



Sudan 2013 Crime and Safety Report

Travel Health and Safety; Transportation Security; Religious Terrorism; State Terrorism; Stolen items; Religious Violence; Civil War; Separatist violence; State-led violence; NGO; Extreme heat/drought; Burglary; Carjacking; Kidnapping; Murder; Theft; Anti-American sentiment

Africa > Sudan > Khartoum

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Overall Crime and Safety Situation

North and central Sudan, including Khartoum, experience relatively low crime rates compared to other capital cities in Sub-Saharan Africa. U.S. Embassy Khartoum received almost no reporting of crimes against Americans in Khartoum and north/central Sudan. Crime in and around Khartoum is generally non-violent and non-confrontational property crime. "Smash and grabs" where items are taken from vehicles parked outside a place of business or residence happen with some regularity.

Carjacking of International Non-Governmental Organization (INGO) and UN vehicles by irregular militia groups is an almost daily event throughout Darfur. The threat of violent crime, including kidnappings, armed robberies, home invasions, and carjackings is particularly high in Darfur, as the government has limited capacity to deter crime in that region.

In addition, Janjaweed militia and other heavily armed Darfuri rebel groups are known to have carried out criminal attacks against foreigners.

Overall Road Safety Situation

Driving conditions are hazardous throughout Khartoum. Speeders, slow drivers, turns from opposite lanes, ignored traffic signals, poorly lit or unlit streets, badly maintained roads and vehicles, overweight tandem-axle cargo trucks on city streets, and pedestrians who step out directly in front of moving cars all are commonplace in Khartoum, as are poorly-marked construction zones and livestock in and on the roadways. Drivers should beware of unsafe road surfaces, unskilled drivers, and the presence of non-roadworthy vehicles on urban and rural roads. Drivers frequently change lanes into oncoming traffic without looking and expect oncoming vehicles to get out of their way even though they are in violation of standard world-wide recognized traffic rules. Animals, such as goats, camels, donkey carts, as well as



the three-wheeled vehicle motorized rickshaws, and stray dogs wander into traffic without warning.

Leaving vehicles unlocked for even a short period of time can result in loss or damage. Carjacking and cattle/camel rustling have become major and frequent events in Darfur.

Visitors who are involved in traffic accidents need to summon police assistance.

Political, Economic, Religious, and Ethnic Violence

Sudan has had a stormy and violent history since independence in 1956. The civil war between northern and southern Sudan began even before independence in 1955 and lasted until 1972. After a decade-long period of relative peace, the war resumed in 1983 and did not formally end until the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in 2005. These wars were based on religious, cultural, economic, and tribal differences and a long history dating back to the colonial period of northern dominance of the south. However, north-south relations remain tense with numerous disputes on issues ranging from setting boundaries to revenue sharing. Per the CPA, a referendum was held in January 2011 where southerners overwhelmingly voted for secession; South Sudan became independent in July 2011. Renewed fighting has increased along the North-South border as post-secession arrangements are settled, and there continues to be an active insurgency in the border states of Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile. Sudan and South Sudan had brief armed conflict in April 2012 over Sudan's Heglig oil area. Although Sudan and South Sudan signed a series of comprehensive agreements in September 2012, border management strategies have not been finalized, and there are communities and factions on both sides of the border that may not accept the outcome of agreements on border demarcation and/or the referendum. This must be viewed in the context of violence between tribes along the border during the migratory season of cattle and other livestock and the fact that much of the country's oil wealth is situated along and to the south of the border, all of which are among the reasons why violence continues in the disputed region of Abyei.

There has also been a recent history of violence and war, both in Darfur and in the east. The war in the east ended in 2006 with the Eastern Sudan Peace Agreement, but tensions about the lack of a peace dividend remain. In Darfur, a small number of armed groups attacked government installations and police offices in 2003 due to disputes with the government over governance, development, and perceived unfairness in the way disputes over land and grazing rights were settled. Since then, the Bashir regime, which came to power through a military coup in 1989, orchestrated a violent, largely proxy counter-insurgency using "Arab" militias that employed scorched earth tactics to remove entire local populations alleged to be



sympathetic to the "African" rebels. This violent campaign by the government, termed genocide by the United States, has resulted in an estimated 300,000 deaths and 2.7 million Darfuris becoming internally displaced persons (IDPs). In 2006, the government signed the Darfur Peace Agreement following negotiations in Abuja, but only one major rebel group signed the agreement, and its terms have yet to be implemented.

In recent years, the war expanded in scope as Chadian rebels, with the support of the government of Sudan, used Darfur as a base from which to wage war against the government of Chad. In February 2008, the Chadian rebels mounted an attack against N'Djamena with material support from Khartoum, and in May 2008, the Darfuri JEM rebels mounted an attack on Khartoum with support from N'Djamena. In January 2010, Chad and Sudan officially ended their proxy war signing agreements in N'Djamena on January 15 to normalize bilateral relations and to reinforce border security arrangements. The two countries pledged to end all support for armed rebel groups and remove them from their respective territories, requiring JEM to leave Chad and Chadian rebel groups to leave Sudan. The Joint Chad-Sudan Border Monitoring Force has been a Cinderella story of sorts, restricting cross-border movement of armed groups. Many of the Chadian rebels have found themselves with nowhere to go and have reportedly taken up arms with Darfuri rebel factions or resorted to criminality and banditry.

Arguably, Darfur was witness to a marked increase in violence in 2012 as both conflict-related fatalities and fatalities attributed to tribal clashes increased. In 2011, the government signed another Darfur peace agreement in Doha with the LJM rebel group, but its provisions have yet to be implemented.

Local, Regional, and International Terrorism Threats/Concerns

Regional terrorism is closely linked with political violence. On September 14, 2012, religious political operatives in Khartoum used a controversial anti-Islamic movie trailer and a German Supreme Court ruling to instigate a mob of approximately 4,000-protestors to attack the British and German Embassies and to ransack and burn the German Embassy; protestors attempted to do the same to the U.S. Embassy. During the seven-hour siege, the Embassy compound sustained extensive damage. Rioters captured a police truck and set it afire, then used the vehicle as a make-shift battering ram in an attempt to breach one of the compound's main entrance doors. Hundreds of rocks and stones--hurled by hand and sling shots--destroyed more than 20 windows around the Embassy's façade. Sudanese authorities have prosecuted no one for inciting the riots.



In the south, rebels and militias are active in ambushes and raids against villages and towns.

In Darfur, various rebel groups, government-supported militias, and general banditry contribute to the ambient level of risk for all Westerners.

While the government has taken some steps to limit the activities of terrorist groups, elements of these groups remain and have threatened to attack Western interests.

The government in Khartoum is cooperating with the U.S. government on counter-terrorism issues, but there are still significant threats directed toward both U.S. and other Western (UN, U.K., etc.) facilities and personnel. Terrorist groups are known to operate in Sudan and seek opportunities to carry out attacks against U.S. and European interests. Al-Qai'da in the Land of the Two Niles remains an active threat with training camps in Sudan. Terrorist actions may include suicide operations, bombings, or kidnappings. There is a risk of indiscriminate attacks on civilian targets in public places, including tourist sites and locations where Westerners are known to congregate, and commercial operations associated with U.S. or Western interests. Terrorists are known to have targeted both official facilities and residential compounds. In November 2012, Sudanese paramilitary forces raided a training camp in Dinder National Park in the Sennar region and reportedly killed 17 terrorists who were planning attacks within Sudan, including possibly against Westerners. Authorities seized a large cache of weapons and munitions in connection with the raid.

On January 1, 2008, terrorists murdered an Embassy officer and local driver who were returning from a New Year's Eve social function. The government cooperated closely with the U.S. State Department's Bureau of Diplomatic Security and the Federal Bureau of Investigation and established a multi-agency investigative commission that shared information freely after the terrorist attack. As a result of close counter-terrorism cooperation, authorities arrested and charged five Sudanese men in connection with the murders. In 2009, four of the suspects were convicted of murder and sentenced to death. The fifth suspect was convicted of being an accessory to the crime and sentenced to time served. In 2010, the four men sentenced to death escaped from Khartoum's Kober prison. Only one has been recaptured, and one has been reported killed in Somalia.

In August 2007, there was a foiled bombing attempt against Western targets in Khartoum that left two dead and several injured when the explosives being assembled detonated prematurely.

While significant successes have been made in disrupting terrorist groups in Sudan, the



terrorist threat remains a significant concern.

Civil Unrest

The situations in Darfur, Blue Nile, South Kordofan, and Abyei have deteriorated due to the escalation of armed conflict among rebel groups, tribes, government-supported militias, and the government. International Non-Government Organizations are not immune to armed groups. Violent flare-ups, particularly in the Darfur region and along the border with South Sudan, break out between various armed militia groups and Sudanese military forces with little notice. Hostilities between Sudanese forces and armed opposition groups in Blue Nile and Southern Kordofan States, including the disputed area of Abyei, present real and immediate dangers to travelers.

Anti-government protests continue to break out in Khartoum. Some of these demonstrations ended in violence.

In November 2012, Sudanese authorities allegedly thwarted a "sabotage attempt" by current and former government officers to overthrow Sudan's ruling NCP party. A handful of civilian and military individuals, to include the former chief of Sudan's National Intelligence and Security Service, were arrested.

Religious or Ethnic Violence

Violence has been known to occur between Sufi and Salafist (Ansar al-Sunnah) religious groups. In December 2012, Ansar al-Sunnah clashed with Sufi worshippers at a cemetery site in Omdurman. Conservative Islamic groups within Khartoum have used vehicles fixed with loudspeakers and mass pamphlet/poster initiatives to protest non-Islamic festivals or celebrations (such as Christmas, New Year's Eve, etc.) and deter Muslims from participating.

Religious and ethnic protests at Khartoum's universities and on its streets occur infrequently but are usually characterized by violence and the use of clubs, molotov cocktails, and edged weapons. Police often disperse crowds with tear gas and batons.

Post-specific Concerns

Environmental Hazards

Earthquakes are rare. Areas adjacent to the Nile River and some areas with a high number of



dry wadis are subject to flooding during the rainy season (July-September).

During the summer, northern Sudan experiences many “haboobs.” These dust storms move in as a wall of sand extending upward of 3,000 feet. Haboobs generally last no more than three hours but can hamper road and air travel for many hours afterwards.

Privacy Concerns

There is no expectation of privacy and no legal protection should you or your personal effects be searched or seized.

When flying, you should maintain constant contact with your baggage and ensure it does not contain illicit items, such as alcohol, pornography, or military ordinance. U.S. citizens have been removed from international airlines and detained when suspect items have been detected in checked baggage.

Regional Travel Concerns and Restricted Travel Areas/Zones

The Department of State warns U.S. citizens of the risks of traveling to Sudan, urges U.S. citizens to avoid all travel to the Darfur region of Sudan, the Blue Nile, and Southern Kordofan States, and advises them to consider the risks of travel in other areas of Sudan carefully.

Travel outside of metropolitan Khartoum can be challenging. Roads to the east are subject to banditry, and roads in the south have significant problems with mine fields and unexploded ordinance. Even for day trips from Khartoum to tourist sites such as Meroe, a two-car rule is always advisable, and those cars should carry both extra fuel and substantial amounts of water.

Before traveling anywhere in Sudan outside of Khartoum, check news reports and local conditions immediately prior to departure. Travel permits may be required by government authorities at checkpoints throughout the country.

Drug-related Crimes

There is small-scale cultivation and recreational use of hashish and marijuana, but narco-terrorism is not considered an issue.

Kidnapping Threats



Beginning March 2009, a steady increase in kidnap-for-profit incidents targeted foreigners working for INGOs and the UN in Darfur. While most of the kidnappings occurred during armed invasions of residences after dark, individuals have been targeted during the day, on the road, and in all three Darfur state capitals.

The first and, to date, only American citizen was kidnapped on May 18, 2010, when her INGO convoy was stopped by gunmen south of Nyala, South Darfur. She was held for 105 days before being released unharmed. More recently, a number of other foreign nationals have been abducted and held for ransom by criminal groups in Darfur. Armed militias are targeting South Sudan civilians in Khartoum. In the spring of 2012, two Saudi Arabian diplomats having a picnic on the outskirts of Khartoum were kidnapped by a criminal gang seeking ransom. The diplomats were able to text security forces who interdicted the criminals on their way back into the city.

Police Response

While most patrol and traffic police are generally helpful, language and cultural barriers sometimes lead to misunderstandings between police and Westerners. Very rarely will a police officer assigned to a patrol or checkpoint speak English.

If you break local laws, your U.S. passport will not help you avoid arrest or prosecution. It is very important to know what is legal and what is not while you are in Sudan. Persons violating Sudan's laws, even unknowingly, may be expelled, arrested, or imprisoned.

Where to Turn to for Assistance if you Become a Victim of Crime

999-Reserve Police: This number should be called to report or seek assistance with any crime or other emergency matter. An English speaker is assigned to each shift.

Additional emergency phone numbers are listed below; however, the 999 dispatcher can transfer any call as necessary.

998-(Civil Defense Police) Fire Brigade

997-Central Ambulance

How to Handle Incidents of Police Detention or Harassment

U.S. citizens have been arrested and/or detained without notification to the U.S. Embassy and without Consular access. Dual Sudanese-U.S. citizens should bear in mind that the government does not recognize their U.S. citizenship for consular purposes and does not



provide the U.S. Embassy with courtesy notification or access to detained dual nationals.

If stopped by the police, do not respond in anger; do not raise your voice. Present your identification papers and answer questions fully. If you are detained, request to contact the U.S. Embassy Duty Officer at one of the following numbers:

Embassy Main Line: (249) (0) 187-022-000;

Embassy Post One: (249) (0) 187-022-222;

Embassy Duty Officer cell phone: (249) (0) 912-141-483;

Regional Security Officer: (249) (0) 912-339-266.

Medical Emergencies

The U.S. Embassy suggests personnel carry a laminated card in Arabic at all times with a request to take you to a hospital with higher standards, listing your blood type and any medical issues. Those that use prescription medications should have an adequate supply with them.

All substantial medical services in Sudan are located in Khartoum. In Darfur, the Embassy has a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with UNAMID to provide medical care to those that are on official USG duty. In South Sudan (Juba), there are several small clinics that provide care to the expat community.

Local medical assistance, especially outside of Khartoum, is limited, and while economic sanctions are in place, credit cards and most checks cannot be used for payment of medical services.

Contact Information for Recommended Local Hospitals and Clinics

In Khartoum:

Sahiroon Specialized Hospital, Burri (249) (0) 183-265-315.

Sudan Heart Hospital, Erkoweit, Khartoum (249) (0) 183-232-136.

Doctors Clinic, Africa Road (249) (0) 183-481-763.

Fedail Medical Center (249) (0) 183-766-661

Recommended Air Ambulance Services

U.S. Embassy Khartoum strongly recommends that travelers make prior arrangements for air ambulance/medical evacuation services before visiting Sudan.



There are several companies that provide air ambulance services:
SOS International 001-267-716-2411 or 971-460-18777
AMREF Flying Doctors (254)-20-315-454 or 455

CDC Country-specific Vaccination and Health Guidance

Malaria prophylaxis is strongly recommended and should be started several days before arriving. Also, all travelers should have an updated vaccination card with evidence of Yellow Fever vaccination. There was an outbreak of Yellow Fever, primarily in Darfur, in 2012. Wading or swimming in the Nile is strongly discouraged.

<http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/sudan.htm>

Tips on How to Avoid Becoming a Victim

Areas to be Avoided

All of Darfur should be avoided unless the traveling party has business with either a government agency or a humanitarian NGO; even then close attention should be paid to security considerations, as areas of Darfur can become dangerous on short notice.

Travelers should check with the UN for the latest updated information on the UN demining program and what roads are considered as "go zones."

Violent flare-ups break out between various armed militia groups and Sudanese military forces, particularly in the Darfur region, Blue Nile State, South Kordofan, along the border with Chad and in areas along the border with South Sudan. Hostilities between Sudanese forces and armed opposition groups in Blue Nile and Southern Kordofan states, including the disputed area of Abyei, present real and immediate dangers to travelers. In addition, U.S. citizens found in these areas without permission from the government of Sudan face the possibility of detention by government security forces.

Best Security Practices

If you are traveling or residing anywhere in Sudan, you should exercise caution at all times and closely monitor local and international news from reliable sources. The terrorist threat level throughout Sudan and particularly in the Darfur region remains critical, and the U.S. Embassy has implemented enhanced security measures to protect U.S. government



personnel assigned to Sudan. These measures include requiring U.S. government personnel to travel in armored government vehicles for official business and to obtain advance permission for travel outside of Khartoum. In addition, family members of U.S. Embassy personnel under 21 are not allowed to reside in Sudan.

Normal crime prevention methods will help lessen the likelihood of becoming a victim while in Sudan. Being aware of one's surroundings has been the time-tested method for avoiding becoming an inviting target of opportunity for crime. You should keep a low profile, vary your time and routes of travel, exercise care while driving, and ensure that your passport and Sudanese visa are valid and up to date.

Arrangements should be made with your company's in-country staff or your hotel to secure trusted transportation. Ensure vehicle doors and windows are locked at all times while traveling, even during daylight hours. Leaving items in plain sight inside a locked vehicle is unwise and may result in a window being smashed to take the items. The best way to avoid being a victim of a carjacking is to be aware of your surroundings at all times, particularly at night or early morning hours, though carjackings do occur during daylight hours.

Drivers should be wary of crowds gathering at the scene of an accident and should depart immediately if they perceive a threat to their safety. It is inadvisable to make restitution at the scene, especially if livestock or pedestrians are involved.

Air travel is the recommended mode of travel and, in many cases, is the only form of transportation.

Demonstrations occur regularly in Khartoum. They have been mostly peaceful; however, participants will often block the roads and engage in indiscriminate rock throwing. The Embassy monitors potential demonstrations and recommends individuals avoid large gatherings and protests. You should avoid all public demonstrations and political rallies, as even demonstrations that seem peaceful can turn confrontational and become violent with little or no notice.

You must be prepared to pay cash for all purchases, including hotel bills, airfares purchased locally, and all other travel expenses. Major credit cards cannot be used due to U.S. sanctions. Sudan has no international ATMs. Local ATMs draw on local banks only. U.S. currency issued prior to 1996 is generally not accepted. Travelers often experience difficulty transferring cash into the country, and travelers carrying large amounts of U.S. currency have been detained. Western Union operates in Khartoum.



Sudan is a conservative society, particularly in the capital and other areas where the Muslim population is the majority. Modest dress and behavior is expected for both men and women. Loose, long-sleeved shirts and full-length skirts or slacks are recommended attire for female visitors. Women who are not Muslim are not expected or required to cover their heads. Men may wear short-sleeved shirts, but short pants are not acceptable in public.

We recommend that all U.S. citizens maintain safe haven plans, as well as plans to evacuate the country on short notice should the situation warrant. The ability of U.S. Embassy Khartoum to provide services to U.S. citizens in emergency situations outside of the Khartoum area is limited and dependent on security conditions. The ability to provide assistance is particularly limited in southern Sudan and in Darfur.

U.S. Embassy/Consulate Location and Contact Information

Embassy/Consulate Address and Hours of Operation

The U.S. Embassy is located at U.S. Embassy Road, Kilo 10, Soba, Khartoum.

Embassy/Consulate Contact Numbers

Duty Officer: (249) (0) 912-141-483
Embassy Operator: (249) (0) 187-022-000
Regional Security Office: (249) (0) 187-022-275
Marine Post One: (249) (0) 187-022-222
Medical Unit: (249) (0) 187-022-776

<http://sudan.usembassy.gov/>

U.S. citizens may obtain the latest security information by contacting the Embassy consular section at ACSKhartoum@state.gov, or by visiting the U.S. Embassy website. If the security situation worsens or if specific threats affecting the safety of U.S. citizens are discovered, we will make this information available through the U.S. Embassy website and by messages communicated through our warden system. Emergency Messages for U.S. Citizens in Sudan can be found online at: http://sudan.usembassy.gov/warden_messages.html.

OSAC Country Council Information

There is no OSAC Country Council in Khartoum. There are efforts underway to launch a



Council in Juba, South Sudan; however, the nearest Country Council is in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.