

**Country/entity** South Sudan  
Sudan

**Region** Africa (excl MENA)

**Agreement name** SPLM-United / Operation Lifeline Sudan Agreement on Ground Rules

**Date** 1 May 1996

**Agreement status** Multiparty signed/agreed

**Interim arrangement** Yes

**Agreement/conflict level** Intrastate/intrastate conflict

### **Sudan Conflicts (1955 - )**

Agreements relate to several distinct dyads, and also the negotiated independence of South Sudan, and subsequent internal conflict in South Sudan. Sudan-South Sudan. The long-standing conflict between the north and the south of the country dates back to colonial times, where the British introduced a so-called 'Southern Policy', severely hampering population movements between these big regions. Immediately after gaining independence in 1956, southern movements started to fight for independence; this fight became professionalised in 1983 with the foundation of the soon internationally supported Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA). When the Islamic Front government introduced strict sharia laws in the south after it took over power in 1988 the war intensified. A decade later, the military situation reached a stalemate, enabling internationally facilitated peace negotiations to begin in 1997. After more fighting, a final negotiation push began in 2002, leading to the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in January 2005.

Sudan-South Sudan post referendum. South Sudan became independent in July 2011; since then, relations between the two countries are complicated and violent conflict led by the SPLM (North) in the Sudanese Nuba mountains region has since intensified.

Darfur. Other long-standing violent conflicts are in the east and the west of the country. In the east, the Beja Congress, established in 1957, is the spearhead of a currently 'peaceful' opposition movement. In the west, the violent conflict in Darfur intensified in the early 2000s and rapidly gained international attention, even resulting in genocide charges against leading figures of the Sudanese government. The situation on the ground is complex, with over a dozen organisations (most notably the Sudanese Liberation Movement and the Justice and Equality Movement) fighting the Sudanese government and allied groups like the Janjaweed – although all parties have switched sides on numerous occasions. Several mediation attempts have not been successful, due to the shaky commitment of the Sudanese central government and the distrust among the armed opposition.

South Sudan - internal

In December 2013, after president Salva Kiir accused opposition leader Riek Machar of attempting a coup, violent conflict broke out between government forces of the SPLM/A and anti-governmental groups. In addition, several other political militias as well as communal militias have joined the conflict. In 2015 the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (ARCSS) was signed. Due to unsuccessful implementation the agreement was revitalized in 2018. In September 2019, Kiir and Machar agreed to establish a power-sharing government after struggles on forming a unity transitional government.

Close

Sudan Conflicts (1955 - )

**Stage** Pre-negotiation/process

**Conflict nature** Government/territory

<b>Peace process</b>	Sudanese (North-South) peace process
<b>Parties</b>	Dr. Lam Akol, Chairman and Commander in Chief SPLM-United; Pierce Gerety, OLS Coordinator and UNICEF Chief of Operations
<b>Third parties</b>	An agreement by the Fashoda Relief and Rehabilitation Association, a humanitarian branch of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement, and Operation Lifeline, a UNICEF-led coalition of humanitarian assistance organizations, on the acceptable standards of conduct for humanitarian activities in SPLM controlled areas.
<b>Description</b>	Agreement to improve delivery of humanitarian relief.

**Agreement document** [SD\\_960501\\_SPLM-United Operation Lifeline Sudan Agreement on Ground Rules.pdf \(opens in new tab\)](#) | [Download PDF](#)

## Groups

<b>Children/youth</b>	<p>Groups→Children/youth→Rhetorical Page 1, A. Statement of humanitarian principles 3. All humanitarian assistance provided is for the use of identified civilian beneficiaries. Priority must at all time be given to women and children and other vulnerable groups such as the elderly, disabled and displaced people.</p> <p>Groups→Children/youth→Substantive Page 1, In signing this agreement, we express our support for the following international humanitarian conventions and their principles, namely: i. Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989</p>
<b>Disabled persons</b>	No specific mention.
<b>Elderly/age</b>	No specific mention.
<b>Migrant workers</b>	No specific mention.
<b>Racial/ethnic/national group</b>	<p>Groups→Racial/ethnic/national group→Anti-discrimination Page 1, A. Statement of humanitarian principles 2. The guiding principle of OLS and FRRA is that of humanitarian neutrality - an independent status for humanitarian work beyond political or military considerations. In other words: i. Humanitarian aid must be given according to considerations of human need alone. Its granting, or its acceptance must not be made dependent on political factors or upon race, religion, ethnicity or nationality. It must not seek to advance any political agenda. Where humanitarian assistance is inadequate to meet the needs of all, priority must be given to the most vulnerable.</p>

**Religious groups** Groups→Religious groups→Anti-discrimination  
Page 1, A. Statement of humanitarian principles  
2. The guiding principle of OLS and FRRA is that of humanitarian neutrality - an independent status for humanitarian work beyond political or military considerations. In other words:  
i. Humanitarian aid must be given according to considerations of human need alone. Its granting, or its acceptance must not be made dependent on political factors or upon race, religion, ethnicity or nationality. It must not seek to advance any political agenda. Where humanitarian assistance is inadequate to meet the needs of all, priority must be given to the most vulnerable.

**Indigenous people** No specific mention.

**Other groups** No specific mention.

**Refugees/displaced persons** No specific mention.

**Social class** No specific mention.

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## Gender

**Women, girls and gender** Page 1, A. Statement of humanitarian principles  
3. All humanitarian assistance provided is for the use of identified civilian beneficiaries. Priority must at all time be given to women and children and other vulnerable groups such as the elderly, disabled and displaced people.

**Men and boys** No specific mention.

**LGBTI** No specific mention.

**Family** No specific mention.

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## State definition

**Nature of state (general)** No specific mention.

**State configuration** No specific mention.

**Self determination** No specific mention.

**Referendum** No specific mention.

**State symbols** No specific mention.

**Independence/  
secession** No specific mention.

**Accession/  
unification** No specific mention.

**Border delimitation** No specific mention.

**Cross-border  
provision** No specific mention.

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## **Governance**

**Political  
institutions (new or  
reformed)** No specific mention.

**Elections** No specific mention.

**Electoral  
commission** No specific mention.

**Political parties  
reform** No specific mention.

## Civil society

Page 1, A. Statement of humanitarian principles

1. The fundamental objective of OLS and FRRA is the provision of humanitarian assistance to populations in need wherever they may be. Such humanitarian assistance seeks to save life, to ease suffering, to promote self-reliance, self-sufficiency and the maintenance of livelihoods. The right to receive humanitarian assistance and to offer it is a fundamental humanitarian principle.

Page 1, A. Statement of humanitarian principles

2. The guiding principle of OLS and FRRA is that of humanitarian neutrality - an independent status for humanitarian work beyond political or military considerations. In other words:

i. Humanitarian aid must be given according to considerations of human need alone. Its granting, or its acceptance must not be made dependent on political factors or upon race, religion, ethnicity or nationality. It must not seek to advance any political agenda. Where humanitarian assistance is inadequate to meet the needs of all, priority must be given to the most vulnerable.

ii. The passage of humanitarian assistance to populations in need should not be denied even if this requires that aid passes through an area controlled by one party in order to reach the needy in another area, provided that such passage is not used for military advantage.

iii. Relief assistance is provided solely on the basis of need; those providing assistance do not affiliate themselves to any side in the ongoing conflict.

iv. The only constraints on responding to humanitarian need should be those of resources and practicality.

Page 2, A. Statement of humanitarian principles

4. Those carrying out relief activities under the auspices of OLS must be accountable to the beneficiaries and their representative structures in first place, and to those who fund the activities. This places the following obligations on the various parties:

i. those rendering humanitarian aid have a duty to ensure its appropriate end use. This includes a right to monitor and participate in the distribution of humanitarian aid on the ground in partnership with FRRA.

ii. local authorities, through the FRRA, must ensure that aid is distributed fairly to civilian beneficiaries. Diversion of aid from intended beneficiaries is regarded as a breach of humanitarian principles.

iii. decision-making on the selection of beneficiaries and the monitoring of the use of inputs and resources must be, and be seen to be, transparent and responsive to broad based decision-making at the level of affected communities. Local authorities and relief agencies should involve local representatives of communities in the processes of targeting and monitoring of aid. Where possible, this should be done through the Joint Relief and Rehabilitation Committees which include elected community representatives.

Page 2, A. Statement of humanitarian principles

5. OLS is based on the complete transparency of all its activities. This means that local authorities have the right to expect that OLS agencies provide full information regarding the resources to be provided. In return, it is expected that local authorities will report honestly and fairly in all their dealings with OLS with respect to needs identified, populations in need, use of resources, etc.

Page 2, A. Statement of humanitarian principles

6. All humanitarian actions should be tailored to local circumstances and aim to enhance, not supplant, locally available resources and mechanisms. Strengthening local capacity to prevent future crises and emergencies and to promote greater involvement of Sudanese institutions and individuals in all humanitarian actions is an integral part of OLS's humanitarian mandate.

<b>Traditional/ religious leaders</b>	No specific mention.
<b>Public administration</b>	Page 6, E. Rents, taxes, licences, protection money 2. In the case of public buildings which are being rented by an NGO as living accommodation, a reasonable rent may be paid by the NGO/UN agency to the civil administration. Genuine efforts should be made to make moves towards standardization of these rents.
<b>Constitution</b>	No specific mention.

### **Power sharing**

<b>Political power sharing</b>	No specific mention.
<b>Territorial power sharing</b>	No specific mention.
<b>Economic power sharing</b>	No specific mention.
<b>Military power sharing</b>	No specific mention.

### **Human rights and equality**

<b>Human rights/RoL general</b>	Page 2, A. Statement of humanitarian principles 7. The fundamental human right of all persons to live in safety and dignity must be affirmed and supported through appropriate measures of protection as well as relief. All those involved in OLS must respect and uphold international humanitarian law and fundamental human rights.
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**Bill of rights/similar** No specific mention.

<b>Treaty incorporation</b>	Page 1, In signing this agreement, we express our support for the following international humanitarian conventions and their principles, namely: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989</li> <li>ii. Geneva Conventions of 1949 and the 1977 Protocols additional to the Geneva Conventions</li> </ul> Page 3, A. Statement of humanitarian principles 7. The fundamental human right of all persons to live in safety and dignity must be affirmed and supported through appropriate measures of protection as well as relief. All those involved in OLS must respect and uphold international humanitarian law and fundamental human rights.
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**Civil and political rights** Human rights and equality→Civil and political rights→Liberty and security of person  
Page 3, A. Statement of humanitarian principles  
7. The fundamental human right of all persons to live in safety and dignity must be affirmed and supported through appropriate measures of protection as well as relief. All those involved in OLS must respect and uphold international humanitarian law and fundamental human rights.  
Human rights and equality→Civil and political rights→Privacy and family life  
Page 4, B. Mutual obligations  
10. UN/NGO compounds should be respected as property of these institutions. Those living in these compounds have the right to privacy and compounds should only be entered with the permission of their residents. No military or political activity should take place in these compounds and no personnel bearing arms may enter them except when the safety of their residents is threatened.

**Socio-economic rights** Human rights and equality→Socio-economic rights→Property  
Page 5, C. Use of relief property and supplies  
3. UN and NGO staff will be allowed unrestricted access to their communication equipment and to exercise normal property rights. Except for emergencies, all messages should be written and recorded. Use of UN/NGO radios or other communication equipment will be limited to information on relief activities only. All messages will be in the English language. Operation shall be by a locally designated radio operator seconded and selected jointly by the local authorities and relief agencies. Whenever necessary, UN/NGO personnel will be allowed to transmit their own messages.  
Human rights and equality→Socio-economic rights→Other  
Page 1, A. Statement of humanitarian principles  
1. The fundamental objective of OLS and FRRA is the provision of humanitarian assistance to populations in need wherever they may be. Such humanitarian assistance seeks to save life, to ease suffering, to promote self-reliance, self-sufficiency and the maintenance of livelihoods. The right to receive humanitarian assistance and to offer it is a fundamental humanitarian principle.  
  
Page 2, A. Statement of humanitarian principles  
5. OLS is based on the complete transparency of all its activities. This means that local authorities have the right to expect that OLS agencies provide full information regarding the resources to be provided. In return, it is expected that local authorities will report honestly and fairly in all their dealings with OLS with respect to needs identified, populations in need, use of resources, etc.

**Rights related issues**

**Citizenship** No specific mention.

**Democracy** No specific mention.

**Detention procedures** No specific mention.

**Media and communication**

Rights related issues→Media and communication→Media logistics

Page 5, C. Use of relief property and supplies

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Page 6, F. Implementation of this agreement

1. All signatories to this agreement must accept responsibility for ensuring that it is disseminated to all their officials and staff working in Sudan. It should also be publicised in public places in Sudan to ensure that local communities and beneficiaries understand its principles and rules.

**Mobility/access**

Page 1, A. Statement of humanitarian principles

2. The guiding principle of OLS and FRRA is that of humanitarian neutrality - an independent status for humanitarian work beyond political or military considerations. In other words:

ii. The passage of humanitarian assistance to populations in need should not be denied even if this requires that aid passes through an area controlled by one party in order to reach the needy in another area, provided that such passage is not used for military advantage.

Page 3, A. Statement of humanitarian principles

8. Bona fide staff members of OLS agencies and others living, working or travelling in Sudan under the auspices of OLS have the right to go about their business freely and without restraint provided that they adhere to these ground rules and to local laws and customs. In all their dealings, relief workers and local authorities must demonstrate mutual respect.

Page 3, B. Mutual obligations

5. UN agencies and NGOs must ensure that all their staff living, working or visiting Sudan are bearers of valid entry passes from SPLM-United.

Page 4, C. Use of relief property and supplies

1. i. All UN/NGO property, including vehicles and property hired by UN/NGOs, is to be controlled and moved at the discretion of UN/NGOs or their agencies, unless such property is formally donated to another party.

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<b>Protection measures</b>	<p>Rights related issues→Protection measures→Protection of civilians Page 1,</p> <p>We, the undersigned, enter into this agreement in a spirit of good faith and mutual cooperation in order to improve the delivery of humanitarian assistance to and protection of civilians in need.</p> <p>Rights related issues→Protection measures→Protection of groups Page 4, B. Mutual obligations</p> <p>9. Local authorities assume full responsibility, through the FRRRA for the safety and Protection of relief workers in areas under their control. This responsibility includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Providing an immediate alert to relief workers in potentially insecure areas;</li> <li>ii. facilitation of safe relocation when necessary;</li> <li>iii. protection from any form of threat harassment or hostility from any source;</li> </ul>
<b>Other</b>	<p>Page 5, D. Employment of staff</p> <p>1. All UN agencies and NGO have the right to hire their own staff as direct employees. These agencies should be encouraged to employ appropriately qualified and experienced Sudanese as part of a capacity building strategy.</p>

**Rights institutions**

**NHRI** No specific mention.

**Regional or international human rights institutions** No specific mention.

**Justice sector reform**

**Criminal justice and emergency law** No specific mention.

**State of emergency provisions** No specific mention.

**Judiciary and courts** No specific mention.

**Prisons and detention** No specific mention.

**Traditional Laws** No specific mention.

**Socio-economic reconstruction**

**Development or socio-economic reconstruction**

Socio-economic reconstruction→Development or socio-economic reconstruction→Humanitarian assistance

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ii. The passage of humanitarian assistance to populations in need should not be denied even if this requires that aid passes through an area controlled by one party in order to reach the needy in another area, provided that such passage is not used for military advantage.

iii. Relief assistance is provided solely on the basis of need; those providing assistance do not affiliate themselves to any side in the ongoing conflict.

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ii. local authorities, through the FRRA, must ensure that aid is distributed fairly to civilian beneficiaries. Diversion of aid from intended beneficiaries is regarded as a breach of humanitarian principles.

iii. decision-making on the selection of beneficiaries and the monitoring of the use of inputs and resources must be, and be seen to be, transparent and responsive to broad based decision-making at the level of affected communities. Local authorities and relief agencies should involve local representatives of communities in the processes of targeting and monitoring of aid. Where possible, this should be done through the Joint Relief and Rehabilitation Committees which include elected community representatives.

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Page 2, A. Statement of humanitarian principles

6. All humanitarian actions should be tailored to local circumstances and aim to enhance, not supplant, locally available resources and mechanisms. Strengthening local capacity to prevent future crises and emergencies and to promote greater involvement

**National economic plan** No specific mention.

**Natural resources** No specific mention.

**International funds** No specific mention.

**Business** No specific mention.

**Taxation** No specific mention.

**Banks** No specific mention.

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**Land, property and environment**

**Land reform/rights** No specific mention.

**Pastoralist/  
nomadism rights** No specific mention.

**Cultural heritage** No specific mention.

**Environment** No specific mention.

**Water or riparian  
rights or access** No specific mention.

## **Security sector**

### **Security Guarantees**

Page 4, B. Mutual obligations

9. Local authorities assume full responsibility, through the FRRRA for the safety and Protection of relief workers in areas under their control. This responsibility includes:

- i. Providing an immediate alert to relief workers in potentially insecure areas;
- ii. facilitation of safe relocation when necessary;
- iii. protection from any form of threat harassment or hostility from any source;

Page 4, B. Mutual obligations

10. UN/NGO compounds should be respected as property of these institutions. Those living in these compounds have the right to privacy and compounds should only be entered with the permission of their residents. No military or political activity should take place in these compounds and no personnel bearing arms may enter them except when the safety of their residents is threatened.

Page 5, C. Use of relief property and supplies

2. UN and NGO flags are for exclusive use by these agencies.

Page 5, C. Use of relief property and supplies

3. UN and NGO staff will be allowed unrestricted access to their communication equipment and to exercise normal property rights. Except for emergencies, all messages should be written and recorded. Use of UN/NGO radios or other communication equipment will be limited to information on relief activities only. All messages will be in the English language. Operation shall be by a locally designated radio operator seconded and selected jointly by the local authorities and relief agencies. Whenever necessary, UN/NGO personnel will be allowed to transmit their own messages.

Page 5, C. Use of relief property and supplies

4. No armed or uniformed personnel is allowed to travel on UN/NGO vehicles: planes, boats or cars. This includes those vehicles contracted by UN/NGOs.

### **Ceasefire**

No specific mention.

### **Police**

No specific mention.

### **Armed forces**

No specific mention.

### **DDR**

No specific mention.

### **Intelligence services**

No specific mention.

### **Parastatal/rebel and opposition group forces**

No specific mention.

**Withdrawal of foreign forces** No specific mention.

**Corruption** No specific mention.

**Crime/organised crime** No specific mention.

**Drugs** No specific mention.

**Terrorism** No specific mention.

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### **Transitional justice**

**Transitional justice general** No specific mention.

**Amnesty/pardon** No specific mention.

**Courts** No specific mention.

**Mechanism** No specific mention.

**Prisoner release** No specific mention.

**Vetting** No specific mention.

**Victims** No specific mention.

**Missing persons** No specific mention.

**Reparations** No specific mention.

**Reconciliation** No specific mention.

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### **Implementation**

**UN signatory** Pierce Gerety, OLS Coordinator and UNICEF Chief of Operations

**Other international signatory** No specific mention.

**Referendum for agreement**

No specific mention.

**International mission/force/similar**

No specific mention.

**Enforcement mechanism**

Page 6, F. Implementation of this agreement

1. All signatories to this agreement must accept responsibility for ensuring that it is disseminated to all their officials and staff working in Sudan. It should also be publicised in public places in Sudan to ensure that local communities and beneficiaries understand its principles and rules.

Page 6, F. Implementation of this agreement

2. UNICEF/OLS, together with the FRRA will be responsible for ensuring the holding of workshops and meetings in all key locations in which the principles and rules of this agreement are explained and discussed with all relevant personnel.

Page 6, F. Implementation of this agreement

3. The FRRA is fully responsible for ensuring compliance with this agreement by the local authorities and communities.

Page 6, F. Implementation of this agreement

4. Joint Relief and Rehabilitation Committees established in all relief centres and involving all relevant actors should meet together on a regular basis to plan, implement and monitor the delivery of humanitarian assistance. These committees will be regarded as the custodians of the principles of this agreement at local level and responsible for ensuring that the rules are upheld and respected by all sides.

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