

Monday 5th April

Background and recent developments in Sudan

Pop: 44.5 million

Muslim: 90%

Sudan has a very long and complicated history, influenced by cultures from the north, south, east, and west. Islam arrived with the Arabs in the 7th century. 'Sudan' stems from the Arabic word for 'black.'

Various conflicts have impacted Sudan for centuries. South Sudan seceded from Sudan in 2011, and the fight over territory and lucrative southern oil reserves rages on. In the west of Sudan in Darfur, fighting since 2003 has left at least 300,000 people dead and 2.5 million displaced, according to the United Nations. Earlier this year, violence flared up again in this region. At least 470 people were killed and tens of thousands were forced to flee. More people were displaced in the first month of 2021 than all of last year, according to the UN. It is a vast and impoverished area, where bitter rivalries between tribes over land and water remain.



Source: Wikimedia Commons

Meanwhile, the Sudanese are also wrestling to create a new identity and government infrastructure since President Omar al Bashir was ousted from power in April 2019. A power-sharing deal put a joint civilian-military government in place in September that year. They will rule until elections are held in December 2022.

They are making efforts to try and unite the country and meet the needs of the people, especially among minority groups. Sudan's current leader is Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok. In February this year, he reshuffled his cabinet in an attempt to push through reforms and secure foreign financing seen as crucial to easing a deep economic crisis and to bolstering Sudan's transition to democracy. The country's economy, which is estimated to have contracted 8.4 % last year, is expected to shrink another 2.3 % in 2021, according to the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Inflation in the country soared to 304% in January from 269% in the previous month, according to the state statistics bureau. This, coupled with a flourishing black market, has led to protests in recent weeks over the worsening economic situation.

Sudan remains one of the poorest countries in the world. Access to clean water and decent health care is very limited. The majority Arab Sunni Muslim population are tired of the fighting. Few trust each other. Many live without hope.

- Pray over the map above. Place your hands over the nation of Sudan, asking for God's light, peace and truth to be made known in every city and in every unreached people group.
- Pray for leaders and authorities as they move towards a more open and democratic government that allows equal rights for everyone. Pray they would walk in integrity and stand up for the truth.
- Investment and help are much needed from other countries and organisations. Aid agencies that were expelled in the last ten years have even been offered the opportunity to return. Pray for this to happen and for people with the right skills and business backgrounds to go to Sudan.

Sources: <https://www.mnnonline.org/news/thousands-displaced-as-darfur-violence-surges/>
<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/2/8/sudan-prime-minister-names-new-cabinet>
<https://prayercast.com/sudanese-arab.html>

Tuesday 6th April

What is God doing in Sudan?

"For a wide door for effective work has opened to me, and there are many adversaries."

1 Corinthians 16:9

This North African nation was one of the world's top 10 persecutors of Christians during Omar al-Bashir's 30-year reign. Followers of Christ in Sudan suffered greatly as the state implemented Sharia law, terrorised believers, confiscated church properties and forbade the distribution of Christian literature. Most foreign Christian field workers and organisations were expelled after the establishment of South Sudan in 2011. Since Bashir's overthrow, the new Minister of Religious Affairs has promised that confiscated lands and properties will be returned to churches and that Christians will be guaranteed freedom of worship. They are cautiously optimistic about the future. However, while the state may no longer officially persecute Muslim background believers, their family and friends most probably will.

Yet house church fellowships are growing along with the national churches. There is a renewed conviction that Sudanese Arabs will be reached by Sudanese believers. The New Testament is available in Sudanese Arabic, as are The Jesus Film and other resources. However, more internet and radio broadcast content are needed to reach and teach oral learners, as many don't use traditional methods of reading and writing to learn or communicate. Organisations and individual believers are working hard to develop suitable gospel resources for many of Sudan's remaining unreached people groups.

A Frontiers worker who has a heart for and has been praying for the unreached Beja people of Sudan, advises there is a great sense of urgency to grasp this window of opportunity and to raise up workers and team leaders while the gospel has the chance to grow and thrive in Sudan. Most of Sudan's population are Muslim and have no knowledge or understanding of Jesus Christ at all.

There is a growing sense of increased openness among people and a willingness and desire to find a better way.

Christmas was declared a public holiday in 2019, and believers marched in the streets singing and chanting their praises to God! Listen to this worship song as you pray:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DX4tmkghlSI>. It is sung by Candlelight choir, a Christian choir in Sudan, with members drawn from Orthodox, Evangelical and Catholic churches. They are also multiracial, composed of African and Arab (Egyptian-Sudanese) members:

- Pray for Sudanese churches. Bless them to stand for courage and forgiveness in the nation.
- Ask the Lord to bless the outreach initiatives among Sudan's unreached people groups. Pray for effective collaboration among believers, church leaders and ministries.
- Pray that the tools and resources being developed will be received with interest by unreached people groups.

Wednesday 7th April

The Rashaida and Beja unreached peoples

The Rashaida, Beja, Lahawin and Guhayna are on Frontier's list of 100 Priority Peoples and Places. They need workers to go to them; very few have heard the good news or met a follower of Jesus. We will pray for the Lahawin and Guhayna on Friday, but today we are praying for the Rashaida and Beja.

The Rashaida people live in the north-eastern region of the country. They are both nomadic herders and settled landowners. They breed camels that are highly prized across the Arabian Peninsula for racing and fetch very high prices. Although largely illiterate, the Rashaida memorise the pedigree of their animals in great detail, keeping mental records of their herds over seven or eight generations.



The Rashaida maintain many of their Arab customs, and are known to live in isolated communities, preferring to live separately from other tribes. In recent years, tensions have grown between tribes in the region over pastureland and water, resulting in conflict. The mechanisation of sorghum production has resulted in reduced grazing land, environmental damage and desertification.

You can watch a short video about the Rashaida here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TNgD2ri25us>

The Beja are traditionally nomadic shepherds living in the north of the country where they raise flocks of sheep, goats, camels and cattle. Some of the Beja have become more settled and nowadays engage in some types of farming, usually of sorghum. Like the Rashaida, many continue to suffer the adverse effects of desertification, decreasing rainfall and the scarcity of pastures for their animals.



Illiteracy is well over 90%. 66% of school-age children do not have education of any kind. Many of those that do drop out after the first year. They live with a shortage of public services, lack of health care and poor job opportunities. Most urban-dwelling Beja now live in shantytowns outside cities, having been attracted there by the potential of jobs in the oil industry.

There is an outreach initiative focusing on a language spoken by the Beja people. Currently ministries are working together to translate The Jesus Film into the Beja's language as well as the Magdalena film and Story of Jesus for Children. Eventually the entire gospel message will be available on film for a people group who do not know how to read and write.

- Pray for God to raise up teams of people to reach the Rashaida and Beja in ways that are effective for nomadic people groups.
- Pray for workers who will provide much needed resources, including clean water and education, as well as providing job-skills in farming, animal husbandry and many more.
- Let's pray for the outreach initiative to the Beja to be effective in speaking to their hearts and for similar material to be available to the Rashaida in their heart language.

Source of some content: <https://www.mnnonline.org/news/amid-sudan-struggles-believers-develop-new-tools-to-reach-the-unreached/>

Thursday 8th April

Seeds Spring to Life in a Forgotten Region

The following story is from a Frontiers worker in Northeast Africa:

Amadou comes from a remote region of Northeast Africa. It's a place that's difficult to access, and few field workers have ever stepped foot in its villages.

As a young man in search of work, Amadou moved to the nearby town where Frontiers worker David and his teammates live. There Amadou met Sidi, a Muslim-background believer who had discovered Christ in Bible studies with David. Sidi gave the young man a Bible, which had recently been translated into Amadou's first language. And after reading through the entire New Testament, Amadou committed to following Jesus.

Amadou was so excited about the gospel message that he decided to go back to his village to tell his family about Christ. First he went to his brother, but as Amadou shared the good news, his brother said that he already knew Jesus. Another Muslim-background believer from their people group had recently shared the gospel with him and now Amadou's brother was a disciple of Christ.

The brothers then went to their mother to introduce her to the gospel. But she stopped them saying she already followed Jesus. She told her sons that many years ago, her father had spoken with her about the good news.

"I have never forgotten the message my father shared with me," she said. "It was the message about a Saviour."

As David's team ministers to Amadou's people, they keep meeting Muslims who have similar stories. "Men and women from the same remote region and from the same people group have told us the same things," says David. "That their parents, grandparents, or great-grandparents shared the good news with them."

What a beautiful mystery—that long ago God used faithful but forgotten labourers to bring the gospel into a hard-to-reach region. And today, we're seeing the evidence that the seeds they planted have sprung to life!

"What did God do to first expose these precious men and women to His love?" David wonders. "One day we will find out. For now, we celebrate that many are now entering the Kingdom and are sharing their new hope in Christ with others."

- Praise God for the miraculous ways He is moving among this people group and drawing Muslims to Jesus.
- Pray for Amadou and other new believers to continue to be bold witnesses as they proclaim the gospel among their own people and beyond.
- Please pray for God's blessing on efforts to translate the Bible into the regional dialect—and pray that those who hear the Word in their heart language will believe in and follow Jesus.

Source: <https://frontiersusa.org/blog/seeds-in-forgotten-region/>

Friday 9th April

The Lahawin and Guhayna unreached peoples

“Declare His glory among the nations, his marvellous deeds among all peoples.” Ps 96: 3

The Lahawin are an Arab group who live in Eastern Sudan. They are nomadic camel herders following specific routes north in the rainy season and returning south later in the year. Some have settled in villages to grow subsistence crops while others travel with the animal herds. There are ongoing disputes between tribes over land and water availability. Some Lahawin have been forcibly settled on land which isn't suitable for the crops they grow. Others have had no choice but to go where they can find work. They have been more reluctant to settle and take up a more sedentary lifestyle than some of the other historically nomadic tribes in the region. For the most part, the Lahawin have resisted integration and have kept their distinct culture and identity. Marriage outside the tribe is rare.

Very few Lahawin have ever had the chance to meet a follower of Christ or hear the gospel message.

The Guhayna are a large Arab group who live in the South East of Sudan. They have maintained their culture and traditions. Like the Lahawin, they are nomads who raise all kinds of livestock. Men migrate to find fresh pasture while women and children stay at home where they grow crops. Diminishing rainfall has meant many herdsmen have lost their stock and been forced to move from their homes. Some have settled in small rural villages where they grow crops, while others have migrated to larger cities such as Khartoum. They are strict followers of Sunni Islam. It is common to find them stopping and bowing to pray whenever the call to pray is heard, whether on the roadside or in their shop or business. Since few can read or write, many consider the written word a source of magical power.

- Pray a blessing on the Lahawin and Guhayna as they adjust to changes in the environment that they live in.
- Ask the Lord to call people who are willing to live amongst the Lahawin and Guhayna and share the love of Christ with them.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to soften their hearts so they will be receptive to the gospel message.

Saturday 10th April

Khartoum – the capital city

Khartoum is the capital and largest city in Sudan, with a population of 6 million people. Spiritually, it is a desert place; many of the people are unengaged. It lies at the confluence of the Blue and White Nile rivers, where they meet to form the River Nile. It is a metropolis made up of three cities; Khartoum proper, Khartoum North or Bahri which is the third largest city in Sudan and Omdurman which is the second largest city in Sudan. Refugees fleeing war in the country live in poor settlements on the outskirts of the city.



With so many diverse people groups coexisting there and because it is a strategic city in Sudan, Khartoum has a significant influence in this country. Imagine if people from each unreached people group and culture came to Christ there, and then took the good news to their families and their communities all over Sudan! God's word in Isaiah assures us:

"Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord rises upon you. See, darkness covers the earth and thick darkness is over the peoples, but the Lord rises upon

you and his glory appears over you." Isaiah 60:1-2

- Let's ask for God's supernatural power to flow into Khartoum, bringing His light and glory to this city and then to this nation.
- Let's pray for the authority of God to rule in Khartoum and that He would open the hearts of the people there.
- Pray for people in Khartoum to hear the gospel message, and like Amadou who we read about on Thursday, to be so excited by it that they take the message back to their villages and towns.