

ISSUES

- Sudan is an extremely fragile state that has experienced state failure and internal conflict and breakup. Decades of conflict with the South ended with the secession of South Sudan in 2011. Years of conflict in Darfur between government and local groups devastated that province and its inhabitants, and led then President Omar al-Bashir to be indicted in the International Criminal Court.
- A popular uprising in 2019 resulted in the ouster of President Bashir by the military, and a tentative agreement — between the military and civilian protest groups — on a 39-month transition process to include power sharing between the military and civilians, and ending with a full return to democracy and the establishment of functioning and accountable executive, legislative, and judicial institutions. Alongside Tunisia, it is one of the rare — but very precarious — cases of attempted democratic transition in the region.
- The population of over 40 million is among the poorest in the world, heavily dependent on agriculture, and suffering from poor wealth distribution, poor infrastructure, and poor governance. The country is particularly vulnerable to the impacts of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) project.
- The country has been hit hard by the socio-economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic. The country has registered a fairly limited number of cases and deaths — around 13,200 and 825 respectively — but the economy is in deep crisis. Over 80% of the population has been included in a direct cash transfer program supported by the international community, and a full fourth of the population faces extreme hunger, if further urgent humanitarian measures are not put in place.
- China is the main player in Sudan's energy sector, and national energy income has contributed to some infrastructure and capital development, but is also impacted by high levels of corruption and poor governance.
- The UAE and Saudi Arabia have become Sudan's closest regional allies. The UAE has brokered meetings between the Sudanese military and Israel.

US INTERESTS

- After many years of an adversarial relationship, relations with the U.S. have improved in recent years. In 2017 the two countries embarked on a five-track reengagement process that has shown improvements in military, intelligence, political, and economic relations.