World
Watch
Research

South Sudan: Full Country Dossier

February 2022

Contents

Introduction

World Watch List 2022

Rank	Country	Private life	Family life	Community life	National life	Church life	Violence	Total Score WWL 2022	Total Score WWL 2021	Total Score WWL 2020	Total Score WWL 2019	Total Score WWL 2018
1	Afghanistan	16.7	16.7	16.7	16.7	16.7	15.0	98	94	93	94	93
2	North Korea	16.7	16.7	16.7	16.7	16.7	13.1	96	94	94	94	94
3	Somalia	16.5	16.7	16.6	16.6	16.6	8.5	91	92	92	91	91
4	Libya	15.6	15.5	15.9	16.2	16.3	11.5	91	92	90	87	86
5	Yemen	16.7	16.6	16.5	16.7	16.7	5.2	88	87	85	86	85
6	Eritrea	14.6	14.9	15.5	15.9	15.6	11.1	88	88	87	86	86
7	Nigeria	13.8	13.8	14.3	14.5	14.4	16.7	87	85	80	80	77
8	Pakistan	13.6	14.0	15.1	14.9	13.1	16.7	87	88	88	87	86
9	Iran	14.5	14.6	13.6	15.8	16.5	10.4	85	86	85	85	85
10	India	12.7	12.7	12.9	14.7	13.3	15.6	82	83	83	83	81
11	Saudi Arabia	15.1	15.1	15.0	15.9	16.7	3.1	81	78	79	77	79
12	Myanmar	12.4	11.5	13.8	13.4	13.1	14.8	79	74	73	71	65
13	Sudan	13.4	13.4	14.3	13.6	15.7	8.5	79	79	85	87	87
14	Iraq	14.0	14.6	14.0	14.8	13.9	6.9	78	82	76	79	86
15	Syria	12.9	13.8	13.5	14.3	13.9	9.3	78	81	82	82	76
16	Maldives	15.4	15.3	13.7	15.8	16.5	0.4	77	77	78	78	78
17	China	12.6	9.8	12.2	14.4	15.5	11.1	76	74	70	65	57
18	Qatar	14.2	14.1	11.1	13.0	14.3	7.2	74	67	66	62	63
19	Vietnam	11.3	9.7	12.7	14.1	14.5	8.7	71	72	72	70	69
20	Egypt	12.7	13.2	11.5	12.7	10.8	10.0	71	75	76	76	70
21	Uzbekistan	14.9	12.7	14.1	11.8	15.6	1.7	71	71	73	74	73
22	Algeria	14.0	14.0	11.1	13.4	14.1	4.1	71	70	73	70	58
23	Mauritania	14.3	13.9	13.1	14.0	14.1	0.9	70	71	68	67	57
24	Mali	9.4	8.2	13.9	10.3	12.8	15.0	70	67	66	68	59
25	Turkmenistan	14.5	11.3	13.6	13.3	15.7	0.6	69	70	70	69	68
26	Laos	12.0	10.3	13.2	13.3	14.1	5.9	69	71	72	71	67
27	Morocco	13.1	13.8	10.8	12.8	14.2	3.9	69	67	66	63	51
28	Indonesia	11.3	11.5	11.5	11.0	9.6	13.5	68	63	60	65	59
29	Bangladesh	11.8	10.7	12.9	11.3	10.2	11.3	68	67	63	58	58
30	Colombia	11.5	8.8	13.1	11.0	9.9	13.3	68	67	62	58	56
31	CAR	9.0	8.6	13.6	9.6	11.4	15.6	68	66	68	70	61
32	Burkina Faso	9.4	9.7	12.0	9.6	12.1	14.8	68	67	66	48	-
33	Niger	9.4	9.5	13.9	7.2	12.8	14.8	68	62	60	52	45
34	Bhutan	13.4	12.4	11.7	13.7	13.8	1.7	67	64	61	64	62
35	Tunisia	11.9	12.7	10.6	11.3	13.4	6.5	66	67	64	63	62
36	Oman	13.8	14.0	10.3	13.2	13.4	1.5	66	63	62	59	57
37	Cuba	12.3	8.1	12.6	13.2	14.0	5.9	66	62	52	49	49
38	Ethiopia	9.9	10.3	13.1	10.3	12.3	9.8	66	65	63	65	62
39	Jordan	12.9	14.0	11.0	12.3	12.5	3.0	66	64	64	65	66
40	DRC	8.0	7.9	12.6	9.7	12.0	15.6	66	64	56	55	33
41	Mozambique	9.3	8.5	11.3	7.9	12.5	15.6	65	63	43	43	-
42	Turkey	12.6	11.5	11.4	13.2	11.6	4.6	65	69	63	66	62
43	Mexico	10.3	8.3	12.5	10.8	10.3	12.6	65	64	60	61	59
44	Cameroon	8.8	7.6	12.6	7.2	13.1	15.4	65	64	60	54	38
45	Tajikistan	13.8	12.3	12.0	12.6	13.2	0.7	65	66	65	65	65
46	Brunei	14.8	14.5	10.3	11.0	13.2	0.6	64	64	63	63	64
47	Kazakhstan	13.4	11.6	11.1	12.6	13.5	1.7	64	64	64	63	63
48	Nepal	12.4	9.8	9.9	13.6	12.7	5.2	64	66	64	64	64
49	Kuwait	13.5	13.7	9.8	12.3	13.1	1.1	64	63	62	60	61
50	Malaysia	12.5	14.3	11.5	11.6	10.2	3.3	63	63	62	60	65

Rank	Country	Private life	Family life	Community life	National life	Church life	Violence	Total Score WWL 2022	Total Score WWL 2021	Total Score WWL 2020	Total Score WWL 2019	Total Score WWL 2018
51	Kenya	11.7	9.2	11.4	8.0	11.5	11.1	63	62	61	61	62
52	Sri Lanka	12.9	9.9	11.4	11.3	9.4	7.8	63	62	65	58	57
53	Comoros	12.7	11.1	11.2	12.4	14.2	0.9	63	62	57	56	56
54	UAE	13.4	13.6	10.1	11.8	12.2	1.3	62	62	60	58	58
55	Tanzania	9.3	10.8	10.3	8.6	8.7	13.7	61	58	55	52	53
56	Azerbaijan	13.1	9.9	9.3	11.0	13.4	3.3	60	56	57	57	57
57	Palestinian Territories	13.0	13.4	9.8	10.2	12.0	0.9	59	58	60	57	60
58	Djibouti	12.3	12.3	11.1	10.0	12.2	0.7	59	56	56	56	56
59	Kyrgyzstan	12.9	10.1	11.1	10.4	12.0	1.5	58	58	57	56	54
60	Bahrain	12.5	13.2	9.1	11.1	10.2	0.9	57	56	55	55	57
61	Nicaragua	9.1	5.6	11.1	11.8	11.3	7.6	56	51	41	41	-
62	Russian Federation	12.3	8.0	10.2	10.6	12.3	2.2	56	57	60	60	51
63	Chad	11.5	8.2	10.2	9.6	10.3	5.6	55	53	56	48	40
64	Burundi	7.6	7.8	9.7	9.2	9.6	8.1	52	48	48	43	-
65	Venezuela	5.6	4.5	11.2	9.4	11.1	9.6	51	39	42	41	34
66	Angola	6.8	6.7	8.1	10.1	11.4	7.8	51	46	43	42	-
67	Rwanda	8.1	5.5	6.7	10.3	10.1	9.3	50	42	42	41	-
68	Honduras	7.2	5.1	10.5	7.7	9.2	8.7	48	46	39	38	
69	Uganda	8.1	4.6	7.4	6.7	9.1	11.7	48	47	48	47	46
70	El Salvador	7.7	4.6	10.7	5.7	9.1	7.2	45	42	38	30	
71	Togo	9.2	6.7	9.3	7.1	9.8	2.4	44	43	41	42	-
72	Gambia	8.3	8.2	8.7	8.3	8.8	1.7	44	43	43	43	-
73	Guinea	10.3	7.5	8.3	7.0	8.1	2.0	43	47	45	46	-
74	South Sudan	5.7	0.9	7.0	6.3	7.8	15.0	43	43	44	44	-
75	Ivory Coast	9.8	8.6	8.2	5.5	7.9	2.0	42	42	42	43	-
76	Israel	9.8	8.4	5.6	6.6	6.6	4.3	41	40	38	39	40

Copyright note

Sources and definitions

- This country report is a collation of data and analysis based around Open Doors World Watch List (WWL) and includes statistical information on world religions, Christian denominations and people groups prepared by the World Christian Database (WCD).
- Highlighted links in the text can be found written out in full at the conclusion of each main section under the heading "External links". In order to reduce the length of these reference sections, a table containing links to regularly used sources can be found at the beginning of the "Keys to Understanding" chapter under the heading "Links for general background information". Where one of these sources has been quoted in the dossier text, a quote reference is supplied as indicated in the second column of the table.
- The WWL 2022 reporting period was 1 October 2020 - 30 September 2021.
- The definition of persecution used in WWL analysis is: "Any hostility experienced as a result of one's identification with Christ. This can include hostile attitudes, words and actions towards Christians". This broad definition includes (but is not limited to) restrictions, pressure, discrimination, opposition, disinformation, injustice, intimidation, mistreatment, marginalization, oppression, intolerance, infringement, violation, ostracism, hostilities, harassment, abuse, violence, ethnic cleansing and genocide.
- The latest update of WWL Methodology including appendices can be found on the World Watch List Documentation page of the Open Doors Analytical website (password: freedom).

Effect on data-gathering during COVID-19 pandemic

In the WWL 2022 reporting period, travel restrictions and other measures introduced by the governments of various countries to combat the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic did cause delays and create the need for restructuring grass-roots research in some cases. Through the agile cooperation of In-country networks, Open Doors country researchers, External experts, WWR analysts and an increased use of technological options, Open Doors is confident that – as in the previous reporting period – WWL 2022 scoring, analysis and documentation has maintained required levels of quality and reliability.

External Links - Introduction

- Sources and definitions: World Watch List Documentation - https://opendoorsanalytical.org/world-watch-list-documentation/

WWL 2022 Situation in brief / South Sudan

Brief country details

South Sudan: Population (UN estimate for 2021)	Christians	Chr%
13,960,000	8,696,000	62.3

Data source: Johnson T M and Zurlo G A, eds, World Christian Database (Leiden/Boston: Brill, accessed April 2021)

South Sudan: World Watch List	Points	WWL Rank
WWL 2022	43	74
WWL 2021	43	69
WWL 2020	44	65
WWL 2019	44	64
WWL 2018	-	-

Ranks are shown above whenever the country scored 41 points or more in the WWL 2018-2022 reporting periods

Dominant persecution engines and drivers

South Sudan: Main Persecution engines	Main drivers
Organized corruption and crime	Revolutionaries or paramilitary groups
Clan oppression	Ethnic group leaders, One's own (extended) family
Dictatorial paranoia	Government officials

Engines and Drivers are listed in order of strength. Only Very strong / Strong / Medium are shown here.

Brief description of the persecution situation

The continuous civil war has left most areas in the country beyond the control of the government. The persecution of Christians by state authorities, rebel groups and tribal leaders have become a common occurrence. Churches have been targeted by armed groups for looting, at times killing people inside the churches. Speaking out against corruption and injustice can invite reprisals.

Specific examples of violations of rights in the reporting period

24 December 2020: As reported by the US State Department (IRFR 2020, p.3): "According to local media, three South Sudan People's Defense Forces (SSPDF) soldiers attacked members of the Revival Movement Church in Loka West, Central Equatoria, on Christmas Eve. The Archbishop of Central Equatoria and Bishop of the Diocese of Lainya said the soldiers forced church members to drink alcohol and locked five men in a hut before setting it on fire. The soldiers reportedly abducted and raped three women, forcing them to carry looted property to SSPDF barracks. Fifteen persons were injured in the attack, which the Archbishop stated was the second incident in which soldiers forced Christians to drink alcohol."

18 May 2021: A pastor serving at the African Inland Church was shot dead in the town of Torit in Eastern Equatoria State. The unidentified gunmen were apparently disguised as people in need and lured the pastor out of his house at night by repeatedly calling his name. (Eye Radio, 18 May 2021).

25 April 2021: Unknown gunmen shot and wounded the bishop-elect of Rumbek Catholic Diocese. Italian-born Christian Carlassare was shot in both legs at his residence in the early hours of 25 April (Vatican News, 21 June 2021).

External Links - Situation in brief

- Specific examples of violations of rights in the reporting period: 24 December 2020 - https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/240282-SOUTH-SUDAN-2020-INTERNATIONAL-RELIGIOUS-FREEDOM-REPORT.pdf
- Specific examples of violations of rights in the reporting period: 18 May 2021: - https://eyeradio.org/torit-cleric-shot-dead-at-his-home/
- Specific examples of violations of rights in the reporting period: 25 April 2021: - https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2021-04/pope-bishop-carlassare-bishop-elect-south-sudan-attack.html

WWL 2022: Keys to understanding / South Sudan

Links for general background information

Name	Quote Reference	Link	Last accessed on
Amnesty International country report	AI 2021	https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/africa/east-africa-the-horn-and-great-lakes/south-sudan/	16 September 2021
BBC News country profile	BBC country profile	https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-14069082	16 September 2021
Bertelsmann Transformation Index 2020	BTI 2020	https://bti-project.org/en/reports/country-dashboard/SSD	16 September 2021
CIA World Factbook	CIA Factbook	https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/south-sudan/	16 September 2021
Economist Intelligence Unit Democracy Index 2020	EIU 2020	https://pages.eiu.com/rs/753-RIQ-438/images/democracy-index-2020.pdf	16 September 2021
FFP's Fragile States Index 2021	FSI 2021	https://fragilestatesindex.org/country-data/	16 September 2021
Freedom House's 2021 Democracy index (Not included)	Freedom House/Democracy 2021	https://freedomhouse.org/countries/nations-transit/scores	
Freedom House's 2021 Global Freedom index	Freedom House/Global Freedom 2021	https://freedomhouse.org/country/south-sudan/freedom-world/2021	16 September 2021
Freedom House's Freedom on the Net 2020 report (Not included)	Freedom House/Internet Freedom 2020	https://freedomhouse.org/countries/freedom-net/scores	
Garda World country report	Garda World	https://www.garda.com/crisis24/country-reports/south-sudan	16 September 2021
Human Rights Watch World Report 2021	HRW 2021	https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2021/country-chapters/south-sudan	16 September 2021
Internet World Stats 2021	IWS 2021	https://www.internetworldstats.com/africa.htm#ss	16 September 2021
RSF's 2020 World Press Freedom Index	World Press Freedom 2020	https://rsf.org/en/south-sudan	16 September 2021
Transparency International's 2020 Corruption Perceptions Index	CPI 2020	https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2020/index/ssd	16 September 2021
UNDP's Global Human Development Indicators	HDI	http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/SSD	16 September 2021
US State Department's 2020 International Religious Freedom country reports	IRFR 2020	https://www.state.gov/reports/2020-report-on-international-religious-freedom/south-sudan/	16 September 2021
USCIRF 2021 country reports (Not included)	USCIRF 2021	https://www.uscirf.gov/countries	
World Bank country report	World Bank	https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/southsudan	16 September 2021

Recent history

The Republic of South Sudan (previously known as Southern Sudan) is a land-locked country in east-central Africa that is part of the United Nations sub-region of Eastern Africa. Its current capital is Juba, which is also its largest city, but there are plans to move it to the more centrally located Ramciel in the future. South Sudan is bordered by Ethiopia to the east, Kenya to the southeast, Uganda to the south, the Democratic Republic of the Congo to the southwest, the Central African Republic to the west and the Republic of Sudan to the north. It includes the vast swamp region of the Sudd, formed by the White Nile and known locally as the Bahr al-Jabal.

South Sudan became an independent state on 9 July 2011, following a referendum that passed with 98.83% of the vote. It is a United Nations member state, a member state of the African Union, and a member state of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development. In July 2012, South Sudan signed the Geneva Conventions.

South Sudan has an estimated population of just over 13 million and the economy is predominantly rural, relying chiefly on subsistence farming. Around 2005, the economy began a transition from this rural dominance, and urban areas within South Sudan have seen extensive development. However, the region is still suffering from the effects of two long-lasting civil wars: The First Sudanese Civil War (1955-1972) in which the Sudanese government fought the Anyanya rebel army; the Second Sudanese Civil War (1985-2005) during which the Sudanese government fought the Sudan People's Liberation Army/Movement (SPLA/M). Unlike the civil

strife of the 1960s and 1970s, the insurgency in the 1980s and the 1990s took on a more religiously confrontational character. Due to the many years of war, the country suffered serious neglect, a lack of infrastructural development, and major destruction and displacement. More than 2.5 million people were killed and millions more became IDPs/refugees (Gurtong, accessed 30 September 2020).

Right after independence, the conflict between the two independence leaders, President Salva Kiir and Vice-President Riek Machar, led to the outbreak of a civil war in 2013. The two leaders got their support from the two major ethnic groups in the country, the Dinka and Nuer respectively. This South Sudan civil war has led to a major socio-economic disaster and to the deaths of nearly 40,000 people. On 12 September 2018, the two factions signed an agreement to end the civil war (BBC News, 13 September 2018). However, there are multiple unresolved issues following the accord and there were some areas in the country where fighting continued. Many other agreements were signed (see below: *Political and Legal landscape*) but were not honored by the parties involved. Eventually, in February 2020, a unity government was formed and an end to the civil war (2013-2019) was declared (Lemon Wire, 22 February 2020). It is hoped this will end all hostilities between the Nuer and Dinka.

The agreement that led to the formation of the unity government in February 2020 brought high hopes for peace both in the country and in the international community. However, certain armed groups were left out of the peace agreement which then led to the formation of the unity government. In April 2021, UN experts warned:

- "[P]olitical, military and ethnic divisions in South Sudan are widening, leading to multiple violent incidents between the main signatories to last year's cease-fire, the possibility of renewed war, and nearly 100,000 people facing 'famine-like conditions'" (AP News, 27 April 2021).

Political and legal landscape

Under the 2011 Transitional Constitution, South Sudan was a republic. Executive power was vested in the president and the vice president, who was appointed by the president (Britannica, accessed 30 September 2020). Hence, in July 2011, Salva Kiir Mayardit became president of the new independent state of South Sudan. However, seven years of civil war erupted when President Kiir sacked his cabinet and accused Vice-President Riek Machar of attempting a failed coup. In September 2018, a power-sharing agreement was signed by President Kiir and opposition groups in a bid to end the brutal conflict. As a first step, the accord called for all armed groups to withdraw from all cities and civilian areas such as schools and refugee camps in the run-up to the country entering into a three-year-long political transition.

In a first step towards durable peace and a transition to civil rule, on 22 February 2020, the Revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity(R-TGoNU) was formed in accordance with the 2018 "Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan" (R-ARCSS, 12 September 2018), marking the start of a 36-month transitional period. While the overall implementation looks promising, some teething problems have slowed down the progress. So far, the parties have agreed and made progress on certain key areas such as the number of states and boundaries in South Sudan, and the unification of the armed forces.

However, the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC, 21 January 2020) expressed its 'grave concern' about the sustained lack of political will to end the war in the country and reported:

- "Beyond the fragile peace at the national level, localized and often ethnically-based tensions intensified, leading to an increase of nearly 200 percent in the number of civilian casualties over 2018. Between late February and May 2019, the United Nations Mission in South Sudan recorded some 531 deaths and 317 injuries in 152 incidents of localized violence. Of grave concern, brutal attacks, often premised on cattle raiding, involved members of the State apparatus or the Sudan People's Liberation Army in Opposition (pro-Riek Machar) (SPLA-IO (RM)) and drove displacement at alarming rates, including in Western Bahr el Ghazal, Unity and Jonglei States."

This meant that even if the peace treaty was honored, there were issues of human rights abuses and atrocities that still had to be resolved. In February 2020, the rival leaders succeeded in forming a coalition government. A day after President Salva Kiir dissolved the previous government, opposition leader Riek Machar was sworn in as his deputy (Lemon Wire, 22 February 2020).

Religious landscape

South Sudan: Religious context	Number of adherents	%
Christians	8,696,000	62.3
Muslim	856,000	6.1
Hindu	260	0.0
Buddhist	320	0.0
Ethno-religionist	4,342,000	31.1
Jewish	0	0.0
Bahai	890	0.0
Atheist	6,600	0.0
Agnostic	58,400	0.4
Other	640	0.0
OTHER includes Chinese folk, New religionist, Sikh, Spiritist, Taoist, Confucianist, Jain, Shintoist, Zoroastrian.		

Data source: Johnson T M and Zurlo G A, eds, World Christian Database (Leiden/Boston: Brill, accessed April 2021)

South Sudan gained independence from Sudan in 2011 and the demography has changed from being a Muslim-majority country (when it was part of Sudan) to being a Christian-majority one. A substantial part of the population in isolated areas adheres to Traditional African religions (ATR, over 31% of the population) or combines Christian and indigenous practices. Although

Christians have become a majority and no longer face the persecution they experienced under a conservative Islamic Sudanese government, their socio-economic conditions have not significantly improved to date.

Christianity is most prevalent among the peoples of Al Istiwai State, namely the Madi, Moru, Azande and Bari.

Economic landscape

The Republic of South Sudan became the world's newest nation and Africa's 55th country on 9 July 2011. The renewed conflicts in December 2013 and July 2016 undermined the development gains achieved since independence and worsened the humanitarian situation. Close to 400,000 people have been killed since 2013, more than 4.2 million people have been displaced both internally and to neighboring countries, and about 5.3 million (nearly half the population) still face severe food insecurity. Much of the population is dependent on subsistence agriculture and humanitarian assistance. Property rights are insecure and price signals are weak because markets are not well-organized.

According to World Bank's [Macro Poverty Outlook 2020](#) (focused on Sub-Saharan Africa):

- **Economic growth:** The economy had picked up strongly before the COVID-19 pandemic, with GDP real growth reaching 9.5 percent in FY2019/20. The oil sector has continued to be the primary driver of growth, with estimated oil production of 62.1 million barrels in FY2019/20, representing a 26.5 percent increase on the 49.1 million barrels realized in FY2018/19. South Sudan's economy is set to contract by 3.4 percent in FY2020/21 as concurrent shocks including COVID-19, floods, and subnational conflict have constrained economic activity. Low oil prices have led to large fiscal and external imbalances. Living standards have deteriorated. More than 6 million people are facing crisis level food insecurity, with 1.4 million children under 5 years expected to be acutely malnourished in 2021.
- **Fiscal deficit:** Despite the sharp drop in oil revenues, the primary fiscal balance remained in surplus, though narrower than in 2019. The government has prioritized spending on health (which increased 40 percent) and social protection. Debt reprofiling agreements reached in 2020, including under the Debt Service Suspension Initiative (DSSI), have reduced near-term financing pressures.
- **Total public debt**: Total public debt during FY 2018/19 was estimated at 34.2% of GDP of which external debt is 30.2%. Accumulation of arrears, low capacity to service debt, and low foreign exchange reserves indicate unsustainable debt dynamics.
- **Poverty:** Given the large economic fallout from Covid-19 and other concurrent shocks, poverty at $1.90 per person per day is projected to increase to 78.2 percent in FY2020/21 from 76.8 percent in FY2019/20.
- **COVID-19:** "South Sudan's economy is set to contract by 3.4 percent in FY2020/21 primarily due to a decline in oil production and slower recovery of the non-oil economy. The Covid-19 pandemic has delayed new investments in the oil sector, with oil production expected to decline by 5.8 percent to 58.4 million barrels in FY2020/21. The non-oil economy is expected to contract by 1.9 percent owing to a combination of conflict and Covid19, with new lockdown measures imposed in early February 2021. A gradual recovery is expected in

the near term, assuming a rebound in the global economy and domestic containment of the pandemic."

According to the World Bank (country overview):

- **Exports:** "South Sudan is one of the most oil-dependent countries in the world, with oil accounting for almost the totality of exports, 90% of revenue, and more than one-third of its gross domestic product (GDP)." On current reserve estimates, oil production is expected to reduce steadily in future years and to become negligible by 2035.
- **Inflation:** After independence, South Sudan's central bank issued a new currency, the South Sudanese Pound (SSP). However, the monetization of the fiscal deficit accelerated inflation from 187% in June 2016 to 550% in September 2016 before declining to 362% in June 2017. As the pace of money printing slowed, inflation decelerated. Inflation averaged 87% during the first nine months of FY2019/20 higher than during FY2018/19.

Social and cultural landscape

According to UNDP's Human Development Indicators (HDI 2020) and CIA Factbook:

- **Main ethnic groups:** Dinka (Jieng) 35.8%, Nuer (Naath) 15.6%, Shilluk (Chollo), Azande, Bari, Kakwa, Kuku, Murle, Mandari, Didinga, Ndogo,Bviri, Lndi, Anuak, Bongo, Lango, Dungotona, Acholi, Baka, Fertit (2011 est.)
- **Main languages:** English (official), Arabic (includes Juba and Sudanese variants), regional languages include Dinka, Nuer, Bari, Zande, Shiluk
- **Median age:** 19.0 years
- **Urban population:** 19.9%
- **Expected years of schooling:** 5.3 years
- **Literacy rate, adult (ages 15 and older):** 34.5%
- **Employment to population ratio (ages 15 and older):** 63.5%
- **Unemployment, total:** 12.2% of labour force
- **Unemployment, youth (ages 15-24):** 18.8%
- **Human Development Index (HDI) score and ranking:** South Sudan ranked 185th out of 189 countries with a human development value of 0.433
- **Life expectancy at birth:** 57.9 years
- **Gender Development Index (GDI):** 0.842
- **Gender Inequality Index (GII):** No data

In general, the new nation has been facing multiple challenges, all exacerbated by the 2013-2019 civil war. According to the CIA Factbook:

- Educational attainment is extremely poor due to the lack of schools, qualified teachers and materials.
- Teachers and students are also struggling with the switch from Arabic to English as the language of instruction.
- Many adults missed out on schooling because of warfare and displacement.

Technological landscape

South Sudan has little infrastructure - about 10,000 kilometers of roads, but just 2% of them paved. Electricity is produced mostly by costly diesel generators, with less than 2% of the population having access to electricity. Indoor plumbing and potable water are scarce. About 90% of consumed goods, capital, and services are imported from neighboring countries (mainly Uganda, Kenya and Sudan).

According to Internet World Stats (IWS 2021):

- *Internet usage:* 7.9% of the population – survey date: December 2020
- *Facebook usage:* 3.8% of the population – survey date: December 2020

According to World Bank (country profile):

- *Mobile phone subscriptions:* 20.1 per 100 people

According to [BuddeComm Research](#) (updated 22 April 2020):

- *Mobile phones*: South Sudan has one of the lowest mobile penetration rates in Africa. Growth in the sector in coming years is premised on a resolution to the political crisis and recovery of the country's economy. The virtually untapped Internet and broadband market also depends to a large extent on the country gaining access to international fiber optic cables and on a national backbone network being in place. Sophisticated infrastructure solutions are needed to reach 80% of the population that live outside of the main urban centers. With a negligible rate of bank account ownership, mobile payment and banking solutions also have a strong potential once a reliable mobile infrastructure is built.

According to the CIA Factbook:

- In March 2018, the government shut down the largest cellphone carrier, Vivacell, stranding 104 million customers over a disputed service fee arrangement.
- A single TV channel and radio station are controlled by the government; several community and commercial FM stations are operational, mostly sponsored by outside aid donors; some foreign radio broadcasts are available.

Security situation

In its update on 13 October 2020, the World Bank (country overview) summarized the country's multiple challenges as follows:

- "South Sudan remains in a serious humanitarian crisis due to the cumulative effects of years of conflict which has destroyed people's livelihoods. Extreme levels of acute food insecurity persist across the country and nearly 7.5 million (more than half of the population) in need of humanitarian assistance and protection in 2020. Almost 4 million people remain displaced by the humanitarian crisis, with nearly 1.6 million people displaced internally and some 2.26 million refugees in six neighboring countries. Women and children continue to be the most affected. A recent upsurge in ethnically motivated violence in parts of the country may exacerbate the humanitarian situation on the ground."

The US State Department's South Sudan Travel Advisory updated in June 2021, states:

- "Violent crime, such as carjackings, shootings, ambushes, assaults, robberies, and kidnappings is common throughout South Sudan, including Juba. Foreign nationals have been victims of rape, sexual assault, armed robberies, and other violent crimes. Armed conflict is ongoing and includes fighting between various political and ethnic groups. Weapons are readily available to the population. In addition, cattle raids occur throughout the country and often lead to violence."

Many aid workers have been killed in the past months and years, including two people working for the Italian charity Doctors with Africa CUAMM in June 2021. (VOA News, 8 June 2021).

According to the UNHCR (1 May 2019): "Nearly 2.3 million South Sudanese have fled to neighboring countries and 1.87 million remain internally displaced in South Sudan due to violent conflict throughout the country. It is the largest refugee crisis in Africa and the third-largest refugee crisis in the world."

On 22 February 2020, Chief Justice Chan Reec Madut, swore in five vice presidents to deputize President Salva Kiir, including the president's arch-rival Reik Machar. This step was an important one in efforts towards ending the conflict. Yet the situation in South Sudan remains fragile. According to Amnesty International (AI, 6 March 2020): "The guns may have largely fallen silent, but until reforms agreed by the parties are implemented, including the security sector, it would be premature to celebrate a conclusive end to violence and human rights violations in South Sudan."

Christians are continually being attacked:

- According to Freedom House/Global Freedom 2020: Even though the Interim Constitution guarantees religious freedom, houses of worship - used as places of refuge for civilians - have been regularly attacked by armed groups seeking members of rival ethnic groups.
- In May 2021, 12 people were killed by suspected armed Misseriya pastoralists in Dunguop village East of Abyei town. Seven other people were also wounded in the attack (Eye Radio, 17 May 2021). A statement issued by the Episcopal Church of South Sudan points out that Abyei is located in 'an area that experiences Islamic encroachments followed by harassment, intimidation and frequent attacks carried out by Arab Islamic militias' (ENS, 18 May 2021).
- In June 2021, two aid workers were ambushed as their convoy returned from delivering food relief in a village some 64 kilometers (40 miles) from Rumbek, in the conflict-prone Lakes State. They were working for the Italian charity Doctors with Africa CUAMM (VOA News, 8 June 2021).
- On 3 June 2021, eight Red Cross staff members were injured when armed youths reportedly stormed the South Sudan Red Cross (SSRC) office in Torit (BBC News, 3 July 2021).

Trends analysis

1) Disregard of human rights and prevalence of impunity continues, despite the peace agreement

It has been a great challenge for the government to bring together over 60 often feuding tribes during an ongoing civil war based along ethnic lines. The situation has been made worse by the dictatorial nature of the regime. Other factors that threaten the lives of all citizens in South Sudan, Christian and non-Christian alike, are the presence of drought and the impossibility of farming arable land in areas affected by the civil war. This has resulted in a food crisis threatening almost half of the population of South Sudan.

In February 2020 a new coalition government was formed and a declaration was made that the civil war was now ended. This end to the conflict is expected to result in a much-needed improvement in the situation for Christians and their church activities. However, what the past 9 years since independence has shown is that impunity, anarchy and complete disregard of human rights have become a pattern. The formation of the unity government, even though it might signal the end of a full-blown civil war, may not result in the protection of human rights and accountability. This needs a profound change in the culture and will of the government which is unlikely to be achieved in the short-term.

2) Armed groups are posing threats

In the past years, various armed groups have posed threats to the people in the country, especially humanitarian workers. Killings, rape, kidnapping and destruction of property has continued. These attacks are at times targeted at Christians. What makes it worse is that these armed groups are often unidentifiable: In the WWL 2022 reporting period, unidentified armed men attacked churches and church leaders.

External Links - Keys to understanding

- Recent history: 2.5 million people were killed - http://www.gurtong.net/Travel/IntroductiontoSouthSudan/tabid/91/Default.aspx
- Recent history: 12 September 2018 - https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-45511352
- Recent history: February 2020 - https://lemonwire.com/2020/02/22/south-sudans-rivals-form-unity-government-meant-to-end-war/
- Recent history: UN experts - https://apnews.com/article/famine-sudan-africa-middle-east-south-sudan-9704f524380e58a623f76bc648d68bf7
- Political and legal landscape: 2011 Transitional Constitution - https://www.britannica.com/place/South-Sudan/Government-and-society#ref300747
- Political and legal landscape: R-ARCSS - https://docs.pca-cpa.org/2016/02/South-Sudan-Peace-Agreement-September-2018.pdf
- Political and legal landscape: UN Human Rights Council - https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/A_HRC_43_56.pdf
- Political and legal landscape: succeeded - https://lemonwire.com/2020/02/22/south-sudans-rivals-form-unity-government-meant-to-end-war/
- Economic landscape: Macro Poverty Outlook 2020 - http://pubdocs.worldbank.org/en/720441492455091991/mpo-ssa.pdf
- Technological landscape: BuddeComm Research - https://www.budde.com.au/Research/South-Sudan-Telecoms-Mobile-and-Broadband-Statistics-and-Analyses

- Security situation: South Sudan Travel Advisory - https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories/south-sudan-travel-advisory.html
- Security situation: VOA News, 8 June 2021 - https://www.voanews.com/africa/two-aid-workers-killed-ambush-south-sudan
- Security situation: UNHCR - https://www.unrefugees.org/news/south-sudan-refugee-crisis-explained/
- Security situation: (AI, 6 March 2020): - https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2020/03/south-sudan-time-for-justice-and-reform-no-celebrations-just-yet/
- Security situation: May 2021 - https://eyeradio.org/armed-men-kill-12-people-in-abyei/
- Security situation: experiences Islamic encroachments - https://www.episcopalnewsservice.org/2021/05/18/primate-of-south-sudan-urges-prayer-for-bishop-of-abyei-after-barbaric-attack-at-dungob-alei/
- Security situation: June 2021 - https://www.voanews.com/africa/two-aid-workers-killed-ambush-south-sudan
- Security situation: 3 June 2021 - https://www.bbc.com/news/topics/c302m85q54lt/south-sudan

WWL 2022: Church information / South Sudan

Christian origins

Christianity was very influential in the Sudan region from the 4th century onwards; for nearly a millennium the majority of the population was Christian. Christians suffered when invading Arabs brought Islam and gradually Islamized the northern part of Sudan by the 15th century. Following the defeat of the self-proclaimed Islamic Mahdi and his supporters by the British in 1898, many Christian groups entered the country. Roman Catholics, Anglicans (via the Church Missionary Society) and American Presbyterians also came from their base in Egypt. The Anglican Sudan United Mission, the Africa Inland Mission, and the Sudan Interior Mission all followed. Several African-initiated churches have also become established.

Church spectrum today

South Sudan: Church networks	Christians	%
Orthodox	3,000	0.0
Catholic	7,535,000	86.6
Protestant	3,538,000	40.7
Independent	182,000	2.1
Unaffiliated	46,000	0.5
Doubly-affiliated Christians	-2,609,000	-30.0
Total	**8,695,000**	**100.0**
(Any deviation from the total number of Christians stated above is due to the rounding of decimals)		
Evangelical movement	1,694,000	19.5
Renewalist movement	979,000	11.3

Data source: Johnson T M and Zurlo G A, eds, World Christian Database (Leiden/Boston: Brill, accessed April 2021)

Orthodox: Eastern (Chalcedonian), Oriental (Pre-Chalcedonian, Non-Chalcedonian, Monophysite), Nestorian (Assyrian), and non-historical Orthodox.
Roman Catholics: All Christians in communion with the Church of Rome. *Protestants: Christians in churches originating in or in communion with the Western world's 16th-century Protestant Reformation. Includes Anglicans, Lutherans and Baptists (any of whom may be Charismatic) and denominational Pentecostals, but not Independent traditions such as Independent Baptists nor independent Charismatics.* *Independents: Christians who do not identify with the major Christian traditions (Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Protestant).* *Unaffiliated Christians: Persons professing publicly to be Christians but who are not affiliated to churches.* *Doubly-affiliated Christians: Persons affiliated to or claimed by 2 denominations at once.* *Evangelical movement: Churches, denominations, and individuals who identify themselves as evangelicals by membership in denominations linked to evangelical alliances (e.g., World Evangelical Alliance) or by self-identification in polls.* *Renewalist movement: Church members involved in Pentecostal/Charismatic renewal.*

Christianity is predominantly Roman Catholic in South Sudan and is most prevalent among the peoples of Al Istiwai State, namely the Madi, Moru, Azande and Bari.

Other principal Christian denominations are Episcopal, Presbyterian, Pentecostal, Sudan Interior, Presbyterian Evangelical, and African Inland Churches. There are also smaller populations of Eritrean Orthodox, Ethiopian Orthodox, Coptic Orthodox and Greek Orthodox (Source: IRFR 2020, p.2).

WWL 2022: Persecution Dynamics / South Sudan

Reporting period
1 October 2020 - 30 September 2021

Position on the World Watch List

South Sudan: World Watch List	Points	WWL Rank
WWL 2022	43	74
WWL 2021	43	69
WWL 2020	44	65
WWL 2019	44	64
WWL 2018	-	-

Ranks are shown above whenever the country scored 41 points or more in the WWL 2018-2022 reporting periods

Since WWR began closely monitoring and analyzing the situation in South Sudan during the WWL 2019 reporting period, the country has consistently scored over 41 points. The 2013 - 2020 civil war left most areas in the country beyond the control of the government. The persecution of Christians by state authorities, rebel groups and tribal leaders became so grave that even colleges were attacked. In the WWL 2022 reporting period, unidentified armed groups have targeted Christians and churches. Furthermore, ethnic leaders target those who oppose traditional indigenous practices. Government officials and security forces intimidate any church leaders who criticize the government. Young Christians are vulnerable to abduction by rebels. Despite the peace agreement, there are still many unresolved issues and clashes can easily flare up in some areas.

Persecution engines

South Sudan: Persecution engines	Abbreviation	Level of influence
Islamic oppression	IO	Very weak
Religious nationalism	RN	Not at all
Ethno-religious hostility	ERH	Not at all
Clan oppression	CO	Medium
Christian denominational protectionism	CDP	Weak
Communist and post - Communist oppression	CPCO	Not at all
Secular intolerance	SI	Not at all
Dictatorial paranoia	DPA	Medium
Organized corruption and crime	OCC	Strong

The scale for the level of influence of Persecution engines in society is: Not at all / Very weak / Weak / Medium / Strong / Very strong. For more information see WWL Methodology.

Clan oppression (Medium)

There are 64 ethnic groups in South Sudan, with ethnic tensions being evident even amongst Christians themselves. (The most obvious ethnic conflict is between the two largest ethnic groups in the country the Dinka and the Nuer. In the period 2013-2019, the Dinkas represented by President Salva Kiir SPLM were in armed conflict with the Nuers represented by Riek Machar SPLM-IO.) An estimated 32% of the population practice traditional religions, the majority living in the remote villages of the country. Although the younger generation is more inclined to follow Christian values, the theological perspective of the traditional religions fits well to the African ethnic or tribal context. The ethnic groups are not anti-Christian per se, but when their members become Christians, it means that they might no longer participate in rituals or clan-based conflicts. For this reason, ethnic group leaders put pressure on converts to follow orders and participate in community rituals and other obligations.

Dictatorial paranoia (Medium)

South Sudan is experiencing a high level of authoritarianism from its president. He is determined to remain in power and has pitted ethnic tribes against each other and suspended key persons in the government for speaking out against his regime. Although this paranoia is not directed specifically against Christians due to their faith, the effects are felt by Christians who make up the majority of the country's population. The war that went on from 2013 to 2019 was partly due to the determination of the president to purge his opponents and remain in power unchallenged. Regime supporters participated in persecuting Christians or allowed persecution to happen.

Organized corruption and crime (Medium)

Corruption is widespread in South Sudan, which is one of the poorest countries in the world. It does, however, have rich resources in oil, gold and livestock and has access to the Nile River. The country's resources have been used to fuel the civil war with top officials accumulating wealth for themselves. The misuse of resources coupled with the civil war has led to severe food shortages, affecting almost half the country's population. The existence of rampant corruption means those who persecute Christians can do so with impunity. There is no accountability, there is no law and order, there is no system in place to bring justice. To date, there has been no willingness on the part of the authorities to change this.

Drivers of persecution

South Sudan: Drivers of persecution	IO	RN	ERH	CO	CDP	CPCO	SI	DPA	OCC
				MEDIUM	WEAK			MEDIUM	STRONG
Government officials								Medium	
Ethnic group leaders				Medium					
Non-Christian religious leaders				Very weak					
Religious leaders of other churches					Weak				
Citizens (people from the broader society), including mobs				Weak					
One's own (extended) family				Medium					
Political parties								Weak	
Revolutionaries or paramilitary groups									Strong

The scale for the level of influence of Drivers of persecution in society is: Not at all / Very weak / Weak / Medium / Strong / Very strong. Please note that "-" denotes "not at all". For more information see WWL Methodology.

Drivers of Clan oppression

- ***Revolutionary or paramilitary groups (Strong):*** The 2013-2019 civil war was waged between different ethnic groups. Torture, abduction, rape, killings and other inhumane atrocities have been taking place. Armed groups from different ethnic groups have been responsible for most of these acts. Aid workers and Christians were killed and churches were attacked.
- ***Ethnic leaders (Medium)****:* Community leaders pass informal local rules which, at times, are aimed against Christians - especially those who evangelize in the remote areas.
- **One's own (extended) family:** An ATR family member who converts to Christianity will face pressure to return to the faith of the ancestors.

Drivers of Dictatorial paranoia

- *Government officials (Medium):* Government officials and government affiliates allow the atrocities being committed in the country to continue. They have created a culture of impunity and an environment where it is very difficult to speak out against injustice, thus silencing Christians who attempt to speak out.

Drivers of Organized corruption and crime

- *Organized crime cartels and networks (Strong), Revolutionary or paramilitary groups (Medium) and Government officials (Medium):* Networks of organized crime have made the life of Christians unbearable. Paramilitary groups are also involved. It has made the application of the rule of law difficult and encourages anarchy. As a result, the looting of church property and the destruction of churches has been happening without any legal repercussions for those responsible.

Areas where Christians face most difficulties

There are no particular hotspots.

## Christian communities and how they are affected

Communities of expatriate Christians: Expatriate Christians are not isolated from other Christian communities and so are not included as a separate category in WWL scoring and analysis.

Historical Christian communities: This category is made up of the Roman Catholic Church and traditional Protestant churches, to which the majority of Christians belong. Church life has been seriously affected by the civil war and Christians continue to suffer persecution arising from ethnic divisions.

Converts: This category mainly includes those who have converted from Islam or traditional African religions. Converts from Islam are the most persecuted Christian group, especially in the northern part of the country where the Muslim population is dominant.

Non-traditional Christian communities: Church groups in this category have been exposed to violence from the civil conflict and also to pressure from some Historical Christian communities.

The Persecution pattern
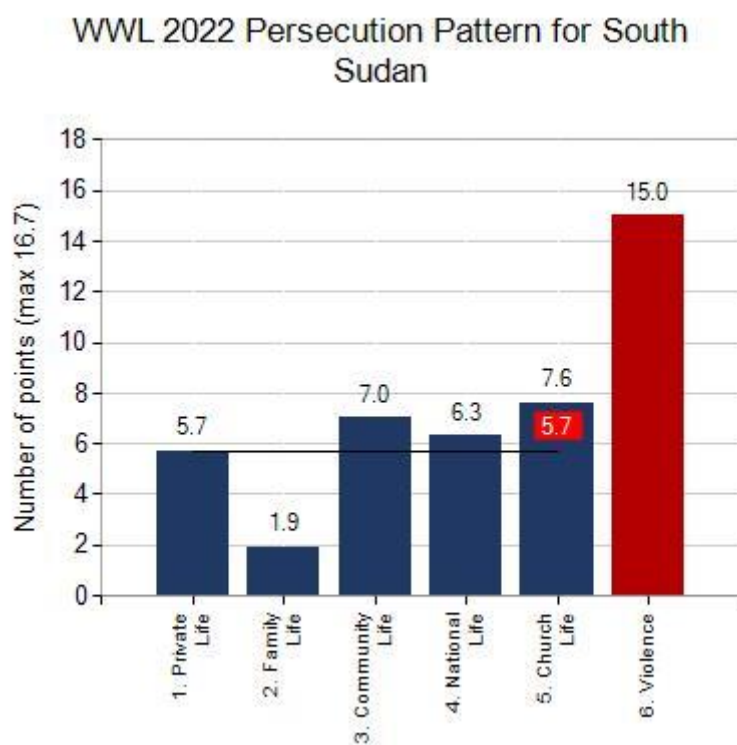
The WWL 2022 Persecution pattern for South Sudan shows:

- The average pressure on Christians over all *spheres of life* is 5.7 points.
- Pressure is highest in the *Church sphere* 7.6 points followed by the *Community sphere of life* with 7.0 points.
- *Family life* scored the lowest for pressure with 1.9 points.
- Violence is at an extreme level, reaching a score of 15.0 points.

Pressure in the 5 spheres of life

In each of the five spheres of life discussed below, four questions have been selected from the WWL 2022 questionnaire for brief commentary and explanation. The selection usually (but not always) reflects the highest scoring elements. In some cases, an additional paragraph per sphere is included to give further information deemed important. (To see how individual questions are scored on a scale of 0-4 points, please see the "WWL Scoring example" in the WWL Methodology, available at: https://opendoorsanalytical.org/world-watch-list-documentation/, password: freedom).

Pressure in Block 1 / Private sphere

Block 1.9: It has been risky for Christians to meet with other Christians. (3.00 points)

Safety has become a critical issue in South Sudan. Christians have been targeted both in their dwellings and while traveling. According to a country expert: "In a country where armed groups in the country attack places of worship, humanitarian workers (often Christians), it is risky for Christians to meet with other Christians." In the context of the existing hostilities, meeting in church or individually elsewhere has become challenging.

Block 1.2: It has been risky for Christians to conduct acts of Christian worship by themselves (e.g. prayer, Bible reading, etc.). (2.25 points)

In the context of *Clan oppression*, those who decide to leave their African traditional religion to become Christians face pressure if their conversion is discovered. Private worship will be disrupted, where seen.

Block 1.3: It has been dangerous to privately own or keep Christian materials. (2.00 points)

This is also an issue in the context of *Clan oppression*. Those who decide to leave the traditional belief system and become Christians would face persecution if found with Christian materials by their non-Christian family or others. There is also fear that armed groups might show up and search the houses. Thus, some non-convert Christians in remote areas also avoid keeping Christians materials.

Block 1.4: It has been risky for Christians to reveal their faith in written forms of personal expression (including expressions in blogs and Facebook etc.). (2.00 points)

Freedom of expression is generally restricted. Armed groups and the government obstruct people's right to express themselves. In this context, it has been observed that both the government and the opposition have monitored media reports and social media accounts and used them to single out church leaders out for criticism. In some cases, this has led to interrogation by security intelligence and incarceration.

Pressure in Block 2 / Family sphere

Block 2.3: Christians have been hindered in celebrating a Christian wedding for faith-related reasons. (2.50 points)

Even if there is a lasting ceasefire and the government of national unity becomes well-established, Christians face serious problems in living out their faith. In places outside Juba, especially where adherents of ATR are dominant, it is challenging for Christians to celebrate weddings. There are still armed groups who attack Christians. I

Block 2.11: Spouses of converts have been put under pressure (successfully or unsuccessfully) by others to divorce. (1.25 points)

South Sudan has over 60 different ethnic groups, some of which are followers of ATR. Traditional religions have a wide-ranging influence on tribal society with social, political and economic dimensions. In this context, Christians face pressure to renounce their faith, particularly if it involves converts.

Block 2.12: Christian spouses of non-Christians have been excluded from the right or opportunity to claim custody of the children in divorce cases. (1.25 points)

As stated above, significant groups of people in South Sudan still adhere to ATR. Those who decide to leave the traditional belief system pay the price of losing custody of their children, among many other punitive measures.

Block 2.10: Christian spouses and/or children of Christians have been subject to separation for prolonged periods of time by circumstances relating to persecution. (1.00 points)

There are many factors that can be mentioned in this context: First, constant attacks have made travelling unsafe leading to the separation of Christians. Secondly, in the context of *Clan oppressio*n, in order to force someone to come back to the community's belief system, they put pressure on converts by separating them from their families.

Pressure in Block 3 / Community sphere

Block 3.2: Christians have been monitored by their local communities or by private groups (this includes reporting to police, being shadowed, telephone lines listened to, emails read/censored, etc.). (3.00 points)

These instances occur especially in areas where armed confrontations take place. This monitoring may sometimes be masked as a legitimate part of the war effort; while sometimes it s used purely for control and to instill fear and forestall any opposition.

Block 3.4: Christians been hindered in sharing community resources because of their faith (e.g. clean drinking water). (3.00 points)

There is a link between ethnicity/tribe/clan and faith which creates problems for many churches. As already mentioned, a significant number of ethnic groups in South Sudan adhere to ATR, which has an influence on society both socially, politically and economically. In order for someone to access state benefits and services, they have to adhere to those belief systems. In this context it is inevitable for Christians to be marginalized and denied access to resources.

Block 3.6: Christians have been hindered in participating in communal institutions, forums, etc., for faith-related reasons. (3.00 points)

Communal life plays a significant role in the life of many communities in South Sudan. Due to the link between ethnicity and faith, many Christians find themselves overlooked, intentionally left-out and allowed no say in matters. This is done deliberately to discourage conversion and any growth of Christianity in those areas.

Block 3.3: Christians have been under threat of abduction and/or forced marriage. (2.75 points)

There have been several reports of Christians working with aid organizations being kidnapped, or even of Christians being attacked at their places of worship and kidnapped. This is a regular occurrence. The peace agreement has not yet been able to solve this issue.

Pressure in Block 4 / National sphere

Block 4.3: Christians have been forced by law or in practice to act against their conscience, e.g. regarding military service or in certain professions. (3.00 points)

There are various layers to this problem. While the law provides for protection against being coerced into carrying out practices that are against one's religion; the reality of the war has led to forced conscription by both the government and the opposition. Even children have been recruited to join the various armed groups. Christians have also been forced to drink alcohol by government soldiers (IRFR 2020, p.3).

Block 4.4: Christians have been hindered in travelling for faith-related reasons. (3.00 points)

Civil war, factions and the presence of armed groups have caused havoc in society. The security situation has made it impossible to travel freely. There are also reports of religious leaders and Christian workers being hindered in their work and even sometimes detained. If any pastor is on a journey to speak at a meeting about corruption, nepotism and rape in the country, it is very likely that he will face assassination attempts en route.

Block 4.5: Christians have been discriminated against when engaging with the authorities (local administration, government, army, etc.) for faith-related reasons. (3.00 points)

There are many factors that play a crucial role in this discrimination. There are clan leaders, criminal networks and government officials who want to make sure that those who do not belong to their network or their supporters do not get access to government jobs etc. Some Christians are regularly discriminated against by the local authorities and will sometimes be identified for specific targeting (for persecution) at a future date.

Block 4.6: Christians have been barred from public office, or has promotion been hindered for faith-related reasons. (3.00 points)

From the perspective of *Dictatorial paranoia*, Christians who speak against the injustices committed in the country are often regarded as a threat and denied jobs or promotion. From the perspective of *Clan oppression*, there is also another dimension, since the structure of the governing system (including the unity government) has a strong ethnic flavor. Those Christians who speak against injustices at local or national level, will face problems when it comes to hiring and promotion.

Pressure in Block 5 / Church sphere

Block 5.5: Churches have been hindered from organizing Christian activities outside church buildings. (3.50 points)

The civil war and the existing ethnicity issues have made church life complex and difficult. During the WWL 2022 reporting period, various church gatherings were targeted by armed groups, including government soldiers; for an example see above: *Specific examples of violations of rights*. Due to these security issues, church activities outside of the worship areas remain re-

stricted. Furthermore, sometimes the permit requirements for outside events are so prohibitive that it is virtually impossible to hold such meetings.

Block 5.18: Churches have been hindered in establishing, managing, maintaining and conducting schools, or charitable, humanitarian, medical, social or cultural organizations, institutions and associations. (3.25 points)

While the Constitution expressly provides for and protects churches in establishing and maintaining schools and other church-related organizations, the unstable security situation has made this theoretical protection meaningless. The issue of conducing charitable/humanitarian activities have become very risky during the 2022 WWL reporting period.

Block 5.3: Christian communities have been hindered in building or renovating church buildings or in claiming historical religious premises and places of worship which had been taken from them earlier. (3.00 points)

Due to the state of conflict, many churches have been attacked, looted and destroyed and the rebuilding efforts remain largely suspended.

Block 5.2: It has been difficult to get registration or legal status for churches at any level of government. (2.50 points)

South Sudan has very stringent registration requirements for churches and church-related humanitarian work. Religious groups are required to register with the state government and the Ministry for Humanitarian Affairs through the Relief and Rehabilitation Commission. Faith-based organizations are required to provide their constitution; a statement of faith documenting their doctrines, beliefs, objectives, and holy book; a list of executive members; and a very large registration fee of $3,500. The government seem to be using the registration process as an easy source of revenue, but local NGOs would obviously prefer spending such high sums on helping people instead.

Violence

Violence is defined in WWL Methodology as the deprivation of physical freedom or as bodily harm to Christians or damage to their property. It includes severe threats (mental abuse). The table is based on reported cases as much as possible, but since many incidents go unreported, the numbers must be understood as being minimum figures. The following 5 points should be considered when using the data provided in the Block 6 table:

1. Some incidents go unreported because the Christians involved choose not to speak about the hostility being faced. Possible reasons for this may be:

- *Doing so would expose them to more attacks. For example, if a family member is killed because of his/her faith, the survivors might decide to keep silent about the circumstances of the killing to avoid provoking any further attacks.*
- *In some circumstances, the reticence to pass on information may be due to the danger of exposure caused by converts returning to their previous faith.*
- *If persecution is related to sexual violence - due to stigma, survivors often do not tell even their closest relatives.*
- *In some cultural settings, if your loved one is killed, you might be under the obligation to take revenge. Christians not wishing to do that, may decide to keep quiet about it.*

2. Other incidents go unreported for the following possible reasons:

- *Some incidents never reach the public consciousness, because no one really knows about it; or the incident is simply not considered worth reporting; or media coverage is deliberately blocked or distorted; or media coverage is not deliberately blocked, but the information somehow gets lost; or the incidents are deliberately not reported widely for security reasons (e.g. for the protection of local church leaders).*

- *In situations where Christians have been discriminated against for many years, armed conflict can make them additionally vulnerable. Christians killed in areas where fighting regularly takes place are unlikely to be reported separately. Examples in recent years have been Sudan, Syria and Myanmar.*

- *Christians who die through the deprivation of basic necessities such as clean water and medical care (due to long-term discrimination) are unlikely to be reported separately. Christians are not always killed directly; they can be so squeezed by regulations and other oppressive factors that they die – not at once, but in the course of years. This often includes the deprivation of basic necessities such as clean water and medical care, or exclusion from government assisted socio-economic development projects. These numbers could be immense.*

3. For further discussion *(with a focus on the complexity of assessing the numbers of Christians killed for their faith) please see World Watch Monitor's article dated 13 November 2013 available at:*
https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2013/11/number-of-christian-martyrs-continues-to-cause-debate/.

4. The use of symbolic numbers: *In cases where it has been impossible to count exactly, a symbolic round figure (10*, 100* etc.) is given and indicated with an asterisk. A symbolic number of 10* could in reality even be 100 or more but the real number is uncertain. A symbolic number of 100* could go well over 1000 but the real number is uncertain. A symbolic number of 1,000* could go well over 10,000 but, again, the real number is uncertain. The same applies for symbolic numbers 10,000*, 100,000* and 1,000,000*: Each could indicate much higher numbers, but WWR chooses to be cautious because the real number is uncertain.*

5. The symbol "x" in the table: *This denotes a known number which cannot be published due to security concerns.*

South Sudan: Violence Block question	WWL 2022	WWL 2021
6.1 How many Christians have been killed for faith-related reasons (including state sanctioned executions)?	10 *	10 *
6.2 How many churches or Christian buildings (schools, hospitals, cemeteries, etc.) have been attacked, damaged, bombed, looted, destroyed, burned down, closed or confiscated for faith-related reasons?	10 *	10 *
6.3 How many Christians have been detained for faith-related reasons?	0	0
6.4 How many Christians have been sentenced to jail, labor camp, sent to psychiatric hospital as punishment, or similar things for faith-related reasons?	0	0
6.5 How many Christians have been abducted for faith-related reasons (including Christians missing in a persecution context)?	10 *	10 *
6.6 How many Christians have been raped or otherwise sexually harassed for faith-related reasons?	10 *	10 *
6.7 How many cases have there been of forced marriages of Christians to non-Christians?	10 *	10 *

6.8 How many Christians have been otherwise physically or mentally abused for faith-related reasons (including beatings and death threats)?	100 *	10 *
6.9 How many houses of Christians or other property (excluding shops) have been attacked, damaged, bombed, looted, destroyed, burned down or confiscated for faith-related reasons?	10 *	10 *
6.10 How many shops or businesses of Christians have been attacked, damaged, bombed, looted, destroyed, burned down, closed or confiscated for faith-related reasons?	10 *	10 *
6.11 How many Christians have been forced to leave their homes or go into hiding in-country for faith-related reasons?	100 *	10 *
6.12 How many Christians have been forced to leave the country for faith-related reasons?	0	0

5 Year trends

Gender-specific religious persecution / Female

Group	Female Pressure Points
Economic	-
Political and Legal	Forced marriage
Security	Abduction; Violence – physical; Violence – sexual
Social and Cultural	Violence – psychological
Technological	-

In South Sudan, the prolonged civil war has been a major instigating factor for the increase in sexual violence against women (HRW 2021). According to a report of the Secretary General to the Security Council (S/2020/487, 3 June 2020, pp.27-28), sexual violence in Sudan has reached "appalling levels of brutality" and is "often committed with political and ethnic undertones". The report further noted that perpetrators often enjoyed impunity for their actions.

Against this backdrop of complex ethnic and political tensions, it is difficult to discern the exact motivations behind the violence experienced by Christian women and girls. It is clear, however, that the use of rape as a weapon in armed conflict makes women and girls more susceptible to religious persecution by those opposed to their Christian faith, which mimics the war-practices in the country. Regional experts indicate that rape and gender-based violence is the most common form of persecution affecting Christian women and girls. The trauma experienced prevents many of these women from forming stable relationships.

Further, South Sudan is one of six countries in the world which has not specified a minimum age for marriage hence leaving a loophole for early and forced marriages. It has the eighth highest rate of child marriage in the world, with 52% of girls marrying by the age of 18 (Girls Not Brides, accessed December 2021). The prevalence of this practice, most often carried out because of

extreme poverty and to secure much-needed assets for families (including cattle, money, and other gifts via the payment of a bride price), creates an obvious avenue of repression and control of young female converts to Christianity. Elders and ethnic leaders have reportedly forced young girls to marry people that they have not even met. Within these marriages, women and girls are exposed to domestic and sexual violence.

Women are also impacted by the killing of men and forceful conscription of boys as child soldiers. As a country expert explains: "Women are left without any way to fend for themselves while mourning the loss of their husbands and sons. The resultant anguish greatly weakens their capacity to do anything either economic or development related".

Gender-specific religious persecution / Male

Group	Male Pressure Points
Economic	Discrimination/harassment via education
Political and Legal	-
Security	Military/militia conscription/service against conscience; Violence – death
Social and Cultural	-
Technological	-

The 2013 - 2019 civil war led to the mass recruitment of males, particularly of boys who were halted in their education and targeted instead to become child soldiers. Within a context of ongoing fragility and insecurity, exacerbated further by COVID-19, recruitment as a means of repression and control has become the most common form of persecution affecting men and boys (UN News, 23 June 2020). Whilst exact figures are lacking, thousands of children are believed to have been recruited into armed forces and groups by both sides of the conflict since 2013, with aid organizations fighting for their release (UNICEF, 26 February 2020; UNICEF, 18 November 2021).

Men also run the risk of being killed by government forces upon suspicion of being part of rebel forces. Reports indicate that religious leaders and Christian workers are particularly in danger. As a regional expert writes, "if any pastor speaks against the current corruption, nepotism, rape, or other issues, he will be killed."

The killing of men and forceful conscription of boys as child soldiers has a catastrophic impact on families and communities.

Persecution of other religious minorities

Non-Christians in South Sudan include Muslims (located particularly in the northern part of the country) and followers of traditional African religions in remote areas. Both groups have also been affected by the civil war and the repression caused by the dictatorial regime.

Future outlook

The outlook for Christians as viewed through the lens of:

Clan oppression

Ethnic groups in South Sudan are known for having a strong clan-based system. This is also what kept the civil war going (which was declared as being over in February 2020). However, since there is a strong connection between ATR and a hierarchical-clan based system, Christians will continue to face challenges in remote areas.

Dictatorial paranoia

This engine is very unpredictable and things can easily change. The role of this engine in persecuting Christians partly depends on whether the new Unity Government set up in February 2020 is able to last until the next election in 2023. If so, then it is likely that the pressure which the government has been putting on Christians will be reduced. However, the 2023 election might bring its own complex dynamics.

Organized corruption and crime

This Persecution engine highlights the existence of rampant corruption, impunity, and lack of rule of law. Clearing such criminal networks can take years.

Expectations for South Sudan in subsequent years

1. The Church in South Sudan is growing rapidly, and with it the Christian influence in society is also growing. This is also due to the distribution of supplies by Christian organizations and the fact that most Christian organizations have been working in war-stricken areas.
2. The 2019 peace agreement and the formation of the Unity Government in February 2020 is fragile and there are worries that it could collapse due to action by the many armed groups in the country. In April 2021, the UN experts warned that war is possible as divisions widen.
3. The level of fear among Christians will be high if civil war breaks out again.
4. The economic impact of the civil war has been immense. It is hoped that a lasting peace agreement will stabilize the economy. This, together with regulated oil production, will help bring significant improvement to the population's standard of living. The attempts to build the economy was hampered by the COVID-19 crisis.

External Links - Persecution Dynamics

- Gender-specific religious persecution Female description: increase in sexual violence - https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2021/country-chapters/south-sudan#d30335
- Gender-specific religious persecution Female description: report - https://www.un.org/sexualviolenceinconflict/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/report/conflict-related-sexual-violence-report-of-the-united-nations-secretary-general/2019-SG-Report.pdf
- Gender-specific religious persecution Female description: eighth highest rate - https://www.girlsnotbrides.org/child-marriage/south-sudan/
- Gender-specific religious persecution Male description: exacerbated further by COVID-19 - https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/06/1066952

- Gender-specific religious persecution Male description: UNICEF, 26 February 2020 - https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/15-child-soldiers-released-south-sudan
- Gender-specific religious persecution Male description: UNICEF, 18 November 2021 - https://www.unicef.org/southsudan/press-releases/unicef-welcomes-release

Further useful reports

A selection of in-depth reports and smaller articles are available on World Watch Research's Open Doors Analytical website (password: freedom) and on the World Watch Monitor website:

- https://opendoorsanalytical.org/reports/
- https://opendoorsanalytical.org/?s=South Sudan
- https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/countries/South Sudan