



of traffic crowded with white SUVs. Walking on Khartoum's streets, flanked by both traditional markets and modern malls, one is confronted by the fact that Sudan is at the crossroads of old and new. Similarly, Sudanese and American attitudes toward the nations' bilateral relations are in transition from an older regime to a newer one.

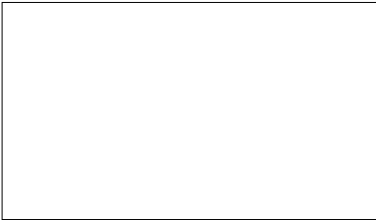
Not many years ago, officers working in the U.S. Embassy in Khartoum could not gain access to government ministries, or to much of the country. Now, officers at Embassy Khartoum keep a busy schedule meeting counterparts in government, business and civil society, laying the foundation for a new era of engagement with Sudan.

In 2016, Embassy Khartoum and the then Office of the U.S. Special Envoy for Sudan and South Sudan began a several-year process encouraging the government of Sudan to improve access to humanitarian aid, fight terrorism and end interference in South Sudan. The Sudanese responded with several positive actions. The government opened humanitarian access throughout the country, maintained a durable cessation of hostilities in Darfur and the Two Areas (Nuba Mountains and Blue Nile State), ceased support to South Sudanese rebel movements and cooperated on threats to regional security. The embassy worked with the government of Sudan to ensure continued progress toward these goals, and the effort resulted in unprecedented access. Dialogue and cooperation on security, defense, education, culture and economics bloomed. | *Cont.* | ▼



AFRICOM Deputy to the Commander for Civil-Military Engagement and Ambassador Alexander M. Laskaris (left) meets Sudanese Military Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Emadeddin Adawi. *Photo by Alsanosi Ahmed*

Sketches of Sudan from an American Perspective



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Public Affairs Officer Keith Hughes (left) shares a joke at a Ramadan iftar organized by a local Sufi cleric for embassy volunteers.

Photo by Alsanosi Ahmed Ali

Mission employees also hosted numerous Washington, D.C. visitors to communicate clearly to decision-makers areas where Sudan had made progress and where it had not. To convey the situation in Sudan took an all-of-embassy effort for each visit. The effort resulted in a changed perspective of Sudan; each visitor learned that Sudan was not a cipher, but a nation with potential to be a partner in both trade and stability management in the region.

The prolonged effort resulted in the lifting of broad economic sanctions on Sudan that had stood for two decades, on Oct. 12, 2017. That executive action, through the formal culmination of the Five Track Engagement Plan, put the U.S. and Sudan on a hard course to improved relations. The executive action marked not only the end of sanctions, but also the beginning of a new era in Sudan and the region. With Embassy Khartoum at the forefront of building relations, it is an exciting time to serve in Khartoum and help to create meaningful impact.

In the months following the lifting of sanctions, Khartoum became a popular destination for high-level visitors, a trend that continues. In November 2017, Deputy Secretary of State John J. Sullivan organized a trip to Sudan and praised the work Embassy Khartoum had done leading to the lifting of sanctions. His public remarks set the course for the two nations to work together and create markers for Sudan to strive toward removing the remaining sanctions. Markers include upholding human rights, cutting ties with North Korea and improving religious tolerance. | *Cont.* | ▼



Deputy Secretary of State John Sullivan talks to media following his keynote speech, setting the path for future relations between Khartoum and the U.S. *Photo by Tital Mohammed*



Embassy staff share a Ramadan iftar in the street. (From left) Amaar Abbas, Political Officer Brian McGrath and POL/ECON Chief Wallace Bain. *Photo by Alsanosi Ahmed Ali*

here than in Egypt; being here, one can imagine the wealth that the Kushite Kingdoms drew to themselves and exported to eager customers living in a vast region spanning the Middle East and much of Africa.

At the end of a day exploring antiquities, officers who venture to these sites frequently camp in the desert where the undiminished Milky Way can cast a shadow. Others prefer to spend a night or two “glamping” at the well-appointed Italian camp, minutes from five discovered archaeological sites. Eras have come and gone in this landscape, and there are still remnants of the ancient Kushite culture to uncover.

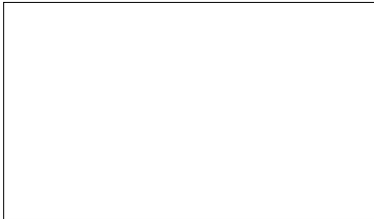
Though sanctions do not seem to have touched Sudan’s large land area and long cultural heritage, their lifting gave Embassy Khartoum an opportunity to expand outreach to key interlocutors outside of Khartoum. Port Sudan, a city on the Red Sea, is in many ways Sudan’s lifeline to the world. Prior to the sanctions lifting, officers visiting Port Sudan were limited in their movements and rarely had substantive meetings. Now, political and economic officers have robust relationships with business groups, the Red Sea State Governor’s office and a growing list of partners in the east of the country.

The removal of sanctions and improved relationships led to an increase in cultural exchanges. Soon after the executive order was signed, a veteran jazz trio from New York visited Sudan for a nationwide tour. Though unforeseen difficulties prevented the band from traveling everywhere on their itinerary, their deep appreciation for the rhythms of Africa and Sudan inspired them to learn a local song and play it to their Sudanese audiences. The Sudanese have immense pride in their culture, which was shown in their reaction to the song. | *Cont.* | ▼



Nubian pyramids were built by the rulers of the ancient Kushite kingdoms. *Photo by Caroline Schneider*

Ahab Makan Music Video



Embassy Khartoum shared the band's recording of the song via Facebook, with the post garnering an unprecedented quarter of a million views.

The improved access to the interior of Sudan allowed Embassy Khartoum officers to travel throughout the country and engage with Sudanese during the holy month of Ramadan. This face-to-face engagement gave Khartoum-based officers the chance to better understand the diverse country and the daily lives of its people. Embassy Khartoum is enjoying great momentum from the lifting of sanctions and the increased engagement with the Sudanese people, creating unique opportunities for those who serve at this post.

| *Cont.* | ▼

sign of positive change and exchange of ideas. From a relationship defined by sanctions to one of mutually beneficial communication and exchange, the U.S. and Sudan are moving toward a partnership working together on securing African stability and growth. Real progress, through fundamental diplomatic engagement, is bringing Sudan closer to peace inside its borders and with its neighbors.

■ *Keith Hughes is the public affairs officer at Embassy Khartoum.*



Chargé d'Affaires Steven Koutsis distributes parcels in an annual embassy food drive tradition that distributes food to neighboring families during the month of Ramadan.

Photo by Tital Mohammed

Below: The Corinthia Hotel Khartoum towers over the Tuti bridge in central Khartoum.



Capital:
Khartoum

Government Type:
presidential republic

Area:
1,861,484 sq km

Population:
37,345,935 (July 2017 est.)

Religions:
Sunni Muslim, small
Christian minority

Ethnic groups:
Sudanese Arab
(approximately 70%), Fur,
Beja, Nuba, Fallata

Languages:
Arabic (official), English
(official), Nubian, Ta
Bedawie, Fur

Exports (commodities):
gold; oil and petroleum
products; cotton, sesame,
livestock, peanuts, gum
Arabic, sugar

Export partners:
UAE 55.5%, Egypt
14.7%, Saudi Arabia
8.8% (2017)

Imports (commodities):
foodstuffs, manufactured
goods, refinery and
transport equipment,
medicines, chemicals,
textiles, wheat

Import partners:
UAE 12.7%, Egypt
10.6%, India 10.5%,
Turkey 10.2%, Japan
7.6%, Saudi Arabia 6%,
Germany 4.6% (2017)

Currency:
Sudanese pounds

Internet country code: .sd



Map produced by the Office of the Geographer and Global Issues

[Return](#)