

# Cultural Fact Sheet

# SUDANESE

## Overview

- The official name of Sudan is: The Republic of The Sudan.
- Sudan gained its independence from the British- Egyptian Condominium on the 1st January 1956.
- The current population of Sudan is estimated at 43 million people
- Sudan spent more than half of 64 years of independence in civil wars, resulting in the separation of South Sudan.



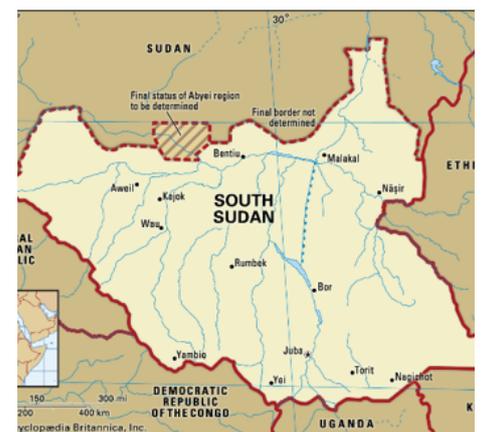
## Location

- Sudan is also known as (north Sudan).
- The geographical location of Sudan is northeast Africa and west to the Red Sea.



## Sudan and South Sudan

- The territory of Sudan once included South Sudan.
- The countries of Sudan and South Sudan split in 2011 following decades of civil war.
- Sudan's capital city is Khartoum
- On 9 July 2011, the Republic of South Sudan became independent from the Republic of Sudan.
- Many Sudanese/South Sudanese in Australia have come from refugee camps in countries bordering Sudan and have experienced post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)
- South Sudan is a land locked country
- The Republic of South Sudan is the youngest country in the world
- Majority of Sudanese-born Australians became South Sudanese after 2011 referendum.



## Migration

- The population of Sudanese born people in Australia is relatively small compared to other migrants.
- Before 2001, the Sudanese- born arriving in Australia were mainly skilled migrants
- 98% of Sudanese born arrivals in Australia after 2001 were mainly from southern Sudan arriving under Refugee and Humanitarian Programmes due to civil war, drought and famine.
- There were approximately 20,000 Sudanese- born people in Australia by 2016.

## Language

- The official language of Sudan is Arabic
- Local African languages, as well as English, are also used in Sudan.
- The major languages of the Sudanese- born people (north and south) in Australia include Arabic, Dinka, Nuer, Bari, Acholi, etc.
- There are two forms of spoken Arabic in Sudan: colloquial, used in everyday communication; and formal, which is used in public speeches, emails, and government addresses.
- South Sudanese people also use a simplified form of Arabic (known as Juba Arabic)

## Communication

- Sudanese are indirect communicators.
- Because of indirect communication style, it's hard to determine if a Sudanese person is offended or not.
- Sudanese people may speak more casually in the comfort of the family at home or within the inner circle of friends and relatives
- Handshakes are a sign of respect, acceptance, and welcome



## Greetings

- Use of social titles is important, e.g. uncle, aunty, etc. it is disrespectful to call an older person by their name.
- The title of haj (for male) and haja (for female) must be used with the first name when greeting seniors and elders.
- The first name is commonly used when greeting friends and people of the same age.
- Greeting must be with the right hand because the left hand is for hygiene and considered uncleaned.
- Left hand is not also used for waving, eating, and giving items.
- The correct way to greet a large group of Sudanese people is to lift your right hand and loudly say: “Assalamu Aleikum”, meaning: “peace upon you”.
- It’s common for Sudanese people, when interacting with strangers, to ask some personal questions (e.g. are you married? Do you have children, etc.)
- A Muslim official title of “Sheikh” is used with the first name to address a Muslim holy man.

## Family:

- Family is the most important aspect of life.
- In Sudan, the family means an expansive kinship network.
- Families form a strong community network that is commonly reliant on relatives and neighbours.
- Strong relationship by marriage
- Extended family often lives together under the same roof
- There’s a strong gender role in the Sudanese society. The man is the head of the family.
- In north Sudan, marriage between relatives is common



## Food

- Food is an important part of social interactions.
- Sorghum, millet and maize are the most common starch (often fermented for the ill and elderly).
- Vegetables and greens as well as meats (halal), e.g. beef, goat, chicken, sheep and fish.
- Pork is not part of Muslim diet.
- It is common for Sudanese to eat in group outdoor, especially during the fasting month of Ramadan
- Men and women generally eat separately.
- People eat with their right hands except the left handed
- Eating in groups, sharing the same dish is common



## Health and wellbeing

- Sudanese are private about their emotions, individuals are expected to hide their pain.
- Resilience and self-restraint are admired and encouraged.
- Common belief in fatalism (all events are predetermined by Allah- "God").
- Complaining can be seen as lack or weakness of faith or objection against God's will.
- Men are thought to be stronger, therefore, expected to deal with their emotional pain courageously and in private.
- It is a general expectation that people resolve their struggles by putting faith in Allah (God) whilst maintaining emotional control and not showing weakness by complaining.
- Sudanese people prefer to share their emotional pains and mental issues with Sheikhs, Imams and older members of the community.

## Stigmas & Taboos

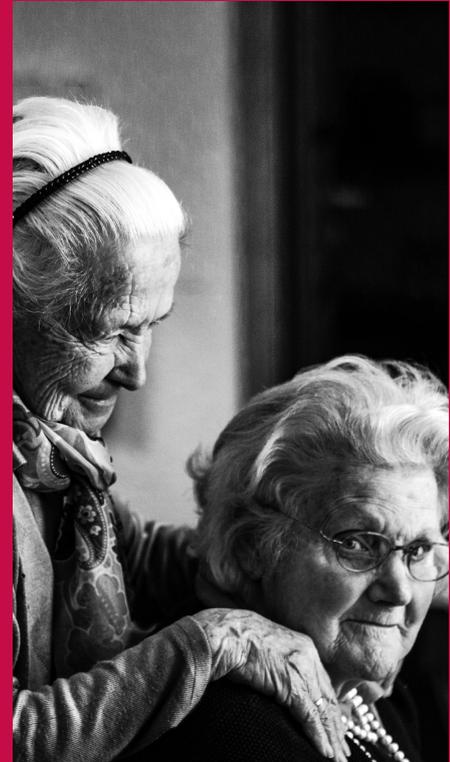
- Mental illness is stigmatised- people with mental health issues may experience shame.
- Families take care of the mentally ill person and may conceal their illness from outsiders.
- Suicide is forbidden in Islam so it's stigmatised for Muslims.
- Sexuality and sexual issues are generally not openly discussed.
- Women health issues are not shared and discussed with men, and likewise, men issues are not shared with women.

## Death and Dying

- Family members and close relatives alternate to provide palliative care to the terminally ill person
- Relatives would always maintain a presence at the terminally ill bedside.
- The deceased is generally buried within 24 hours
- The male body is washed by a male relative or Imam (holy man). The female body is washed by a female relative or midwife.
- No cremation.
- Body washing at the Mosque for cleaning and blessing rituals
- The Imam (mosque leader) blesses the body and perform services
- Family and friends pay final respects to the deceased
- The standard mourning period is between three and seven days.
- Women wear black during the mourning period.

## Religion

- 97% of Sudanese population are Muslim
- 3% of the population are Christians (Coptic Christians, Greek Orthodox, etc.)



## CONTACTING US

### Compliments or complaints

- Whether you wish to make a suggestion, comment or a complaint, you can contact the MAS Team Leader:
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