Sudan tops 'failed states index'

Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo are the world's most vulnerable states, according to a new study.

The report - compiled by the US Foreign Policy magazine and the US-based Fund for Peace think-tank - ranked nations according to their viability.

Judged according to 12 criteria, including human flight and economic decline, states range from the most failed, Sudan, to the least, Norway.

Eleven of the 20 most failed states of the 146 nations examined are in Africa.

Internal conflicts

The second annual "failed states index" was based on "tens of thousands of articles" from different sources gathered over several months in 2005 and reviewed by experts, its authors said.

Failed States 2006 - Top 10

1. Sudan (3)*
2. DR Congo (2)*
3. Ivory Coast (1)*
4. Iraq (4)*
5. Zimbabwe (15)*
6. Chad (7)*
(Tie) Somalia (5)*
8. Haiti (10)*
9. Pakistan (34)*
10. Afghanistan (11)*

* Position in 2005 report

Each nation was given an overall score based on the 12 criteria:

- mounting demographic pressures
- massive movement of refugees and internally displaced peoples
- legacy of vengeance - seeking group grievance
- chronic and sustained human flight
- uneven economic development along group lines
- sharp and/or severe economic decline
- criminalisation and delegitimisation of the state
- progressive deterioration of public services
- widespread violation of human rights
- security apparatus as "state within a state"
- rise of factionalised elites
The study concluded that Sudan was the country under the most stress because of the violent internal conflicts in western Darfur region.

**HAVE YOUR SAY**

I do not believe that Sudan is more failed than Somalia, Iraq and Afghanistan

Amin, Toronto

The Democratic Republic of Congo and Ivory Coast - both ravaged by years of civil wars in recent years - ranked second and third respectively.

Despite the presence of US-led troops, Iraq was fourth in the index.

"For Iraq, the index category that worsened most was human flights," the report said.

"The exodus of Iraq's professional class has accelerated, leaving the country without the trained citizens it needs to staff important posts."

**Pakistan's 'plunge'**

Zimbabwe, Chad, Somalia, Haiti and Pakistan and Afghanistan were also placed in the top 10 of the most failed states.

Pakistan slipped from 34th last year to ninth in the new report - one of the sharpest declines in overall score to any country on the list.

The contributing factors were Pakistan's inability to police the tribal areas near the Afghan border, the devastating earthquake last October in Kashmir and rising ethnic tensions, report said.

The top sixty positions in the list were occupied almost exclusively by African, Middle Eastern, and Asian countries.

The only European states in relatively high positions were Bosnia and Herzegovina (35), Russia (43), Belarus (50), Serbia and Montenegro (55) and Moldova (58).

The least vulnerable states were Finland (144), Sweden (145) and Norway (146), the report said.

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