-Chalcedonian, Monophysite), Nestorian (Assyrian), and non-historical Orthodox. **Roman Catholics:** All Christians in communion with the Church of Rome. **Protestants:** Christians in churches originating in or in communion with the Western world's 16th-century Protestant Reformation. Includes Anglicans, Lutherans and Baptists (any of whom may be Charismatic) and denominational Pentecostals, but not Independent traditions such as Independent Baptists nor independent Charismatics. **Independents:** Christians who do not identify with the major Christian traditions (Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Protestant). **Unaffiliated Christians:** Persons professing publicly to be Christians but who are not affiliated to churches. **Doubly-affiliated Christians:** Persons affiliated to or claimed by 2 denominations at once. **Evangelical movement:** Churches, denominations, and individuals who identify themselves as evangelicals by membership in denominations linked to evangelical alliances (e.g., World Evangelical Alliance) or by self-identification in polls. **Renewalist movement:** Church members involved in Pentecostal/Charismatic renewal.

Christianity is predominantly Roman Catholic in South Sudan and is most prevalent among the peoples of Al Istiwai state, namely the Madi, Moru, Azande and Bari.

Other principal Christian denominations are Episcopal, Presbyterian, Pentecostal, Sudan Interior, Presbyterian Evangelical, and African Inland Churches. There are also smaller populations of Eritrean Orthodox, Ethiopian Orthodox, Coptic Orthodox and Greek Orthodox (Source: IRFR 2021, p.2).

## Areas where Christians face most difficulties

There are no particular hotspots.

## Christian communities and how they are affected

**Communities of expatriate Christians:** Expatriate Christians are not isolated from other Christian communities and so are not included as a separate category in WWL scoring and analysis.

**Historical Christian communities:** This category is made up of the Roman Catholic Church and traditional Protestant churches, to which the majority of Christians belong. Church life has been seriously affected by the civil war and Christians continue to suffer persecution arising from ethnic divisions.

**Converts:** This category mainly includes those who have converted from Islam or traditional African religions. Converts from Islam are the most persecuted Christian group, especially in the northern part of the country where the Muslim population is dominant.

**Non-traditional Christian communities:** Church groups in this category have been exposed to violence from the civil conflict and have also faced pressure from some Historical Christian communities.

## WWL 2023: Persecution Dynamics / South Sudan

### Reporting period

1 October 2021 - 30 September 2022

### Position on the World Watch List

South Sudan: World Watch List	Points	WWL Rank
WWL 2023	46	72
WWL 2022	43	74
WWL 2021	43	69
WWL 2020	44	65
WWL 2019	44	64

*Ranks are shown above whenever the country scored 41 points or more in the WWL 2019-2023 reporting periods*

Since WWL began closely monitoring and analyzing the situation in South Sudan during the WWL 2019 reporting period, the country has consistently scored over 41 points. During WWL 2023 reporting period the overall score of South Sudan increased by three points. Although the violence score remained unchanged at the extreme level of 15.0 points, average pressure increased from 5.5 to 6.2 points. *Organized corruption and crime (Strong):* The 2013-2020 civil war left most areas in the country beyond the control of the government. The persecution of Christians by state authorities, rebel groups and tribal leaders became so grave that even col-

leges were attacked. Despite the February 2020 Peace Agreement, there are still many unresolved issues, and clashes can easily flare up in some areas. The existence of rampant corruption means those who persecute Christians can do so with impunity. There is no accountability, there is no law and order, there is no system in place to bring justice. In the WWL 2023 reporting period, killings, church destruction and forced displacement have occurred. *Clan oppression (Medium)*: Ethnic leaders target those who oppose traditional indigenous practices. *Dictatorial paranoia (Medium)*: Government officials and security forces intimidate any church leaders who criticize the government.

## Persecution engines

South Sudan: Persecution engines	Abbreviation	Level of influence
Islamic oppression	IO	Weak
Religious nationalism	RN	Not at all
Ethno-religious hostility	ERH	Not at all
Clan oppression	CO	Medium
Christian denominational protectionism	CDP	Weak
Communist and post-Communist oppression	CPCO	Not at all
Secular intolerance	SI	Not at all
Dictatorial paranoia	DPA	Medium
Organized corruption and crime	OCC	Strong

*The scale for the level of influence of Persecution engines in society is: Not at all / Very weak / Weak / Medium / Strong / Very strong. For more information see WWL Methodology.*

### Clan oppression (Medium)

There are 64 ethnic groups in South Sudan, with ethnic tensions being evident even amongst Christians themselves. (The most obvious ethnic conflict is between the two largest ethnic groups in the country the Dinka and the Nuer. In the period 2013-2019, the Dinkas represented by President Salva Kiir SPLM were in armed conflict with the Nuers represented by Riek Machar SPLM-IO.) An estimated 32% of the population practice traditional religions, the majority living in the remote villages of the country. Although the younger generation is more inclined to follow Christian values, the theological perspective of the traditional religions fits well to the African ethnic or tribal context. The ethnic groups are not anti-Christian per se, but when their members become Christians, it means that they might no longer participate in rituals or clan-based conflicts. For this reason, ethnic group leaders put pressure on converts to follow orders and participate in community rituals and other obligations.

### Dictatorial paranoia (Medium)

South Sudan is experiencing a high level of authoritarianism from its president. He is determined to remain in power and has pitted ethnic tribes against each other and suspended key persons

in the government for speaking out against his regime. Although this paranoia is not directed specifically against Christians due to their faith, the effects are felt by Christians who make up the majority of the country’s population. The war that went on from 2013 to 2019 was partly due to the determination of the president to purge his opponents and remain in power unchallenged. Regime supporters participated in persecuting Christians or allowed persecution to happen.

**Organized corruption and crime (Medium)**

Corruption is widespread in South Sudan, which is one of the poorest countries in the world. It does, however, have rich resources in oil, gold and livestock and has access to the Nile River. The country's resources have been used to fuel the civil war with top officials accumulating wealth for themselves. The misuse of resources coupled with the civil war has led to severe food shortages, affecting almost half the country's population. The existence of rampant corruption means those who persecute Christians can do so with impunity. There is no accountability, there is no law and order, there is no system in place to bring justice. To date, there has been no willingness on the part of the authorities to change this.

**Drivers of persecution**

South Sudan: Drivers of Persecution	IO	RN	ERH	CO	CDP	CPCO	SI	DPA	OCC
	WEAK			MEDIUM	WEAK			MEDIUM	STRONG
Government officials								Medium	Medium
Ethnic group leaders				Medium					
Non-Christian religious leaders	Weak				Weak				
Religious leaders of other churches					-				
One's own (extended) family				Medium					
Revolutionaries or paramilitary groups				Strong					Strong
Organized crime cartels or networks									Medium

*The scale for the level of influence of Drivers of persecution in society is: Not at all / Very weak / Weak / Medium / Strong / Very strong. Please note that "-" denotes "not at all". For more information see WWL Methodology.*

**Drivers of Clan oppression**

- **Revolutionary or paramilitary groups (Strong):** The 2013-2019 civil war was waged between different ethnic groups. Torture, abduction, rape, killings and other inhumane atrocities have been taking place. Armed groups from different ethnic groups have been responsible for most of these acts. Aid workers and Christians were killed and churches were attacked.

- **Ethnic leaders (Medium):** Community leaders pass informal local rules which, at times, are aimed against Christians - especially those who evangelize in the remote areas.
- **One's own (extended) family:** An ATR family member who converts to Christianity will face pressure to return to the faith of the ancestors.

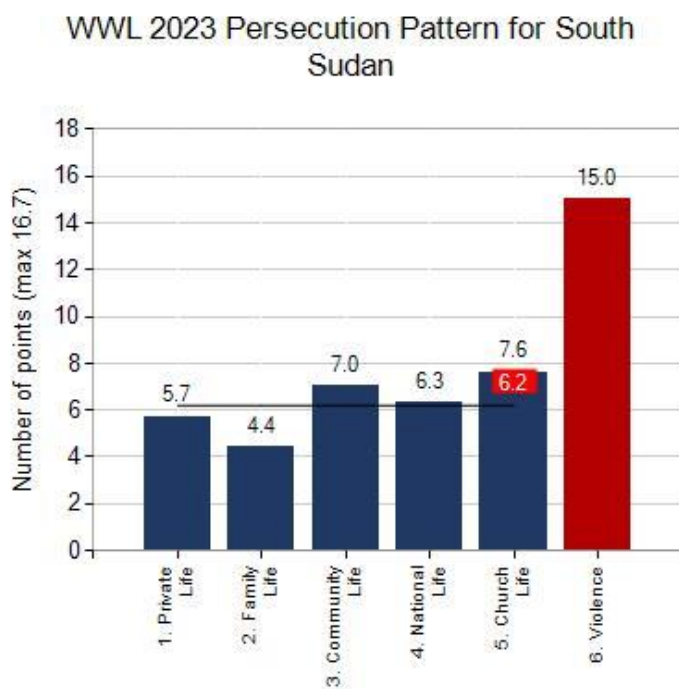
#### Drivers of Dictatorial paranoia

- **Government officials (Medium):** Government officials and government affiliates allow the atrocities being committed in the country to continue. They have created a culture of impunity and an environment where it is very difficult to speak out against injustice, thus silencing Christians who attempt to speak out.

#### Drivers of Organized corruption and crime

- **Organized crime cartels and networks (Strong) and conjunction with Revolutionary or paramilitary groups (strong) :** Networks of organized crime have made the life of Christians unbearable. Paramilitary groups are also involved. It has made the application of the rule of law difficult and encourages anarchy. As a result, the looting of church property and the destruction of churches has been happening without any legal repercussions for those responsible.
- **Government officials (Medium):** In the context of persecution and organized corruption, the role of government cannot be underestimated. It has been reported that the corruption of some officials at the highest level is intertwined with networks of organized crime. These networks have made government protection of Christians impossible.

## The Persecution pattern



The WWL 2023 Persecution pattern for South Sudan shows:

- The average pressure on Christians over all *spheres of life* is 6.2 points, an increase of 0.5 points compared to WWL 2022.
- Pressure is highest in the *Church sphere* (7.6 points) followed by the *Community sphere of life* with 7.0 points.
- The *Family life* score increased the most in WWL 2023 (rising to 4.4 points from 1.9 points in WWL 2022).
- Violence is at an extreme level, remaining stable at 15.0 points.

## Pressure in the 5 spheres of life

*In each of the five spheres of life discussed below, four questions have been selected from the WWL 2023 questionnaire for brief commentary and explanation. The selection usually (but not always) reflects the highest scoring elements. In some cases, an additional paragraph per sphere is included to give further information deemed important. (To see how individual questions are scored on a scale of 0-4 points, please see the “WWL Scoring example” in the WWL Methodology, available at: <https://opendoorsanalytical.org/world-watch-list-documentation/>, password: freedom).*

## Pressure in Block 1 / Private sphere

### **Block 1.9: It has been risky for Christians to meet with other Christians. (3.00 points)**

Safety and security in South Sudan have become a serious issue. Christians have been targeted both in their dwellings and while traveling. According to a country expert: "In a country where armed groups attack places of worship and humanitarian workers (often Christians), it is risky for Christians to meet with other Christians." In the context of the existing hostilities, meeting in church or individually elsewhere has become challenging.

### **Block 1.2: It has been risky for Christians to conduct acts of Christian worship by themselves (e.g. prayer, Bible reading, etc.). (2.25 points)**

Be it in the context of organized crime/paramilitary activities or *Clan oppression*, there have been situations where Christians found it difficult/risky to conduct acts of worship by themselves. This has been particularly true where *Clan oppression* is involved: Those who decide to leave their African traditional religion to become Christians face pressure if their conversion is discovered. Private prayer and worship will be disrupted, where seen.

### **Block 1.3: It has been dangerous to privately own or keep Christian materials. (2.00 points)**

Similar to 1.2, this problem exists in many contexts and is a particularly serious issue where *Clan oppression* is involved. Those who decide to leave the traditional belief system and become Christians would face danger if found with Christian materials by their non-Christian family or others. There is also fear that armed groups might show up and search the houses. Thus, some non-convert Christians in remote areas also avoid keeping Christians materials at home.



**Block 1.4: It has been risky for Christians to reveal their faith in written forms of personal expression (including expressions in blogs and Facebook etc.). (2.00 points)**

Freedom of expression is generally restricted. Armed groups and the government obstruct people's right to express themselves. In this context, it has been observed that both the government and the opposition have monitored media reports and social media accounts and used them to single out church leaders for criticism. In some cases, this has led to interrogation by intelligence agents and incarceration.

## Pressure in Block 2 / Family sphere

**Block 2.11: Spouses of converts have been put under pressure (successfully or unsuccessfully) by others to divorce. (2.75 points)**

Traditional religions have a wide-ranging influence on tribal society with social, political and economic dimensions. Pressure on spouses of converts to file for divorce is one of the tools that is used by those who oppose conversion.

**Block 2.3: Christians have been hindered in celebrating a Christian wedding for faith-related reasons. (2.50 points)**

In places outside Juba, especially where adherents of ATR are dominant, it can be challenging for Christians to gather and celebrate a wedding. There are also armed groups who look for opportunities to attack Christians.

**Block 2.10: Christian spouses and/or children of Christians have been subject to separation for prolonged periods of time by circumstances relating to persecution. (2.50 points)**

Separating family members (especially children from parents) has been adopted as a tactic against Christians in some places in South Sudan. Constant attacks have made travelling unsafe leading to the separation of Christians. Also, in the context of *Clan oppression*, in order to force someone to come back to the community's belief system, they put pressure on converts by separating them from their families.

**Block 2.12: Christian spouses of non-Christians have been excluded from the right or opportunity to claim custody of the children in divorce cases. (2.50 points)**

The right to inherit or claim custody is often contingent upon the approval of family or community. Those who decide to leave the traditional belief system pay the price of losing custody of their children, among many other punitive measures.

## Pressure in Block 3 / Community sphere

**Block 3.2: Christians have been monitored by their local communities or by private groups (this includes reporting to police, being shadowed, telephone lines listened to, emails read/censored, etc.). (3.00 points)**

South Sudan has seen the emergence of armed vigilante groups in their communities in many parts of the country. Monitoring occurs especially in areas where there are different armed

groups vying for power. This monitoring may sometimes be masked as a legitimate part of law and order, while sometimes it is used purely for control and to instill fear and forestall any opposition.

**Block 3.4: Christians been hindered in sharing community resources because of their faith (e.g. clean drinking water). (3.00 points)**

Community resources play a critical role in countries like Sudan where state infrastructure is not well developed and where war-damage is widespread. Indeed, sharing communal resources is at times a matter of survival. However, there is a link between ethnicity/tribe/clan and faith which creates problems for many churches. As mentioned above, a significant number of ethnic groups in South Sudan adhere to ATR, which has an influence on society both socially, politically and economically. In order for someone to access state benefits and services, they have to adhere to those belief systems. In this context, it is inevitable for Christians to be marginalized and denied access to resources.

**Block 3.6: Christians have been hindered in participating in communal institutions, forums, etc., for faith-related reasons. (3.00 points)**

This is similar to 3.4 above. Communal life plays a significant role in the life of many communities in South Sudan. Due to the link between ethnicity and faith, many Christians find themselves overlooked, intentionally left-out and allowed no say in local matters. This is done deliberately to discourage conversion and any growth of Christianity in those areas.

**Block 3.3: Christians have been under threat of abduction and/or forced marriage. (2.75 points)**

Christians living outside major towns live under constant fear of getting abducted. In the past ten years, there have been several reports of Christians working with aid organizations being kidnapped, or even of Christians being attacked at their places of worship and kidnapped.

## Pressure in Block 4 / National sphere

**Block 4.3: Christians have been forced by law or in practice to act against their conscience, e.g. regarding military service or in certain professions. (3.00 points)**

While the law provides for protection against being coerced into carrying out practices that are against one's religion; the reality of the war has led to forced conscription by both the government and the opposition. Even children have been recruited to join the various armed groups.

**Block 4.4: Christians have been hindered in travelling for faith-related reasons. (3.00 points)**

There have been reports about armed groups or local government officials making travelling difficult for Christians. The security situation has made it impossible to travel freely. There are also reports of religious leaders and Christian workers being hindered in their work and even sometimes detained. And if a pastor is known to be on a journey to speak at a meeting about corruption, nepotism and rape in the country, it is very likely that he will face assassination at-

tempts en route.

**Block 4.5: Christians have been discriminated against when engaging with the authorities (local administration, government, army, etc.) for faith-related reasons. (3.00 points)**

The political environment in South Sudan has created an 'us versus them' scenario. Those in power discriminate against those whom they consider to be 'other.' There are many factors playing a crucial role in this discrimination. There are clan leaders, criminal networks and government officials who want to make sure that those who do not belong to their network or their supporters do not get access to government jobs etc. Some Christians are regularly discriminated against by the local authorities and will sometimes be identified for specific targeting (for persecution) at a future date.

**Block 4.6: Christians have been barred from public office, or has promotion been hindered for faith-related reasons. (3.00 points)**

This is also related to 4.5 above. From the perspective of *Dictatorial paranoia*, Christians who speak against the injustices committed in the country are often regarded as a threat and denied jobs or promotion. From the perspective of *Clan oppression*, there is also another dimension, since the structure of the governing system (including the unity government) has a strong ethnic flavor. Those Christians who speak against injustices at local or national level, will face problems when it comes to hiring and promotion.

## Pressure in Block 5 / Church sphere

**Block 5.5: Churches have been hindered from organizing Christian activities outside church buildings. (3.50 points)**

There have been constant threats to the church in South Sudan: Kidnappings, detention and killings have all been reported. The civil war (which ended with the formation of the government of national unity) and the existing ethnicity issues have made church life complex and difficult. During the WWL 2023 reporting period, various church gatherings were targeted by armed groups, including by government soldiers; for an example see above: *Specific examples of violations of rights*. Due to these security issues, church events located outside church buildings remain restricted. Furthermore, sometimes the permit requirements for outside events are so prohibitive that it is virtually impossible to hold such meetings.

**Block 5.18: Churches have been hindered in establishing, managing, maintaining and conducting schools, or charitable, humanitarian, medical, social or cultural organizations, institutions and associations. (3.25 points)**

Even though it is churches and other civil society organizations that are considered a symbol of stability in what is otherwise a country engulfed in chaos, these entities are facing serious limitations including interference from government (direct and indirect) and from organized crime. Yes, it is true that the Constitution expressly provides for and protects churches in establishing and maintaining schools and other church-related organizations. However, the unstable security situation has made this theoretical protection meaningless. Conducting charitable/humanitarian activities has become very risky during the 2023 WWL reporting period.

**Block 5.3: Christian communities have been hindered in building or renovating church buildings or in claiming historical religious premises and places of worship which had been taken from them earlier. (3.00 points)**

Church buildings and other Christian property have been targeted and damaged in the past few years. This hostility has created fear and successfully intimidated Christians, hindering them from repairing and building new structures. Furthermore, the intentionally lengthy, administrative procedure (and other preconditions required by the authorities) have made building or renovating difficult.

**Block 5.2: It has been difficult to get registration or legal status for churches at any level of government. (2.50 points)**

Getting a registration license is an expensive commodity in South Sudan. The country has very stringent requirements for churches and church-related humanitarian work. Religious groups are required to register with the state government and the Ministry for Humanitarian Affairs through the Relief and Rehabilitation Commission. Faith-based organizations are required to provide their constitution, a statement of faith documenting their doctrines, a list of executive members, and a very large registration fee of \$3,500. The government seems to be using the registration process as an easy source of revenue, but local NGOs would obviously prefer spending such high sums on helping people instead.

## Violence

*Violence is defined in WWL Methodology as the deprivation of physical freedom or as bodily harm to Christians or damage to their property. It includes severe threats (mental abuse). The table is based on reported cases as much as possible, but since many incidents go unreported, the numbers must be understood as being minimum figures. The following 5 points should be considered when using the data provided in the Block 6 table:*

**1. Some incidents go unreported because the Christians involved choose not to speak about the hostility being faced. Possible reasons for this may be:**

- *Doing so would expose them to more attacks. For example, if a family member is killed because of his/her faith, the survivors might decide to keep silent about the circumstances of the killing to avoid provoking any further attacks.*
- *In some circumstances, the reticence to pass on information may be due to the danger of exposure caused by converts returning to their previous faith.*
- *If persecution is related to sexual violence - due to stigma, survivors often do not tell even their closest relatives.*
- *In some cultural settings, if your loved one is killed, you might be under the obligation to take revenge. Christians not wishing to do that, may decide to keep quiet about it.*

**2. Other incidents go unreported for the following possible reasons:**

- Some incidents never reach the public consciousness, because no one really knows about it; or the incident is simply not considered worth reporting; or media coverage is deliberately blocked or distorted; or media coverage is not deliberately blocked, but the information somehow gets lost; or the incidents are deliberately not reported widely for security reasons (e.g. for the protection of local church leaders).
- In situations where Christians have been discriminated against for many years, armed conflict can make them additionally vulnerable. Christians killed in areas where fighting regularly takes place are unlikely to be reported separately. Examples in recent years have been Sudan, Syria and Myanmar.
- Christians who die through the deprivation of basic necessities such as clean water and medical care (due to long-term discrimination) are unlikely to be reported separately. Christians are not always killed directly; they can be so squeezed by regulations and other oppressive factors that they die – not at once, but in the course of years. This often includes the deprivation of basic necessities such as clean water and medical care, or exclusion from government assisted socio-economic development projects. These numbers could be immense.

**3. For further discussion** (with a focus on the complexity of assessing the numbers of Christians killed for their faith) please see World Watch Monitor’s article dated 13 November 2013 available at: <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2013/11/number-of-christian-martyrs-continues-to-cause-debate/>.

**4. The use of symbolic numbers:** In cases where it has been impossible to count exactly, a symbolic round figure (10\*, 100\* etc.) is given and indicated with an asterisk. A symbolic number of 10\* could in reality even be 100 or more but the real number is uncertain. A symbolic number of 100\* could go well over 1000 but the real number is uncertain. A symbolic number of 1,000\* could go well over 10,000 but, again, the real number is uncertain. The same applies for symbolic numbers 10,000\*, 100,000\* and 1,000,000\*: Each could indicate much higher numbers, but WWR chooses to be cautious because the real number is uncertain.

**5. The symbol “x” in the table:** This denotes a known number which cannot be published due to security concerns.

South Sudan: Violence Block question	WWL 2023	WWL 2022
6.1 How many Christians have been killed for faith-related reasons (including state sanctioned executions)?	10 *	10
6.2 How many churches or Christian buildings (schools, hospitals, cemeteries, etc.) have been attacked, damaged, bombed, looted, destroyed, burned down, closed or confiscated for faith-related reasons?	10 *	10
6.3 How many Christians have been detained for faith-related reasons?	0	0
6.4 How many Christians have been sentenced to jail, labor camp, sent to psychiatric hospital as punishment, or similar things for faith-related reasons?	0	0
6.5 How many Christians have been abducted for faith-related reasons (including Christians missing in a persecution context)?	10 *	10
6.6 How many Christians have been raped or otherwise sexually harassed for faith-related reasons?	10 *	10 *
6.7 How many cases have there been of forced marriages of Christians to non-Christians?	10 *	10 *

6.8	How many Christians have been otherwise physically or mentally abused for faith-related reasons (including beatings and death threats)?	100 *	100 *
6.9	How many houses of Christians or other property (excluding shops) have been attacked, damaged, bombed, looted, destroyed, burned down or confiscated for faith-related reasons?	10	10 *
6.10	How many shops or businesses of Christians have been attacked, damaged, bombed, looted, destroyed, burned down, closed or confiscated for faith-related reasons?	10 *	10
6.11	How many Christians have been forced to leave their homes or go into hiding in-country for faith-related reasons?	100 *	100 *
6.12	How many Christians have been forced to leave the country for faith-related reasons?	0	0

## 5 Year trends

The following three charts show the levels of pressure and violence faced by Christians in the country over the last five WWL reporting periods.

### 5 Year trends: Average pressure

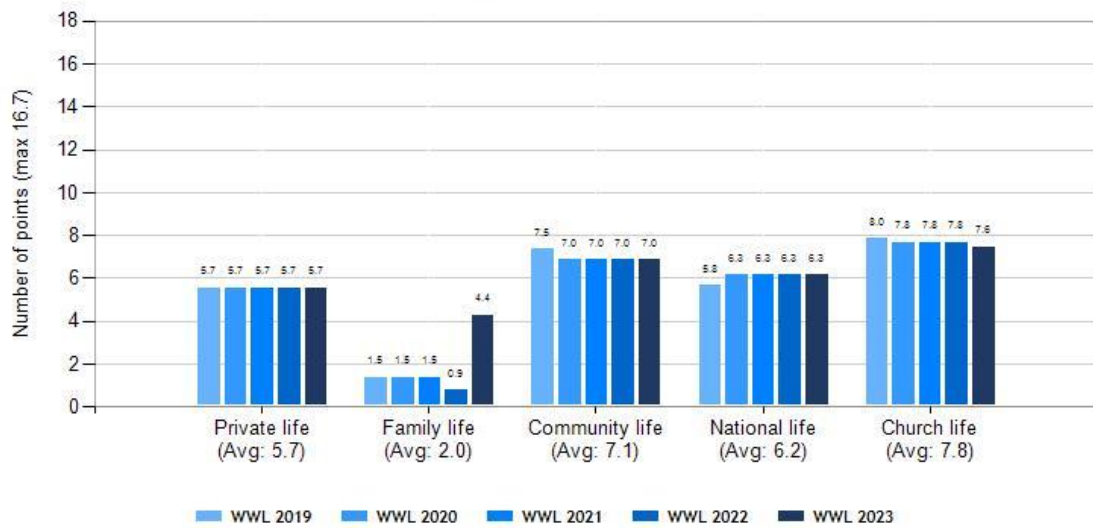
South Sudan: WWL 2019 - WWL 2023	
Persecution Pattern history	Average pressure over 5 Spheres of life
2023	6.2
2022	5.5
2021	5.7
2020	5.7
2019	5.7

The table above shows that the average pressure on Christians in the past five reporting periods has been more or less stable within the range 5.5 - 6.2 points.

### 5 Year trends: Pressure in each sphere of life

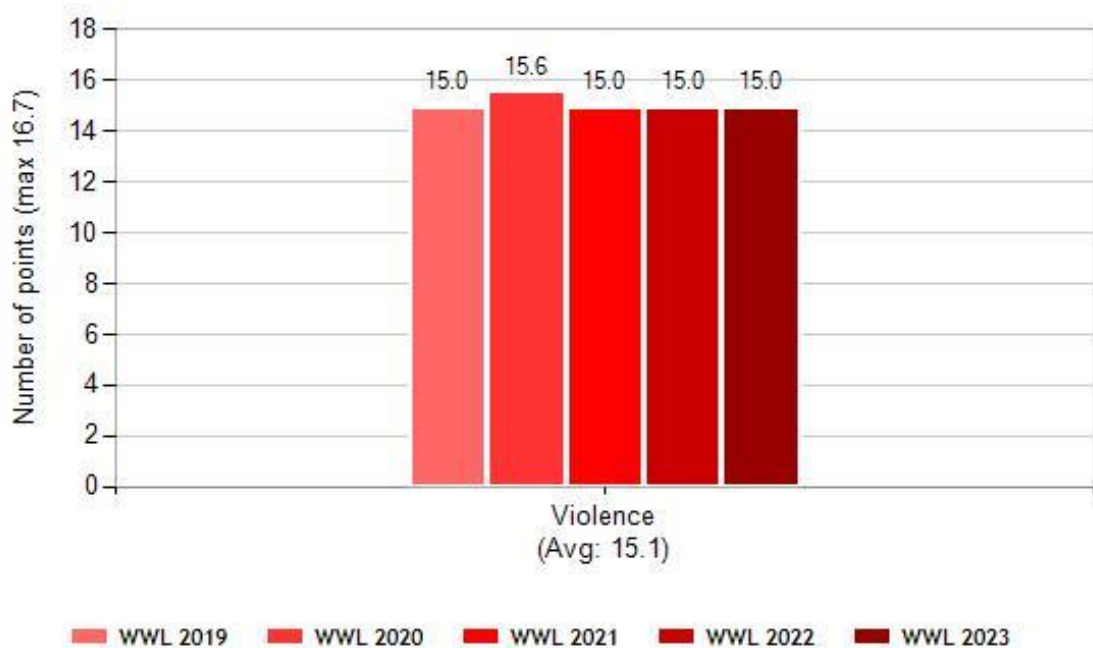
The chart below shows that the highest levels of pressure have consistently been in *Church life* and *Community life*. The *Family sphere* has the lowest five year average (2.0 points), but showed the sharpest rise in score in WWL 2023.

WWL 2019 - WWL 2023 Persecution Pattern for South Sudan (Spheres of life)



### 5 Year trends: Violence against Christians

WWL 2019 - WWL 2023 Persecution Pattern for South Sudan (Violence)



Violence against Christians in South Sudan has been stable at an extreme level in the past five WWL reporting periods. Churches have been attacked, Christians have been unable to deliver humanitarian services and church leaders were targeted. The highest violence score was recorded during the WWL 2020 reporting period.

## Gender-specific religious persecution / Female

Group	Female Pressure Points
Economic	-
Political and Legal	Forced marriage
Security	Abduction; Targeted Seduction; Violence – physical; Violence – sexual
Social and Cultural	Violence – psychological
Technological	-

In South Sudan, the prolonged civil war has been a major instigating factor for the increase in sexual violence against women (HRW 2022 country chapter). According to a [report](#) from the Secretary-General to the Security Council (UN, 3 June 2020, pp.27-28), sexual violence in Sudan has reached "appalling levels of brutality" and is "often committed with political and ethnic undertones". The report further noted that perpetrators often enjoyed impunity for their actions.

Against this backdrop of complex ethnic and political tensions, it is difficult to discern the exact motivations behind the violence experienced by Christian women and girls. It is clear, however, that the use of rape as a weapon in armed conflict makes women and girls more susceptible to religious persecution by those opposed to their Christian faith, which mimics the war practices in the country. Regional experts indicate that rape and [gender-based violence](#) is the most common form of persecution affecting Christian women and girls (HRW, 14 December 2022). An expert explains: "Sexual violence is an issue in South Sudan. Sexual slavery, rape, abductions and forced marriages are among the types of sexual violence suffered by South Sudanese [women]." The trauma experienced prevents many of these women from forming stable relationships.

Furthermore, South Sudan is one of six countries in the world which has not specified a minimum age for marriage hence leaving a loophole for early and forced marriages. It has the [eighth highest rate](#) of child marriage in the world, with 52% of girls marrying by the age of 18 (Girls Not Brides, accessed 4 January 2023). The prevalence of this practice, most often carried out because of extreme poverty and to secure much-needed assets for families, (including cattle, money, and other gifts via the payment of a bride price), creates an obvious avenue of repression and control of young female converts. Elders and ethnic leaders have reportedly forced young girls to marry people that they have never met. Within these marriages, women and girls are exposed to domestic and sexual violence.

Women are also impacted by the killing of men and forceful conscription of boys as child soldiers, since they are left without any way to fend for themselves while mourning the loss of their husbands and sons (see below).



## Gender-specific religious persecution / Male

Group	Male Pressure Points
Economic	-
Political and Legal	Imprisonment by government
Security	Abduction; Military/militia conscription/service against conscience; Targeted Seduction; Violence – death; Violence – physical
Social and Cultural	-
Technological	-

The South Sudanese civil war that lasted for about seven years, from 2013 to early 2020, contributed to the mass recruitment of males, particularly of boys who were halted in their education and targeted instead to become [child soldiers](#) (FP, 8 January 2022). Within a context of ongoing fragility and insecurity, [exacerbated further by the COVID-19 crisis](#), recruitment as a means of repression and control has become the most common form of persecution affecting men and boys (UN News, 23 June 2020). Whilst exact figures are lacking, thousands of children are believed to have been recruited into armed forces and groups by both sides of the conflict since 2013, with aid organizations fighting for their release ([UNICEF, 18 Nov 2021](#); [World Vision, 6 May 2022](#)).

Men also run the risk of being killed by government forces upon suspicion of being part of rebel forces. Reports indicate that religious leaders and Christian workers are particularly in danger. A regional expert writes: “Religious leaders have been singled out for criticism by both the government and the opposition, using media reports and social media accounts. In certain circumstances, this has resulted in interrogation, security intelligence summonses, and even incarceration. As a result, freedom of expression has been restricted, and public debate has been silenced.”

The killing of men and forceful conscription of boys as child soldiers has a catastrophic impact on families and communities. As an expert explains: “Women are left without any way to fend for themselves while mourning the loss of their husbands and sons. The resultant anguish greatly weakens their capacity to do anything either economic or development-related.”

### Persecution of other religious minorities

Non-Christians in South Sudan include Muslims (located particularly in the northern part of the country) and followers of traditional African religions in remote areas. Both groups have been affected by the ongoing fighting and the repression caused by the dictatorial regime.

According to the US State Department (IRFR 2021):

- "In June [2021], the former mayor of Juba, Kalisto Lado, destroyed shrines associated with indigenous religious practices."

## Future outlook

The outlook for Christians as viewed through the lens of:

### Clan oppression

Ethnic groups in South Sudan are known for having a strong clan-based system. This is also what kept the civil war going (which was declared as being over in February 2020). However, since there is a strong connection between ATR and a hierarchical-clan based system, Christians will continue to face challenges in remote areas.

### Dictatorial paranoia

This engine is very unpredictable and things can easily change. The role of this engine in persecuting Christians partly depends on whether the new Unity Government set up in February 2020 is able to last until the elections which have been [postponed to 2024](#) (AP News, 4 August 2022). If so, then it is likely that the pressure which the government has been putting on Christians will be reduced. However, the forthcoming elections might bring their own complex dynamics.

### Organized corruption and crime

This Persecution engine highlights the existence of rampant corruption, impunity and lack of rule of law. Clearing such criminal networks can take years.

### Expectations for South Sudan over the next years

- The Church in South Sudan is growing rapidly, and with it the Christian influence in society is also growing. This is also due to the distribution of humanitarian aid by Christian organizations and the fact that most Christian organizations have been working in war-stricken areas.
- Both the peace agreement and the formation of the Unity Government in February 2020 is fragile and there are worries that it could collapse due to action by the many armed groups in the country. In April 2021, UN experts warned that renewed civil war is possible as divisions widen. The first general election since the independence was originally scheduled to take place in 2015 but that was not held due to the civil war. It was then rescheduled for 2023, but put off further until 2024. This election will bring tense moments in the country and it is more than likely that the loser will not accept the outcome.
- The level of fear among Christians will be high if civil war breaks out again.

## External Links - Persecution Dynamics

- Gender-specific religious persecution Female description: report - <https://www.un.org/sexualviolenceinconflict/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/report/conflict-related-sexual-violence-report-of-the-united-nations-secretary-general/2019-SG-Report.pdf>
- Gender-specific religious persecution Female description: gender-based violence - <https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/12/1131712>
- Gender-specific religious persecution Female description: eighth highest rate - <https://www.girlsnotbrides.org/child-marriage/south-sudan/>
- Gender-specific religious persecution Male description: child soldiers - <https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/01/08/south-sudan-child-soldiers-riek-machar/>

- Gender-specific religious persecution Male description: exacerbated further by the COVID-19 crisis - <https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/06/1066952>
- Gender-specific religious persecution Male description: UNICEF, 18 Nov 2021; - <https://www.unicef.org/southsudan/press-releases/unicef-welcomes-release>
- Gender-specific religious persecution Male description: World Vision, 6 May 2022 - [https://www.wvi.org/sites/default/files/2022-05/WVSS-Child%20soldier%20report%202022-update\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.wvi.org/sites/default/files/2022-05/WVSS-Child%20soldier%20report%202022-update_FINAL.pdf)
- Future outlook: postponed to 2024 - <https://apnews.com/article/middle-east-africa-sudan-south-juba-4f35064ef1173a9e14f6e60f55d36b50>

## Further useful reports

A selection of in-depth reports and smaller articles are available on the new Research & Reports page of the website od.org. As in earlier years, they are also available on the Open Doors Analytical website (password: freedom) using the following links:

- <https://opendoorsanalytical.org/reports/>
- <https://opendoorsanalytical.org/?s=South Sudan>