



South Sudan — Va-PoReg Country Report

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[Before 2011 South Sudan was a part of Sudan. The Southern Sudan Autonomous Region was an autonomous region that existed in Southern Sudan between 1972 and 1983. It was established on 02/28/1972 by the Addis Ababa Agreement which ended the First Sudanese Civil War. The region was abolished on 06/05/1983 by the administration of Sudanese President Gaafar Nimeiry. Revocation of southern autonomy was one of the causes of the Second Sudanese Civil War which would continue until January 2005, when southern autonomy was restored; the region became the independent Republic of South Sudan in 2011.^{93F¹} The Second Sudanese Civil War was a conflict from 1983 to 2005 between the central Sudanese government and the Sudan People's Liberation Army. It was largely a continuation of the First Sudanese Civil War of 1955 to 1972. Although it originated in southern Sudan, the civil war spread to the Nuba mountains and the Blue Nile. It lasted for 22 years and is one of the longest civil wars on record. The war resulted in the independence of South Sudan six years after the war ended.^{94F²}]

[For the history of the region before 2011 see Sudan.]

07/09/2011 End Part of Other Country [of Sudan, Military Autocracy]/Start Personalist Autocracy: On this date, South Sudan gained independence from the Republic of Sudan as the outcome of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), signed on 01/09/2005 between the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) and the government of Sudan. The CPA granted the region of South Sudan a six-year transitional period of self-rule and allowed for an independence referendum, which took place from 01/09 to 15/2011. The results showed an overwhelming majority for independence from Sudan, granted on 07/09/2011.^{95F³} Salva Kiir Mayardit was elected president of the semiautonomous region of Southern Sudan from 04/11-15/2010 and remained president after South Sudan gained independence.^{96F⁴} The president cannot be impeached and has the authority to dismiss state governors and dissolve the legislature and state assemblies. A permanent constitution has not been published.^{97F⁵} We code this regime change event as a negotiated transition because the independence resulted from the peace agreement. As classified by FH for this regime period, the country is scored from 11 to 14 as not free, which corresponds to our interpretation of not free. According to LIED, no multiparty executive or legislative elections were held during this period. However, the Transitional Constitution of South Sudan 2011 (TCSS), enforced on the day of independence, introduced universal suffrage (Diehl/van der Horst 2013).^{98F⁶} On 12/15/2013 the South Sudanese civil war started. It was a multi-sided civil war in South Sudan between forces of the government and opposition forces. In December 2013, President Kiir accused his former deputy Riek Machar and ten others of attempting a coup d'état. Machar denied trying to start a coup and fled to lead the SPLM – in opposition (SPLM-IO). Fighting broke out between the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) and SPLM-IO, igniting the civil war. Ugandan troops were deployed to fight alongside the South Sudanese government.^{99F⁷} On 08/17/2015 the South Sudanese government and Machar's rebels signed a peace agreement on, brokered by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), temporarily stopping the fighting. As part of the peace accord, Machar returned to Juba and was sworn in as vice president on 04/26/2016.^{100F⁸} On 07/07/2016 the 2015 peace agreement collapsed after clashes between Kiir's and Machar's forces broke out. The fighting spreads across South Sudan and the southern Equatoria region.^{101F⁹} Consequently, Machar fled the country, and the rebel chief negotiator, Taban Deng Gai, replaced Machar as acting vice president, rejected by Machar as he had

fired Deng Gai before.^{102F}¹⁰ On 09/12/2018, President Kiir and rebel factions signed a second peace deal. However, rebels led by General Thomas Cirillo in Equatoria refused to sign the agreement and continued fighting.^{103F}¹¹ On 02/22/2020 after months of renewed negotiations, Machar returned to Juba and formed a unity government, the Revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity, with Kiir on this date. They declared an end to the civil war.^{104F}¹² The transitional government has postponed the 2023 general elections to late 2024.^{105F}¹³ The SPLM holds significant influence in the political arena, with the majority of competition occurring within the movement itself, following its fragmentation at the onset of the civil war. Kiir's intolerance towards dissent within the SPLM exacerbated the conflict. Both the government and the legislature, lacking electoral credibility, struggle to exert authority over the nation's territory.^{106F}¹⁴ In summary, the political developments in South Sudan since independence, including the concentration of power in the presidency and the absence of competitive elections align with the attributes of a personalist autocracy. Regarding political liberties, LIED only does consider the country from 2012 onwards and identifies political liberties as absent for the entire regime period. V-Dem's PCLI is classified by us as indicating that political liberties are not really present until 2013 and in 2020 and are absent for the remaining years. In 2012 and 2023, V-Dem's JCE is interpreted by us as indicating that judicial constraints on the executive were limited, and V-Dem's LCE is classified by us as indicating that legislative constraints on the executive were also limited. For the remaining years, V-Dem's JCE is interpreted by us as indicating that judicial constraints on the executive were absent, while V-Dem's LCE is classified by us as indicating that legislative constraints on the executive were limited.

Personalist Autocracy as of 07/01/2025 continued.

Notes

¹ [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Southern_Sudan_Autonomous_Region_\(1972%E2%80%931983\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Southern_Sudan_Autonomous_Region_(1972%E2%80%931983))

² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Second_Sudanese_Civil_War

³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2011_South_Sudanese_independence_referendum

⁴ <https://freedomhouse.org/country/south-sudan/freedom-world/2023>

⁵ <https://freedomhouse.org/country/south-sudan/freedom-world/2022>

⁶ https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/South_Sudan_2013?lang=en

⁷ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_Sudanese_Civil_War

⁸ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Riek_Machar

⁹ <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/horn-africa/south-sudan/south-sudan-independence-civil-war>

¹⁰ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Riek_Machar

¹¹ <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/horn-africa/south-sudan/south-sudan-independence-civil-war>

¹² <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/horn-africa/south-sudan/south-sudan-independence-civil-war>

¹³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2024_South_Sudanese_general_election

¹⁴ <https://freedomhouse.org/country/south-sudan/freedom-world/2023>

References

Diehl, Katharina/Van Der Horst, Judith (2013): The New Electoral Law in South Sudan, in: *Verfassung und Recht in Übersee/Law and Politics in Africa, Asia and Latin America* 46, 215-233.