



Genocide Watch
The Alliance Against Genocide

South Sudan Country Report

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South Sudan gained its independence from Sudan in July 2011, following a referendum in which [99% of South Sudanese](#) vote in favour of secession from Sudan. The new state was led by President Salva Kiir, a former rebel leader and an ethnic Dinka, and Vice President Riek Machar, an ethnic Nuer. Many hoped independence would bring the country long-standing peace and stability [following decades](#) of neo-colonial domination by Khartoum, civil war, and genocide. But independence brought more ethnic civil war despite putative peace deals and ceasefire efforts.

President Kiir and Vice President Machar's power struggle and exploitation of ethnic hatreds devolved into genocidal civil war in December 2013. Kiir's government forces and Dinka militias violently clashed with Nuer forces loyal to Machar. [400,000 civilians](#) have been killed as a result of the constant war. The [peace agreements](#) in 2015 and 2018 did not end the ethnic conflicts. Civilians continue to be massacred on a scale so large it is genocidal. [86% of those killed or injured](#) are victims of attacks by ethnic militias or army troops. Though a peace deal promised creation of a Hybrid Court to try war crimes and crimes against humanity, it has never been established.

Machar and Kiir signed a [power-sharing](#) agreement in August 2018 in an [attempt](#) to bring about peace in the country. Another peace agreement [followed](#), but its implementation has not happened. Unification of Kiir and Machar's forces into a national army and demobilization of smaller militias has not occurred. Although the peace agreement was supposed to be implemented in February 2023, President Kiir's government [extended](#) the transitional period by two years. South Sudan is due to hold presidential elections in December 2024.

South Sudan is plagued by political instability, food insecurity, grave human rights abuses, ethnic violence, deaths from endemic diseases, and the displacement of over two million civilians. Conflict in the country has [resulted](#) in 2.4 million refugees and 2.3 million internally displaced. An estimated [9.4 million people](#) require humanitarian assistance. [7.1 million civilians](#) face acute food insecurity. Foreign aid remains totally [insufficient](#) to meet basic needs.

With the outbreak of war in Sudan in April 2023, hundreds of thousands of displaced persons [fled](#) to South Sudan. Many were South Sudanese refugees who had previously fled to Sudan when civil war engulfed South Sudan in 2013. Grave human rights violations and crimes against humanity, including widespread rape and extrajudicial killings, are being committed against civilian populations with total [impunity](#).

Growing insecurity due to the ongoing civil war has resulted in a steady [increase](#) in mass rape and gender-based violence. Women and girls have been [victims](#) of rape and other atrocities, mainly perpetrated by members of armed groups [such as](#) the South Sudan People's Defence Forces and the Sudan People's Liberation Army-In Opposition (SPLA-IO). [Children](#) are being [abducted](#) and recruited into the armed forces, with girls often subjected to sexual slavery.

Since 2013, [ethnic massacres](#) of civilians have become normal. Nuer and Dinka men and women have been subjected to hate speech and torture by both Nuer and Dinka armies. This ethnic targeting of civilians constitutes Genocide.

Due to continuing civil war, ethnic massacres, and non-implementation of peace agreements, Genocide Watch considers South Sudan to be at **Stage 9: Extermination**.

Genocide Watch recommends:

- The African Union should work with the South Sudanese government to establish a Hybrid Court for South Sudan to try individuals suspected of war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide.
- The South Sudan People's Defense Force and Nuer SPLA-IO forces should be integrated into a small, single disciplined and well-trained national army. All ethnic militias should be disarmed and demobilized.
- U.N./A.U. forces should oversee and support upcoming elections to ensure that they are free and fair.
- Church and civil society leaders should engage in dialogue to encourage inter-ethnic unity and peace.