

Sudan

Sudan, an Arab republic in which the predominant religion is Islam, has long suffered from severe ethnic strife and has been plagued by internal conflict. The country has a poor human rights record, with particular issues over ethnic cleansing and slavery. Sudan is member of the League of Arab States (LAS), as well as the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC).

Constitution and government	Education and children’s rights	Family, community, society, religious courts and tribunals	Freedom of expression advocacy of humanist values
<p><u>State legislation is largely or entirely derived from religious law or by religious authorities</u></p>		<p><u>Government figures or state agencies openly marginalize, harass, or incite hatred or violence against the non-religious</u> <u>It is illegal to register an explicitly Humanist, atheist, secularist or other non-religious NGO or other human rights organization, or such groups are persecuted by authorities</u></p>	<p><u>Expression of core Humanist principles on democracy, freedom and human rights is brutally repressed</u> <u>‘Apostasy’ or conversion from a specific religion is outlawed and punishable by death</u> <u>It is illegal to advocate secularism or church-state separation, or such advocacy is suppressed</u></p>
	<p><u>Religious or ideological instruction is mandatory in all or most state-funded schools with no secular or humanist alternative</u></p>	<p><u>Systemic religious privilege results in significant social discrimination</u> <u>Government authorities push a socially conservative, religiously or ideologically inspired agenda, without regard to the rights of those with progressive views</u> <u>Prohibitive interreligious social control (including interreligious marriage bans)</u> <u>Religious control over family law or legislation on moral matters</u></p>	<p><u>Expression of core humanist principles on democracy, freedom or human rights is severely restricted</u> <u>‘Blasphemy’ is outlawed or criticism of religion is restricted and punishable with a prison sentence</u></p>

Legend

Constitution and government

2014 saw a continuation in egregious and systematic violations of freedom of thought by the Sudanese government, with religious discrimination remaining prevalent, apostasy and blasphemy still criminalized, continued restrictive application of Sharia-based provisions, and the application of public order laws allowing floggings for undefined acts of “indecent” and “immorality”.

The Interim National Constitution, adopted in 2005, remains in force as the constitution of Sudan. For the past 20 years, the ruling National Congress Party (NCP) has grounded many of the provisions of the 1991 Personal Status Law, the 1991 Criminal Code, and state-level public order laws on its interpretations of Sharia. All Sudanese citizens, including all non-Muslims, are subject to these laws.

The 1991 Criminal Code allows for floggings for undefined honour-based offences, reputation and public morality issues. Public order laws further implement the 1991 Criminal Code’s prohibitions, where religiously-grounded morality laws and corporal punishments are imposed through the Public Order Regime with violations being subject to lashes or a fine, or both. Laws relating to public morality and order prohibit indecent dress and the brewing or selling of alcohol. They are vague and subject to the interpretation of local law enforcement agents.

Discriminatory implementation of the law

Religious discrimination is prevalent in Sudan. Whilst Muslim men are allowed to marry Christian or Jewish women, a Muslim woman cannot marry a non-Muslim man. The implementation of criminal and civil law in terms of penalties imposed can depend upon the religion of the perpetrator involved. For example, whilst Muslims might be punished with lashes if caught producing or consuming alcohol, Christians are typically not punished if caught for the same crime. The justice minister has the power to release any prisoner who memorizes the Quran during his prison term.

Education and children’s rights

All schools are required to teach Islamic education classes, but some public schools excuse non-Muslims from these classes.

Freedom of expression, advocacy of humanist values

There have been numerous reports of print runs being confiscated. Journalists also face intimidation and violence. In July 2014, Osman Mirghani, Editor in Chief of al-Tayyar, was hospitalised after his offices were stormed by gunmen. Concerns from civil society have been expressed about the lack of a fair trial in cases where arrested civilians are being subjected to military trials.

<gov.uk/government/publications/sudan-country-of-concern/sudan-country-of-concern-latest-update-30-september-2014>

“Apostasy” and “blasphemy”

Apostasy or conversion to a religion other than Islam is outlawed and may be punishable with the death penalty. By law, a person convicted of conversion has an opportunity to recant.

There were reports that in November 2015, up to 27 Muslim men were arrested for “apostasy”, on the accusation that they were Quranists (deny the authority of the Hadith), and were facing trial.

<bloomberg.com/news/articles/2015-12-03/sudan-tries-27-on-apostasy-charge-that-may-bring-death>

[sentences](#)>

The “apostasy” death sentence handed to a Christian woman, Meriam Yahya Ibrahim, provided the most well-publicised case of apostasy in 2014. Ibrahim self-identified as a Christian and maintained she was never Muslim having been raised by her Christian mother, but Sudan insisted that since her father was a Muslim, so was she, and she should not have converted. She was released after international outcry on the issue. She was subsequently allowed to leave Sudan.

Whilst the law does not explicitly ban proselytizing, the vaguely worded apostasy law criminalizes both apostasy and acts that encourage apostasy, which could be understood to include proselytization.

“Blasphemy” is also criminalized; it can be punished by six-months’ imprisonment, flogging or a fine, or both.

According to Ammar Saleh, the chairman of the Islamic Centre for Preaching and Comparative Studies, the number of cases of apostasy and atheism are growing in a “scary” and “continuous fashion” in the country. The Islamic figure accused authorities of negligence in addressing the issue. Adam Mudawi, the head of Ombadda People’s Committee, claimed that the Orthodox Church in Ombadda kept a large cache of weapons in an underground storage facility and accused it of exploiting poor citizens by providing financial support and assistance to aid its proselytizing activities.

<sudantribune.com/spip.php?article46577=>

Highlighted cases

In May 2017 **Mohamed Salih** (or in some source Mohamed al-Dosogy) was arrested for “apostasy” after writing to a Sudanese court that he wanted to change the religion listed on his national identification card from ‘Islam’ to ‘atheist’ or ‘non-religious’. It was widely reported that under Sudan’s “apostasy” law he faced a possible death sentence. Within days, however, the case was dismissed following a psychiatric and al-Dosogy was released by the court. The test purported to find that Mohamed was not mentally competent to stand trial. Mr al-Dosogy’s defence reportedly rejected the court’s decision, saying the defendant never asked the court to submit him to a psychiatric test.