

# CORI

Country of origin research and information

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## **CORI Research Analysis**

**Date:** 22 October 2013

**Country:** Darfur

**Ref:** Dar1013

**Issues:** Please provide information on how Sudanese of Arab ethnicities are affected by the recent upsurge in inter-communal violence in/around Katalya, South Darfur (specifically Beni Halba or Gimr)

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*CORI research analyses are prepared on the basis of publicly available information studies and commentaries and produced within a specified time frame. All sources are cited and fully referenced. Every effort has been taken to ensure accuracy and comprehensive coverage of the research issue however as Country of Origin Information (COI) is reliant on publicly available documentation there may be instances where the required information is not available. The analyses are not and do not purport to be either exhaustive with regard to conditions in the country surveyed or conclusive as to the merits of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Please read the full text of each document referred to using the URL provided in the footnote.*

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## **Arab inter-communal violence**

Inter-communal fighting amongst several Arab tribes e.g. Misseriya and Salamat,<sup>1</sup> Rizeigat and the Maalia,<sup>2</sup> Northern Reizegat and Beni Hussein<sup>3</sup> was reported outside Katayla locality.<sup>4</sup> In May 2013 Kenyan online newspaper *Africa Review* carried an AFP article

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<sup>1</sup> ACAPS, Global Overview, June 2013, available from <http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/geo%20%2815%29.pdf>, accessed 12 October 2013

<sup>2</sup> Sudan Tribune, More than 100 killed in tribal conflict in south Darfur, 11 August 2013, <http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article47620>, accessed 12 October 2013

<sup>3</sup> IRIN, The Humanitarian Situation in Darfur, 15 August 2013, <http://www.irinnews.org/report/98580/briefing-the-humanitarian-situation-in-darfur>, accessed 13 October 2013

<sup>4</sup> Small Arms Survey, Human Security Baseline Assessment (HSBA), Darfur Peace Process Chronology, 2013, updated 24 July 2013, <http://www.smallarmssurveysudan.org/fileadmin/docs/facts-figures/sudan/darfur/peace-process-chronology/HSBA-Darfur-Peace-Process-Chronology-2013.pdf>, accessed 13 October 2013; UN Security Council, Report of the Secretary General on the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur, 12 July 2013, S/2013/420, [http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s\\_2013\\_420.pdf](http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_2013_420.pdf), accessed 12 October 2013

which stated that "as drought has wracked the region, disputes between rival tribes over access to water and pasture have multiplied."<sup>5</sup> In June 2013 Geneva based humanitarian agency ACAPS reported that "in different parts of Darfur near the cities of Katila, Um Dukhun, Ed Elfirsan and Rihaid Albirdi, tribal fighting between the Salamat and Ta'isha, Al-Gimir and Beni Halba, Misseriya and Salamat tribes is intensifying."<sup>6</sup>

### **Fighting between Beni Halba and Gimir in and around Katayla locality**

In May 2013 the *British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC)* reported that fighting broke out between the Gimir and Beni Halba over land producing gum arabic, "deaths are the result of an ongoing dispute between two ethnic groups in South Darfur, over pasture and acacia trees, from which the gum is cut."<sup>7</sup>

In April 2013 *Radio Dabanga*, operated by Netherlands based Free Press Unlimited, reported that fighting broke out in February between the Beni Halba and Gimir following a dispute over land ownership. Eight people were killed and four wounded as a result of the fighting in the Ed Al Fursan area, displacing 750 families.<sup>8</sup>

In April 2013 *Radio Dabanga* reported that the Beni Halba and Gimir tribes resumed fighting on 26 April during which 137 houses were burned and several people were killed and injured in Haraza village 50km northwest of Katayla, causing displacement. *Radio Dabanga* reported that the tribes accuse each other of breaching a previously signed peace treaty,

"Fighting between Beni Halba and Gimir began at Haraza's district of Zain, located north of the police station. The village itself is situated about 50km northwest of Katayla, which received a large number of displaced fleeing the battles.

Sources said fighting was still on-going by the evening. They told Radio Dabanga the Gimir lost seven men, including Hassan Zaqzouq, and Akwei Abdullah, Abdul Rahman Abdullah Abdulrahman. Seven others from the same tribe were injured, they added.

Beni Halba tribesmen burned 137 houses in Zain and sources said they had the support of elements of the Central Reserve Forces (Abu Tira), who arrived in 12 Land Cruiser vehicles, on foot and on horsebacks and camels."<sup>9</sup>

In July 2013 the report of the *Secretary General on the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID)* stated that clashes between Beni Halba and Gimir tribes continued during April and May in Katayla locality in Southern Darfur. *UNAMID* stated that fighting started in Batikha village (95km south west of Ed Al Fursan) in February. In an attack in Katayla on 22 May 31 civilians were killed and 13,000 people

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<sup>5</sup> AFP, Tribal clashes kill 64 in Sudan's Darfur, 30 May 2013, available from <http://www.africareview.com/News/Tribal-clashes-kill-in-Sudan-Darfur/-/979180/1867142/-/vvhc4/-/index.html>, accessed 12 October 2013

<sup>6</sup> ACAPS, Global Overview, June 2013, <http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/geo%20%2815%29.pdf>, accessed 13 October 2013

<sup>7</sup> BBC, Sudan clashes over gum arabic in Darfur, 31 May 2013, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-22728071>, accessed 13 October 2013

<sup>8</sup> Radio Dabanga, Beni Halba, Gimir tribes in new violent clashes in South Darfur, 26 April 2013, <https://www.radiodabanga.org/node/47431>, accessed 12 October 2013

<sup>9</sup> Radio Dabanga, Beni Halba, Gimir tribes in new violent clashes in South Darfur, 26 April 2013, <https://www.radiodabanga.org/node/47431>, accessed 12 October 2013

displaced. The *UNAMID* stated that attempts by the Southern Darfur State to resolve the conflict by demarcating administrative borders between the tribes in Katalya and Ed Al Fursan were ineffective,

"According to local authorities, on 22 May, Beni Halba militias attacked Katilla (38 km south of Ed Al Fursan), a town predominantly inhabited by the Gimir tribe, resulting in an unspecified number of houses and Government buildings destroyed; 31 civilians reportedly killed and 21 injured; and an estimated 13,000 people displaced. Government security forces were deployed to the area to quell the fighting. Clashes continued on 27 and 28 May in Intakana (50 km south of Katilla), resulting in what community sources reported as approximately 90 casualties incurred by both sides. On 23 and 24 June, local authorities reported renewed attacks by Beni Halba militia on several Gimir villages in Katilla. Gimir leaders have since stated their unwillingness to participate in any reconciliation initiatives. Influential tribal leaders engaged by UNAMID to discuss the stalled reconciliation process observed that the Gimir lacked confidence in the neutrality of State authorities to mediate the dispute, while the Beni Halba were refusing to accept the proposed demarcation of land between the tribes."<sup>10</sup>

In May 2013 Kenyan online newspaper *Africa Review* carried an AFP article which stated that 64 people were killed and dozens wounded by fighting between the Gimir and Beni Halba in May.<sup>11</sup>

In June 2013 *ACAPS* reported that fighting occurred between the Gimir and Beni Halba tribes in April and May 2013,

"In Southern Darfur, disputes over land ownership and tribal fighting remain. On 26 April conflict between the Al-Gimir and Bani Halba tribes resumed after a relatively stable period since February. On 21 May, clashes between the two tribes intensified in South Darfur leading to at least 23 people killed and some 51 others injured. The violence led to the burning of Katela town of the Al-Gimir tribe and to large displacements. Following the violence, the Al-Gimir tribe has accused the Sudanese authorities of colluding with the Bani Halba tribe."<sup>12,13</sup>

In June 2013 *Radio Dabanga* reported that fighting broke out between the Gimir and Beni Halba on 24 June,

"Speaking to Radio Dabanga from Ed Al Fursan city, Beni Halba leader Fathi Madi Al Toum has strongly denied allegations from the Gimir, as reported previously by Radio Dabanga, that the Beni Halba have the support of government forces and are engaging in genocide. He said the accusations are "false and void".

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<sup>10</sup> UN Security Council, Report of the Secretary General on the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur, 12 July 2013, S/2013/420, [http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s\\_2013\\_420.pdf](http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_2013_420.pdf), accessed 12 October 2013

<sup>11</sup> AFP, Tribal clashes kill 64 in Sudan's Darfur, 30 May 2013, available from <http://www.africareview.com/News/Tribal-clashes-kill-in-Sudan-Darfur/-/979180/1867142/-/vvhhc4/-/index.html>, accessed 12 October 2013

<sup>12</sup> ACAPS, Global Overview, June 2013, <http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/geo%20%2815%29.pdf>, accessed 13 October 2013

<sup>13</sup> ACAPS, Global Overview, June 2013, <http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/geo%20%2815%29.pdf>, accessed 13 October 2013

The Beni Halba delegation is still present at the negotiation table in Nyala,” he said. “We are extending our hands to our Gimr brothers, saying ‘enough is enough’. We need to put an end to the fighting.”

Clashes between both tribes resumed at the beginning of this week following a relatively stable period since February, when the Gimr and Beni Halba clashed over land disputes.”<sup>14</sup>

### **Allegations of government forces involvement**

In May 2013 *Radio Dabanga* reported that a Gimr spokesman stated that during fighting in March government forces failed to protect the population of Katayla,

“Abkar Al Toum, spokesman for the Gimr tribe, told Radio Dabanga that throughout the hostilities, which flared-up at the end of March, “no official force intervened to protect the inhabitants of Katayla. “The troops that were there were reluctant to intervene, which confirms the conspiracy. Moral responsibility lies with the Ministers of Defence and the Interior for their inability to protect the people of Darfur,” he said.”<sup>15</sup>

In May 2013 *Radio Dabanga* reported allegations that the Beni Halba tribe was supported by government forces in their attacks against the Gimir,

“One the *Fathis* (leaders) of the Beni Halba tribe has strongly denied allegations last week by South Darfur governor Adam Mahmoud Jar Al Nabi’s that the tribe used foreigners, border guards and Reserve (Abu Tira) forces along with governmental and presidential support in their fight against Gimr tribe.

Speaking to Radio Dabanga from Edd Al Fursan on Thursday, Fathi Madi El Toam called Al Nabi’s allegations “false and completely far from truth”.<sup>16</sup>

In May 2013 *Radio Dabanga* reported that witnesses to the attacks by Beni Halba gunmen on Katalya on 22 May stated that government forces colluded with the attack,

“At least eight people have died and dozens more have been injured as gunmen from the Beni Halba tribe attacked the city of Katayla, stronghold of the Gimr tribe, at 8.30am on Wednesday. Witnesses told Radio Dabanga that most of the city has been destroyed by fire, including houses and the entire market.

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Residents of the city accused official authorities of “facilitating the attack”. They said that the Sudanese Army (SAF) contingent charged with enforcing the treaty withdrew from the city at around 8.00am. The Beni Halba tribesmen then advanced “30 minutes later, from the same direction” with various weapons, and military vehicles and uniforms.”<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Radio Dabanga, 'Calm descends' between Gimr and Beni Halba tribes in South Darfur, <https://www.radiodabanga.org/node/52314>, accessed 12 October 2013

<sup>15</sup> Radio Dabanga, Beni Halba deny government or foreign involvement in South Darfur tribal clashes, 31 May 2013, <https://www.radiodabanga.org/node/50537>, accessed 12 October 2013

<sup>16</sup> Radio Dabanga, Beni Halba deny government or foreign involvement in South Darfur tribal clashes, 31 May 2013, <https://www.radiodabanga.org/node/50537>, accessed 12 October 2013

<sup>17</sup> Radio Dabanga, Renewed Gimr-Beni Halba clashes in South Darfur, eight dead, 22 May 2013, <https://www.radiodabanga.org/node/49709>, accessed 12 October 2013

In May 2013 the US funded, South Sudanese broadcaster *Sudan Radio Service* reported that on 29 May renewed inter communal violence broke out between the Beni Halba and the Gimir tribes, killing 14 Gimir and wounding 22. *Sudan Radio Service* reported allegations that government forces supported the Beni Halba in their attack,

"This incident is a continuation of a series of on-and-off conflicts between the two tribes sparked by land disputes.

South Darfur State Governor Adam Mohammed Jar-Al-Nabi on Monday accused foreign agents and government militias of supporting the Beni Halba tribe against the Gimir. He warned of renewed violence based on what he described as an amassing of armed Beni Halba in the vicinity.

Abakar Al-Toum, a spokesperson for the Gimir tribe accused the paramilitary reserve police, border patrol and foreign elements of involvement in the Tuesday attacks against his tribesmen.

"The attack included the entire northern border areas between the Gimir and Taaisha, and the Gimir with the Beni Halba tribes," said Al-Toum, in an interview with Sudan Radio Service on Wednesday from Nyala.

He added that the Gimir were eventually able to defeat the aggressors who fled leaving a huge number of weapons and vehicles, which implicate the government forces."<sup>18</sup>

In June 2013 *Radio Dabanga* reported that several members of the Gimir tribe were wounded and homes were torched, despite the presence of government forces,

"According to a spokesman from the Gimir tribe, 50 'Beni Halba gunmen' in vehicles and on motorcycles, descended on Gimir areas of Shaatir, Al Buhaira, and Abu Krakir in Katayla locality, South Darfur on Monday, wounding several members of the Gimir tribe, as well as torching numerous homes.

"Due to this new upsurge in violence, the Gimir hereby cancel any peace agreements made", spokesman Abkar Al Toum told Radio Dabanga. "The Beni Halba are using this opportunity to perpetrate genocide on the Gimir."

Al Toum told Radio Dabanga that this attack occurred in spite of the presence of special forces sent by Khartoum to occupy a buffer zone between the two parties. "The attack was possible because on Sunday evening, the special forces withdrew eastwards," Al Toum said."<sup>19</sup>

In September 2013 ACAPS reported that fighting between the Gimir and Beni Halba tribes continued in July, stating that government forces enforced a buffer zone between them,

"Tribal disputes over land ownership continued in July, requiring Khartoum to deploy Special Forces to enforce a buffer zone between the Al-Gimir and Beni

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<sup>18</sup> Sudan Radio Service, 14 killed, 22 injured in inter-tribal clashes between Gimir and Beni Halba in South Darfur, 29 May 2013, <http://www.sudanradio.org/index.php/using-joomla/extensions/modules/content-modules/2111-14-killed-22-injured-in-inter-tribal-clashes-between-gimir-and-beni-halba-in-south-darfur>, accessed 12 October 2013

<sup>19</sup> Radio Dabanga, Sudan: Accusations of 'Genocide' as Beni Halba, Gimir clash again in South Darfur

Halba tribes. In April, conflict between the two tribes reignited after a relatively stable period since February. Fighting intensified at end May in South Darfur, leading 23 people being killed and 51 injured. The violence led to the burning of Katela town of the Al-Gimir tribe, large displacements, and the Al-Gimir tribe accusing the Sudanese authorities of colluding with the Beni Halba tribe. On 26 June, conflict resumed in Katela with nine killed and dozens displaced. Clashes between the Dajo and Bei Halba tribes were reported in Kubum, South Darfur."<sup>20</sup>

## Displacement and humanitarian access

In September 2013 ACAPS reported that fighting between the Gimir and Beni Halba in May displaced 20,000 people from Katayla to the southern neighbouring locality of Tulus."<sup>21</sup>

In June 2013 OCHA reported that clashes in May between the Beni Halba and Gimir over land ownership in Katalya locality had displaced "2,000 people from the Gimir and Assignor tribes to Bulbul Timbisko town, 25 km west of the state capital, Nyala town."<sup>22</sup>

In June 2013 OCHA reported according to Norwegian Church Aid 200 people were displaced to Bileil IDP camp from Erieda village in Kubum locality following clashes between the Dajo and Beni Halba on 21 June."<sup>23</sup>

In July 2013 UNAMID reported that an estimated 29,000 people were displaced by fighting between the Gimir and Beni Halba tribes in the Katalya, "Humanitarian agencies conducted needs assessments and provided assistance."<sup>24</sup>

In July 2013 *Radio Dabanga* reported that according to NGO Norwegian Church Aid, 200 people were displaced from Erieda village in Kubum locality following fighting between the Dajo and Beni Halba on 21 June. *Radio Dabanga* reported that the International Organisation for Migration would distribute food and relief items to the new arrivals."<sup>25</sup>

In July 2013 UNAMID reported that conflict prevented them from attending sites of reported human rights abuses in Katalya,

"Access restrictions owing to the security situation adversely affected the ability of UNAMID to conduct timely site visits to locations of reported human rights violations and abuses, including to Um Dukhun, Mukjar and East Jebel Mara in Central

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<sup>20</sup> ACAPS, Global Overview, September 2013, [http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/geo\\_21.pdf](http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/geo_21.pdf), accessed 13 October 2013

<sup>21</sup> ACAPS, Global Overview, September 2013, [http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/geo\\_21.pdf](http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/geo_21.pdf), accessed 13 October 2013

<sup>22</sup> OCHA, Humanitarian Bulletin, Sudan, Issue 26, 24-30 June 2013, <http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Sudan%20Humanitarian%20Bulletin%20Issue%2026.pdf>, accessed 13 October 2013

<sup>23</sup> OCHA, Humanitarian Bulletin, Sudan, Issue 26, 24-30 June 2013, <http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Sudan%20Humanitarian%20Bulletin%20Issue%2026.pdf>, accessed 13 October 2013

<sup>24</sup> UN Security Council, Report of the Secretary General on the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur, 12 July 2013, S/2013/420, [http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s\\_2013\\_420.pdf](http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_2013_420.pdf), accessed 12 October 2013

<sup>25</sup> Radio Dabanga, UN: Clashes between Dajo, Beni Halba displace 200 in South Darfur, 8 July 2013, <https://www.radiodabanga.org/node/53058>, accessed 12 October 2013

Darfur; and Um Gonya, Abu Jabra, Marla, Rehad el Birdi, and Katalya in Southern Darfur."<sup>26</sup>

### **Sources consulted**

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IRIN

Medecins sans Frontieres

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Relief Web

Small Arms Survey

Sudan Radio Service

Sudan Tribune

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<sup>26</sup> UN Security Council, Report of the Secretary General on the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur, 12 July 2013, S/2013/420, [http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s\\_2013\\_420.pdf](http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_2013_420.pdf), accessed 12 October 2013