

Definition: **Kordofan** from *Merriam-Webster's Geographical Dictionary*

Former province of cen. Sudan; ❁ El Obeid.

Summary Article: **Kordofan**

From *The Hutchinson Unabridged Encyclopedia with Atlas and Weather Guide*

Former province of central Sudan, known as the 'White Land'. Today it comprises two states: North Kordofan, with an area of 185,302 sq km/71,545 sq mi and a population of 2.5 million (2006 est); and South Kordofan, with an area of 158,355 sq km/61,141 sq mi and a population of 1.1 million (2006 est). Kordofan comprised two provinces, North and South, which were divided in 1994 into three new federal states: North, South, and West Kordofan. In August 2005, West Kordofan was abolished and divided between North and South, under the Comprehensive Peace Agreement which ended the 1983–2005 Sudanese civil war. Although it has never been an independent state, it has a character of its own. It is mainly undulating plain, with acacia scrub producing gum arabic, marketed in the chief towns of El Obeid (Al-Ubayyid), the capital of North Kordofan and Kaduqli, the capital of South Kordofan. Formerly a rich agricultural region, it is threatened by desertification.

Agriculture and industry There are rich gum forests, and groundnuts, cotton, tobacco, cereals, sesame, and sorghum are grown, especially in the south, where agriculture is more productive. Industries include cotton gins, oilseed mills, and leather and soap manufacture, and ostrich feathers, gum arabic, hides, and ivory are exported.

History The Mahdi captured El Obeid in 1883. The Egyptian government despatched a force from Cairo under the British General Hicks, which was ambushed and annihilated at Shekan to the south of El Obeid. Following British reoccupation in 1898, Kordofan was added (1899) to the number of provinces of Sudan. In 1928 Kordofan province was amalgamated with the province of the Nuba Mountains which had been a separate province since 1913. During the Sudanese civil war of 1983–2005 there was fierce conflict, particularly in South Kordofan, where many of the Nuba, in the Nuba mountains, supported and fought with the Sudanese People's Liberation Army (SPLA), which eventually won independence for South Sudan in July 2011. Renewed fighting broke out in South Kordofan in June 2011 as the Sudanese army sought to disarm Nuban fighters, leading to accusations of ethnic cleansing.

Physical More than half of Kordofan's surface is flat, but in the southeast quarter is the Jebel Nuba, a series of rocky massifs rising from the plain and containing caves. During the rainy season, which lasts from June to September, the vegetation is luxuriant, but in the dry season the country is almost a desert.

Demographics Large grazing areas are used by Arabic-speaking, semi-nomadic Baggara and camel-raising Kababish. The most important ethnic groups living here are the Nuba, Shilluk, and Dinka.

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