

A HISTORY OF SOUTH SUDAN

South Sudan is the world's youngest independent country. Established in 2011 after two wars, South Sudan has since reverted to a state of devastating civil strife. This book is the first general history of the new country, from the arrival of Turco-Egyptian explorers in the upper Nile, the turbulence of the Mahdist revolutionary period, the chaos of the "Scramble for Africa," during which the South was prey to European and African adventurers and empire builders, to the Anglo-Egyptian colonial era. Special attention is paid to the period since Sudanese independence in 1956, when Southern disaffection grew into outright war, from the 1960s to 1972 and from 1983 until the Comprehensive Peace of 2005, and to the transition to South Sudan's independence. The book concludes with coverage of events since then, which, since December 2013, have assumed the character of civil war, and with insights into what the future might hold.

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A HISTORY OF SOUTH SUDAN

From Slavery to Independence

ØYSTEIN H. ROLANDSEN

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Preface

A History of South Sudan addresses several audiences and a wide variety of issues. We have chosen a conventional chronological approach, but a number of themes recur. Above all, we aim to illuminate two questions in the history of this new country: How did South Sudan become a political and administrative entity? And why did it separate from Sudan?

Answering these questions requires a new look at standard versions, for the historiography of South Sudan reflects entrenched and often diametrically opposed political views. Some nationalists' mission to create a South Sudanese national identity has led to the invention of a "natural" and timeless political and cultural unit. But we know remarkably little about what most people even today think it means to be South Sudanese. Although this book is not a "history of an idea," we examine some processes and events that contributed to shaping one. When South Sudanese voted, in January 2011, the proffered alternative to separation from Sudan was confederation and considerable autonomy: South Sudan would be recognized as a political and administrative unit within Sudan. Yet the vote went overwhelmingly for independence. How deep, and with what particular ramifications, was the sentiment for separation?

After all, the history of South Sudan over the past two centuries is of steadily increasing interaction between its peoples and the outside world. And since the mid-twentieth century, South Sudanese have migrated (or fled) in millions to Sudan, to neighboring countries, and beyond. Today, there are South Sudanese communities in most corners of the world. Some have impacted the places to which they have moved; many have returned to South Sudan with new allies and ideas. Thus, patterns of interaction have varied considerably over time and from place to place. So also have South Sudanese responses, their motives, and the opportunities for exchange and transformation that interaction opened up. This book aims to present at least broad outlines of how these opportunities came about and to what uses South Sudanese put them in pursuit of their own goals.

The term “South Sudan” has also become associated with war and human suffering. As yet another large-scale conflict unfolds, it is important to emphasize that this is not senseless violence or the result of incompetent politicians’ miscalculations, but the outcome of historical processes restricted and shaped by external and institutional conditions. The history of South Sudan is, in part, not only a product of violence, systems of oppression, and patterns of resistance but also a story of resilience and of the harnessing and mastering of the geographical, climatic, economic, and social contexts in which the people of this new country have found themselves.

In a brief and sweeping book like this, abbreviation and omissions are inevitable. Our goal is to present a fair and balanced account of the interplay between the broader structural forces of history and the chief agents of politics and warfare, that is, governments, political parties, armed groups, community leaders, and businessmen, which drove South Sudan toward independence. By this, we hope to correct (and indeed to analyze) the tendency in foreign source materials to depict outsiders as agents of change (however defined or characterized) and South Sudanese as passive (or irrational, or subversive) receptors.

Beyond what we can learn from oral tradition and archeology, South Sudan’s precolonial history remains obscure. In consequence, the book is divided into two main eras: that of colonialization and colonialism, and the period from 1956 to 2011 when South Sudan was part of the independent Sudan. The years since South Sudan’s independence are briefly discussed in Chapter 10. The bibliographical essay at the end gives a rudimentary introduction to the historiography of South Sudan and lists references to pioneering works which offer in-depth analysis and information concerning aspects of this country’s history. But much still remains to be done, and if this book can inspire or provoke such endeavors we will consider our mission accomplished.

Chronology

1839	First Egyptian expedition to the upper Nile.
1881–98	Mahdist revolution ends Turco-Egyptian rule in northern Sudan (1885) and overwhelms remaining outposts in south.
1899	Establishment of Anglo-Egyptian Condominium.
1930	End of “Nuer settlement” and armed South Sudanese resistance.
January 1930	“Southern Policy” adumbrated.
1946	“Southern Policy” officially revoked.
June 1947	First Juba Conference: South Sudanese to send representatives to National Legislative Assembly.
July 1947	Striking workers in Juba demand pay equal to Northerners’.
February 1953	Anglo-Egyptian Agreement stipulates end of colonial rule within three years.
November 1953	First national election.
October 1954	“Sudanization” outcome announced; Southerners win six posts of district commissioner and assistant district commissioner.
October 1954	Second Juba conference: chiefs, civil servants, and politicians demand federalism. Nzara protest violently suppressed.
July 1955	Torit Mutiny sparks weeks-long “Southern Disturbances”; subsequently put down by SDF.
August 18, 1955	

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Chronology

January 1956	Republic of Sudan established.
1957	Nationalization of missionary schools.
February 1958	Second national election.
November 1958	Coup overthrows Sudanese government, beginning six years of military rule.
February 1960	Southern schools closed after student protests; grievances include replacement of Sunday with Friday as day of rest.
Early 1962	Sudan African Closed Districts National Union established in exile.
October 1962	Southern students strike; thousands flee to neighboring countries.
November 1962	“Regulations for Missionary Societies” restrict foreign missionaries; expulsions ensue.
July/August 1963	Anya-Nya founded in Kampala.
September 1963	Attacks in the Upper Nile and Equatoria spark civil war.
January 1964	Anya-Nya attack Wau; war engulfs southern provinces.
February 1964	All foreign missionaries expelled.
November 1964	Military regime falls; Southerners join Transitional Government; Southern Front emerges in Khartoum.
March 1965	Round Table Conference on South held in Khartoum.
April 1965	National elections return traditional parties to power.
July 1965	Government soldiers carry out massacres in Juba and Wau.
May 1969	Coup overthrows government; Col. Jaafar Nimeiri emerges as leader, rules until 1985.
February 1972	Signing of Addis Ababa peace accord.
October 1973	First election to Southern Regional Assembly; Abel Alier becomes president of HEC.
1974–7	Former Anya-Nya soldiers mutiny in Juba (1974, February 1977), Akobo (1975), and Wau (1976).

Chronology

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December 1977–February 1978	Second election to Regional Assembly; Joseph Lagu becomes HEC president.
1979	First significant discoveries of oil announced.
1980	“Anya-Nya 2” commences hit-and-run attacks in the Upper Nile.
February 1980	Nimeiri dissolves Regional Assembly.
June 1980	Third election to Regional Assembly; Abel Alier returns as HEC president.
November 1980	Khartoum redraws provincial boundaries; oil fields removed from Southern region.
October 1981	President Nimeiri dissolves Regional Assembly, appoints Gismalla Abdalla Rassas to govern South pending elections.
April 1982	Fourth election to Regional Assembly; Joseph Tembura becomes HEC president.
May 16, 1983	Army moves to suppress mutiny at Bor; 105th Battalion escapes to Ethiopia, followed by 104th battalion from Akobo.
June 1983	Khartoum abolishes Regional Assembly, divides South into three “regions.”
July 1983	Sudan People’s Liberation Movement/Army founded in Ethiopia.
September 1983	Nimeiri regime promulgates Sharia law for Sudan, including the South.
April 1985	Army ousts Nimeiri after mass demonstrations; Transitional Military Council takes power.
March 1986	SPLM/A and National Alliance for National Salvation signs the Koka Dam Declaration.
April 1986	National elections return civilian government in Khartoum.
June 30, 1989	Coup overthrows government; Revolutionary Command Council established, with strong Islamist influence, under General Omar Hassan al-Bashir.
May–June 1991	SPLM/A evacuates Ethiopia after fall of Derg regime.

xii	<i>Chronology</i>
August 28, 1991	Nasir Declaration by Riek Machar, Lam Akol, and Gordon Kong splits SPLM/A; factional fighting ensues.
January 1992	Khartoum regime and Nasir faction sign Frankfurt Agreement conceding referendum on special status for South.
May 1992	Abuja peace talks between Sudanese government and SPLM/A factions; latter demand self-determination for South.
September 1993	Beginning of IGAD attempt to mediate between Sudanese government and SPLM/A.
July 1994	Joint Declaration of Principles, rejected by Sudanese government, reaffirms SPLM/A commitment to Southern self-determination and secularism.
April 2–13, 1994	First SPLM/A National Convention at Chukudum.
June 1995	NDA endorses Southern self-determination and concessions over border regions.
September 1995	Sudanese government implicated in attempted assassination of Egyptian President Mubarak.
December 1996	Chinese and Indonesian state oil companies form consortium with Sudan.
April 1997	In Khartoum Peace Agreement with Southern militias, Sudanese government accepts referendum over South Sudan's future status.
January 1998	High point of SPLM/A counter-offensive with capture of Wau; severe famine in Bahr al-Ghazal.
March 1999	Wunlit peace agreement signals start of grassroots reconciliations of warring factions in South.
July 1999	NDA and Sudanese government endorse Joint Egyptian–Libyan initiative rejecting self-determination for South.
August 1999	Export of Sudanese oil commences.

Chronology

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November 1999	In the USA, Sudan Peace Act allows direct assistance to SPLM/A.
January 2000	President Bashir wins power struggle with Islamists, whose leader Hassan al-Turabi establishes Popular Congress Party.
September 6, 2001	John Danforth appointed US special envoy for Sudan.
January 2002	Riek Machar reunites with SPLM/A.
March 2002	Sudan and Uganda sign appeasement agreement; Ugandan forces invited to combat Lord's Resistance Army in Sudan.
July 20, 2002	In Machakos Protocol, SPLM/A concedes Sharia law in northern Sudan; South to exercise self-determination after six-and-a-half years.
October 2002	Government and SPLM/A reach agreement on cessation of hostilities.
April 2003	Low-intensity conflict in Darfur escalates into civil war.
July 2003	IGAD peace talks break down.
September 2003	Vice-President Ali Osman Taha and SPLM/A Chairman John Garang start direct talks on security arrangements and reach an agreement.
January 2004	Taha and Garang reach agreement over wealth-sharing.
May 2004	Agreement reached on power-sharing and contested areas of Abyei, Nuba Mountains, and the Blue Nile.
January 9, 2005	Comprehensive Peace Agreement signed in Nairobi.
July 30, 2005	John Garang dies in helicopter crash. In August, Salva Kiir becomes vice-president of Sudan and SPLM/A chairman.
January 2006	Juba Declaration signed; militias of Paulino Matip and other commanders to be absorbed into SPLA.
October 2007	SPLM withdraws in protest from Government of National Unity; rejoins in December.

xiv	<i>Chronology</i>
May 2008	Factional disputes disrupt SPLM's second National Convention; fighting erupts at Abyei.
March 2009	International Criminal Court issues arrest warrant for President Bashir over crimes against humanity in Darfur.
December 2009	After demonstration and arrests of leading SPLM members, Referendum Law passed by National Parliament in Khartoum.
April 2010	Bashir wins presidential election; Salva Kiir elected president of Southern Sudan. Some state elections violently contested.
July 2010	Commencement of negotiations between NCP and SPLM over post-referendum arrangements under auspices of African Union High Level Panel.
January 9–15, 2011	Southern referendum over independence or regional autonomy results in almost 99% vote for secession.
May 2011	Sudanese government forces occupy Abyei following refusal to hold Abyei referendum.
June 2011	New rebellion in South Kordofan/Nuba Mountains following contested gubernatorial elections.
July 9, 2011	Republic of South Sudan declared.
September 2011	Reignited civil war in the Blue Nile.
January 2012	South Sudan stops oil production after Sudan confiscates an oil shipment.
March–April 2012	Skirmishes between Sudan and South Sudan in the border states of South Kordofan and Unity.
September 2012	Agreement between Sudan and South Sudan on bilateral relations and payment for South Sudan's use of oil pipeline and port facilities.
July 2013	President Salva Kiir dismisses cabinet and Vice-President Riek Machar.

Chronology

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December 2013

SPLM leadership crisis quickly escalates into civil war.

January 2014

SPLM factions reach Cessation of Hostilities agreement, which is subsequently ignored.

Abbreviations and Arabic terms

ANC	African National Congress
AU	African Union
CAR	Central African Republic
CMS	Church Missionary Society
CPA	Comprehensive Peace Agreement
DC	District Commissioner
DUP/NUP	Democratic/National Unionist Party
E£	Egyptian Pounds
EPLF	Eritrean People's Liberation Front
<i>hakuma</i>	Ar.: government
HEC	High Executive Council
IGAD(D)	Intergovernmental Authority on [Drought and] Development (in 1996, "Drought" was eliminated from its name, hence IGAD)
<i>Jallabal/jallabiya</i>	Ar.: peddlers/gown worn by northern Sudanese
JIU	Joint Integrated Units
KAR	King's African Rifles
<i>Khalwa</i>	Ar.: rudimentary village school
NCP	National Congress Party
NDA	National Democratic Alliance
NGO	Nongovernmental organization
NIF	National Islamic Front
NLC	National Liberation Council
OAU	Organization of African Unity
OLS	Operation Lifeline Sudan
RAF	Royal Air Force
SACDNU	Southern African Closed Districts National Union (1962–3)
SAF	Sudan Armed Forces

List of abbreviations and Arabic terms

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SANU	Sudan African National Union (1963–)
SDF	Sudan Defence Force
SOA	Sudan Open Archive
SPLA	Sudan People’s Liberation Army
SPLM	Sudan People’s Liberation Movement
SPLM/A Nasir	SPLM/A faction during the 1990s
SSLM	South Sudan Liberation Movement (c. 1970–2)
<i>sudd</i>	Ar.: “barrier”: vast flooded area in South Sudan
TPLF	Tigray People’s Liberation Front
UNMIS/SS	UN Mission in Sudan (from July 2011: UN Mission in South Sudan)
<i>zariba</i>	Ar.: “enclosure,” palisaded camp erected by slave traders in South Sudan

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Maps

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