

## The Sudan Consortium

*African and International Civil Society Action for Sudan*

### Human Rights Update: February - March 2015

#### *Bombings continue ahead of elections<sup>1</sup>*

The Sudan Consortium works with a trusted group of local Sudanese partners who have been working on the ground in Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile since the current conflict began in 2011. Unless otherwise cited, information in this report, including all photos, were gathered by these monitors. **All the attacks referred to in this report were launched against areas where there was no military presence and which were clearly identifiable as civilian in character.** We believe that this information provides strong evidence that civilians are being directly and deliberately targeted by the Sudanese armed forces in Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile.

As elections in Sudan approach in April 2015, the conflict in Southern Kordofan is being drawn in to the political debate. President Bashir had promised that all wars would be ended by the end of 2014 and that the elections would be held in a peaceful environment.<sup>2</sup> The continuation of the war, among other factors, is undermining international confidence in the elections.<sup>3</sup> At the same time, rebels have threatened to stop the elections<sup>4</sup> in Southern Kordofan and have claimed that their recent offensives have been undertaken in an effort to support election boycotts.<sup>5</sup>

In this tense context, the government carried out significant attacks in both February and March, continuing the dry season offensive that has been underway since November 2014. During the reporting period, which includes all of February and the first three weeks of March, there were 68 verified incidents of either bombing or shelling, 47 in February and 21 in the first three weeks of March. The attacks caused significant damage, with ten deaths confirmed in February,<sup>6</sup> and 61 injuries (44 in February and 17 in March). A particular facet of the violence in the last months has been the high level of injuries to children (16 in the period). By way of comparison, this is more than half the total number of injuries to children monitored throughout 2014. The attacks also caused significant destruction to civilian infrastructure and assets, claiming 80 head of livestock (70 in February and 10

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<sup>1</sup> We have been unable to include information on Blue Nile in this update. Information from that region will be published as it becomes available.

<sup>2</sup> Sudan Tribune, "[Bashir vows to end rebellion and tribal clashes before 2015 elections](#)," 16 September 2013.

<sup>3</sup> See, for example, UK Parliament, "[Sudan: Written question - HL5782](#)," 17 March 2015.

<sup>4</sup> Radio Tamazuj, "[SPLA-N threatens to stop elections in South Kordofan](#)," 29 March 2015.

<sup>5</sup> Sudan Tribune, "[SPLM-N rebels say military attacks aim to support election boycott](#)," 14 March 2015.

<sup>6</sup> No deaths were recorded in the March attacks.

in March) and damaging hospital and school facilities. Finally, there were reports of the use of cluster bombs, a phenomenon that has not been common in the conflict to date.

#### *Civilian Deaths and Injuries*



*Child burned in Umserdiba attack, Um Dorein County*

One particularly serious incident was a shelling attack on 3 February 2015 on Umserdiba village in Um Dorein County that killed four children. A further five children sustained serious burns, and a house was also burnt down. In addition to being reported by the team of monitors on the ground, this incident was documented by Dr. Tom Catena and his team at Mother of Mercy Hospital in Gidel, which treated the victims and provided photographic evidence to the Sudan: Research, Analysis and Advocacy website.<sup>7</sup>

Another particularly tragic attack took place on 6 February in Tunguli village, Delami County. The attack killed two pregnant women, one of whom was eight and a half months pregnant despite the fact they were sheltering in a cave. The same attack also injured four children.

In another incident, that took place at 5.35pm on 1 February in Alhebeil village in Um Dorein County, a 25 year old man was killed. In addition, an attack on 16 February at 7.30am in Heiban village in Heiban County killed a 28 year old woman and a 36 year old man.

On 15 March, ten people were injured when a bomb from an Antonov fell on the Peace and Community Development Centre in Kanist Alamsih Church in Heiban County. Six women aged between 19 and 38 were injured as were two children (aged 3 and 17) and the village chief, a 70 year old man.

In Talodi County on 19 March a landmine exploded injuring two people and killing four head of cattle.

The reporting period was marked by a particularly high number of incidents in which children were injured. On 1 February, a bombing at 9.00am in Regifi village in Um Dorein County injured five children in a single attack. Four children were injured in the incident in Delami County that took the lives of two pregnant women on 6 February, noted above, and eight children were injured in an attack on Chawry village in Heiban County at 7.30am on 16 February, where two adults were also injured. Two cows and a goat were killed and a garden was also destroyed in the same attack. Three children, aged 3, 8 and 9 were injured in an attack on Dabi village in Heiban County on 1 March. The attack also killed one goat and two cows and destroyed five gardens. On 11 March, a MIG bombed Tenassa village in Al Buram (Tobo) County, injuring a 12 year old girl.<sup>8</sup>



*The victim of Tenassa village bombing has her wounds cleaned, Al Buram (Tobo) County*

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<sup>7</sup> Eric Reeves, "[Photographs of carnage in the Nuba Mountains](#)," 3 February 2015.

<sup>8</sup> In addition to being reported by the monitors working with the Sudan Consortium, it was also reported by the Sudan Tribune, quoting SPLM sources. Sudan Tribune, "[Sudan army repels new rebel attack in South Kordofan: spokesperson](#)," 13 March 2015.

A significant number of older men and women were also harmed during the reporting period. In an attack on Alazraq village in Heiban County on 6 February, a 65 year old woman was injured. A 57 year old man was injured in an attack on Allubi village in Heiban County in an attack that occurred at 7.50am on 12 March.



*Shrapnel from Antonov Bombing,  
Heiban County*

#### *Damage to Civilian Infrastructure*

In addition to the human damage, significant damage to infrastructure and civilian assets was sustained. As noted above, 80 head of livestock were killed in the seven week period, severely depleting the limited resources of the population and their ability to provide for their material needs. In a number of other incidents, farms and gardens were burned, destroying critically needed food supplies.

In addition to bombings and shelling, incidents of kidnapping, looting and arson continued to threaten the population. Monitors in Lagawa County reported a looting incident in Al Sonut village. On 7 February, assailants believed to be soldiers of the government of Sudan, killed a man who was taking his cows out to graze. The attackers took all of his possessions and fled. The attackers also abducted two boys who were herding cattle and stole their livestock. On 11 February, crops which had been harvested and were being prepared for threshing were set on fire by unknown persons. Local civilians suspect Arab militias to be responsible.

Despite hospitals and medical units having special protected status under international humanitarian law (including [Article 11 of the Protocol Additional to Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and relating to the Protection of Victims of Non-International Armed Conflicts \(Protocol II\)](#) which [Sudan](#) is a state party), Heiban Alreife Hospital in Errl Payam in Heiban County was bombed in two separate incidents in February. In one of the bombings, on 16 February 2015, ten rooms in the hospital were destroyed. In addition, the recent spate of attacks have resulted in significant damage to educational facilities. In Asolo village in Buram (Tobo) County, four bombs were dropped on a teacher's compound on 15 February at 8.00am. In another attack, a school was damaged on 12 February at 6.05am in Echorlang village in Um Dorein County. On 15 March, two bombs fell on the New Sudan Primary School in Heiban Payam, Heiban County. Fortunately, in this instance, the bomb caused only light damage.

The damage to schools, along with the wider impact of the war, has made it difficult for students to continue with their studies. As one witness said: "The continuous war in Sudan has stopped us from our social lives, and it has affected the lives of our children from getting the right materials for their studies". Nonetheless, students have shown commitment to continuing their schooling. In the words of one student, "life is hard but the struggle continues in school". In Delami County, locally constructed schools continue to operate despite the war, albeit with little in the way of amenities. Students sit exams seated on rocks, and the same student quoted above demonstrated how, due to the lack of other materials being available, clay-like soil is used to practice the letters of the Latin alphabet. The fact that these schools are operating at all is a testament to the resilience of the people of Southern Kordofan. However, it goes without saying that the next generation of Nubans deserve a better quality of education than is currently possible amid the ongoing bombings.



*A student in Delami County practices the alphabet with clay like soil*

#### *Repeated targeting of the same location*

Once again, a number of villages appear to have been targeted repeatedly by aerial bombardment. The village of Karkaraya in Um Dorein County was bombed on seven separate days in the month of February. The attacks occurred on 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 8 and 15 February. Most of these attacks were carried out by Antonovs, but one was undertaken by two MIGs. One of these attacks injured five people, two adults and three children. Another destroyed a water container. The other attacks killed a total of ten head of livestock. In another example, the village of Tunguli in Delami County has been bombed six times in

2015 alone, including on 6 March (reports have been received, but not yet confirmed of another bombing on 6 April). Residents speculate that this village is being targeted because the county commissioner's office is based there.

#### *Cluster bombs*

Another worrying development is the suspected deployment of cluster bombs in Delami County. This is not the first time that cluster bombs have been deployed in the conflict, for example Human Rights Watch recorded the discovery of a cluster bomb in 2012.<sup>9</sup> It is, however, the first time that this ordinance has been reported in Delami County and in general, reports of the use of such ordinance have been uncommon throughout the war. According to sources on the ground, four suspected cluster bombs were dropped on Tunguli village, although three did not explode. While the monitoring team does not have the military



*Students in Delami County sit exams sitting on stones*

expertise to confirm the types of weapons used, we are sourcing experts to confirm the type of weaponry. The government of Sudan has denied possessing cluster bombs, which are prohibited under the 2008 Convention on Cluster Munitions. Although Sudan is not a party, the existence of the convention is a testament to growing international consensus that the use of these weapons is unacceptable.

#### *Reported SPLM-N violations*

In this reporting period, there were also a number of allegations leveled against the rebel Sudan Peoples' Liberation Army – North (SPLM-N). On 16 March, the British Ambassador to Sudan, Peter Tibber, expressed "concern" about "reports of alleged attacks on civilians in Kalogi," referring to Sudanese government reports that rebels killed civilians and burned property in the region<sup>10</sup> – although this was denied by Radio Dabanga, citing a resident of the town.<sup>11</sup> In late March, the governor of South Kordofan, Adam Al Fekki, claimed that 21 civilians were killed and 2,500 were displaced in a rebel attack on the town of Habila. SPLM-N authorities claimed to have taken in town in late March.<sup>12</sup> In both cases, the monitors were unable to access these areas to make an assessment as to the veracity of the allegations. However, we remind the SPLM-N of their obligation to respect international humanitarian law.

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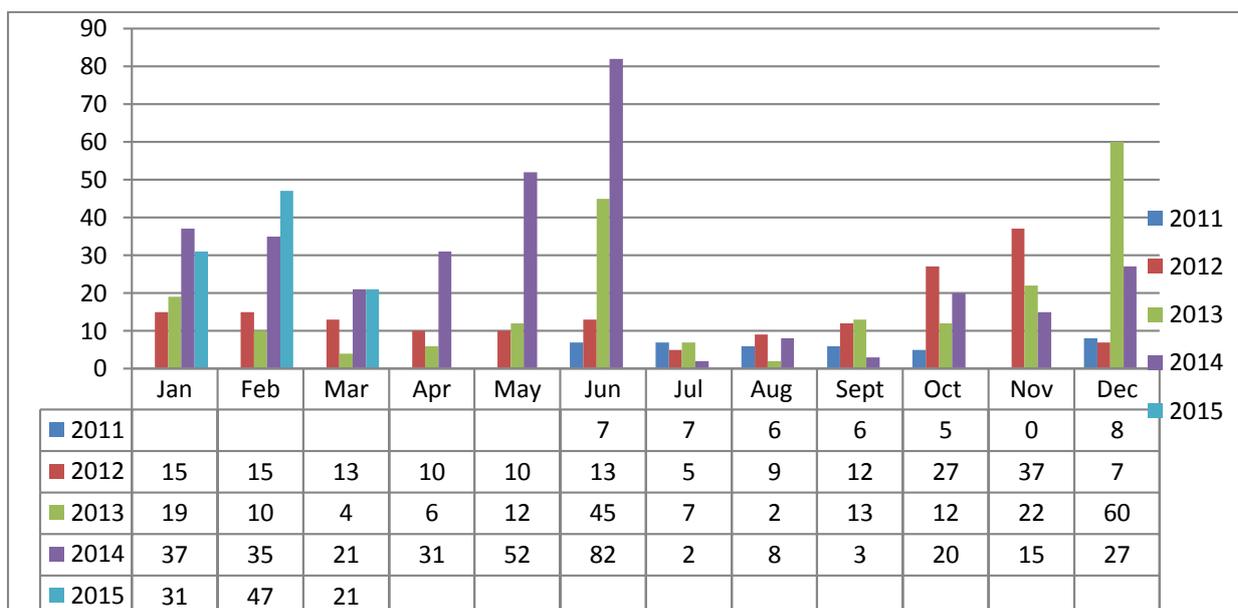
<sup>9</sup> Human Rights Watch, "[Cluster Bomb Found in Conflict Zone](#)," 25 May 2012.

<sup>10</sup> Sudan Tribune, "[British envoy concerned by rebel attacks on civilians in S. Kordofan](#)," 17 March 2015.

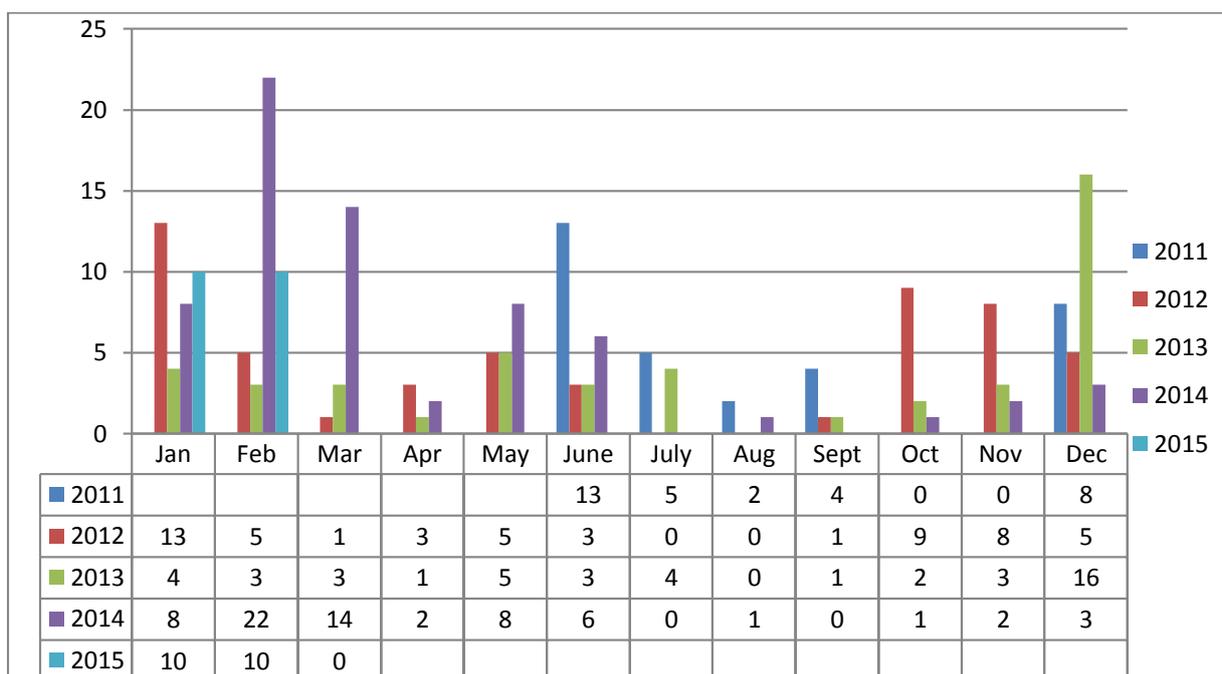
<sup>11</sup> Radio Dabanga, "[SPLM-N did not attack civilians in South Kordofan's Kalogi](#)," 17 March 2015.

<sup>12</sup> Radio Tamazuj, "[South Kordofan governor says 21 citizens killed in Habila attack](#)," 31 March 2015.

**Number of bombing and shelling attacks on civilians and civilian objects in Southern Kordofan  
June 2011 – March 2015**



**Civilians killed by bombing and shelling attacks in Southern Kordofan:  
June 2011 – March 2015**



**Civilians injured by bombing and shelling attacks in Southern Kordofan:  
June 2011 – March 2015**

