



REPUBLIC OF SOUTH SUDAN

NATIONAL BUREAU OF STATISTICS

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Press Release

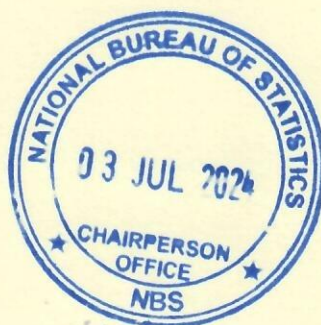
The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), South Sudan's principal statistical agency, has just learned of a social media report, entitled "**Demographic Shifts in South Sudan: An Analytical Review**," which purports to analyze newly released population counts that are ethnically/tribally segmented. The report also alleges that these counts come from a recent exercise by the National Bureau of Statistics. We set the record straight as follows:

1. First, the information presented in the report does not come from the Bureau.
2. Second, the Bureau's three major valid sources of data, including the 2008 Population and Housing Census, the 2021 Population Estimation Survey, and the 2009-2024 Population Projections, did not include questions on ethnicity and religion.
3. Finally, the Bureau stands ready to conduct the next census to appropriately guide the Government, Development Partners, and the public.

Any questions, please contact the Bureau's Communication, Advocacy, and Publicity Department at 0928 022 777.

Communication and Advocacy
The National Bureau of Statistics

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Demographic Shifts in South Sudan

The Recent findings from the South Sudan Census Bureau and Statistics reveal significant demographic changes within the country's tribal composition. Historically, the Dinka tribe was the largest ethnic group in South Sudan, as per the 2008 census. However, new data indicates that the Nuer tribe now surpasses the Dinka in population. This article provides an analytical review of these findings, examining the potential causes and implications of such demographic shifts.

Overview of Census Data

According to the latest research, the population of the Dinka tribe stands at 4.53 million, making them the second largest tribe in South Sudan. In contrast, the Nuer tribe now holds the largest population at 4.65 million. Additionally, the Azande, Bari tribe follows with a population of 1.7 million, while the Ketebo tribe remains the smallest, residing primarily in Bira Kidepo County, Eastern Equatoria State.

Analysing the Population Shifts

Historical Context and Tribal Dynamics

The Dinka and Nuer tribes have long been the two predominant ethnic groups in South Sudan. The 2008 census reflected this, with the Dinka holding a slight majority. Several factors could contribute to the shift observed in recent years:

1. **Conflict and Displacement:** South Sudan has experienced prolonged periods of civil conflict, notably the civil war that erupted in 2013. These conflicts have led to significant displacement of populations. It is possible that the Nuer population, concentrated in certain areas, experienced less displacement or had higher birth rates in refugee settings compared to the Dinka.
2. **Migration Patterns:** Internal and external migration may have influenced the tribal demographics. If a significant portion of the Dinka population migrated out of the country or to different regions within South Sudan, this could result in a lower recorded population.
3. **Differential Birth Rates:** Variations in birth rates between the tribes could also explain the demographic changes. If the Nuer had a higher birth rate over the past decade, this would naturally lead to an increase in their population relative to the Dinka.
4. **Methodological Changes:** Differences in data collection methods and accuracy between the 2008 census and the recent research could also contribute to the apparent population shift. Improved data collection techniques may have provided a more accurate picture of the Nuer population size.

Socioeconomic Implications

Political Representation and Power Dynamics

The relative sizes of ethnic groups in South Sudan have significant political implications. Historically, political power has often been concentrated among the larger tribes, with the Dinka and Nuer playing central roles. The new demographic data could potentially alter political alliances and power structures:

- **Resource Allocation:** Government resources, including development projects and humanitarian aid, may be redistributed based on the updated population figures. This could lead to increased investment in Nuer-majority areas.
- **Representation:** The shift could also influence representation in government bodies. If the Nuer are now the largest tribe, they might push for greater representation in the legislative and executive branches.

Social Cohesion and Ethnic Relations

Ethnic relations in South Sudan are complex and have historically been marked by tensions and conflict. The new demographic landscape may impact these relations in several ways:

- **Inter-Tribal Relations:** The perceived shift in power balance could exacerbate tensions between the Dinka and Nuer. Ensuring equitable treatment and fostering dialogue between these groups will be crucial for maintaining stability.
- **Integration Policies:** Policies aimed at integrating various ethnic groups and promoting social cohesion will need to consider the updated demographics to be effective.