Sudan at War With Itself

Since gaining independence in 1956, Sudan has spent all but about 10 years in internal armed conflict. The current crisis in Darfur has become one of the worst human disasters in Africa. Shortly after the Darfur conflict erupted in 2003, a two-decade-long civil war in the southern provinces ended with a peace accord, but occasional flare-ups and recent complaints from the south point to many unsettled issues.

**SOUTH SUDAN**

- **Geography**
  - The 10 southern provinces make up about one-third of Sudan’s land area. It is a fertile area, fed by many tributaries of the Nile River.
- **People**
  - Most of the people in the south are African and follow either traditional indigenous beliefs or Christianity. The majority of people live off agriculture.
- **Economy**
  - The region has long been neglected and has little infrastructure. But the discovery of oil has changed the economic outlook of the south and that of all of Sudan.

**DARFUR**

- **Geography**
  - Sudan’s largest country in area, almost the size of the continental United States east of the Mississippi. Darfur constitutes about one-fifth of Sudan’s land.
  - Darfur consists primarily of an arid, sandy plateau with the Marra Mountains traversing the center. Seasonal rivers and bennhows for tapping deep aquifers provide water for farmers and herders.

**The Wars**

- **1956**
  - Formal independence from Britain and Egypt. A north-south civil war had erupted the previous year after southern army officers mutinied.
- **1972**
  - Peace accord signed.
- **1970s**
  - Oil discovery in south leads to new clashes.
- **1983**
  - North-south civil war reignites.
- **1980s**
  - Sudanese President Nimeri abrogated the peace accord and announced he would turn Sudan into a Muslim Arab state, where Islamic law, or sharia, would prevail, including in the southern provinces. Sharia can include amputation of limbs for certain crimes.
- **1990s**
  - Sudanese, African, and Arab; many ethnic, linguistic and religious subdivisions.
- **2000s**
  - U.S. imposes trade embargo.
- **2005**
  - North-south peace accord signed.

**The Rebel Forces**

- **The Janjaweed**
  - The JEM (Justice and Equality Movement) was joined by the UDA (Umma Democratic Alliance) in 2004.
- **The government**
  - Omar Hassan al-Bashir.

**Human Misery**

- Dead: 2 million, from famine, disease and fighting.
- Displaced: At least 4 million, of whom many left for other countries. The United Nations has repatriated many refugees, and fewer than 400,000 remained in other African countries as of October 2005.

**Darfur Peace Efforts**

- **U.N. forces**
  - Sudanese President Bashir has refused to allow a large U.N. force into Darfur.
- **All forces**
  - A 7,000-member African Union force is underfunded and ineffective in halting the fighting.