



Sudan: Country Report

The situation in South Kordofan and Blue Nile

1 June 2016 (COI up to 1 April 2016)

South Kordofan and Blue Nile Country Report

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Explanatory Note

This report presents country of origin information (COI) on Sudan up to 1 April 2016 on issues of relevance in refugee status determination for Sudanese nationals from South Kordofan and Blue Nile states, also known as the “Two Areas”. Only COI specific to the Two Areas has been included unless otherwise stated. For information on the situation in Sudan more generally, see the relevant sections of the ARC publication [Darfur Country Report](#), October 2015.

The COI presented is illustrative, but not exhaustive of the information available in the public domain, nor is it determinative of any individual human rights or asylum claim. All sources are publicly available and a direct hyperlink has been provided. A list of sources and databases consulted is also provided, to enable users to conduct further research and to conduct source assessments. Research focused on **events** which occurred between 1 July 2014 to 1 April 2016 and all sources were accessed in April and May 2016. Excerpts from annual reports covering events from 2014 have been included even though part of their reporting periods pre-date the cut-off point for research (although illustrative incidents included from such reports all post-date July 2014). Excerpts from annual reports covering events in 2015 were included, even if they were published after April 2016, i.e. those from Amnesty International¹, Foreign and Commonwealth Office² and the U.S Department of State³. Limited COI which pre-dates the cut-off point for research has been included to provide historical context where necessary.

It should be noted that as Human Rights Watch explained in a December 2014 report, “there has been little information about conditions in government-held areas in both states as Sudan has not allowed human rights investigators access”.⁴ As set out by the UN Secretary-General in his June 2015 report, “Access to Government and SPLM-N-controlled areas remained very challenging, even though there was a slight improvement compared with 2013. For the first time, the United Nations was granted limited access to Kurmuk and Bau localities in Blue Nile. Access to Abyei through Kadugli continued to be difficult”.⁵ Amnesty International similarly noted in an August 2015 report on attacks against civilians in Sudan’s South Kordofan State that “International organizations have faced considerable difficulty in monitoring the human rights situation in the state because of sweeping restrictions by the Government of Sudan on access to the area. While it has been very difficult because of security concerns and logistical challenges related to travel, it has been possible to conduct some research in areas that are controlled by the SPLA-N, but it has been impossible to do so in areas under the control of the Sudanese Armed Forces. There has been scant media coverage of the conflict over the past four years because of the ban on access and the security and logistical challenges associated with travel to and in the area”.⁶

This document is intended to be used as a tool to help to identify relevant COI and the COI referred to in this report can be considered by decision makers in assessing asylum applications and appeals. **However, this document should not be submitted in full or in isolation as evidence to refugee decision making authorities.** Whilst every attempt has been made to ensure accuracy, the authors accept no responsibility for any errors included in this report.

¹ Amnesty International, [Death Sentences and Executions 2015](#), 6 April 2016

² UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office, [Human Rights and Democracy Report 2014: Sudan - in-year update December 2015](#), 21 April 2016

³ United States Department of State, [Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2015 – Sudan](#), 13 April 2016

⁴ Human Rights Watch, [Sudan: Soldiers, Militias Killing, Raping Civilians](#), 15 December 2014

⁵ UN Secretary-General (UNSG), [Children and armed conflict: report of the Secretary-General](#), 5 June 2015, A/69/926–S/2015/409, paragraph 178

⁶ Amnesty International, [Don't We Matter? Four years of unrelenting attacks against civilians in Sudan's South Kordofan State \[AFR 54/2162/2015\]](#), 17 August 2015, *Restrictions on Human Rights Monitoring* p.38

Sources and databases consulted

Not all of the sources listed here have been consulted for each issue addressed in the report. Additional sources to those individually listed were consulted via database searches. This non-exhaustive list is intended to assist in further case-specific research. To find out more about an organisation, view the 'About Us' tab of a source's website.

Databases consulted:

[ECOI.net](#)

[Refworld](#)

[Reliefweb](#)

Sources consulted

[Armed Conflict Location & Event Date Project \(ACLED\)](#)

[Aegis Trust](#)

[African Arguments](#)

[African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies \(ACJPS\)](#)

[Africa Review](#)

[All Africa](#)

[Amnesty International](#)

[Article 19](#)

[Brookings Institution](#)

[Carnegie Endowment for International Peace](#)

[Child Rights International Network](#)

[Child Soldiers International](#)

[CHR Michelsen Institute](#)

[Committee to Protect Journalists](#)

[Death Penalty Worldwide \(Cornell Law School\)](#)

[Doctors Without Borders](#)

[Eldis](#)

[Enough Project](#)

[Equal Rights Trust](#)

[Eric Reeves, Sudan Research, Analysis, and Advocacy](#)

[Fund for Peace – Fragile States Index 2015](#)

[Gurtong](#)

[Hands off Cain](#)

[Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research](#)

[Human Rights Watch](#)

[Human Security Baseline Assessment for Sudan and South Sudan/Small Arms Survey](#)

[Institute for Economics & Peace – Global Peace Index 2015](#)

[Institute for War and Peace Reporting](#)

[Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre](#)

[International Committee of the Red Cross \(ICRC\)](#)

[International Crisis Group](#)

[International Federation for Human Rights](#)

[International Office for Migration Sudan Mission](#)

[International Refugee Rights Initiative](#)

[International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims](#)

[Inter Press Service](#)

[IRIN news](#)

[Jamestown Foundation](#)

[Medecins Sans Frontieres/Doctors Without Borders](#)
[Minority Rights Group International](#)
[Nuba Relief, Rehabilitation and Development Organization](#)
[Nuba Reports](#)
[Open Society Foundations](#)
[Oxfam](#)
[Radio Dabanga](#)
[Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty](#)
[Radio Miraya](#)
[Radio Tamazuj](#)
[Reporters Without Borders](#)
[Reuters Africa](#)
[Rift Valley Institute](#)
[Save the Children](#)
[South Kordofan Blue Nile Coordination Unit \(SKBLCU\)](#)
[Sudan Democracy First Group](#)
[Strategic Initiative for Women in the Horn of Africa](#)
[Sudan Consortium](#)
[Sudan Social Development Organisation \(SUDO\)](#)
[Sudan Tribune](#)
[Transparency International](#)
[UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office](#)
[United Nations Children's Fund \(UNICEF\)](#)
[United Nations Development Programme \(UNDP\)](#)
[United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees \(UNHCR\)](#)
[United Nations Human Settlements Programme \(UNHABITAT\)](#)
[United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs \(UNOCHA\)](#)
[United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime \(UNODC\)](#)
[United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights \(OHCHR\)](#)
[United Nations Population Fund \(UNPFPA\)](#)
[United Nations Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially in women and children](#)
[United Nations Women](#)
[United Nations World Food Programme \(WFP\)](#)
[United States Institute of Peace](#)
[United States Department of State](#)
[Uppsala Universitet – UCDP Conflict Encyclopedia](#)
[Waging Peace](#)
[Walk Free Foundation > The 2014 Global Slavery Index](#)
[Women Under Siege Project](#)
[World Bank](#)
[World Health Organisation](#)
[World Organisation Against Torture](#)

List of Acronyms

ACJPS	African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies
AUHIP	African Union High-Level Implementation Panel
BN	Blue Nile
CPA	Comprehensive Peace Agreement
CSO	Civil society organization
FCO	UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office
FEWS	Famine Early Warning System Network
FIDH	International Federation for Human Rights
GoNU	Government of National Unity
GoS	Government of Sudan
HART	Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust
HSBA	Human Security Baseline Assessment for Sudan and South Sudan
HUDO	Human Rights Development Organization
ICC	International Criminal Court
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
IDMC	Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
IOM	International Organization for Migration
JEM	Justice and Equality Movement
JIU	Joint Integrated Units
LJM	Liberation and Justice Movement
MI	Military Intelligence
NCF	National Consensus Forces
NCP	National Congress Party
ND	National Dialogue
NIF	National Islamic Front
NISS	National Intelligence and Security Service
NLJM	National Liberation and Justice Movement
NLJP	National Liberation and Justice Party
NUP	National Umma Party
PDF	Popular Defence Forces
RAC	Revolutionary Awakening Council
RSF	Rapid Support Forces
SAF	Sudanese Armed Forces
SCP/SCoP	Sudanese Congress Party
SDP	Sudanese Pound
SK	South Kordofan
SKBNCU	South Kordofan Blue Nile Coordination Unit
SLA	Sudan Liberation Army
SLA-AW	Sudan Liberation Army-Abdul Wahid
SLA-MM	Sudan Liberation Army-Minni Minawi
SPC	Sudanese Penal Code
SPLM/A-N	Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army-North
SRCS	Sudanese Red Crescent Society
SRF	Sudan Revolutionary Front
SUDO	Sudan Social Development Organisation
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	UN Children's Fund
UN OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

UXO
WHO

Unexploded ordinance
World Health Organization

1. Background information

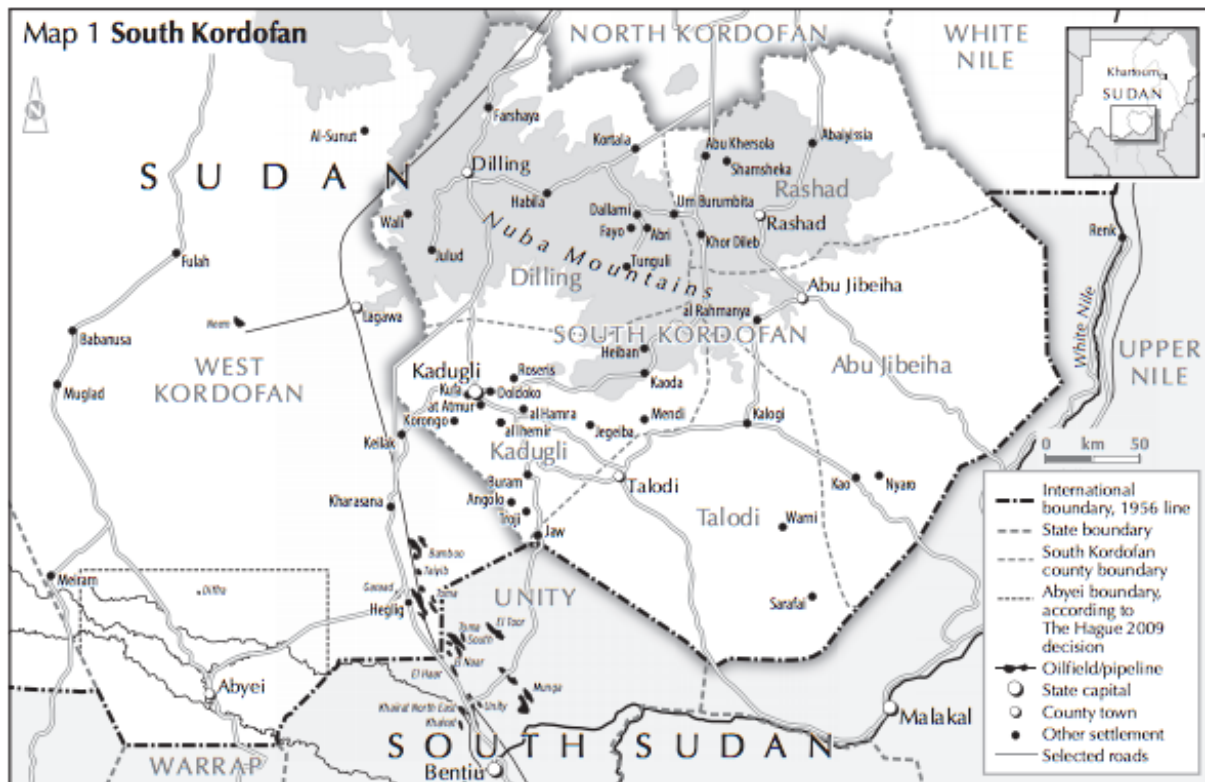
1.1. Geographical information (map of Sudan; maps of South Kordofan and Blue Nile)

Map of Sudan⁷



⁷UN, Department of Field Support-Cartographic Section, [Sudan](#), March 2012

Map of South Kordofan⁸



A detailed administrative map of South Kordofan published in February 2015 by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) can be accessed [here](#).⁹

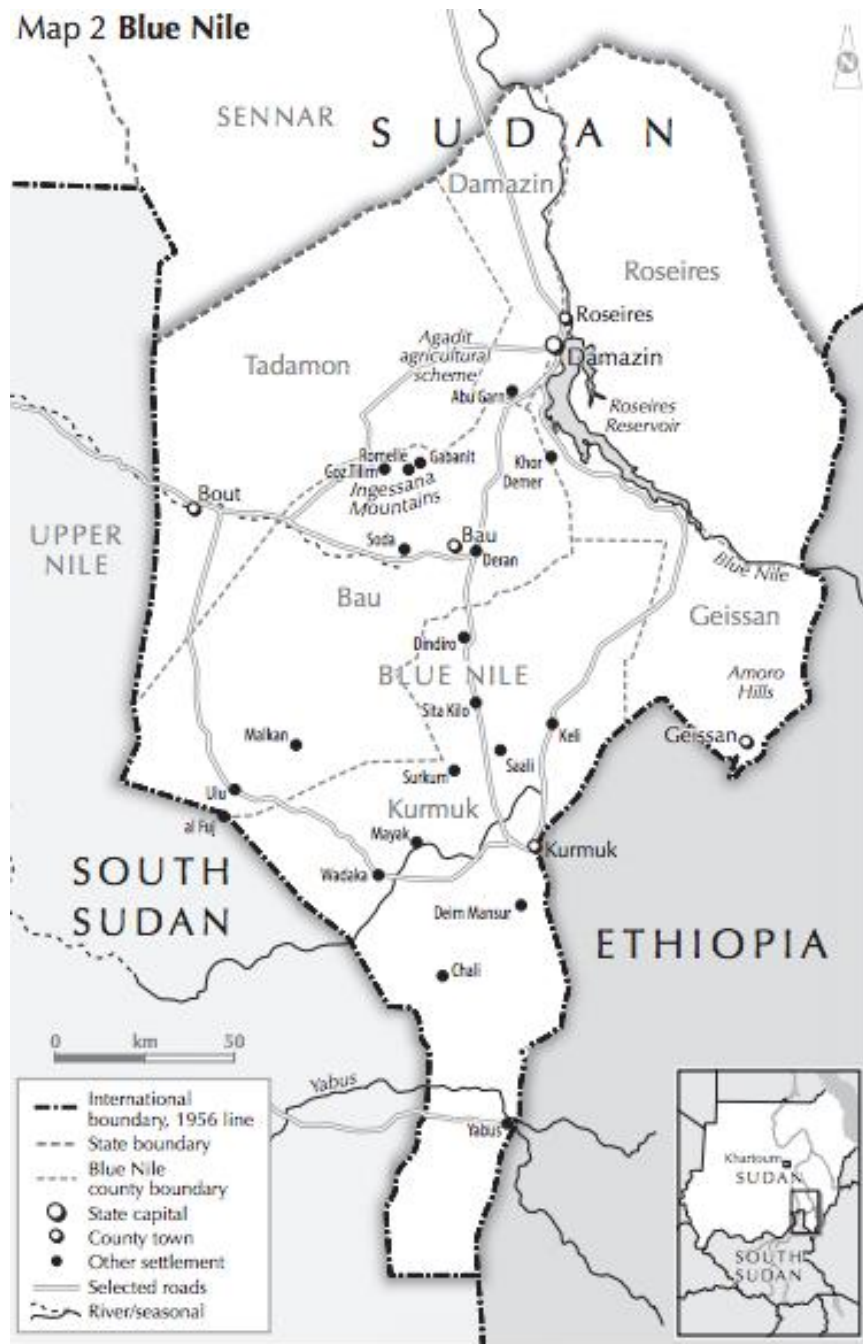
For a more detailed map of South Kordofan including its main towns and villages see Sudan expert, Eric Reeves', map [here](#).¹⁰

⁸Small Arms Survey, *New war, old enemies: Conflict dynamics in South Kordofan*, March 2013, II. *The South Kordofan conflict and its roots*, Map 1 South Kordofan

⁹See OCHA, *Sudan: South Kordofan State Administrative map (February 2015)*, 4 February 2015

¹⁰ See Eric Reeves, *Map of South Kordofan, now the focus of Khartoum's military efforts*, 12 March 2016

Map of Blue Nile¹¹



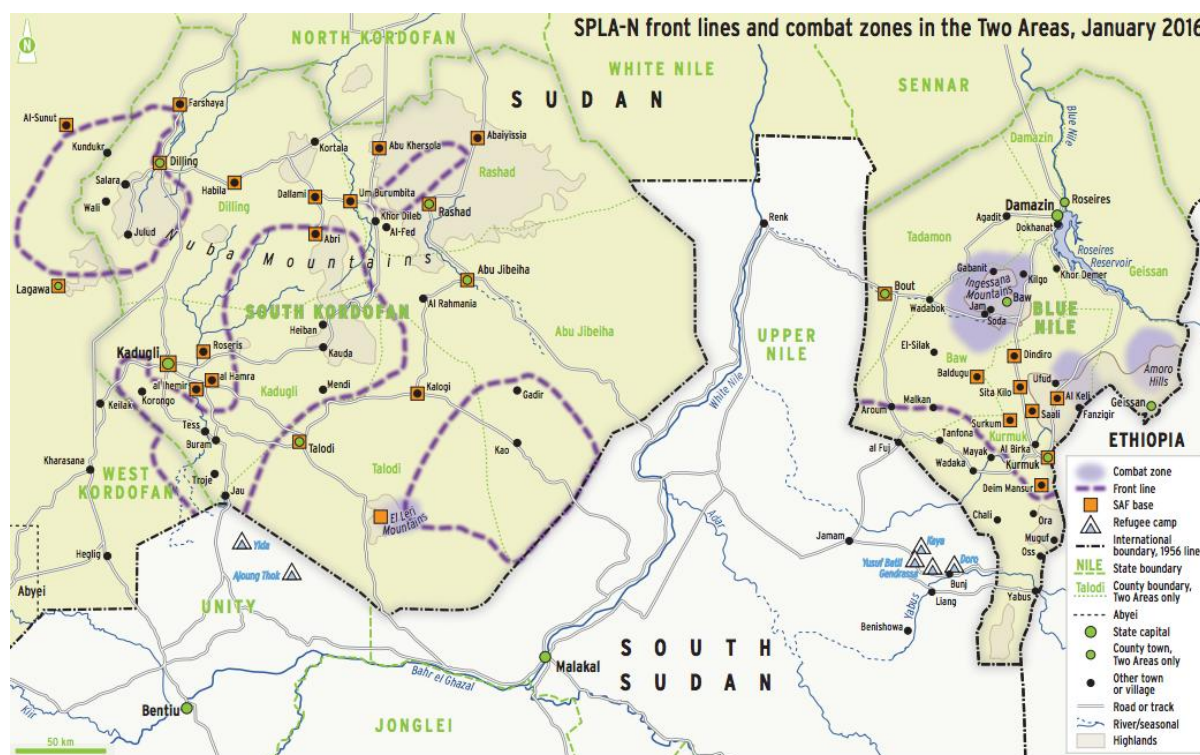
A detailed administrative map of Blue Nile published in September 2012 by OCHA can be accessed [here](#).¹²

¹¹Small Arms Survey, *Two Fronts, One War: Evolution of the Two Areas Conflict, 2014–15*, HSBA Working Paper 38, August 2015, IV. Current dynamics

¹²See OCHA, *Sudan: Blue Nile State – Administrative Map*, September 2012

Map of combat zones

The Human Security Baseline Assessment for Sudan and South Sudan (HSBA) produced the following map depicting the SPLA-N front lines and combat zones in South Kordofan and Blue Nile in January 2016.¹³



1.2. Background to the current state of the conflict

For an overview of the current state of the conflict in South Kordofan and Blue Nile, see [3. Current state of the conflict/peace negotiations](#) and [4. Security situation: impact of the conflict on civilians](#).

Human Rights Watch summarised in December 2014 the conflict as follows:

Conflict between the Sudanese government and rebel SPLA-North – a spin-off of the rebel movement that fought for independence for South Sudan – spread to Blue Nile in September 2011, five months after it started in Southern Kordofan following disputed state elections.¹⁴

The Human Rights Development Organization (HUDO) Centre provided this summary to the background of the conflict in March 2016:

One of the major causes for the war in BN and SK to resume in 2011 is mistrust between the National congress party (NCP) which is the ruling party and Sudan People’s Liberation Movement/Army-North (SPLM/A–N). SPLM/A–N is the rebelling group that resumed fighting after the relative peace in the areas created by signing the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in 2005. In response, the government of Sudan (GoS) represented by security agencies (National Intelligence and security services (NISS), Military Intelligence (MI), Popular Defense Forces (PDF), Rapid Support Force RSF,

¹³ HSBA, [SPLA-N front lines and combat zones in the Two Areas](#), January 2016

¹⁴ Human Rights Watch, [Sudan: Soldiers, Militias Killing, Raping Civilians](#), 14 December 2014

allied militias and police) carried out operations of apprehending people that oppose government. This operation caused a lot of human rights violations in the two areas.¹⁵

An August 2015 Small Arms Survey report provided a more detailed background to the conflict in the Two Areas:

The conflict in South Kordofan and Blue Nile is largely a continuation of the Second Civil War (1983–2005) fought by the SPLM/A against the Sudanese government's centralization of power and wealth and increasing homogenization of the country's society. These issues were left largely unresolved by the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) [...]

While Southern Sudan and the contested region of Abyei were given the right to self-determination if the parties failed to make unity attractive after a six-year interim period, the Two Areas obtained only the right to a popular consultation, which was a vague process to ascertain the people's acceptance of the CPA's implementation during the interim period. The implementation of this consultation process was affected by slow and poor overall CPA implementation, triggered by the early death of John Garang, the SPLM leader, which ultimately shifted the SPLM's focus away from a national solution to Southern independence [...]

Meanwhile, the population of the Two Areas in peace time continued to suffer social, political, and economic marginalization [...]

A crisis point was reached when the Sudanese government demanded that all SPLA forces in the Two Areas fully disarm by 1 June 2011, before the CPA deadline set for January 2012, and while negotiations between Sudan and South Sudan were ongoing, including over outstanding security arrangements in the Two Areas following the referendum. Long-standing grievances that had pushed the population to join the SPLA in their first war and expectations unmet by the CPA exacerbated by the independence of South Sudan came to the boil after a skirmish on 5 June between SAF and SPLA forces of the JIUs [Joint Integrated Units]. The conflict quickly escalated throughout South Kordofan, with fighting among the forces comprising the JIUs in Buram, Dilling, Heiban, Julud, Khor Dileb, Talodi, and Troji, and much of the population actively joined the opposition side [...]

On 1 September 2011 the war expanded to Blue Nile when the SPLA commander of the JIUs in Damazin was attacked, the house of the elected governor destroyed, and JIU component forces in various locations engaged in armed confrontations [...]

In both states the first year of fighting created the front lines that largely remain in place today, with rebels in South Kordofan seizing a considerable number of weapons and improving their initial military disadvantage vis-à-vis government forces [...]

In South Kordofan the GoS remained in control of the lowlands and the main strategic towns such as Dallami, Dilling, Kadugli, and Talodi, while the SPLA-N secured Buram and Heiban, and the major mountains. The presence of the JIUs throughout the state gave the SPLA-N access to territory it never controlled during the previous war such as the south-eastern jebels (mountains) of Kao, Nyaro, and Warni; the eastern jebels of Abaiyissia and Rashad; and the western jebels of Dilling and Lagawa [...]

In South Kordofan fighting escalated during the second dry season of the war (November 2012–June 2013), with heavy government aerial bombing as the SPLA-N engaged in more [...]

The SPLA-N, however, took the strategic SAF positions of Jaw and Troji in February 2012, securing a vital corridor into South Sudan and freeing the passage of goods and people—routes that remain open today.

In Blue Nile, after the fighting started in the capital, Damazin, it quickly escalated throughout the state, followed by massive air attacks until the end of October 2011 [...]

The front-line towns of Deim Mansur, Malkan, Mayak, Surkum, and Ulu remain disputed today and are theatres of heavy fighting. The SPLA-N also suffered major losses in the Ingessana Mountains, a strategic location for both parties that is close to the capital and rich in natural resources, and also the land of the largest pro-SPLM-N tribe, the Ingessana, from which thousands were displaced into refugee camps in South Sudan.

The few SPLA-N troops north of the front line continued to engage in guerrilla operations in Bau, Geissan, and Kurmuk counties, managing to seize equipment and vehicles and reduce GoS military

¹⁵ HUDO Centre, [Human Rights Situation in South Kordofan and Blue Nile States of Sudan January-December 2015](#), 20 March 2016, Introduction

pressure. These operations also disrupted the government's procurement and exploitation of natural resources [...]

The GoS announced on 12 November 2013 the beginning of its third dry season offensive, followed by heavy shelling of civilian areas that displaced around 80,000 people from rebel-controlled areas during November alone. Despite the massive fighting and displacement of the population, the third dry season ended with the overall military status quo largely unchanged. While the GoS claimed to have taken around 11 per cent of SPLA-N territory, some of these gains were outside traditional SPLA-N strongholds, including regained territories previously lost by government forces.¹⁶

The International Crisis Group stated in January 2015 that "In 2013, Sudan's wars in Darfur, Blue Nile and South Kordofan converged in the latter state, which also borders on South Sudan. Major attacks began the day after peace talks between the government and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement North (SPLM-N) were suspended in April and shocked Khartoum".¹⁷

For a more detailed account of the conflict in South Kordofan and Blue Nile specifically and its impact on Sudan more generally see Small Arms Survey, [Two Fronts, One War: Evolution of the Two Areas Conflict, 2014–15](#), HSBA Working Paper 38, August 2015, II. *The conflict*

An International Refugee Rights Initiative/National Human Rights Monitoring Organisation report from April 2015 stated with regards to the second "Decisive Summer Operation":

In April 2014, the government of Sudan launched its "Decisive Summer Operation" that was meant "to the end rebellion in South Kordofan, Darfur and Blue Nile." As a result, the following months (April – June) saw an intensification of the indiscriminate aerial bombardments and shelling against civilians and civilian objects. This intensification of attacks against civilians during the planting season suggests that the GoS was intentionally attempting to increase the already severe food insecurity in the region. Despite a short respite during the rainy season in 2014 (July – October), fighting and targeting of civilian areas by the GoS increased again in the run up to peace talks between the Sudanese government and the SPLM-N in Addis Ababa in November 2014. This has continued in the run up to the planned elections in April 2015.¹⁸

Similarly, Amnesty International's report on South Kordofan published in July 2015 summarised that:

Since armed conflict began in June 2011 between the Sudanese Government and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army-North (SPLM/A-N), people living in SPLA-N controlled areas of Sudan's South Kordofan state have endured an unrelenting campaign of aerial and ground attacks by the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF). At various points during the last four years, there have been military offensives by one or both parties to the conflict which have increased the dangers faced by civilians. In April 2014 the Sudanese government launched a military operation called "Decisive Summer" whose implementation involved an intensified campaign of aerial bombardment, and increased civilian casualties and destruction of civilian property. As the conflict in South Kordofan and Blue Nile States enters its fifth year, there is once again intensified military activity. There was a sharp increase in attacks by the SAF in April 2015, making it one of the months with the highest number of attacks since the start of the armed conflict. The conflict continues unabated at this time [July 2015].¹⁹

An August 2015 Small Arms Survey report also stated that "The government's second 'decisive summer campaign', aimed at eradicating all rebellions and characterized by the use of locally

¹⁶Small Arms Survey, [Two Fronts, One War: Evolution of the Two Areas Conflict, 2014–15](#), HSBA Working Paper 38, August 2015, II. *The conflict*

¹⁷International Crisis Group, [Sudan and South Sudan's Merging Conflicts](#), 29 January 2015, II. *South Kordofan – the Epicentre of Sudan's Conflicts*, A. *The government's "Hot Dry Season" Campaign*

¹⁸International Refugee Rights Initiative/National Human Rights Monitoring Organisation, ["We just want a rest from war." Civilian perspectives on the conflict in Sudan's Southern Kordofan State](#), April 2015, *Background*

¹⁹Amnesty International, [Don't we matter? – Four years of unrelenting attacks against civilians in Sudan's South Kordofan State](#), July 2015, *Executive Summary*

recruited militias and heavy aerial bombing of civilians, began in South Kordofan on 1 December 2014. Fighting continued through mid-January 2015 and extended to Blue Nile in February, with the SPLA-N claiming substantial seizures of weapons and defections from the government side. After a relatively calm few months a second phase of the government offensive began in the aftermath of the April national elections. However, the front line has not substantially changed. SPLA-N guerrilla operations against GoS positions in Geissan and the Ingessana Mountains in Blue Nile did not stop during the rainy season and throughout the reporting period, and the war has reached the outskirts of the state capital, Damazin”.²⁰

The 2015 Fund for Peace’s ‘Fragile States Index’ put Sudan at “very high alert” along with three other countries: South Sudan, Somalia and the Central African Republic.²¹ The 2015 Global Peace Index issued by the Institute for Economics & Peace ranked Sudan 156 out of 162 countries.²²

2. Actors involved in the conflict

2.1. Government forces

For information on human rights abuses committed by government forces and their supporting paramilitary militias in the context of armed conflict view sections [4. Security situation: impact of the conflict on civilians](#), [7. Women](#) and [8.1. Recruitment and use of children](#). For information on rule of law abuses committed by the security forces, see sections [5. Rule of Law and access to justice](#) and [6. Human rights situation: civil and political rights](#).

2.1.1. Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF)

The CIA World Factbook states that the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) consists of the: Land Forces, Navy (includes Marines), Sudanese Air Force (Sikakh al-Jawwiya as-Sudaniya) and Popular Defense Forces.²³

Article 6 (1) of Sudan’s Armed Forces Act of 2007 defines the SAF as “military forces of national composition” whose “target and mission” consists of “protection of sovereignty of the country, and securing safety of its territories, and participating in construction thereof, and assisting in facing national disasters and protection or the Nation’s gains, and defense of the constitutional regime”.²⁴ As set out in Article 6 (2), “[t]hey help law enforcement organs, upon need, in the time of peace and emergencies, in accordance with the provisions of the law; and shall have for the sake of that, such powers and legal protection, as may be granted to such forces”.²⁵

Article 8 of Sudan’s Armed Forces Act of 2007 states that the SAF “shall be under the supreme command of the President of the Republic”.²⁶ The 2015 UNITED STATES Department of State annual report indicated that “The Ministry of Defense oversees all elements of the SAF, including the Border

²⁰Small Arms Survey, [Two Fronts, One War: Evolution of the Two Areas Conflict, 2014–15](#), HSBA Working Paper 38, August 2015, *I. Introduction and key findings*

²¹Fund for Peace, [2015 Fragile States Index](#), 17 June 2015

²²Institute for Economics & Peace, [2015 Global Peace Index](#), 2015

²³Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), [World Factbook Sudan](#), last updated 6 April 2016 [accessed 12 April 2016], *Military and Security*. Note that this particular information is dated ‘2011’ in the original source.

²⁴Sudan, [Armed Forces Act 2007 \[Sudan\]](#), 5 December 2007

²⁵Sudan, [Armed Forces Act 2007 \[Sudan\]](#), 5 December 2007

²⁶Sudan, [Armed Forces Act 2007 \[Sudan\]](#), 5 December 2007

Guards and military intelligence units”.²⁷ On 9th February 2016 Reuters reported that the new Military Chief of Staff is Lieutenant General Emadeddine Mostafa Adawi, replacing Lieutenant General Mostafa Obeid, who held the position for less than three years.²⁸ In August 2015 it was reported that a new Minister of Defence was appointed, namely Awad al-Karim Ibnouf, who “is a retired army lieutenant-general who once served as the head of Sudan's military intelligence agency and later as ambassador to Oman”.²⁹ On 16th February 2016 General Ibrahim Mohamed Al-Hassan was sworn in as the “State Minister at the Ministry of Defence”.³⁰

The World Bank puts the total number of armed personnel in Sudan as of 2014 at 264,300 defined as “active duty military personnel, including paramilitary forces if the training, organization, equipment, and control suggest they may be used to support or replace regular military forces”.³¹ According to the website Global Security, “The Sudanese army numbered 200,000 soldiers in 2014, organized into at least 15 divisions, including 1 armored, 1 mechanized, 1 airborne and at least 11 infantry divisions. By then, the army had 445 tanks, 248 reconnaissance vehicles, 412 armored vehicles, 849 artillery pieces, including 665 multiple rocket launchers”.³²

Defence Web, a South Africa-based news portal with a focus on defence and security issues in Africa provided the following overview of the SAF's structure as of December 2013:

- 6 Regional Commands
- 1 armoured division HQ
- 1 airborne Corps HQ
- 1 Republican Guard brigade
- 2 armoured brigades
- 2 infantry brigades
- 1 parachute brigade
- 3 artillery regiments
- 5 air defence brigades
- 1 SAM [Surface-to-air-missile] battalion
- 1 engineer battalion
- 1 ranger company
- 1 special operations/counter terrorist unit.³³

The same source reported with regard to the capabilities and resources of the SAF that:

Sudan's military is large and relatively well equipped, and is bolstered by paramilitary, irregular tribal and former rebel militias. The Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) are combat hardened, having fought in various conflicts in recent times, including the Sudanese Civil War, Darfur Conflict, Sudan-SPLM-N conflict and the 2012 South Sudan-Sudan border conflict. Nevertheless Sudanese army soldiers are considered to be largely ineffective, poorly motivated and politically unreliable.³⁴

The Equal Rights Trust noted in October 2014 that the UN Mission in Sudan reported that the Armed Forces Act of 2007 “grants members of the armed forces substantive and procedural immunity for acts, including human rights violations committed in the course of their duties. They can only be subjected to a full investigation and prosecution if the head of the respective forces explicitly lifts

²⁷ United States Department of State, [Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2015: Sudan](#), 13 April 2016, *1.d. Arbitrary Arrest or Detention, Role of the Police and Security Apparatus*

²⁸ Reuters, [Sudan's Bashir replaces military chief of staff](#), 9 February 2016

²⁹ Reuters, [Sudan's Bashir appoints new defence minister -state news agency](#), 23 August 2015

³⁰ African Defense, [New Sudanese Minister of Defence](#), 16 February 2016

³¹ World Bank, [Armed forces personnel, total](#), 2011-2015 Sudan [last accessed: 12 April 2016]

³² Global Security, [Sudan Army](#), Undated [last accessed: 12 April 2016]

³³ Defence Web, [Sudanese Armed Forces](#), 3 December 2013

³⁴ Defence Web, [Sudanese Armed Forces](#), 3 December 2013

their immunity. In practice, this is tantamount to immunity in that the military commands rarely lift the immunity of their soldiers.³⁵ The same report further noted that “the state extends immunity to paramilitaries and Janjaweed militia members, on the basis that they are members of the ‘border forces’ or ‘Popular Defence Forces’”.³⁶

The 2015 UNITED STATES Department of State report further noted that:

A 2013 amendment of the 2007 Sudanese Armed Forces Act subjects any civilians within SAF-controlled areas believed to be rebels or members of paramilitary groups to military trials. NISS and military intelligence officers applied this article to detainees in the conflict areas.³⁷

For ranks and insignia of the Sudan army see:

- ❖ International Encyclopedia of Uniform Insignia Around the World, [Rank Insignia- Army Land Forces: Sudan](#), undated [accessed 12 April 2016]

The organisation Nuba Reports noted that the SAF is the “main force fighting the SPLA-N in Blue Nile and South Kordofan. SAF’s arsenal included heavy artillery, tanks and aircraft including Antonov bombers, MiG [Mikoyan-Gurevich] and Sukhoi fighter jets. These are often employed during battles against rebel forces”.³⁸

An August 2015 Small Arms Survey report found that in the Two Areas “GoS [Government of Sudan] forces are increasingly composed of seasonally recruited local militias organized under the National Intelligence and Security Services (NISS), which are expected to fight more effectively in their home areas, with an estimated 48,000–63,000 men in total, while the use of regular Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) troops has been reduced. In South Kordofan some 6,000–10,000 Nuba were recruited into the Rapid Support Forces (RSF)”.³⁹

The same report more specifically reported with regards to government forces in the Two Areas that:

A striking feature of the conflict in the Two Areas is the decreasing presence of regular SAF forces, which are mostly stationed to defend the main garrison towns. The government increasingly favours the use of locally recruited paramilitaries, in particular the RSF, organized under the NISS under Mohammed Hamdan Dagolo, also known as ‘Hemetti’, and personally controlled by President Bashir, the use of which was legalized through January 2015 constitutional amendments [...]

In 2015 the SPLA-N estimates the total government force in South Kordofan to be 30,000–45,000 fighters, but this is difficult to verify, given its flexible structure and the lack of information from SAF. The number of regular SAF troops in South Kordofan is thought to be 15,000–20,000, lower than in previous years and mainly stationed in the historical government garrison towns. The RSF may have 6,000–10,000 fighters in South Kordofan, where some 5,000–10,000 PDF and other ad hoc forces are also operating [...]

³⁵Equal Rights Trust, [In search of confluence: Addressing discrimination and inequality in Sudan](#), October 2014, 2.2 *Discrimination and Inequality Based on Race and Ethnicity, Discrimination by the Army, Security and Police Forces*

³⁶Equal Rights Trust, [In search of confluence: Addressing discrimination and inequality in Sudan](#), October 2014, 2.2 *Discrimination and Inequality Based on Race and Ethnicity, Discrimination by the Army, Security and Police Forces*

³⁷United States Department of State, [Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2015: Sudan](#), 13 April 2016, 1.e. *Denial of fair public trial, Trial procedures*

³⁸Nuba Reports, [The Regime: Armed Groups: Sudanese Armed Forces](#), Undated [last accessed: 10 May 2016]

³⁹Small Arms Survey, [Two Fronts, One War: Evolution of the Two Areas Conflict, 2014–15](#), HSBA Working Paper 38, August 2015, 1. *Introduction and key findings*

According to the SPLA-N, the government has about 18,000 troops in Blue Nile, including SAF forces in the garrison towns and around 5,000 mobile paramilitaries and militias, i.e. PDF, RSF, and other militias from Sudan, South Sudan, and Ethiopia. Government forces are mainly trained in Bout, Dindiro, Disa, and Kurmuk. The number of forces in Blue Nile this year [2015] is greater than last year, due to the presence of Southern troops and the RSF. It is, however, difficult to ascertain the total number, since the government is increasingly using ad hoc recruitment ahead of battles, as it has in South Kordofan.⁴⁰

The Human Security Baseline Assessment (HSBA) for Sudan and South Sudan reported in February 2016 that:

Government forces involved in the fighting are estimated at 30,000–40,000 soldiers—fewer than in 2014. In its offensive in 2014, the GoS had deployed a fighting force of some 11,000 troops in Blue Nile and 30,000 in South Kordofan. As in 2015, the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) are largely stationed around the garrison towns, while the Popular Defence Forces (PDF) and militias—and especially the local recruits who are familiar with the territory—are leading the attacks.⁴¹

For more specific information on the make-up and changing nature of the SAF see Small Arms Survey, [Two Fronts, One War: Evolution of the Two Areas Conflict, 2014–15](#), HSBA Working Paper 38, August 2015, *III. Armed actor, Government forces, South Kordofan*.

2.1.2. The Rapid Support Forces (RSF)

Further information on additional militias supporting the government of Sudan can be found in section [2.1.5 Paramilitary militias](#).

According to reporting by the UNITED STATES Department of State “In 2013 the government created the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) as a new element of the security apparatus. A former SAF general commanded the RSF, but NISS oversaw its operations”.⁴²

Similarly, covering the time period December 2014–January 2015, the African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies (ACJPS) reported that the RSF was introduced to “support counter-insurgency offenses in conflict zones in Darfur, South Kordofan and Blue Nile states. The RSF operates under the auspices of the NISS but is led by a Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) Commander, the former Janjawid militia leader Mohamed ‘Hamdan’ Hemeti. The RSF has come under fire for perpetrating widespread human rights and humanitarian law violations in conflict zones with several commentators querying their mandate to take part in military operations alongside the SAF. Although human rights groups including ACJPS have documented joint military operations of the SAF and RSF, senior SAF officials have sought to publicly distance themselves from the RSF”.⁴³

The UNITED STATES Department of State annual report covering 2015 noted that the RSF “continued to play a significant role in the government’s campaigns against rebel movements and was often implicated in reports of human rights violations against civilians. The government tightly controlled

⁴⁰Small Arms Survey, [Two Fronts, One War: Evolution of the Two Areas Conflict, 2014–15](#), HSBA Working Paper 38, August 2015, *III. Armed actors*

⁴¹Human Security Baseline Assessment (HSBA) for Sudan and South Sudan, [Conflict in the Two Areas Security and political dynamics at the beginning of the fifth season of fighting](#), 17 February 2016

⁴²United States Department of State, [Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2015: Sudan](#), 13 April 2016, *1.d. Arbitrary Arrest or Detention, Role of the Police and Security Apparatus*

⁴³African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies (ACJPS), [Sudan Human Rights Monitor December 2014 – January 2015](#), 13 April 2015, *Legal and Political Developments*

information about the RSF, and public comment critical of the RSF often resulted in arrest or detention”.⁴⁴

The International Crisis Group reported that the first regiment of the RSF “5,000-6,000 strong, was mostly recruited in South Darfur from the local abbala (camel-herding) component of the Rizeigat Arab tribe, the bulk of the infamous ‘Janjawid’ militias”.⁴⁵ The same source further noted that “RSF leader Mohammed Hamdan Dagolo (‘Hemmeti’) is the nephew of a traditional leader of the Awlad Mansour section of the Mahariya Rizeigat. Originally from Chad, the government let them occupy historic Fur land, but in 2007, unhappy with waning support, Hemmeti launched a brief rebellion. To regain his support, he was made security adviser to South Darfur’s governor”.⁴⁶

The Enough Project reported in June 2014 that many original Janjaweed commanders have become officers in the RSF, but are “operating under vastly different circumstances from those under which the rag-tag militias that conducted the first wave of the Sudanese government’s genocidal campaign operated”:

First, these forces are better equipped. They also come under central command and are fully integrated into the state’s security apparatus. Second, they have legal immunity under Sudanese law from prosecution for any acts committed in the course of duty. Finally, although they were recruited in Darfur, the troops have been deployed around the country at the command of the Sudanese government. These forces also play a role in broader transnational criminal looting and poaching networks, adding a regional dynamic to their activities.⁴⁷

Further reporting on the first regiment of the RSF the International Crisis Group stated in April 2015 that:

It was trained in central Sudan, then sent to South Kordofan for the first “summer campaign” against the SRF. In the unfamiliar Nuba Mountains, it reportedly suffered heavy casualties, then moved to North Kordofan, where it wreaked havoc around the capital, al-Obeid [...] Initially the retraining of some Darfur Arab militias, their integration into supposedly more professional regular units and deployment outside Darfur could have been seen as a way to neutralise restive militias and reassert government control. It is not what happened: RSF abuses in Kordofan may have contributed to a policy change – the strategy seems now to deploy them in their own areas, Darfur RSF to Darfur and new RSF components, locally recruited, to South Kordofan and Blue Nile. But RSF abuses (and impunity) have not ended, including in Darfur and, more surprisingly, in central Sudan, where militia misbehaviour was long seen as a peripheries issue.⁴⁸

Freedom House reported that throughout 2014 “A new counterinsurgency militia, the Rapid Support Forces, was responsible for numerous atrocities in 2014. Numbering up to 6,000 fighters, this latest incarnation of the notorious janjaweed militias led offensives in South Darfur in February and March and South Kordofan in May and June in which civilians were deliberately targeted”.⁴⁹ According to the Enough Project’s report of June 2014, “In both Darfur and South Kordofan, the [RSF] fighters

⁴⁴ United States Department of State, [Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2015: Sudan](#), 13 April 2016, 1.d. *Arbitrary Arrest or Detention, Role of the Police and Security Apparatus*

⁴⁵ International Crisis Group, [Sudan and South Sudan’s Merging Conflicts](#), 29 January 2015, II. A. *The Government’s “Hot Dry Season” Campaign* p. 3

⁴⁶ International Crisis Group, [Sudan and South Sudan’s Merging Conflicts](#), 29 January 2015, II. A. *The Government’s “Hot Dry Season” Campaign* p. 3, footnote 6

⁴⁷ Enough Project, [Janjaweed Reincarnate: Sudan’s New Army of War Criminals](#), June 2014, *Introduction*

⁴⁸ International Crisis Group (ICG), [The Chaos in Darfur](#), 22 April 2015, A. *Arab Militias against Non-Arab Communities and the Advent of the RSF*

⁴⁹ Freedom House, [Freedom in the World 2015 - Sudan](#), 28 January 2015

have directly targeted civilians, particularly those of the Fur, Masalit, Zaghawa, and Nuba ethnic groups”.⁵⁰

An August 2015 Small Arms Survey report noted that “The RSF, numbering around 10,000–15,000 in the whole of Sudan as of early 2015, developed from an initial group of 5,000–6,000 fighters recruited from the Abbala Rizeigat tribe of North Darfur, who were mobilized in Darfur; the RSF was then extended to the whole of Sudan [...] The RSF, used predominantly in South Kordofan and, since 2015, also in Blue Nile, has played the role previously occupied by the PDF in the state, but without Islamist overtones”.⁵¹

With regards to the RSF operating in South Kordofan, the August 2015 Small Arms Survey report found specifically that “Darfur members of the SRF left South Kordofan during 2014 and the majority of their troops moved to Darfur and border areas in Bahr el Ghazal in South Sudan. The SPLM/A-N leadership asked the Darfur rebels to leave the area over reported abuses against civilians and the recruitment of Nuba and SPLA-N soldiers, mainly by JEM. This decision did not end the political and military cooperation of the groups constituting the SRF. Following the SPLA-N’s withdrawal from Raja in February 2015, each rebel group is now fighting in its own area”.⁵²

With regards to recruitment in Blue Nile, the August 2015 Small Arms Survey report stated that “Unlike in South Kordofan, RSF recruitment was conducted mainly outside the state, throughout Sudan—including in Darfur—and abroad, given the lack of available fighters in Blue Nile”.⁵³

2.1.3. National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS)

Very limited information was found specifically referring to NISS operations in South Kordofan and Blue Nile amongst the sources covering the period between 1 July 2014 and 1 April 2016. Therefore, more general information on the NISS was included and information on the NISS’s reach throughout the whole of Sudan.

A September 2013 Radio Dabanga article provides the following background on the Military Intelligence (Istikhbarat El Askariyya):

Military Intelligence (Istikhbarat El Askariyya) is a branch of the General Staff with its own administration and command. Under emergency laws, it has the power to arrest, detain and interrogate. With regard to communication and reporting, it passes information through the operational chain, as well as directly to the Presidency.⁵⁴

With regards to the National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS) the same report noted that:

National Security and Intelligence Service (NISS) is not part of the Sudan Armed Forces but is part of the Ministry of Interior, formed in February 2004 as a move to create one unified service dealing with both internal and external intelligence. Its main headquarter is in Khartoum and is headed by a Director-general who is appointed by the President. The previous Director-General, Major-general

⁵⁰ Enough Project, *Janjaweed Reincarnate: Sudan’s New Army of War Criminals*, June 2014, *A nationwide and transnational campaign*

⁵¹ Small Arms Survey, *Two Fronts, One War: Evolution of the Two Areas Conflict, 2014–15*, HSBA Working Paper 38, August 2015, *III. Armed actors*

⁵² Small Arms Survey, *Two Fronts, One War: Evolution of the Two Areas Conflict, 2014–15*, HSBA Working Paper 38, August 2015, *I. Introduction and key findings*

⁵³ Small Arms Survey, *Two Fronts, One War: Evolution of the Two Areas Conflict, 2014–15*, HSBA Working Paper 38, August 2015, *I. Introduction and key findings*

⁵⁴ Radio Dabanga, *‘6,000 young Darfuris recruited by Khartoum’: sources*, 2 September 2013

Salah Abdallah (also known as Salah Gosh) who was detained for being involved in an alleged coup attempt, had to report at least every second day to the President (not the minister of interior). Its mandate derives from the National Security Force Act (NSF).⁵⁵

The Director-General of the NISS is Mohamed Atta Abbas al-Moula/Muhammad al-Atta Fadl al-Mula who has held this position since 2009, according to the Sudan Tribune.⁵⁶ In June 2015 General Ali Mohamed Salim replaced General Sideeg Amer Hassan Ali as the Chairman of the Intelligence and Security.⁵⁷ The Minister of Interior, Ismat Abdel-Rahman, was reconfirmed following the April 2015 elections.⁵⁸

The 2015 UNITED STATES Department of State report noted in relation to the functions of the NISS:

NISS is responsible for internal security and all intelligence matters. It functions independent of any ministry. Constitutional amendments passed in January expanded NISS's mandate to include immunities and authorities traditionally reserved for the military and judiciary. Under the new amendments, NISS may establish courts and is allowed greater jurisdiction for making arrests [...].⁵⁹

Freedom House's 2015 'Freedom in the World' report stated, "the 2010 National Security Act gives the NISS sweeping authority to seize property, conduct surveillance, search premises, and detain suspects for up to four and a half months without judicial review. The police and security forces routinely exceed these broad powers, carrying out arbitrary arrests and holding people at secret locations without access to lawyers or their relatives".⁶⁰

With specific regards to the Two Areas of South Kordofan and Blue Nile the Human Security Baseline Assessment (HSBA) for Sudan and South Sudan reported in February 2016 that the militias fighting alongside the government of Sudan "are mainly organized as part of the RSF under the command of the National Intelligence and Security Services (NISS) [...] Despite difficulties on the ground, NISS forces continue to enjoy special consideration from the presidency vis-à-vis the army, and their status was legally elevated to that of a military force through constitutional amendments in January 2015".⁶¹

For more information on the paramilitary militias operating in South Kordofan and Blue Nile view section [2.1.5. Paramilitary militias](#).

2.1.4. Law enforcement

Very limited information was found amongst the sources consulted within the timeframe of this report specific to law enforcement in the Two Areas. For further information on law enforcement in Sudan in general, see ARC, [Darfur Country Report](#), October 2015, [2.1.3 Law enforcement](#).

Reporting specifically on the law enforcement authorities' response to conflict related sexual violence, the UN Secretary-General noted in November 2014 that "There is a prevailing lack of

⁵⁵ Radio Dabanga, '[6,000 young Darfuris recruited by Khartoum](#)': sources, 2 September 2013

⁵⁶ Sudan Tribune, [Mohamed Atta al-Moula Abbas](#), Undated [last accessed: 10 May 2016]

⁵⁷ Sudan Tribune, [Sudan's Bashir conducts major reshuffle in top army posts](#), 1 June 2015

⁵⁸ Human Security Baseline Assessment (HSBA) for Sudan and South Sudan, [Conflict in the Two Areas Security and political dynamics at the beginning of the fifth season of fighting](#), 17 February 2016

⁵⁹ United States Department of State, [Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2015: Sudan](#), 13 April 2016, *1. D. Arbitrary Arrest or Detention, Role of the Police and Security Apparatus*

⁶⁰ Freedom House, [Freedom in the World 2015 – Sudan](#), 28 January 2015

⁶¹ Human Security Baseline Assessment (HSBA) for Sudan and South Sudan, [Conflict in the Two Areas Security and political dynamics at the beginning of the fifth season of fighting](#), 17 February 2016

confidence in law enforcement agencies to take action, particularly when perpetrators belong to armed groups. Many police stations are ill-equipped to act on civilians' complaints".⁶² For further information, on sexual and gender-based violence in South Kordofan and Blue Nile view section [7.1. Sexual and gender-based violence \(SGBV\)](#).

2.1.5. Paramilitary militias

The Human Security Baseline Assessment (HSBA) for Sudan and South Sudan reported in January 2015 with regards to paramilitary forces in the Two Areas:

The SPLA-N and the government have both mobilized great resources for renewed fighting in the Two Areas. On the government side, the GoS has recruited an increasing number of National Intelligence Security Services (NISS)-affiliated local militias under President Bashir's direct control. [...]

The government strategy for the new campaign has been to recruit local militias to defeat the rebels once and for all in their own difficult territory, especially in the Nuba Mountains where 10,000–15,000 Nuba—including underage youths—have reportedly been recruited. That strategy revives the government's long-standing 'divide and rule' tactic that has had the long-term effect of weakening the social fabric in the regions.⁶³

An August 2015 Small Arms Survey report noted that:

Militias are recruited on a seasonal basis and in some cases just before a new operation begins, making it more difficult to ascertain their numbers. In some cases the new recruits are sent to the area where they will operate in buses as civilians and armed at their destination. More generally the multitude of names attributed to government-aligned militias makes it extremely difficult to ascertain accurate numbers and locations.

For the government, the use of paramilitaries responds to a pragmatic need: 'when you fight too many wars and guard the borders, you need to recruit everyone, even civilians and reserves', stated chief negotiator and NCP deputy chairman Ibrahim Gandhour.

The use of paramilitaries may also suggest the weakness of the regular army and state institutions [...] The reduction in the use of SAF forces to fight the SPLA-N and SRF coincides with a drop in morale within the army and defections from the main barracks (at Khartoum, Kosti, and el Obeid), because soldiers have seen the paramilitaries being better paid and given free rein to loot and misbehave. [...]

In fact, militias, unlike regular soldiers, are not perceived as a threat to the regime: they do not want power and they can be more effectively controlled by the leadership through money. Their loyalty and commitment, however, are difficult to buy.⁶⁴

The Human Security Baseline Assessment (HSBA) for Sudan and South Sudan reported in February 2016 that:

As in 2015, the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) are largely stationed around the garrison towns, while the Popular Defence Forces (PDF) and militias—and especially the local recruits who are familiar with the territory—are leading the attacks. The militias are mainly organized as part of the RSF under the command of the National Intelligence and Security Services (NISS). The total number of militias could not be ascertained because militias are not yet fully deployed. In 2014, after the first group of RSF, composed of Rizeigat from Darfur, failed to defeat the SPLA-N in South Kordofan, the GoS began to recruit locally in the Two Areas. While the Darfur militias have mostly returned home, and some were

⁶² UN, [Report of the Secretary-General on the African Union United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur](#), 26 November 2014, paragraph 54

⁶³ Human Security Baseline Assessment (HSBA) for Sudan and South Sudan, [Conflict in the Two Areas: Describing events through 29 January 2015](#), 30 January 2015

⁶⁴ Small Arms Survey, [Two Fronts, One War: Evolution of the Two Areas Conflict, 2014–15](#), HSBA Working Paper 38, August 2015, III. Armed actors

deployed in Yemen in the Saudi-led 'Operation Restoring Hope', the government's economic incentives have also given rise to a plethora of small, locally based militias. In the Two Areas, government recruitment of youths into militias and PDF continued throughout the 2015 rainy season.⁶⁵

With regards to South Kordofan the HSBA report further noted with regards to government recruitment of youths into militias and the PDF that:

In South Kordofan, in addition to the Arab groups, all Nuba tribes were targeted, especially in Kadugli, Kalogi, Khartoum, and Rashad, as well as in Buram county. In October 2015, at least 200 Nuba youths from Buram were seen training in Shendi camp, northeast of the capital, Khartoum. A group of new PDF recruits was assembled in Jebel Awlia, in the outskirts of Khartoum, in the last week of October 2015, following the defeat of GoS troops in Blue Nile, but their destination remained unknown. Informants on the ground indicated that militias that deployed in convoys in South Kordofan are mainly newly recruits, both Nuba and individuals from elsewhere in Sudan. Foreign militias have mostly refused to fight in the area.⁶⁶

For further information on child recruitment see section [8.1. Recruitment and use of children](#), specifically [8.1.1. By government forces](#).

In relation to battles fought in March 2016 in South Kordofan, Nuba Reports stated that:

Militias and local recruits familiar with the territory are leading the government attacks, sources in the Nuba Mountains told Nuba Reports. The SPLM-N claim SAF is training and even using a South Sudanese militia to carry out attacks in Tess, Buram County and the Al-Hamra area in neighboring Um Dorein County, reports said. The government denies the claim.⁶⁷

As for militias operating in Blue Nile, the February 2016 HSBA report stated:

The number of militia forces expected to fight in Blue Nile is also unclear. Around 2,000 RSF troops from Darfur were seen assembling in White Nile in October 2015. According to the SPLM-N, they are well armed and equipped with vehicles, and thus a major threat to the rebel army. The majority of the fighters hail from Blue Nile itself. Various local militias are also organizing in the state, drawn from all tribes that are linked to the National Congress Party (NCP), but mostly from the Fellata group, following economic and political gains. One group—known locally as Kobagi and composed largely of defected SPLM-N soldiers, retired SAF, and former police—was seen fighting in the Surkum and Saali battles in 2015; according to local witnesses, they are moving between Agadit, El-Silak, Geissan, and Wadabok in government-held areas. They number around 200 men and are poorly equipped. The PDF is still active in the state, composed mainly of local Arab tribes connected to the ruling party. In the previous dry season (December 2014–May 2015), they were primarily employed alongside the militias. In Blue Nile, the militias and the PDF are considered responsible for conducting widespread attacks and causing the displacement of civilians in the Ingessana Mountains since the beginning of the conflict. They began to expand the scale and scope of their operations in April 2015.⁶⁸

With regards to an additional paramilitary militia operating in the Two Areas, Nuba Reports mentioned the "Abu Tira: Also known as the Central Reserve Forces" which is a "paramilitary police

⁶⁵Human Security Baseline Assessment (HSBA) for Sudan and South Sudan, [Conflict in the Two Areas Security and political dynamics at the beginning of the fifth season of fighting](#), 17 February 2016

⁶⁶Human Security Baseline Assessment (HSBA) for Sudan and South Sudan, [Conflict in the Two Areas Security and political dynamics at the beginning of the fifth season of fighting](#), 17 February 2016

⁶⁷Nuba Reports, [Sudan, rebel forces clash in fighting season's biggest battles yet](#), 31 March 2016

⁶⁸Human Security Baseline Assessment (HSBA) for Sudan and South Sudan, [Conflict in the Two Areas Security and political dynamics at the beginning of the fifth season of fighting](#), 17 February 2016

unit often employed by the Sudanese government in conflicts in Darfur, Blue Nile and South Kordofan”.⁶⁹

2.1.5.1. Popular Defence Forces (PDF)

For a historical overview of the Popular Defence Forces, its organisation and personnel see:

- ❖ Sudan Human Security Baseline Assessment, [Popular Defence Forces \(al Difa'a al Shaabi\)](#), updated March 2011
- ❖ Global Security, [Sudan - Popular Defense Forces \(PDF\)](#), undated [accessed 13 April 2016]

For a more detailed discussion on the make-up of the PDF force in South Kordofan see Small Arms Survey, [Two Fronts, One War: Evolution of the Two Areas Conflict, 2014–15](#), HSBA Working Paper 38, August 2015, *III. Armed actors, Government forces, South Kordofan*.

According to the International Crisis Group, the Popular Defence Forces (PDF) was “established in 1989 as a ‘semi-military’ force, it was expanded in 1991 to help Khartoum fight the civil war. It was supposed to be dismantled under the CPA but was expanded and remains important in the Darfur, South Kordofan and Blue Nile conflicts”.⁷⁰ Similarly, the website of Global Security reports that the PDF was the military wing of the National Islamic Front which as of 2004 consisted of 10,000 active members, with 85,000 reserves and had been deployed alongside regular army units against various rebel groups.⁷¹

Nuba Reports noted that the PDF is comprised of “conscripts and voluntary recruits drawn from around Sudan. PDF troops are sometimes recruited from rebel held areas including South Kordofan and Blue Nile. Their forces often receive less training and are less experienced than SAF soldiers. While separate from the professional forces of the SAF, the militia is usually led by SAF commanders in battle”.⁷²

A September 2013 Radio Dabanga article provides the following background on the PDF:

The PDF are locally based, organised, trained, and equipped Islamists units raised by the government to protect local communities. The PDF are defined by the Popular Defence Forces Act of 1989. They were mainly mobilised from Darfur, sending tens of thousands of Darfuris to fight against southern rebels. It is operational in Darfur and Southern Kordofan. In addition it plays a major role in the distribution of weapons to, and military training for, tribal militias.⁷³

An August 2015 Small Arms Survey report noted that “The PDF is composed of Arab indigenous tribes with some foreign mercenaries, notably from South Sudan and Ethiopia (the latter are present in Blue Nile only), and used to stage attacks throughout the state, but is now mostly in support of the RSF”.⁷⁴ It further stated that the PDF “continues to represent an important force of around 5,000–10,000 fighters, mainly composed of local Arab nomads, Hawazma, Missiriya, and, to a lesser extent, Nuba. While in Blue Nile the Fellata (West African nomads) represent the bulk of the state

⁶⁹ Nuba Reports, [The Regime: Armed Groups: Sudanese Armed Forces](#), Undated [last accessed: 10 May 2016]

⁷⁰ International Crisis Group (ICG), [Sudan and South Sudan's Merging Conflicts](#), 29 January 2015, *Appendix D: Glossary of Terms and Groups* p.29

⁷¹ Global Security, [Sudan – Popular Defense Forces \(PDF\)](#), Undated [last accessed: 13 April 2016]

⁷² Nuba Reports, [The Regime: Armed Groups: Sudanese Armed Forces](#), Undated [last accessed: 10 May 2016]

⁷³ Radio Dabanga, [‘6,000 young Darfuris recruited by Khartoum’: sources](#), 2 September 2013

⁷⁴ Small Arms Survey, [Two Fronts, One War: Evolution of the Two Areas Conflict, 2014–15](#), HSBA Working Paper 38, August 2015, *III. Armed actors*

PDF, in South Kordofan they operate mainly as independent militias. PDF forces in South Kordofan are used in most key government areas: Abu Jubeiha, Dallami, Dilling, Kadugli, Rashad, and Talodi. During the most recent dry season offensive PDF fighters were used to support RSF 'hit and run' tactics".⁷⁵

In the Blue Nile, the HSBA report stated that "the PDF is still active in the state, composed mainly of local Arab tribes connected to the ruling party. In the previous dry season (December 2014–May 2015), they were primarily employed alongside the militias. In Blue Nile, the militias and the PDF are considered responsible for conducting widespread attacks and causing the displacement of civilians in the Ingessana Mountains since the beginning of the conflict. They began to expand the scale and scope of their operations in April 2015".⁷⁶

2.1.6. Defection from government forces

In January 2015 Radio Dabanga reported that "Troops of the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) militia stationed at the Talodi military garrison in South Kordofan have reportedly mutinied against the Sudanese army".⁷⁷

Radio Dabanga reported in December 2015 that "Dozens of soldiers from the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) and paramilitaries of the Popular Defence Forces have reportedly abandoned their posts in Blue Nile state" stating that they "refused to take up arms against possible relatives in the state in battles against the rebel Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N)".⁷⁸

In relation to battles fought in March 2016 in South Kordofan, Nuba Reports stated that:

Militia recruitment since the beginning of 2015 has also been problematic for Khartoum. The government has been unable to pay the militias, leading the state-sponsored militia, the Rapid Support Force, to loot northern Khartoum in protest last September. Youths from another militia, the Popular Defense Force, are deserting the battlefield due to lack of payment, local sources said.⁷⁹

2.1.7. Immunity from human rights abuses

The Equal Rights Trust reported that the National Security Act 2010 "provides effective immunity from prosecution for members of the security services". Its Article 52 states:

1. There shall not be deemed a crime an act done by any NSS [National Security Service] member in good intention while or by reason of performing his/her functions or any duty assigned thereto or any act she/he did as part of any power bestowed on him/her pursuant to this Act or any other applicable Act, regulation or orders issued thereunder provided that this Act is within the limits of the works and duties assigned thereto in accordance with the powers bestowed thereon pursuant to this Act (...)
3. Without prejudice to the provisions of this Act and any right to claiming compensation against NSS, no civil or criminal procedures may be brought against a member or associate unless upon the approval of the Director. The Director shall give such approval whenever it appears that the subject of such accountability is not related to official business, provided that the trial of any staff or associates

⁷⁵Small Arms Survey, [Two Fronts, One War: Evolution of the Two Areas Conflict, 2014–15](#), HSBA Working Paper 38, August 2015, III. *Armed actors*

⁷⁶Human Security Baseline Assessment (HSBA) for Sudan and South Sudan, [Conflict in the Two Areas Security and political dynamics at the beginning of the fifth season of fighting](#), 17 February 2016

⁷⁷Radio Dabanga, [Rebels report 'RSF militia mutiny' in Sudan's South Kordofan](#), 29 January 2015

⁷⁸Radio Dabanga, [Mutiny among Sudan Armed Forces in Blue Nile](#), 17 December 2015

⁷⁹Nuba Reports, [Sudan, rebel forces clash in fighting season's biggest battles yet](#), 31 March 2016

shall be before a closed criminal court, during their service or after its termination, with regards to acts committed by them.⁸⁰

In a September 2014 report Amnesty International noted with regards to the lack of accountability for NISS in Sudan that:

Under international human rights law, states must investigate all cases of excessive use of force, arbitrary detention such as secret or unacknowledged detention and torture and other ill-treatment, bring perpetrators to justice and ensure effective redress for the victims. Amnesty International and ACJPS [African Centre for Peace and Justice Studies] have identified widespread problems resulting in the persistence of impunity for violations committed by the security services. Firstly, the GoS has repeatedly failed to ensure prompt, thorough, impartial and effective investigations. Second, access to justice for victims and their families is hampered through immunities for the police, the NISS and other security services, the lack of will to investigate lodged criminal complaints, and the harassment and intimidation of those who try to do so. [...]

In Sudan, complaints against a member of the security services are effectively curtailed by immunity legislation. Legislation governing the SAF, NISS and police all include immunities for acts committed “in good faith” and “in the course of duty”. Immunities can only be waived by the relevant governing bodies of the Ministry of Interior, Defence or Director of the NISS. [...]

A Darfuri lawyer told Amnesty International: “Because of the immunities, it is almost impossible for victims of human rights violations to file charges against NISS officers and the police. A lot of people don’t even want to try despite the glaring evidence because they know it’s not going to lead to anything. [...]

Amnesty International and ACJPS [African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies] have interviewed lawyers acting for people who have brought criminal complaints against the police and the NISS. These lawyers have expressed the view that, in cases of such complaints about the police or NISS, the response of the relevant prosecutors has been inadequate, sometimes even to the extent of defending the police or NISS officers. Due to the lack of rigour by prosecutors in pursuing cases, the initiative is left in many cases to victims to press for criminal investigations to be pursued. [...]

Even in the rare cases where there is irrefutable evidence and witnesses and immunities are lifted, the judicial system fails to effectively investigate complaints of excessive use of force, torture and other ill-treatment by the security services with a view to prosecuting those who commit such human rights violations. [...]

Many fear if they attempt to pursue legal remedies, they risk being threatened by the security services or being re-arrested. Lawyers who have encouraged their clients to file complaints against members of the NISS or the police told Amnesty International that many victims back down at the last minute given fear of reprisals.⁸¹

Similarly, the 2015 UNITED STATES Department of State’s annual report stated in relation to investigations of human rights abuses committed by the NISS:

Impunity remained a serious problem for security forces, although crimes involving child victims were prosecuted more regularly. The law provides NISS officials with legal protection for acts committed in their official capacity [...]

The government reported NISS maintained an internal court system to address internal discipline matters and investigate and prosecute violations of the National Security Act, including abuse of power under article 59 of the act. Penalties included up to 10 years in prison, a fine, or both for NISS officers found in violation of the act. The government claimed to have closed approximately 25 cases during the year [...]

⁸⁰Equal Rights Trust, [In search of confluence: Addressing discrimination and inequality in Sudan](#), October 2014, 2.2 *Discrimination and Inequality Based on Race and Ethnicity, Discrimination by the Army, Security and Police Forces*

⁸¹Amnesty International, [Excessive and Deadly: The use of force, arbitrary detention and torture against protesters in Sudan](#), 3 September 2014, III –THE LACK OF ACCOUNTABILITY AND JUSTICE p.21-26

Although the government in 2011 named a special prosecutor from the Ministry of Justice to monitor NISS detentions, the UN independent expert remained concerned about weak judicial oversight of NISS arrests and detention. In numerous press statements, she expressed concern over NISS' failure to adhere to human rights principles, including respect for the rule of law in Khartoum, Darfur, and the Two Areas. Corruption among police and other security forces continued to be a problem. Security forces and police harassed suspected government opponents.⁸²

Amnesty International reported that in March 2015, "the Sudanese Parliament passed amendments to the Interim Constitution, including one extending the NISS' mandate. The amendment to Article 151 transforms the NISS from an intelligence agency focused on information gathering, analysis and advice, to a fully-fledged security agency with a broad mandate to exercise a mix of functions usually carried out by the armed forces or law enforcement agencies. By expanding the NISS's mandate, Parliament has not only endorsed its methods but rewarded its performance".⁸³ The same source further noted that:

Neither the revised Article 151 nor the NSA explicitly or implicitly require the NISS to abide by relevant international, regional and domestic law. [...]

The "new" relationship between the NISS, the military and law enforcement agencies is not articulated. The NISS is already deployed both militarily and in law enforcement. There is a risk that the NISS's mandate, cutting across intelligence, military and law enforcement spheres, could also undermine or unduly interfere with ordinary police work thus enhancing dysfunction in the criminal justice system.

The increased mandate and powers of the NISS is already having far-reaching and negative effects on the protection and protection of human rights. Under the National Security Act, NISS agents have immunity from civil and criminal liability for acts conducted in "the course of their duty" or in "good faith." They are only vulnerable to prosecution if the Director General of the NISS decides to lift this protection. The African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) opines that such a remedy, being discretionary and not subject to judicial oversight, is therefore inadequate and insufficient.⁸⁴

2.2. Armed opposition groups

For information on human rights abuses committed by armed opposition groups view section [2.2.3. Human rights abuses committed by armed opposition groups](#).

2.2.1. Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army-North (SPLM/A-N)

For a more detailed discussion on the composition of the SPLM/A-N force in South Kordofan and Blue Nile see Small Arms Survey, [Two Fronts, One War: Evolution of the Two Areas Conflict, 2014–15](#), HSBA Working Paper 38, August 2015, III. *Armed actors, SPLM/A-N and SRF*.

Nuba Reports provided the following background with regards to the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-North):

the Sudan People's Liberation Movement – North is a political group representing people in Sudan's South Kordofan and Blue Nile states, which SPLM-North leaders say have been politically and

⁸²United States Department of State, [Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2015: Sudan](#), 13 April 2016, 1. D. *Arbitrary Arrest or Detention, Role of the Police and Security Apparatus*

⁸³ Amnesty International, [Sudanese National Intelligence Service empowered to violate human rights](#), 19 March 2015

⁸⁴ Amnesty International, [Sudanese National Intelligence Service empowered to violate human rights](#), 19 March 2015

economically marginalized by the Sudanese Government. The SPLM-N was created when South Sudan seceded from Sudan in 2011, separating the SPLM leadership in Blue Nile and South Kordofan from the broader SPLM party.⁸⁵

As for the leadership of the SPLM-North, Nuba Reports stated:

The SPLM-N is lead [*sic*] by Chairman Malik Agar and Vice Chairman Abdelaziz al Hilu, who command the SPLA-N forces in Blue Nile and South Kordofan respectively. The SPLM-N Secretary General is Yasir Arman, who often negotiates on behalf of the group.⁸⁶

With regards to Malik Agar, Nuba Reports stated that “Malik Agar is the commander of SPLA-North forces in Blue Nile and the overall chairman of the SPLM-North and the Sudan Revolutionary Front. Agar was elected governor of Sudan’s Blue Nile State in the April 2010 Sudanese General Elections. Agar was dismissed from his post in September 2011 by Sudanese President Omar al Bashir, who declared a state of emergency”.⁸⁷

The Small Arms Survey added the following information:

The SPLM-North is led by Malik Agar, an Ingessana from Blue Nile state. Abdelaziz al-Hilu, a Masalit from the Nuba Mountains, is in charge of SPLM-North in South Kordofan. The third major figure in the movement is Yassir Arman, a riverine Arab who is responsible for much of the movement’s political work. All are strong believers in John Garang’s ‘New Sudan’ vision, which attempted to remove religious, ethnic, and regional discrimination.

The SPLM-North was the northern wing of Garang’s movement, but was left north of the border when South Sudan became independent. At this point it had anywhere between 20,000 and 40,000 men in uniform, divided into the 9th Division (South Kordofan) and the 10th Division (Blue Nile), although they were subsequently renamed the 1st and 2nd Divisions of the SPLM-North, respectively. At South Sudan’s independence each division had an armoured battalion, an artillery company, and a company of vehicle-mounted rocket launchers. Unlike the Darfur movements, the SPLM-North uses more conventional military tactics, and prefers to hold territory and establish administrations there. The 1st Division controls four large pockets of territory in the Nuba Mountains of South Kordofan and the 2nd Division holds the southern extremity of Blue Nile state. The organization maintains good relations with the SPLM/A in South Sudan.⁸⁸

As for the Sudan People’s Liberation Army-North (SPLA-North), Nuba Reports stated:

The Sudan People’s Liberation Army – North is the military wing of the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement – North. The SPLA-N is fighting government forces in Sudan’s South Kordofan and Blue Nile States. The group fought with the Sudan People’s Liberation Army during the Second Sudanese civil war, which eventually led to South Sudan’s independence. The SPLA-N split from South Sudan’s SPLA following the country’s independence in July 2011. Khartoum has repeatedly accused South Sudan of continuing to fund their former comrades, a claim which South Sudan denies. Following the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in 2005, the rebel leaders in South Kordofan and Blue Nile laid down their arms. Fighting again broke out between the two groups in June of 2011, following a series of political and electoral disputes in Blue Nile and South Kordofan.⁸⁹

⁸⁵Nuba Reports, [The Opposition: Opposition Political Parties](#), Undated [last accessed: 10 May 2016]

⁸⁶Nuba Reports, [The Opposition: Opposition Political Parties](#), Undated [last accessed: 10 May 2016]

⁸⁷Nuba Reports, [The Opposition: Rebel Commanders](#), Undated [last accessed: 10 May 2016]

⁸⁸Small Arms Survey, [The Sudan Revolutionary Front: Its Formation and Development](#), October 2014, III. *Formation of the SRF*

⁸⁹Nuba Reports, [The Opposition: Armed Groups](#), Undated [last accessed: 10 May 2016]

An August 2015 Small Arms Survey report found that “SPLA-N forces are mainly composed of indigenous tribes and total around 35,000 fighters”.⁹⁰

The same source noted further that in South Kordofan “The SPLA-N is composed mainly of Nuba fighters from various tribes, including from small tribes historically allied to Khartoum, such as the Dilling and Kadugli. [...] In this conflict the SPLA-N also gained the support of an increasing number of Missiriya, who are active mainly in the south-western part of Kordofan and are considered good fighters”.⁹¹

In Blue Nile, “As of 2015 the SPLA-N has some 7,000–10,000 fighters in Blue Nile, organized as the 2nd Front. In March 2015 a sub-division was formed for the Ingessana Mountains that would fight independently of the Front command and would be isolated during the rainy season [...] The SPLA-N was able to recruit mainly among the Berta, Ingessana, Jumjum, and Uduk tribes, who were all receptive to the rebels’ marginalization narrative [...] Support for the SPLA-N among the indigenous tribes is not unanimous [...] Unlike in South Kordofan, Blue Nile pastoralists are strong allies of Khartoum and only a few elements of the Fellata have joined the SPLA-N, notably Abbas Abdalah Kara, head of the SPLM-N human rights court and member of the SPLM-N state leadership. Elements of the Rufa’a al-Hoi Arab tribe from the area of Roseires and Sinja have also joined the SPLA-N, with one senior officer being a member of the tribe”.⁹²

The Human Security Baseline Assessment (HSBA) for Sudan and South Sudan reported in February 2016 on the SPLA-N’s military divisions in 2016:

The SPLA-N is fighting in the Two Areas using three active ‘fronts’—the local term for ‘divisions’. Front 1 is in South Kordofan under the command of Gen. Jogood Mukwar, who is also the SPLA-N chief of staff (CoS). Two fronts (2 and 4) are in Blue Nile: Front 2 is commanded by Gen. Joseph Tuka, also deputy SPLA-N CoS for logistics, and Front 4 falls under Gen. Ahmed al Omda, deputy SPLA-N CoS for operations. Jogood and Omda were both chief negotiators for the SPLM/A-N in Addis Ababa in 2014; they have since been replaced by the SPLM-N secretaries of South Kordofan and Blue Nile. Front 3, meant to be deployed in Darfur, was dissolved in August 2015 and the troops returned to South Kordofan soon thereafter. [...]

Front 4 was created in March 2015 around al Fuj and dispatched to the Ingessana Mountains, where its 2,000 men began to alter the conflict dynamics in the state [...]

The chairman of the SPLM/A-N, Malik Agar, remains SPLA-N commander-in-chief, with Abdelaziz al Hilu as deputy. Abdelaziz is also the head of the SPLM-N civil administration in the Two Areas. With an estimated total of 25,000–35,000 troops, the SPLA-N has not undergone any substantial changes since the previous fighting season.⁹³

2.2.2. The Sudan Revolutionary Front (SRF)

For more detailed information on the Sudan Revolutionary Front, especially its formation, its joint forces and early battles, its politics and external relations, see Small Arms Survey, [The Sudan Revolutionary Front: Its Formation and Development](#), October 2014

⁹⁰Small Arms Survey, [Two Fronts, One War: Evolution of the Two Areas Conflict, 2014–15](#), HSBA Working Paper 38, August 2015, I. Introduction and key findings

⁹¹Small Arms Survey, [Two Fronts, One War: Evolution of the Two Areas Conflict, 2014–15](#), HSBA Working Paper 38, August 2015, III. Armed groups

⁹²Small Arms Survey, [Two Fronts, One War: Evolution of the Two Areas Conflict, 2014–15](#), HSBA Working Paper 38, August 2015, III. Armed groups

⁹³Human Security Baseline Assessment (HSBA) for Sudan and South Sudan, [Conflict in the Two Areas Security and political dynamics at the beginning of the fifth season of fighting](#), 17 February 2016

In October 2014 the Small Arms Survey published a working paper on the SRF's formation and reported that:

On 11 November 2011 the major Sudanese rebel groups signed an alliance with the objective of working together to remove President Bashir, through either violent regime change or negotiations achieved through political and military pressure. The four movements (SPLM-North, SLA-AW, SLA-MM, and JEM) called their new alliance the Sudan Revolutionary Front. Publicly, representatives from the four groups said they had met in Kauda, one of the main SPLM North towns in South Kordofan, although the Sudanese government believes they actually gathered in South Sudan.⁹⁴

The same source noted that in March 2012 two further "movements" joined, who were more important politically than militarily (original emphasis):

- **Nasreldin al-Hadi al-Mahdi** is a descendent of the Mahdi and the son of the late Imam al-Hadi al-Mahdi. For years he was the political deputy of Sadig al-Mahdi in the National Umma Party (NUP). He still has some support among the Ansar, who form the backbone of the Umma constituency.
- **Al Tom Hajo** was a prominent figure in the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), which has been in power in Sudan on several occasions (usually as part of a coalition) and is now a minor part of the government. Hajo is said to have brought with him a small military force of about 200 men, largely 'Sinnar Arabs and White Nile Hassaniya' (Arabs), who reportedly fight alongside the SPLM-North in Blue Nile.⁹⁵

In October 2013 a seventh movement joined the SRF according to the Small Arms Survey: "The United People's Front for Liberation and Justice (UPFLJ), led by Zeinab Kabbashi, is a coalition of 17 small movements from eastern Sudan, largely based outside the country. There has been speculation that Kabbashi has been removed as UPFLJ leader, but the SRF still considers her to be its head. SRF leaders have been trying to bring in eastern Sudanese movements since the movement's founding in an effort to spread the conflict. However, the UPFLJ has no military capacity".⁹⁶

According to the August 2015 Small Arms Survey report "Between 2011 and 2014 the Darfur members of the SRF, i.e. JEM and the two factions of the Sudan Liberation Army under Minni Minawi (SLA-MM) and Abdel Wahid al Nur (SLA-AW), provided military support to the SPLA-N in South Kordofan, which became the epicentre of the Sudanese military opposition. The Darfur rebels arrived in the state during the 2011 dry season, following the leadership's decision to join the alliance, while continuing to conduct independent operations in their areas of control. [...] From June 2013 until mid-2014 the Darfur groups gradually withdrew from South Kordofan, moving south from Dilling and Rashad counties between August and November 2013 and leaving the area by the end of the dry season".⁹⁷

The Human Security Baseline Assessment (HSBA) for Sudan and South Sudan reported in February 2016 that:

Darfur armed groups allied with the SPLM/A-N through the SRF are no longer fighting in South Kordofan. Since mid-2014, these groups—overwhelmingly from the Justice and Equality Movement

⁹⁴Small Arms Survey, [The Sudan Revolutionary Front: Its Formation and Development](#), October 2014, III. *Formation of the SRF*

⁹⁵Small Arms Survey, [The Sudan Revolutionary Front: Its Formation and Development](#), October 2014, III. *Formation of the SRF*

⁹⁶Small Arms Survey, [The Sudan Revolutionary Front: Its Formation and Development](#), October 2014, III. *Formation of the SRF*

⁹⁷Small Arms Survey, [Two Fronts, One War: Evolution of the Two Areas Conflict, 2014–15](#), HSBA Working Paper 38, August 2015, III. *Armed groups, SPLM/A-N and SRF, South Kordofan*

(JEM)—returned to their home areas, yet not before committing abuses against civilians and problematically recruiting Nuba.⁹⁸

With regards to SRF's structure, the Small Arms Survey reported:

With the establishment of the Joint Military Command structure, the SPLM North's Abdelaziz was named permanent chief of staff, because he had the largest area under his control and the most troops. [...] Abdelaziz also comes from a Darfur ethnic group, the Masalit, although he grew up in South Kordofan. This helps his relationship with the Darfurians. He is widely respected in the SRF. Abdelaziz's three deputies come from the other military movements and are subject to change. Around the time of the Abu Kershola attack in 2013 SLAMM's Juma Haggar was the deputy chief of staff in charge of administration; JEM's Al Tahir Hamad Adam was the deputy chief of staff in charge of operations, based in Kordofan; and SLA-AW's Abdu Haran was the deputy chief of staff in charge of logistics [...]

Because an SPLM-North leader had been named chief of staff, the Darfur leaders had the privilege of naming one of their own as overall SRF leader. However, the heads of the three Darfur movements could not agree on which of them would take the role [...] After nearly three weeks of debates it was decided that Malik Agar, the SPLM-North leader, was the only possible consensus candidate. The SPLM-North therefore holds the SRF's two most important posts of chairman and chief of staff.

In January 2012 the SRF declared that Malik would be in charge for a year, with the three Darfur leaders, Abdul Wahid, Minnawi, and Ibrahim, as well as Nasreldin al-Hadi al-Mahdi and Al Tom Hajo, as deputy chairmen in a rotational system. However, Malik remains chairman more than two years after his appointment because the Darfurians cannot agree on which one of them should replace him. In addition, the full political leadership does not meet regularly and the post of chairman is not the SRF's main priority.

Another key part of the SRF's structure is the Leadership Council. In theory, this is the alliance's most important political body, which debates the direction and objectives of the movement. However, different leaders give different responses to the question of who exactly is a member of the council. In July 2013 the number of members was variously put at between 19 and 24. In practice, the logistical and financial difficulties in getting all the members in one place at the same time mean that the Leadership Council can go for months without meeting. The leaders of the movements, who are mainly based in Kampala, take most of the decisions without calling a full council meeting.⁹⁹

According to the Small Arms Survey, the SRF is a "military alliance with political ambitions", which worked to draft a document outlining their vision for 'Restructuring the Sudanese State', but suffers from "serious political differences – some ideological, some personal" amongst the SRF's leadership.¹⁰⁰

It further noted that "The creation of the SRF changed the dynamic of rebel–SAF conflict in Sudan, shifting the epicentre of rebel activity from Darfur to South Kordofan. At the same time a partial improvement in relations between Sudan and South Sudan allowed Khartoum to assign more resources to fighting the rebels".¹⁰¹ With regards to Blue Nile the report noted that a "stalemate continues. The rebels have retained control of a strip of territory in the south of the state, but are unable to win any more ground. SAF appears to have switched much of its resources to South

⁹⁸ Human Security Baseline Assessment (HSBA) for Sudan and South Sudan, [Conflict in the Two Areas Security and political dynamics at the beginning of the fifth season of fighting](#), 17 February 2016

⁹⁹ Small Arms Survey, [The Sudan Revolutionary Front: Its Formation and Development](#), October 2014, III. *Formation of the SRF*

¹⁰⁰ Small Arms Survey, [The Sudan Revolutionary Front: Its Formation and Development](#), October 2014, V. *Politics*

¹⁰¹ Small Arms Survey, [The Sudan Revolutionary Front: Its Formation and Development](#), October 2014, V. *Politics*

Kordofan and is increasingly using militias and the PDF to fight the SPLM-North in Blue Nile. SPLM-North troops here receive little practical benefit from being part of the SRF".¹⁰²

In relation to South Sudan's alleged support of the SRF and general involvement in the Two Areas, the Human Security Baseline Assessment (HSBA) for Sudan and South Sudan reported in February 2016 that:

The presence of South Sudanese rebels in the Two Areas reflects complex regional and international dynamics that have a deep effect on Sudanese internal politics.

Sudan and South Sudan continue to level allegations of hosting proxy militias and foreign armed groups against one another. The IGAD-mediated Compromise Agreement contains a provision that requires the GRSS [Government of the Republic of South Sudan] to stop supporting the SRF (Paragraph 1.6 under 'Security Arrangements'), yet Juba continues to deny having provided such support. President Salva Kiir of South Sudan allegedly added this clause to his list of GRSS reservations to the Agreement.¹⁰³

2.2.3. Human rights abuses committed by armed opposition groups

See also information included in section [4. Security situation: impact of the conflict on civilians](#).

The 2015 UNITED STATES Department of State report summarised the human rights abuses committed by the armed opposition groups as follows:

Government forces, government-aligned groups, rebels, and armed groups committed human rights abuses and violations throughout the year. The most serious human rights abuses and violations included: indiscriminate and deliberate bombings of civilian areas; ground attacks that included the killing and beating of civilians, sexual and gender-based violence, forced displacement, looting and burning entire villages, and destroying the means necessary for sustaining life; and attacks on humanitarian targets, including humanitarian facilities and peacekeepers. Other major abuses included: extrajudicial and other unlawful killings; torture, beatings, rape and other cruel or inhuman treatment or punishment [...] obstruction of humanitarian assistance [...].¹⁰⁴

Physical Abuse, Punishment, and Torture: All parties to the conflicts in [...] the Two Areas were accused of perpetrating torture and other human rights violations and abuses [...] There were continuing reports that government security forces, progovernment and antigovernment militias, and other armed persons raped women and children. [...]

Rebel groups in Darfur and the Two Areas periodically detained persons in isolated locations and held them in prison-like detention centers.¹⁰⁵

In October 2014 the Small Arms Survey published a working paper on the Sudan Revolutionary Front's (SRF) formation and reported that:

Of all the allegations of rape, theft, and harassment against the SRF, one senior SRF figure says that more than 90 per cent were made against JEM forces. JEM denies this, putting the accusation down to the distrust some other SRF members feel for it.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰²Small Arms Survey, [The Sudan Revolutionary Front: Its Formation and Development](#), October 2014, V. *Politics*

¹⁰³Human Security Baseline Assessment (HSBA) for Sudan and South Sudan, [Conflict in the Two Areas Security and political dynamics at the beginning of the fifth season of fighting](#), 17 February 2016

¹⁰⁴United States Department of State, [Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2015: Sudan](#), 13 April 2016, *Executive Summary*

¹⁰⁵United States Department of State, [Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2015: Sudan](#), 13 April 2016, *1.g. Use of Excessive Force and Other Abuses in Internal Conflicts*

It is not clear from the report whether this relates only to JEM's operations in Darfur or also to the Two Areas.

In February 2015 the Sudanese government accused the SPLM-N of killing three aid workers in Blue Nile State.¹⁰⁷ According to the Sudan Tribune article "Unidentified armed men ambushed a team of the Sudanese Red Crescent Society (SRCS) heading to the Blue Nile state capital Ed Damazin on 8 February killing three and seriously injured another".¹⁰⁸

In April 2015 the German Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge reported that "SPLA-N rebels are said to have killed 136 civilians and injured 150 in attacks on polling stations".¹⁰⁹ For the same month, the HUDO Centre reported that the "Rapid Support Force (RSF) supported by SAF attacked Kashsa village of the Nuba Mountains/ West Kordofan State" killing one person, wounding six, twelve people were arrested and "about eight shops around the village were robbed".¹¹⁰

Amnesty International's report on South Kordofan published in July 2015 reported that it had received information of international humanitarian law and human rights violations being committed by the SPLA-N forces in government controlled areas of South Kordofan:

The SPLA-N forces regularly carry out attacks by means of ground shelling and incursions by ground forces into government controlled areas. The Sudan Development Organisation (SUDO) reports that on 12 March 2015, the SPLA-N attacked the SAF present in Kalogi town, killing 27 civilians and injuring 25 more. 25,000 civilians were displaced following this attack, to the outskirts of the town. SPLA-N forces proceeded to attack another five villages around the area of Kalogi. According to SUDO, there was no military presence in the area around the villages at the time of the attacks. The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) reports that on 28 March 2015, SPLA-N forces attacked Habila County, triggering the displacement of 13,000 civilians.

The lack of humanitarian access to areas controlled by SPLA-N has contributed to a number of deaths. For example, while the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), together with the Ministry of Health, has launched a massive campaign to immunize children across Sudan against measles, UNICEF has not accessed SPLA-N-controlled areas of South Kordofan. In one of only two hospitals still operating in the area, 1,400 children were treated for measles and approximately 30 died from what is generally a reliably preventable disease.¹¹¹

In May 2015, SUDO (UK) reported on the killing of civilians by the SPLM-N in Blue Nile state: "The SPLM-N attacked 'Village number 10' in Gesan locality killing four civilians and injuring four children from the same family".¹¹²

The 2015 UNITED STATES Department of State report noted that in June and August 2015 "The SPLM-N is alleged to have killed 33 gold miners in attacks near Talodi, Southern Kordofan, on June 25 and at least 10 artisanal gold miners in attacks in Manjam al-Akhadaar, South Kordofan, on

¹⁰⁶Small Arms Survey, [The Sudan Revolutionary Front: Its Formation and Development](#), October 2014, V. *Politics*

¹⁰⁷Sudan Tribune, [Sudan calls for international pressure for humanitarian access to rebel areas](#), 12 February 2015

¹⁰⁸Sudan Tribune, [Sudan calls for international pressure for humanitarian access to rebel areas](#), 12 February 2015

¹⁰⁹ Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge, [Briefing Notes 20 April 2015](#), 20 April 2015

¹¹⁰ HUDO Centre, [Human Rights Situation in South Kordofan and Blue Nile States of Sudan January-December 2015](#), 20 March 2016, 2.0.1 Arbitrary Arrest in South Kordofan

¹¹¹ Amnesty International, [Don't we matter? – Four years of unrelenting attacks against civilians in Sudan's South Kordofan State](#), July 2015, Executive Summary

¹¹² SUDO (UK), [Human rights abuses in Sudan over the month of May 2015](#), 31 May 2015, Blue Nile state

August 12. A spokesperson for the SPLM-N denied any involvement by the armed group, stating that their forces only attacked SAF and RSF troops”.¹¹³

SUDO (UK) reported on further looting and forcible displacement by the SPLM-N in June 2015 in ‘Village No. 9’ in Gesan locality and in the town of Wad Abok, in Bao locality, Blue Nile state.¹¹⁴ The latter attack resulted in “the death of 22 civilians, the destruction of houses, and the looting and burning of the town’s market. Consequently, 19,000 civilians were reportedly displaced to Guli”.¹¹⁵

In July 2015, SUDO (UK) similarly reported that in South Kordofan SPLM-N forces attacked a group of nomads from the Awlad Gaboush ethnic group (a sub-ethnic group from the Hawazma), and “looted 350 cows from the victims, after which a separate group from Awlad Gaboush tried to rescue the looted cows. The SPLM-N soldiers fired upon the rescue party killing Fadlalla Mohamed [...] The Hawazma view such attacks as a concerted effort to force Arab ethnic groups away from South Kordofan, whilst the Nuba blame the Hawazma, and other Arab ethnic groups, for colluding with the Government’s attempts to cleanse South Kordofan of Nuba”.¹¹⁶

The UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) ‘Sudan – in-year update’ report published in July 2015 reported similar abuses committed by the SPLM-N:

While the government of Sudan remained the primary perpetrator of violations of human rights and international humanitarian law, there have also been reports of abuses by armed opposition groups. On 12 March, a Sudan People’s Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N) attack on Kalogi in South Kordofan allegedly resulted in 40 civilian deaths, 45 injuries, and the displacement of an estimated 25,000 people. On 25 June, a SPLM-N attack against Talodi in South Kordofan allegedly killed dozens and injured roughly 100 others. Many of the casualties are believed to be civilians. Media also reported SPLM-N missile attacks on three main South Kordofan towns during the elections.¹¹⁷

Amnesty International’s report on South Kordofan published in July 2015 reported that:

Amnesty International has also received information of international humanitarian law and human rights violations by the SPLA-N forces in government controlled areas of South Kordofan. The SPLA-N forces regularly carry out attacks by means of ground shelling and incursions by ground forces into government controlled areas. The Sudan Development Organisation (SUDO) reports that on 12 March 2015, the SPLA-N attacked the SAF present in Kalogi town, killing 27 civilians and injuring 25 more. 25,000 civilians were displaced following this attack, to the outskirts of the town. SPLA-N forces proceeded to attack another five villages around the area of Kalogi. According to SUDO, there was no military presence in the area around the villages at the time of the attacks. The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) reports that on 28 March 2015, SPLA-N forces attacked Habila County, triggering the displacement of 13,000 civilians.¹¹⁸

In August, SUDO (UK) reported on the following human rights abuses committed by the SPLM-N in South Kordofan:

¹¹³United States Department of State, [Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2015: Sudan](#), 13 April 2016, *1.g. Use of Excessive Force and Other Abuses in Internal Conflicts, Two Areas*

¹¹⁴SUDO (UK), [Human rights abuses in Sudan over the month of June 2015](#), 1 July 2015, *An update on violations recorded in May*

¹¹⁵SUDO (UK), [Human rights abuses in Sudan over the month of June 2015](#), 1 July 2015, *An update on violations recorded in May*

¹¹⁶SUDO (UK), [Human rights abuses in Sudan over the month of July 2015](#), 1 August 2015, *South Kordofan*

¹¹⁷UK FCO, [Sudan – in-year update](#), 15 July 2015

¹¹⁸Amnesty International, [Don’t we matter? – Four years of unrelenting attacks against civilians in Sudan’s South Kordofan State](#), July 2015, *Executive Summary*

A group of SPLM-N soldiers attacked a gold mine in Al-Jabal Al-Alakhdar; 12 km east of Alliri East near the border of Unity State in the Republic of South Sudan. At roughly 5am the soldiers fired indiscriminately at the traditional miners, who hail from different parts of Sudan and the neighbouring countries, killing 10 of them and wounding others. The SPLM-N soldiers further abducted a group of miners from Ethiopia [...] In addition to the above, the SPLM-N soldiers looted the local market that served the miners and raped the Ethiopian women who were working as tea sellers. The rest of the miners have fled in different directions towards Alliri west and east. Estimates of the total number of miners in the area are between 500 and 1,000. This is the second time that SPLM-N soldiers have attacked gold miners in South Kordofan following the previous incident on the 26th May when a group of SPLM-N soldiers attacked a traditional mining area by the name of Al-Tagula in Talodi locality [...] The attack resulted in the killing of 38 miners and the injury of many more.¹¹⁹

The same report also noted looting activities in South Kordofan: "A group of SPLM-N soldiers attacked a number of traders who were returning to their home in Abasiyia Town after finishing at Al-Jabel market between Rashad and Abasiyia. The soldiers looted 60 cows, which belonged to the trader El-Haj Al-Toum. The traders informed the army garrison based in Al-Migrih who drove off the SPLM-N force and recovered 12 of the stolen cows".¹²⁰

In September, SUDO (UK) reported on SPLM-N being responsible for killing three elders suspected of collaborating with the government in South Kordofan: "Following the failure of the Government's second decisive summer campaign to end the rebellion in the Nuba Mountains, the Government approached traditional leaders from the areas controlled by the SPLM-N to convince them to abandon their struggle and commit to peace. Three leaders from rural localities in southern Kadugli accepted this call and left to meet with the SPLM-N in Al-Buram, the location of the largest SPLM-N camp. Three days after their departure they were found dead on the road leading to Al-Buram. One of the leaders had been decapitated. Sources indicate that members from the SPLM-N are responsible for their deaths".¹²¹

Human Rights Watch noted in September 2015 that:

The SPLA-N has also launched retaliation attacks on civilian communities presumed to support Government forces. Seven civilians were killed on 12 April when the SPLA-N shelled Almadina 10, just south of El Damazein, presumed to be occupied by pro-government civilians, three days after the SAF burned and forcibly displaced the residents of Mediam al Jabal village.¹²²

In October, SUDO (UK) reported on SPLM-N's looting in Blue Nile and the killing of those it suspects of collaborating with the government: "SPLM-N forces killed nine people from the Falata Um-Broro ethnic group in Um-Gulbi area situated in Bao locality and looted 500 sheep. This is the result of the SPLM-N accusing this ethnic group of working on behalf of the Government and killing members of the Ingessana ethnic group, looting their properties and raping the women".¹²³

In November 2015, SUDO (UK) reported the following with regards to SPLM-N's human rights abuses in South Kordofan: "Monitors reported an attack by the SPLM-N on Um Olwan village situated north-

¹¹⁹SUDO (UK), [Human rights abuses in Sudan over the month of August 2015](#), 1 September 2015, *South Kordofan*

¹²⁰SUDO (UK), [Human rights abuses in Sudan over the month of August 2015](#), 1 September 2015, *South Kordofan*

¹²¹SUDO (UK), [Human rights abuses in Sudan over the month of September 2015](#), 1 October 2015, *Killing of three community leaders in South Kordofan, one decapitated*

¹²²Human Rights Watch, [Joint NGO Letter: Human Rights Situation in Sudan](#), 3 September 2015, *Annex: Situation of human rights in Sudan since September 2014, Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile*

¹²³SUDO (UK), [Human rights abuses in Sudan over the month of October 2015](#), 1 November 2015, *Blue Nile*

west of Delling in Delling Locality. The attack is the consequence of inflaming tensions and escalating incidents between members from the Hawazma ethnic group and the local garrison in question. The Hawazma from this particular village had attacked the SPLM-N camp previously killing two soldiers in response to the SPLM-N having earlier looted their cattle. This led the SPLM-N to attack the village in question killing civilians including women and children. As of yet the death count is unclear but constitutes members from both sides. Seven persons have been rushed to Delling hospital, whilst four shops in the village were looted, 100 cows stolen and farms destroyed”.¹²⁴

The same report also reported on looting in Blue Nile: “SPLM-N forces looted 300 sheep from Adam Aтора in Gombrda area in El-Kurmuk locality” and “Forces from the SPLM-N looted 600 sheep from Hamoda Al-Haja in Al-Goz area in Tadamon locality. Additionally the forces opened fire on the shepherds forcing their dispersal before looting all of their belongings. The forces in question attempted to justify their actions by stating that the shepherds are from the Al-Hilawen Al-Zain ethnic group that fights on behalf of the Government”.¹²⁵

SUDO (UK) reported in November 2015 of the emergence of ethnic militias involved in criminal activities throughout South Kordofan: “Monitors this month have highlighted the general levels of insecurity, and most notably the impact of several ethnic militias originating from Arab ethnic groups throughout South Kordofan. Such ethnic militias are taking advantage of the security situation, which restricts freedom of movement for civilians, by operating roadblocks early in the day or late at night. Such roadblocks are used to attack civilians and loot their personal possessions”.¹²⁶

In December 2015, SUDO (UK) reported that the SPLM-N engaged in an ambush against camel herders in South Kordofan and attacked, killed and wounded a group of shepherds.¹²⁷ The same report also reported that SPLM-N engaged in looting in Blue Nile, in the Ingeessana Mountains in Bao Locality.¹²⁸

This continued in February 2016, when SUDO (UK) reported that the SPLM-N engaged in looting in Blue Nile, from Guli Al-Gaalieen area in Al-Tadamon locality and in Putt area, in Geissan locality.¹²⁹

3. Current state of the conflict/peace negotiations

3.1. Territorial control

In January 2016 the Human Security Baseline Assessment for Sudan and South Sudan (HSBA) produced a map depicting the SPLA-N front lines and combat zones in South Kordofan and Blue Nile, which is included in this report in section [1.1. Geographical information](#).

The same source reported in January 2015 that “As of January 2015, the government controls all the major towns in the Two Areas, while the rebels defend their strongholds in the mountains and in the countryside”.¹³⁰

¹²⁴SUDO (UK), [Human rights abuses in Sudan over the month of November 2015](#), 21 December 2015, *South Kordofan*

¹²⁵SUDO (UK), [Human rights abuses in Sudan over the month of November 2015](#), 21 December 2015, *South Kordofan*

¹²⁶SUDO (UK), [Human rights abuses in Sudan over the month of November 2015](#), 21 December 2015, *South Kordofan*

¹²⁷SUDO (UK), [Human rights abuses in Sudan over the month of December 2015](#), 26 February 2016, *South Kordofan*

¹²⁸SUDO (UK), [Human rights abuses in Sudan over the month of December 2015](#), 26 February 2016, *Blue Nile*

¹²⁹SUDO (UK), [Human rights abuses in Sudan over the month of February 2016](#), 31 March 2016, *Blue Nile*

The Human Security Baseline Assessment (HSBA) for Sudan and South Sudan reporting on the “fourth dry season of fighting” between December 2014 to May 2015 stated that the Government of Sudan and the SPLM/A-N were “unable to provide a serious military challenge to the enemy. The front lines have not changed substantially since 2012. The exception is a new formation in the Ingessana Mountains, Blue Nile, which took shape in March 2015, creating new conflict dynamics around the capital, Damazin, and widening the confrontation between the two forces”.¹³¹

Covering the whole of 2015, the HUDO Centre report published in March 2016 noted that “South Kordofan State consists of 17 localities. Some are located under SPLA-N control territories and others are within the State controlled areas”, whilst Blue Nile State “[...] is made up of six (6) localities controlled by the state with the presence of SPLA-N”.¹³²

3.2. Peace negotiations

The Human Security Baseline Assessment (HSBA) for Sudan and South Sudan reported the following with regards to peace developments in November/December 2014:

The seventh round of African Union High Implementation Panel (AUHIP)-sponsored talks between the rebels and the GoS began on 12 November in Addis Ababa, but the ‘one process, two tracks’ (Darfur, Two Areas) negotiations ended on 8 December without major progress. While negotiations were officially ongoing, on 1 December fighting erupted in South Kordofan, followed by heavy aerial bombardments [...] Generally, rebels want to address local dynamics in direct talks with Khartoum, including a cessation of hostilities for humanitarian purposes, before joining the government’s comprehensive National Dialogue process, while the GoS demands a ceasefire (with immediate disarmament of the rebels) ahead of any possible political agreement.¹³³

In December 2014, then Sudanese Defense Minister, Abdel-Rahim Mohamed Hussein, announced the beginning of the “second wave of operations against the rebels in Darfur, South Kordofan and Blue Nile”, ‘vow[ing] to crush them in the military campaign known as ‘decisive summer’ operations” reported the Sudan Tribune.¹³⁴

Consequently, the Human Security Baseline Assessment (HSBA) for Sudan and South Sudan reported that:

The SPLA-N and the government have both mobilized great resources for renewed fighting in the Two Areas. On the government side, the GoS has recruited an increasing number of National Intelligence Security Services (NISS)-affiliated local militias under President Bashir’s direct control. [...] The government strategy for the new campaign has been to recruit local militias to defeat the rebels once and for all in their own difficult territory, especially in the Nuba Mountains where 10,000–15,000 Nuba—including underage youths—have reportedly been recruited. That strategy revives the

¹³⁰ Human Security Baseline Assessment (HSBA) for Sudan and South Sudan, [Conflict in the Two Areas: Describing events through 29 January 2015](#), 30 January 2015

¹³¹ Human Security Baseline Assessment (HSBA) for Sudan and South Sudan, [Conflict in the Two Areas Security and political dynamics at the beginning of the fifth season of fighting](#), 17 February 2016

¹³² HUDO Centre, [Human Rights Situation in South Kordofan and Blue Nile States of Sudan January-December 2015](#), 20 March 2016, 1.5 Scope of the Study

¹³³ Human Security Baseline Assessment (HSBA) for Sudan and South Sudan, [Conflict in the Two Areas: Describing events through 29 January 2015](#), 30 January 2015

¹³⁴ Sudan Tribune, [Sudan army launches second phase of military campaign against rebels](#), 11 December 2014

government's long-standing 'divide and rule' tactic that has had the long-term effect of weakening the social fabric in the regions.¹³⁵

In March 2015 the International Crisis Group provided the following analysis on peace negotiations:

Prospects for an inclusive national dialogue President Omar al-Bashir promised in January 2014 are fading, making a soft-landing end to Sudan's crises more doubtful. Sceptics who warned that the ruling party was unwilling and unable to make needed concessions have been vindicated. Peacemaking in Darfur and the Two Areas (Blue Nile and South Kordofan) and potential merging of these negotiations with the national dialogue were dealt a blow with suspension of African Union High-Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP)-mediated "parallel" talks in Addis Ababa in December [2015]. A separate German-backed initiative has elicited a more unified and constructive approach from the armed and unarmed opposition, but no breakthrough yet. The government still holds many cards – including formidable means of coercion – and has little sympathy for the increasingly unified demand of the armed and political opposition for a really inclusive process and true power sharing. Unless both sides give ground, a continuation of intense war and humanitarian crises is inevitable.¹³⁶

Similarly, the Small Arms Survey's report found that:

The military components of the Sudan Revolutionary Front (SRF) are pushing the 'one process, two tracks' approach established by the AU Peace and Security Council (AUPSC) that asks for local arrangements, i.e. a cessation of hostilities in the Two Areas and Darfur, and political autonomy as a prerequisite for a National Dialogue. The government insists on a ceasefire before any political agreement.¹³⁷

The same source further concluded ahead of its publication in August 2015 that:

After four years the conflict in the Two Areas is in an overall state of military stalemate, with almost no changes in the front line since 2012. For the SPLM/A-N, which claims to have been forced into the conflict, the fighting is not over territory, but constitutes a tool for an ideological war in the name of a revived national New Sudan vision. As such, the movement has begun to develop a civil administration in the areas it controls in Blue Nile and South Kordofan, and has engaged in political alliances with the opposition—both armed and unarmed—in Sudan. This resulted in the formation of the SRF in 2011 and subsequent alliances that led to the 'Sudan Call' signed in December 2014 with traditional political parties and civil society. While the declaration of the need for a democratic transformation of Sudan bridged the gap between political parties from the centre and military opposition groupings from the peripheries, it remains reliant on the strength of its signatories and their relations. The GoS's reaction to the Sudan Call, i.e. a renewed dry season offensive fought increasingly through locally recruited militias and targeted air attacks, the arrest of some of the Call's signatories, and constitutional amendments that increase the powers of the president and security organs, suggests that the ruling party finds itself in an increasingly difficult situation. Internal power struggles and a serious economic recession affect the NCP's strength, while the president is securing powers for himself in a climate of deep mistrust. The weakness of the party is reflected in the weakness of civilian opposition, as a result of their inability to meet and develop in Sudan, which could affect the fortunes of the SRF and its alliances. In the absence of an effective political process in Sudan, an increasingly militarized war continues to be a major political tool for the government and the SPLM/A-N.¹³⁸

¹³⁵Human Security Baseline Assessment (HSBA) for Sudan and South Sudan, [Conflict in the Two Areas: Describing events through 29 January 2015](#), 30 January 2015

¹³⁶International Crisis Group, [Sudan: The Prospects for National Dialogue](#), 11 March 2015, *I. Overview*

¹³⁷Small Arms Survey, [Two Fronts, One War: Evolution of the Two Areas Conflict, 2014–15](#), HSBA Working Paper 38, August 2015, *I. Introduction and key findings*

¹³⁸Small Arms Survey, [Two Fronts, One War: Evolution of the Two Areas Conflict, 2014–15](#), HSBA Working Paper 38, August 2015, *VIII. Conclusion*

In March 2015 President Bashir reportedly vowed to achieve peace across the country in 2015 either through negotiations or military action.¹³⁹ The HUDO Centre report covering 2015 noted that “there was a military campaign carried out by the SPLA-N in the two states meant to disrupt the March-April 2015 elections”.¹⁴⁰

The International Crisis Group’s CrisisWatch Database reported on 1st October 2015 that following a meeting with “Troika (UNITED STATES, UK and Norway)” on 15th September 2015, the opposition Sudan Revolutionary Front (SRF) coalition released a statement affirming its preparedness to sign a six-month cessation of hostilities agreement in Darfur, SouthKordofan and Blue Nile.¹⁴¹ The statement further noted that it would participate in the National Dialogue (ND) preparatory meeting but rejected its current arrangements.¹⁴² The same source further reported that on 22nd September 2015 President Bashir announced that rebel leaders who would participate in the ND would be pardoned and declared government willingness for ceasefire in conflict regions.¹⁴³

A joint ‘Human Rights Update’ report published by the Sudan Consortium and the National Human Rights Monitors Organization covering September – October 2015 reported that “A two month ceasefire was declared in September [2015] to enable peace talks. Whilst the ceasefire has clearly not been respected by the government of Sudan (GoS), it may have contributed to reducing the number of bombings. Although the GoS’s agreement to resume talks, the first in a year, with SPLM-N in November was a positive development, they were suspended again very shortly afterwards following a deadlock on discussions around humanitarian aid”.¹⁴⁴

In October 2015 the Sudan Tribune reported that “Sudan’s foreign minister Ibrahim Ghandour has told a visiting donor delegation that the government is ready to allow international aid groups to access South Kordofan and Blue Nile provided they don’t offer assistance to the rebels”.¹⁴⁵

The Human Security Baseline Assessment (HSBA) for Sudan and South Sudan provided the following summary with regards to peace developments from November 2015 to January 2016:

The African Union High-Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP) called a new round of talks in Addis Ababa on 19–23 November 2015, one year after the previous round, but the negotiations were adjourned without progress. Fighting did not stop during the talks. On 19 November, while the parties were sitting in Addis Ababa, the government attacked SPLM/A–N positions in Soda in Blue Nile (Kurmuk county).

One Antonov reportedly flew over Kauda, the headquarters of the SPLM–N controlled areas in South Kordofan, on the morning of 26 November, after a few months of calm. Subsequently, in December 2015, the parties held an informal round of talks, yet these also failed to produce substantive results.

The rebels—alongside other armed and unarmed groups in the country—have called for a cessation of hostilities on humanitarian grounds in advance of any comprehensive discussion on a political solution for all of Sudan. The GoS has rejected their demands, insisting instead on a negotiated ceasefire followed by political consultations in Sudan. Internal divisions within and among the opposition groups and within the GoS have affected their ability to achieve stated objectives.

¹³⁹Xinhuanet news, [Sudan to achieve peace in 2015 via talks or war: president](#), 2 March 2015

¹⁴⁰HUDO Centre, [Human Rights Situation in South Kordofan and Blue Nile States of Sudan January-December 2015](#), 20 March 2016, 1.6 Statement of the problem

¹⁴¹International Crisis Group, [CrisisWatch Database: Sudan](#), 1 October 2015 2016

¹⁴²International Crisis Group, [CrisisWatch Database: Sudan](#), 1 October 2015 2016

¹⁴³International Crisis Group, [CrisisWatch Database: Sudan](#), 1 October 2015 2016

¹⁴⁴The Sudan Consortium/ National Human Rights Monitors Organization, [Human Rights Update: September-October 2015](#), Undated [last accessed: 10 May 2016]

¹⁴⁵Sudan Tribune, [Sudan expresses willingness to allow humanitarian access to the Two Areas](#), 18 October 2015

With their political power reduced, all the parties had reverted to military means to gain leverage ahead of the round of informal talks that were held in Berlin on 22–24 January 2016, without a positive outcome.¹⁴⁶

Similarly, the Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust (HART) following its visit to South Kordofan in January 2016, reported that “In November 2015 the 10th round of peace talks between the GoS and rebel groups (SRF coalition) from South Kordofan and Darfur failed. Mediated by the African Union High Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP), negotiations ran for a week with primary focus on humanitarian access and cessation of hostilities. The restrictions on humanitarian aid were supposedly a central part of negotiations. The GoS refused access from South Sudan and Ethiopia due to the perceived risk of weapons being smuggled across the border to the SPLM-N. The SPLM-N do not consider it safe for aid to reach civilians in Blue Nile and South Kordofan through Sudan due to mistrust of the GoS and the belief the GoS could use aid as a means of further targeting civilians, for example by poisoning supplies. Bashir is using national dialogue to mislead international community. In reality, the GoS are evading any true negotiation, dialogue or steps towards peace through the nuances in their terminology. The SPLA/M-N have lobbied for negotiations which include all opposition groups, i.e. an inclusive dialogue. However, the GoS persistently refuses to open dialogue beyond themselves and the SRF”¹⁴⁷.

On 22nd November 2015 the Sudan Tribune reported that “Security talks between Sudan’s government and the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement/North (SPLM-MN) on South Kordofan and Blue Nile has made no progress as the government chief negotiator returned to Khartoum for consultations”.¹⁴⁸ The International Crisis Group’s CrisisWatch Database reported on 1st December 2015 that African Union-supported negotiations between the Sudanese government and rebel groups from Darfur, South Kordofan and Blue Nile held on 19-22 November 2015 in Addis Ababa concluded with parties disagreeing on definition of ceasefire; the government refusing to allow humanitarian aid into rebel-held territory; and the government proposing a separate deal with the SPLM-N on South Kordofan and Blue Nile.¹⁴⁹ Following on from this Radio Dabanga reported on 1st December 2015 that “The day after the suspension of the talks, the chairman of the Government delegation and the Minister of Defence announced expanded military deployment in the three war regions, and the end of the unilateral temporary ceasefire”.¹⁵⁰

Similarly, Nuba Reports stated on 5th December 2015 that:

Civilians are bracing for another fighting season after the latest round of peace talks between government and rebel forces failed last month. Government and Sudan People’s Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N) troops are mobilizing to fight in Sudan’s Nuba Mountains that last time brought nearly 2,000 bombings on civilians.

The SPLM-N spokesperson Arno Lodi claims government forces attacked their positions in Blue Nile State and built up troops in South Kordofan State while the talks were underway. The day after the peace talks ended, Sudan Defense Minister Awad Ibn Ouf announced a plan to recapture the SPLM-N stronghold of Kauda.

Meanwhile the government delegation accused the SPLM-N in a statement of stalling and failing the people in the two restive areas of South Kordofan and Blue Nile States, who were optimistic that this round will lead to ending war and put an end to their suffering.¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁶Human Security Baseline Assessment (HSBA) for Sudan and South Sudan, [Conflict in the Two Areas Security and political dynamics at the beginning of the fifth season of fighting](#), 17 February 2016

¹⁴⁷HART, [“They are killing us loudly but no-one is listening”: Sudan and South Sudan](#), January 2016, Executive Summary, Sudan

¹⁴⁸Sudan Tribune, [Sudanese security talks on the Two Areas make no progress](#), 22 November 2015

¹⁴⁹International Crisis Group, [CrisisWatch Database: Sudan](#), 1 December 2015

¹⁵⁰Radio Dabanga, [‘Sudan govt. responsible for failed talk’: think tank](#), 1 December 2015

¹⁵¹Nuba Reports, [Sudan: Thousands Prepare To Plunge Back Into War](#), 5 December 2015

For more background information on the failed peace negotiations in Addis Ababa in November 2015 see Nuba Reports, [Hundreds of thousands of civilians in Sudan prepare to plunge back into war](#), 5 December 2015.

On 31st December 2015, President Bashir reportedly announced the “extension of both a unilateral ceasefire and the National Dialogue for one month”, which the head of the rebel Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), Dr Jibril Ibrahim, said was “only a cover for new fighting” as the Sudanese Air Force “never stopped bombing Jebel Marra, the Blue Nile, and the Nuba Mountains [in South Kordofan]” and “never stopped their military actions”.¹⁵²

The International Crisis Group’s CrisisWatch Database reported on 1st February 2016 that informal talks were held in Germany during 22-23 January 2016 between the Sudanese government and the SPLM-N on South Kordofan and Blue Nile but made no progress on issues of National Dialogue (ND), security and humanitarian arrangements.¹⁵³

The UN News Centre reported on 29th March 2016 about the African Union’s latest initiative to “accelerate progress towards ending the fighting in Darfur, South Kordofan and the Blue Nile states”.¹⁵⁴ According to the article the initiative would “bring together the Sudanese Government, the National Umma Party, Sudan People’s Liberation Movement/North, Justice and Equality Movement and Sudan Liberation Movement/Minni Minawi ‘to reach an agreement on a cessation of hostilities, humanitarian access and assistance and an inclusive national dialogue process’”.¹⁵⁵

In contrast, the Sudan Democracy First Group stated in its article of 22nd March 2016 that

On 21 March 2016 and in a clear violation and departure of the well-recognized international standard and ground rules of mediation and negotiation, the African Union High-Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP) [...] signed [...] a Road Map Agreement (RMA) with the Sudan’s ruling National Congress Party (NCP). All other opposition forces which were invited [...] announced their objection to the RMA and hence refuse to affix their signature to the document. The opposition forces that attended the opening session of the meetings included the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), the Sudan Liberation Movement – Minni Minawi (SLM-M), Sudan People Liberation Movement-North (SPLMN), and the National Umma Party (NUP). The Chair of the AUHIP, presented a RMA that was essentially intended to push the opposition forces to take part in the discredited National Dialogue in Khartoum, which was organized, supervised and managed by the Government of Sudan (GoS), without implementing the necessary prerequisites that would ensure inclusivity, impartiality, and seriousness of the process. [...]

In addition, the failure of the AUHIP to compel the regime in Sudan to implement any of the prerequisites stipulated in the two mentioned AUPSC communiqués during the last year, particularly the government’s negotiating position pertaining to Darfur and the two areas, during all previous rounds of negotiations have increased skepticism about the impartiality, seriousness and the ability of the AUHIP to successfully manage this or any other negotiations. SDFG believes that the position of the AUHIP is an explicit support the policies of the Bashir regime and would lead to the escalation of the ongoing military campaigns in Darfur around Jebel Marra, in South Kordofan/Nuba Mountains and in Blue Nile around Kilqo Mountain area. Moreover, such a position will also encourage the regime to continue its repressive policies through more restriction on all freedoms.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵²Radio Dabanga, [Sudan: Rebel Leader Mocks Sudan’s Ceasefire Extension](#), 8 January 2016

¹⁵³International Crisis Group, [CrisisWatch Database: Sudan](#), 1 February 2016

¹⁵⁴UN News Centre, [UN chief welcomes signing by Sudanese Government of African Union roadmap agreement](#), 29 March 2016

¹⁵⁵UN News Centre, [UN chief welcomes signing by Sudanese Government of African Union roadmap agreement](#), 29 March 2016

¹⁵⁶Sudan Democracy First Group, [A continuation of Failure: The AUHIP sign a Unilateral Road Map Agreement with the NCP](#), 22 March 2016

4. Security situation: impact of the conflict on civilians

This section should be read in conjunction with sections [2.2.3. Human rights abuses committed by armed opposition groups](#) and [9. Internally Displaced Persons \(IDPs\)](#).

Monthly updates on the security situation and human rights abuses committed in South Kordofan and Blue Nile are published, amongst others, by:

- [SUDO \(UK\)](#)
- [South Kordofan Blue Nile Coordination Unit \(SKBLCU\)](#)

Daily reports on attacks, clashes and the general security situation in the Two Areas can be accessed through the following news sites:

- [Radio Dabanga](#)
- [Radio Miraya](#)
- [Radio Tamazuj](#)

The weekly 'Humanitarian Bulletin' published by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) includes information on access to health care, food insecurity amongst other issues of relevance for an assessment on the impact of the conflict on the Two Areas. Its reports can be accessed [here](#).¹⁵⁷

4.1. Aerial bombing campaigns and ground attacks

Several sources have documented the general impact of aerial bombing campaigns and ground attacks in South Kordofan and Blue Nile States. Human Rights Watch summarised in December 2014 the impact of state aerial bombings as follows:

Since then [September 2011], government attacks on civilians and persistent indiscriminate bombing in the rebel areas of both states have forced hundreds of thousands of people to flee. Sudan's refusal to allow humanitarian aid into rebel-held areas, in violation of international law, has deprived communities of food and basic services. The bombing and deprivation of aid has forced more than 170,000 people to flee to refugee camps in South Sudan and Ethiopia, and others to cross into government-controlled areas in search of food and essential services.¹⁵⁸

An International Refugee Rights Initiative/National Human Rights Monitoring Organisation report from April 2015 stated that:

The ongoing conflict in Sudan's Southern Kordofan (SK) and Blue Nile (BN) states, while massively underreported, has had devastating consequences. Widespread aerial bombardment of rebel held civilian areas by the government of Sudan (GoS) are a hallmark of the conflict, and more than 3,000 bombs – on average three a day – have fallen since April 2012. Monitoring on the ground has shown that bombings coincide disproportionately with planting and harvesting cycles, as well as market days, suggesting a deliberate plan to decimate the local economy. Despite its disruption of agricultural production and access to markets, the GoS refuses to allow humanitarian access to these areas, citing fears that such aid would be used to support rebel fighters. With increasing numbers being displaced from their homes, and humanitarian access all but cut off, the ability to survive grows more precarious by the day. As a result, 1.7 million people – roughly half of the

¹⁵⁷ See UN OCHA, [Humanitarian Bulletin: Sudan](#)

¹⁵⁸ Human Rights Watch, [Sudan: Soldiers, Militias Killing, Raping Civilians](#), 14 December 2014

population of the two states – have been displaced, and food insecurity has reached crisis levels for many of those who remain [...]¹⁵⁹

It is important to note that although aspects of the conflict in SK are unique, both the conflict and its eventual resolution need to be viewed within a wider national context. What is taking place in SK is part of a broader GoS strategy to use violence and displacement as a mechanism of control. Similar tactics were used during the war that led to South Sudan's independence, in Darfur and in neighbouring Blue Nile. Repeatedly, and in violation of fundamental principles of international humanitarian law, the GoS has shown a willingness to force the mass displacement of civilian populations in order to alter the political and ethnic fabric of the country – and to strengthen those who are seen as supportive of the regime.¹⁶⁰

In its submission to the UN Universal Periodic Review in September 2015, Human Rights Watch provided the following summary of the impact of government aerial bombing campaigns:

The Sudanese government's indiscriminate aerial bombing of civilians in Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile violates basic principles of international humanitarian and human rights law. It has killed and maimed hundreds of women, men and children and caused hundreds of thousands to flee their homes. In both states, the government of Sudan has used explosive weapons in air attacks on towns and villages, and has maintained an aid blockade that has seriously aggravated dire humanitarian as well as security conditions facing civilians in both states.¹⁶¹

Also in September 2015, Human Rights Watch reported that it had documented "patterns of abuse in Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile, where the Sudanese government has for the past four years engaged in indiscriminate and targeted aerial bombardment of civilian areas, killing and wounding hundreds of civilians including children, often by burning".¹⁶²

A joint submission to the UN Universal Periodic Review of Sudan in September 2015 by the African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies (ACJPS), International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), and International Refugee Rights Initiative (IRRI), summarised that:

In Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile states, more than 1 million people have been forced to flee from their homes in the four years since conflict started between government forces and the Sudan People's Liberation Army-North (SPLA-North) in June and September 2011. The fighting has been marked by serious violations of international human rights and humanitarian law. Government forces have attacked civilian areas and infrastructure through indiscriminate and targeted aerial bombardment and ground offensives, killing and maiming hundreds of civilians. Since the start of 2015, 258 incidents of attacks on civilian populations have been recorded, killing 43 individuals. Monitoring has consistently shown that bombings increase in connection with times of planting and harvesting, indicating a deliberate attempt to disrupt agricultural production and inflict food insecurity. Aerial bombardment in May and June 2015 disrupted cultivation activities before the rainy season. Over four years, government forces have destroyed civilian property including villages, health facilities, schools, mosques and churches, and the authorities continue to obstruct humanitarian assistance [...]. Aerial bombardment and flights over civilian areas has had a profound psychological impact over the course of the conflict. There is also evidence that

¹⁵⁹International Refugee Rights Initiative/National Human Rights Monitoring Organisation, "[We just want a rest from war.](#)" *Civilian perspectives on the conflict in Sudan's Southern Kordofan State*, April 2015, *Summary*

¹⁶⁰International Refugee Rights Initiative/National Human Rights Monitoring Organisation, "[We just want a rest from war.](#)" *Civilian perspectives on the conflict in Sudan's Southern Kordofan State*, April 2015, *Background*

¹⁶¹Human Rights Watch, [Universal periodic review submission: Sudan](#), 21 September 2015, *Armed conflict and human rights, Blue Nile state and Southern Kordofan*

¹⁶²Human Rights Watch, [UN Human Rights Council: Interactive Dialogue with the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in Sudan](#), 30 September 2015

Government aircraft has deliberately bombed hospitals and other humanitarian facilities and used cluster bombs despite international condemnation of the indiscriminate nature of these weapons.¹⁶³

A Small Arms Survey report reported with regards to targeted attacks in the Two Areas in 2014 that “Since the beginning of the conflict, but more so in 2014, weekly markets have also frequently been targeted”.¹⁶⁴ Nuba Reports reported in October 2015 that “nearly 4,000 bombs have been dropped on civilian targets since Nuba Reports started counting in 2012”.¹⁶⁵

A report by the Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust in January 2015, following their visit to Sudan, South Sudan and Uganda, suggested deliberate targeting of aerial bombardment of civilians in 2014: “Accounts of regular aerial bombardment recounted by individuals from Blue Nile State suggest deliberate targeting of civilian areas. Victims described planes dropping bombs and then circling back to hit populated areas for a second time. Others reported the use of searchlights to seek out inhabited areas”.¹⁶⁶

The Human Security Baseline Assessment (HSBA) for Sudan and South Sudan reported that throughout 2015:

government aerial attacks targeted mainly civilians and active farms, limiting the people’s ability to cultivate. As the humanitarian conditions for the people living in both government- and rebel-held areas deteriorated, exacerbated by alarming food insecurity levels due to a severe drought in parts of the states, both parties publicly showed a willingness to sign a cessation of hostilities agreement to support humanitarian access.¹⁶⁷

Summarising the situation throughout 2015, the Sudan Consortium/ National Human Rights Monitors Organisation similarly stated that:

Monitoring on the ground has shown that bombings coincide disproportionately with planting and harvesting cycles, as well as market days, suggesting a deliberate plan to decimate the local economy. As a result, 1.7 million people – roughly half the population of the two states – have been displaced, and food insecurity has reached crisis levels for many of those who remain. This dire situation is exacerbated by the blocking of independent humanitarian access to rebel held areas of SK and BN, which prevents those in need from accessing assistance. This, combined with poor rainfall, has resulted in the Famine Early Warning Systems Network predicting that food insecurity will rise to crisis levels in rebel held areas generally in early 2016 and “in conflict-affected areas of Southern Kordofan, food security outcomes are likely to worsen from Crisis (IPC Phase 3) to Emergency (IPC Phase 4) by March 2016 among IDPs and poor residents.”

Living with the daily threat of aerial bombardment, of the government of Sudan’s (GoS) land forces breaking through the rebel Sudan Peoples’ Liberation Movement–North (SPLM-N) frontline, and a chronic lack of food and medicine, the resilience of this population is being severely depleted. Meanwhile the international community remains, for the most part, silent.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶³ African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies (ACJPS), International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), and International Refugee Rights Initiative (IRRI), [Submission to the Universal Periodic Review of Sudan 2016](#), September 2015, *Part B: Human rights developments on the ground since 2011, Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile*

¹⁶⁴ Small Arms Survey, [Two Fronts, One War: Evolution of the Two Areas Conflict, 2014–15](#), HSBA Working Paper 38, August 2015, *V. Humanitarian impacts and human rights violations*

¹⁶⁵ Nuba Reports, [The bombing campaign, mapped](#), 23 October 2015

¹⁶⁶ Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust, [“There is no place to hide” – HART visit report Sudan and South Sudan](#), January 2015, *Executive Summary, Sudan*

¹⁶⁷ Human Security Baseline Assessment (HSBA) for Sudan and South Sudan, [Conflict in the Two Areas Security and political dynamics at the beginning of the fifth season of fighting](#), 17 February 2016

¹⁶⁸ The Sudan Consortium/ National Human Rights Monitors Organisation, [Human Rights Violations in Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile: 2015 in Review](#), 20 April 2016

The 2015 UNITED STATES Department of State report also noted the following with regards to conflict in the Two Areas during 2015:

Killings: In [...] the Two Areas, government forces and government-aligned militias killed civilians, including by repeated targeting and indiscriminate aerial and artillery bombardment of civilian areas. Ground attacks often followed aerial bombardments. Rebel forces also killed civilians during attacks.¹⁶⁹

Heavy fighting between the SAF and the SPLM-N continued in Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile (known as the Two Areas). Both the government and rebel fighters were accused of using excessive force and targeting civilians. The government continued its Decisive Summer campaign throughout the dry season, with a surge in aerial bombardments in May and June [...]

SAF air raids resulted in civilian deaths and the destruction of fields and impeded the planting of crops throughout Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile. Women and children accounted for most of the victims [...]

There were numerous reported aerial bombardments similar to the following example: The humanitarian wing of the SPLM-N, the Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Agency, alleged the SAF conducted 135 air raids between January and June, killing at least 75 persons and injuring 98. [...]

Ground attacks by SAF forces and government-backed militias often followed aerial bombardments [...]

Government forces killed and maimed civilians during repeated aerial or artillery bombardment. There were also numerous reports of the SAF using cluster bombs in the Two Areas. Throughout the year the SAF also repeatedly bombed cultivated land, disrupting planting cycles, which, coupled with forced displacements and the denial of humanitarian assistance, resulted in near famine-like conditions. NGOs accused the government of using the denial of food as a weapon of war. During July and August, humanitarian actors reported the SAF targeted civilian areas with 53 bombs, including 11 cluster bombs, and 122 artillery shells.¹⁷⁰

Further information is included in section [5.2. Arbitrary arrest and detention](#) on the practise of arbitrary arrest committed during ground attacks.

Nuba Reports informed that “Nuba Reports journalists geo-locate each bombing and frontline battle, and they verify them with GPS photographs. For the first time, this forgotten war is mapped, and the location data brought to life”, which can be accessed [here](#).¹⁷¹ It is not clear from this source whether the figures relate to aerial bombing campaigns by both governmental forces and the SPLM/A-N or just government forces.

4.1.1. Casualties caused by aerial bombing campaigns and ground attacks between 1 July 2014 and 1 April 2016

The following section lists, amongst others, illustrative, non-exhaustive examples of aerial bombing campaigns and ground attacks. Unfortunately, some sources do not make it clear who the specific perpetrators are of campaigns and attacks they are reporting on.

¹⁶⁹United States Department of State, [Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2015: Sudan](#), 13 April 2016, *1.g. Use of Excessive Force and Other Abuses in Internal Conflicts*

¹⁷⁰United States Department of State, [Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2015: Sudan](#), 13 April 2016, *1.g. Use of Excessive Force and Other Abuses in Internal Conflicts, Two Areas*

¹⁷¹Nuba Reports, [The bombing campaign, mapped](#), 23 October 2015

4.1.1.1. Two Areas

2014

Human Rights Watch reported that it had documented “more than 100 civilian casualties in 2014 and 2015 from aerial bombardment or after the initial attack by unexploded ordnance and other explosive remnants of war, including 26 deaths of children and 29 cases in which children were injured, some seriously”.¹⁷²

The Sudan Consortium reported in August 2014 that “Attacks on civilians in opposition held areas of Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile continued in July and August 2014, with five incidents reported in July and eight in August. The attacks killed two people, injured five, killed 60 animals and damaged property and crops [...] Although the number of attacks in July and August was substantially lower than those experienced in June, the number is similar to those experienced during these months in previous years of the conflict [...] Thus it would appear that this is a seasonal lull in the attacks, rather than a fundamental shift in the dynamics of the conflict”.¹⁷³

In Mid October 2014 UN OCHA’s Humanitarian Bulletin reported that “The SKBNCU [South Kordofan Blue Nile Coordination Unit] reported that aerial bombardments by Sudanese security forces occurred in South Kordofan and Blue Nile in late September and early October. While a number of civilians were injured in both South Kordofan and Blue Nile, the SKBNCU also said that many farms and some infrastructure were damaged, adversely affecting the harvesting of crops and impacting food security levels in the area”.¹⁷⁴

A Small Arms Survey report reported with regards to frequency of bombing, targets and types of bombs used in 2014/2015:

The GoS’s [Government of Sudan] continued use of indiscriminate and targeted aerial bombing of civilians, including attacks on cultivated farms, food stocks, and clinics, has worsened the humanitarian situation for around 600,000 IDPs in rebel-held areas. The frequency of bombing in support of the government offensive in December 2014–February 2015 was higher than average, and cluster bombs were dropped on civilian areas. As a result of insecurity and consequent reduced production, local humanitarian actors were expecting severe food insecurity levels by May 2015 in part of the rebel-held areas.¹⁷⁵ [...]

The Small Arms Survey obtained photographic evidence of indiscriminate and targeted air attacks on the civilian population, villages, and farms located a few miles away from military positions in the Two Areas [...]

An unprecedented number of bombs were reportedly dropped on civilians in the Two Areas between December 2014 and January 2015. Air attacks are also used as a political tool ahead of a round of talks. [...]

According to local government officials in the Two Areas the pattern reveals the GoS’s intention to starve the population and force people to flee.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷²Human Rights Watch, [Sudan: Bombing Campaign’s Heavy Toll on Children: Dying From Attacks, Hunger, Disease](#), 6 May 2015

¹⁷³The Sudan Consortium, [Human Rights Update: August 2014](#), Undated [last accessed: 10 May 2016]

¹⁷⁴ UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, [Humanitarian Bulletin; Sudan; Issue 42; 13 - 19 October 2014](#), 19 October 2014, *Humanitarian update on SPLM-N areas*

¹⁷⁵Small Arms Survey, [Two Fronts, One War: Evolution of the Two Areas Conflict, 2014–15](#), HSBA Working Paper 38, August 2015, I. *Introduction and key findings*

¹⁷⁶Small Arms Survey, [Two Fronts, One War: Evolution of the Two Areas Conflict, 2014–15](#), HSBA Working Paper 38, August 2015, V. *Humanitarian impacts and human rights violations*

2015

The Sudan Consortium and National Human Rights Monitors Organisation' annual report covering 2015 noted that "Since the beginning of the current round of conflict in Southern Kordofan (SK) and Blue Nile (BN) civilians have been injured, killed, detained, abducted and displaced on a massive scale. The number of attacks rose sharply between 2013 and 2014 and continued apace in 2015. There has been a 78% increase in bombing incidents in 2015 compared to 2012 [...] 173 attacks against civilian were reported in 2012 and 309 in 2015".¹⁷⁷

In preparation for the 6th consecutive year of fighting in the Two Areas Nuba Reports noted in December 2015 that "During the last fighting season over 2000 bombs were dropped on civilian targets".¹⁷⁸

During the period February – March 2015, according to The Sudan Consortium, the Sudanese government carried out "significant attacks" in the Two Areas "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, 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 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".¹⁷⁹

For the period March till mid- April 2015, The Sudan Consortium reported "For the SPLM-N controlled locations in the Two Areas, the month of March in terms of civilian protection incidents has been somewhat subdued when compared to the previous three months. No deaths wer[e] reported in March 2015 and 20 civilians were reported to having been injured as a result of aerial bombardment or shelling. However, the intensity of military attacks that affected civilian locations in SPLM-N controlled areas increased near the end of March and into the first week of April, resulting in 17 civilian deaths and 12 persons injured between April 4 and 7th".¹⁸⁰

Human Rights Watch noted in September 2015 that "The use of aerial bombardment and flights over civilian villages and communities has been a consistent practice of the Sudan Air Force since the beginning of conflict in 2011. Aerial bombardment in May and June 2015 disrupted cultivation activities before the rainy season, as well as having had a profound psychological impact over the course of the conflict".¹⁸¹

A joint 'Human Rights Update' report published by The Sudan Consortium and the National Human Rights Monitors Organization covering July - August 2015 found that "In the two last months, the situation continued to deteriorate in Southern Kordofan (SK) and Blue Nile (BN). In July and August

¹⁷⁷The Sudan Consortium/ National Human Rights Monitors Organisation, [Human Rights Violations in Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile: 2015 in Review](#), 20 April 2016

¹⁷⁸Nuba Reports, [Hundreds of thousands of civilians in Sudan prepare to plunge back into war](#), 5 December 2015

¹⁷⁹The Sudan Consortium, [Human Rights Update: February-March 2015](#), Undated [last accessed: 10 May 2016]

¹⁸⁰The Sudan Consortium, [South Kordofan and Blue Nile Coordination Unit Protection Report #5 – 2015](#), 12 April 2015

¹⁸¹Human Rights Watch, [Joint NGO Letter: Human Rights Situation in Sudan](#), 3 September 2015, Annex: *Situation of human rights in Sudan since September 2014, Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile*

2015, attacks against civilians in the two areas continued although on a reduced scale from the previous months as a result of the rainy season, which is generally associated with a reduction in the number of attacks. There was, however, a substantial increase in the number of attacks as compared with the previous rainy season. The total number of attacks recorded over the two month period, 34, was more than double the number reported in the same period in 2014".¹⁸²

The same source covering September – October 2015 found that "In the last two months, attacks against civilians in Southern Kordofan (SK) and Blue Nile (BN) have continued though at a reduced scale compared to this year's high of 65 attacks in May. There was, however, a fivefold increase in the number of attacks in September 2015 as compared with September 2014. The slight decrease is likely to be as a result of the annual decrease due to the rainy season. [...] Despite the smaller number of attacks over the past two months, 2015 is shaping up to be one of the worst record for SK. In nine months, from January to September our monitors were able to verify 294 attacks, more than they documented over the full year in 2013, which saw 212 attacks, and 2012, which saw 173 attacks. Only 2014, with 333 attacks, remains higher".¹⁸³

In preparation for the 6th consecutive year of fighting in the Two Areas Nuba Reports noted in December 2015 that "Government and Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N) troops have mobilized to fight in South Kordofan and Blue Nile States".¹⁸⁴

January – April 2016

Nuba Reports reported in January 2016 that:

Conflict looms in the two conflict areas of South Kordofan and Blue Nile states as the Sudanese government amasses troops along the borders of rebel-controlled areas. Local sources suspect the conflict will commence within two weeks once government forces, made up of the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) and other militias, reposition themselves.

An estimated 230,000 citizens in the SPLM-N-controlled area in the Nuba Mountains are now at risk of attack and displacement as the fighting season commences. The fighting season generally starts in full force in December or January after the rainy season ends, making roads accessible [...]

Estimates of government troops from monitors vary. Some sources claim this to be the largest build-up they have seen, with potentially 4,000 troops in place. This figure may be greater, Ngutulu [SPLM-N Spokesman] said, since military recruits were recently trained within the region. If so, it would represent a significant increase from past years, he said.¹⁸⁵

It further noted that:

Since the New Year's inception, both sides have breached a January ceasefire announced by Sudan President Omar al-Bashir. Ngutulu told Nuba Reports the government's extension of the ceasefire is a disingenuous effort to allow SAF troops to reposition themselves before engaging in combat.

SAF Spokesman Col. Khalifa al-Shami denied this, and said they have only reacted militarily due to rebel land-grabbing attacks during the ceasefire period. On January 1 – 6, government Antonov planes dropped bombs south of Kurmuk, Blue Nile State, destroying an estimated 23 farms in Yabus and Chali towns, according to local sources. Only three days later, the government bombed more areas north and south of Kurmuk, forcing an estimated 1,000 people to hide in caves and forests, the same sources said. On January 3, the SPLA-N attacked a SAF military garrison at Mazlagan between

¹⁸² The Sudan Consortium/ National Human Rights Monitors Organisation, [Human Rights Update: July-August 2015](#), Undated [last accessed: 10 May 2016]

¹⁸³ The Sudan Consortium/ National Human Rights Monitors Organisation, [Human Rights Update: September-October 2015](#), Undated [last accessed: 10 May 2016]

¹⁸⁴ Nuba Reports, [Hundreds of thousands of civilians in Sudan prepare to plunge back into war](#), 5 December 2015

¹⁸⁵ Nuba Reports, [Conflict looms as mass government troops assemble](#), 20 January 2016

Dilling and Kudir in South Kordofan State, claiming in a press statement the attack was a “preventive measure.” Both warring parties have disputed claims of the casualties in this incident.¹⁸⁶

The month of March 2016 was characterised by SUDO (UK) as follows:

SUDO (UK) received 12 verified reports (seven Blue Nile; five South Kordofan) containing information of aerial bombardments conducted by the Sudanese Air Force on civilian targets during the month of March. Monitors further identified the specific targeting of seven civilian villages – mostly under the pretext that they are in what is deemed SPLM-N territory – whilst a further 12 strikes targeted areas including Heiban and Azrag in South Kordofan. During these indiscriminate attacks seven civilians were killed and a further seven wounded. Though most attacks do not involve direct civilian casualties; they target civilian infrastructure including those relating to food security and livelihoods through the destruction of farmland and livestock. Such attacks furthermore subject civilians to trauma and psychological stress, all in an effort to undermine the capacity of civilians to survive and to force their displacement.¹⁸⁷

On 31st March 2016 Nuba Reports stated that “So far, the 2016 fighting season has been far less active than previous years. Sudan warplanes have dropped roughly 105 bombs this year, compared to 816 in January 2015 alone”.¹⁸⁸

4.1.1.2. South Kordofan

2014

According to the conflict incident data update compiled by the Austrian Centre for Country of Origin & Asylum Research and Documentation (ACCORD) South Kordofan had “99 incidents killing 392 people” in 2014 of which “the following locations were affected: Abri, Abu Jibeiha, Abu Kershola, Al Abbasiyya, Al Atmor, Al Dulayb, Al Hamra, Buram, Dalam, Daldako, Deri, Dilling, Fanga, Habila, Heiban, Hijlij, Jabal Dalam, Kadugli, Kawdah, Lagori, Mardis, Miri Barra, Murinj, Niaro, Nuba Mountains, Nyakma, Rashad, Sabat, South Kordofan, Tabanya, Talodi, Tindimming, Tomna, Tomo, Um Marha, Um Shuran, Umm Dorein, Umm Durin, Werni”.¹⁸⁹ In comparison, the Sudan Consortium/ National Human Rights Monitors Organisation put the number of attacks at 333, killing 67 persons and injuring a further 162.¹⁹⁰

In November 2014 the Enough Project made the case that the situation in the Nuba Mountains amounted to crimes against humanity:

For three years, the government of Sudan has refused to grant humanitarian agencies entry into rebel-controlled areas of its war-torn South Kordofan state. Despite numerous requests for permission to serve needy populations in these areas, Sudan’s government continues to deny hundreds of thousands of vulnerable civilians life-saving assistance. At the same time, the government has exacerbated the humanitarian crisis by accelerating its own aerial bombardment campaign and ground attacks in these areas. Taken together, the desperate situation of the people in

¹⁸⁶Nuba Reports, [Conflict looms as mass government troops assemble](#), 20 January 2016

¹⁸⁷SUDO (UK), [Human rights abuses in Sudan over the month of March 2016](#), 26 April 2016, *Government aerial bombardments in Blue Nile and South Kordofan*

¹⁸⁸Nuba Reports, [Sudan, rebel forces clash in fighting season’s biggest battles yet](#), 31 March 2016

¹⁸⁹Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation (ACCORD), [Sudan, Year 2014: Update on incidents according to the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data project \(ACLED\)](#), 3 November 2015

¹⁹⁰The Sudan Consortium/ National Human Rights Monitors Organisation, [Human Rights Violations in Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile: 2015 in Review](#), 20 April 2016

rebel-controlled areas, the Sudanese government's aid blockade, and indiscriminate attacks on civilians, along with statements recently attributed to senior commanders in the government forces, lay the foundation for a case of crimes against humanity by extermination [...]

When considered together, the Sudan government's targeted attacks on humanitarian installations, its refusal to allow any aid workers into rebel-held areas, its aerial bombing of civilian settlements, its efforts to prevent harvesting of crops, and some of its other war tactics in the region all add up to extermination by design.¹⁹¹

A Small Arms Survey report reported with regards to South Kordofan in May and June 2014 that "Between May and June 2014 some 60 bombs were dropped in the Kauda area, targeting a local NGO and a clinic that were miles from the front line".¹⁹²

In October 2014 the South Kordofan and Blue Nile Coordination Unit (SKBNCU) reported that "aerial bombing also seriously disrupted livelihoods and daily life in affected villages and, in one instance, caused over 2,000 people to take cover in nearby mountains caves during daytime, only returning to their villages in Heiban and Nakama localities at night".¹⁹³ Similarly, The Sudan Consortium reported that "The month of October saw a dramatic fourfold increase from the previous month in bombings in Southern Kordofan, particularly at the end of the month as the rains eased and the dry season approached. A total of 20 bombings were recorded by the monitors, with six bombings recorded in the last five days of the month. The bombings in October were concentrated primarily in one geographic area, that of Delami County. Not only did thirteen of the bombing incidents occur there, but six of these incidents targeted just two villages".¹⁹⁴ Specifically the SKBNCU reported that "eight civilians were killed and at least two more injured following aerial bombings in Um Dorein and Delami localities in South Kordofan in October".¹⁹⁵ In the same month, Human Rights Watch reported that "six children were killed and one injured when a house was bombed by an Antonov airplane in Heiban town, Heiban county. The plane flew over the town in the morning dropping at least eight bombs on the settlement, also killing a man, witnesses said".¹⁹⁶

The Sudan Consortium reported that in November 2014 "In Southern Kordofan, the pattern of increased aerial bombardment, which began in late October, continued. Fifteen incidents of aerial bombardment were recorded in the first 15 days of November alone, reinforcing the belief that the increase in attacks is tied to the onset of the dry season".¹⁹⁷

The Small Arms Survey reported that in November 2014 "the GoS [Government of Sudan] dropped 14 bombs on a civilian area around Tunguli, killing a prominent local activist, Neima Abiad".¹⁹⁸

A needs assessment by an international organisation¹⁹⁹ in August 2014 in South Kordofan, whose findings were published in November 2014 by the Enough Project, found that:

¹⁹¹Enough Project, [Extermination by Design: The Case for Crimes against Humanity in Sudan's Nuba Mountains](#), November 2014, *Introduction and The crime against humanity of extermination*

¹⁹²Small Arms Survey, [Two Fronts, One War: Evolution of the Two Areas Conflict, 2014–15](#), HSBA Working Paper 38, August 2015, *V. Humanitarian impacts and human rights violations*

¹⁹³ UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, [Humanitarian Bulletin; Sudan; Issue 45; 3 - 9 November 2014](#), 9 November 2014, *New update on SPLM-N areas in South Kordofan and Blue Nile*

¹⁹⁴The Sudan Consortium, [Human Rights Update: October 2014](#), Undated [last accessed: 10 May 2016]

¹⁹⁵ UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, [Humanitarian Bulletin; Sudan; Issue 45; 3 - 9 November 2014](#), 9 November 2014, *New update on SPLM-N areas in South Kordofan and Blue Nile*

¹⁹⁶Human Rights Watch, [Sudan: Bombing Campaign's Heavy Toll on Children](#), 6 May 2015

¹⁹⁷The Sudan Consortium, [Human Rights Update: November 2014](#), Undated [last accessed: 10 May 2016]

¹⁹⁸Small Arms Survey, [Two Fronts, One War: Evolution of the Two Areas Conflict, 2014–15](#), HSBA Working Paper 38, August 2015, *V. Humanitarian impacts and human rights violations*

¹⁹⁹For security reasons they want to remain anonymous. See Enough Project, [Life under Siege: South Kordofan Needs Assessment](#), November 2014, *Editor's note*

In 2014, the government of Sudan scaled up its military offensive in the region and, beginning in April 2014, the area saw an upsurge of indiscriminate aerial bombardments that led to mass casualties and displacement, with many families fleeing the region into nearby foxholes and caves for shelter. Recently, civilian infrastructure, including farming plots, grain stores, health facilities, and water holes, have become the targets of aerial attacks, further harming the already vulnerable population living in the region [...]

Security concerns are an increasing threat to the population, demonstrated by 92% of displaced households fleeing due to fighting, up from 66% a year ago; 29% of the population has a family member currently living in a refugee camp and 79% of households state they do not feel safe at home—12% more than last year's findings of 67%. Women and girls in focus group discussions claim sexual violence and rape are now serious concerns in the region, as a result of encroaching frontlines and proximity to enemy soldiers.²⁰⁰

In November 2014 UN OCHA's 'Humanitarian Bulletin' reported that:

The South Kordofan and Blue Nile Coordination Unit (SKBNCU) said that between 17 and 23 November eight people were killed by aerial bombing and ground fighting in parts of South Kordofan and Blue Nile states controlled by the Sudan People's Liberation Movement – North (SPLM-N). [...]

SKBNCU works with local civil society organisations and international humanitarian actors to share credible information on humanitarian needs in SPLM-N areas in South Kordofan and Blue Nile states. SKBNCU added that following this surge in aerial bombings in South Kordofan many people in Delami, Heiban and Al Buram localities have relocated their families to caves. This has reportedly complicated the collection of drinking water and food supplies. With the coming winter season, morbidity particularly among children living in the cold, damp caves is expected to increase, according to SKBNCU. SKBNCU estimates that the bombing over the past two weeks has made between 300 -600 people more critically food insecure and vulnerable to disease. At least half of these people have likely lost all options for feeding themselves for the next 12 months, says the SKBNCU.²⁰¹

Radio Dabanga reported that in December 2014 "Two children were killed and 21 others were wounded in bombardments by the Sudanese Air Force in Buram locality [...] according to an armed rebel group".²⁰²

2015

According to the conflict incident data update compiled by the Austrian Centre for Country of Origin & Asylum Research and Documentation (ACCORD) South Kordofan had "119 incidents killing 511 people" in 2015 of which "the following locations were affected: Abu Girun, Abu Jubaiha, Abu Kershola, Abu Layla, Al Abbasiya, Al Azraq, Al Dabker, Al Kuk, Al Labo Didy, Al Nogra, Andona Sughaiyir, Angarto, Angola, Buram, Dabri, Dalami, Daliuka, Delling, Dilling, El Fangalo, El Feid, El Hadra, El Rahmania, Frandala, Gadier, Habila, Heiban, Jabal Kroongo, Kadugli, Kalogi, Kanga, Karkaia, Kauda, Khor El Daliab, Korongo Abdalla, Kululu Terai, Meriam, Nuba, Nuba Mountains, Ragafi, Rashad, Shat Damam, Tabania, Tabsa, Taguli, Talodi, Tongol, Toro, Trogi, Tujur, Umm Dorain, Umm Serdiba, Wakara."²⁰³

²⁰⁰ Enough Project, [Life under Siege: South Kordofan Needs Assessment](#), November 2014, 2. Executive Summary

²⁰¹ UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, [Humanitarian Bulletin; Sudan; Issue 47; 17 - 23 November 2014](#), 23 November 2014, *Civilians killed and injured in SPLM-N areas in South Kordofan and Blue Nile*

²⁰² Radio Dabanga, [Air raid kills two children, wounds 21 in South Kordofan](#), 25 December 2014

²⁰³ Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation (ACCORD), [Sudan, Year 2015: Update on incidents according to the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data project \(ACLED\)](#), 4 February 2016

The Sudan Consortium and National Human Rights Monitors Organisation' annual report covering 2015 specifically noted the following with regards to incidents against civilians in South Kordofan:

In 2015, 309 incidents against civilians were reported by National Human Rights Monitoring Organisation's (NHRMO) monitors in SK including 185 aerial bombings - including the use of cluster bombs and barrel bombs - 97 shelling attacks, 13 ground attacks, seven lootings and seven incidents of other types. Within those 282 bombing and shelling attacks, at least 1000 bombs and 902 shells fell on SK alone [...]

In 2015, the counties in SK most targeted by the Sudanese government were respectively Umdorein (118 incidents against civilians reported), followed by Delami (53 incidents), Heiban (45 incidents), Alburam (Tobo) (36 incidents), Dilling (32 incidents), Habila (13 incidents) and Kadugli (9 incidents). There were three attacks on other counties.²⁰⁴

It further found that "During 2015, 46 civilians were killed and 140 were injured in SK [South Kordofan]. Of those killed, 19 were men, 12 women and 16 children. Of the 140 civilians injured, 56 were men, 40 women and 44 children".²⁰⁵ The same report noted that a worrying trend was the increased use of cluster bombs with at least "23 cluster bombs were dropped in Delami, 4 Umdorein, 5 and Alburam (Tobo) counties".²⁰⁶

Human Rights Watch stated in May 2015 that it had documented "more than 100 civilian casualties in 2014 and 2015 from aerial bombardment or after the initial attack by unexploded ordnance and other explosive remnants of war, including 26 deaths of children and 29 cases in which children were injured, some seriously".²⁰⁷

A Small Arms Survey report reported with regards to types of bombs used in 2014/2015:

International observers and local activists provided evidence of the use of cluster bombs between February and May 2015 in South Kordofan [...]

An increasing use of reconnaissance drones has allowed for more targeted air attacks, and four drones have been shot down since the beginning of the conflict in South Kordofan, including an Iranian Zagil model near Kurchi (Um Dorein) on 1 December 2014.²⁰⁸

Amnesty International's report on South Kordofan published in July 2015 found that:

[...] many of the attacks targeted civilian areas and objects without warning, and without legitimate military targets. In addition, the Sudanese forces have used weapons which are inherently indiscriminate, such as cluster bombs, or used weapons and delivery systems which are too imprecise to be used lawfully in civilian areas, such as the use of unguided bombs dropped from Antonov aircraft. The SPLA-N has captured and maintained control of a substantial portion of territory in South Kordofan with ground fighting continuing between Sudanese and SPLA-N forces. However the SPLA-N does not have aerial capabilities and the Sudanese Air Force has relatively unhindered control of the skies over the entire state. The Sudanese government has consistently refused humanitarian access to areas controlled by the SPLA-N, with devastating consequences on food supplies, health care and education. The widespread destruction or damage to civilian property including homes, fields, food stores, hospitals, health clinics, schools and market areas by these

²⁰⁴The Sudan Consortium/ National Human Rights Monitors Organisation, [Human Rights Violations in Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile: 2015 in Review](#), 20 April 2016

²⁰⁵The Sudan Consortium/ National Human Rights Monitors Organisation, [Human Rights Violations in Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile: 2015 in Review](#), 20 April 2016

²⁰⁶The Sudan Consortium/ National Human Rights Monitors Organisation, [Human Rights Violations in Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile: 2015 in Review](#), 20 April 2016

²⁰⁷Human Rights Watch, [Sudan: Bombing Campaign's Heavy Toll on Children](#), 6 May 2015

²⁰⁸Small Arms Survey, [Two Fronts, One War: Evolution of the Two Areas Conflict, 2014–15](#), HSBA Working Paper 38, August 2015, V. *Humanitarian impacts and human rights violations*

attacks has also disrupted agricultural production, health care and education in the area, contributing to the humanitarian crisis.²⁰⁹

It further concluded that the attacks in South Kordofan amount to war crimes:

Attacks targeted against civilians and civilian objects, indiscriminate aerial and ground attacks, as well as the denial of humanitarian access, constitute breaches of international humanitarian law. Amnesty International has concluded that they amount to war crimes. The Government of Sudan has also committed serious violations of numerous human rights including the rights to life, healthcare, education, food, safe water and adequate housing.

Over the course of four years of conflict, hundreds of civilians have been killed and thousands injured in attacks, particularly by bombs and rockets launched from Antonov planes and MiG and Sukhoi fighter jets as well as from long-range artillery shelling on the ground. For instance, between January and April 2015, the Sudanese Air Force dropped an estimated 374 Antonov, MiG and Sukhoi bombs in 60 locations across South Kordofan. The aerial bombardments and ground shelling resulted in the deaths of an estimated 35 civilians and injured a further 70 individuals, and damaged civilian objects including villages, schools and mills. The SAF have bombed 26 health facilities (hospitals, clinics and health units) in SPLA-N controlled areas since 2011. Amnesty International did not identify any evidence, either from inspections or interviews, that any of these buildings had been used for military purposes or were located near legitimate military targets when they were attacked.

Amnesty International has evidence confirming that the SAF widely disregards the fundamental rule of international humanitarian law that requires parties to a conflict to at all times, “distinguish between civilians and combatants.” This rule means that “attacks may only be directed against combatants” and “must not be directed against civilians.” The SAF have also consistently violated the obligation to distinguish between civilian objects and military objectives. On this basis Amnesty International is of the view that the Sudan Armed Forces is responsible for having committed war crimes.

Amnesty International has also received information of international humanitarian law and human rights violations by the SPLA-N forces in government controlled areas of South Kordofan. The SPLA-N forces regularly carry out attacks by means of ground shelling and incursions by ground forces into government controlled areas. The Sudan Development Organisation (SUDO) reports that on 12 March 2015, the SPLA-N attacked the SAF present in Kalogi town, killing 27 civilians and injuring 25 more. 25,000 civilians were displaced following this attack, to the outskirts of the town. SPLA-N forces proceeded to attack another five villages around the area of Kalogi. According to SUDO, there was no military presence in the area around the villages at the time of the attacks. The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) reports that on 28 March 2015, SPLA-N forces attacked Habila County, triggering the displacement of 13,000 civilians.²¹⁰

The African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies (ACJPS) reported that “In late 2014 the Government of Sudan launched a renewal of the ‘Decisive Summer Campaign’, professing to eradicate all armed rebellions in Sudan. Over 1,500 bombs and shells were reportedly dropped on South Kordofan in December 2014 and January 2015 alone”.²¹¹

Amnesty International reported in its annual report covering 2015 that:

government aircraft deliberately bombed hospitals and other humanitarian facilities, and dropped cluster bombs on civilian areas of South Kordofan’s Nuba Mountains in February, March and June

²⁰⁹ Amnesty International, [Don’t we matter? – Four years of unrelenting attacks against civilians in Sudan’s South Kordofan State](#), July 2015, Executive Summary

²¹⁰ Amnesty International, [Don’t we matter? – Four years of unrelenting attacks against civilians in Sudan’s South Kordofan State](#), July 2015, Executive Summary

²¹¹ African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies (ACJPS), [Attacks on Civilians by Sudanese Armed Forces and Sudanese Peoples’ Liberation Movement – North in Blue Nile](#), 1 May 2015

2015. Between January and April, the air force dropped 374 bombs in 60 locations across South Kordofan.²¹²

The same source further reported in its 'Human Rights Monitor' on two attacks in January 2015: firstly, on 4th January "the GoS [Government of Sudan] deployed roughly 10,000 members of the Rapid Support Forces to Al Dalang from Khartoum and Darfur. When they arrived in Al Dalang, they began firing into the air, injuring one civilian, Ahmed Tawr Isa, (m), 30 years of age"²¹³; secondly, on 10th January "the SAF attacked the SPLM-N military base in Jilad in the western region of the Nuba Mountains. The area is also densely inhabited by civilians. Three civilians were injured".²¹⁴ The same source specifically reported with regards to aerial bombardments that:

On 15 January 2015 the Sudanese Armed Forces began a bombing campaign in the Nuba Mountains. Aerial bombardment has occurred up to three times a day in January 2015. Civilians have been caught in the cross-fire as the rebel Sudanese Peoples' Liberation Movement – North (SPLM-N) has prevented civilians from moving out of Kadugli area. Scores of civilians have been trapped in the western region of the Nuba Mountains, including Fenda, Almendal, Slara, Alnatal, Wali, Kujoria, Karkwa, Katala, Tema, Tulushi, Tubug, Jilad, Teman, and Majda. Civilians have also been trapped in Kega Alkhail, Kega Limn, Kurngo, Abdalla, Kufa, Merry Joda, Angolo, Shayat, Safia North, Sayat Daman, Kololo, Um Sardba, Heban, Angarto, Ier, Mundi, Tangli, Lwera, Terigi, and Kauda. Humanitarian needs are escalating in the area immediately east of Kadugli, including Kufa, Dloka, Kurngo, Abdala, Alhamra, Alihaimir, Dalgo Altais, and Um Sardba. Residents of Angarto, Tosi, and Ira Mundi in Kadugli area have been displaced to Abujibaiha and Rashad. Authorities in Abujibaiha and Rashad have only recently allocated lands for internally displaced persons. Authorities in the Nuba Mountains have also banned the sale of specific commodities. On Mondays and Thursdays merchants are not allowed to sell sugar, lintel, flour, sorghum, gasoline and benzene. Merchants must obtain permission from the NISS prior to conducting any transactions on commodities on the pretext that they could be sent to SPLM-N controlled areas.²¹⁵

Similarly, Human Rights Watch reported on three such attacks in January 2015: firstly, "a 4-year-old boy died on his way to the hospital, wounded when aircraft dropped more than 20 bombs on the village of Abu Leila in Buram county"²¹⁶; secondly, "a very small girl and her 14-year-old brother were killed when a bomb dropped by an aircraft landed next to their shelter"²¹⁷; lastly, "two aircraft dropped about 20 bombs on the village of Nyakama in Heiban county, killing a woman and a child and injuring three other children, according to local human rights monitors".²¹⁸

The UN Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in the Sudan reported in his August 2015 report covering the period 1 December 2014-30 June 2015 that:

During the period under review, several reports were received of human rights violations in the States of Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile. The violations included systematic attacks against civilians by both government forces and armed opposition groups and bombing in areas populated by civilians in

²¹² Amnesty International, [Amnesty International Report 2015/2016 – The State of the world's human rights](#), 24 February 2016, *Sudan: Armed conflict, South Kordofan and Blue Nile*

²¹³ African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies (ACJPS), [Sudan Human Rights Monitor December 2014 – January 2015](#), 13 April 2015, *Insecurity in South Kordofan*

²¹⁴ African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies (ACJPS), [Sudan Human Rights Monitor December 2014 – January 2015](#), 13 April 2015, *Insecurity in South Kordofan*

²¹⁵ African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies (ACJPS), [Sudan Human Rights Monitor December 2014 – January 2015](#), 13 April 2015, *Insecurity in South Kordofan*

²¹⁶ Human Rights Watch, [Sudan: Bombing Campaign's Heavy Toll on Children](#), 6 May 2015

²¹⁷ Human Rights Watch, [Sudan: Bombing Campaign's Heavy Toll on Children](#), 6 May 2015

²¹⁸ Human Rights Watch, [Sudan: Bombing Campaign's Heavy Toll on Children](#), 6 May 2015

the Nuba Mountains – acts contrary to the international humanitarian principles of distinction and proportionality. According to information received by the Independent Expert, between January and April 2015, the Sudanese Air Force dropped approximately 374 bombs in 60 locations in Southern Kordofan. The aerial bombardments and ground shelling resulted in the deaths of an estimated 35 civilians and injured a further 70 individuals, and damaged civilian objects, including villages, schools and mills. [...]

The Independent Expert also received information on a surge in fighting on the ground between government forces and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N), in particular following the elections. The fighting caused the displacement of approximately 50,000 people in the States of Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile in May 2015.

Violations of human rights and international humanitarian law were also perpetrated by armed movements. On 12 March 2015, a [sic] attack by SPLM-N on Kalogi in Southern Kordofan reportedly resulted in 40 civilian deaths, 45 injuries and the displacement of 25,000 people. On 25 June, another attack by SPLM-N in Southern Kordofan is said to have led to the death of a dozen civilians and the wounding of approximately 100 others.²¹⁹

In March 2015 the Sudan Consortium reported that:

The intensity of aerial bombardment reduced in the month of March in South Kordofan, only to start again in the last week of the month. Overall 102 bombs were reported, with seventeen people were injured among which were a significant number of children. According to Sudan Consortium, the number of bombing incidents is equal to last March 2014, but four times higher than March 2013. Bombing continued to target civilian locations mainly in Dalami, Heiban and Um Dorein counties, hitting houses, farms and food stores. On 15 March, the Peace and Community Development Center in Kanist Alamsih Church and the New Sudan Primary School (Heiban County) were bombed injuring ten people. These locations are far from any military position. In the same county, on March 21 and 27 respectively, six bombs were dropped on Njakima village and around Alazrag destroying tree crops. As a result of the bombing on 21 March of Karkaria village (Um Dorein County) an unknown but considerable number of people were displaced to the streams. Anti-personnel mines in Angarto (Talodi County) reportedly injured two people, while at the same time killed four animals and injured ten.²²⁰

In April 2015 the Sudan Tribune reported that the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N) "resumed mortar attacks on the capital of South Kordofan state, Kadugli [...] while the government said four civilians were killed as a result of the shelling".²²¹

A UN OCHA 'Humanitarian Bulletin' from mid-April 2015 reported with regards to an SPLM-N attack that:

On 6 April, an inter-agency mission visited South Kordofan's Habila town to assess the needs of 13,000 people who fled following an attack on the town by the Sudan People's Liberation Movement – North (SPLM-N) on 28 March, then later returned. International aid organisations have been unable to reach affected people due to insecurity. Some assistance, however, was provided through local partners while the Government provided food rations. According to displaced people, about 60 per cent of the town residents fled to Dilling and Samasim towns. The remaining 40 per cent hid in nearby areas and returned to Habila town on the same day, after the situation had calmed. According to the Government's Humanitarian Aid Commission (HAC), of the 13,000 residents who fled the town only 32 families (approximately 160 people) remain at El Rugool village (some 30km north of Habila town). Local authorities claim that these people are unable to find transportation back to Habila town. Local

²¹⁹UN Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in the Sudan, [Report of the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in the Sudan, Aristide Nononsi](#), 24 August 2015, *E. Conflict-affected areas*, 2. *Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile*, paragraphs 49-51

²²⁰Sudan Consortium, [Humanitarian Update – March 2015](#), Undated [last accessed: 10 May 2016], *South Kordofan, A. Protection, Insecurity and Displacement*

²²¹Sudan Tribune, [4 killed as SPLM-N rebels resume mortar attacks on Kadugli](#), 15 April 2015

authorities also report that over 360 homes were destroyed during the fighting, leaving 2,240 homeless. The town's market was looted during the attack, the town's generator was damaged, one school was burnt down and livestock, according to local authorities, polluted numerous water sources. According to the mission's findings, the main needs of the affected people are food, water and sanitation services.²²²

UNICEF reported in April 2015 that "Ten children aged between two and 15 years have been killed in the last two weeks in Sudan's South Kordofan state" and condemned "in the strongest terms the continued loss of innocent lives in Sudan as a result of armed conflict. Children continue to bear the biggest burden of this man-made disaster. Conflict kills – but it also prevents boys and girls from going to school, from accessing quality health and nutrition services and from receiving adequate protection".²²³

In April 2015, a joint 'Human Rights Update' report published by The Sudan Consortium and the National Human Rights Monitors Organization found that:

As Sudanese in Khartoum and other parts of the country went to the polls on 13-16 April, civilians in Southern Kordofan were not only excluded from the vote, they faced continuing government attacks. Over the three days of the elections, civilians faced 12 separate aerial bombardments and shelling attacks [...] In this tense context, the government significantly increased attacks in April 2015 in an apparent effort to gain ground ahead of the coming rainy season. April saw a particularly large number of attacks, 171 % more than last month, making it one of months with the highest number of attacks since the start of the war. During the month of April, there were 55 verified incidents of either bombing or shelling, one verified incident of looting and one verified incident of a ground attack – all against civilians. The attacks led by the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) caused significant damage, with 10 civilian deaths, including four children,² and 19 civilians injured. The attacks also caused significant destruction to civilian infrastructure and assets, with 38 animals reported killed and 12 injured and 23 huts and 18 houses burned or significantly damaged. The attacks from SAF occurred in Umdorein County with 29 verified incidents, Delami County with 21 verified incidents, Al Buram (Tobo) County with 6 verified incidents and in Heiban County with 1 verified incident.²²⁴

In May 2015 Human Rights Watch reported that it had found evidence that "Sudan probably used cluster bombs in Southern Kordofan, and observed the remnants of the bombs in the villages of Tungoli and Rajeeji in April 2015. These weapons are banned by the Convention on Cluster Munitions, which Sudan has not joined".²²⁵

A joint 'Human Rights Update' report published by The Sudan Consortium and the National Human Rights Monitors Organization covering May 2015 found that:

The government of Sudan's (GoS) military offensive against opposition forces of the Sudanese People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N) in Southern Kordofan intensified significantly during May 2015, as the government attempted to gain ground ahead of the coming rainy season. This follows the same pattern seen in previous years, our monitors recorded 65 attacks in SPLM-N controlled areas in May. The number of attacks represented a 14% increase over last month and a 25% increase over May 2014. Of particular concern in this month has been a significant increase in ground attacks, which often cause significant displacement. In total from January to May 2015, 200 verified incidents were registered, killing 39 civilians and injuring 148 persons. During the month of May, there were 56 verified bombing and shelling incidents, seven verified ground attacks and two verified incidents of

²²² UN OCHA, [Humanitarian Bulletin Sudan, Issue 16 13 – 19 April 2015](#), 19 April 2015

²²³ UNICEF, [UNICEF Sudan calls on armed forces and groups to respect child rights after conflict in South Kordofan alone kills 10 boys and girls in last two weeks](#), 16 April 2015

²²⁴ The Sudan Consortium/ National Human Rights Monitors Organisation, [Human Rights Update: April 2015](#), Undated [last accessed: 10 May 2016]

²²⁵ Human Rights Watch, [Sudan: Bombing Campaign's Heavy Toll on Children](#), 6 May 2015

looting – all against civilians. The attacks led by the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) caused nine deaths, including one child, and 19 civilians were injured. The attacks also caused significant destruction to civilian infrastructure and property, with about 347 civilian homes burned and at least 56 livestock killed. Of particular concern has been the increase in ground attacks. In the month of May, there were seven ground attacks recorded, claiming five lives and leaving eight injured, 45 homes and two entire villages burned and 7,000 displaced. These included particularly serious attacks on 1 May, Kululu village (Sofaiyia Payam – and on 5 May in Damam village in Tobo (Al Buram) County and on 10 May in Hadara village in Delami County which displaced more than 7,000 civilians and led to the capture of eight civilians by the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), the militia formed from the notorious janjaweed. These civilians are now believed to be detained in government controlled areas. Ten civilians, including five children, are still missing.²²⁶

A joint 'Human Rights Update' report published by The Sudan Consortium and the National Human Rights Monitors Organization found that "In June 2015, with the beginning of the rainy season, the number of attacks carried out by the Sudanese government in SK decreased significantly, with fewer than half as many incidents reported in June 2015 as compared to May 2015, and nearly a quarter of the number reported in June 2014. However, even despite the significant decrease in bombings, sadly June 2015 saw the same number of casualties as June 2014. In total, 22 verified incidents were reported by monitors in the counties of Southern Kordofan that they cover (Heiban, Umdorein, Al Buram (Tobo), Habila, Aldilling and Delami). The attacks caused six deaths, including three children, and injured two civilians".²²⁷

The UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) reported that on 25th June 2015 "a SPLM-N attack against Talodi in South Kordofan allegedly killed dozens and injured roughly 100 others. Many of the casualties are believed to be civilians".²²⁸ A few days later, on 30th June 2015, the South Kordofan Blue Nile Coordination Unit reported that "A 17 year old boy was killed on 30 June by shelling in Nugra village (Tangel payam, Umdorein county) in South Kordofan when 12 shells were fired from the state capital Kadugli by government forces. The shells also killed 3 cows".²²⁹

In July 2015, SUDO (UK) reported that "indiscriminate aerial bombardments continue on a daily basis, though our monitors have not yet reported any casualties within the civilian population for the month of July. However, the main focus of such attacks has been to prevent civilians from cultivating their farms. This, in turn, is a systematic programme designed to force civilians from SPLM-N held territory, to areas controlled by the Government, or even to force them into South Sudan".²³⁰

SUDO (UK) reported that in September 2015 its monitors "have identified six incidents of aerial bombardment on at least 10 villages between the 12th September and the 29th September. Antonov Planes were utilised for such attacks on four occasions bombarding eight villages, one of which delivered 11 barrel bombs. Regarding human casualties, monitors have only reported the injury of an unspecified number on the 19th September. All attacks have resulted in an extensive loss of farmland. Aside from the loss of food potential, these attacks serve as a psychological attack on civilians".²³¹

²²⁶ The Sudan Consortium/ National Human Rights Monitors Organisation, [Human Rights Update: May 2015](#), Undated [last accessed: 10 May 2016]

²²⁷ The Sudan Consortium/ National Human Rights Monitors Organisation, [Human Rights Update: June 2015](#), Undated [last accessed: 10 May 2016]

²²⁸ UK FCO, [Sudan – in-year update](#), 15 July 2015

²²⁹ South Kordofan Blue Nile Coordination Unit, [Protection Report #8](#), 15 July 2015

²³⁰ SUDO (UK), [Human rights abuses in Sudan over the month of July 2015](#), 1 August 2015, *South Kordofan*

²³¹ SUDO (UK), [Human rights abuses in Sudan over the month of September 2015](#), 1 October 2015, *Aerial bombardment by the Sudanese Government in South Kordofan*

A joint 'Human Rights Update' report published by The Sudan Consortium and the National Human Rights Monitors Organization covering September – October 2015 found that in “In September and October 2015, our monitors verified 27 incidents in SK including 17 shelling attacks, six aerial bombings, one incident of ground fighting, one of looting and one of abduction. Unfortunately, a one year old baby and a man were killed and two children, three men and one woman were injured in these attacks. In addition, one child is missing. At least 50 bombs and 164 projectiles landed in the SPLM-N controlled areas of SK during the reporting period”.²³²

The same source noted that “Once again in September [2015], Umdorein County was the most targeted with 47% of the attacks and again followed by Dilling County with 23% or four verified incidents. In addition, Delami County had three verified incidents, Heiban and Tobo (Al Buram) Counties had only one verified incident each”.²³³ In October 2015 “Dilling County was the county most targeted with 60% of the verified incidents followed by Umdorein County with two verified incidents. Delami County and Heiban County had only one verified incident each”.²³⁴

In January 2016, the Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust (HART) following its visit to South Kordofan in the same month found that “While there has been relative calm in South Kordofan for the past four months, those we interviewed within the Nuba Mountains expressed their deep concern over the build-up of Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) troops in strategic positions around Kauda. They anticipate imminent attacks which are likely to target civilian infrastructure as before”.²³⁵

January-April 2016

Between 13-16th February 2016, SUDO (UK) found that “The Sudanese Air Force dropped an estimated 46 bombs on civilian targets over a four day period. On the 13th, 14th, and 16th of February 34 bombs were dropped over the villages of Sabat, Toger, and Lampary in Dalami area. No casualties were reported. On the 15th February the Sudanese Armed Forces bombarded Al-Dabo area near Um Doreen. Monitors report 12 bombs dropped on civilian targets, killing Gabriel Tia and injuring seven others”.²³⁶

On 19th March 2016 SUDO (UK) reported that “SPLM-N forces attacked Furshaya area, located between Al-Debeibat and Delling. During which they clashed with the Sudanese Armed Forces in the area during Primary School exams, resulting in the death of one student”.²³⁷

On 29th March 2016, Agence-France Presse reported that “Sudanese troops have clashed with rebels in South Kordofan after months of calm in the state [...] The military said it had destroyed a number of SPLM-N vehicles and killed 55 rebels, suffering no casualties of its own”.²³⁸

On 31st March 2016 Nuba Reports stated that “Sudan government forces attacked at least six rebel-held locations across the Nuba mountains [...] sparking the largest battles the region has seen in more than a year [...] Simultaneously, Sudan picked up its aerial attacks in the Nuba Mountains,

²³² The Sudan Consortium/ National Human Rights Monitors Organization, [Human Rights Update: September-October 2015](#), Undated [last accessed: 10 May 2016]

²³³ The Sudan Consortium/ National Human Rights Monitors Organization, [Human Rights Update: September-October 2015](#), Undated [last accessed: 10 May 2016], *September 2015*

²³⁴ The Sudan Consortium/ National Human Rights Monitors Organization, [Human Rights Update: September-October 2015](#), Undated [last accessed: 10 May 2016], *October 2015*

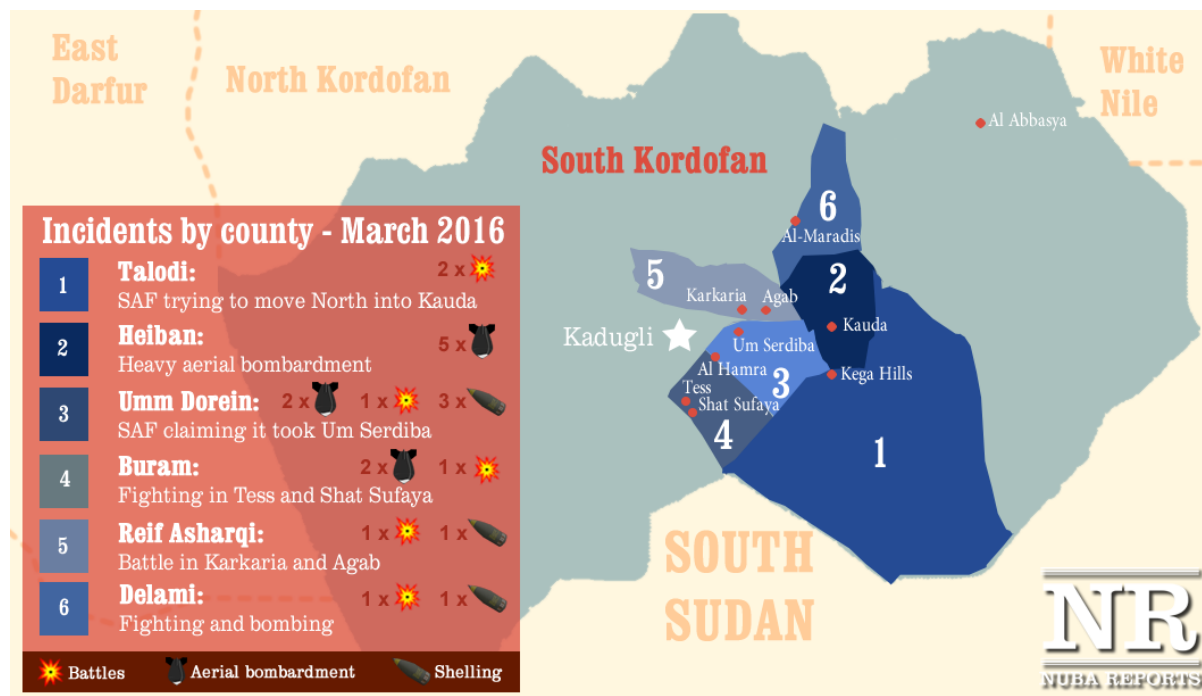
²³⁵ HART, [“They are killing us loudly but no-one is listening”: Sudan and South Sudan](#), January 2016, *Executive Summary, Sudan*

²³⁶ SUDO (UK), [Human rights abuses in Sudan over the month of February 2016](#), 31 March 2016, *South Kordofan*

²³⁷ SUDO (UK), [Human rights abuses in Sudan over the month of March 2016](#), 26 April 2016, *South Kordofan*

²³⁸ Agence France-Presse, [Sudan army and rebels clash in Kordofan, ending months of calm](#), 29 March 2016

hitting Heiban and Um Dorein hardest, according to witnesses. Three women – a mother, teacher, and student – and two children, ages 16 and 6 months, were injured when an Antonov bombed a village in Heiban. Bombing has also reached the outskirts of Kauda this week. Nuba Reports has identified 38 wounded at a local hospital in the Nuba Mountains”.²³⁹ The same source provided the following map²⁴⁰ showing the incidents per county in South Kordofan in March 2016:



4.1.1.3. Blue Nile

2014

According to the conflict incident data update compiled by the Austrian Centre for Country of Origin & Asylum Research and Documentation (ACCORD) Blue Nile had “29 incidents killing 114 people” in 2014 of which “the following locations were affected: Ad-Damazin, Agadi, Baw, Blue Nile, Kurmuk, Roseires, Salbal, Yabus”.²⁴¹

Human Rights Watch reported in its annual report covering 2014 that:

Ground attacks and government bombing also persisted in Blue Nile, though many people have fled to refugee camps in South Sudan. In September, government forces attacked villages, carrying out numerous cases of sexual violence in Bau locality.²⁴²

In September 2014 the African Centre for Justice and Peace studies (ACJPS) reported that

²³⁹Nuba Reports, [Sudan, rebel forces clash in fighting season's biggest battles yet](#), 31 March 2016

²⁴⁰Nuba Reports, [Sudan, rebel forces clash in fighting season's biggest battles yet](#), 31 March 2016

²⁴¹Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation (ACCORD), [Sudan, Year 2014: Update on incidents according to the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data project \(ACLED\)](#), 3 November 2015

²⁴²Human Rights Watch, [Word Report 2015: Sudan: Events of 2014](#), 29 January 2015, *Conflict and Abuses in Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile*

On 1 September 2014 the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and paramilitary Popular Defence Forces (PDF) attacked Samsorah village, near to Bao locality, in Blue Nile state. Ten women and girls were raped and a local community leader was arrested and taken to an unknown location; his whereabouts remain unknown.²⁴³

The Small Arms Survey reported in October 2014 that “four bombs were dropped on the Heiban market, killing six people”.²⁴⁴ Whilst on 11/12th November 2014 “25 bombs were dropped in Kurmuk county [...] killing one woman and injuring another”, according to the same source.²⁴⁵ Radio Dabanga reported on an incident involving the death of a child at the end of November 2014: “One child was killed, and three other children were injured when the Sudanese Air Force bombed areas in El Kurmuk locality, Blue Nile state [...] Large tracts of pasture and farmlands were burned as well, the rebel Sudan People's Liberation Army-North reported”.²⁴⁶

The Sudan Consortium reported that in November 2014 “In Blue Nile, a number of bombing of civilian areas were [...] recorded”.²⁴⁷

In November 2014 UN OCHA's ‘Humanitarian Bulletin’ reported that:

The South Kordofan and Blue Nile Coordination Unit (SKBNCU) said that between 17 and 23 November eight people were killed by aerial bombing and ground fighting in parts of South Kordofan and Blue Nile states controlled by the Sudan People's Liberation Movement – North (SPLM-N). Aerial bombing reportedly injured another 33 people, 27 of whom were in Blue Nile. SKBNCU said it received reports of a major surge in aerial bombings and ground fighting in parts of Blue Nile on 23 November, with no reports of civilian displacement received yet.²⁴⁸

In December 2014 Human Rights Watch found that “Sudanese government forces and allied militias are unlawfully killing and otherwise abusing civilians in government-held areas in Sudan's Blue Nile state. Dozens of civilians who fled the government held areas and sought refuge in South Sudan described killings, rapes, and beatings to Human Rights Watch”.²⁴⁹ The same report further noted that

Dozens of refugees in South Sudan told Human Rights Watch they had fled abusive treatment in several government-held towns or villages along the road connecting Damazin, the state capital, and the town of Kormuk on the Ethiopian border. The abuses – often during house-to-house searches for rebels – included rapes, beatings, and theft.

Most described the government-held areas they left as camp-like settings in which they were forced to live in close proximity to government military barracks. They said that soldiers or government-aligned militia used force to impose curfews and restrictions on movement and food purchases. The soldiers routinely accused them of links to the rebel SPLA-North, and carried out various abuses including stealing their crops or livestock. Some reported attempts by soldiers to recruit children

²⁴³African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies (ACJPS), [Sudan must stop attacks on civilians in Blue Nile state and guarantee safety of detainees](#), 23 September 2014

²⁴⁴Small Arms Survey, [Two Fronts, One War: Evolution of the Two Areas Conflict, 2014–15](#), HSBA Working Paper 38, August 2015, *V. Humanitarian impacts and human rights violations*

²⁴⁵Small Arms Survey, [Two Fronts, One War: Evolution of the Two Areas Conflict, 2014–15](#), HSBA Working Paper 38, August 2015, *V. Humanitarian impacts and human rights violations*

²⁴⁶Radio Dabanga, [‘Sudan bombs kill child in Blue Nile’: SPLA-N](#), 24 November 2014

²⁴⁷The Sudan Consortium, [Human Rights Update: November 2014](#), Undated [last accessed: 10 May 2016]

²⁴⁸UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, [Humanitarian Bulletin; Sudan; Issue 47; 17 - 23 November 2014](#), 23 November 2014, *Civilians killed and injured in SPLM-N areas in South Kordofan and Blue Nile*

²⁴⁹Human Rights Watch, [Sudan: Soldiers, Militias Killing, Raping Civilians](#), 14 December 2014

under 15 into the army, although none of those interviewed said the recruitment attempts had affected their immediate families.²⁵⁰

2015

According to the conflict incident data update compiled by the Austrian Centre for Country of Origin & Asylum Research and Documentation (ACCORD) Blue Nile had “64 incidents killing 436 people” in 2015 of which “the following locations were affected: Agadi, Bagis, Bau, Ed Damazin, El Barun, El Kurmuk, El Roseires, Gulli, Ingessana Hills, Kaiog, Kilgo, Kurmuk, Malkan, Maqanza, Sally, Shali Al Fil, Soda, Tumat, Tunphona, Ullu, Wadaka, Wedabok”.²⁵¹

A report by the Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust in January 2015, following their visit to Sudan, South Sudan and Uganda, suggested “An estimated 70-80,000 people are in areas of Blue Nile State controlled by the SPLA-N – this number fluctuates, as people move back and forth from refugee camps in South Sudan, seeking safety and food. While the Government claims to be carrying out a counter-insurgency operation against the SPLA-N, the reality is that attacks in this region are largely targeted at civilians [...]”²⁵²

Reporting on a specific attack in mid-January, Radio Dabanga reported that “A woman was killed, and three others wounded during bombardments by the Sudanese Air Force on various areas in Blue Nile state”.²⁵³

The Small Arms Survey noted that in May 2015 “12 bombs from an Antonov and 4 cluster bombs targeted the local weekly market and residential areas, killing 2 children”.²⁵⁴

The Sudan Democracy First Group published a commentary in the Sudan Tribune in May 2015 stating that

Al Gareeda reported on fires that consumed the villages of Maganza, Midyam and Bagis in the Bau locality. The newspaper’s local correspondent estimated the number of those left homeless by the fires at 6,872 [...]

While news of these events has been slow to trickle down to national and international audiences, local community activists and human rights monitors, Funj Youth Development Association (FYDA), have been reporting that the village burnings began in April [2015], signaling a new wave of scorched earth tactics in the government’s counterinsurgency campaign against the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement / Army-North (SPLM/A-N) in Blue Nile. The Blue Nile Human Rights and Peace Center documented these developments in a statement issued on 27 May (Arabic), which prompted the UN Resident Coordinator to issue a strong expression of concern for the populations affected by these forcible evictions and relocations [...]

Figures vary from the 6,872 reported by Al Gareeda for the three villages, to approximately 30,000 according to local community activists who cite other villages that have experienced the same scenario: Gambarda, Galfouk, Abugarin, Midyam Masalit, Salbel and Fadamiya.²⁵⁵

²⁵⁰Human Rights Watch, [Sudan: Soldiers, Militias Killing, Raping Civilians](#), 14 December 2014

²⁵¹Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation (ACCORD), [Sudan, Year 2015: Update on incidents according to the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data project \(ACLED\)](#), 4 February 2016

²⁵²Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust, [“There is no place to hide” – HART visit report Sudan and South Sudan](#), January 2015, *Blue Nile State, Sudan, SPLA-N Controlled Areas – Attacks on Civilians*

²⁵³Radio Dabanga, [Woman killed in bombardments on Sudan’s Blue Nile state](#), 14 January 2015

²⁵⁴Small Arms Survey, [Two Fronts, One War: Evolution of the Two Areas Conflict, 2014–15](#), HSBA Working Paper 38, August 2015, *V. Humanitarian impacts and human rights violations*

²⁵⁵Sudan Democracy First Group in the Sudan Tribune, [Blue Nile State: Under Fire](#), 28 May 2015

A joint 'Human Rights Update' report published by The Sudan Consortium and the National Human Rights Monitors Organization found that "In June 2015[...] In Blue Nile, one verified incident was reported".²⁵⁶

The International Crisis Group's CrisisWatch Database reported on 1st June 2015 that "Military offensive against SPLM-N in Blue Nile continued: UN resident coordinator Geert Cappelaere 27 May expressed concerns about significant civilian displacement including forced relocations, said humanitarian needs rapidly rising".²⁵⁷ Reporting on a specific incident on 14th June 2015, Radio Dabanga reported that "The Sudanese Air Force dropped a number of bombs on Wed Abuk, Blue Nile state [...] According to an armed rebel group, there were many casualties among the residents".²⁵⁸

January-April 2016

The South Kordofan Blue Nile Coordination Unit (SKBNCU) reported in January 2016 that "In Blue Nile, humanitarian monitors reported 18 incidents of bombing. As a result, 3,060 people were displaced in Kurmuk county, 4 people were injured, including 1 child, and 27 farms destroyed. In South Kordofan, government troops build up in Heiban, Talodi and El Abassiya led to a general deterioration of security levels for the population with an increasing number of attacks against civilians by government militias".²⁵⁹

On 31st March 2016 Nuba Reports stated that "In Blue Nile State, Khartoum has primarily resorted to Antonov attacks using crude shrapnel bombs with at least 86 reported incidents in March targeting Kurmuk County. With a rebel headquarters base in Kurmuk, SAF bombings are designed to empty the area of civilians, forcefully displacing them to government-controlled areas, Ngutulu [SPLM-N spokesman] and sources in Blue Nile said".²⁶⁰

4.2. Unexploded ordinance (UXO)

Covering the period October 2013 – July 2014, the September 2014 report by the UN Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in the Sudan noted that "The problem of unexploded ordnances and the need for demining in the conflict areas was emphasized by the United Nations representatives in the State, who reported civilian casualties from unexploded ordnances".²⁶¹

Covering the year 2015 the Sudan Consortium and National Human Rights Monitors Organisation's annual report continued to highlight the problem of unexploded ordnances: "it also important to highlight that there is also a significant amount of unexploded ordnance (UXO) which constitutes a real, and ongoing, threat for the whole population living in the two areas".²⁶²

²⁵⁶ The Sudan Consortium/ National Human Rights Monitors Organisation, [Human Rights Update: June 2015](#), Undated [last accessed: 10 May 2016]

²⁵⁷ International Crisis Group, [CrisisWatch Database: Sudan](#), 1 June 2015

²⁵⁸ Radio Dabanga, [Sudan Air Force bombs village rebels, nomads in Blue Nile](#), 14 June 2015

²⁵⁹ SKBUCU, [Humanitarian Update, January 2016, South Kordofan and Blue Nile states, Sudan](#), Undated [last accessed: 11 May 2016], *Overview*

²⁶⁰ Nuba Reports, [Sudan, rebel forces clash in fighting season's biggest battles yet](#), 31 March 2016

²⁶¹ UN Human Rights Council (formerly UN Commission on Human Rights), [Report of the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in the Sudan, Mashood A. Baderin \[A/HRC/27/69\]](#), 4 September 2014, II. *Methodology and Engagements, South Kordofan, paragraph 15*

²⁶² The Sudan Consortium/ National Human Rights Monitors Organisation, [Human Rights Violations in Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile: 2015 in Review](#), 20 April 2016

Human Rights Watch reported in May 2015 that it had documented “more than 100 civilian casualties in 2014 and 2015 from aerial bombardment or after the initial attack by unexploded ordnance and other explosive remnants of war, including 26 deaths of children and 29 cases in which children were injured, some seriously”.²⁶³

4.2.1. South Kordofan

The Government of Sudan and the UN Mine Action Office in Sudan published in January 2016 a ‘Landmine/ERW [Explosive Remnants of War] threat map’, which can be accessed [here](#).²⁶⁴

In July 2014 Radio Dabanga reported that “The Sudan People’s Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N) has warned for a catastrophe in South Kordofan, as the number of land mines and unexploded ordnance (UXO) in the region has increased significantly during the past months of bombing and shelling by the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF)”.²⁶⁵

The Sudan Consortium reported in September 2014 that in South Kordofan “An additional problem is that of unexploded ordnance (UXO) posing a danger to civilians. There were reportedly nine UXOs and two anti-personnel landmines found in Um Dorein County in September. Partners reported that there are no trained and equipped teams available in the area to facilitate the removal of the materiel, as a result of which it continues to pose a risk to the civilian community”.²⁶⁶

4.2.2. Blue Nile

No COI was found amongst the sources consulted within the time frame of this report specific to UXOs in Blue Nile State, however information included above in section [4.2. Unexploded ordnance \(UXO\)](#) refers to the Two Areas.

4.3. Forced displacement

This section details forced displacements in South Kordofan and Blue Nile as a result of aerial bombardment campaigns and ground attacks. For information on displacement figures and the humanitarian situation of those forcibly displaced consult section [9. Internally Displaced Persons \(IDPs\)](#).

The following are illustrative, non-exhaustive reports of forcible displacement caused by fighting between government and armed opposition forces. The section [2.2.3. Human rights abuses committed by armed opposition groups](#) contains further such reports which are directly attributable to SPLM/A-N actions.

4.3.1. South Kordofan

Human Rights Watch reported in its annual report covering 2014 that:

²⁶³Human Rights Watch, [Sudan: Bombing Campaign’s Heavy Toll on Children: Dying From Attacks, Hunger, Disease](#), 6 May 2015

²⁶⁴See Government of Sudan/UN Mine Action Office in Sudan, [Sudan: Landmine/ERW Threat Map - South Kordofan as of January 2016](#), 31 January 2016

²⁶⁵Radio Dabanga, [‘South Kordofan littered with unexploded ordnance’: SPLM-N](#), 7 July 2014

²⁶⁶The Sudan Consortium, [Human Rights Update: September 2014](#), Undated [last accessed: 10 May 2016]

In April 2014, the government intensified ground and aerial attacks in rebel-held areas of the Nuba Mountains, Southern Kordofan, deploying the Rapid Support Forces and other security forces to several areas. In May and June, government bombing damaged schools, mosques, churches, water sources and health centers, including a Médecins sans Frontières clinic. Dozens of civilians were killed or injured.

The attacks, which continued throughout the year, forced tens of thousands of people, some already displaced, to abandon their homes and fields. In government-controlled areas, government forces detained dozens of displaced civilians for their perceived political views.²⁶⁷

The UN Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in the Sudan reported in his August 2015 report covering the period 1 December 2014-30 June 2015 that:

The Independent Expert also received information on a surge in fighting on the ground between government forces and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N), in particular following the elections. The fighting caused the displacement of approximately 50,000 people in the States of Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile in May 2015.

Violations of human rights and international humanitarian law were also perpetrated by armed movements. On 12 March 2015, a [sic] attack by SPLM-N on Kalogi in Southern Kordofan reportedly resulted in 40 civilian deaths, 45 injuries and the displacement of 25,000 people. On 25 June, another attack by SPLM-N in Southern Kordofan is said to have led to the death of a dozen civilians and the wounding of approximately 100 others.²⁶⁸

In January 2015 UNHCR reported that "fresh fighting in Sudan's Nuba Mountains has led to an increase in the number of people fleeing to South Sudan in the past month. UNHCR field staff said that more than 3,000 Sudan citizens from South Kordofan and Blue Nile states have arrived since December 23 [2014] at the border town of Yida, a spontaneous settlement in South Sudan's Unity state already sheltering some 80,000 Sudanese refugees".²⁶⁹ They are mainly from "Um Dorrein, Heiban and Delami counties" and told UNHCR that "they had escaped conflict and widespread violence in the Nuba Mountains region, including air and ground attacks. Refugees have also cited the lack of livelihood opportunities and education in their areas of origin as reasons for leaving".²⁷⁰

Radio Tamazuj reported on 27 January 2015 that "More than 700 people were displaced [...] between 16 and 23 January due to fighting between the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) and allied militia and the SPLA-North rebels, according to a group that monitors violence in the area [South Kordofan Blue Nile Coordination Unit (SKBNCU)]".²⁷¹

Sudan Tribune reported on 5th February 2015 that UNHCR said that "over 500 Sudanese arrive every week into refugee camps in South Sudan since last December fleeing the armed conflict in South Kordofan state. The UNHCR said that clashes between the Sudanese army and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement -North (SPLM-N) forced more than 3,000 people to flee to Yida refugee camp in Unity State, South Sudan, from 23 December to 30 January".²⁷²

²⁶⁷ Human Rights Watch, [Word Report 2015: Sudan: Events of 2014](#), 29 January 2015, *Conflict and Abuses in Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile*

²⁶⁸ UN Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in the Sudan, [Report of the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in the Sudan, Aristide Nononsi](#), 24 August 2015, *E. Conflict-affected areas, 2. Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile, paragraphs 49-51*

²⁶⁹ UNHCR, [Fresh fighting over past month forces 3,000 to flee Sudan's Nuba Mountains](#), 30 January 2015

²⁷⁰ UNHCR, [Fresh fighting over past month forces 3,000 to flee Sudan's Nuba Mountains](#), 30 January 2015

²⁷¹ Radio Tamazuj, [Bombings displace hundreds of S Kordofan civilians](#), 27 January 2015

²⁷² Sudan Tribune, [Sudan: 500 refugees flee South Kordofan per week, UNHCR](#), 5 February 2015

4.3.2. Blue Nile

At the end of May 2015, SUDO (UK) reported that in Blue Nile “9,000 civilians have been forcibly displaced from the area surrounding Deireng, in Bao locality, to Alazaza, near Roseris town, following an attack by a government force consisting of military intelligence. During the attack water and medical facilities were destroyed, in addition to the market and civilian houses. Those displaced are from the Dawali and Ingessana ethnic groups and have been accused of associating with the SPLM-N. They are currently facing a lack of shelter, water, food and medical services, whilst the fate of 1,000 inhabitants of Deireng is unknown as they were said to have refused displacement”.²⁷³

Also reporting in May, SUDO (UK) reported further that in Blue Nile “Monitors have recently recorded the displacement of 1088 persons during the month of May from the villages of Magnza, Musfa, and Begis to Khor Berng in Roseris locality. The displacement was the result of the destruction of the villages of Mediem Al-Jabal, Magnza and Begis by the Sudanese Army and pro-government militias after accusing the population of having relations with SPLM-N”.²⁷⁴

A similar situation was reported in Khor Magnza, Blue Nile state, where, according to SUDO (UK) reporting, “On the 11th May 2015, SUDO (UK) reported on an attack perpetrated by the Sudanese Armed Forces on Khor Magnza, which forced the displacement of 17,000 civilians who were then left stranded without food, water and shelter. This incident was the result of a form of collective punishment following the failure of the Sudanese Armed Forces to capture the mountainous area of Gilo from SPLM-N. The following photos were taken by one of our monitors in Khor Magnza in Bao locality, Blue Nile. They clearly showcase the destruction of civilian infrastructure and lay further evidence to arguments stating that Government forces are forcibly displacing civilians from their homes as a form of counter-insurgency”.²⁷⁵

The South Kordofan and Blue Nile Coordination Unit (SKBNCU) reported in June 2015 that “In the Blue Nile Ingessana Mountains, the forced relocation of civilians by government forces as a result of ground attacks between SAF and SPLA-N continue, with at least 24,500 people affected according to OCHA, or more people according to local sources. Numbers cannot be verified as the government has not allowed assessments and continues to prohibit humanitarian access to those areas”.²⁷⁶

In June 2015, SUDO (UK) reported on further forced displacement in Blue Nile: “4,000 civilians have been forcibly displaced from their homes in the villages of Bant, Khor al-Dom, Khor Adar and Dereing, in Bao locality, by a combined force from the Government’s Military Intelligence and the NISS. Once again this is a clear indication of the Government using displacement and collective punishment as a means of counter-insurgency. The civilians have been accused of providing intelligence and supplies to the SPLM-N. The residents of Bant have been displaced to various neighbourhoods in Damazin, where many are staying with relatives, whilst some have been forced to go to Al-Roseris. The villagers from Khor al-Dom and Deireng, many of whom are from the Ingessana ethnic group, were displaced south of Damazin, in the area of al-Shaheed Afandi. Civilians from Khor Adar, many of whom are from the Funj ethnic group, have been displaced to the area of Salha, north of Damazin. Many of the 4,000 displaced do not have secure access to food, water, shelter or medical care”.²⁷⁷ The same report further mentioned additional forced displacement: “The Sudanese Army and the Popular Defence Forces forcibly displaced civilians in Sheteiyo, Kelto,

²⁷³SUDO (UK), [Human rights abuses in Sudan over the month of May 2015](#), 31 May 2015, *Blue Nile state*

²⁷⁴SUDO (UK), [Human rights abuses in Sudan over the month of October 2015](#), 1 November 2015, *Blue Nile*

²⁷⁵SUDO (UK), [Human rights abuses in Sudan over the month of June 2015](#), 1 July 2015, *An update on violations recorded in May*

²⁷⁶SKBUCU, [Humanitarian Update, June 2015, South Kordofan and Blue Nile states, Sudan](#), Undated [last accessed: 11 May 2016], *Overview*

²⁷⁷SUDO (UK), [Human rights abuses in Sudan over the month of June 2015](#), 1 July 2015, *Blue Nile*

Kernkern, Dokan Ragrek, Daglok, and Abego, in Kurmuk locality. The displaced have moved to al-Radeef area, north of Damazin, and face harsh conditions due to the rainy season; they lack food, water and shelter. The majority of those displaced are elderly, children and women from either the Funj or Ragek ethnic groups. They are perceived by the Government to be providing support to the SPLM-N. Some concerned civilians told our monitors that they were displaced in order to pave the way for the Government to use chemical weapons in the area”.²⁷⁸

Also in June 2015 the African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies (ACJPS) reported that “Since April 2015, three villages in Blue Nile, primarily comprised of members of the Ingessana ethnic group, have been burned to the ground by the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) in an apparent attempt to forcibly displace communities perceived to support the rebel Sudanese Peoples’ Liberation Movement (SPLM-N). The armed forces have also ordered residents of four villages to relocate from their homes, threatening that those who stay behind will be presumed to be members of the SPLM-N. The attacks have displaced thousands of civilians and destroyed agriculture”.²⁷⁹

In July 2015, SUDO (UK) reported that “National Intelligence and Security Services (NISS) situated in Belgowa, Kurmuk locality [Blue Nile], have forced civilians working in the traditional mining of gold to leave the mines in Jebel Ansar, Sharia Al-Mout, Al-Tartra, Banjadeed, and Belgowa. This decision has affected an estimated 10,000 civilians who have flocked to the region from all parts of Sudan. This follows previous forced displacements of the Ingessana and Dowala ethnic groups who were forced to leave their land and were consequently removed of their wealth as a result of the war in Blue Nile State [...] Sudanese Military Intelligence forcibly displaced 5,000 civilians from Belang, Kurmuk locality, to Shin Tashrab, Demazin, where there is no shelter, water, or health services available to the affected people. In Belang, Military Intelligence has destroyed hand pumps, agricultural crops and livestock, in addition to closing schools and health facilities to ward off against resettlement in the near future. The displaced are from the Ragrek, Dowala and Ingessana ethnic groups and have been accused by the Sudanese Army of providing supplies and intelligence to the SPLM-N”.²⁸⁰

Human Rights Watch noted in September 2015 that:

In Blue Nile, Government forces, again including the RSF, arbitrarily detained residents, raped women and girls, and restricted residents’ movements, farming, and access to food. Entire communities have been displaced by Government forces in what appears to be collective punishment for their perceived support to the rebel movements based on ethnic identity. The African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies (ACJPS) documented that between April and May 2015 the SAF burned three villages, comprised mainly of people from the Ingessana ethnic group, to the ground and ordered the residents of at least four others to evacuate their homes. Residents told ACJPS they were threatened with arrest for presumed membership in the opposition party if they stayed behind. A campaign of incommunicado and arbitrary detentions followed the displacements. The Sudan Democracy First Group (SDFG) documented the burning by SAF of two additional Blue Nile villages in May.²⁸¹

The South Kordofan Blue Nile Coordination Unit report of September 2015 reported that:

Sudanese citizens living in the Government held areas in Blue Nile are victims of continue abuses by government forces and militias. The people who safely reached the refugee camps in South Sudan and SPLM/A-N held areas in Blue Nile, have reported appalling human rights abuses and dire humanitarian

²⁷⁸SUDO (UK), [Human rights abuses in Sudan over the month of June 2015](#), 1 July 2015, *Blue Nile*

²⁷⁹African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies (ACJPS), [Sudan forcibly displaces and sets villages on fire in Blue Nile; civilians presumed to be affiliated with rebels detained incommunicado](#), 17 June 2015

²⁸⁰SUDO (UK), [Human rights abuses in Sudan over the month of July 2015](#), 1 August 2015, *Blue Nile*

²⁸¹Human Rights Watch, [Joint NGO Letter: Human Rights Situation in Sudan](#), 3 September 2015, Annex: *Situation of human rights in Sudan since September 2014, Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile*

conditions within the Government held areas in Baw, northern Kurmuk and southern Geissan counties. People have limited freedom to cultivate, schools are closed and clinics are not available. Burning of villages intensified in 2015, forcing people to flee their areas for safety. According to those interviewed, villages were burned to force people out of their home areas and to reduce support for the SPLM/A-N. People lost all their belongings and livestock, while an unverified number of women were raped.²⁸²

Human Rights Watch reported in its annual report covering 2015 that “In May 2015, government attacks on villages in Blue Nile caused large scale displacement of people from the Bau locality. Sudanese groups reported that at least three villages were burned by government forces, and people were forced to move to government strongholds. Residents were threatened with arrest or were detained if they did not leave”.²⁸³

4.4. Denial of humanitarian access

At the end of August 2014 USAID reported that “IDPs and other conflict-affected populations continue to face difficult living conditions in Sudan People’s Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N)-controlled areas of Blue Nile and Southern Kordofan, where humanitarian agencies have had limited or no access since fighting began in May 2011, relief actors report. Many vulnerable populations lack access to health care, essential medicines, and safe drinking water, resulting in the spread of infectious diseases and respiratory illnesses”.²⁸⁴

In August 2015 a report by the Small Arms Survey noted that “The GoS [Government of Sudan] has not allowed any humanitarian assistance in the Two Areas since the beginning of the conflict, which has contributed to a massive flow of refugees, particularly from Blue Nile, into South Sudan. A 9 February 2012 tripartite proposal by the UN, the AU, and the League of Arab States for the delivery of humanitarian aid to the Two Areas, which was endorsed by UN Security Council Resolution 2046 (UNSC, 2012), failed to be implemented due to government obstruction. Few INGOs are prepared to risk working in the SPLM/A-N territories. Those that have stayed have been increasingly subject to air attacks, leading to a substantial scaling down of their operations”.²⁸⁵

The 2015 UNITED STATES Department of State report noted the following with regards to the provision of humanitarian aid during 2015:

The government also continued to deny access to humanitarian organizations and UN agencies in all SPLM-N-controlled areas of Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile, isolating an estimated 800,000 IDPs and severely limiting access to lifesaving humanitarian assistance. The SPLM-N failed to respond to calls to negotiate access for the UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and the World Health Organization (WHO) to conduct vaccination campaigns in the Two Areas as a standalone issue but insisted on including the campaign in broader political negotiations for increased humanitarian access [...]

The government continued to obstruct the work of humanitarian organizations, increasing the displacement of civilians and abuse of IDPs. Violence, insecurity, and the denial of visas and refusal of access to international organizations reduced the ability of humanitarian organizations to provide

²⁸²South Kordofan Blue Nile Coordination Unit, [Abuses against civilians continue in Government held areas in Blue Nile](#), 15 September 2015

²⁸³Human Rights Watch, [World Report 2016: Sudan: Events of 2015](#), 6 January 2016, *Conflict and Abuses in Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile*

²⁸⁴USAID, [Sudan – Complex Emergency](#), 30 September 2014, *The Two Areas and Abyei, Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile*

²⁸⁵Small Arms Survey, [Two Fronts, One War: Evolution of the Two Areas Conflict, 2014–15](#), HSBA Working Paper 38, August 2015, *V. Humanitarian impacts and human rights, violations, The international community’s dilemma*

needed services. Government forces frequently harassed local NGOs that received international assistance, despite a joint communique between the government and the United Nations that allowed for the NGOs' operation. The government restricted or denied permission for humanitarian assessments, refused to approve technical agreements, changed procedures, copied NGO files, confiscated NGO property, questioned humanitarian workers at length and monitored their personal correspondence, delayed issuance of visas and travel permits, restricted travel, and publicly accused humanitarian workers of aiding rebel groups.²⁸⁶

Similarly, Human Rights Watch reported in its annual report covering 2015 that:

The government has barred humanitarian agencies from working in rebel-held areas of Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile, and has failed to agree with SPLM-N on terms for humanitarian access, including for a UN emergency polio vaccination campaign.²⁸⁷

The same source reported specifically in September 2015 that "Sudan has blocked aid from entering the rebel-held areas in both states. The denial of aid has led to malnutrition and the lack of basic health and education services".²⁸⁸

In January 2016, the Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust (HART) following its visit to South Kordofan in the same month found that "The Government of Sudan (GoS) continues to deny humanitarian assistance to the Two Areas (South Kordofan and Blue Nile). In the areas that we visited, this is likely to be particularly serious this year as the effects of El Niño resulted in a short and delayed rainy season in 2015 which had disastrous effects on the planting season and subsequent harvest".²⁸⁹

4.4.1. South Kordofan

Voice of America reported in December 2014 that "The rebel-held areas of Sudan's Nuba Mountains have been under blockade since the start of a civil war in 2011 — with the Sudanese government denying all access for food, supplies and humanitarian aid".²⁹⁰

The UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) reported in December 2014 that "NGOs are reporting that over one million people are trapped in South Kordofan without access to humanitarian aid".²⁹¹

In July 2015, SUDO (UK) reported that "the humanitarian situation in South Kordofan continues to be dire, and is only exacerbated by the lack of humanitarian access to a significant portion of the civilian population. Negotiations over such access have broken down numerous times between both the Government of Sudan and the SPLM-N. Indeed, territory held by the SPLM-N has not officially received any access since the conflict began in 2011. Whilst in the Government held areas humanitarian relief is provided only by the Sudanese Red Crescent".²⁹²

²⁸⁶United States Department of State, [Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2015: Sudan](#), 13 April 2016, 1.g. *Use of Excessive Force and Other Abuses in Internal Conflicts*

²⁸⁷Human Rights Watch, [World Report 2016: Sudan: Events of 2015](#), 6 January 2016, *Conflict and Abuses in Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile*

²⁸⁸Human Rights Watch, [UN Human Rights Council: Interactive Dialogue with the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in Sudan](#), 30 September 2015

²⁸⁹HART, ["They are killing us loudly but no-one is listening": Sudan and South Sudan](#), January 2016, *Executive Summary, Sudan*

²⁹⁰Voice of America, [Only Hospital in Sudan's S. Kordofan Struggles to Treat Patients](#), 23 December 2014

²⁹¹UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office, [Sudan - Country of Concern, latest update 31 December 2014](#), 21 January 2015

²⁹²SUDO (UK), [Human rights abuses in Sudan over the month of July 2015](#), 1 August 2015, *South Kordofan*

4.4.2. Blue Nile

A report by the Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust in January 2015, following their visit to Sudan, South Sudan and Uganda, stated that in Blue Nile “The Government of Sudan does not allow humanitarian or human rights organisations, including the UN, access to the area. Access to humanitarian assistance is therefore extremely limited. A very small number of NGOs are working in SPLM-N held areas, almost all run by local people, with some support from international donors including HART”.²⁹³

4.5. Access to health care

For monthly updates on the humanitarian situation in South Kordofan and Blue Nile including a distinct section on ‘health’ view the South Kordofan Blue Nile Coordination Unit (SKBLCU) reports [here](#).²⁹⁴

For information on access to health care specific to the IDP populations in the Two Areas, see section [9.3. South Kordofan, 9.3.1.3. Health care](#) and [9.4. Blue Nile, 9.4.1.3. Health care](#).

In October 2014 the South Kordofan and Blue Nile Coordination Unit (SKBNCU) noted that “the lack of access to health care and basic medicines and standard immunisations combined with malnutrition, poor shelter, and a lack of soap and clean water remain the most critical primary health care challenges in SPLM-N areas of South Kordofan and Blue Nile. No vaccinations against measles, polio and other preventable childhood diseases have been undertaken in SPLM-N areas since June 2011 [...] On 6 November 2014, the United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Sudan a.i., Mr. Geert Cappelaere, has expressed deep concern that children in conflict-affected areas of South Kordofan and Blue Nile may again be at high risk of contracting polio”.²⁹⁵

Human Rights Watch reported in its annual report covering 2015 that:

The government has barred humanitarian agencies from working in rebel-held areas of Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile, and has failed to agree with SPLM-N on terms for humanitarian access, including for a UN emergency polio vaccination campaign. As a result, the majority of children born in rebel-held areas have not been vaccinated against preventable diseases. Health workers received almost 2,000 suspected measles cases during an outbreak in Southern Kordofan between April and December 2014.²⁹⁶

Similarly, the 2015 UNITED STATES Department of State report noted the following with regards to the provision of health care during 2015:

²⁹³ Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust, [“There is no place to hide” – HART visit report Sudan and South Sudan](#), January 2015, *Blue Nile State, Sudan, Humanitarian Situation*

²⁹⁴ See Sudan Consortium, [Sudan Crisis, South Kordofan Blue Nile Coordination Unit \(SKBLCU\) Updates](#)

²⁹⁵ UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, [Humanitarian Bulletin; Sudan; Issue 45; 3 - 9 November 2014](#), 9 November 2014, *New update on SPLM-N areas in South Kordofan and Blue Nile* and *Concerns over polio risk in SPLM-N areas*

²⁹⁶ Human Rights Watch, [World Report 2016: Sudan: Events of 2015](#), 6 January 2016, *Conflict and Abuses in Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile*

The SPLM-N failed to work with OCHA and WHO officials to implement a vaccination campaign from October through year's end. There continued to be reports humanitarian aid workers and centers, including hospitals, were targeted in the Two Areas. [...].²⁹⁷

4.5.1. South Kordofan

Voice of America reported in December 2014 that at the only hospital in the Nuba Mountains region “deaths due to preventable illnesses are on the increase. Mother of Mercy Hospital is the only medical facility in all of South Kordofan province. The 80-bed hospital runs at triple its capacity [...] The staff is currently dealing with a large-scale measles outbreak — with more than 1,000 admissions for measles alone just last month, and a 25-per-thousand measles-related fatality rate [...] For three years, Sudan's government has refused to let humanitarian aid into rebel-controlled areas. As a result, vaccine supplies were cut off, leaving the whole community here unvaccinated and thousands of children at risk of dying from otherwise preventable diseases”.²⁹⁸

In March 2015 the Sudan Consortium reported that in South Kordofan “Lack of drugs, frequent movements and unreliable presence of qualified personnel, poor communication and very limited access to health facilities because of insecurity remain the greatest challenges facing the civilians. Areas particularly affected include the counties of Western Kadugli, Al Buram, Um Dorein, Dalami, Alabasiya and Rashad. Lack of access to health services remains critical in the western Jebels, especially in the Lagawa area, where most people are using local remedies that are not always safe”.²⁹⁹

In October 2015, the South Kordofan and Blue Nile Coordination Unit (SKBNCU) reported that “Prohibited access to replenish health supplies and provide vaccination has resulted in a country-wide increase in measles cases. According to the UN Children's Agency (UNICEF), the number of confirmed measles cases in Sudan this year is almost five times the annual average. At least 37 people have died from a reported measles infection in South Kordofan in October alone [...] Cases of scabies were reported from Rashad county and other areas in the Eastern Jebel. Medicines and vaccine are urgently needed to contain a possible epidemic”.³⁰⁰

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) clarified in October 2015 that it “does not have access to South Kordofan State in Sudan and has no activities or presence in that area”.³⁰¹

Amnesty International reported in its annual report covering 2015 that:

Since 2011, the air force has bombed 26 health facilities (hospitals, clinics and health units). By 2015 there were only two hospitals operating to serve a population of 1.2 million people.

A Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) hospital was bombed in January: a Sudan Air Force fighter jet dropped 13 bombs, of which two landed inside the hospital compound and the others just outside the hospital fence.³⁰²

²⁹⁷ United States Department of State, [Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2015: Sudan](#), 13 April 2016, 1.g. *Use of Excessive Force and Other Abuses in Internal Conflicts*

²⁹⁸ Voice of America, [Only Hospital in Sudan's S. Kordofan Struggles to Treat Patients](#), 23 December 2014

²⁹⁹ Sudan Consortium, [Humanitarian Update – March 2015](#), Undated [last accessed: 10 May 2016], *South Kordofan, C. Health*

³⁰⁰ SKBUCU, [Humanitarian Update, October 2015, South Kordofan and Blue Nile states, Sudan](#), Undated [last accessed: 11 May 2016], *Overview*

³⁰¹ ICRC, [Sudan: Clarification from the ICRC regarding news article in Al Intibaha on 26 October 2015](#), 26 October 2015

³⁰² Amnesty International, [Amnesty International Report 2015/2016 – The State of the world's human rights](#), 24 February 2016, *Sudan: Armed conflict, South Kordofan and Blue Nile*

The South Kordofan and Blue Nile Coordination Unit (SKBNCU) reported in January 2016 that in South Kordofan “In the Western Jebels, humanitarian monitors report people are crossing to government areas seeking medication, due to the lack of drugs and functioning medical centres in SPLA/M-N held areas”.³⁰³

4.5.2. Blue Nile

The August 2014 ‘Humanitarian Bulletin’ published by UN OCHA reported that “In Blue Nile, many areas still have no access to health care. Only 12 of the 21 medical clinics in SPLM-N controlled areas in Blue Nile were functioning in July, and these were only partially functional as volunteer staff have sporadic access to limited medicines and equipment”.³⁰⁴

The Brussels-based operational centre of Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) announced in January 2015 that “it can no longer reach communities in the greatest need, and therefore has been forced to close its activities” throughout Sudan.³⁰⁵ Until then, MSF focused its activities in Blue Nile, East Darfur and South Darfur States, but reported that “total denial of access to Blue Nile State” amongst other reasons made it “impossible for MSF to respond to medical emergencies in these areas”.³⁰⁶

In March 2015 the Sudan Consortium reported that in Blue Nile “The health system in Blue Nile has been severely affected by the war, with few clinics available, a limited supply of drugs, shortage of medical equipments [sic], and insufficiently trained or unqualified health personnel. Children in the area have not been vaccinated since the war started in late 2011. Most of the people interviewed are still relying on traditional medicine, including special roots and leaves of trees especially in south Yabus and Wadaka payams. The major diseases reported by the communities and nurses interviewed are: malaria, diarrhea (watery and bloody), skin infection, violence and non-violence wounds, eye infection, malnutrition (SAM & MAM), typhoid, TB, leprosy, fever, headache, and cough”.³⁰⁷

In November 2015, SUDO (UK) reported on the denial of entry of a medical convoy in Blue Nile: “The Blue Nile Security Committee headed by Alaadin Fouad, the head of the National Intelligence and Security Services in Blue Nile, and Hussein Yasin, the State Governor, refused the entrance of a medical convoy into Demazin city without providing an explanation”.³⁰⁸

Nuba Reports noted in January 2016 that Kurmuk locality in Blue Nile, which “has been a stronghold for the rebels and is their de-facto capital in the state with Yabus referred to as ‘the liberated Yabus’ by those living in rebel-controlled areas”, has been “on lockdown for years as the conflict continues, severely limiting access to crucial medical supplies. Only half of the small population of 18,775 has access to basic healthcare services at the hospital, according to the area’s health secretary, Abdel-Rahim. International humanitarian organizations such as GOAL pulled out in 2011 due to insecurity, GOAL’s communications officer David Williams, leaving scant organizations operating in the area.

³⁰³ SKBUCU, [Humanitarian Update, January 2016, South Kordofan and Blue Nile states, Sudan](#), Undated [last accessed: 11 May 2016], *South Kordofan, C. Health*

³⁰⁴ UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, [Humanitarian Bulletin, Sudan, Issue 32, 4-10 August 2014](#), 10 August 2014, *Lack of medical supplies and limited health services*

³⁰⁵ Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), [Sudan: Brussels-based operational centre of MSF stops emergency medical aid following government’s systematic denial of access](#), 29 January 2015

³⁰⁶ Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), [Sudan: Brussels-based operational centre of MSF stops emergency medical aid following government’s systematic denial of access](#), 29 January 2015

³⁰⁷ Sudan Consortium, [Humanitarian Update – March 2015](#), Undated [last accessed: 10 May 2016], *Blue Nile, C. Health*

³⁰⁸ SUDO (UK), [Human rights abuses in Sudan over the month of November 2015](#), 21 December 2015, *Blue Nile*

Doctors Without Borders (MSF) stated in early 2015 that it will stop applying for a work permit in Blue Nile State since the government has routinely failed to reply to such requests. While committed, a sense of helplessness hangs over the hospital staff due to their limited training and access to medical supplies, Yabus Director Fatih Zarouq said”.³⁰⁹

The same report noted that “162,000 children under 5 years in SPLM-N areas in Blue Nile and Southern Kordofan [...] have not received any form of vaccination since 2011” despite a plan to vaccinate being developed in 2013, but “has yet to be implemented due to lack of agreement between both sides on access to humanitarian aid”.³¹⁰

4.6. Food insecurity

For monthly updates on the humanitarian situation in South Kordofan and Blue Nile including a distinct section on ‘food insecurity’ view the South Kordofan Blue Nile Coordination Unit (SKBLCU) reports [here](#).³¹¹

For information on food security specific to the IDP populations in the Two Areas, see section [9. Internally displaced persons \(IDPs\)](#), [9.3. South Kordofan](#), [9.3.1.2. Food](#) and [9.4. Blue Nile](#), [9.4.1.2. Food](#).

In August 2014, IRIN stated that: “an estimated 5.3 million people in Sudan face Stressed (IPC Phase 2), Crisis (IPC Phase 3) or Emergency (IPC Phase 4) acute food insecurity... Conflicts in Darfur, South Kordofan, Blue Nile, and West Kordofan, have disrupted livelihoods and reduced household food access, especially for IDPs, while the persistent rise of staple food prices has reduced household capacity to meet minimum food requirements during the peak of the lean season when households are most market dependent”.³¹²

Early November 2014 UN OCHA’s ‘Humanitarian Bulletin’ reported that “acute food insecurity is likely to persist in conflict-affected areas of South Kordofan, Blue Nile and Darfur states where conflict continues to disrupt agricultural activities, access to income earning opportunities and access to markets”.³¹³

The UNOCHA Humanitarian Bulletin for end of April 2015 reported that “In conflict-affected areas of South Kordofan, Blue Nile and Darfur states, acute food insecurity is likely to persist despite the above-average harvest due to limited income generating opportunities, restricted humanitarian access, disruptions in access to cultivation and markets, and lack of basic health services”.³¹⁴

The South Kordofan and Blue Nile Coordination Unit (SKBNCU) reported in September 2015 that “Pockets of population in the Two Areas are facing severe levels of food insecurity, mainly due to late and poor rainfall, which compounds difficulties to produce and access food in the war torn areas [...] An estimated 90,000 people are now considered 2 - red at risk of a localised famine, and more deaths are expected if immediate assistance is not provided to these populations. In Blue Nile, the

³⁰⁹Nuba Reports, [Yabus Hospital: Crucial but struggling](#), 13 January 2016

³¹⁰Nuba Reports, [Yabus Hospital: Crucial but struggling](#), 13 January 2016

³¹¹ See Sudan Consortium, [Sudan Crisis, South Kordofan Blue Nile Coordination Unit \(SKBLCU\) Updates](#)

³¹² IRIN, [Food Security Alarm for East, Central Africa](#), 13 August 2014.

³¹³ UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, [Humanitarian Bulletin; Sudan; Issue 44; 27 October – 2 November 2014](#), 2 November 2014, *Good harvest improves food security in Sudan*

³¹⁴ UN OCHA, [Humanitarian Bulletin: Sudan, Issue 18, 27 April – 3 May 2015](#), 3 May 2015

number of people facing severe levels of food insecurity is more than half of the entire population living under SPLM/A-N control”.³¹⁵

In December 2015, the South Kordofan and Blue Nile Coordination Unit (SKBNCU) reported that “food security has marginally improved [in Blue Nile] with the beginning of the harvest of far farms. However an independent report published in December 2015 notes more than 50% of the population has no food in the house, ‘going to sleep hungry’ or at worse - going a whole day and night without eating on average 3 days a week. These rates increase to more than 80% in Blue Nile. 3 Crude estimates based on dietary diversity indicate that diet quality is extremely poor, on a scale of 1-12, where 9-12 is considered acceptable. Populations living in South Kordofan score a 2.0-2.5 while in Blue Nile only 1.7.4 HHs [households] are reduced to eating cereals and some vegetable, fruit, meat or milk once or twice a week. Implications on malnutrition, chronic or acute, are self-evident, even in the absence of formal surveys”.³¹⁶

The South Kordofan and Blue Nile Coordination Unit (SKBNCU) reported in January 2016 that “Amidst a deterioration of security levels, some people in the Two Areas are having a small respite in their food security situation due to the seasonal harvest of far farms in January. However the food stocks are expected to last only 2 more months in Blue Nile and 4 in South Kordofan due to a below average harvest [...] As of early February Fewsnet raised the Integrated Phase Classification to Emergency 4 for South Kordofan and Blue Nile. Phase 4 indicates at least 1 in 5 households face extreme food consumption gaps resulting in very high acute malnutrition or excess mortality, or faces extreme loss of livelihood assets that will likely lead to food consumption gaps. Phase 5 is famine”.³¹⁷

4.6.1. South Kordofan

A needs assessment by an international organisation³¹⁸ in August 2014 in South Kordofan, whose findings were published in November 2014 by the Enough Project, found that:

Food security is poor with 80% of non-displaced households and 77% of displaced households showing unacceptable (either poor or borderline) food consumption scores. Seventy percent of displaced households and 64% of non-displaced households are experiencing moderate to severe hunger. To survive the lean season, families have employed various coping strategies; 65% of households are restricting food consumption of adults to feed children; 81% of households are reducing the number of meals consumed each week; and, 73% of families have been limiting their portion size at meals. Food stocks are a problem with 90% of households not having enough food stocks to last one month and 49% not having enough even for one week. Future food shortages are a concern, as cultivated land has declined. This year, households estimated that they cultivated an average of 1.57 feddans compared to 1.75 feddans a year ago, marking a 10% decrease. Prior to the war, households stated they were cultivating an average of 7.75 feddans.³¹⁹

Early November 2014 UN OCHA’s ‘Humanitarian Bulletin’ reported that “In Darfur and South Kordofan states however, insecurity and displacement have limited improvements in food security

³¹⁵SKBUCU, [Humanitarian Update, September 2015, South Kordofan and Blue Nile states, Sudan](#), Undated [last accessed: 11 May 2016], *Overview*

³¹⁶SKBUCU, [Humanitarian Update, December 2015, South Kordofan and Blue Nile states, Sudan](#), Undated [last accessed: 11 May 2016], *Overview*

³¹⁷SKBUCU, [Humanitarian Update, January 2016, South Kordofan and Blue Nile states, Sudan](#), Undated [last accessed: 11 May 2016], *Overview*

³¹⁸For security reasons they want to remain anonymous. See Enough Project, [Life under Siege: South Kordofan Needs Assessment](#), November 2014, *Editor’s note*

³¹⁹Enough Project, [Life under Siege: South Kordofan Needs Assessment](#), November 2014, 2. *Executive Summary*

and acute food insecurity persists [...] acute food insecurity is likely to persist in conflict-affected areas of South Kordofan, Blue Nile and Darfur states where conflict continues to disrupt agricultural activities, access to income earning opportunities and access to markets”.³²⁰

In March 2015 the Sudan Consortium reported that “A household food security survey (the last one using the same survey format since 2012) was conducted in December 2014 by a third-party organization” and found that “Sixty-five percent of households in the central localities of South Kordofan were considered moderately to severely food insecure in December 2014, a rate that is five percent higher than in December 2013. Food insecurity levels in Buram A (90 percent of households) and Buram B (98 percent) remained particularly high”.³²¹

The South Kordofan and Blue Nile Coordination Unit (SKBNCU) reported in June 2015 that “As reported by the Food Security Monitoring Unit (FSMU), an independent monitoring body, the effect of the shelling will lead to reduced farming activities hence lower food production in the coming months. The FSMU quarterly report confirms over 75% of households in South Kordofan experienced severe food insecurity between January and March 2015 and 82.7% experienced some form of insecurity. They note the significant deterioration since December 2014, and the inevitably decline as the hunger season approaches (June-September). Food insecurity is highest in Thobo and Heiban counties (85% of the population affected)”.³²²

A joint ‘Human Rights Update’ report published by The Sudan Consortium and the National Human Rights Monitors Organization covering July - August 2015 found that “In humanitarian terms, the needs remain acute and in some cases are worsening in terms of food security. Our monitors reported the critical situation in some counties in SK (Heiban, Dilling counties) where the lack of rain is disrupting cultivation and increasing the risk of food insecurity. According to the Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWSNET) many household in SK are in crisis (IPC phase 3)”.³²³

A joint ‘Human Rights Update’ report published by the same sources covering September – October 2015 found that in South Kordofan “the needs of the people of SK remain acute and in some cases are worsening in terms of food security. Our monitors reported, once again, the critical food security situation in Heiban and Dilling counties which is not expected to improve from September to December as the ongoing targeting of civilians has considerably reduced the amount of land cultivated, insufficient rain has reduced yields in areas that were cultivated and livestock continue to be killed. As in July and August, most of bombs and shells reported in September and October fell in civilian areas particularly used for cultivation”.³²⁴

In February 2016 the South Kordofan Blue Nile Coordination Unit (SKBNCU) reported in relation to South Kordofan that:

Food security in South Kordofan has seen a further decline during February, particularly in Habila and As-Sunut counties, where humanitarian monitors have already reported depleted food stocks and "households totally dependent on acts of kindness and kinship for food". Harvest in these areas was

³²⁰ UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, [Humanitarian Bulletin; Sudan; Issue 44; 27 October – 2 November 2014](#), 2 November 2014, *Good harvest improves food security in Sudan*

³²¹ Sudan Consortium, [Humanitarian Update – March 2015](#), Undated [last accessed: 10 May 2016], *South Kordofan, B. Food security*

³²² SKBUCU, [Humanitarian Update, June 2015, South Kordofan and Blue Nile states, Sudan](#), Undated [last accessed: 11 May 2016], *Overview*

³²³ The Sudan Consortium/ National Human Rights Monitors Organisation, [Human Rights Update: July-August 2015](#), Undated [last accessed: 10 May 2016]

³²⁴ The Sudan Consortium/ National Human Rights Monitors Organization, [Human Rights Update: September-October 2015](#), Undated [last accessed: 10 May 2016]

well below average due to low levels of rainfall during the last rainy season, as well as insecurity, which prevented people from harvesting the larger far farms, and instead planted in hilly areas where soil is poor. Independent food security monitoring also noted that continuous bombing by SAF in January destroyed crops, and payams such as As-Sunut are experiencing critical food insecurity [...] As the food security situation worsens, there have been reports of increased movements of people from Dallami, Western Kadugli and Thobo, to Yida refugee camp, due to lack of food. The number is still unknown.

In the Kao, Warni and Nyaro area, there are 65,000 people in urgent need of assistance. FSMU reported that as many as sixty four percent (64%) of households in the area are severely food insecure and a further thirty six percent (36%) are moderately food insecure (total 97%). All households reported having no remaining food stock from the current harvest, and are consuming wild foods as their main source of food.³²⁵

4.6.2. Blue Nile

The UN World Food Programme (WFP) found in its December 2014 food security monitoring of Blue Nile that “Acute food insecurity increased from March 2014 to December 2014 in three of the surveyed localities: Kurmuk, Geissan and Rosseris. The proportion of food secure households was 38, 48, and 53 percent, respectively, up from 63, 88, and 80 percent, respectively in March 2014. The three localities were also the areas where the level of food security was the lowest. IDP and returnee households were less likely to be food security compared to residents. There was no significant difference in food security between households receiving food assistance and other households”.³²⁶

UN OCHA’s ‘Humanitarian Bulletin’ of early January 2015 reported that “According to the Humanitarian Needs Overview of the Strategic Response Plan 2015 for Sudan, there are an estimated 154,000 people in need of humanitarian assistance in accessible areas of Blue Nile. This includes about 83,000 internally displaced people (‘s), with the rest being returnees, food insecure people and refugees from South Sudan”.³²⁷

A report by the Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust (HART) in January 2015, following their visit to Sudan, South Sudan and Uganda, suggested that “The population remaining in Blue Nile State is isolated and dire need of humanitarian assistance, particularly food, healthcare and education. The GoS is using starvation as a weapon of war, orchestrating a humanitarian catastrophe by targeting crops and livestock, and banning humanitarian assistance. An estimated 940,000 people are now in need of aid in the two areas”.³²⁸

In March 2015 the Sudan Consortium reported that “Quantitative reports could not be collected in Blue Nile in March 2015 as the monitoring report system is being improved. As a result of qualitative information collected by local monitors in Kurmuk county, it appears that food remains the first priority for the population and the hungry season will begin in 2015 as of late April, compared to August/September in a normal year. The limited food stocks available, due to a poor harvesting season as a result of insecurity, heavy rains, floods and insects, are quickly being depleted. The population of the Koma Ganza, living in the southern area of Yabus, live on roots and leaves of trees. In the northern part Wadaka payam (Wadaka Aljebel, Mayak, Mofu, Goz Abu rassin, Goz Aljamamat, Marmaton, Tunfona, Tunja, and Goz Bagar), people were not able to cultivate due to insecurity, and

³²⁵SKBUCU, [Humanitarian Update, February 2016, South Kordofan and Blue Nile states, Sudan](#), Undated [last accessed: 11 May 2016], *South Kordofan, A. Food security*

³²⁶UN WFP, [Sudan: Blue Nile State, Food Security Monitoring](#), December 2014, *Highlights*

³²⁷ UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, [Humanitarian Bulletin; Sudan; Issue 02; 5 – 11 January 2015](#), 11 January 2015, *HAC blue Nile: international staff can participate in joint needs assessments*

³²⁸Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust, [“There is no place to hide” – HART visit report Sudan and South Sudan](#), January 2015, *Executive Summary, Sudan*

depend on sorghum bought in nearby markets that is considered not sufficient to cover their needs”.³²⁹

The South Kordofan and Blue Nile Coordination Unit (SKBNCU) reported in September 2015 that “Pockets of population in the Two Areas are facing severe levels of food insecurity, mainly due to late and poor rainfall, which compounds difficulties to produce and access food in the war torn areas [...] An estimated 90,000 people are now considered 2 - red at risk of a localised famine, and more deaths are expected if immediate assistance is not provided to these populations. In Blue Nile, the number of people facing severe levels of food insecurity is more than half of the entire population living under SPLM/A-N control”.³³⁰

In October 2015 the South Kordofan Blue Nile Coordination Unit warned that “around 30,000 people living in those areas are at risk of a localised famine” in Kurmuk county, Blue Nile due to lack of rains and the protracted conflict in the Two Areas.³³¹

The UN World Food Programme (WFP) found in its December 2015 food security analysis on Blue Nile that “Food security in November 2015 had improved compared to November 2014 in the three localities with the highest level of food insecurity: Geissan, Kurmuk and Rosseris. Two thirds or more of households in all localities were food secure. The improvement could be attributed to the lasting effects of the very good 2014/15 agricultural season, largely moderate food price levels, and ongoing food assistance. Despite improvements, concerns remains that the poor 2015/16 season could prolong and deepen the upcoming lean season. Households who self-identified as internally displaced persons (IDPs) and those who self-identified as residents exhibited similar levels of food security”.³³² The same source reported with regards to South Kordofan that “The food security situation deteriorated among sampled households from May 2014 to November 2015. Overall, the proportion of households categorized as food secure decreased from 82 percent in May 2014 to 70 percent in November 2015. The poor outlook for the main 2015/16 season impacted household economy by limiting household production and the demand for agricultural labour”.³³³

In February 2016 the South Kordofan Blue Nile Coordination Unit (SKBNCU) reported in relation to Blue Nile:

The food security situation in Blue Nile continues to deteriorate as food stocks start to run out. Most areas suffered from a low harvest as a result of low levels of rainfall last year, flooding and crop pests [...] This coupled with an extended lean season and high levels of insecurity has left the population in these areas in need of assistance, with an expected further deterioration of the situation from mid-April.

Humanitarian monitors on the ground report that the situation for the 9,000 people living in the southern edge of Yabus payam, the Koma Ganza area, remains critical, with most people surviving on cassava and gathering wild roots.³³⁴

³²⁹Sudan Consortium, [Humanitarian Update – March 2015](#), Undated [last accessed: 10 May 2016], *Blue Nile, B. Food security*

³³⁰SKBUCU, [Humanitarian Update, September 2015, South Kordofan and Blue Nile states, Sudan](#), Undated [last accessed: 11 May 2016], *Overview*

³³¹South Kordofan Blue Nile Coordination Unit, [Food security crisis in Blue Nile: 30,000 people at risk of a localised famine](#), 8 October 2015

³³²UN WFP, [Blue Nile, Sudan, Food Security Monitoring](#), December 2015, *Executive Summary*

³³³UN WFP, [South Kordofan, Sudan, Food Security Monitoring](#), December 2015, *Executive Summary*

³³⁴SKBUCU, [Humanitarian Update, February 2016, South Kordofan and Blue Nile states, Sudan](#), Undated [last accessed: 11 May 2016], *Blue Nile, A. Food security*

5. Rule of Law and access to justice

For further information on the situation in Sudan in general, see ARC, [Darfur Country Report](#), October 2015, 5. *Rule of Law and the Administration of Justice*.

5.1. Local conflict resolution mechanisms

Limited information was found amongst the sources consulted specific to the situation in Blue Nile or South Kordofan between 1 July 2014 and 1 April 2016.

Radio Tamazuj reported that in August 2014 “A final peace and reconciliation conference between the Ghulfan and Dar El Naila tribes in Sudan’s South Kordofan state was adjourned indefinitely after the peace committee failed to come to the venue of the meeting, a traditional leader said. The committee that comprises of emirs and native administration leaders of the Ghulfan and Dar El Naila tribes was scheduled to facilitate the conference at Lectures Hall in Dilling University on Tuesday 27 August”.³³⁵ The same source further noted that “Sadiq Ham, the omda of Dar En Naila tribe in Dilling Locality, told Radio Tamazuj that they received a letter from the head of the peace and reconciliation committee Juma Jad El Karim about the postponement of the conference. ‘We were wondering why is the committee did not show up on the agreed date of the meeting between representatives of Dar El Naila and Ghulfan tribes,’ he said. The tribal leader also blamed South Kordofan governor Adam El Faki for the failure of the conference. Sadiq accused the state government of focusing its attention on elections only rather than resolving challenges the local residents are facing”.³³⁶

In February 2015 Radio Tamazuj reported that “A reconciliation process has begun between the Maban community and Blue Nile refugees at Yusuf Batil camp in Upper Nile following weeks of disputes. Commissioner Timatu Nau told Radio Tamazuj that the reconciliation was headed by the executive director in the county. He said the authorities managed to resolve the dispute between the two communities. The official further said the program was also supported [*sic*] the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and other organizations operating in the area”.³³⁷

In an April 2015 report on civilian perspectives on the conflict in South Kordofan, the International Refugee Rights Initiative reported that “not all tensions are being ignored during the conflict. In Um Dorein County, many of the interviewees talked about a recent peace-building conference that was organised by the deputy governor and the commissioner in the area to resolve a dispute between five Nuba tribes over access to land. The fact that this conference took place in the midst of the conflict is an indicator of the extraordinary resilience that is being demonstrated in this territory. It also shows the extent to which community coherence is recognised as essential to resisting the pressure the community faces”.³³⁸

The UNITED STATES Department of State report covering events in 2015 noted with regards to the situation in Sudan in general that “Civilian authorities generally maintained control of police and other security forces but failed to prevent societal violence. The government attempted to respond to some interethnic fighting but was not effective in mediating peaceful solutions. [...] Due to long distances between court facilities and police stations, local mediation was often the first resort to try

³³⁵ Radio Tamazuj, [Ghulfan-Dar El Naila tribes peace meeting delayed](#), 29 August 2014

³³⁶ Radio Tamazuj, [Ghulfan-Dar El Naila tribes peace meeting delayed](#), 29 August 2014

³³⁷ Radio Tamazuj, Blue Nile, [Maban communities reconcile after Gendrasa clashes](#), 13 February 2015

³³⁸ International Refugee Rights Initiative (IRRI), [“We just want a rest from war.” Civilian perspectives on the conflict in Sudan’s Southern Kordofan State](#), April 2015, *Community relationships* p.23

to resolve disputes. In some instances tribal courts operating outside the official legal system decided cases. Such courts did not provide the same protections as regular courts”.³³⁹

5.2. Arbitrary arrest and detention

This section documents the legal provisions that provide for arrest and detention in Sudan and how they are used against the populations in Blue Nile and South Kordofan. For illustrative incidents of arbitrary arrest of persons perceived to oppose the government, see the relevant profiles addressed in section [6. Human rights situation: civil and political rights](#), [6.1. Freedom of expression, association, and assembly](#), in particular:

[6.1.1. Political opposition parties and activists](#)

[6.1.2. Lawyers as political opposition members and activists](#)

[6.1.3. \(Suspected\) members of the SPLM/A-N](#)

[6.1.4. Individuals \(perceived to be\) associated with or supportive of the SPLM/A-N](#)

[6.1.5.1. Treatment of critical journalists, citizen-journalists, bloggers, etc.](#)

[6.1.6. Civil society organizations and civil society activists, including women’s rights activists](#)

In its ‘Concluding observations’ the UN Human Rights Committee reported in August 2014 that it was concerned “by the fact that, under the 2010 National Security Act, National Intelligence and Security Services officials may detain suspects for periods of up to a total of four and a half months without judicial supervision. The Committee is also concerned by reports that many detainees are held in clandestine detention centres (art. 9)”.³⁴⁰ The UNITED STATES Department of State report covering 2014 documented that “A state of emergency in Darfur, Blue Nile, and Southern Kordofan allowed for arrest and detention without trial”.³⁴¹ Amnesty International explained that “The Emergency and Public Safety Act gives SAF and other security agencies unfettered discretion to arrest anyone perceived as a member or supporter of the SPLM/A-N. Those arrested face a very high risk of being tortured in detention, a practice which Amnesty International has documented”.³⁴²

A joint submission from the African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies (ACJPS), International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), and International Refugee Rights Initiative (IRRI) to the 2016 Universal Periodic Review of Sudan similarly reported that “Emergency and Public Safety Bylaw of 1998 have repeatedly given rise to concerns over arbitrary arrest and detention, ill treatment and torture, and violations of the right to a fair trial, which are facilitated by the virtually complete absence of safeguards and judicial oversight”.³⁴³ The same source noted with regards to the use of the National Security Act (2010) in general in Sudan “The NISS regularly uses these powers to target real or perceived political opponents to the ruling National Congress Party (NCP) for arbitrary detention without charge, incommunicado detention, torture and ill-treatment”.³⁴⁴ The September

³³⁹ United States Department of State, [Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2015 – Sudan](#), 13 April 2016, *Section 1.d. Role of the Police and Security Apparatus and 1.e Trial procedures*

³⁴⁰ UN Human Rights Committee, [Concluding observations on the fourth periodic report of Sudan \[CCPR/C/SDN/CO/4\]](#), 19 August 2014, *paragraph 18*

³⁴¹ United States Department of State, [Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2014 – Sudan](#), 25 June 2015, *Section 1.c*

³⁴² Amnesty International, [Don’t We Matter? Four years of unrelenting attacks against civilians in Sudan’s South Kordofan State \[AFR 54/2162/2015\]](#), 17 August 2015, *Restrictions on Human Rights Monitoring p.39*

³⁴³ African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies (ACJPS), International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), and International Refugee Rights Initiative (IRRI), [Submission to the Universal Periodic Review of Sudan 2016](#), September 2015, *Emergency Law p.2*

³⁴⁴ African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies (ACJPS), International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), and International Refugee Rights Initiative (IRRI), [Submission to the Universal Periodic Review of Sudan 2016](#), September 2015, *The National Security Act (2010) p.2*

2014 report of the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in the Sudan considered that “The fear of arbitrary arrests and detentions by the National Intelligence and Security Service continues to be a major cause of intimidation of political opponents and other civil activists in the Sudan”.³⁴⁵

The UNITED STATES Department of State report covering events in 2015 further explained with regards to the situation in Sudan in general that “The NISS director may refer certain cases to the Security Council and request an extension of up to three months, allowing for detentions of up to four and one-half months without charge. Authorities often released detainees when their terms expired and rearrested them shortly thereafter for a new detention period, such that detainees were held for several months without criminal charges. [...] NISS, police, and military intelligence arbitrarily arrested and detained persons. Authorities often detained persons for a few days before releasing them without charge, but many persons were held much longer. The government often targeted political opponents and suspected rebel supporters. [...] Individuals arrested by NISS often were not informed of the reasons for their arrest.”.³⁴⁶ According to Human Rights Watch, “Sudan has a long record of stifling dissent by targeting activists for specific abuses, such as beatings, arbitrary arrests, unlawful detentions, ill-treatment in detention, interrogation for long hours, and intrusive government surveillance”.³⁴⁷ Amnesty International similarly documented in its submission to the 2016 Universal Periodic Review of Sudan that “The NISS has committed numerous human rights violations, including arbitrary arrests and detentions without charge or trial of political activists. Senior political opposition leaders are also frequently arrested by the authorities”.³⁴⁸

Reporting with regards to the situation in the Two Areas, in its Concluding observations the UN Human Rights Committee reported in August 2014 that it was concerned “at reports of serious human rights violations, including [...] arbitrary detention [...] which have been and continue to be committed in conflict-affected areas, in particular Darfur, South Kordofan and Blue Nile, and lack of accountability for these crimes”.³⁴⁹

The UNITED STATES Department of State report noted that “A 2013 amendment of the 2007 Sudanese Armed Forces Act subjects any civilians within SAF-controlled areas believed to be rebels or members of paramilitary groups to military trials. NISS and military intelligence officers applied this article to detainees in the conflict areas. For example, between April and October 2014, military intelligence officers arrested six civilians in Rashad and Dallami in South Kordofan during a period of heightened government offensives against the localities. Two arrestees were minors found carrying rifles as they grazed their cattle. Authorities released one minor, Idris Abdalla Kuku, immediately, but continued to hold the other (who has since reached adulthood). Military officials detained four other civilians in Rashad. The five defendants were eventually transferred to El Obeid, capital of North Kordofan, and brought before a military court at the headquarters of the Sudan Armed Forces

³⁴⁵ UN, [Report of the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in the Sudan, Mashood A. Baderin*](#), 4 September 2014, *paragraph 48*

³⁴⁶ United States Department of State, [Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2015 – Sudan](#), 13 April 2016, *Section 1.d. Arrest Procedures and Treatment of Detainees and 1.e. Trial Procedures*

³⁴⁷ Human Rights Watch, [“Good Girls Don’t Protest” Repression and Abuse of Women Human Rights Defenders, Activists, and Protesters in Sudan](#), 23 March 2016, *Summary p.1*

³⁴⁸ Amnesty International, [Sudan: Dire Human Rights Situation Continues; Amnesty International Submission to the UN Universal Periodic Review, May 2016 \[AFR 54/3532/2016\]](#), 26 February 2016, *ARBITRARY ARRESTS AND USE OF EXCESSIVE FORCE*

³⁴⁹ UN Human Rights Committee, [Concluding observations on the fourth periodic report of Sudan \[CCPR/C/SDN/CO/4\]](#), 19 August 2014, *paragraph 8*

Fifth Division on August 18. The defendants were being tried as a group under Article 50 of the Court Martial Act. As of year's end the trial continued".³⁵⁰

Radio Dabanga reported that in August 2014 "In South Kordofan, the number of the citizens detained by the security services and military intelligence in Habila locality, has risen to at least 513 detainees. Activists from the locality appealed to the Sudanese government and human rights organisations to intervene for the release of the 'innocent citizens'".³⁵¹ Reporting on 17 August 2014 Radio Dabanga noted that "More than 50 citizens have been detained in Blue Nile State since the beginning of August. The Humanitarian Affairs Coordinator of Blue Nile State, Hashim Orta, told Radio Dabanga that the leader of the Angasana tribe, Rizig Tawer, is among the 'innocent citizens who were detained recently'. The detentions came after the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N) forces had attacked Blue Nile's area of Agadi. 'The detention campaign is still ongoing. In particular the people of Fundi village, near the state's capital El Damazin, are terrified by the continuing arrests'".³⁵²

In a December 2014 report based on a five-day research trip during which 42 refugees in South Sudan's Maban County, and six internally displaced people inside Blue Nile state were interviewed, Human Rights Watch reported that "Many refugees said they or their relatives were beaten or detained, including when they tried to leave the government-controlled towns or villages. Some of the men who had been detained said that government authorities tried to force them to join the Sudanese army; several described severe beatings and torture by security forces".³⁵³

The UNITED STATES Department of State report covering events in 2015 further noted that "International organizations were unable independently to verify reports of disappearances due to lack of access to the region. Humanitarian actors reported unverified cases of civilians, including women, being abducted or detained by government-aligned forces due to their suspected affiliation with the SPLM-N. Local human rights actors reported one case of abduction and one case of illegal detention of civilians by government forces in Dilling County, Southern Kordofan, during July. In May government forces allegedly abducted 48 civilians during forced displacements in Blue Nile".³⁵⁴

SUDO reported that in April 2015, "A Joint team from the Secret Police and the National Intelligent Security Services (NISS) are going around in some of the neighborhood in Damazin, (Nasr, Higra and Arkaweet), arresting male children (minors 16 years and under). The number of detainees reached 65 on Wednesday 1st April 2015. [...] All the detainees are from the outskirts neighborhoods of Damazin, their families were given no reason for the detention and the attorney general office in Damazin renewed their arrest period".³⁵⁵ Radio Dabanga reported that in South Kordofan "Members of a government militia attacked two villages in South Kordofan's El Sunut locality on 29 April [2015], and abducted a number of residents, according to an armed rebel group. 'The direct order came from the governor of West Kordofan, Maj. Gen. Ahmed Khamis,' Arnun Ngutulu Lodi wrote in a press statement. 'They broke into shops and looted all goods and civilians properties.' He reported that six civilians were wounded. Fourteen others were forcibly taken to El Fula prison, he claimed".³⁵⁶

³⁵⁰ United States Department of State, [Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2015 – Sudan](#), 13 April 2016, *Section 1.e Trial procedures*

³⁵¹ Radio Dabanga, [Seven party members, 513 others detained in Sudan](#), 18 August 2014

³⁵² Radio Dabanga, [Tribal leader detained in Sudan's Blue Nile State](#), 17 August 2014

³⁵³ Human Rights Watch, [Sudan: Soldiers, Militias Killing, Raping Civilians](#), 15 December 2014

³⁵⁴ United States Department of State, [Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2015 – Sudan](#), 13 April 2016, *Section 1.g, Two Areas*

³⁵⁵ SUDO UK, [A number of minors were arrested by the NISS and the Secret Police in Damazin 1st April 2015](#), 4 April 2015

³⁵⁶ Radio Dabanga, ['Two South Kordofan villages attacked': Sudan rebels](#), 6 May 2015

Radio Dabanga also reported that in May 2015, “Fayda Organisation, operating in Blue Nile state, and the Arab Coalition for Sudan have expressed their concern about the violence employed by government forces against villagers in Bau locality. [...] The organisations also uttered their concern about the arbitrary detention of people on the streets in Blue Nile state. Some of the detainees have been subjected to threats and torture during their interrogation”.³⁵⁷ According to Human Rights Watch’s annual report covering events in 2015, “In May 2015, government attacks on villages in Blue Nile caused large scale displacement of people from the Bau locality. Sudanese groups reported that at least three villages were burned by government forces, and people were forced to move to government strongholds. Residents were threatened with arrest or were detained if they did not leave”.³⁵⁸

For further information on the use of forced displacement in the Two Areas see section [4.3 Forced displacement](#).

In an August 2015 report on the ‘Evolution of the Two Areas Conflict, 2014–15’ the Small Arms Survey noted that “The little information coming from government areas indicates that people from the Two Areas suspected of supporting the rebellion are arrested and kept in NISS facilities, in some cases tortured and raped, and their property looted”.³⁵⁹

In September 2015 the Sudan Consortium reported that “Sudanese citizens living in the Government held areas in Blue Nile are victims of continue abuses by government forces and militias. The people who safely reached the refugee camps in South Sudan and SPLM/A-N held areas in Blue Nile, have reported appalling human rights abuses and dire humanitarian conditions within the Government held areas in Baw, northern Kurmuk and southern Geissan counties”.³⁶⁰ The same source reported with regards to arbitrary arrests and detention that:

Occasionally, government military forces would come and arrest people without ID, take them to military barracks and torture them (the majority of the new arrivals either lost their IDs in the fire or never had them due to the high cost – 80SDG per ID). [...] According to the community, at least 200 people from the area had been taken to Damazin and arrested and tortured since January 2015 by the military intelligence. A 25-year-old man spent sixmonths and twelve days in prison in Damazin. He was tortured several times. He and other prisoners were forced to walk and crawl on the fire (domestic and International monitors saw burn scars on the man’s body). They were beaten, and cut with a sword. They were accused of supporting the SPLM/A-N. People’s perception is also that they were punished because they were considered ‘black’. The man managed to escape and reach his home only to find the village had been burned. He then managed to reunite with his community in the SPLM/A-N controlled areas. He said that many more people remain in prison.³⁶¹

A September 2015 joint submission from the African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies (ACJPS), International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), and International Refugee Rights Initiative (IRRI) to the 2016 Universal Periodic Review of Sudan reported that “In Blue Nile, Government forces arbitrarily detained residents, raped women and girls, and restricted residents’ movements, farming,

³⁵⁷ Radio Dabanga, [‘Sudanese forces torch villages in Blue Nile state’: Arab Coalition, Fayda](#), 21 May 2015

³⁵⁸ Human Rights Watch, [World Report 2016 – Sudan](#), 27 January 2016

³⁵⁹ Small Arms Survey, [Two Fronts, One War: Evolution of the Two Areas Conflict](#), 2014–15, August 2015, *Arbitrary arrests and rape as government tactics* p.52-3

³⁶⁰ Sudan Consortium, [Abuses against civilians continue in Government held areas in Blue Nile](#), 15 September 2015

³⁶¹ Sudan Consortium, [Abuses against civilians continue in Government held areas in Blue Nile](#), 15 September 2015

and access to food”.³⁶² The same source further noted that “Over the past four years the NISS has used its powers of arrest without charge for up to four-and a half months to arbitrarily detain scores of perceived opponents and other people with real or perceived links to the rebel movements who are often targeted because of their ethnic origin”.³⁶³

The Human Rights and Development Organisation’s (HUDO) annual report covering events in Blue Nile and South Kordofan in 2015 similarly noted with regards to arbitrary arrest that “HUDO Centre observed the situation through their monitors and other focal persons. The arbitrary arrests jointly carried out by NISS, MI [military intelligence] and the government associated militias were mainly unlawful. Many people arrested were unarmed civilians from different villages and towns, were accused of associating or supporting the SPLA-N. They arrest anybody irrespective of age or sex/gender and treat the detainees inhumanly”.³⁶⁴ HUDO further noted with regards to arbitrary arrests in Blue Nile that in October 2015 military intelligence arrested four people originally from Darfur, accused of associating with the Sudan Revolutionary Front (SRF).³⁶⁵

5.3. Unlawful or disproportionate punishment for crimes

Very limited COI was found amongst the sources consulted within the time frame of this report specific to disproportionate punishment being carried out in South Kordofan and Blue Nile States. Information pertaining to the situation in Sudan in general has therefore been included.

In its ‘Concluding observations’ the UN Human Rights Committee reported in August 2014 that it was concerned that “the State party’s legislation still provides for several forms of corporal punishment, such as flogging and amputation, that violate article 7 of the Covenant”.³⁶⁶

A joint submission from the African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies (ACJPS), International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), and International Refugee Rights Initiative (IRRI) to the 2016 Universal Periodic Review of Sudan explained, “INC [Interim National Constitution] Article 33 prohibits torture but fails to prohibit cruel, inhuman or degrading punishment. A number of national laws provide for corporal punishments including flogging, amputation, stoning and death penalty by hanging in violation of the absolute prohibition torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading punishment or treatment to which Sudan has committed”.³⁶⁷

An October 2014 Equal Rights Trust report considered that “It is a serious violation of international human rights norms related to cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment that Sudan has not abolished corporal punishment based on sharia law. The penalty of amputation remains on the statute books, though there has been an unspoken moratorium on its use for over a decade.

³⁶² African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies (ACJPS), International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), and International Refugee Rights Initiative (IRRI), [Submission to the Universal Periodic Review of Sudan 2016](#), September 2015, *Human rights violations in the context of armed conflict Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile* p.5

³⁶³ African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies (ACJPS), International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), and International Refugee Rights Initiative (IRRI), [Submission to the Universal Periodic Review of Sudan 2016](#), September 2015, *Arbitrary detention, torture and other ill-treatment* p.8

³⁶⁴ HUDO Centre, [Human Rights Situation in South Kordofan and Blue Nile States of Sudan January-December 2015](#), 20 March 2016, *2.0 Arbitrary Arrest* p.13

³⁶⁵ HUDO Centre, [Human Rights Situation in South Kordofan and Blue Nile States of Sudan January-December 2015](#), 20 March 2016, *2.0.2 Arbitrary Arrest in Blue Nile* p.20

³⁶⁶ UN Human Rights Committee, [Concluding observations on the fourth periodic report of Sudan \[CCPR/C/SDN/CO/4\]](#), 19 August 2014, *paragraph 16*

³⁶⁷ African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies (ACJPS), International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), and International Refugee Rights Initiative (IRRI), [Submission to the Universal Periodic Review of Sudan 2016](#), September 2015, *Prohibition of Torture* p.1

However, to quote a senior legal practitioner, ‘flogging is everywhere, every day’, being used most frequently against ‘people from the periphery’.³⁶⁸ According to Freedom House’s annual report covering events in 2014, “Sudanese criminal law is based on Sharia and allows punishments such as flogging and cross-amputation (removal of the right hand and left foot). In 2013, Sudan’s deputy chief justice confirmed that 16 cases of amputation had been carried out since 2001”.³⁶⁹

The UNITED STATES Department of State report covering events in 2015 noted that “In accordance with sharia (Islamic law), the penal code provides for physical punishments, including flogging, amputation, stoning, and the public display of a body after execution, and was commonly applied to convicted defendants despite the constitution’s prohibitions. With the exception of flogging, such physical punishment was not common. Courts routinely imposed flogging, especially as punishment for the production or consumption of alcohol”.³⁷⁰ Also reporting on the situation in general throughout Sudan, the August 2015 ‘Report of the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in the Sudan, Aristide Nonons’ stated that “The Independent Expert is concerned that [...] lashing is used as a routine penalty, in contravention of international human rights law”.³⁷¹ According to a June 2015 African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies report, “Hundreds of Sudanese have also been subjected to flogging and corporal punishment under Sudan’s Public Order laws, legislation governing vague ‘indecent’ and ‘immoral’ behaviour. Sudan’s public order laws disproportionately impact women, and sentences are often handed down in summary trials without legal representation”.³⁷²

Summarising the situation in Sudan the 2015 UNITED STATES Commission on International Religious Freedom report noted that “As in previous years, there were several known amputation sentences for those found guilty of theft. Dozens of Muslim and Christian women were flogged or fined for ‘indecent’ dress”.³⁷³ Similarly a March 2016 Human Rights Watch report on ‘Repression and Abuse of Women Human Rights Defenders, Activists, and Protesters in Sudan’ stated that “Vaguely defined public morality crimes discriminate against women in Sudan, proscribing their manner of dress, limiting their movement and role in public life, and imposing humiliating corporal punishments of lashing and stoning, in violation of international norms”.³⁷⁴ The same report also detailed that “Although no executions by stoning have been carried out, courts frequently impose flogging and fines for adultery and other morality crimes”.³⁷⁵ Furthermore:

Sudan’s so-called “public order regime” is more directly relevant to stifling activism. Spelled out in Article 152 of the criminal code, it criminalizes dress or public actions “contrary to public morals.” These laws are vague and proscribe private matters that should not be the subject of criminal law, such as clothing choice or keeping company with someone from the opposite sex, and carry flogging penalties. Charges are often brought against marginalized communities, such as women alcohol-brewers, or non Muslim women and girls, in summary proceedings without fair trial protections, and

³⁶⁸ Equal Rights Trust, [In Search of Confluence Addressing Discrimination and Inequality in Sudan](#), October 2014, 2.1 *Discrimination and Inequality Based on Religion or Belief* p.44

³⁶⁹ Freedom House, [Freedom in the World 2015 – Sudan](#), 28 January 2015

³⁷⁰ United Department of State, [Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2015 – Sudan](#), 13 April 2016, Section 1.c. *Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment*

³⁷¹ UN, [Report of the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in the Sudan, Aristide Nonons](#), 24 August 2015, paragraph 57

³⁷² African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies, [Sudan: On the international day in support of torture survivors, end torture and repeal enabling legislation](#), 26 June 2015

³⁷³ United States Commission on International Religious Freedom, [USCIRF Annual Report 2015 - Tier 1 CPCs designated by the State Department and recommended by USCIRF: Sudan](#), 1 May 2015

³⁷⁴ Human Rights Watch, [“Good Girls Don’t Protest” Repression and Abuse of Women Human Rights Defenders, Activists, and Protesters in Sudan](#), 23 March 2016, Summary p.1

³⁷⁵ Human Rights Watch, [“Good Girls Don’t Protest” Repression and Abuse of Women Human Rights Defenders, Activists, and Protesters in Sudan](#), 23 March 2016, *Discriminatory Laws Used Against Female Activists* p.17

usually result in fines and flogging, which violates international prohibitions on cruel, inhuman or degrading punishment.

Women, including high-profile activists, have repeatedly been arrested and prosecuted under these laws.³⁷⁶

In March 2016 the Sudan Democracy First Group stated that “Women continue to be convicted and punished under the criminal and public order laws. Every year around 50,000 women across the country are subjected to lashings by the Public Order Police alone. These police target women working in the informal sector to provide livelihoods for their families under difficult circumstances including impoverishing economic policies and war”.³⁷⁷

Very limited individual cases of flogging were reported amongst the sources consulted. The African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies reported that in South Kordofan in January 2015, “the NISS arrested Salwa Kuku Kome, (f), from her home in Al Dalang. Ms. Kome is accused of communicating with her husband, who is allegedly a member of the SPLM-N. In March 2015, Ms. Kone remained in NISS, had reportedly been flogged, and had been refused family visits”.³⁷⁸

5.4. Death penalty

Very limited COI specific to the death penalty been carried out in Blue Nile or South Kordofan was found amongst the sources consulted. Some information has therefore been included on the situation in Sudan more generally.

For a list of crimes punishable by death in Sudan see the Cornell Law School’s website.³⁷⁹

As reported by the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office in its report covering 2014, reporting on the situation in Sudan “it is difficult to quantify how often the death penalty was used due to a lack of consistent reporting and the informal justice mechanisms operating in parts of Sudan”.³⁸⁰

In its ‘Concluding observations’ the UN Human Rights Committee reported in August 2014 that it was concerned that “the death penalty has been maintained for crimes which do not meet the threshold of the ‘most serious crimes’ as well as in relation to practices that the Covenant does not allow to be criminalized at all (arts. 6 and 7)”.³⁸¹

Amnesty International reported that during 2014, “At least 23 executions were recorded in Sudan and at least 14 death sentences were imposed. At least 215 people were on death row at the end of the year, and at least four people were exonerated in 2014”.³⁸² With specific regards to executions carried out in South Kordofan and Blue Nile States the UNITED STATES Department of State report covering 2014 indicated that “According to local human rights advocates, military intelligence arrested and summarily executed four civilians: Khatir Hassan (arrested on August 12), Tariq Khatir

³⁷⁶ Human Rights Watch, [“Good Girls Don’t Protest” Repression and Abuse of Women Human Rights Defenders, Activists, and Protesters in Sudan](#), 23 March 2016, *Discriminatory Laws Used Against Female Activists* p.18

³⁷⁷ Sudan Democracy First Group, [SDFG statement on International Women’s Day](#), 8 March 2016

³⁷⁸ African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies, [Sudan Human Rights Monitor December 2014 – January 2015](#), January 2015

³⁷⁹ Cornell Law School, [Death Penalty Database- Sudan](#), undated (information current as of 24 July 2012), *Crimes and Offenders Punishable By Death*

³⁸⁰ UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office, [Human Rights and Democracy Report 2014 - Section XII: Human Rights in Countries of Concern - Sudan](#), 12 March 2015, *Death Penalty*

³⁸¹ UN Human Rights Committee, [Concluding observations on the fourth periodic report of Sudan \[CCPR/C/SDN/CO/4\]](#), 19 August 2014, *paragraph 14*

³⁸² Amnesty International, [Death sentences and executions in 2014](#), 31 March 2015, *Country Developments* p.64

(arrested on August 12), Humaidan Mohammed Kurtikaila Atron (arrested on July 17), and Abdel Rahman Alti (arrested on July 5), in Dilling, Southern Kordofan. The victims were arrested in Kurgul and transferred to Dilling for execution”.³⁸³

A September 2015 joint submission to the Universal Periodic Review by the African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies, International Federation for Human Rights, and International Refugee Rights Initiative reported with regards to Sudan in general that “The courts have continued to hand down death sentences, some in absentia. The death penalty, which is implemented by hanging in Sudan, is not restricted to the most serious of crimes. The crime of apostasy – which itself should not constitute a crime under international law – carries the death penalty. Crimes against the state charges that carry the death penalty have been used increasingly often since 2011 to punish and silence political opposition party members and other activists who have criticized government policy. Since the last review the scope of application of the death penalty has been widened. The crime of apostasy has been broadened to include additional prohibited acts and a new crime of trafficking attracts the death penalty”.³⁸⁴

The UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office report covering events in 2015 summarised the situation in Sudan as follows “The continued use of the death penalty in Sudan remains deeply concerning. On 26 November, 18 members of the Sudan Liberation Army-Minni Minnawi (SLA-MM) were sentenced to death (a 19th member of the group died in custody before the sentencing). On 21 December, the GoS announced a stay of execution for seven members of the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) following appeals by opposition parties and the Chair of the National Dialogue Rights and Freedoms Committee”.³⁸⁵ Amnesty International reported that during 2015 “Sudan carried out three executions and imposed 18 death sentences for crimes that included: child abuse, rape of a child, and engagement with armed groups. President Omar al-Bashir pardoned five people under sentence of death”, however the locations of these were not specified.³⁸⁶

5.5. Detention conditions

The UNITED STATES Department of State report covering 2014 stated with specific regards to detention conditions in the Two Areas that “Human rights advocates reported that between April and May, three detainees died in the custody of military intelligence units in Nyala, South Darfur, and Fazugli, Blue Nile state”.³⁸⁷

Reporting on the October 2014 detention of six persons detained in Abu Jehiba town, South Kordofan state (reportedly in connection with the appearance of graffiti in Abu Jehiba town calling for citizens not to forget the deaths of civilians who were killed during protests in September and October 2013), African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies (ACJPS) and the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) stated that they were detained incommunicado and without charge and were then transferred to Khartoum on an unknown date.³⁸⁸

³⁸³ United States Department of State, [Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2014 – Sudan](#), 25 June 2015, Section 1.g, Two Areas

³⁸⁴ African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies (ACJPS), International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), and International Refugee Rights Initiative (IRRI), [Submission to the Universal Periodic Review of Sudan 2016](#), September 2015

³⁸⁵ UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office, [Human Rights and Democracy Report 2014: Sudan – in-year update December 2015](#), 21 April 2016

³⁸⁶ Amnesty International, [Death Sentences and Executions 2015](#), 6 April 2016, *Country Developments* p.62

³⁸⁷ United States Department of State, [Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2014 – Sudan](#), 25 June 2015, Section 1.c

³⁸⁸ Fédération Internationale des Ligues des Droits de l’Homme, [Six individuals from South Kordofan detained incommunicado after calls for memorial events to mark 2013 protest killings](#), 23 October 2014

In a December 2014 report based on a five-day research trip during which 42 refugees in South Sudan's Maban County, and six internally displaced people inside Blue Nile state were interviewed, Human Rights Watch reported that "At least 12 people said that they were detained or that close family members had been detained at various times since the conflict started. Former detainees described harsh conditions and beatings by security forces".³⁸⁹ Also in December 2014, Radio Tamazuj reported that Omda Khaled Medani, the omda of Bok omodiyya (administrative unit), one of several native administration leaders detained recently in Damazin, Blue Nile, "complained of the prison conditions saying they were kept separately and that it was very hot in the cells. They were released after three days".³⁹⁰

In an August 2015 report on the 'Evolution of the Two Areas Conflict, 2014–15' the Small Arms Survey noted that "The little information coming from government areas indicates that people from the Two Areas suspected of supporting the rebellion are arrested and kept in NISS facilities, in some cases tortured and raped, and their property looted. According to a local NGO following the cases of missing or detained people, at least 100 people have been held in jail since 2011 in Agadit, Kadugli, Khartoum, and Roseires. Some are believed to have died".³⁹¹ The same source further reported that:

Mahieddin Mahmud, who was arrested in 2014, with other Nuba accused of sympathizing with the SPLM-N managed to escape from Kadugli prison and reach Abu Jubeiha, and reported that people in prison were being killed.³⁹²

SUDO reported in November 2015 with regards to Blue Nile State that "Since our August 2015 monthly update SUDO (UK) has consistently highlighted the detention of over 100 civilians in containers within the Sudanese Armed Forces Fourth Infantry Division Headquarters in Demazin. The October 2015 report noted the death of Tarig Ali, a 40 year-old farmer from Fazogli in Geisan locality, and the first person SUDO (UK) monitors have identified as having died whilst in detention in containers within Blue Nile state".³⁹³ The same report covering events in November 2015 further noted:

[...] monitors have reported the hospitalisation of a container detainee by the name of Alitaa Younis, who has been detained in inhumane conditions since July 2015 following the suspicion that he sold milk to the SPLM-N, and he is now undergoing treatment at Demazin Royal Hospital. Already monitors have established that detainees are unable to leave the containers except in the morning and the evening for a short time to go the toilet, in addition to having no contact with family, lawyers, health care or even being able to take their own prescribed medicines. It has been established that Alitaa Younis shared a container with another 30 persons, all of who are suffering from serious illnesses relating to a lack of food, sleep, hygiene facilities and medicine.³⁹⁴

With further regards to the situation in Blue Nile, in December 2015, "SUDO (UK) monitors reported the release of 150 civilians who had been detained in containers within the Sudanese Armed Forces military garrison in Demazin. Since their release monitors have obtained personal testimony from some of those detained".³⁹⁵ SUDO further noted:

³⁸⁹ Human Rights Watch, *Sudan: Soldiers, Militias Killing, Raping Civilians*, 15 December 2014

³⁹⁰ Radio Tamazuj, *Blue Nile traditional leader reveals reasons for arrest*, 12 December 2014

³⁹¹ Small Arms Survey, *Two Fronts, One War: Evolution of the Two Areas Conflict*, 2014–15, August 2015, *Arbitrary arrests and rape as government tactics p.52-3*

³⁹² Small Arms Survey, *Two Fronts, One War: Evolution of the Two Areas Conflict*, 2014–15, August 2015, *Arbitrary arrests and rape as government tactics p.52-3*

³⁹³ SUDO UK, *HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES IN SUDAN OVER THE MONTH OF NOVEMBER 2015*, 21 December 2015

³⁹⁴ SUDO UK, *HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES IN SUDAN OVER THE MONTH OF NOVEMBER 2015*, 21 December 2015

³⁹⁵ SUDO UK, *HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES IN SUDAN OVER THE MONTH OF JANUARY 2016*, 18 March 2016, *Blue Nile*

“The conditions of detention were terrible. Groups of Military Intelligence would torture us by beating us with leather straps or rubber hoses or burning our skins and threatening to rape us. They would put us in solitary confinement in a small cell or detain us for three days in toxic containers which brought haemorrhages from the testes and gave us sores all over our bodies. Our health deteriorated from lack of health care and medicine and some of the detainees suffered from diabetes, malaria and infectious diseases. We suffered from malnourishment because we were given so little food; just one meal a day of asida and lentils. They wouldn’t allow us to bath or wash our clothes so our bodies became full of skin diseases and body lice.” [...]

The number of those still detained in containers has been estimated by those who have been released as anywhere between 50 and 85, whilst SUDO (UK) monitors have reported another three civilians that have been arrested and taken to the Sudanese Armed Forces military garrison in Demazin. [...]

Monitors have regularly reported that detainees are denied access to their families and to lawyers, in addition to basic healthcare and sanitation. The testimonies gathered; however, not only showcase the above, but further the acts of torture that they and others underwent at the hands of Military Intelligence.

It is further worth noting that the 150 or so detainees released in December were never formally charged nor were they brought before a prosecutor.³⁹⁶

The UNITED STATES Department of State report covering events in 2015 noted with regards to detention conditions in conflict areas that “Prison conditions throughout the country remained harsh, overcrowded, and life threatening. The Prisons and Reform Directorate, a branch of the national police that reports to the Ministry of Interior, oversees prisons, but according to human rights activists and released detainees, military intelligence officials detained and held civilians on military installations, especially in conflict areas. Rebel groups in Darfur and the Two Areas periodically detained persons in isolated locations and held them in prison-like detention centers”.³⁹⁷ Reporting further on general detention conditions in Sudan the same source considered that:

Reportedly, overall conditions, including food, sanitary and living conditions, were better in women’s detention facilities and prisons, such as the Federal Prison for Women in Omdurman, than at equivalent facilities for men, such as Kober or Omdurman prisons. [...]

Health care was often inadequate. Some prisoners did not have access to medications or physical examinations. Prisoners sometimes relied on family or friends for food. Most prisoners did not have access to beds. Ventilation and lighting conditions differed among prisons, and overcrowding was a major problem.

There were reports of deaths due to negligence in prisons and pretrial detention centers, but comprehensive figures were not available. Local press reported deaths resulting from suspected torture by police.[...]

Prisoners held in NISS custody or detained under national security statutes were held in separate, sometimes unknown facilities. [...]

One prisoner died while in detention due to negligence, health complications with anemia, and poor nutrition. Authorities regularly denied prisoners held in NISS facilities visits from family and lawyers, and, in the case of foreign prisoners, from foreign government representatives. Some former detainees reported security forces held them incommunicado; beat them; deprived them of food, water, and toilets; and forced them to sleep on cold floors. Political prisoners were held in special sections of prisons. [...]

Police reportedly allowed some visitors, including lawyers and family members, while prisoners were in custody and during judicial hearings. Visitors generally were not allowed access to prisoners held in custody of NISS, however. [...]

Christian clergy held services in prisons, but access was irregular. [...]

³⁹⁶ SUDO UK, [HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES IN SUDAN OVER THE MONTH OF JANUARY 2016](#), 18 March 2016, *Blue Nile*

³⁹⁷ United States Department of State, [Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2015 – Sudan](#), 13 April 2016, *Section 1.c. Prison and Detention Center Conditions*

Lengthy pretrial detention was common. The large number of detainees and judicial inefficiency resulted in trial delays.³⁹⁸

5.5.1. Torture in detention

In its ‘Concluding observations’ the UN Human Rights Committee reported in August 2014 that it was concerned that “the State party’s criminal legislation does not yet provide a legal definition of torture” and at allegations that “confessions obtained in violation of article 7 of the Covenant have been used by courts in some cases, including to impose the death penalty. It is also concerned by numerous allegations of acts of torture or ill-treatment committed by State officials”.³⁹⁹

According to a June 2015 African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies report with regards to the general situation throughout Sudan, “The use of torture across Sudan is endemic. Sudanese authorities use torture and other forms of ill-treatment to intimidate and silence perceived political opposition to the policies of the ruling National Congress Party (NCP). Human rights defenders, political and other social activists, internally displaced persons (IDPs) and students are particularly vulnerable to torture and ill-treatment”.⁴⁰⁰

A September 2015 Amnesty International submission to the 2016 Universal Periodic Review of Sudan explained with regards to torture throughout Sudan that “The 2010 National Security Act (NSA) grants extensive powers to the National Intelligence and Security Services (NISS) to arrest and detain individuals for up to 45 days and further authorizes the National Security Council to extend the detention for up to four and a half months. During this period of detention, there is no judicial oversight which increases the risk that those detained may face torture or other ill-treatment, including to extract ‘confessions’. In addition, the NSA grants NISS agents immunity from prosecution or other disciplinary action for any abuses committed during the course of their work”.⁴⁰¹

A further September 2015 joint submission from the African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies (ACJPS), International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), and International Refugee Rights Initiative (IRRI) to the 2016 Universal Periodic Review of Sudan also reporting on the general situation in Sudan noted that:

Scores of detainees have testified to ACJPS their experiences of ill-treatment and torture at the hands of the NISS, police and armed forces. Reports have included, inter alia, the use of beatings with water pipes, gun butts, metal bars, sticks and fists, being beaten on the soles of their feet (a practice known as falanga) and hung or suspended by their hands or feet, being stamped on and bitten by interrogators. Detainees have reported being injected with unknown substances and having blood samples taken, including whilst blindfolded, without their consent or explanation. Detainees have been subjected to prolonged enforced standing, exposure to bright sunlight and heat, extremely cold temperatures, sleep deprivation, blindfolding, death threats against detainees and their families, threats of sexual violence and exposure to the torture and beatings of fellow detainees, as well as verbal and racist insults. Detainees have been held in inadequate facilities with no electricity, bedding

³⁹⁸ United States Department of State, [Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2015 – Sudan](#), 13 April 2016, Section 1.c. Prison and Detention Center Conditions and 1.e. Pretrial Detention

³⁹⁹ UN Human Rights Committee, [Concluding observations on the fourth periodic report of Sudan \[CCPR/C/SDN/CO/4\]](#), 19 August 2014, paragraph 15

⁴⁰⁰ African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies, [Sudan: On the international day in support of torture survivors, end torture and repeal enabling legislation](#), 26 June 2015

⁴⁰¹ Amnesty International, [Sudan: Dire Human Rights Situation Continues; Amnesty International Submission to the UN Universal Periodic Review, May 2016 \[AFR 54/3532/2016\]](#), 26 February 2016, NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND SECURITY SERVICES

or sufficient ventilation. Some detainees were forced to provide their email, Facebook and Skype passwords.⁴⁰²

Reporting generally on the situation in Sudan the UNITED STATES Department of State report covering events in 2015 noted that “security forces, government-aligned groups, rebel groups, and ethnic factions continued to torture, beat, and harass suspected political opponents, rebel supporters, and others”, further noting that:

There have been no known prosecutions of NISS officers for torture or other ill-treatment. [...] Former detainees reported physical and psychological torture by police, NISS, and military intelligence personnel of the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF). Some of those arrested were subjected to torture and other forms of mistreatment, including prolonged isolation, exposure to extreme temperature variations, electric shock, and use of stress positions. Some female detainees alleged NISS harassed and sexually assaulted them while in detention. Some former detainees reported being injected with unknown substances without their consent. [...] Security forces detained political opponents incommunicado, without charge, and tortured them. Some political detainees were held in isolation cells in regular prisons, and many were held without access to family or medical treatment. Human rights organizations asserted NISS ran “ghost houses,” where it detained opposition and human rights figures without acknowledging they were being held. Such detentions were prolonged at times. [...] Defendants in common criminal cases such as theft as well as in more politicized cases were often compelled to confess guilt while in police custody through physical abuse and police intimidation of family members.⁴⁰³

With specific regards to the situation in South Kordofan or Blue Nile states, the UNITED STATES Department of State report covering 2014 considered that “There were reports of physical abuse and violent interrogations of SPLM-N-affiliated individuals in Kadugli prison and military installations. Human rights advocates reported security forces arrested al-Sadig Hassan and three other activists in Fazugli, Blue Nile, on May 3, and sent them to Dem Sa’ad military base on suspicion of supporting the SPLM-N. Human rights advocates believe Hassan died from torture while in detention on May 19. Authorities released the other three activists the same week”.⁴⁰⁴

Reporting on 17 August 2014 Radio Dabanga noted that “More than 50 citizens have been detained in Blue Nile State since the beginning of August. [...] The detentions came after the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N) forces had attacked Blue Nile’s area of Agadi. ‘The detention campaign is still ongoing. In particular the people of Fundi village, near the state’s capital El Damazin, are terrified by the continuing arrests.’ According to Orta, the detainees were subjected to torture. He appealed to humanitarian organisations to ‘intervene, visit the detainees, and help with their release’”.⁴⁰⁵

In a December 2014 report based on a five-day research trip during which 42 refugees in South Sudan’s Maban County, and six internally displaced people inside Blue Nile state were interviewed, Human Rights Watch reported that “Many refugees said they or their relatives were beaten or detained, including when they tried to leave the government-controlled towns or villages. Some of

⁴⁰² African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies (ACJPS), International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), and International Refugee Rights Initiative (IRRI), [Submission to the Universal Periodic Review of Sudan 2016](#), September 2015, *Justice and accountability / effective remedies p.4* and *Arbitrary detention, torture and other ill-treatment p.9*

⁴⁰³ United States Department of State, [Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2015 – Sudan](#), 13 April 2016, *Section 1.c. Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and Section 1.e. Political Prisoners and Detainees, Trial Procedures*

⁴⁰⁴ United States Department of State, [Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2014 – Sudan](#), 25 June 2015, *Section 1.g Two Areas*

⁴⁰⁵ Radio Dabanga, [Tribal leader detained in Sudan’s Blue Nile State](#), 17 August 2014

the men who had been detained said that government authorities tried to force them to join the Sudanese army; several described severe beatings and torture by security forces. One 21-year-old farmer who was detained with 13 other men said two of them died from beatings in custody”.⁴⁰⁶ The same source noted that:

Rahama, a 21-year-old man from Bulang, said that in March soldiers arrested him and 13 other men in the middle of the night during a roundup: “I was sleeping and they came and asked for the men.... They tied my hands and asked who I belong to. I said I am just a farmer. Then they beat me and tied my feet and put me in a truck.”

The group was detained in an underground cell in Deirang for several hours, then transferred to a prison in Roseris, where they were held without charge for three months. The prison officers beat the detainees so severely that two of them died, he said. Human Rights Watch could not verify the deaths.

Amna, a 26-year-old woman from Bagis, near Damazin, said that about a year ago government soldiers came to her house and beat her and arrested her for giving food to rebels, which she said she admitted doing. They detained her in a military prison in Damazin for more than a month:

There were some other women outside the cells but I was alone inside. They would give me food sometimes once every two days. Every day they beat me ... they would tell me to have sex with them but when I refused they would beat me. They slapped me in the face and beat me with a plastic rod.

Jalila, a 19-year-old woman from Kumreek, also displaced to Khor Maganza, said her brother Bashir was arrested in August during a roundup. “They were going to many houses and arrested many men,” she said. He was taken to Deirang and Roseris prison, where he was held for a week. “He had wounds on [his] back from the beatings with sticks.”

Hawa, a 20-year-old from Musfa, said soldiers arrested her brother at their home earlier in 2014, detained him for about a month in Bulang and Roseris prison, and beat and tortured him:

He said he was tortured with pliers. Some skin is still scarred. When he came back he was weak and his body was wounded. He was sick with skin disease. He could not move and is still not able to work.... When I tried to greet him he could not raise his hand.⁴⁰⁷

Radio Tamazuj reported in January 2015 that “Min Allah Hussein Hadi, who was convicted by a Sennar court of belonging to the SPLA-North, said he has been tortured while in detention. He alleged that elements of the Sudanese Security and Intelligence Service have been torturing them to force out a confession and accused judges of encouraging such acts in order to please the authorities. ‘We were being tortured in the presence of judges. You know if you don’t confess you can be put in sackcloth. We had undergone different types of torture to the extent that we were being threatened with sodomy,’ he said”.⁴⁰⁸

Radio Dabanga reported that in May 2015, “Fayda Organisation, operating in Blue Nile state, and the Arab Coalition for Sudan have expressed their concern about the violence employed by government forces against villagers in Bau locality. [...] The organisations also uttered their concern about the arbitrary detention of people on the streets in Blue Nile state. Some of the detainees have been subjected to threats and torture during their interrogation”.⁴⁰⁹

According to Human Rights Watch’s annual report covering events in 2015, the NISS “is known for its abusive tactics, including torture, against real or perceived political opponents”.⁴¹⁰ In an August 2015 report on the ‘Evolution of the Two Areas Conflict, 2014–15’ the Small Arms Survey noted that “The little information coming from government areas indicates that people from the Two Areas suspected of supporting the rebellion are arrested and kept in NISS facilities, in some cases tortured

⁴⁰⁶ Human Rights Watch, *Sudan: Soldiers, Militias Killing, Raping Civilians*, 15 December 2014

⁴⁰⁷ Human Rights Watch, *Sudan: Soldiers, Militias Killing, Raping Civilians*, 15 December 2014

⁴⁰⁸ Radio Tamazuj, *Sudan: death row inmate alleges torture in prison*, 29 January 2015

⁴⁰⁹ Radio Dabanga, *‘Sudanese forces torch villages in Blue Nile state’: Arab Coalition, Fayda*, 21 May 2015

⁴¹⁰ Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2016 – Sudan*, 27 January 2016

and raped, and their property looted”.⁴¹¹ According to the UNITED STATES Department of State report covering 2015 “Human rights groups continued to report that government forces and allied militias raped, detained, tortured, and arbitrarily killed civilians in government-controlled areas of Blue Nile”.⁴¹²

Amnesty International considered in an August 2015 report on attacks against civilians in Sudan’s South Kordofan State that “The Emergency and Public Safety Act gives SAF and other security agencies unfettered discretion to arrest anyone perceived as a member or supporter of the SPLM/A-N. Those arrested face a very high risk of being tortured in detention, a practice which Amnesty International has documented”.⁴¹³ The June 2015 African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies (ACJPS) further noted that:

Members of ethnic minority groups, including Darfuris and people hailing from Sudan’s Blue Nile and South Kordofan states, are particularly vulnerable to torture and ill-treatment. ACJPS has documented threats of sexual violence against male and female detainees, as well as cases of rape against female detainees in state custody. Detainees have also reported the use of racist verbal abuse. [...] ACJPS has also documented cases where individuals are believed to have been tortured to death or tortured before being killed. In April and May 2014 ACJPS documented the deaths of at least four detainees in Military Intelligence custody in South Darfur and Blue Nile states. [...] Hundreds of Sudanese have also been subjected to flogging and corporal punishment under Sudan’s Public Order laws, legislation governing vague “indecent” and “immoral” behaviour. Sudan’s public order laws disproportionately impact women, and sentences are often handed down in summary trials without legal representation.⁴¹⁴

The Human Rights and Development Organisation’s (HUDO) annual report covering events in 2015 noted with regards to arbitrary arrests in Blue Nile that:

On June 26th 2015, at around 1:00 pm, NISS officers arrested Mohamed Mahmoud Issa, 19 years a student at Blue Nile University. He was taken from Ganees East market by three NISS officers and he was released on the same day at around 6:00 pm after being tortured. Mohamed was arrested for the alleged comments he made on 22nd June 2015 while engaging in an argument with a colleague named Aggaba about the attempted arrest of President Bashir in South Africa. Eight people (one of them called Mahadi) took turns in beating him with a black water pipe which caused injuries on his back.⁴¹⁵

With regards to the situation in Blue Nile, in December 2015, “SUDO (UK) monitors reported the release of 150 civilians who had been detained in containers within the Sudanese Armed Forces military garrison in Demazin. Since their release monitors have obtained personal testimony from some of those detained”.⁴¹⁶ SUDO further noted:

⁴¹¹ Small Arms Survey, [Two Fronts, One War: Evolution of the Two Areas Conflict](#), 2014–15, August 2015, *Arbitrary arrests and rape as government tactics* p.52-3

⁴¹² United States Department of State, [Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2015 – Sudan](#), 13 April 2016, *Section 1.c. Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment* and *Section 1.e. Political Prisoners and Detainees*

⁴¹³ Amnesty International, [Don’t We Matter? Four years of unrelenting attacks against civilians in Sudan’s South Kordofan State \[AFR 54/2162/2015\]](#), 17 August 2015, *Restrictions on Human Rights Monitoring* p.39

⁴¹⁴ African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies, [Sudan: On the international day in support of torture survivors, end torture and repeal enabling legislation](#), 26 June 2015

⁴¹⁵ HUDO Centre, [Human Rights Situation in South Kordofan and Blue Nile States of Sudan January-December 2015](#), 20 March 2016, *2.0.2 Arbitrary Arrest in Blue Nile* p.19

⁴¹⁶ SUDO UK, [HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES IN SUDAN OVER THE MONTH OF JANUARY 2016](#), 18 March 2016, *Blue Nile*

“The conditions of detention were terrible. Groups of Military Intelligence would torture us by beating us with leather straps or rubber hoses or burning our skins and threatening to rape us. [...] “During my detention they beat me many times with leather whips and they tied me to the bed in the torture room.” – Monitors observed that this individual had swelling all over his back and hands because of being tied down and beaten. “During this period Military Intelligence tortured me by burning me with fire, that is they would heat iron in the fire and put it on my body, or they would burn plastic and put it on my body so that now I am covered with open wounds.” [...]⁴¹⁷

SUDO further reported that on 20th December 2015, “Members of the National Intelligence and Security Services killed Mohamed Juma after severely beating him in Yarada area. Mohamed Juma has been detained by security services under the pretext that he was a member of the SPLM-N”.⁴¹⁸

SUDO reported that on 18 February 2016 in Blue Nile State “Noor Abdul-Fadil, a 25 year-old from Lot area, died two days after being arrested and tortured by the National Intelligence and Security Services (NISS) located in Al-Tadamon locality. Noor Abdul-Fadil was arrested by an officer first lieutenant under the pretext that he had purchased a rifle”.⁴¹⁹ The same SUDO document further reported that “A further source, who had been detained for roughly five months, confirmed previous accounts describing torture conducted by members of Military Intelligence on detainees in Demazin. He referenced the pouring of cold water over detainees’ bodies, which were followed by severe beatings. He further noted that detainees remain in terrible conditions and are suffering from hunger and disease”.⁴²⁰

6. Human rights situation: civil and political rights

6.1. Freedom of expression, association, and assembly

For information on the domestic legislative instruments pertaining to civil and political rights and on freedom of expression, association and assembly in Sudan in general, see the ARC publication [Darfur Country Report](#), October 2015, 7. *Civil and Political Rights*, and 7.1. *Freedom of expression, association, and assembly*.

6.1.1. Political opposition parties and activists

For information on the treatment of SPLM/A-N members see the section [6.1.3. \(Suspected\) members of the SPLM/A-N](#).

In its ‘Concluding observations’ the UN Human Rights Committee reported in August 2014 that it was “concerned at allegations indicating that State officials have subjected opponents and perceived opponents of the Government, human rights defenders and other activists to harassment, intimidation, arbitrary arrest and detention, and torture and ill-treatment (arts. 6, 7, 9, 19, 21 and

⁴¹⁷ SUDO UK, [HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES IN SUDAN OVER THE MONTH OF JANUARY 2016](#), 18 March 2016, *Blue Nile*

⁴¹⁸ SUDO UK, [HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES IN SUDAN OVER THE MONTH OF DECEMBER 2015](#), 26 February 2016, *Blue Nile*

⁴¹⁹ SUDO UK, [HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES IN SUDAN OVER THE MONTH OF FEBRUARY 2016](#), 31 March 2016, *Blue Nile*

⁴²⁰ SUDO UK, [HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES IN SUDAN OVER THE MONTH OF FEBRUARY 2016](#), 31 March 2016, *Blue Nile*

22)”.⁴²¹ The September 2014 report of the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in the Sudan documented that “The fear of arbitrary arrests and detentions by the National Intelligence and Security Service continues to be a major cause of intimidation of political opponents and other civil activists in the Sudan. This creates an impediment to the full enjoyment of the right to liberty and security as guaranteed under article 29 of the Sudanese Constitution and article 9 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights to which the Sudan is a State party”.⁴²²

Human Rights Watch reported in March 2016 that “The NISS is the primary instrument Sudan’s government uses to repress civil and political rights. [...] It censors media, monitors organizations, and targets activists and real or perceived political opponents for harassment, interrogations, arrests and detentions, often without charge. Its abusive tactics, such as physical mistreatment and torture, are well-documented by many human rights organizations”.⁴²³ Amnesty International similarly documented in its submission to the 2016 Universal Periodic Review of Sudan that “The NISS has committed numerous human rights violations, including arbitrary arrests and detentions without charge or trial of political activists. Senior political opposition leaders are also frequently arrested by the authorities”.⁴²⁴

A September 2015 joint submission from the African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies (ACJPS), International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), and International Refugee Rights Initiative (IRRI) to the 2016 Universal Periodic Review of Sudan summarises the general situation for political opponents in Sudan as follows

Over the past four years the NISS has used its powers of arrest without charge for up to four-and a half months to arbitrarily detain scores of perceived opponents and other people with real or perceived links to the rebel movements who are often targeted because of their ethnic origin. The NISS routinely holds detainees incommunicado and without charge for prolonged periods, including in excess of the four and a half months permitted the NSA 2010, and has subjected detainees to torture and other forms of ill-treatment. The NISS has also used intimidation and harassment tactics such as repeated summonses and threatening phone calls to frighten perceived political opponents and activists, and refusing individuals permission to leave the country. [...]

Prominent leaders of political opposition parties have been especially targeted by the NISS for detention. A number have been detained incommunicado, often without charge. Others have been charged with serious criminal offences for speaking out against government policy, and released when charges are dropped after a number of months. [...]

Authorities imposed heavy restrictions on political opposition parties and their members by refusing permission for events, cancelling events and arbitrarily detaining members, including senior party leaders. Each year President al-Bashir said promised to release all “political detainees” and ease restrictions on opposition parties and the media. [...]

Penalties that carry corporal punishments have also been used to restrict the right to freedom of expression and association of political opposition members.⁴²⁵

⁴²¹ UN Human Rights Committee, [Concluding observations on the fourth periodic report of Sudan \[CCPR/C/SDN/CO/4\]](#), 19 August 2014, paragraph 22

⁴²² UN, [Report of the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in the Sudan, Mashood A. Baderin*](#), 4 September 2014, paragraph 48

⁴²³ Human Rights Watch, [“Good Girls Don’t Protest” Repression and Abuse of Women Human Rights Defenders, Activists, and Protesters in Sudan](#), 23 March 2016, V. *Sudanese Law and State Repression of Women Activists and Human Rights Defenders* p.47

⁴²⁴ Amnesty International, [Sudan: Dire Human Rights Situation Continues; Amnesty International Submission to the UN Universal Periodic Review, May 2016 \[AFR 54/3532/2016\]](#), 26 February 2016, *ARBITRARY ARRESTS AND USE OF EXCESSIVE FORCE*

⁴²⁵ African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies (ACJPS), International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), and International Refugee Rights Initiative (IRRI), [Submission to the Universal Periodic Review of Sudan 2016](#), September 2015, p.9 -11

The UNITED STATES Department of State report for 2015 further documented with regards to the treatment of political opponents in general in Sudan that:

There were reports of politically motivated disappearances. Unlike in the previous year, this included disappearances in nonconflict (as well as conflict) areas. [...] security forces, government-aligned groups, rebel groups, and ethnic factions continued to torture, beat, and harass suspected political opponents, rebel supporters, and others. [...]

Authorities monitored and impeded political party meetings and activities, restricted political party demonstrations, used excessive force to break them up, and arrested opposition party members. [...]

The authorities, especially NISS, arbitrarily detained political opponents and those believed to sympathize with the opposition. [...]

In cases involving political defendants accused of subverting national security, the accused may be held for as long as four and one-half months, with the possibility of extended detention periods, before being formally charged. [...]

Political prisoners were held in special sections of prisons. [...]

In lieu of formal detention, NISS increasingly called individuals to report to NISS offices for long hours on a daily basis without a stated purpose. Many human rights observers considered this a tactic to harass, intimidate, and disrupt the lives of opposition members and activists, prevent the carrying out of "opposition" activities, and prevent the recording of formal detentions. [...]

Due to lack of access, the actual numbers of political prisoners and detainees could not be confirmed. Human rights monitors reported political prisoners as being in the hundreds; the government claimed it did not have political prisoners. [...]

Security forces detained political opponents incommunicado, without charge, and tortured them. Some political detainees were held in isolation cells in regular prisons, and many were held without access to family or medical treatment. Human rights organizations asserted NISS ran "ghost houses," where it detained opposition and human rights figures without acknowledging they were being held. Such detentions were prolonged at times. [...]

The government continued to arrest or temporarily detain opposition members, especially those belonging to or affiliated with of the Sudan Congress Party, Sudanese Communist Party, and affiliates of the SPLM-N or other opposition groups. Detentions were especially frequent in the period before national elections in April. There were some temporary detentions after elections as well despite the government's assurances that it would create an environment conducive to national dialogue. [...]

The government requires citizens to obtain an exit visa if they wish to depart the country. Issuance was usually pro forma, but the government continued to use the visa requirement to restrict some citizens' travel, especially persons of political or security interest.⁴²⁶

The following non-exhaustive, illustrative incidents of ill-treatment based on political party membership (excluding the SPLM/A-N) in South Kordofan or Blue Nile between 1 July 2014 and 1 April 2016 were found amongst the sources consulted:

The African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies reported that in Blue Nile in October and November 2014:

Four people in Al Damazin, Blue Nile state, were arrested between 22 October and 2 November in connection with the printing and distribution of a statement by the Blue Nile sector of the Sudanese Communist Party, marking the anniversary of Sudan's 1964 "October Revolution". The statement, which called for regime change as a solution to address the problems faced by Sudan, condemned the application of emergency laws and restrictions on fundamental human rights and freedoms in Blue Nile state, and was distributed to mark the anniversary of the 1964 popular uprisings that led to the downfall of Sudan's first military government. Those charged include members of the Communist Party of Sudan as well as the owner of the printing and photocopying business alleged to have printed the statement.

⁴²⁶ United States Department of State, [Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2015 – Sudan](#), 13 April 2016, Section 1.b.- 1.e, Section 2.a. and Section 3

They have been charged under articles 21 (Joint Criminal acts in Execution of Criminal Conspiracy), 50 (Undermining the Constitutional System), 63 (Sedition – Calling for Opposition to Public Authority by use of Violence or Criminal force), 66 (Publication of False News) and 69 (Disturbance of Public Peace) of the 1991 Sudanese Penal Code. Article 50 carries the death penalty. The defendants – Mr. Adil Keryazi, 60 years of age; Mr. Adil Fadulmula, 55 years of age; Mr. Ibrahim Musa, 40 years of age; and Mr. Suiam Ali Osman – are awaiting a trial date set for 16 December.⁴²⁷

Radio Dabanga, reporting on the same cases noted that reportedly Suleiman Ali, secretary-general of the Communist Party in the Blue Nile who was arrested was not allowed to take his medication with him.⁴²⁸ The 2014 UNITED STATES Department of State report indicated that “Between October 22 and November 2, the NISS arrested five members of the Sudanese Communist Party in Blue Nile state. Authorities released one woman but charged the other four members with numerous criminal offenses against the state, including ‘undermining the constitutional system,’ which carries the death penalty. Authorities arrested the individuals in connection with the printing and distribution of a statement by the Blue Nile branch of the Sudanese Communist Party that commemorated the 1964 October revolution in the country”.⁴²⁹

In April 2015 the African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies (ACJPS) reported that “In the months leading up to the elections, ACJPS and FIDH have documented a series of violations, apparently aimed at restricting the ability of independent groups and activists to voice dissenting political views from those of the ruling party. Activists and political opposition party members affiliated with Irhal (Go!), a campaign established by the opposition coalition, the National Consensus Forces (NCF), calling on supporters to boycott the elections, have been subjected to harassment, arbitrary arrest and ill-treatment by security forces”.⁴³⁰ The same report described the following such incident in Blue Nile State: “On 15 February [2015] three youth activists were arrested by the NISS in Al Damazin, Blue Nile state, and interrogated about their relationship to the Irhal campaign. They were released the following day”.⁴³¹

The Human Rights and Development Organisation’s (HUDO) annual report covering events in 2015 noted with regards to arbitrary arrests in Blue Nile that:

On April 11th 2015, MI [military intelligence] in Damazin arrested the following and released them on 13th April 2015:

1. Azhari Alkhalifa, 30 years old from Madinah,
2. Mohamed Omer, 32 years old, from Madinah 9,
3. Alterefi Mohamed, 35 years old, from Madinah 9.
4. Arbab Abunemah, 35 years old from Alkharabat,

The four detainees were former members of SPLM-N. Together with other people, they formed the National Movement for Peace and Development Party (NMPDP). According to NISS, their activity during the campaigns of the recent election was considered to be a threat. [...]

On April 13th 2015, NISS arrested three students who are members of Umma National Party from Geli Village of Tadamon locality. The detainees are political activists at Blue Nile University; they were accused of supporting Arhal26 campaign. They were released on 18th-April-2015. Their names are;

1. Ali Dafallah, graduate of Blue Nile University,
2. Saleh Essa, Student at Blue Nile University,

⁴²⁷ African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies, [Sudan detains political activists and human rights defenders to silence criticism](#), 10 December 2014

⁴²⁸ Radio Dabanga, [Arrests in Blue Nile’s Communist Party continue, Sudan](#), 7 November 2014

⁴²⁹ United States Department of State, [Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2014 – Sudan](#), 25 June 2015, Section 1.e

⁴³⁰ African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies, [Detentions, civil society closures, media restrictions on eve of Sudan elections](#), 12 April 2015

⁴³¹ African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies, [Detentions, civil society closures, media restrictions on eve of Sudan elections](#), 12 April 2015

3. Hussein Yusuf, Blue Nile University.⁴³²

SUDO reported that on 13 April 2015 NISS detained five persons in Roseris town for the reason that they had previously been members of the SPLM.⁴³³ The African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies further explained that:

Five individuals, including two political candidates belonging to the SPLM – Peace Wing, were arrested from their homes in Al Rosairis area in Al Damazin, Blue Nile state by the NISS.

- Sidig Ahmed Sidig, (m), a candidate for the State Assembly for Blue Nile. Mr. Sidig was released the same day.
- Al Jaili Abdalla, (m). Mr. Abdalla was released on 14 April.
- Mohamed Juda, (m). Mr. Juda is still detained by the NISS.
- Sidig Almugdam, (m), a candidate for the State Assembly for Blue Nile. Mr. Almugdam is still detained by the NISS.
- Asir Hamad, (m). Mr. Hamad is still detained by the NISS.
- Mr. Juda, Mr. Almugdam, and Mr. Hamad are still being held at NISS offices in Al Damazein. They have not been allowed any visits from their families or lawyers.

The SPLM – Peace Wing is a faction of the SPLM that emerged after the outbreak of conflict in South Kordofan and Blue Nile in 2011. The party is sympathetic to the government, but has been increasingly under pressure from the government since the SPLM – N's announcement to boycott the elections.

ACJPS has recently learnt that George Khamjan, a SPLM – Peace Wing candidate for the State Assembly for Blue Nile, was arrested on 5 April 2015 by the NISS from Al Shahid Afandi neighborhood of Al Rosairis. Mr. Khamjan had reportedly called for a boycott to the elections. Mr. Khamjan remains in detention.

Abdulrahman Joni, a member of the political opposition party, SPLM – Peace Wing, was abducted from in front of his home in Al Rosairis by unidentified men in a white land cruiser on 12 April. His whereabouts remain unknown. Mr. Joni is contesting for a seat on the State Assembly of Blue Nile. The party submitted a memorandum to the NEC informing them of Mr. Joni's abduction.⁴³⁴

6.1.2. Lawyers as political opposition members and activists

Very limited information was found on the treatment of lawyers in Blue Nile or South Kordofan amongst the sources consulted within the time frame for this report. Radio Tamazuj reported that "There are reports from Blue Nile state that Sudanese security agents have conducted mass arrests of traditional leaders after they complained about land sales in the area. A source that requested anonymity told Radio Tamazuj that El Mak Adel-Malik Adam Hamdan of El Keili North in the Kurmuk locality and Omda Bade Khalifa Kabash Gali have been arrested. The lawyer El Agib Zarouq was also allegedly arrested".⁴³⁵

It should also be noted that as the UNITED STATES Department of State annual human rights report covering events of 2015 documented "Lawyers wishing to practice are required to maintain membership in the government-controlled Sudanese Bar Association. The government continued to arrest and harass members of the legal profession whom it considered political opponents".⁴³⁶

⁴³² HUDO Centre, [Human Rights Situation in South Kordofan and Blue Nile States of Sudan January-December 2015](#), 20 March 2016, 2.0.2 Arbitrary Arrest in Blue Nile p.18

⁴³³ SUDO UK, [SITUATION UPDATES BLUE NILE AND SOUTH KORDOFAN 12TH AND 13TH APRIL 2015](#), 14 April 2015

⁴³⁴ African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies, [Sudan's Electoral Period Marred by Arrests and Incommunicado Detention; insecurity in Darfur](#), 17 April 2015

⁴³⁵ Radio Tamazuj, [Blue Nile traditional leaders allegedly arrested over land dispute](#), 24 November 2014

⁴³⁶ United States Department of State, [Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2015 – Sudan](#), 13 April 2016, Section 1. E. Denial of Fair Public Trial

For information on the treatment of lawyers in Sudan in general, see ARC, [Darfur Country Report](#), October 2015, 1.3. *Lawyers as political opposition members and activists*.

6.1.3. (Suspected) members of the SPLM/A-N

This section presents non-exhaustive, illustrative incidents of ill-treatment based on perceived membership to SPLM/A-N in South Kordofan or Blue Nile between 1 July 2014 and 1 April 2016. For information on perceived *affiliation* to the SPLM-A/N see the subsequent section [6.1.4. Individuals \(perceived to be\) associated with or supportive of the SPLM/A](#).

The UNITED STATES Department of State report covering 2014 indicated that “Reports continued that military and intelligence members of the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) abducted or detained civilians with connections to the Sudanese People’s Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N) in the Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile states”.⁴³⁷ The same source further reported that “In December 2014 security officers arrested Farouq Abu Eissa, 78, head of the National Consensus Forces; Amin Mekki Medani, 75, former president of the Confederation of Civil Society Organizations; and SPLM-N advisor Farah Ibrahim Mohamed Agar, 60, for their support of the ‘Sudan’s Call,’ a political declaration by a number of both armed and political opposition groups that called for political reforms and a transitional government. [...] Authorities held Farah Agar in an undisclosed location and denied him visits. No formal charges were brought against Agar, nor was he brought to trial. Under significant international and domestic pressure, the minister of justice exercised discretionary powers to release the individuals on the eve of national elections on April 9”.⁴³⁸

The Human Rights and Development Organisation’s (HUDO) annual report covering events in 2015 noted with regards to arbitrary arrests in South Kordofan that:

On Feb. 2nd 2015, a group of Military Intelligence (MI) soldiers from Al Abbasiya town arrested Adam Essa Agoumy, 35 years, who is a member of SPLM-N. He was detained from his village called Mabsout. The MI soldiers came in three vehicles (land cruiser) when they reached Mabsout, they immediately shot firing in the air before arresting him.

He was later transported to SAF headquarter in El Obeid by then. Later they transferred him to Al Abbasiya and filed a criminal case against him, accusing him under article (130) Intentional murder according to Sudan criminal Act 1991. They accused him that he killed a civilian at Moreib village in 2011. The defendant’s lawyer objected the accusation. However, the procedures seem to prove unfair trial since the Judge did not give the defendant’s lawyer enough time for his defense argument. He also refused to hear any testimony from the defendant’s witnesses. On August 2015, he was charged to death sentences. Days after his lawyer died in suspicious criminal event. Up to date no appeal done in his case yet, the appeal constituted period is over.⁴³⁹

A May 2015 Amnesty International Urgent Action reporting on the arrest of South Kordofan human rights activist Mohamed Musa Mohamed Dawud stated that “Since the beginning of the conflict in South Kordofan in June 2011 thousands of people have disappeared and thousands others have been arrested by SAF and other Sudan security forces on suspicion of being sympathetic to, or members of Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM/A). The SPLM/A report that at least 3000 of their members have been disappeared since June 2011”.⁴⁴⁰ The UNITED STATES Department of State report for 2015 noted that “There were reports of individuals detained due to their actual or

⁴³⁷ United States Department of State, [Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2014 – Sudan](#), 25 June 2015, Section 1.b

⁴³⁸ United States Department of State, [Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2015 – Sudan](#), 13 April 2016, Section 1.3. *Political Prisoners and Detainees*

⁴³⁹ HUDO Centre, [Human Rights Situation in South Kordofan and Blue Nile States of Sudan January-December 2015](#), 20 March 2016, 2.0.1 *Arbitrary Arrest in South Kordofan* p.13

⁴⁴⁰ Amnesty International, [Urgent Action: Detained Activist at Risk of Torture](#), 20 May 2015

assumed support of antigovernment forces, such as the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N)”⁴⁴¹.

Radio Dabanga noted that in September 2015 “The review office of the National Supreme Court of Khartoum has upheld the ruling of the execution for Malik Agar, the head of the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N), and 16 other officials in the rebel movement. The seventeen members were tried in absentia in August 2014, and sentenced to death by hanging by the court in Sinja in January. The court in Khartoum also upheld the execution of Manallah Hussein Huda on Thursday, and the sentence of life imprisonment of 46 other members of the SPLM-N”⁴⁴².

SUDO documented that in December 2015 in Blue Nile state “Members of the National Intelligence and Security Services killed Mohamed Juma after severely beating him in Yarada area. Mohamed Juma has been detained by security services under the pretext that he was a member of the SPLM-N”⁴⁴³. The same source reported that in January 2016, SUDO “Military Intelligence forces situated in Demazin arrested Mohamed Ken Al-Ziaab, a 34-year-old member of the Ingessana ethnic group, for suspicion of belonging to the SPLM-N”⁴⁴⁴.

6.1.4. Individuals (perceived to be) associated with or supportive of the SPLM/A

6.1.4.1. General

6.1.4.1.1. Two Areas

The Human Rights and Development Organisation’s (HUDO) annual report covering events in 2015 noted that “The human rights situation had worsened because of many arbitrary arrests in both states of SK and BN. Many civilians were frequently arrested and accused of being affiliated or associating with SPLA/N. These arrests were carried out by the National Intelligence and Security Services (NISS), Military Intelligence (MI) and the allied government militias. Among those under detention are women and children”⁴⁴⁵.

In an August 2015 report on the ‘Evolution of the Two Areas Conflict, 2014–15’ the Small Arms Survey noted with regards to arbitrary arrests and rape as government tactics in the Two Areas that:

The Small Arms Survey has found evidence of abuses committed by local authorities (PDF, SAF, and others) against civilians in government-held areas, particularly against groups of people suspected of supporting the SPLA-N. According to testimony collected from IDPs and in the refugee camps, repression is particularly acute in areas that voted for the SPLM in the 2010 elections, such as the Ingessana areas in Bau county, Blue Nile. IDPs who arrived in Bau from the countryside were asked by county executive director Eltom Abdel Rahim to pay SDP 250 to stay in the area and were forced to flee when they were unable to pay. An eyewitness interviewed in Maban said that IDPs from the Ingessana tribe in Dindiro did not receive any relief assistance, because ‘sons of the rebellion did not deserve even a glass of water’. According to a reportedly leaked memo (unverified) from GoS intelligence seen by the author, a force of dismissed SAF soldiers and officers and SPLA-N defectors ‘led by 1st Lieutenant Shirra and 2nd Lieutenant Jafar Omer from Khor Adaar, under the auspices of Major General Yahya Mohamed Khair (the Blue Nile Governor after Malik Agar’s removal in 2011) and

⁴⁴¹United States Department of State, [Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2015 – Sudan](#), 13 April 2016, Section 1.d Arbitrary Arrest and Section 1.g. Two Areas

⁴⁴² Radio Dabanga, [Death sentence for 17 SPLM-N leaders confirmed by Sudan court](#), 14 September 2015

⁴⁴³ SUDO UK, [HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES IN SUDAN OVER THE MONTH OF DECEMBER 2015](#), 26 February 2016, Blue Nile

⁴⁴⁴ SUDO UK, [HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES IN SUDAN OVER THE MONTH OF JANUARY 2016](#), 18 March 2016, Blue Nile

⁴⁴⁵ HUDO Centre, [Human Rights Situation in South Kordufan and Blue Nile States of Sudan January-December 2015](#), 20 March 2016, 1.6 Statement of the problem p.12

Abdel Rah' were sent from Damazin 'to loot and kill the Ingessana cattle and terrorize the girls and the wives of their sons who joined the SPLA-N'. The militia group of Ismeil Omer Kurra, a Fellata, is particularly active in the Ingessana Mountains against the local people, with several cases of abuses being reported.

The little information coming from government areas indicates that people from the Two Areas suspected of supporting the rebellion are arrested and kept in NISS facilities, in some cases tortured and raped, and their property looted.⁴⁴⁶

The UNITED STATES Department of State report for 2015 noted that "There were reports of individuals detained due to their actual or assumed support of antigovernment forces, such as the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N) [...] Local NGOs reported that some women were detained because of their association with men suspected of being SPLM-N supporters. [...] There were reports of physical abuse and violent interrogations of SPLM-N-affiliated individuals in Kadugli prison and military installations".⁴⁴⁷ The same source further noted that "all parties to the conflicts in Darfur and the Two Areas were accused of perpetrating torture and other human rights violations and abuses. Government forces abused persons detained in connection with armed conflict as well as internally displaced persons (IDPs) suspected of having links to rebel groups".⁴⁴⁸

6.1.4.1.2. South Kordofan

In May 2015 Amnesty International stated that "Since the beginning of the conflict in South Kordofan in June 2011 thousands of people have disappeared and thousands others have been arrested by SAF and other Sudan security forces on suspicion of being sympathetic to, or members of Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM/A)".⁴⁴⁹

Amnesty International considered in an August 2015 report on attacks against civilians in Sudan's South Kordofan State that "The Emergency and Public Safety Act gives SAF and other security agencies unfettered discretion to arrest anyone perceived as a member or supporter of the SPLM/A-N. Those arrested face a very high risk of being tortured in detention, a practice which Amnesty International has documented".⁴⁵⁰

According to the April 2015 International Refugee Rights Initiative report on 'Civilian perspectives on the conflict in Sudan's Southern Kordofan State', "a common tactic used by the government forces has been to deliberately target communities that support the SPLMN or are affiliated with it".⁴⁵¹ The same source further noted:

Since June 2011, aerial bombardments (mostly by Antonov cargo planes using barrel bombs) and artillery shelling by the SAF – with recent ground reinforcements from the notorious Rapid Support

⁴⁴⁶ Small Arms Survey, [Two Fronts, One War: Evolution of the Two Areas Conflict](#), 2014–15, August 2015, *Arbitrary arrests and rape as government tactics* p.51-2

⁴⁴⁷ United States Department of State, [Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2015 – Sudan](#), 13 April 2016, *Section 1.d Arbitrary Arrest and Section 1.g. Two Areas*

⁴⁴⁸ United States Department of State, [Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2015 – Sudan](#), 13 April 2016, *Section 1. G. Use of Excessive Force and Other Abuses in Internal Conflicts*

⁴⁴⁹ Amnesty International, [Urgent Action: Detained Activist at Risk of Torture](#), 20 May 2015

⁴⁵⁰ Amnesty International, [Don't We Matter? Four years of unrelenting attacks against civilians in Sudan's South Kordofan State \[AFR 54/2162/2015\]](#), 17 August 2015, *Restrictions on Human Rights Monitoring* p.39

⁴⁵¹ International Refugee Rights Initiative (IRRI), ["We just want a rest from war." Civilian perspectives on the conflict in Sudan's Southern Kordofan State](#), April 2015, *Background* p.11

Forces (a reinvention of the infamous janjaweed militias) – have persisted, although at varying levels of intensity. This has had a devastating effect on the civilian population in the area [...].⁴⁵²

Amnesty International further explained in a September 2015 report that “Most of the South Kordofan population are from nomadic Misseriya and Hawazma Arab tribes and agriculturalist African Nuba communities. Having faced years marginalisation by governments of Sudan many support South Sudan and some fought alongside the SPLA during the civil war”.⁴⁵³ The same source further noted that “People have been living in fear in South Kordofan since the Government of Sudan began to attack them in an attempt to stem support for the armed rebel movement - the Sudanese People’s Liberation Army - North (SPLA-N). Determined at any cost to defeat the armed rebel movement, the Sudanese military are waging an unrelenting campaign of aerial and ground attacks against people living in rebel controlled areas. The Government sends ‘Antonov’ planes to target areas where people live and work – there are no military targets in sight”.⁴⁵⁴

In a March 2016 article Radio Dabanga reported that “Both the Sudanese government and the SPLM-N are targeting tribes and individuals in the state on the basis of ethnicity, a workshop on the effects of the civil war on the population of South Kordofan, held in Khartoum on Monday, concluded”.⁴⁵⁵

The following are non-exhaustive, illustrative incidents of ill-treatment from 1 July 2014 to 1 April 2016 owing to a perceived association with the SPLM/A-N in South Kordofan State:

- September 2014: The UNITED STATES Department of State detailed that “Human rights defenders reported that in September military intelligence arrested five individuals: Eisa Abbas, Gibriel Abbas, Abdalla Khamis, Abboud Obeid, and Abboud al-Tijani in Allaggori village, Southern Kordofan. Military intelligence accused the detainees of being SPLM-N supporters or affiliates. The detainees were transferred to Dilling. As of October they remained in detention without charge”.⁴⁵⁶
- 24 December 2014: The Human Rights and Development Organisation (HUDO) reported that “Khaleil Yousif Adam, 16 Years of age was arrested from Elfaid by MI [Military Intelligence][...]. On arrival, they started beating him then they took him to their Military base. The following day Dec. 27th 2014, the community leader (Sheikh) went to the Military base to inquire about the boy. The officer in-charge informed him that, this child has a brother who joined the SPLA-N and they are suspecting him to have connections with the rebel brother. The detained child was forced to work at the Commander’s house as a servant up to the time of his release on Jan 9th, 2015”.⁴⁵⁷
- January 2015: The African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies reported that “the NISS arrested Salwa Kuku Kome, (f), from her home in Al Dalang. Ms. Kome is accused of communicating with her husband, who is allegedly a member of the SPLM-N. In March 2015, Ms. Kone remained in NISS, had reportedly been flogged, and had been refused family visits”.⁴⁵⁸

⁴⁵² International Refugee Rights Initiative (IRRI), [“We just want a rest from war.” Civilian perspectives on the conflict in Sudan’s Southern Kordofan State](#), April 2015, *Background* p.11

⁴⁵³ Amnesty International, [Sudan: People’s lives in South Kordofan do matter](#), September 2015

⁴⁵⁴ Amnesty International, [Sudan: People’s lives in South Kordofan do matter](#), September 2015

⁴⁵⁵ Radio Dabanga, [Sudan: Population of South Kordofan ‘Victims of Both Sides’](#), 27 March 2016

⁴⁵⁶ United States Department of State, [Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2014 – Sudan](#), 25 June 2015, *Section 1.g Two Areas*

⁴⁵⁷ HUDO Centre, [Human Rights Situation in South Kordofan and Blue Nile States of Sudan January-December 2015](#), 20 March 2016, *2.2.1 Child Violations in South Kordofan* p.22

⁴⁵⁸ African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies, [Sudan Human Rights Monitor December 2014 – January 2015](#), January 2015

- January 2015: The African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies reported “Authorities in the Nuba Mountains have also banned the sale of specific commodities. On Mondays and Thursdays merchants are not allowed to sell sugar, lintel, flour, sorghum, gasoline and benzene. Merchants must obtain permission from the NISS prior to conducting any transactions on commodities on the pretext that they could be sent to SPLM-N controlled areas”.⁴⁵⁹
- 26 March 2015: HUDO reported that “a group of MI soldiers arrested four women from Dilling Market. They were coming from Kalara village for shopping. Their names are indicated below;
 1. Amnah Mirga 70 years
 2. Ishragha Hussein 22 years
 3. Noura Dawoud 65 years
 4. Taghawa Irin 65 years
 They were apprehended at SAF Head Quarters in Dilling town. They were accused of supplying the SPLA-N with items they were shopping. Relatives of the four women tried to bail them out but MI refused. The four women were later released”.⁴⁶⁰
- 1 June 2015: According to SUDO, “The National Intelligence and Security Services (NISS) detained Salah Yousif Ibrahim, a shepherd, whilst he was returning from al-Abassiya market in South Kordofan. No reasons were given for his arrest; however, sources suggest the NISS suspect him of cooperating with SPLM-N”.⁴⁶¹
- 6 June 2015: HUDO reported that “a number of armed soldiers from Rashad PDF headed by sergeant/ Alradi Osman Aldaw on MI vehicle attacked a home of Mohamed Idris Komi, 52 years old. [...] After one month in detention, 5th July 2015 Mohamed was released without his cattle and money. He tried to open case at Rashad police station but police officers could not allow. Later he went with the community leader and others to the governor Musa Yunis requesting for his belongings but, the governor intimidated him that he would be killed for associating with SPLA-N”.⁴⁶²
- 1 September 2015: SUDO noted that “NISS officials violated the religious rights of Mariam Osman upon the death of her husband. Her husband was an SPLM-N soldier fighting in the bush, and in accordance with Islamic teaching, Mariam Osman is to stay at home for four months and 10 days. In the following days of her husband’s death she was approached by NISS officials who demanded her to cease mourning her dead husband due to the fact that he was a rebel. Consequently, Mariam Osman is unable to mourn her husband’s death for fear of retribution, and has had to cancel any planned ceremonies”.⁴⁶³
- Late September 2015: The Sudan Consortium reported that “SAF forces attacked and killed three people at cross-line markets, to discourage the sale of commodities to people in the SPLM/A-N held areas”.⁴⁶⁴
- 3 October 2015: SUDO reported that in Teiba checkpoint in South Kordofan, “A pharmacist was arrested by Military Intelligence on the accusation that he was a member of SPLM-N

⁴⁵⁹ African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies, [Sudan Human Rights Monitor December 2014 – January 2015](#), January 2015

⁴⁶⁰ HUDO Centre, [Human Rights Situation in South Kordofan and Blue Nile States of Sudan January-December 2015](#), 20 March 2016, 2.0.1 Arbitrary Arrest in South Kordofan p.13

⁴⁶¹ SUDO UK, [HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES IN SUDAN OVER THE MONTH OF JUNE 2015](#), 1 July 2015, South Kordofan

⁴⁶² HUDO Centre, [Human Rights Situation in South Kordofan and Blue Nile States of Sudan January-December 2015](#), 20 March 2016, 2.0.1 Arbitrary Arrest in South Kordofan p.13

⁴⁶³ SUDO UK, [HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES IN SUDAN OVER THE MONTH OF SEPTEMBER 2015](#), 1 October 2015, South Kordofan

⁴⁶⁴ Sudan Consortium [HUMANITARIAN UPDATE – October 2015](#), October 2015

after complaining about the aforementioned Military Intelligence officers illegally confiscating his medicines”⁴⁶⁵.

6.1.4.1.3. Blue Nile

In a December 2014 report based on a five-day research trip during which 42 refugees in South Sudan’s Maban County, and six internally displaced people inside Blue Nile state were interviewed, Human Rights Watch reported that “The majority of refugees interviewed said soldiers carried out raids and house-to-house searches, ostensibly in search of rebels, during which they also beat, sexually abused, and arbitrarily detained civilians and stole their personal property”⁴⁶⁶. Furthermore:

Many of those who fled Khor Maganza said the soldiers were joined by damseri, meaning the RSF. The RSF carried out massive ground attacks on dozens of villages in south and north Darfur earlier in 2014, burning and looting homes and shops and killing and robbing civilians, targeting areas where they accused the population of sympathizing with the rebels.

Abdelrahman, 30, said the forces periodically “would come to your house and they would beat people. They would ask many questions like: ‘Do you have brothers? Are they with SPLA-North?’ They came in trucks and were wearing uniforms, searching the houses. They took telephones.”

Mohammed, a 49-year-old man from Khor Maganza said the RSF raided his home four times.

The last time they arrived in pick-up trucks with machine guns, surrounded the camp [town], came in, and started beating people for no reason.... They said my brother was with the rebels. Four soldiers beat me. They asked me to lie down on the ground and beat me with sticks and their feet. I was in pain for many days.

Jalila, a 19-year-old from Kumreek, also lived in Khor Maganza and recalled a similar raid, during which her brother was arrested:

They were going to many houses and arresting the men. They were accusing us of feeding the SPLA-North.... I saw the soldiers come. They were many in groups of three or four. They entered houses and asked for phones and numbers and looked through our belongings.⁴⁶⁷

The same source further noted that “Most described the government-held areas they left as camp-like settings in which they were forced to live in close proximity to government military barracks. They said that soldiers or government-aligned militia used force to impose curfews and restrictions on movement and food purchases. The soldiers routinely accused them of links to the rebel SPLA-North, and carried out various abuses including stealing their crops or livestock. Some reported attempts by soldiers to recruit children under 15 into the army, although none of those interviewed said the recruitment attempts had affected their immediate families”⁴⁶⁸. For further information on the recruitment of children, see [8.1. Recruitment and use of children](#).

SUDO reported that during May 2015, “Monitors have recently recorded the displacement of 1088 persons during the month of May from the villages of Magnza, Musfa, and Begis to Khor Berng in Roseris locality. The displacement was the result of the destruction of the villages of Mediem Al-Jabal, Magnza and Begis by the Sudanese Army and pro-government militias after accusing the population of having relations with SPLM-N”⁴⁶⁹.

⁴⁶⁵ SUDO UK, [HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES IN SUDAN OVER THE MONTH OF OCTOBER 2015](#), 1 November 2015, South Kordofan

⁴⁶⁶ Human Rights Watch, [Sudan: Soldiers, Militias Killing, Raping Civilians](#), 15 December 2014

⁴⁶⁷ Human Rights Watch, [Sudan: Soldiers, Militias Killing, Raping Civilians](#), 15 December 2014

⁴⁶⁸ Human Rights Watch, [Sudan: Soldiers, Militias Killing, Raping Civilians](#), 15 December 2014

⁴⁶⁹ SUDO UK, [HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES IN SUDAN OVER THE MONTH OF OCTOBER 2015](#), 1 November 2015, South Kordofan

Reporting on the July 2015 forced displacement of civilians in the villages of Al-Noranyia and Morek in Blue Nile state by members of the government's Military Intelligence and the Popular Defence Forces, SUDO considered that "Both groups of villagers were forcibly displaced as a form of collective punishment following government accusations that they provided intelligence and food to the SPLM-N. The residents all belong to the Ingessena ethnic group".⁴⁷⁰ Reportedly according to the same source, 4,000 civilians were forcibly displaced from ant, Khor al-Dom, Khor Adar and Dereing, in Bao locality, by a combined force from the Government's Military Intelligence and the NISS, having been "accused of providing intelligence and supplies to the SPLM-N".⁴⁷¹ Civilians in Heteiyo, Kelto, Kernkern, Dokan Ragrek, Daglok, and Abego, in Kurmuk locality were also reported to have been forcibly displaced in July 2015, "perceived by the Government to be providing support to the SPLM-N".⁴⁷²

The African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies (ACJPS) reported in June 2015 that "People have also reported suspicions that the Military Intelligence of the SAF is intercepting private correspondence of people with family members living in SPLM – N controlled areas. On 15 May 2015 SAF intelligence arrested Inam Ali, (f), a tea seller from Al Damazein market, near the Forest Administration building. She was interrogated regarding phone calls she had received from a relative living in an SPLM – N controlled area. She was released the same evening".⁴⁷³

A September 2015 joint submission from the African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies (ACJPS), International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), and International Refugee Rights Initiative (IRRI) to the 2016 Universal Periodic Review of Sudan reported that "In Blue Nile, Government forces arbitrarily detained residents, raped women and girls, and restricted residents' movements, farming, and access to food. Entire communities have been displaced by Government forces in what appears to be collective punishment for their perceived support to the rebel movements based on ethnic identity".⁴⁷⁴

The following are non-exhaustive, illustrative incidents of ill-treatment from 1 July 2014 to 1 April 2016 owing to a perceived association with the SPLM/A-N in Blue Nile State:

- 25 August 2014: over 50 civilians arrested in Agadi, accused of spying for the SPLM-N.⁴⁷⁵
- 1 September 2014: the SAF and Popular Defence Forces attacked Samsorah village, Bao locality. Ten women and girls were raped and a local community leader arrested. The joint forces reportedly told the residents that they were the "children" of the SPLM-N.⁴⁷⁶
- 13 May 2015: Military Intelligence (MI) arrested Hassan Mustafaon suspicion that he had been wounded in SPLM–N and SAF fighting, owing to a long term injury to his left leg.⁴⁷⁷
- 13 May 2015: MI arrested and physically assaulted Ms. Elham Ali Shikan, a tea Maker/seller. On May 16th 2015 she was re-arrested with her sister Ms. Ena'm Ali Shikan. They were accused of spying for SPLA-N but were released on the same day.⁴⁷⁸

⁴⁷⁰ SUDO UK, [HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES IN SUDAN OVER THE MONTH OF JUNE 2015](#), 1 July 2015, *Blue Nile*

⁴⁷¹ SUDO UK, [HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES IN SUDAN OVER THE MONTH OF JUNE 2015](#), 1 July 2015, *Blue Nile*

⁴⁷² SUDO UK, [HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES IN SUDAN OVER THE MONTH OF JUNE 2015](#), 1 July 2015, *Blue Nile*

⁴⁷³ African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies, [Sudan forcibly displaces and sets villages on fire in Blue Nile; civilians presumed to be affiliated with rebels detained incommunicado](#), 17 June 2015

⁴⁷⁴ African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies (ACJPS), International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), and International Refugee Rights Initiative (IRRI), [Submission to the Universal Periodic Review of Sudan 2016](#), September 2015, *Human rights violations in the context of armed conflict Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile p.5*

⁴⁷⁵ Radio Tamazuj, [Sudan security agents arrest over 50 SPLA-N suspects in Aqadi](#), 25 August 2014

⁴⁷⁶ African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies, [Sudan must stop attacks on civilians in Blue Nile state and guarantee safety of detainees](#), 23 September 2014

⁴⁷⁷ African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies, [Sudan forcibly displaces and sets villages on fire in Blue Nile; civilians presumed to be affiliated with rebels detained incommunicado](#), 17 June 2015

- 19 May 2015: Siragedin Hassan Has'an, a civilian trader, was arrested in Kurmuk by MI, accused of communicating with SPLM-N leaders.⁴⁷⁹
- 21 May 2015: Adam Omer, an employee of the Forestry Department in the Ministry of Agriculture, was arrested on suspicion of providing SPLM-N with intelligence.⁴⁸⁰
- 23 May 2015, NISS arrested Altayeb Yagoub, a retired Sudan Armed Force soldier from Arkaweet, accused of conspiring and planning the attacks of SPLA- N.⁴⁸¹
- 23 May 2015: Salah Alradhi Ragab, a member of the Ingessana and relative of Malik Agar, was arrested in Alzohoor, Demazin on suspicion of communicating with SPLM-N by mobile phone. Reportedly "Many locals believe that the reason for his arrest is solely for being a relative of Malik Agar, the chair of SPLM-N".⁴⁸²
- 2 June 2015: MI arrested two pastoralists accused of spying for the SPLM–Nand detained them incommunicado at the Fourth Infantry Division.⁴⁸³
- 16 June 2015: NISS arrested two cattle herders, both Ingessena, accused of smuggling goods to SPLM-N controlled areas and confiscated all commercial goods in their possession.⁴⁸⁴
- 20 June 2015: security officials arrested Osman Suleiman Taworfrom Gesan, anIngessena, and confiscated trading goods. He was accused of smuggling goods to SPLM-N.⁴⁸⁵
- 24 June 2015: NISS arrested Abuelgasim Sabir Norein of the Funj ethnicity whilst he was receiving a money transfer. He was accused of collaborating and receiving funds from the SPLM-N, based on the fact that he recently bought a new car.⁴⁸⁶
- 24 June 2015, NISS arrested Gasim Sabir from Damazin, accused of having purchased his vehicle using money from SPLA-N.⁴⁸⁷
- July 2015 2015: Alitaa Younis was detained following accusations that as shepherd he sold the SPLM-N milk.⁴⁸⁸
- 8 July 2015: Hassan Al-Mardi was arrested after presenting MI with a Kalashnikov he had found in his farm situated in Belang. The officials accused him of belonging to SPLM-N, held him in solitary confinement and subjected him to torture.⁴⁸⁹
- 13 July 2015:MI arrested farmer Hisham Sisi, accused of having a political relation with the SPLM-N due to his farm being near an SPLM-N camp and subjected him to torture: "The accusation is based on the absurd logic that Hisham Sisi has never been arrested, beaten or attacked by SPLM-N troops, thus must be in cohorts with them".⁴⁹⁰

⁴⁷⁸ HUDO Centre, [Human Rights Situation in South Kordufan and Blue Nile States of Sudan January-December 2015](#), 20 March 2016, 2.0.2 Arbitrary Arrest in Blue Nile p.19-20

⁴⁷⁹ SUDO UK, [HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES IN SUDAN OVER THE MONTH OF MAY 2015](#), 31 May 2015, *Blue Nile*

⁴⁸⁰ SUDO UK, [HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES IN SUDAN OVER THE MONTH OF MAY 2015](#), 31 May 2015, *Blue Nile*

⁴⁸¹ HUDO Centre, [Human Rights Situation in South Kordufan and Blue Nile States of Sudan January-December 2015](#), 20 March 2016, 2.0.2 Arbitrary Arrest in Blue Nile p.19-20

⁴⁸² SUDO UK, [HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES IN SUDAN OVER THE MONTH OF MAY 2015](#), 31 May 2015, *Blue Nile*

⁴⁸³ African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies, [Sudan forcibly displaces and sets villages on fire in Blue Nile; civilians presumed to be affiliated with rebels detained incommunicado](#), 17 June 2015

⁴⁸⁴ SUDO UK, [HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES IN SUDAN OVER THE MONTH OF JUNE 2015](#), 1 July 2015, *Blue Nile*

⁴⁸⁵ SUDO UK, [HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES IN SUDAN OVER THE MONTH OF JUNE 2015](#), 1 July 2015, *Blue Nile*

⁴⁸⁶ SUDO UK, [HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES IN SUDAN OVER THE MONTH OF JUNE 2015](#), 1 July 2015, *Blue Nile*

⁴⁸⁷ HUDO Centre, [Human Rights Situation in South Kordufan and Blue Nile States of Sudan January-December 2015](#), 20 March 2016, 2.0.2 Arbitrary Arrest in Blue Nile p.19-20

⁴⁸⁸ SUDO UK, [HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES IN SUDAN OVER THE MONTH OF NOVEMBER 2015](#), 21 December 2015, *Blue Nile*

⁴⁸⁹ SUDO UK, [HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES IN SUDAN OVER THE MONTH OF JULY 2015](#), 1 August 2015, *Blue Nile*

⁴⁹⁰ SUDO UK, [HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES IN SUDAN OVER THE MONTH OF AUGUST 2015](#), 1 September 2015, *Blue Nile*

- 16 August 2015: MI arrested Mohamed Yousif from Demazin, a driver for the World Food Programme who belongs to the Funj ethnic group, accused of talking by mobile phone to his brother, who is a member of the SPLM-N.⁴⁹¹
- 9 September 2015: Ali Moon, an Ingessana Omda of Fadimia, was detained by MI, accused of communicating with the SPLM-N by mobile phone.⁴⁹² On the same date Abood Ali Noor, a student from Bao was arrested and reportedly tortured, accused of communicating with SPLM-N forces in Kelgo Mountain.⁴⁹³
- 21 September 2015: MI arrested and torture Suleiman Farag in Al-Zubeir in Damazin, accused of communicating with the SPLM-N and supplying them with information.⁴⁹⁴
- 1 October 2015: Tarig, a Funj residing in Bao, was arrested and beaten in detention by NISS officers who claimed that he was smuggling goods to the SPLM-N.⁴⁹⁵
- 8 October 2015: Al-Mak Bada, an Ingessana residing in Bao was arrested and tortured by MI, accused of communicating with SPLM-N and providing information to them.⁴⁹⁶
- 9 October 2015: Saddam Mohamed Ali, a merchant from Al-Rikabiya ethnic group was arrested by MI in Kurmuk locality after being accused of smuggling goods to the SPLM-N.⁴⁹⁷
- 24 October 2015: El-Sheikh Gamal Kumuj, a Chief of Beleng Ingessana village was arrested by MI, accused of selling his livestock to SPLM-N, and had 500 cows confiscated.⁴⁹⁸
- 25 October 2015: MI arrested Omer Eisa Tagroor, Mohamed El-Toum Awad and Bangos Faisal in in Kurmuk locality, accusing them of communicating with SPLM-N.⁴⁹⁹
- 15 November 2015: MI in Abu Garin area arrested Rajab Dafaallah, on the suspicion that he is in contact with SPLM-N forces.⁵⁰⁰
- 30 November 2015: MI in Demazin arrested Mohamed Keen Al-Zeav, an Ingessana, and confiscated his motorcycle on suspicion that he is communicating with SPLM-N.⁵⁰¹
- 3 December 2015: MI arrested primary school teacher Amal Hassan Ibrahim from Bao for phoning her husband who is a leader within the SPLM-N forces.⁵⁰²
- 10 December 2015: MI arrested Suliman Tukul from Damazin town, accused of communicating with his relatives who are with the SPLA-N via phone.⁵⁰³

⁴⁹¹ SUDO UK, [HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES IN SUDAN OVER THE MONTH OF AUGUST 2015](#), 1 September 2015, *Blue Nile*

⁴⁹² SUDO UK, [HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES IN SUDAN OVER THE MONTH OF SEPTEMBER 2015](#), 1 October 2015, *Blue Nile*

⁴⁹³ SUDO UK, [HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES IN SUDAN OVER THE MONTH OF SEPTEMBER 2015](#), 1 October 2015, *Blue Nile*

⁴⁹⁴ SUDO UK, [HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES IN SUDAN OVER THE MONTH OF SEPTEMBER 2015](#), 1 October 2015, *Blue Nile*

⁴⁹⁵ SUDO UK, [HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES IN SUDAN OVER THE MONTH OF OCTOBER 2015](#), 1 November 2015, *Blue Nile*

⁴⁹⁶ SUDO UK, [HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES IN SUDAN OVER THE MONTH OF OCTOBER 2015](#), 1 November 2015, *Blue Nile*

⁴⁹⁷ SUDO UK, [HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES IN SUDAN OVER THE MONTH OF OCTOBER 2015](#), 1 November 2015, *Blue Nile*

⁴⁹⁸ SUDO UK, [HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES IN SUDAN OVER THE MONTH OF OCTOBER 2015](#), 1 November 2015, *Blue Nile*

⁴⁹⁹ SUDO UK, [HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES IN SUDAN OVER THE MONTH OF OCTOBER 2015](#), 1 November 2015, *Blue Nile*

⁵⁰⁰ SUDO UK, [HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES IN SUDAN OVER THE MONTH OF NOVEMBER 2015](#), 21 December 2015, *Blue Nile*

⁵⁰¹ SUDO UK, [HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES IN SUDAN OVER THE MONTH OF NOVEMBER 2015](#), 21 December 2015, *Blue Nile*

⁵⁰² SUDO UK, [HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES IN SUDAN OVER THE MONTH OF DECEMBER 2015](#), 26 February 2016, *Blue Nile*

⁵⁰³ HUDO Centre, [Human Rights Situation in South Kordufan and Blue Nile States of Sudan January-December 2015](#), 20 March 2016, 2.0.2 Arbitrary Arrest in *Blue Nile* p.19-20

- 27 January 2016: A combined force of MI and NISS forcibly displaced civilians from Ardek village, Bao locality on the pretext that they were working alongside the SPLM-N.⁵⁰⁴
- 2 February 2016: MI arrested Muna Mousa, a housewife resident in Masfa village on the pretext that she cooperated with the SPLM-N.⁵⁰⁵
- 7 February 2016: MI arrested El-Sheikh El-Nour Ali, an Ingessana from Demazin, for being in contact with and providing information for the SPLM-N through his mobile phone.⁵⁰⁶
- 10 February 2016: MI undertook an arbitrary arrest campaign of civilians in Bleng Anfosna village, Kurmuk locality.⁵⁰⁷ The report identified four civilians arrested on suspicion of communicating with the SPLM-N and transferred to the military garrison in Demazin.⁵⁰⁸

6.1.4.2. Nuba (South Kordofan)

N.B. COI has only been included in this section which documents the treatment of the Nuba for the reason of their ethnicity. Reported incidents that detail the ethnic minority of victims as Nuba but do not document ethnicity as the purported motivation for the attack have not been included. See previous section [6.1.4. Individuals \(perceived to be\) associated with or supportive of the SPLM/A-N, 6.1.4.1. General](#) for such illustrative incidents.

It should be noted that as reported by the International Refugee Rights Initiative, South Kordofan “is populated by multiple different identity groups, generally described as Arab and African. The African groups, often called the ‘Nuba’, are composed of more than 80 communities. These communities do not necessarily share the same faith or language, and Sudanese Arabic is the lingua franca. Indeed, the construction of a ‘Nuba people’ has been very much defined by outsiders, and has been reinforced at a local level as a result of a common experience of repression and discrimination by Khartoum”.⁵⁰⁹ A September 2015 article published by CMI CHR. Michelsen Institute explained that “Socially and culturally the Nuba have been presented as different from the majority groups in the Sudan, in need of Arabisation, Islamisation and Sudanisation, which is a Sudanese version of modernity”.⁵¹⁰

Amnesty International explains by way of background on the Nuba in a report on attacks against civilians in Sudan’s South Kordofan State that:

In 2010, before the armed conflict started, approximately 2.5 million people, representing over 100 different ethnic communities, lived in South Kordofan. The majority of the population are from nomadic Misseriya and Hawazma Arab tribes and agriculturalist African Nuba communities. In the Kadugli area and surrounding Nuba Mountains, the population is predominantly Nuba. Historically, the Nuba ethnic communities have been marginalized by successive governments of Sudan, and were

⁵⁰⁴ SUDO UK, [HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES IN SUDAN OVER THE MONTH OF JANUARY 2016](#), 18 March 2016, *Blue Nile*

⁵⁰⁵ SUDO UK, [HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES IN SUDAN OVER THE MONTH OF FEBRUARY 2016](#), 31 March 2016, *Blue Nile*

⁵⁰⁶ SUDO UK, [HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES IN SUDAN OVER THE MONTH OF FEBRUARY 2016](#), 31 March 2016, *Blue Nile*

⁵⁰⁷ SUDO UK, [HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES IN SUDAN OVER THE MONTH OF FEBRUARY 2016](#), 31 March 2016, *Blue Nile*

⁵⁰⁸ SUDO UK, [HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES IN SUDAN OVER THE MONTH OF FEBRUARY 2016](#), 31 March 2016, *Blue Nile*

⁵⁰⁹ International Refugee Rights Initiative (IRRI), [“We just want a rest from war.” Civilian perspectives on the conflict in Sudan’s Southern Kordofan State](#), April 2015, *Background p.9*

⁵¹⁰ CMI CHR. Michelsen Institute, Leif Ole Manger Department of Social Anthropology, (UiB) University of Bergen, [LOST IN TRANSLATION: Understanding the Nuba as a movement between epistemic territories —between difference and sameness, between contingency and continuity](#), September 2015, *Theorising the “Other” and the role of “difference”—ontology or politics? P.5*

allied with the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) during the armed conflict between 1983 and 2005".⁵¹¹ An August 2015 Small Arms Survey report similarly noted that "The 'Nuba', as some eighty tribes living in the Nuba Mountains scattered in the greater Kordofan area in the central part of Sudan are commonly called, and the indigenous tribes of Blue Nile, such as the Ingessana, the Jumjum, and the (Christian) Uduk, have been subject to oppressive policies imposed by the central government since the country's independence in 1956, in particular land grabbing and exploitation, environmental degradation, and forced labour."⁵¹²

An October 2014 Equal Rights Trust report considered that "The ongoing conflict between rebel forces in South Kordofan and the government leaves people belonging to the Nuba and other ethnic groups in these regions vulnerable to discrimination which is ethnically based, as well as discrimination by association with the government's political and military opponents. Continued outbreaks of violence over many years have resulted in a lack of effective government in the region, resulting in ineffective law enforcement, lack of access to basic services and a reliance on traditional forms of justice".⁵¹³ The same source further explained that:

It should be reiterated that the racially discriminatory nature of Sudan's conflicts cannot be isolated from their political underpinnings, i.e. the Arabisation and Islamisation policies of the Nimeiry and al-Bashir regimes. Still, while the role of ethnicity (as opposed to religion, politics or economics) in causing these conflicts is open to question, the discriminatory effects on the ethnic/tribal communities in each conflict area are not. In each of the conflict areas, the Sudanese army has engaged in direct armed conflict against rebel forces which are largely composed of members of ethnic/tribal populations constituting majorities within the respective conflict regions. It appears, from numerous expressions of concern by many parties over the last decade, that attacks on rebel-held positions have had little regard for limiting the number of civilian casualties from the local communities. In addition, the government has supported tribal militias in South Sudan and Darfur throughout the conflicts there, and is continuing to do so today in South Kordofan and Blue Nile states, exploiting existing tribal differences to fuel conflict.⁵¹⁴

In a December 2014 report the Enough Project reported that "When considered along with the mounting humanitarian need in the area, the statements made by senior army in the leaked meeting minutes offer evidence of a government campaign of 'extermination' in the Nuba Mountains".⁵¹⁵ A November 2014 report from the same source entitled 'The Case for Crimes against Humanity in Sudan's Nuba Mountains' considered that "When considered together, the Sudan government's targeted attacks on humanitarian installations, its refusal to allow any aid workers into rebel-held areas, its aerial bombing of civilian settlements, its efforts to prevent harvesting of crops, and some of its other war tactics in the region all add up to extermination by design".⁵¹⁶ For further information on aerial bombardments targeting Nuba populations, see section [4.1.1. Casualties caused by aerial bombing campaigns and ground attacks between 1 July 2014 and 1 April 2016](#), and specifically within it [4.1.1.2. South Kordofan](#).

⁵¹¹ Amnesty International, [Don't We Matter? Four years of unrelenting attacks against civilians in Sudan's South Kordofan State \[AFR 54/2162/2015\]](#), 17 August 2015, *Background* p.12

⁵¹² Small Arms Survey, [Two Fronts, One War: Evolution of the Two Areas Conflict](#), 2014–15, August 2015, *II. The conflict, Background: politics and war in the Two Areas* p.12

⁵¹³ Equal Rights Trust, [In Search of Confluence Addressing Discrimination and Inequality in Sudan](#), October 2014, *Ethno-regional Conflicts as Manifestations of Ethnic Discrimination, South Kordofan and Blue Nile* p.64

⁵¹⁴ Equal Rights Trust, [In Search of Confluence Addressing Discrimination and Inequality in Sudan](#), October 2014, *Ethno-regional Conflicts as Manifestations of Ethnic Discrimination* p.54

⁵¹⁵ Enough Project, [Starving War, Feeding Peace: And Setting the Table for National Dialogue in Sudan](#), 17 December 2014, *The NCP is Its Own Worst Enemy* p.4

⁵¹⁶ Enough Project, [Extermination by Design, The Case for Crimes against Humanity in Sudan's Nuba Mountains](#), November 2014

The African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies reported that “On 15 January 2015 the NISS arrested a number of people from Al Dalang and confiscated their belongings. All of the individuals arrested were members of the Nuba ethnic group and perceived to be supportive of the SPLM-N. Their arrests were on the pretext that they were transporting commodities from SPLM-N controlled areas. The confiscated properties include fourteen motorcycles, sugar, cooking oil, onions, and tea”.⁵¹⁷ The same source reported in April 2015 that:

A number of political opposition party members, including electoral candidates, have been arrested and detained by the National Intelligence and Security Services (NISS). Members of the Sudanese Congress Party (SCP) and factions of the Sudanese Peoples’ Liberation Movement – North (SPLM – N), in particular, have been targeted.

Members of the Nuba ethnic group also appear to have been targeted, possibly on the grounds of their presumed political affiliations to armed movements. Four members of the Nuba ethnic group in Khartoum were arrested by the NISS and held for three days on suspicion of being members of the SPLM-N. They were released onto a street in Khartoum blindfolded. All four individuals reported being subjected to torture and ill-treatment, including being beaten with water pipes, whilst in NISS custody.⁵¹⁸

In an April 2015 submission to the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, the Nuba Mountains Peoples Foundation described the history of discrimination against the Nuba and reported that “The security agents accuse the Nuba of being sympathisers with the armed opposition and branding them as “Fifth Column””.⁵¹⁹ The same report considered that “It is not safe for Nuba people living in other parts of the country to visit their homeland due to fear of arrest and detention by the security forces, which was common experience during the earlier civil war, (1980’s and 1990’s), and for that reason people feel unsafe to return. Nuba Mountains peoples foundation received reports that many homes were broken into and demolished, and some Nuba homes have been occupied by the Army militia rent free”.⁵²⁰ With regards to freedom of movement of the Nuba the same source reported:

Sudanese move freely from one region to another without any problem. However, there are a number of Nuba teachers and civil servants who were relocated against their will out of Nuba Mountains to work elsewhere without returning to their region. There is enforced displacement and assimilation of Nuba communities, evidenced by the mass removal of thousands of Nuba IDPs who chose to settle in Nuba mountains big cities during the civil war 1980’s and 1990’s.⁵²¹

A May 2015 Amnesty International Urgent Action reporting on the arrest of South Kordofan human rights activist Mohamed Musa Mohamed Dawud stated that “Since the beginning of the conflict in South Kordofan in June 2011 thousands of people have disappeared and thousands others have been arrested by SAF and other Sudan security forces on suspicion of being sympathetic to, or members of Sudan People’s Liberation Movement (SPLM/A). The SPLM/A report that at least 3000 of their members have been disappeared since June 2011. Many other Nuba people report that they have been targeted by the SAF on the basis of their ethnicity”.⁵²²

⁵¹⁷ African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies, [Sudan Human Rights Monitor December 2014 – January 2015](#), January 2015

⁵¹⁸ African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies, [Sudan’s Electoral Period Marred by Arrests and Incommunicado Detention; insecurity in Darfur](#), 17 April 2015

⁵¹⁹ Nuba Mountains Peoples Foundation, [Alternative Report to the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination \(CERD\); Review of the Periodic Report of Sudan](#), April 2015, paragraph 3

⁵²⁰ Nuba Mountains Peoples Foundation, [Alternative Report to the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination \(CERD\); Review of the Periodic Report of Sudan](#), April 2015, paragraph 11

⁵²¹ Nuba Mountains Peoples Foundation, [Alternative Report to the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination \(CERD\); Review of the Periodic Report of Sudan](#), April 2015, paragraph 15

⁵²² Amnesty International, [Urgent Action: Detained Activist at Risk of Torture](#), 20 May 2015

In June 2015 the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination reported that it “expresses grave concern about the escalation of violence in Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile States and in particular about the excessive and indiscriminate use of force, including the aerial bombardments, by government armed forces having a disproportionate effect on the Nuba and other ethnic groups, as well as causing damage to civilian objects. These attacks have resulted in the deaths of numerous civilians and the displacement of thousands of others from the Nuba”.⁵²³ The same source also expressed concern “that the large-scale displacement of persons in the State party affects ethnic or tribal groups disproportionately, and that this impact is further exacerbated by the ongoing conflicts” and noted the emergence of new waves of internally displaced persons within the Nuba mountains with particular concern.⁵²⁴

The August 2015 Small Arms Survey report described the Government’s strategy of ‘divide and rule’ within the Nuba population noting that “today almost every tribe is divided in its support for the warring parties. Recruitment is highly politicized and conducted mostly through traditional chiefs, some of whom are prominent political leaders in Khartoum, who in some instances were forced to provide soldiers or were accused of supporting the SPLA-N and arrested. The GoS reportedly uses what was described as ‘tribes security’, i.e. designated security personnel tasked with recruiting from each tribe”.⁵²⁵

Reporting on the government recruitment of youths into militias and PDF throughout 2015 the Human Security Baseline Assessment for Sudan and South Sudan reported that:

In South Kordofan, in addition to the Arab groups, all Nuba tribes were targeted, especially in Kadugli, Kalogi, Khartoum, and Rashad, as well as in Buram county. In October 2015, at least 200 Nuba youths from Buram were seen training in Shendi camp, northeast of the capital, Khartoum. A group of new PDF recruits was assembled in Jebel Awlia, in the outskirts of Khartoum, in the last week of October 2015, following the defeat of GoS troops in Blue Nile, but their destination remained unknown. Informants on the ground indicated that militias that deployed in convoys in South Kordofan are mainly newly recruits, both Nuba and individuals from elsewhere in Sudan.⁵²⁶

For further information on the recruitment of children, see [8.1. Recruitment and use of children](#)

For further information on the treatment of ethnic minorities see [6.3. Discrimination against ethnic minorities](#).

6.1.4.3. Other ethnic groups

N.B. COI has only been included in this section which clearly documents the treatment of members of ethnic groups for the reason of their ethnicity. Reported incidents that detail the ethnic minority of victims but do not document ethnicity as the purported motivation for the attack have not been

⁵²³ Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, [Concluding observations on the combined twelfth to sixteenth periodic reports of the Sudan*](#), 12 June 2015, paragraph 8

⁵²⁴ Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, [Concluding observations on the combined twelfth to sixteenth periodic reports of the Sudan*](#), 12 June 2015, paragraph 10

⁵²⁵ Small Arms Survey, [Two Fronts, One War: Evolution of the Two Areas Conflict](#), 2014–15, August 2015, II. *The conflict, Background: politics and war in the Two Areas* p.12

⁵²⁶ Human Security Baseline Assessment for Sudan and South Sudan, [Conflict in the Two Areas: Security and political dynamics at the beginning of the fifth season of fighting](#), 9 February 2016, III. *Armed actors, Government forces, South Kordofan* p.23

included. See previous section [6.1.4. Individuals \(perceived to be\) associated with or supportive of the SPLM/A-N, 6.1.4.1. General](#) for such illustrative incidents.

Reporting on events in 2014 the Council of the European Union noted that “The targeting of individuals because of their ethnic affiliation continued in many parts of the country”.⁵²⁷ An October 2014 Equal Rights Trust report cited human rights activist Dr Mudawi Ibrahim Adam as similarly stating that “members of ethnic minorities are vulnerable to arrest and prolonged detention due to their perceived association with rebel movements in Darfur, South Kordofan and Blue Nile. He further stated that there are many such cases, though estimating total numbers is difficult because of the lack of official records on the activities of the NISS”.⁵²⁸

SUDO explains that “The Ingessena are often targeted by the Sudanese Authorities in Blue Nile as they belong to the same ethnic group as Malik Agar, Chair of the SPLM-N, and are deemed loyal supporters of the SPLM-N”.⁵²⁹ Similarly, a June 2015 report by the African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies (ACJPS) stated that “The Ingessana Hills are currently under the control of the SAF, but have traditionally been a SPLM – N stronghold. Areas in Wau locality have been captured by the SPLM – N, including Jebel Kalgo. The Ingessana Hills are also the birthplace of Malik Agar, chairperson of the SPLM – N. The pattern of arrests and interrogations of members of the group indicate that the Sudanese authorities presume all members of the Ingessana ethnic group to be supportive of the rebel SPLM – N”.⁵³⁰

Human Rights Watch explained in a December 2014 report that “During a five-day research trip in November 2014, Human Rights Watch researchers interviewed 42 refugees in South Sudan’s Maban County, and six internally displaced people inside Blue Nile state. The refugees, including 17 women and girls, had recently fled abusive treatment in government towns or villages”.⁵³¹ Reporting with regards to ethnic targeting the same source noted that (emphasis added):

The vast majority were Ingessana, the ethnic group of Malik Agar, the commander of the Sudan People’s Liberation Army-North (SPLA-North), the main rebel group fighting the Sudanese government. **The Ingessana appear to have been targeted because of their perceived support for the rebels.** They had fled their homes during the night – in some cases leaving some children and family members behind – and walked more than 150 kilometers with little food or water to reach South Sudan, arriving in late October or early November.⁵³²

The African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies further reported in a June 2015 report that:

Since April 2015, three villages in Blue Nile, primarily comprised of members of the Ingessana ethnic group, have been burned to the ground by the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) in an apparent attempt to forcibly displace communities perceived to support the rebel Sudanese Peoples’ Liberation Movement (SPLM-N). The armed forces have also ordered residents of four villages to relocate from their homes, threatening that those who stay behind will be presumed to be members of the SPLM-N. The attacks have displaced thousands of civilians and destroyed agriculture. [...]

Since the burning of Khor Mungra and Bau locality, the SAF’s Military Intelligence has subjected a number of individuals from Al Damazein and elsewhere in the Ingessana Hills region, including the

⁵²⁷ Council of the European Union, [EU Annual Report on Human Rights and Democracy in the World in 2014](#), 22 June 2015, *Sudan* p.269

⁵²⁸ Equal Rights Trust, [In Search of Confluence Addressing Discrimination and Inequality in Sudan](#), October 2014, *Discrimination by the Army, Security and Police Forces*, p.72

⁵²⁹ SUDO UK, [HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES IN SUDAN OVER THE MONTH OF JULY 2015](#), 1 August 2015, *Overview*

⁵³⁰ African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies, [Sudan forcibly displaces and sets villages on fire in Blue Nile; civilians presumed to be affiliated with rebels detained incommunicado](#), 17 June 2015

⁵³¹ Human Rights Watch, [Sudan: Soldiers, Militias Killing, Raping Civilians](#), 15 December 2014

⁵³² Human Rights Watch, [Sudan: Soldiers, Militias Killing, Raping Civilians](#), 15 December 2014

forcibly displaced village of Alshaheed Afendy, to arbitrary detention and accused them of spying for the SPLM – N. The SAF’s Military Intelligence Unit is tasked with investigating rebel activities and coordinating offensives in Sudan’s conflict zones of Darfur, South Kordofan, and Blue Nile. At least two people are detained in unknown locations, and at least three people are being detained by Military Intelligence at the SAF’s Fourth Infantry Division of Al Damazein without access to their families or a lawyer.⁵³³

In a May 2015 report the African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies stated that “On 7 April the SPLM-N attacked a private truck carrying four uniformed SAF officers and two civilians heading north to El Damazien from Al Madina village. The four SAF officers and a pregnant woman were killed. In apparent retaliation the next day, the SAF attacked the village of Mediam al Jabal, around 70km south of El Damazein, populated mostly by the Ansanga ethnic group who are widely perceived to support the SPLM-N. The SAF, arriving in land-cruisers, reportedly ordered residents to leave their homes, and then set fire to the village. The village – including 450 homes – was burned, and the property and foodstuffs carried by fleeing residents was confiscated. Residents were displaced to a nearby roadside”.⁵³⁴ The same source further reported:

The attacks on Almadina and Mediam al Jabal appear to have been aimed solely at punishing populations perceived to support either side to the conflict in Blue Nile state, based on their ethnic affiliations. Civilians and civilian property was directly targeted with no military presence or legitimate military targets evident in either village.⁵³⁵

The UNITED STATES Department of State report covering events in 2015 noted that “Between April and May, the government burned at least three Ingessana villages of Mankaza, Khor Mungra, and Mediam in Blue Nile, with as many as 50,000 persons displaced. Fleeing IDPs and refugees reported numerous unverified civilian executions during these forced displacements and village razings. According to human rights observers, these populations were targeted as ‘rebel supporters’”.⁵³⁶ The same source further reported that “On May 25 [2015], there were reports that military intelligence captured and imprisoned Mohamed al-Bur Ali from the Ingessana ethnic group in Damazin Market, Blue Nile. Military intelligence accused him of communicating with the SPLM-N through internet application WhatsApp. As of year’s end, he remained in solitary confinement in SAF headquarters in Damazin”.⁵³⁷

SUDO noted that during May 2015, “500 soldiers from the SAF attacked the village of Khor Magnza in Bao Locality. The attack forced 17,000 civilians out of their homes, which were subsequently destroyed alongside their possessions and grain stores. Following the attacks, 17,000 civilians have been left without shelter, food and water. [...] Residents of the village of Khor Magnza come from the Ingessana ethnic group to which Malik Agar, chairman of the SPLM-N, belongs”.⁵³⁸ The source further considered that “Members of the Ingessana have been forcibly removed from their homes, which have then been allocated by the government to loyal members of the Falata ethnic group. The Falata, under the leadership of Abakar and through the PDF militia, have been empowered by the

⁵³³ African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies, [Sudan forcibly displaces and sets villages on fire in Blue Nile; civilians presumed to be affiliated with rebels detained incommunicado](#), 17 June 2015

⁵³⁴ African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies, [Attacks on Civilians by Sudanese Armed Forces and Sudanese Peoples’ Liberation Movement – North in Blue Nile](#), 1 May 2015

⁵³⁵ African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies, [Attacks on Civilians by Sudanese Armed Forces and Sudanese Peoples’ Liberation Movement – North in Blue Nile](#), 1 May 2015

⁵³⁶ United States Department of State, [Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2015 – Sudan](#), 13 April 2016, Section 1.g Two Areas

⁵³⁷ United States Department of State, [Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2015 – Sudan](#), 13 April 2016, Section 1.g Two Areas

⁵³⁸ SUDO UK, [HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES IN SUDAN OVER THE MONTH OF MAY 2015](#), 31 May 2015, Blue Nile

government to drive out the Ingessana from the region”.⁵³⁹ Also in May 2015, SUDO further noted that

A unit from the RSF attacked the village of Begis in the Ingessana Mountains south west of Demazin. They further attacked the village of Algeri in Roseris Locality, burning down 250 homes and forcibly displacing 2,000 civilians. These actions took place following accusations by Sudanese authorities that the villagers had supported SPLM-N by relaying intelligence, in addition to providing food and shelter for injured soldiers.[...] A combined force from the police and the army attacked the village of Mediam Masalit. The force closed down the schools, destroyed the market, and burned the village. This has resulted in the forced displacement of 3,200 civilians who have fled to Wad Afodi, north of Roseris city. The villagers were accused of providing intelligence, shelter and food to the SPLM-N.⁵⁴⁰

Moreover, SUDO noted that in May 2015 “9,000 civilians have been forcibly displaced from the area surrounding Deireng, in Bao locality, to Alazaza, near Roseris town, following an attack by a government force consisting of military intelligence. During the attack water and medical facilities were destroyed, in addition to the market and civilian houses. Those displaced are from the Dawali and Ingessana ethnic groups and have been accused of associating with the SPLM-N. They are currently facing a lack of shelter, water, food and medical services, whilst the fate of 1,000 inhabitants of Deireng is unknown as they were said to have refused displacement”.⁵⁴¹

In June 2015 the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination reported that it “expresses grave concern about the escalation of violence in Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile States and in particular about the excessive and indiscriminate use of force, including the aerial bombardments, by government armed forces having a disproportionate effect on the Nuba and other ethnic groups, as well as causing damage to civilian objects. These attacks have resulted in the deaths of numerous civilians and the displacement of thousands of others from the Nuba”.⁵⁴²

SUDO reported that during July 2015 that “Blue Nile state again witnessed what appears to be a concerted effort by Government forces to continually harass the Ingessana ethnic group - amongst others deemed as supporters of the armed opposition”.⁵⁴³ The same source reported that in South Kordofan in July 2015:

SPLM-N forces, based in Jebel Al-Bedeiryia roughly 1km from the ring road connecting Abasyia to Rashad, attacked a group of nomads from the Awlad Gaboush ethnic group (a sub-ethnic group from the Hawazma) heading north as part of their migration away from the south due to the onset of the rainy season.

Following the attack the SPLM-N soldiers looted 350 cows from the victims, after which a separate group from Awlad Gaboush tried to rescue the looted cows. The SPLM-N soldiers fired upon the rescue party killing Fadlalla Mohamed, who is aged 52 and married to two wives and has 11 children. The situation remains tense between the Hawazma and the Nuba ethnic groups. The Hawazma view such attacks as a concerted effort to force Arab ethnic groups away from South Kordofan, whilst the Nuba blame the Hawazma, and other Arab ethnic groups, for colluding with the Government’s attempts to cleanse South Kordofan of Nuba.[...]

Sudanese Military Intelligence forcibly displaced 5,000 civilians from Belang, Kurmuk locality, to Shin Tashrab, Demazin, where there is no shelter, water, or health services available to the affected people. [...]

⁵³⁹ SUDO UK, [HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES IN SUDAN OVER THE MONTH OF MAY 2015](#), 31 May 2015, *Blue Nile*

⁵⁴⁰ SUDO UK, [HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES IN SUDAN OVER THE MONTH OF MAY 2015](#), 31 May 2015, *Blue Nile*

⁵⁴¹ SUDO UK, [HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES IN SUDAN OVER THE MONTH OF MAY 2015](#), 31 May 2015, *Blue Nile*

⁵⁴² Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, [Concluding observations on the combined twelfth to sixteenth periodic reports of the Sudan*](#), 12 June 2015, *paragraph 8*

⁵⁴³ SUDO UK, [HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES IN SUDAN OVER THE MONTH OF JULY 2015](#), 1 August 2015, *Overview*

The displaced are from the Ragrek, Dowala and Ingessana ethnic groups and have been accused by the Sudanese Army of providing supplies and intelligence to the SPLM-N.⁵⁴⁴

In an August 2015 report on the 'Evolution of the Two Areas Conflict, 2014–15' the Small Arms Survey noted that it "has found evidence of abuses committed by local authorities (PDF, SAF, and others) against civilians in government-held areas, particularly against groups of people suspected of supporting the SPLA-N". The same source further noted with regards to ethnic minorities that:

According to testimony collected from IDPs and in the refugee camps, repression is particularly acute in areas that voted for the SPLM in the 2010 elections, such as the Ingessana areas in Bau county, Blue Nile. IDPs who arrived in Bau from the countryside were asked by county executive director Eltom Abdel Rahim to pay SDP 250 to stay in the area and were forced to flee when they were unable to pay. An eyewitness interviewed in Maban said that IDPs from the Ingessana tribe in Dindiro did not receive any relief assistance, because 'sons of the rebellion did not deserve even a glass of water'. According to a reportedly leaked memo (unverified) from GoS intelligence seen by the author, a force of dismissed SAF soldiers and officers and SPLA-N defectors 'led by 1st Lieutenant Shirra and 2nd Lieutenant Jafar Omer from Khor Adaar, under the auspices of Major General Yahya Mohamed Khair (the Blue Nile Governor after Malik Agar's removal in 2011) and Abdel Rah' were sent from Damazin 'to loot and kill the Ingessana cattle and terrorize the girls and the wives of their sons who joined the SPLA-N'. The militia group of Ismeil Omer Kurra, a Fellata, is particularly active in the Ingessana Mountains against the local people, with several cases of abuses being reported.⁵⁴⁵

In September 2015 the Sudan Consortium reported with regards to victims of abuses by government forces and militias in government-held areas of Blue Nile, "According to the community, at least 200 people from the area had been taken to Damazin and arrested and tortured since January 2015 by the military intelligence. A 25-year-old man spent six months and twelve days in prison in Damazin. He was tortured several times. He and other prisoners were forced to walk and crawl on the fire (domestic and International monitors saw burn scars on the man's body). They were beaten, and cut with a sword. They were accused of supporting the SPLM/A-N. People's perception is also that they were punished because they were considered 'black'".⁵⁴⁶ The International Federation for Human Rights considered in a September 2015 report that (emphasis added):

In Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile states, civilians also continue to be the targets of indiscriminate aerial bombardment and ground offensives. Government forces, again deploying the RSF, have destroyed civilian property including villages, health facilities, schools, mosques and churches. Authorities continue to obstruct humanitarian assistance and carry out arbitrary arrests and commit torture. Their forces and allied militia have been implicated in alarming levels of sexual violence. There is also evidence that Government aircraft has deliberately bombed hospitals and other humanitarian facilities and used cluster bombs in South Kordofan. Mirroring strategies deployed in Darfur, **entire communities have been displaced by Government forces in what appears to be collective punishment for their perceived support to the rebel movements based on ethnic identity.**⁵⁴⁷

According to SUDO, also in October 2015, "SPLM-N forces killed nine people from the Falata Um-Broro ethnic group in Um-Gulbi area situated in Bao locality and looted 500 sheep. This is the result of the SPLM-N accusing this ethnic group of working on behalf of the Government and killing

⁵⁴⁴ SUDO UK, [HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES IN SUDAN OVER THE MONTH OF JULY 2015](#), 1 August 2015, *Overview*

⁵⁴⁵ Small Arms Survey, [Two Fronts, One War: Evolution of the Two Areas Conflict](#), 2014–15, August 2015, *Arbitrary arrests and rape as government tactics* p.51-2

⁵⁴⁶ Sudan Consortium, [Abuses against civilians continue in Government held areas in Blue Nile](#), 15 September 2015

⁵⁴⁷ International Federation for Human Rights, [On the anniversary of protest massacres, the international community must take a strong stand on impunity for widespread human rights abuses in Sudan](#), 23 September 2015

members of the Ingessana ethnic group, looting their properties and raping the women”.⁵⁴⁸SUDO further reported that in Blue Nile State on 1 January 2016 “Military Intelligence forces situated in Demazin arrested Mohamed Ken Al-Ziaab, a 34-year-old member of the Ingessana ethnic group, for suspicion of belonging to the SPLM-N”.⁵⁴⁹

For information on attacks on ethnic groups not based on a perceived affiliation to the SPLM/A-N, see [6.3. Discrimination against ethnic minorities](#).

6.1.4.4. Christians

Very limited information was found on the treatment of Christians in Blue Nile or South Kordofan state between 1 July 2014 and 1 April 2016 owing to a perceived affiliation to the SPLM/A-N.

According to an October 2014 Nuba Reports article, “Religion is regularly used by the Sudanese government to justify its conflict in the Nuba Mountains. Religious clerics aligned with the ruling National Congress Party often unofficially recruit youth for militias sent to fight the rebel Sudan Revolutionary Front”.⁵⁵⁰

An August 2015 Small Arms Survey report similarly noted that “The ‘Nuba’, as some eighty tribes living in the Nuba Mountains scattered in the greater Kordofan area in the central part of Sudan are commonly called, and the indigenous tribes of Blue Nile, such as the Ingessana, the Jumjum, and the (Christian) Uduk, have been subject to oppressive policies imposed by the central government since the country’s independence in 1956, in particular land grabbing and exploitation, environmental degradation, and forced labour”.⁵⁵¹In an April 2015 submission to the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, the Nuba Mountains Peoples Foundation considered that “The marginalisation of ethnic and religious minorities in Sudan, including the Nuba peoples, is institutionalized in the media including national TV which does not equally represent or portray Sudan’s diversity”.⁵⁵²

According to a June 2015 Christian Solidarity Worldwide article:

The repression against minorities is not restricted to the capital city Khartoum. Since 2011, the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) have increased their attacks on non-Muslim communities in South Kordofan. On 25 May [2015, two SAF fighter jets dropped three bombs on the town of Kauda in the Nuba Mountains killing a four year-old girl, and two bombs over the Catholic Church, school and priest’s compounds. On 27 May, two SAF fighter jets dropped four cluster bombs over a residential area in Kauda that did not deploy properly; later that day 12 bombs were dropped near the town market, injuring three people, killing livestock and destroying six homes.

In a letter dated 28 May 2015, His Excellency Macram Max Gassis, the Catholic Bishop (Emeritus) of El Obeid raised concerns about the targeting of civilians in the Nuba Mountains, highlighting that the 25 May bombing occurred almost a year after the bombing of the Mother of Mercy Hospital in Gidel,

⁵⁴⁸ SUDO UK, [HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES IN SUDAN OVER THE MONTH OF OCTOBER 2015](#), 1 November 2015, *Blue Nile*

⁵⁴⁹ SUDO UK, [HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES IN SUDAN OVER THE MONTH OF JANUARY 2016](#), 18 March 2016, *Blue Nile*

⁵⁵⁰ Nuba Reports, [TWO BROTHERS, TWO RELIGIONS](#), 21 October 2014

⁵⁵¹ Small Arms Survey, [Two Fronts, One War: Evolution of the Two Areas Conflict](#), 2014–15, August 2015, *II. The conflict, Background: politics and war in the Two Areas p.12*

⁵⁵² Nuba Mountains Peoples Foundation, [Alternative Report to the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination \(CERD\); Review of the Periodic Report of Sudan](#), April 2015, *paragraph 12*

South Kordofan. It was the only functioning hospital providing humanitarian assistance to the people of the Nuba Mountains.⁵⁵³

For information on abuses of religious freedom, including against Christians see [6.2. Freedom of religion](#).

6.1.5. Freedom of the Media

The following section provides a brief overview of the situation throughout Sudan.

In its ‘Concluding observations’ the UN Human Rights Committee reported in August 2014 that it was “concerned by the numerous allegations indicating that State officials have curtailed the full and effective enjoyment of the right to freedom of expression by, inter alia, closing newspapers without court orders, confiscating entire newspaper editions and subjecting journalists to intimidation and harassment. The Committee is also concerned about the obligations placed on journalists by the 2009 Press and Publications Act and about prosecutions for disseminating ‘false news’ (art. 19)”.⁵⁵⁴

Freedom House explained that “A new Freedom of Access to Information Law passed in January 2015 classifies 12 types of information that are restricted from citizens, which observers believe was part of an effort to legalize the government’s censorship powers. In the lead-up to the April 2015 general elections, the government took preemptive measures to restrict critical information and silence the opposition by arresting numerous online journalists and activists. Hacking attacks against critical news websites and activists’ social media accounts also escalated around the general elections”.⁵⁵⁵ For further information on domestic legislative instruments that are contrary to established international standards being enforced against the press, see Amnesty International, [Entrenched Repression: Freedom of Expression and Association Under Attack](#), 2 April 2015.

Also reporting on the situation in general throughout Sudan, the August 2015 ‘Report of the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in the Sudan, Aristide Nonons’ stated that “In spite of some progress made in legislative reforms, the Sudan continues to face enormous human rights challenges in terms of securing basic fundamental rights, in particular the rights to freedom of expression and opinion, freedom of the press, freedom of association and peaceful assembly, and freedom of religion”.⁵⁵⁶ The same source further noted that:

There is a need to ensure the protection of freedom of the press in the Sudan; the Independent Expert notes in particular the application of national security laws to clamp down on the press, including through the closure of media houses, the arrest of journalists and the confiscation of newspapers and equipment by the National Security Service.

Since December 2014, there have been several clampdowns on press and media freedoms, including the censorship and temporary closure of several newspapers. During the period under review, at least 16 newspapers had their publications confiscated on 42 different occasions by the National Security Service. Several journalists reported interrogation and harassment by the police and of security service agents. On 16 February 2015, the print runs of 14 newspapers were confiscated. On 25 May, the editions of 10 newspapers were seized by security service officers. These actions contravene

⁵⁵³ Christian Solidarity Worldwide, [PROSECUTION CLOSES CASE SUDANESE PASTORS TRIAL](#), 26 June 2015

⁵⁵⁴ UN Human Rights Committee, [Concluding observations on the fourth periodic report of Sudan \[CCPR/C/SDN/CO/4\]](#), 19 August 2014, paragraph 21

⁵⁵⁵ Freedom House, [Freedom on the Net 2015 – Sudan](#), 02 November 2015, *Violations of User Rights*

⁵⁵⁶ UN, [Report of the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in the Sudan, Aristide Nonons](#), 24 August 2015, paragraph 20

article 39 of the interim national Constitution of the Sudan (2005), which guarantees “freedom of expression and the media”.⁵⁵⁷

A September 2015 joint submission from the African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies (ACJPS), International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), and International Refugee Rights Initiative (IRRI) to the 2016 Universal Periodic Review of Sudan summarises the general situation in Sudan as follows

The press has been subjected to repeated censorship under the Press and Publications Act of 2009 and by the NISS using its powers under the NSA 2010. The NISS has restricted the media through blacklisting, prosecuting and harassing journalists, subjecting journalists to repeated summonses and threats of prosecution, detaining journalists, and making threatening visits or telephone calls to editors ordering them not to report outside of “red lines” determined by the government.

In an emerging trend since 2013, traditionally pro-government newspapers have also been censored. TV and access to electronic media sites has also been blocked.

Post-print censorship, whereby entire print runs of daily editions are confiscated prior to morning distribution, is used increasingly as a control tactic by the NISS, at great cost to newspapers.⁵⁵⁸

Describing the climate for bloggers and online journalists in general in Sudan, Freedom House noted in its 2015 ‘Freedom on the Net’ report that:

Blogging is an important platform for journalists and writers to publish commentary free from the restrictions leveled on print newspapers. Blogs also give ethnic, gender, and religious minorities a venue to express themselves. As of mid-2015, there were about 300 Sudanese blogs registered with the Sudanese Bloggers Network. The more active Sudanese bloggers write in the English language.

Nonetheless, online self-censorship increased notably in 2014-2015 in response to the government’s heavy-handed crackdown against both print and online media in advance of the April 2015 elections. The majority of journalists writing for online newspapers, such as the newly established Altareeq and Altaghyeer, write anonymously. [...]

Online journalists have no legal status in Sudan. While this legal limbo can be beneficial for online journalists, freeing them from the limitations of the restrictive press law, they forfeit many privileges available to print journalists, such as media access at official events. [...]

Security agents in Sudan regularly employ extralegal intimidation, harassment, and violence against online journalists and activists. The authorities also routinely abuse political detainees to obtain access to private communications that could be used as evidence in court. [...]

Independent online news outlets are frequently subject to hacking attacks by what activists believe is the work of the Cyber Jihadist Unit.⁵⁵⁹

The UNITED STATES Department of State report for 2015 noted that “Individuals who criticized the government publicly or privately were subject to reprisal, including arrest. The government attempted to impede such criticism and monitored political meetings and the press. [...] The government, including NISS, continued to arrest, harass, intimidate, and torture journalists and vocal critics of the government. NISS required journalists to provide it [*sic*] personal information, such as details on their tribe, political affiliation, and family. Following the April elections, journalists reported that authorities increasingly required them to report daily to NISS, where they would be held several hours a day, sometimes without questioning. Human rights observers considered this type of alternative detention a form of harassment and intimidation”.⁵⁶⁰ In the 2016 Press Freedom

⁵⁵⁷ UN, [Report of the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in the Sudan, Aristide Nonons](#), 24 August 2015, paragraph 22-24

⁵⁵⁸ African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies (ACJPS), International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), and International Refugee Rights Initiative (IRRI), [Submission to the Universal Periodic Review of Sudan 2016](#), September 2015, *Arbitrary detention, torture and other ill-treatment* p.9

⁵⁵⁹ Freedom House, [Freedom on the Net 2015 – Sudan](#), 02 November 2015,

⁵⁶⁰ United States Department of State, [Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2015 – Sudan](#), 13 April 2016, Section 2.a Freedom of Speech and Press

Index established by Reporters Without Borders (Reporters Sans Frontières), Sudan is ranked 174 out of 180 countries listed in the index for the second year running (with one being the most free and 180 the least).⁵⁶¹

Agence France-Presse notes that “NISS agents regularly seize whole print runs of newspapers over articles they deem to be sensitive”.⁵⁶² Reporting on the situation throughout Sudan, an April 2015 African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies (ACJPS) report noted that “Since early 2015, ACJPS has documented the confiscation of at least 33 entire print runs of 15 newspapers”.⁵⁶³ Radio Dabanga reported that “Between 3 May 2014 and 2 May 2015, the NISS confiscated 66 print-runs of Sudanese newspapers, according to the Sudanese Journalists’ Association for Human Rights (JAHR)”.⁵⁶⁴ The same source noted that “JAHR documented 13 physical assaults on journalists. Nine women journalists were abused by policemen, and 20 by security officers. Twelve women journalists were questioned by prosecutors of the National Press and Publications Council in Khartoum and Wad Madani, capital of El Gezira state, because of their alleged ‘crimes against the state of Sudan’, and eighteen were abused by representatives of various state institutions”.⁵⁶⁵ The January 2016 edition of the Sudan NGO Law Monitor from the International Center for Not-for-Profit Law reported that “In early 2015 [...] more than 21 journalists were interrogated by the police and the NISS”.⁵⁶⁶ Whilst the cited sources did not specify the location of these incidents, it should be noted that most print houses are in Khartoum.⁵⁶⁷

6.1.5.1. Treatment of critical journalists, citizen-journalists, bloggers, etc.

Limited information was found specific to the treatment of journalists in South Kordofan and Blue Nile. Some information has therefore been included on the treatment of media professionals who write about the conflict in the Two Areas.

For information on the treatment of journalists in Sudan in general, see ARC, [Darfur Country Report](#), October 2015, 7.2.1. *Treatment of critical journalists, citizen-journalists, bloggers, etc.*

Reporters Sans Frontières explains that “In Sudan, military raids in the Darfur, Blue Nile and Kordofan region continue to inflict scores of casualties [*sic*] and displace thousands, but newspapers are not allowed to print any information about it”.⁵⁶⁸ An October 2014 Equal Rights Trust report further explained that:

According to journalists participating in an Equal Rights Trust focus group, editors are expected to observe “red lines” which specify topics that cannot be discussed, such as the conflicts in the Nuba Mountains, South Kordofan and Darfur, the International Criminal Court, or any issues of government corruption. The journalists told the Equal Rights Trust that NISS officers would either come to newspaper offices demanding to see and approve editions, or review printed editions at printing houses, requiring printers to pulp newspapers which were considered unacceptable.⁵⁶⁹

⁵⁶¹ Reporters Without Borders, [Sudan pages](#), undated [accessed 10 May 2016]

⁵⁶² Agence France-Presse, [Sudan human rights situation ‘deteriorating’: top lawyer](#), 22 December 2015

⁵⁶³ African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies, [Detentions, civil society closures, media restrictions on eve of Sudan elections](#), 12 April 2015

⁵⁶⁴ Radio Dabanga, [66 print-runs confiscated in one year: Sudanese journalists](#), 3 May 2015

⁵⁶⁵ Radio Dabanga, [66 print-runs confiscated in one year: Sudanese journalists](#), 3 May 2015

⁵⁶⁶ International Center for Not-for-Profit Law, [NGO Law Monitor: Sudan](#), 4 January 2016

⁵⁶⁷ See for example Africa Centre for Justice and Peace Studies, [Mass censorship of Khartoum newspapers during official visit of human rights experts](#), 26 May 2015

⁵⁶⁸ Reporters Without Borders, [2015 World Press Freedom Index](#), 2015

⁵⁶⁹ Equal Rights Trust, [In Search of Confluence Addressing Discrimination and Inequality in Sudan](#), October 2014, *Discriminatory Denial of Freedoms of Expression, Assembly and Association* p. 125

In September 2014 Reporters Without Borders noted that “Nuba Reports, a news website specializing in covering the Sudanese war-torn states of South Kordofan, Blue Nile and Darfur, is concerned for the safety of its local correspondents after it was the target of a Distributed Denial of Service attack”.⁵⁷⁰ Nuba Reports is a media outlet based in South Kordofan, with smaller teams in Darfur and Blue Nile.⁵⁷¹ Reporters Without Borders further reported:

The attack comes three days after a paper by Nuba Reports was circulated during the 27th session of the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva. Entitled “Khartoum’s War on Sudan”, it summarized human rights violations since 2012 in the three regions the website covers.

“This cyber-attack on the Nuba Reports website is worrying,” said Cléa Kahn-Sriber, the head of the Reporters Without Borders Africa desk. “While those responsible have yet to be identified, we know that the Sudanese government has already censored media covering the conflict in South Kordofan.”

Nuba Reports is regarded as one of the very few sources of neutral reporting coming out of South Kordofan, Blue Nile and Darfur, three regions where the Sudanese army is fighting rebel groups.⁵⁷²

Freedom House explains that “In addition to the NTC [National Telecommunications Corporation], NISS agents reportedly have the technical capability to block websites deemed harmful and threatening to Sudan’s national security, while the General Prosecutor also has the right to block any site that threatens national security or violates social mores”.⁵⁷³

In January 2015 Reporters Without Borders expressed alarm that Madeeha Abdella, editor-in-chief of the Sudan Communist Party newspaper Al-Midan, was facing a possible death sentence on a charge of crimes against the state brought by the National Intelligence and Security Services (NISS).⁵⁷⁴ It further noted that “The charges against her, brought on 13 January, appear to have been prompted by an interview with one of the military commanders of the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N), a separatist movement based in North Kurdufan state. The government has banned all media coverage of Sudan’s rebel movements”.⁵⁷⁵

6.1.6. Civil society organizations and civil society activists, including women’s rights activists

Limited COI specific to the situation in Blue Nile or South Kordofan for civil society organisations or activists was found amongst the sources covering the period between 1 July 2014 and 1 April 2016. Some information on the general situation across Sudan has therefore been included.

The Sudan NGO Law Monitor from the International Center for Not-for-Profit Law explains that “CSOs are governed by the [Voluntary and Humanitarian Work \(Organization\) Act, 2006](#) (‘the Act’) ([Arabic version](#)). The legislation is inconsistent with many provisions of the 2005 Interim National Constitution and the ICCPR. A key concern is Section 6 of the Act, which defines the objectives of humanitarian work narrowly, so as to include only such goals as emergency relief from natural disasters, reducing risks from disasters, directing relief aid to rehabilitation and development, reconstruction of infrastructure destroyed by war or natural disasters, building local capacity of national organizations, and the execution of relief projects and services through voluntary and

⁵⁷⁰ Reporters Sans Frontières, [Hackers attack website that covers Sudan’s war-torn regions](#), 19 September 2014

⁵⁷¹ Nuba Reports, [Nuba Reports website under attack](#), 18 September 2014

⁵⁷² Reporters Sans Frontières, [Hackers attack website that covers Sudan’s war-torn regions](#), 19 September 2014

⁵⁷³ Freedom House, [Freedom on the Net 2015 – Sudan](#), 02 November 2015, *Blocking and Filtering*

⁵⁷⁴ Reporters Sans Frontières, [Sudan – A journalist from Al-Midan newspaper in government’s sights again](#), 21 January 2015

⁵⁷⁵ Reporters Sans Frontières, [Sudan – A journalist from Al-Midan newspaper in government’s sights again](#), 21 January 2015

charitable organizations”.⁵⁷⁶For further information on domestic legislative instruments being enforced against civil society organisations that are contrary to established international standards, see Amnesty International, [Entrenched Repression: Freedom of Expression and Association Under Attack](#), 2 April 2015.

The UNITED STATES Department of State explained that “NGOs must register with the HAC, the government entity for regulating humanitarian efforts”.⁵⁷⁷Amnesty International also noted with regards to the situation in Sudan in general that “The government uses different state bodies such as the HAC, the Ministry of Culture, the non-profit companies’ Registrar and the National Council for Training, to harass or shut down civil society Organizations”.⁵⁷⁸

In its ‘Concluding observations’ the UN Human Rights Committee reported in August 2014 that it was “concerned at allegations indicating that State officials have subjected opponents and perceived opponents of the Government, human rights defenders and other activists to harassment, intimidation, arbitrary arrest and detention, and torture and ill-treatment (arts. 6, 7, 9, 19, 21 and 22)”.⁵⁷⁹ An October 2014 Equal Rights Trust report also documenting the general situation in Sudan considered that “Evidence collected by the Equal Rights Trust and other organisations indicates that agents of the state – in particular the NISS – seek to repress dissent, with the effect that discrimination on grounds of political opinion is a significant problem, affecting not just those directly involved with opposition political parties, but also independent media, civil society organisations and social campaigners. [...] The activities of civil society groups have also been disrupted, with those perceived to be challenging the regime’s position on contentious issues subjected to harassment, interruption of their activities and in some cases the closure of their organisations”.⁵⁸⁰

The January 2016 edition of the Sudan NGO Law Monitor from the International Center for Not-for-Profit Law reported that “CSOs [civil society organizations] supporting the government in power enjoy full government backing, including funding, customs exemptions on imports, and participation in government activities, including accompanying official delegations on travel to regional and international events. CSOs opposing the government, however, are often harassed, threatened, and closed down if they voice a position contrary to government views. The government also refuses to allow CSOs to take part in ‘national dialogue’ because they are perceived as opposing the government”.⁵⁸¹ The same source further reported in regards to Sudan in general that “In September 2014, on the anniversary of the September 2013 protests in which more than 200 peaceful demonstrators were killed in the streets of Khartoum and other cities, the government launched a crackdown on CSOs, including detaining 48 activists, according to the Sudan Change Now movement. In the months before the presidential and parliamentary elections in April 2015, the government again cracked down on CSOs, human rights defenders, students, the media and members of the political opposition, and refused to allow CSOs to observe the elections”.⁵⁸²

⁵⁷⁶International Center for Not-for-Profit Law, [NGO Law Monitor: Sudan](#), 4 January 2016

⁵⁷⁷United States Department of State, [Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2015 – Sudan](#), 13 April 2016, Section 5. Governmental Attitude Regarding International and Nongovernmental Investigation of Alleged Violations of Human Rights

⁵⁷⁸Amnesty International, [Entrenched Repression: Freedom of Expression and Association Under Attack](#), 2 April 2015

⁵⁷⁹UN Human Rights Committee, [Concluding observations on the fourth periodic report of Sudan \[CCPR/C/SDN/CO/4\]](#), 19 August 2014, paragraph 22

⁵⁸⁰Equal Rights Trust, [In Search of Confluence Addressing Discrimination and Inequality in Sudan](#), October 2014, 2.3 Discrimination and Inequality Based on Political Opinion, p. 87 and p.101

⁵⁸¹International Center for Not-for-Profit Law, [NGO Law Monitor: Sudan](#), 4 January 2016

⁵⁸²International Center for Not-for-Profit Law, [NGO Law Monitor: Sudan](#), 4 January 2016

The UNITED STATES Department of State report covering events in 2015 noted that “The government was uncooperative with, and unresponsive to, domestic human rights groups. It restricted and harassed workers of both domestic and international human rights organizations. According to international NGOs, government agents consistently monitored, threatened, prosecuted, and occasionally physically assaulted civil society activists. The government arrested NGO-affiliated international human rights and humanitarian workers, including in Darfur”.⁵⁸³

Amnesty International further reporting in May 2015 with regards to the situation in Sudan in general noted that “Abdel Rahman Al Mahdi, Director of Sudan Development Initiative (SUDIA), which works on good governance, peacebuilding, empowering youth and advancing the role of the media and civil society, told Amnesty International that ‘the working environment for civil societies has deteriorated compared to the previous year. I think the current harassment and threats to civil society can be understood in the overall attempt of the government to control civil society, in terms of reducing their access to funds and consequently reducing their ability to work’”.⁵⁸⁴ Amnesty International also noted that “Many civil society organizations find themselves in a Catch 22 situation. On one hand, they face government restrictions, and, on the other hand, grantmakers are reluctant to fund them because of these restrictions. Many grantmakers now refuse to support civil society organizations because they are not registered at the state level or their licences were revoked. SORD, for example, lost funding for five projects last year, forcing it to cut almost 50% of its staff”.⁵⁸⁵

Further documenting the situation in general throughout Sudan, the August 2015 ‘Report of the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in the Sudan, Aristide Nonons’ stated that “During the period under review, the Government continued to clamp down on the activities of civil society organizations. Four leading civil society organizations have been shut down, while at least five others are under threat of imminent closure”.⁵⁸⁶ It should be noted that where documented, these organisations were reported to be located in Khartoum.

With regards to women’s rights activists and women’s rights NGOs, following her May 2015 mission to the Republic of Sudan, Ms. Rashida Manjoo, United Nations Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, stated “The reports that I have received indicate a clamping down on NGOs generally, but more specifically women’s rights organisations, including through deregistration, challenges to applications by the relevant authorities, and also the imposition of barriers to registration”.⁵⁸⁷ A September 2015 Strategic Initiative for Women in the Horn of Africa report explains that “Article 154 of the SPC [Sudanese Penal Code] provides for ‘Practicing Prostitution’, which defines a ‘place of prostitution’ as ‘any place designated for the meeting of men and women between whom there is no marital relationship, or kinship, in circumstances in which the exercise of sexual acts is probable to occur.’ The law is extremely vague and broad in scope, and could be hypothetically used to prosecute any woman in the same room as an unrelated man. In the past, Sudanese civil society organizations have noted the use of Article 154 to especially target and intimidate female human rights defenders and activists critical of the

⁵⁸³ United States Department of State, [Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2015 – Sudan](#), 13 April 2016, Section 5. Governmental Attitude Regarding International and Nongovernmental Investigation of Alleged Violations of Human Rights

⁵⁸⁴ Amnesty International, [Entrenched Repression: Freedom of Expression and Association Under Attack](#), 2 April 2015

⁵⁸⁵ Amnesty International, [Entrenched Repression: Freedom of Expression and Association Under Attack](#), 2 April 2015

⁵⁸⁶ UN, [Report of the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in the Sudan, Aristide Nonons](#), 24 August 2015, paragraph 25

⁵⁸⁷ OHCHR news, [Special Rapporteur on violence against women finalizes country mission to Sudan and calls for more open and constructive dialogues on violence against women, its causes and consequences](#), 24 May 2015

regime, where they have been accused of prostitution for working with male colleagues alone in their offices”.⁵⁸⁸

In a March 2016 report on ‘Repression and Abuse of Women Human Rights Defenders, Activists, and Protesters in Sudan’, Human Rights Watch reported that “women involved in protests, rights campaigns, social services, legal aid, and journalism, and other public action have been targeted for a range of abuses, and operate in a wider context of gender inequality that makes their activism all the more challenging”.⁵⁸⁹ The same source further described that:

Based on interviews with more than 85 female activists and human rights defenders in Sudan’s urban centers, this report documents the patterns of abuse women experience at the hands of government security forces and the restrictive environment in which they work. It describes how women activists and human rights defenders face an array of abusive practices their male colleagues are less likely to have to contend with – from sexual violence to the deliberate efforts of security personnel to tar their reputations in ways that can cause lasting social and professional harm.

These abuses reflect, or are made worse by, the wider context of gender inequality in Sudanese society and the laws that institutionalize it. Vaguely defined public morality crimes discriminate against women in Sudan, proscribing their manner of dress, limiting their movement and role in public life, and imposing humiliating corporal punishments of lashing and stoning, in violation of international norms. The cases described in this report also highlight the broader problem of entrenched impunity for human rights abuses women face, including sexual violence.⁵⁹⁰

The report further detailed that “Government abuses against activists in conflict zones was beyond the scope of this research, but researchers found many examples of arrest of women activists and human rights defenders working with conflict-affected communities. In many cases, security officials presume or claim to believe that activists support the opposition or rebel groups”.⁵⁹¹

The following non-exhaustive, illustrative incidents of ill-treatment of civil society organisations in South Kordofan or Blue Nile between 1 July 2014 and 1 April 2016 were found amongst the sources consulted:

Freedom House’s ‘Freedom in the World 2015’ report provided the following overview of the situation of civil society organizations in the Two Areas of Sudan:

The operating environment for NGOs is challenging. All NGOs must register with the governmental Humanitarian Assistance Commission (HAC). The HAC regularly places restrictions or bans on the operations of NGOs and the movements of their workers, particularly in the conflict-affected areas of Darfur, Southern Kordofan, and Blue Nile.⁵⁹²

⁵⁸⁸ Strategic Initiative for Women in the Horn of Africa, [Third Class Citizens: Women and Citizenship in Sudan](#), September 2015, 2. *The 1991 Sudanese Penal Code, The Public Order Regime*

⁵⁸⁹ Human Rights Watch, [“Good Girls Don’t Protest” Repression and Abuse of Women Human Rights Defenders, Activists, and Protesters in Sudan](#), 23 March 2016, *Summary p.1*

⁵⁹⁰ Human Rights Watch, [“Good Girls Don’t Protest” Repression and Abuse of Women Human Rights Defenders, Activists, and Protesters in Sudan](#), 23 March 2016, *Summary p.1*

⁵⁹¹ Human Rights Watch, [“Good Girls Don’t Protest” Repression and Abuse of Women Human Rights Defenders, Activists, and Protesters in Sudan](#), 23 March 2016, *Activists Working with Conflict-Affected Communities p.34*

⁵⁹² Freedom House, [Freedom in the World 2015 – Sudan](#), 28 January 2015, *E. Associational and Organizational Rights*

The UNITED STATES Department of State report covering events in 2015 similarly noted that “The HAC obstructed the work of NGOs including in Darfur, the Two Areas, White Nile State, and Abyei. The HAC often changed its rules and regulations without prior notification”.⁵⁹³

The same source noted with regards to the situation for NGOs in the Two Areas that:

The government continued to obstruct the work of humanitarian organizations, increasing the displacement of civilians and abuse of IDPs. Violence, insecurity, and the denial of visas and refusal of access to international organizations reduced the ability of humanitarian organizations to provide needed services.

Government forces frequently harassed local NGOs that received international assistance, despite a joint communique between the government and the United Nations that allowed for the NGOs’ operation. The government restricted or denied permission for humanitarian assessments, refused to approve technical agreements, changed procedures, copied NGO files, confiscated NGO property, questioned humanitarian workers at length and monitored their personal correspondence, delayed issuance of visas and travel permits, restricted travel, and publicly accused humanitarian workers of aiding rebel groups.

The SPLM-N failed to work with OCHA and WHO officials to implement a vaccination campaign from October through year’s end. There continued to be reports humanitarian aid workers and centers, including hospitals, were targeted in the Two Areas. In the June report on children and armed conflict, the UN secretary-general noted the United Nations had received credible reports in 2014 regarding the military use of three schools by armed forces in South Kordofan. On January 20, the air force bombed the NGO Doctors without Borders in Frandala, Southern Kordofan, killing at least one person and injuring two. The NGO subsequently left the country.⁵⁹⁴

In January 2015 the Belgian branch of Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF/Doctors Without Borders) announced the closure of its activities in Sudan, citing among other issues “a total denial of access to Blue Nile state”.⁵⁹⁵ Dr Bart Janssens, director of operations for MSF in Brussels stated that “The Sudanese government’s approach to an international humanitarian presence in conflict areas of Sudan was starkly revealed last week when a Sudanese Air Force fighter jet targeted and bombed a hospital run by our MSF colleagues in South Kordofan State”.⁵⁹⁶

In February 2015 Radio Dabanga reported that “Two Sudanese Red Crescent Society (SRCS) employees and a volunteer were killed, and another volunteer was wounded, in an armed attack in the war-torn Blue Nile state. [...] It is as yet unclear who is responsible for the attack. [...] The SRCS reported in a press statement today that the victims were attacked while they were returning from El Kurmuk town to Ed Damazin, capital of Blue Nile state, ‘after performing a humanitarian mission regarding the distribution of relief materials to the needy in the town’”.⁵⁹⁷

In May 2015 Amnesty International reported that “Mohamed Musa Mohamed Dawud, a human rights activist from South Kordofan, Sudan was arrested in South Kadugli on 24 April by a suspected Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) unit. He is currently being held at Kadugli Military Hospital while undergoing medical treatment, but he has no access to a lawyer or his family. He is at serious risk of torture and other ill-treatment”.⁵⁹⁸ Reporting on the same incident the African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies noted that “Mohamad Dawud is a known human rights defender who is thought to

⁵⁹³ United States Department of State, [Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2015 – Sudan](#), 13 April 2016, Section 5. Governmental Attitude Regarding International and Nongovernmental Investigation of Alleged Violations of Human Rights

⁵⁹⁴ United States United States Department of State, [Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2015 – Sudan](#), 13 April 2016, Section 1.g

⁵⁹⁵ Radio Dabanga, [MSF-Belgium suspends aid in East and South Darfur, Blue Nile](#), 29 January 2015

⁵⁹⁶ Radio Dabanga, [MSF-Belgium suspends aid in East and South Darfur, Blue Nile](#), 29 January 2015

⁵⁹⁷ Radio Dabanga, [Three Sudanese aid workers killed in Blue Nile](#), 9 February 2015

⁵⁹⁸ Amnesty International, [Urgent Action: Detained Activist at Risk of Torture](#), 20 May 2015

have been injured and detained during a ground attack by the SAF on the civilian village of Belanga in West Kadugli County, South Kordofan. Conflicting reports suggest he was detained sometime between 23 and 30 April and taken to Kadugli hospital under armed guard, having sustained gunshot wounds. His current whereabouts have not been confirmed”.⁵⁹⁹

In an August 2015 report on attacks against civilians in Sudan’s South Kordofan State, Amnesty International noted with regards to the situation of human rights defenders that “Despite the serious limitations and dangers, local human rights defenders are active in South Kordofan. However, they have been targeted in the course of their work by SAF. For instance, a local human rights activist, Mohamed Musa Mohamed Dawud, was reportedly arrested in South Kadugli on 24 April 2015 by a SAF unit. He was being detained in a military hospital in the South Kordofan capital Kadugli, without access to a lawyer or his family”⁶⁰⁰ (see above for further details).

The Confederation of Sudanese Civil Society Organizations reported that “In August and September [2015] and in both the states of Blue Nile State and South Kordofan the government continues to obstruct projects/activities of organizations that are related to human-rights issues and more specifically awareness around Resolution 1325⁶⁰¹. Security also prohibit field surveys, data collection and community mobilization activities that may be deemed necessary during any project design or formulation stages. Additionally, a TV program/episode recorded by the Blue Nile TV channel and which hosted a discussion between civil society leaders and representatives from the HAC on tissues related to civil society in Sudan and the role of the HAC was repeatedly postponed and never broadcast”.⁶⁰² The same source, reporting on the situation between July and September 2015 noted that:

NIDAA organization continues to struggle with authorities (HAC) in establishing its offices and beginning its activities in Blue Nile State. Initially, the HAC nominated five local organizations of which (NIDAA) was to select one to work with as a partner. NIDAA’s selection was rejected and HAC designated a specific organization for NIDAA to partner with. Further complications and delays involved differences over the projects target locations, and the reluctance of NIDAA to capitulate to the HACs insistence that the project technical agreement place NIDAA as a donor and the local partner/NGO (designated by HAC) as the executing agency.

Civil society organizations in Blue Nile State also reported that government institutions related to services (health, water, education) have created new internal departments to review and approve requests from NGOs looking to carry out projects in their relevant service area. This represents an additional layer of approvals that has the potential to disrupt and delay activities. Organizations are also anticipating the issuance of a new law for the NGO sector before the end of the year. A revised law that will place even greater restrictions and have a direct negative impact on the activities of civil society organizations.⁶⁰³

In September 2015 the organisation Nord-Sud XXI submitted to the UN Human Rights Council that “No independent humanitarian agencies are currently allowed by the government of Sudan to

⁵⁹⁹ African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies, [Sudan: Release and guarantee safety of human rights defender detained by armed forces in Nuba Mountains](#), 18 May 2015

⁶⁰⁰ Amnesty International, [Don’t We Matter? Four years of unrelenting attacks against civilians in Sudan’s South Kordofan State \[AFR 54/2162/2015\]](#), 17 August 2015, *Restrictions on Human Rights Monitoring* p.40

⁶⁰¹ For a discussion of UN Resolution 1325 on Women Peace and Security, unanimously adopted in October 2000, see NOREF Norwegian Peacebuilding Resource Centre, [Complex realities and astute actors: Sudanese women’s activism and UN Security Council Resolution 1325](#), January 2014

⁶⁰² Confederation of Sudanese Civil Society Organizations, [Sudan Civil Society Watch](#), July-September 2015

⁶⁰³ Confederation of Sudanese Civil Society Organizations, [Sudan Civil Society Watch](#), July-September 2015

deliver relief material to the needy populations in areas controlled by the SPLA-N in the Nuba Mountains and the Blue Nile since the fighting started in June 2011”.⁶⁰⁴

The UNITED STATES Department of State report covering events in 2015 noted “Under the government’s ‘Sudanization’ policy, many organizations reported they faced administrative difficulties if they refused to have progovernment groups implement their programs at the state level. In Blue Nile, for example, HAC state authorities prevented one humanitarian organization from implementing a food security program for several months until it agreed to collaborate with CORD, a local organization selected by the state government”.⁶⁰⁵

In a March 2016 report on Repression and Abuse of Women Human Rights Defenders, Activists, and Protesters in Sudan, Human Rights Watch reported that “Community-based organizations assisting displaced people from the conflict zones of Darfur, Nuba Mountains and Blue Nile appear especially vulnerable to being shut down”.⁶⁰⁶

Further information on the denial of humanitarian access in the Two Areas can be found in section [4.4. Denial of humanitarian access](#).

6.1.6.1. Demonstrators, protestors and persons speaking out

In its ‘Concluding observations’ the UN Human Rights Committee reported in August 2014 that it was “concerned about the numerous reports of excessive and disproportionate use of force by law-enforcement and security officials in the context of demonstrations, which in several instances has resulted in loss of lives”.⁶⁰⁷ The UNITED STATES Department of State report for 2015 explained that “Individuals who criticized the government publicly or privately were subject to reprisal, including arrest”.⁶⁰⁸ The same source further noted that “Security forces used tear gas and other heavy-handed tactics against largely peaceful protests at universities or involving university students”.⁶⁰⁹ Human Rights Watch’s annual report for 2015 similarly documented “Sudanese security forces used excessive force to break up demonstrations over a range of issues, and prevented or restricted public events, particularly in the lead up to the general elections”.⁶¹⁰ A September 2015 joint submission from the African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies (ACJPS), International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), and International Refugee Rights Initiative (IRRI) to the 2016 Universal Periodic Review of Sudan reported that “Since 2011, Sudanese authorities including the police, the NISS and other security forces, have repeatedly used unnecessary and excessive force, including lethal force, to disperse demonstrations and public gatherings, and during arrests”.⁶¹¹

⁶⁰⁴ Nord-Sud XXI, [Written statement* submitted to the UN Human Rights Council, by the Nord-Sud XXI – North South XXI, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status: Situation of Human Rights in Sudan*](#), 8 September 2015

⁶⁰⁵ United States Department of State, [Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2015 – Sudan](#), 13 April 2016, *Section 1.c. Prison and Detention Center Conditions*

⁶⁰⁶ Human Rights Watch, [“Good Girls Don’t Protest” Repression and Abuse of Women Human Rights Defenders, Activists, and Protesters in Sudan](#), 23 March 2016, *Restrictions on Women’s Civil Society p.39*

⁶⁰⁷ UN Human Rights Committee, [Concluding observations on the fourth periodic report of Sudan \[CCPR/C/SDN/CO/4\]](#), 19 August 2014, *paragraph 22*

⁶⁰⁸ United States Department of State, [Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2015 – Sudan](#), 13 April 2016, *Section 2.a Freedom of Speech and Press*

⁶⁰⁹ United States Department of State, [Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2015 – Sudan](#), 13 April 2016, *Section 2.a Freedom of Speech and Press*

⁶¹⁰ Human Rights Watch, [World Report 2016 – Sudan](#), 27 January 2016

⁶¹¹ African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies (ACJPS), International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), and International Refugee Rights Initiative (IRRI), [Submission to the Universal Periodic Review of Sudan 2016](#), September 2015, *Excessive use of force p.7*

The following non-exhaustive, illustrative incidents of ill-treatment of protestors in South Kordofan or Blue Nile between 1 July 2014 and 1 April 2016 were found amongst the sources consulted:

According to Radio Dabanga, on 18 September 2014 three men were detained in Kadugli, South Kordofan, one of whom, Karam Ibrahim “was accused of possessing a laptop that contained pictures of the demonstrations in September 2013, as well as pictures of armed movements in Darfur”.⁶¹²

Radio Dabanga reported that on 30th September 2014, 6 student activists were detained in Abu Jubaiha town, south-east South Kordofan “after they had handed a memorandum to the local authorities, demanding the provision of clean drinking water and electricity services”.⁶¹³ Two further student activists were subsequently detained by members of the National Intelligence and Security Service and reportedly, “security forces also raided El Marfaein village, 5 km south of Abu Jubaiha, in search of student Ibrahim El Nimiya”.⁶¹⁴ Radio Dabanga further reported that “On 6 October [2014], residents of Abu Jubaiha organised a sit-in in front of the NISS office in the town, demanding the release of the detainees. A delegation consisting of Abu Jubaiha notables and youth representatives met with the commissioner of Abu Jubaiha locality, and NISS officers, who promised to release the detained youths. NISS agents later detained 15 of the protesters, among them women”.⁶¹⁵

The International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) reported on 23rd October 2014 that six people were detained incommunicado and without charge since their arrests by Sudanese security services on 2 and 3 October 2014 in Abu Jehiba town, South Kordofan state.⁶¹⁶ It further noted that there were “concerns for the safety of those individuals who were transferred to Khartoum on an unknown date and have been denied access to their families or lawyers. The arrests are thought to have been made in connection with the appearance of graffiti in Abu Jehiba town calling for citizens not to forget the deaths of civilians who were killed during protests throughout the country in September and October 2013”.⁶¹⁷ Moreover, “Five other individuals protesting their detention outside the offices of the National Intelligence and Security Services (NISS) in Abu Jehiba town were detained by the NISS for three days before being transferred to police custody and released on bail, charged with disturbance of the public peace and public nuisance under Sudan’s 1991 Penal Code”.⁶¹⁸

Radio Tamazuj reported that in December 2014, three students had been dismissed from the College of Engineering in Blue Nile University in Roseires “or protesting against the transfer of the internal library to a new location”.⁶¹⁹

The Human Rights and Development Organisation’s (HUDO) annual report covering events in 2015 noted with regards to arbitrary arrests in Blue Nile that:

On June 26th 2015, at around 1:00 pm, NISS officers arrested Mohamed MahmoudIssa, 19 years a student at Blue Nile University. He was taken from Ganees East market by three NISS officers and he was released on the same day at around 6:00 pm after being tortured.

⁶¹² Radio Dabanga, [Families demand Sudan release South Kordofan detainees](#), 2 October 2014

⁶¹³ Radio Dabanga, [South Kordofan activists detained for demanding water, electricity](#), 13 October 2014

⁶¹⁴ Radio Dabanga, [South Kordofan activists detained for demanding water, electricity](#), 13 October 2014

⁶¹⁵ Radio Dabanga, [South Kordofan activists detained for demanding water, electricity](#), 13 October 2014

⁶¹⁶ International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), [Six individuals from South Kordofan detained incommunicado after calls for memorial events to mark 2013 protest killings](#), 23 October 2014

⁶¹⁷ International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), [Six individuals from South Kordofan detained incommunicado after calls for memorial events to mark 2013 protest killings](#), 23 October 2014

⁶¹⁸ International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), [Six individuals from South Kordofan detained incommunicado after calls for memorial events to mark 2013 protest killings](#), 23 October 2014

⁶¹⁹ Radio Tamazuj, [Blue Nile University students protest dismissal of their colleagues](#), 20 December 2014

Mohamed was arrested for the alleged comments he made on 22nd June 2015 while engaging in an argument with a colleague named Aggaba about the attempted arrest of President Bashir in South Africa. Eight people (one of them called Mahadi) took turns in beating him with a black water pipe which caused injuries on his back.⁶²⁰

SUDO reported that in October 2015 “NISS forces dispersed a demonstration using tear gas and live ammunition against primary school students, as well as the inhabitants of Al-Higra neighbourhood in Demazin. The demonstration was the result of a decision by the local authorities to demolish the house of a resident who had lived there for 30 years, in order to give ownership of the land to another individual. In addition to the use of live ammunition and tear gas, Military Intelligence officers arrested Ali Khamis and Awad Gumaa, accusing both of agitating the students and the neighbourhood and furthermore of being members of SPLM-N. Both are reportedly being tortured and are held in containers in the Sudanese Armed Forces Headquarters in Demazin”.⁶²¹

SUDO further reported in November 2015 that in Blue Nile State “Ramadan Ashmra was arrested in front of Al-Hejra Mosque in North Demazin by National Intelligence and Security Services for publicly speaking about the tragic situation that Blue Nile citizens face themselves in”.⁶²²

6.2. Freedom of religion

As reported by the UNITED STATES Department of State in its 2014 report on International Religious Freedom, it should be noted that “Because of the overlap between ethnicity and religion, it was often difficult to determine whether reported abuses were specifically due to religious intolerance”.⁶²³ This section should therefore be read in conjunction with [6.3. Discrimination against ethnic minorities](#).

Limited information specific to freedom of religion in South Kordofan and Blue Nile was found amongst the sources consulted within the timeframe of this report. Contextual information on the situation in general across Sudan has therefore also been included.

In its ‘Concluding observation’s the UN Human Rights Committee reported in August 2014 that it was concerned that “apostasy is still criminalized in the State party and that other forms of discrimination against non-Muslims are embodied in legislation or exercised in practice (art. 18)”.⁶²⁴

The UNITED STATES Department of State’s 2014 Report on International Religious Freedom found that in Sudan, “Laws and government practices continued to favor Islam, however, and to make conversion from Islam to another religion a crime. The criminal code does not explicitly ban proselytizing, but criminalizes both apostasy and acts that encourage apostasy against Islam. [...] Most individuals charged with apostasy recanted their non-Islamic faith or fled the country to escape harsh penalties, including death. The government also continued to deny permits for the construction of new churches, detain church members, close or demolish pre-existing churches, restrict non-Muslim religious groups and missionaries from operating or entering the country, censor

⁶²⁰ HUDO Centre, [Human Rights Situation in South Kordofan and Blue Nile States of Sudan January-December 2015](#), 20 March 2016, 2.0.2 Arbitrary Arrest in Blue Nile p.19

⁶²¹ SUDO UK, [HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES IN SUDAN OVER THE MONTH OF OCTOBER 2015](#), 1 November 2015, Blue Nile

⁶²² SUDO UK, [HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES IN SUDAN OVER THE MONTH OF NOVEMBER 2015](#), 21 December 2015, Blue Nile

⁶²³ United States Department of State, [2014 Report on International Religious Freedom – Sudan](#), 14 October 2015, Executive Summary

⁶²⁴ UN Human Rights Committee, [Concluding observations on the fourth periodic report of Sudan \[CCPR/C/SDN/CO/4\]](#), 19 August 2014, paragraph 8

religious materials and leaders, and arrest or intimidate suspected proselytizers. There was a general consensus among religious leaders that Muslim and Christian communities generally co-existed peacefully”.⁶²⁵

A July 2014 article from Christian Solidarity Worldwide reported that “Since South Sudan seceded, the Christian community in Sudan has continued to face increased harassment from the government. Christians have been detained by the National Intelligence Security Services (NISS) and non-Sudanese Christians have been deported or refused entry into the country. Church buildings have been demolished often with less than 24 hours notice, and Church properties have been vandalised with impunity”.⁶²⁶ An October 2014 Equal Rights Trust report similarly considered that “evidence suggests that, since the secession of South Sudan in 2011, Christians have faced increased pressure at the hands of both state and non-state actors, with cases involving attacks on religious buildings, the closure of churches and Christian educational institutions, arrests for proselytisation and the confiscation of religious literature. [...] In addition to the forced closure of Christian religious buildings, there are indications that the government does not permit the building of new churches”.⁶²⁷

Summarising the situation in Sudan in 2015, the UNITED STATES Commission on International Religious Freedom report noted that “The government of Sudan, led by President Omar Hassan al-Bashir, continues to engage in systematic, ongoing, and egregious violations of freedom of religion or belief. These violations are the result of President Bashir's policies of Islamization and Arabization. The government of Sudan prosecutes persons accused of apostasy, imposes a restrictive interpretation of Shari'ah (Islamic law) and applies corresponding hudood punishments on Muslims and non-Muslims alike, and harasses the country's Christian community. President al-Bashir and other National Congress Party (NCP) leaders continue to state that the country will be governed by Shari'ah law. [...] Suspected converts to Christianity face societal pressures, and government security personnel intimidate and sometimes torture those suspected of conversion. [...] Dozens of Muslim and Christian women were flogged or fined for ‘indecent dress’”.⁶²⁸ The UNITED STATES State Department report for 2015 noted that “Government security forces beat and tortured persons in detention, including members [...] religious activists, and journalists, according to civil society activists in Khartoum, former detainees, and NGOs. Subsequently, the government released many of these persons without charge. It did not investigate cases of torture or excessive use of force by security agents”.⁶²⁹

Also reporting on the situation in general throughout Sudan, the August 2015 ‘Report of the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in the Sudan, Aristide Nonons’ stated that:

The right to freedom of religion is enshrined in article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and in article 38 of the interim national Constitution of the Sudan. The interim national Constitution also established the Commission for the Rights of Non-Muslims in Khartoum State to ensure that their rights are protected in accordance with the Constitution. The Independent Expert,

⁶²⁵ United States Department of State, [2014 Report on International Religious Freedom – Sudan](#), 14 October 2015, *Executive Summary*

⁶²⁶ Christian Solidarity Worldwide, [SUDANESE MINISTER REAFFIRMS ANTI-CHURCH POLICY](#), 16 July 2014

⁶²⁷ Equal Rights Trust, [In Search of Confluence Addressing Discrimination and Inequality in Sudan](#), October 2014, 2.1 *Discrimination and Inequality Based on Religion or Belief, Discrimination against Christians and Other Religious Minorities* p.44

⁶²⁸ United States Commission on International Religious Freedom, [USCIRF Annual Report 2015 – Tier 1 CPCs designated by the State Department and recommended by USCIRF: Sudan](#), 1 May 2015

⁶²⁹ United States Department of State, [Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2015 – Sudan](#), 13 April 2016, c. *Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment*

however, received information in relation to incidents of arrest and restrictions of freedom of religion or belief of the Christian communities.⁶³⁰

The report then goes on to document the arrest and detention of two Pastors from South Sudan.⁶³¹ A March 2016 report from the Sudan Democracy First Group noted with regards to the situation in Sudan in general that “In addition to the individual targeting of Christian religious leaders, there has been broader state practice which has further undermined the religious rights of Sudanese Christians. Since 2011, for example, the government has stopped the celebration of Christmas as an official holiday, alongside other non-Muslim religious occasions, including refusing to broadcast these celebrations through the state-own media outlets”.⁶³²

It should be noted that the incidents of abuses of religious freedom reported by the sources consulted within the time frame of this report typically occurred in Khartoum and Omdurman,⁶³³ including against those originating from the Nuba mountains.⁶³⁴ However according to a June 2015 Christian Solidarity Worldwide article:

The repression against minorities is not restricted to the capital city Khartoum. Since 2011, the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) have increased their attacks on non-Muslim communities in South Kordofan. On 25 May, two SAF fighter jets dropped three bombs on the town of Kauda in the Nuba Mountains killing a four year-old girl, and two bombs over the Catholic Church, school and priest’s compounds. On 27 May, two SAF fighter jets dropped four cluster bombs over a residential area in Kauda that did not deploy properly; later that day 12 bombs were dropped near the town market, injuring three people, killing livestock and destroying six homes.⁶³⁵

With further regards to freedom of religion in Blue Nile and South Kordofan, according to Freedom House’s annual report covering events in 2014, “Beyond the capital and the immediate area around it, Sudan’s many distinct ethnic, regional, and religious groups face political, social, and economic marginalization and the ruling elite treats them as second-class citizens”.⁶³⁶ In contrast, the UNITED STATES Department of State’s 2014 Report on International Religious Freedom considered that “There was generally greater tolerance for different religions in rural areas as compared to major cities, where government policies in general were more strictly enforced”.⁶³⁷ According to an October 2014 Nuba Reports article, “Religion is regularly used by the Sudanese government to justify its conflict in the Nuba Mountains. Religious clerics aligned with the ruling National Congress Party often unofficially recruit youth for militias sent to fight the rebel Sudan Revolutionary Front”.⁶³⁸ The same source reported that “in the Nuba Mountains, religious freedom is an important right. It is common to have both Muslims and Christians in the same family. And though communities do not

⁶³⁰ UN, [Report of the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in the Sudan, Aristide Nonons](#), 24 August 2015, paragraph 30

⁶³¹ UN, [Report of the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in the Sudan, Aristide Nonons](#), 24 August 2015, paragraph 30

⁶³² Sudan Democracy First Group, [Sudan Religious Discrimination and the Quest for National Integration](#), 14 March 2016

⁶³³ For example, see Sudan Democracy First Group, [Sudan Religious Discrimination and the Quest for National Integration](#), 14 March 2016 and various Christian Solidarity Worldwide articles e.g. Christian Solidarity Worldwide, [SUDAN CLERGYMEN OBLIGED TO REPORT DAILY TO NISS](#), 30 March 2016; Christian Solidarity Worldwide, [SUDAN TWO PASTORS DETAINED INCOMMUNICADO](#), 22 December 2015

⁶³⁴ For example, see Nuba Reports, [NO CHANCE TO CELEBRATE CHRISTMAS IN SUDAN, CRACKDOWN CONTINUE](#), 23 December 2015. Also see the relevant chapters in: ARC, [Situation in Khartoum and Omdurman](#), 9 September 2015

⁶³⁵ Christian Solidarity Worldwide, [PROSECUTION CLOSES CASE SUDANESE PASTORS TRIAL](#), 26 June 2015

⁶³⁶ Freedom House, [Freedom in the World 2015 – Sudan](#), 28 January 2015

⁶³⁷ United States Department of State, [2014 Report on International Religious Freedom – Sudan](#), 14 October 2015, Section III. Status of Societal Respect for Religious Freedom

⁶³⁸ Nuba Reports, [TWO BROTHERS, TWO RELIGIONS](#), 21 October 2014

share the same beliefs, they are happy to celebrate their spirituality together”.⁶³⁹ For further information on the targeting of Christian communities due to their perceived affiliation with the SPLM/A-N, see [6.1.4, Individuals \(perceived to be\) associated with or supportive of the SPLM/A-N, 6.1.4.4. Christians.](#)

Reporting specifically on the situation for religious minorities from (but not necessarily in) the Two Areas the Sudan Democracy First Group stated in a March 2016 report:

The most systematic and government-driven religious discrimination and attacks against religious freedoms, however, have been suffered by the people of the Nuba Mountains/South Kordofan and Blue Nile. The security apparatus appears to consider their churches in Khartoum as centers of undesirable gatherings and their leaders as opinion leaders who are categorised as security threats given their influence in their parishes. This combination of ethnic and religious targeting and discrimination against Sudanese citizens of Nuba Mountains/South Kordofan and Blue Nile origin has become a key tool of the political conflict in the two regions. Such actions by the regime aim at generating support from extremist Islamic circles and misleading the Sudanese public so that the actual causes of the wars in the two regions are misunderstood. The result of this systematic religious discrimination is not only the exposure of citizens from Nuba Mountains/South Kordofan and Blue Nile to a double oppression (ethnic and religious targeting) but also the masking of historic failures of governance, political and social grievances and uneven development which are the foundation of the conflict.⁶⁴⁰

6.3. Discrimination against ethnic minorities

As reported by the UNITED STATES Department of State in its 2014 report on International Religious Freedom, it should be noted that “Because of the overlap between ethnicity and religion, it was often difficult to determine whether reported abuses were specifically due to religious intolerance”.⁶⁴¹ This section should therefore be read in conjunction with [6.2. Freedom of Religion.](#)

According to Freedom House’s annual report covering events in 2014, “Beyond the capital and the immediate area around it, Sudan’s many distinct ethnic, regional, and religious groups face political, social, and economic marginalization and the ruling elite treats them as second-class citizens”.⁶⁴² The Equal Rights Trust explained in its October 2014 report in relation to ‘Addressing Discrimination and Inequality in Sudan’ that “Sudan has a long history of ethno-regional conflicts, a number of which continue today. In each of these conflicts, the root causes are a combination of ethnic, religious and political discrimination promoted by the Khartoum regime against populations in the periphery regions”.⁶⁴³ The same report considered that with regards to the current ethno-regional conflicts, including those in South Kordofan and southern Blue Nile:

It should be reiterated that the racially discriminatory nature of Sudan’s conflicts cannot be isolated from their political underpinnings, i.e. the Arabisation and Islamisation policies of the Nimeiry and al-Bashir regimes. Still, while the role of ethnicity (as opposed to religion, politics or economics) in causing these conflicts is open to question, the discriminatory effects on the ethnic/tribal communities in each conflict area are not. In each of the conflict areas, the Sudanese army has engaged in direct armed conflict against rebel forces which are largely composed of members of ethnic/tribal populations constituting majorities within the respective conflict regions.

⁶³⁹ Nuba Reports, [TWO BROTHERS, TWO RELIGIONS](#), 21 October 2014

⁶⁴⁰ Sudan Democracy First Group, [Sudan Religious Discrimination and the Quest for National Integration](#), 14 March 2016

⁶⁴¹ United States Department of State, [2014 Report on International Religious Freedom – Sudan](#), 14 October 2015, *Executive Summary*

⁶⁴² Freedom House, [Freedom in the World 2015 – Sudan](#), 28 January 2015

⁶⁴³ Equal Rights Trust, [In Search of Confluence: Addressing Discrimination and Inequality in Sudan](#), October 2014, *Ethno-regional Conflicts as Manifestations of Ethnic Discrimination* p.53

It appears, from numerous expressions of concern by many parties over the last decade, that attacks on rebel-held positions have had little regard for limiting the number of civilian casualties from the local communities. In addition, the government has supported tribal militias in South Sudan and Darfur throughout the conflicts there, and is continuing to do so today in South Kordofan and Blue Nile states, exploiting existing tribal differences to fuel conflict.⁶⁴⁴

Indeed, the report documented that some commentators have attributed the conflict in South Kordofan to “the marginalisation of the Nuba people by the Sudanese government, and their consequent affiliation with the southern rebels during the civil war”.⁶⁴⁵

The Equal Rights Trust further explained that “The ongoing conflict between rebel forces in South Kordofan and the government leaves people belonging to the Nuba and other ethnic groups in these regions vulnerable to discrimination which is ethnically based, as well as discrimination by association with the government’s political and military opponents. [...] Sources indicate that the Nuba, who originate in the Nuba Mountains in South Kordofan state, were persecuted by successive regimes, and that they continue to be discriminated against on grounds of race and colour”.⁶⁴⁶ Moreover, “Members of the police and security services are also accused of discriminating against those ethnic groups which are believed to be in opposition to the Khartoum regime, harassing, arresting and detaining persons on the basis of their ethnicity”.⁶⁴⁷ For further information, see [6.1.4. Individuals \(perceived to be\) associated with or supportive of the SPLM/A-N](#), particularly [6.1.4.2. Nuba \(South Kordofan\)](#) and [6.1.4.3 Other ethnic groups](#).

With regards to discrimination on the basis of language the Equal Rights Trust report considered that:

[T]he official languages of Sudan are Arabic and English. In practice however, Arabic is the only language used by government departments and agencies. As a result, non-Arabic speakers can experience disadvantage in access to education, employment and other areas of life. The role of Arabic as the effective language of government, and the impact which this has on non-Arabic speakers cannot be overstated, particularly in view of the ethnic, cultural and religious significance of the language. Arabic is the language of the Qur’an, and there is a strong perceived connection between the use of Arabic and the Islamic cultural project which celebrates Arab and Muslim identities to the exclusion of other groups. Similarly, language interconnects with ethnicity and tribe: if a person cannot speak fluent Arabic, there is a perception that this person belongs to an “African” ethnic group. [...]

The lack of instruction in native languages effectively forces children from ethnic minority communities to learn to communicate and receive instruction in Arabic.⁶⁴⁸

The UNITED STATES Department of State report covering events in 2015 noted that “The Muslim majority and the government continued to discriminate against ethnic minorities in almost every aspect of society. Citizens in Arabic-speaking areas who did not speak Arabic experienced discrimination in education, employment, and other areas. [...] The government did not effectively enforce labor laws and regulations, and penalties were not sufficient to deter violations. Discrimination in employment and occupation occurred based on gender, religion, and ethnic, tribal,

⁶⁴⁴ Equal Rights Trust, [In Search of Confluence: Addressing Discrimination and Inequality in Sudan](#), October 2014, *Ethno-regional Conflicts as Manifestations of Ethnic Discrimination* p.54

⁶⁴⁵ Equal Rights Trust, [In Search of Confluence: Addressing Discrimination and Inequality in Sudan](#), October 2014, *Ethno-regional Conflicts as Manifestations of Ethnic Discrimination* p.64

⁶⁴⁶ Equal Rights Trust, [In Search of Confluence: Addressing Discrimination and Inequality in Sudan](#), October 2014, *Ethno-regional Conflicts as Manifestations of Ethnic Discrimination* p.64 and *Introduction* p.19

⁶⁴⁷ Equal Rights Trust, [In Search of Confluence: Addressing Discrimination and Inequality in Sudan](#), October 2014, *Ethno-regional Conflicts as Manifestations of Ethnic Discrimination* p.70

⁶⁴⁸ Equal Rights Trust, [In Search of Confluence: Addressing Discrimination and Inequality in Sudan](#), October 2014, *Ethnic Discrimination in Education, Employment and Political Participation* p.82

or party affiliation. Ethnic minorities often complained that government hiring practices discriminated against them in favor of ‘riverine’ Arabs from northern Sudan”.⁶⁴⁹ Similarly the Equal Rights Trust report of October 2014 described that “regardless of their fluency in Arabic, ethnic origin is a stand-alone barrier to employment, education and services. There are very few non-Arabs in the civil service, the army, the police and the security services. Darfuri students are reportedly often discriminated against merely because of their ethnic origin”.⁶⁵⁰

The UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office report for 2014 considered that “Individuals from Darfur and the Two Areas have continued to receive discriminatory treatment, particularly with respect to access to education”.⁶⁵¹ The Bertelsmann Foundation 2016 Sudan Country report covering the period from 1 February 2013 to 31 January 2015 noted that “Appointment and promotion in the judicial system is widely seen as reflecting political acceptability to the regime, as well as on occasion being the result of kinship and ethnic links”.⁶⁵²

In an April 2015 submission to the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, the Nuba Mountains Peoples Foundation considered that “The marginalisation of ethnic and religious minorities in Sudan, including the Nuba peoples, is institutionalized in the media including national TV which does not equally represent or portray Sudan’s diversity”.⁶⁵³ Moreover, “There is no fair representation of Nuba people in government functions, including central government ministries, local government, the military and police academies, though the majority of police and army personnel are from the Nuba, but never in high placed positions, especially in conflict locations”.⁶⁵⁴ The same source further noted:

The new constitutional powers (amending Article 43 of Sudan 2005 interim constitution) give the president sole right to allocate and confiscate land for investment purposes across the country without restriction. This undermines the indigenous and minority tribal people right to their ancestral lands and their right to free and prior informed consent.⁶⁵⁵

In an April 2015 report on civilian perspectives on the conflict in South Kordofan, the International Refugee Rights Initiative reported that “people differentiated between tensions that have been created by the war, and those that pre-dated the war. As an example of the latter, many referred to tensions over the use of land for both grazing and cultivation, a tension that was described as falling along ethnic lines: ‘There are still conflicts between us and Arabs, the Baggara, particularly around livestock looting and grazing issues. And this has been made worse by the NCP oppression: there is no security for us to cultivate. But despite that, there is still cooperation between people.’ As another man said, ‘I am Nuban even though I came from the north. But some people, Arabs, are not accepted around here.’ One man living in Delami County said, ‘Sometimes tribalism and the looting

⁶⁴⁹ United States Department of State, [Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2015 – Sudan](#), 13 April 2016, Section 6. National/Racial/Ethnic Minorities and Section 7. D. Discrimination with Respect to Employment and Occupation

⁶⁵⁰ Equal Rights Trust, [In Search of Confluence: Addressing Discrimination and Inequality in Sudan](#), October 2014, *Ethnic Discrimination in Education, Employment and Political Participation* p.83

⁶⁵¹ UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office, [Human Rights and Democracy Report 2014- Sudan – Country of Concern](#), 12 March 2015

⁶⁵² Bertelsmann Foundation, [BTI 2016; Sudan Country Report](#), 2016, 3 Rule of Law p.9

⁶⁵³ Nuba Mountains Peoples Foundation, [Alternative Report to the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination \(CERD\); Review of the Periodic Report of Sudan](#), April 2015, paragraph 12

⁶⁵⁴ Nuba Mountains Peoples Foundation, [Alternative Report to the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination \(CERD\); Review of the Periodic Report of Sudan](#), April 2015, paragraph 20

⁶⁵⁵ Nuba Mountains Peoples Foundation, [Alternative Report to the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination \(CERD\); Review of the Periodic Report of Sudan](#), April 2015, paragraph 16

of property creates tensions in our communities. But at the moment there is not any tension, even the Arabs we are living with us peacefully”⁶⁵⁶.

The Sudan Consortium reported in October 2015 that in Blue Nile “Relations between the Maban and the Nuer have deteriorated since the beginning of the conflict in South Sudan, with killing on both sides (the Maban people have mostly sided with the Government of South Sudan). The new trend has exacerbated existing tension between the refugees and the host community, based on a struggle over scarcity of land and resources. Three refugees from the Ingessana tribe were killed in Yousif Batil by the host communities in October. The increasing intertribal violence and divisions between Maban, Blue Nile and Nuer groups is a dramatic feature of the conflicts in Sudan and South Sudan”⁶⁵⁷.

SUDO reported in November 2015 that in Blue Nile State “Military Intelligence detained 60 year-old Babiker Hamza, the elder of the Al-Ragreg ethnic group, for asking the authorities to release the detainees from his ethnic group. Babiker Hamza, resident of Al-Thwra neighbourhood in Demazin is detained inside a container in the Sudanese Armed Forces Fourth Division Headquarters in Demazin”⁶⁵⁸. The same source reported that in November 2015 in South Kordofan:

Monitors reported an attack by the SPLM-N on Um Olwan village situated north-west of Delling in Delling Locality. The attack is the consequence of inflaming tensions and escalating incidents between members from the Hawazma ethnic group and the local garrison in question. The Hawazma from this particular village had attacked the SPLM-N camp previously killing two soldiers in response to the SPLM-N having earlier looted their cattle. This led the SPLM-N to attack the village in question killing civilians including women and children. As of yet the death count is unclear but constitutes members from both sides. Seven persons have been rushed to Delling hospital, whilst four shops in the village were looted, 100 cows stolen and farms destroyed.⁶⁵⁹

SUDO documented that in December 2015 in South Kordofan, “SPLM-N forces attacked a group of shepherds in the village of Alibdarah killing two and wounding another two, before looting 70 cows. Alibdarah is located roughly 2km south of Abasiya, which has experienced similar attacks throughout the year. Most of the attacks have been targeting members of the Baggara ethnic group; however, in this instance the victims were members of the Tagli ethnic group. Monitors note that this is due to a change in SPLM-N forces in the region, having brought new units in from different areas”⁶⁶⁰.

For further information on the targets of SPLM-N attacks, see section [2.2.3. Human rights abuses committed by armed opposition groups](#).

7. Women

7.1. Sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV)

The COI in this section specifically relates to sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) in the conflict areas of South Kordofan and Blue Nile. For further information on SGBV in Sudan more generally and

⁶⁵⁶ International Refugee Rights Initiative (IRRI), [“We just want a rest from war.” Civilian perspectives on the conflict in Sudan’s Southern Kordofan State](#), April 2015, *Community relationships* p.22-3

⁶⁵⁷ Sudan Consortium [HUMANITARIAN UPDATE – October 2015](#), October 2015

⁶⁵⁸ SUDO UK, [HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES IN SUDAN OVER THE MONTH OF NOVEMBER 2015](#), 21 December 2015, *Blue Nile*

⁶⁵⁹ SUDO UK, [HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES IN SUDAN OVER THE MONTH OF NOVEMBER 2015](#), 21 December 2015, *South Kordofan*

⁶⁶⁰ SUDO UK, [HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES IN SUDAN OVER THE MONTH OF DECEMBER 2015](#), 26 February 2016, *Blue Nile*

for information on the legislative framework, see: ARC, [Darfur Country Report](#), October 2015, 10.2. *Sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV)*.

The September 2014 report of the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in the Sudan documented that “Although the Unit for Combating Violence against Women and Children as well as the Family and Child Protection Unit of the Sudanese police force are doing very good work, the problem of violence against women and children remains of grave concern, especially in the conflict areas. During the reporting period, there were incidents of sexual and gender-based violence including rape, mainly targeting IDPs in conflict-affected areas. [...] There is increased reluctance on the part of victims to formally report incidents of sexual and gender-based violence, including rape, for fear of social stigma or reprisals and also due to the absence of government security forces in some localities where those crimes are prevalent”.⁶⁶¹ UN Women’s webpage on Sudan considers that:

Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) is regarded as a prevalent and critical hindering factor for human development and peace-building in Sudan. The country has a weak normative framework regarding VAWG, as it is not a state party to the Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

Women are disproportionately affected by the various conflicts and security situations across the country; yet their involvement in leadership and participation in peace talks, conflict resolutions, and peace building continue to reflect only token treatment.⁶⁶²

The UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office report for 2014 considers that “There were continuing reports of rape being used as a weapon of war in both Darfur and the Two Areas”.⁶⁶³ Reporting on events in 2014 the Council of the European Union noted that:

In 2014, Sudan's internal conflicts in Darfur, Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile continued, implying serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law such as indiscriminate aerial bombardments, scorched earth tactics, large-scale displacements, widespread violence against women and children and denial of humanitarian access, all committed by state actors, non-state actors (in particular the "Rapid Support Forces" militia), and rebel forces. The situation was compounded by a general lack of accountability and widespread impunity.⁶⁶⁴

According to Freedom House reporting on events of 2014 (emphasis added):

Beyond the capital and the immediate area around it, Sudan’s many distinct ethnic, regional, and religious groups face political, social, and economic marginalization and the ruling elite treats them as second-class citizens. Some of these aggrieved groups have rebelled in Darfur, **South Kordofan**, and **Blue Nile**, and the state security forces and their proxies have responded with indiscriminate violence—including the bombing of civilians, targeted killings, forced displacement of communities, the burning of villages, **and the use of rape as a weapon of war**—for which no one has been held accountable.⁶⁶⁵

An October 2014 report by the Equal Rights Trust noted with regards to gender violence in conflict areas that “Violence against women is a particularly serious problem in areas of conflict where rape,

⁶⁶¹ UN, [Report of the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in the Sudan, Mashood A. Baderin*](#), 4 September 2014, paragraphs 66-67

⁶⁶² UN Women, [Sudan](#), undated (accessed 6 April 2016)

⁶⁶³ UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office, [Human Rights and Democracy Report 2014- Sudan – Country of Concern](#), 12 March 2015

⁶⁶⁴ Council of the European Union, [EU Annual Report on Human Rights and Democracy in the World in 2014](#), 22 June 2015, Sudan p.207

⁶⁶⁵ Freedom House, [Freedom in the World 2015 – Sudan](#), 28 January 2015

sexual violence, harassment, abduction and physical abuse are common practices”.⁶⁶⁶ The report cited Dr M., a psychologist who provides assistance to victims of violence and torture as stating that:

[...] it is very difficult to get firsthand evidence from these areas because movement is severely restricted, but that he had good reason to believe that the number of victims coming to Khartoum and filing complaints represents just a tiny part of the total number. He also explained the stigma associated with making allegations of sexual violence, and rape in particular, and that anyone who mentions the issue is immediately suspected of supporting the International Criminal Court. Dr M. told the Equal Rights Trust about a recent case from South Kordofan:

I worked with one woman, a sexual harassment case involving a woman from an international NGO working in the region. Their base was attacked by some kind of militia and she was attacked. It was very difficult to establish what happened to her – she was very distressed – but she had lots of symptoms, and was clearly traumatised (...)

However she could not be persuaded to be seen by a forensic doctor or gynaecologist. It is very sensitive in our culture for women to speak about sexual violence. When raped, they always call it “harassment”, you know.⁶⁶⁷

In a November 2014 South Kordofan Needs Assessment, the Enough Project noted that “Women and girls in focus group discussions claim sexual violence and rape are now serious concerns in the region, as a result of encroaching frontlines and proximity to enemy soldiers”.⁶⁶⁸ The UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office report covering events in 2015 summarised the situation as follows “The prevalence of sexual violence in conflict areas, including against minors, remains of deep concern”.⁶⁶⁹ The UNITED STATES Department of State report covering 2015 stated that “Because there was no official tracking of rape cases, no information was available on the number of persons prosecuted, convicted, or punished for rape. Rape of women and girls continued to be a serious problem throughout the country, especially in conflict areas”.⁶⁷⁰

In an April 2015 submission to the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, the Nuba Mountains Peoples Foundation reported with regards to the Rapid Response Forces that “Members of the (RRF) have been responsible for numerous human rights violations including rapes, looting and killing of innocent civilians in Darfur and in South Kordofan”.⁶⁷¹

Following her May 2015 mission to the Republic of Sudan, Ms. Rashida Manjoo, United Nations Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, stated “sexual and gender based violence in the context of conflict remains a source of concern, with rape and sexual harassment/humiliation continuing to be reported by different interlocutors”.⁶⁷² The same source further noted:

The problem of numerous manifestations of violence against women in conflict situations requires more attention, particularly in a context of on-going hostilities and conflicts. The violence experienced

⁶⁶⁶ Equal Rights Trust, [In Search of Confluence Addressing Discrimination and Inequality in Sudan](#), October 2014, *Gender Violence in Conflict Zones* p.122

⁶⁶⁷ Equal Rights Trust, [In Search of Confluence Addressing Discrimination and Inequality in Sudan](#), October 2014, *Gender Violence in Conflict Zones* p.122-3

⁶⁶⁸ Enough Project, [Life under Siege: South Kordofan Needs Assessment](#), November 2014, 2. Executive Summary

⁶⁶⁹ UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office, [Human Rights and Democracy Report 2014: Sudan – in-year update December 2015](#), 21 April 2016

⁶⁷⁰ United States Department of State, [Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2015 – Sudan](#), 13 April 2016, Section 6 Women

⁶⁷¹ Nuba Mountains Peoples Foundation, [Alternative Report to the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination \(CERD\); Review of the Periodic Report of Sudan](#), April 2015, paragraph 6

⁶⁷² OHCHR news, [Special Rapporteur on violence against women finalizes country mission to Sudan and calls for more open and constructive dialogues on violence against women, its causes and consequences](#), 24 May 2015

by women in conflict situations is a reflection of the continuum of violence that is part of their daily reality, but one that is exacerbated in times of conflict and insecurity.⁶⁷³

In September 2015 the organisation Nord-Sud XXI submitted to the UN Human Rights Council that “The crime of rape and sexual violence against women is a major concern in the armed conflict affected areas”.⁶⁷⁴ The International Federation for Human Rights considered in a September 2015 report that:

In Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile states, civilians also continue to be the targets of indiscriminate aerial bombardment and ground offensives. Government forces, again deploying the RSF, have destroyed civilian property including villages, health facilities, schools, mosques and churches. Authorities continue to obstruct humanitarian assistance and carry out arbitrary arrests and commit torture. Their forces and allied militia have been implicated in alarming levels of sexual violence. There is also evidence that Government aircraft has deliberately bombed hospitals and other humanitarian facilities and used cluster bombs in South Kordofan. Mirroring strategies deployed in Darfur, entire communities have been displaced by Government forces in what appears to be collective punishment for their perceived support to the rebel movements based on ethnic identity.⁶⁷⁵

A September 2015 joint submission from the African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies (ACJPS), International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), and International Refugee Rights Initiative (IRRI) to the 2016 Universal Periodic Review of Sudan reported that “In Blue Nile, Government forces arbitrarily detained residents, raped women and girls, and restricted residents’ movements, farming, and access to food”.⁶⁷⁶ The Human Rights and Development Organisation’s (HUDO) annual report covering events in 2015 noted with regards to sexual violence that “HUDO Centre received several reports about Sexual violence, mainly committed by the Military and other government security agencies together with the militias. There are many cases of sexual violence but the victims and their families could not freely share the information because of social stigma and the security threats”.⁶⁷⁷ In March 2016 Sudan Democracy First Group stated that “Sudanese women in Darfur, South Kordofan/Nuba Mountains and Blue Nile continue to be targeted, as the regime forces and paramilitias continue to subject these women to systematic violence, including sexual violence and mass rape. This takes place under government protection and impunity, that not only prevents accountability but further encourages the continuation and spread of such violations”.⁶⁷⁸

The following are non-exhaustive illustrative incidents of SGBV reported between 1 July 2014 and 1 April 2016 found amongst the sources consulted:

The African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies reported that “On 1 September 2014 the SAF and paramilitary Popular Defence Forces jointly attacked Samsorah village in the Bao locality of Blue Nile State. A reliable source confirmed to ACJPS that there is no rebel presence in the area. The attack

⁶⁷³ OHCHR news, [Special Rapporteur on violence against women finalizes country mission to Sudan and calls for more open and constructive dialogues on violence against women, its causes and consequences](#), 24 May 2015

⁶⁷⁴ Nord-Sud XXI, [Written statement* submitted to the UN Human Rights Council, by the Nord-Sud XXI – North South XXI, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status: Situation of Human Rights in Sudan*](#), 8 September 2015

⁶⁷⁵ International Federation for Human Rights, [On the anniversary of protest massacres, the international community must take a strong stand on impunity for widespread human rights abuses in Sudan](#), 23 September 2015

⁶⁷⁶ African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies (ACJPS), International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), and International Refugee Rights Initiative (IRRI), [Submission to the Universal Periodic Review of Sudan 2016](#), September 2015, *Human rights violations in the context of armed conflict Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile p.5*

⁶⁷⁷ HUDO Centre, [Human Rights Situation in South Kordofan and Blue Nile States of Sudan January-December 2015](#), 20 March 2016, 2.1 Sexual violence p.21

⁶⁷⁸ Sudan Democracy First Group, [SDFG statement on International Women’s Day](#), 8 March 2016

reportedly took place under the command of SAF Lieutenant Al Tayeb Ahmed following an order of the local governor, Faiz Balla. Ten women and girls were raped during the attack, including two girls aged 14 and 13 respectively”.⁶⁷⁹

Reporting on events in 2014 Human Rights Watch noted that “Ground attacks and government bombing also persisted in Blue Nile, though many people have fled to refugee camps in South Sudan. In September, government forces attacked villages, carrying out numerous cases of sexual violence in Bau locality [in Blue Nile State]”.⁶⁸⁰ In November 2014 Radio Tamazuj reported that two girls were allegedly raped by eight herders in Kurtala village in Habila Locality of South Kordofan state.⁶⁸¹

In a December 2014 report based on a five-day research trip during which 42 refugees in South Sudan’s Maban County, and six internally displaced people inside Blue Nile state were interviewed, Human Rights Watch reported that “Sudanese government forces and allied militias are unlawfully killing and otherwise abusing civilians in government-held areas in Sudan’s Blue Nile state. Dozens of civilians who fled the government held areas and sought refuge in South Sudan described killings, rapes, and beatings to Human Rights Watch”.⁶⁸² Reporting with further regards to sexual violence the same source noted that:

Among the refugees Human Rights Watch interviewed, five said they were raped by members of government security forces or armed militia, and twelve said relatives had been raped. Some women said security forces detained them, then took them away and raped them. Refugees also reported being detained and subjected to ill-treatment and torture. Most of the reported incidents took place within the past year.[...]

Almost half of the refugees said they had experienced sexual violence themselves, have an immediate family member or neighbor who had, or had witnessed sexual assaults. Sexual violence occurred during home raids or house-to-house searches by security forces.

“They raped me one after the other and they beat me,” said Hawa, 20, who was raped by soldiers following her arrest at a market in the small town of Musfa earlier in 2014. “I tried to resist and they pulled me to the ground and [when they were finished] they left me.” She lost consciousness and was taken to the hospital in the state capital, Damazin, where she remained for 10 days, she said. [...]

“The number of rapes reported to us, often in harrowing detail, suggests that sexual violence is part of the government’s counterinsurgency strategy,” Bekele said. “The scale of reported abuses points to the urgent need for an international investigation in both rebel- and government-controlled areas.”⁶⁸³

Reporting on the perpetrators of sexual violence the same Human Rights Watch report stated that “The refugees attributed most of the abuses to Sudanese forces, including its Rapid Support Force (RSF), a new security force under the command of Sudanese National Intelligence and Security Services. The RSF has carried out attacks on civilians in Darfur and Southern Kordofan over the last year. Many of the refugees also described rapes, killings, harassment, and cattle theft by a militia drawn from the Fellata – a nomadic ethnic group whose members the Sudanese government has recruited into auxiliary forces since conflict erupted in Blue Nile”.⁶⁸⁴

In a report on the ‘Evolution of the Two Areas Conflict, 2014–15’ the Small Arms Survey noted with regards to sexual violence that:

⁶⁷⁹ African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies, [Sudan must stop attacks on civilians in Blue Nile state and guarantee safety of detainees](#), 23 September 2014

⁶⁸⁰ Human Rights Watch, [World Report 2015 – Sudan](#), 29 January 2015

⁶⁸¹ Radio Tamazuj, [Two girls allegedly raped in Habila area, South Kordofan](#), 18 November 2014

⁶⁸² Human Rights Watch, [Sudan: Soldiers, Militias Killing, Raping Civilians](#), 15 December 2014

⁶⁸³ Human Rights Watch, [Sudan: Soldiers, Militias Killing, Raping Civilians](#), 15 December 2014

⁶⁸⁴ Human Rights Watch, [Sudan: Soldiers, Militias Killing, Raping Civilians](#), 15 December 2014

Women are particularly vulnerable to abuses. In Blue Nile the raping of women has become a weapon of war used by government and paramilitary forces against the population (see HRW, 2014). The author interviewed 11 of a group of 400 women, including under-age girls, who arrived in Maban camps in November 2014 after having reportedly been raped in the government areas of Khor Maganza and Mosfa, and in Fadimia and Sam Sur barracks between December 2013 and September 2014.

According to information collected from a refugee association that supports women arriving in the camps from the Bau area, many more women were victims of abuses in 2012–13.

Some women who were married to SPLA-N fighters were abducted and forced to marry militia members.⁶⁸⁵

Radio Dabanga cited HUDO as recording a number of incidents of violence against civilians committed by government forces in the area of Kadugli, capital of South Kordofan in January 2015:

According to Dr Bushra Gamar, chairman of Hudo, recent attacks on civilians in the South Kordofani Nuba Mountains by the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF), Popular Defence Forces (PDF), and other security troops have not been reported yet.

He told Dabanga in an interview on Sunday that the “second batch” of RSF militia fighters, who arrived at Kadugli at the end of January, is responsible for at least eight rape cases within four days. “The militiamen knocked on doors in the town, asking if there were any women in the house. They also pillaged many homes in the capital.”⁶⁸⁶

In its 2015 annual report HUDO cited the following case in South Kordofan:

On May 29th 2015, H. M. A four month pregnant lady, 34 years, was raped by four SAFsoldiers. The victim lives in Terri Village and she was on her way back home from Chamchaka Market which is 10 kilometers away from her village. Along the way, she was stopped by seven (7) soldiers wearing SAF uniform, armed with AK 47 driving a Land Cruiser (red number plate 87). They searched her luggage which had her items/stuff worth (170) Sudanese Pounds that she had bought for her family. They offered her a lift of which she rejected. They lifted her, forced her into their vehicle and drove back towards Chamchaka. They stopped the car on the way and the four of them raped her in turns and left her with her luggage. The local Authorities allegedly stopped her from travelling for treatment despite the bleeding and the injuries she had sustained. The rape case was not reported.⁶⁸⁷

SUDO reported that during July 2015 in Blue Nile state:

An estimated 2,500 civilians from the Ingessana ethnic group were displaced from Dendro, in Kurmuk locality, to Al-Shaheed Afendi, an IDP settlement camp south of Demazin, and Reih Balak, north of Demazin.

The displaced have told SUDO (UK) monitors that they fled their homes following an attack by Government soldiers, which was characterised by the destruction of homes and acts of sexual violence. Testimonies from the victims stated that soldiers from the SAF raped their daughters and their wives in front of them. Those that resisted were deemed by the Sudanese Army as members of SPLM-N and faced summary execution. Testimonies further note the disappearance of men and the confiscation of personal possessions including livestock.⁶⁸⁸

The August 2015 ‘Humanitarian Update’ from the Sudan Consortium reported that “attacks against civilians in the Ingessana Mountains in Blue Nile continue. New arrivals to the refugee camps in

⁶⁸⁵ Small Arms Survey, *Two Fronts, One War: Evolution of the Two Areas Conflict*, 2014–15, August 2015, *Arbitrary arrests and rape as government tactics* p.52-3

⁶⁸⁶ Radio Dabanga, *Govt. forces rape, wreak havoc in South Kordofan*, 23 February 2015

⁶⁸⁷ HUDO Centre, *Human Rights Situation in South Kordofan and Blue Nile States of Sudan January-December 2015*, 20 March 2016, 2.1.1 *Sexual violence in South Kordofan*.21

⁶⁸⁸ SUDO UK, *HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES IN SUDAN OVER THE MONTH OF AUGUST 2015*, 1 September 2015, *Blue Nile*

South Sudan and to SPLM/A-N areas report targeted attacks by government forces and allied militias, the burning of villages, rape and extreme dire conditions in which the population is forced to live in government-held areas, with insufficient food, potable water and basic medicine”.⁶⁸⁹ An August 2015 Small Arms Survey report described that Fellata nomads, originally from West and Central Africa constitute the bulk of the PDF forces in Blue Nile State.⁶⁹⁰ Reportedly “According to local people interviewed, Fellata are responsible for massive abuses against the population, such as beatings, rape, and the burning of villages, notably the militia group of Ismeil Omer Kurra, which is active in the Ingessana Mountains”.⁶⁹¹ This was similarly reported by SUDO during September 2015 “A Falata ethnic militia, supported by the Government of Sudan, has caused the displacement of 5,000 persons from Abugarin situated in Bao locality. The displaced have fled to Damazin following attacks on civilian property and civilian life. Eyewitnesses state that the militia is raping their daughters, looting their homes, and beating anyone in sight”.⁶⁹²

The Sudan Consortium reported:

In the first week of September 2015, 19 Households (HHs) with 99 people, arrived from the village of Maganza Moraik (Baw county) into the SPLM/A-N controlled areas at the border with South Sudan. The newcomers were interviewed by local humanitarian actors. Their village was burned down by government militias and they were forced to run away. The group spent four days walking in the bushes, eating roots and wild fruits. Several cases of malnutrition were reported, and the community said that four children died as they walked to SPLM/A-N controlled areas. Two women interviewed disclosed several cases of rape that happened while the militias were looting the village, but number of rapes could not be verified. Women are still frightened and reluctant to talk.⁶⁹³

Radio Tamazuj noted that in October 2015 “A 14-year-old girl was gang raped by three SPLA-North rebel soldiers at Balan area in Sudan’s Blue Nile State. [...] Hussein Kantur Ibrahim, a relative, told Radio Tamazuj the incident took place after the rebels threatened the girl’s grandmother who was with her at their farm”.⁶⁹⁴

SUDO reported that in Blue Nile state in October 2015 “A 13 year-old student from Al-Marabaat neighbourhood in Demazin was raped by a member of the Kabogi forces (a local term for the Rapid Support Forces). The perpetrator broke into her family home when she was alone and threatened her with a Kalashnikov before sexually assaulting her. The girl was found unconscious and bleeding heavily before being taken to the hospital for treatment. The police were informed and filed a case against the perpetrator who is now in custody”.⁶⁹⁵ According to SUDO, also in October 2015, “SPLM-N forces killed nine people from the Falata Um-Broro ethnic group in Um-Gulbi area situated in Bao locality and looted 500 sheep. This is the result of the SPLM-N accusing this ethnic group of working on behalf of the Government and killing members of the Ingessana ethnic group, looting their properties and raping the women”.⁶⁹⁶

⁶⁸⁹ Sudan Consortium, [HUMANITARIAN UPDATE – August 2015](#), August 2015

⁶⁹⁰ Small Arms Survey, [Two Fronts, One War: Evolution of the Two Areas Conflict](#), 2014–15, August 2015, III. *Armed actors, Government forces, Blue Nile p.28*

⁶⁹¹ Small Arms Survey, [Two Fronts, One War: Evolution of the Two Areas Conflict](#), 2014–15, August 2015, III. *Armed actors, Government forces, Blue Nile p.28*

⁶⁹² SUDO UK, [HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES IN SUDAN OVER THE MONTH OF SEPTEMBER 2015](#), 1 October 2015, *Blue Nile*

⁶⁹³ Sudan Consortium, [Abuses against civilians continue in Government held areas in Blue Nile](#), 15 September 2015

⁶⁹⁴ Radio Tamazuj, [SPLA-North soldiers accused of gang-raping underage girl in Blue Nile State](#), 30 October 2015

⁶⁹⁵ SUDO UK, [HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES IN SUDAN OVER THE MONTH OF OCTOBER 2015](#), 1 November 2015, *Blue Nile*

⁶⁹⁶ SUDO UK, [HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES IN SUDAN OVER THE MONTH OF OCTOBER 2015](#), 1 November 2015, *Blue Nile*

SUDO reported in November 2015 that in Blue Nile State “A 17 year-old girl from Alazaza situated in El-Roseires locality was raped by a member of the Sudanese military who is stationed at El-Roseires dam. The rape occurred whilst the soldier was in full military uniform. As a result of the rape the victim has lost her hymen and suffers from bleeding and pain in the vaginal area as well as a broken tooth and swollen lip. The police have refused to press charges and the victim is still suffering from trauma”.⁶⁹⁷

In a December 2015 report UNHCR noted that “Identification of extremely vulnerable individuals in affected areas has led to targeted assistance for gender-based violence (GBV) survivors and persons with disabilities. Hygiene kits were provided to 11,222 vulnerable women and girls of reproductive age in White Nile, Blue Nile and South Kordofan States, as well as to 1,000 in Khartoum”.⁶⁹⁸

SUDO reported that in January 2016 Units belonging to the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) entered the borders of South Kordofan, causing “major distress to civilians and has led to a drastic spike in crime and attacks on civilians”.⁶⁹⁹ Reportedly, “Members from the Rapid Support Forces killed a 28 year-old man after he returned to his home to find three militiamen attempting to rape his sister. The victim sought to defend his sister but was shot as a result; he was taken to hospital before he succumbed to his wounds and died. [...] On the 7th January, members from the Rapid Support Forces raped a 54 year-old displaced woman in Abassiya. The incident was reported to the police”.⁷⁰⁰

In January 2016 Radio Dabanga cited El Fadil Saeed Sanhuri, the Director-General of the Nuba Mountains Observatory for Human Rights as stating that “they received reports on 7 January that members of the paramilitary RSF had robbed a number of shops in the main market of El Abbasiya Tagali. In the first week of January, the militiamen killed six people, raped five women and wounded 17 people, after they arrived in the area on their way to the battlefield in the Nuba Mountains. One of the rape victims is an elderly woman”.⁷⁰¹ Also in January 2016 Radio Tamazuj noted that “Two displaced women at Gari camp were raped by a group of herders in the eastern Damazin town in Sudan’s Blue Nile State. [...] The source told Radio Tamazuj the incident took place when several displaced women were intercepted by herders on their way to bring fuel”.⁷⁰²

Radio Tamazuj reported that in March 2016 a girl of 11 years was raped in Heiban County in the Nuba Mountains by an 18 year old boy noting that “people who were working in the farms heard screaming from the bush and they rescued her and took her to a clinic. The suspected perpetrator was arrested”.⁷⁰³

7.2. State response to SGBV

An October 2014 report by the Equal Rights Trust noted that cases of sexual violence targeting women tend to go “largely unreported” in conflict zones due to a number of factors:

⁶⁹⁷ SUDO UK, [HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES IN SUDAN OVER THE MONTH OF NOVEMBER 2015](#), 21 December 2015, *Blue Nile*

⁶⁹⁸ UNHCR, [South Sudan Situation; Regional Refugee Response Plan; January – December 2016](#), December 2015, *SUDAN Response Plan, Background and Achievements p.43*

⁶⁹⁹ SUDO UK, [HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES IN SUDAN OVER THE MONTH OF JANUARY 2016](#), 18 March 2016, *Blue Nile*

⁷⁰⁰ SUDO UK, [HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES IN SUDAN OVER THE MONTH OF JANUARY 2016](#), 18 March 2016, *Blue Nile*

⁷⁰¹ Radio Dabanga, [‘RSF kill six in Nuba Mountains’: Observatory](#), 12 January 2016

⁷⁰² Radio Tamazuj, [Herders accused of raping two women in Damazin](#), 29 January 2016

⁷⁰³ Radio Tamazuj, [Girl raped in Heiban County in the Nuba Mountains](#), 8 March 2016

Research on violence against women in Sudan is hampered by the fact that many women are either unable or unwilling to speak about the treatment to which they have been exposed, particularly where sexual offences are involved, with the result that reliable statistics on gender-based violence are not available. It appears that incidents of sexual and other forms of violence against women in conflict zones go largely unreported, and reporting is not helped by the severe restrictions on access to certain parts of the country where armed conflicts are ongoing. More broadly, crimes of rape and sexual violence go unreported, both as a result of fear of reverse prosecution for adultery, and because of the stigma attached to women who have had sex outside marriage, irrespective of whether they had consented. Regarding domestic violence, women are generally reluctant to file formal complaints against their husbands, even though this is a legal ground for divorce, while the police do not normally intervene in domestic violence cases.⁷⁰⁴

In a December 2014 report documenting sexual violence against women in Blue Nile, Human Rights Watch noted that “Several relatives of rape survivors said they were beaten up, threatened, or turned away when they tried to report the rapes to local authorities, police, or army officials”.⁷⁰⁵ The same source further noted:

Ramadan, a 27-year-old veterinarian from Musfa, said soldiers and Fellata militia raped his aunt, beat his uncle, and stole money and a phone while raiding their family compound on August 25. He said he took his aunt to the hospital. “The soldiers took turns raping her, one after the other,” he said. “We went to the police station to report, but instead of taking the information they wanted to beat us. They said that if we tried to come back and continued saying this, they would beat us.”⁷⁰⁶

In February 2015 Radio Dabanga reported that “A young woman, who recently fled to Rashad after she was gang-raped by elements of the paramilitary Popular Defence Forces (PDF), has to report to the office of the security apparatus three times a day”.⁷⁰⁷ Providing further details on the case the same source noted that:

On 6 April 2013, four PDF troops on motorbikes, intercepted the woman (26) when she was returning home with her mother after having collected firewood in an area, 2km from El Fayd in Rashad locality. The militiamen beat the mother, and raped her daughter alternately at gunpoint, the Sudanese Human Rights and Development Organisation (Hudo) related in a press statement on Thursday. Three of the assailants were masked, but the victim recognised the fourth, PDF commander Bashir Hussein El Mahdi, who also owned a shop at the market of El Fayd.

They threatened to kill the victims if they would file a complaint, “or even talk about the incident”. Some days later, the family was told that they were not allowed to leave the village.

On 10 February this year, the rape victim managed to flee to Rashad town, 25km from El Fayd, on foot, Hudo reported. Three days later, security authorities discovered her hiding place in Rashad. She was told not to leave the town, and has now to report to their office three times a day. According to the human rights organisation, her family is under serious threat from PDF members in El Fayd.⁷⁰⁸

Liv Tønnessen, senior researcher at the Chr. Michelsen Institute (CMI), states in an April 2015 article that “As a country struggling with poverty, internal displacement, and several armed conflicts, Sudan lacks medical infrastructure, particularly doctors. In many rural areas, particularly in conflict zones like Darfur where sexual violence is rampant, midwives and nurses are the only healthcare providers. However, they are not allowed to prescribe emergency contraceptives in cases of rape”.⁷⁰⁹

⁷⁰⁴ Equal Rights Trust, [In Search of Confluence Addressing Discrimination and Inequality in Sudan](#), October 2014, p. 121-122

⁷⁰⁵ Human Rights Watch, [Sudan: Soldiers, Militias Killing, Raping Civilians](#), 15 December 2014

⁷⁰⁶ Human Rights Watch, [Sudan: Soldiers, Militias Killing, Raping Civilians](#), 15 December 2014

⁷⁰⁷ Radio Dabanga, [Rape victim harassed in South Kordofan](#), 22 February 2015

⁷⁰⁸ Radio Dabanga, [Rape victim harassed in South Kordofan](#), 22 February 2015

⁷⁰⁹ Liv Tønnessen, [Women’s right to abortion after rape in Sudan](#), *Bergen: Chr. Michelsen Institute (CMI Insight no. 2)*, April 2015, p. 2

The UNITED STATES Department of State report covering 2015 stated that “Rape of women and girls continued to be a serious problem throughout the country, especially in conflict areas. International and government agencies assisting rape victims stated rape cases were underreported due to victims’ fear of reprisal and stigmatization. Investigative and prosecuting authorities often obstructed access to justice for rape victims. By law a woman who accuses a man of rape and fails to prove her case may be tried for adultery. Victims sometimes refused to report their cases to family or authorities due to fear they would be punished or arrested for ‘illegal pregnancy’ or adultery”.⁷¹⁰

In a March 2016 report on ‘Repression and Abuse of Women Human Rights Defenders, Activists, and Protesters in Sudan’, Human Rights Watch reported with regards to the situation in Sudan in general that “Government security forces, especially NISS, have raped and sexually abused female activists with impunity” and that “to Human Rights Watch’s knowledge, the Sudanese authorities have not investigated or prosecuted any perpetrators of the crimes described”.⁷¹¹ With further regards to the lack of accountability and protection available the report noted:

Almost everyone we interviewed emphasized the lack of protection available in Sudan for human rights activists, especially for women. “The human rights defenders have no national umbrella for protection. There are no laws that provide protection for them or mechanisms that defenders can use for their protection, especially women rights defenders,” observed Azza (pseudonym), a journalist and longtime human rights activist. “Women in particular go through challenging circumstances due to their place in the society especially when they have children.

Little exists to support women activists who have been sexually assaulted or otherwise abused by security personnel, and who may face “damaged reputations” and other social problems if the abuses they suffered become known to others.

Women also face enormous obstacles to justice. “If you tried to file a case the police will not consider the seriousness of your claim or try to provide any protection,” said Azza. Safiya Ishaq, when she tried to report her case, said a high-ranking police officer warned her not to file a case against NISS because it would ruin her family’s name. Similarly, other victims of abuse have not succeeded in lodging formal complaints, in part because of legal immunities protecting members of the security services from prosecution. These immunities have contributed to an environment of impunity for sexual violence particularly in conflict zones – Darfur, Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile – where many armed forces are deployed.⁷¹²

In relation to those that speak out against sexual violence, the same Human Rights Watch report noted that:

Activists who speak out on topics the government deems sensitive – such as sexual violence – are especially susceptible to government restriction, interference or outright censure. After the international women’s rights organization, Nobel Women’s Initiative, published a report on sexual violence in Sudan in 2013, for example, members of parliament discussed the report and reportedly threatened women quoted in it. As noted above, authorities brought criminal charges against journalists for reporting on alleged rapes by security agents (notably the alleged rape of Safiya Ishaq). They have also arrested those who speak on sexual violence: for instance, in May 2015, activist

⁷¹⁰ United States Department of State, [Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2015 – Sudan](#), 13 April 2016, Section 6 Women

⁷¹¹ Human Rights Watch, [“Good Girls Don’t Protest” Repression and Abuse of Women Human Rights Defenders, Activists, and Protesters in Sudan](#), 23 March 2016

⁷¹² Human Rights Watch, [“Good Girls Don’t Protest” Repression and Abuse of Women Human Rights Defenders, Activists, and Protesters in Sudan](#), 23 March 2016, III. Lack of Accountability, Protection p.42-43

Nasreen Ali Mustafa and another were detained by national security after attending a symposium at which she spoke about sexual harassment and abuse in school buses.⁷¹³

It is beyond the scope of this report to document the general situation in Sudan outside of South Kordofan and Blue Nile States in detail, but it should be noted that several sources document the barriers to women realising effective protection for sexual and gender-based violence. To illustrate, a September 2015 Strategic Initiative for Women in the Horn of Africa report identifies:

One of the most problematic aspects of the 1991 SPC is the lack of adequate protection for women against rape. Article 149, which criminalizes rape, states that:

- 1) There shall be deemed to commit the offence of rape, whoever makes sexual intercourse, byway of adultery, or sodomy, with any person without his consent.
- 2) Consent shall not be recognized, where the offender has custody or authority over the victim.
- 3) Whoever commits the offense or rape shall be punished with whipping a hundred lashes, and with imprisonment, for a term, not exceeding ten years, unless rape constitutes the offence of adultery, or sodomy, punishable by death.

This paper argues that the definition of rape is narrow in scope and does not reflect legislative reforms and best practices elsewhere. It also fails to address marital rape, as well as rape with objects. Article 62 of the 1991 Evidence Act clearly undermines the status of women and girls as it provides for four credible male eyewitnesses being required to report rape and places severe deterrence to women who may face countercharges under adultery (Article 145). If a woman is unable to present four male eyewitnesses to testify that they witnessed non-consensual sex, she may therefore be charged with adultery.

Several practical and logistical impediments also exist to prevent a girl or woman from bringing a rape case to fair hearing, such as high legal costs and lack of access to legal aid, as the latter is only accessible through a few nongovernmental organisations. Women also face high stigma by the police in reporting rape, as police have occasionally been reported to refuse to process a sexual abuse complaint. A further obstacle to the prosecution of rape in Sudan is the broad immunities prescribe to law enforcement, military and government militias, for actions performed “in the course of duty”, as the immunity of the such can only be waived, if the Ministry of Interior decides to lift it.⁷¹⁴

In a March 2016 report the African Centre for Peace and Justice details amendments to the 1991 Criminal Act noting that “an amendment to Article 149 (rape) changed the legal definition of rape, and a new Article 151 (3) was introduced, providing a new offence of sexual harassment”.⁷¹⁵ The report further noted:

[...] whilst there were some important steps towards bringing the law in line with international standards, serious gaps remained. [...] without further amendments and clear guidance to law enforcement officers and judges, the criminal justice outlook for survivors of sexual violence in Sudan remains bleak.

The new provision on sexual harassment within the existing law on “gross indecency” introduced ambiguity about who the victims and the perpetrators are in sexual harassment cases. It refers to acts, speech or behaviour that cause seduction or temptation, and is likely to serve as a further deterrent to women reporting sexual offences, owing to a risk they could be accused of “gross indecency”.⁷¹⁶

⁷¹³ Human Rights Watch, [“Good Girls Don’t Protest” Repression and Abuse of Women Human Rights Defenders, Activists, and Protesters in Sudan](#), 23 March 2016, *Hostile Environment for Female Activists and Women’s Rights Groups* p.14

⁷¹⁴ Strategic Initiative for Women in the Horn of Africa, [Third Class Citizens: Women and Citizenship in Sudan](#), September 2015

⁷¹⁵ African Centre for Peace and Justice, [Sudan’s new law on rape and sexual harassment: One step forward, two steps back?](#) 8 March 2016

⁷¹⁶ African Centre for Peace and Justice, [Sudan’s new law on rape and sexual harassment: One step forward, two steps back?](#) 8 March 2016

For further information on access to protection for victims of sexual and gender-based violence in Sudan in general, see: ARC, [Darfur Country Report](#), October 2015, 10.3. *State response to SGBV*.

8. Children

8.1. Recruitment and use of children

Without specifying the exact location and without referring to government or non-government forces, in its 'Concluding observations on the fourth periodic report of Sudan' of August 2014, the UN Human Rights Committee stated that "the Committee is concerned by reports indicating that children are still being recruited and used in armed conflict, and that efforts at monitoring this practice are insufficient".⁷¹⁷

The UNITED STATES Department of State reported in its annual report covering 2015 that "Due to problems of access, particularly in conflict zones, reports of child soldiers were limited and often difficult to verify".⁷¹⁸

8.1.1. By government forces

The report of the UN Secretary-General on 'Children and armed conflict' covering events in 2014 stated that:

Although no new recruitment cases by Sudanese Armed Forces were verified, the United Nations received credible information of recruitment and use of children by the Popular Defence Forces. Large areas of those states [Darfur, South Kordofan and Blue Nile] were inaccessible, which limited United Nations ability to monitor allegations in order to reflect the full extent of violations.⁷¹⁹

Reporting on the recruitment of minors, Radio Dabanga noted in August 2014 that "The SPLM-N spokesman for the Nuba Mountains, Jatigo Amoga Delman, told Radio Dabanga that the 'Rapid Support militias, under the command of the National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS), during the past few days have recruited more than 3,000 boys between 15 and 17 years old from the areas under control of the regime in South Kordofan'".⁷²⁰

According to an October 2014 Nuba Reports article, "Religion is regularly used by the Sudanese government to justify its conflict in the Nuba Mountains. Religious clerics aligned with the ruling National Congress Party often unofficially recruit youth for militias sent to fight the rebel Sudan Revolutionary Front".⁷²¹

The United States Department of State, in its 'Trafficking in Persons Report for 2015', covering developments in 2014, stated that the "Government security forces recruited and used children as combatants and in support roles. In 2014, an international organization reported four children between the ages of 13 and 15 years were observed in Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) uniforms

⁷¹⁷ UN Human Rights Committee: [Concluding observations on the fourth periodic report of the Sudan](#) [CCPR/C/SDN/CO/4], 19 August 2014

⁷¹⁸ United States Department of State, [Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2015: Sudan](#), 13 April 2016, Section 1.G. *Use of Excessive Force and Other Abuses in Internal Conflicts*

⁷¹⁹ United States Department of State, [Trafficking in Persons Report 2015 – Country Narratives, Sudan](#), 27 July 2015, *Prosecution*

⁷²⁰ Radio Dabanga, [Sudan militia recruit more than 3,000 minors in South Kordofan](#), 27 August 2014

⁷²¹ Nuba Reports, [TWO BROTHERS, TWO RELIGIONS](#), 21 October 2014

carrying weapons”.⁷²² Moreover, the same source noted that the Sudanese government “continued to deny that forced labor, sex trafficking, and recruitment of child soldiers occurred in the country”.⁷²³ The same report further found that:

The SAF [Sudanese Armed Forces]’s Child Protection Unit continued to lead efforts to work with international organizations on child protection issues, including preventing the recruitment of child soldiers. Various other government entities were also mandated to address the recruitment of child soldiers, but lacked the financial resources or capacity to effectively carry out their mandates in this regard. [...] In February 2015, the government hosted a workshop organized including children associated with armed conflict or armed groups. International organizations, however, reported cooperation with the government on disarmament and demobilization programming remained challenging due to the government’s limited resources. Sudan’s Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration Commission remained a weak entity that lacked capacity and financial resources to carry out its mandate.⁷²⁴

In its report ‘Freedom in the World 2015 – Sudan’, covering events in 2014, Freedom House stated that “The Sudanese military [...] continue to use child soldiers”.⁷²⁵

The Human Security Baseline Assessment (HSBA) for Sudan and South Sudan reported in January 2015:

The government strategy for the new campaign has been to recruit local militias to defeat the rebels once and for all in their own difficult territory, especially in the Nuba Mountains where 10,000–15,000 Nuba—including underage youths—have reportedly been recruited.[...] The recruitment of child soldiers by government or government-allied forces is also supported by qualitative interviews. This occurs due to the co-option of chiefs and local political leaders, and for financial incentives. Interviews with former child fighters and files captured by the SPLA-N in Daloka and reviewed by the Small Arms Survey suggest that underage children have been recruited into SAF and PDF.⁷²⁶

Similarly, according to the June 2015 report of the UN Secretary-General on ‘Children and Armed Conflict’, “Although no new recruitment cases by Sudanese Armed Forces were verified, the United Nations received credible information of recruitment and use of children by the Popular Defence Forces”.⁷²⁷

An August 2015 Small Arms Survey report found that:

According to information collected on the ground and supported by qualitative interviews in SPLM/A-N-controlled areas, the recruitment of child soldiers in government areas and Khartoum is common and is perpetrated by government forces and allied militias; [...]Several SPLA-N commanders interviewed in the Two Areas confirmed that children are fighting on the GoS [Government of Sudan] side, and many of their bodies are found after battles. [...]Interviews with former child fighters and files captured by the SPLA-N in Daloka in January 2015 and reviewed by the Small Arms Survey suggest that under-age children have been recruited into SAF and PDF units in South Kordofan. Several

⁷²² United States Department of State, [Trafficking in Persons Report 2015 – Country Narratives, Sudan](#), 27 July 2015

⁷²³ United States Department of State, [Trafficking in Persons Report 2015 – Country Narratives, Sudan](#), 27 July 2015, *Prevention*

⁷²⁴ United States Department of State, [Trafficking in Persons Report 2015 – Country Narratives, Sudan](#), 27 July 2015, *Prevention*

⁷²⁵ Freedom House, [Freedom in the World 2015–Sudan](#), 31 March 2015

⁷²⁶ Human Security Baseline Assessment (HSBA) for Sudan and South Sudan, [Conflict in the Two Areas: Describing events through 29 January 2015](#), 30 January 2015

⁷²⁷ UN, [Report of the Secretary-General: Children and armed conflict](#), 5 June 2015 paragraph 174

SPLA-N commanders interviewed in the Two Areas confirmed that children are fighting on the GoS side, and many of their bodies are found after battles.⁷²⁸

The HUDO Centre report covering 2015 reported on an incident where a child of 16 years was arrested in South Kordofan by an uniformed SAF soldier, accompanied by an MI personnel in civilian clothing.⁷²⁹ After beating the child, they took him to their military base accusing him of having connection with his “rebel brother” who joined the SPLA-Nand until his release ten days later the child was forced to work at the Commander’s house as a servant”.⁷³⁰ Similarly, in April 2015 police in Blue Nile arrested nineteen young men accusing them of belonging to the ‘Neggars Gang’.⁷³¹ They were transported to NISS premises and forced to clean and cook for other detainees and guards until their release a couple of days later.⁷³²

The South Kordofan Blue Nile Coordination Unit (SKBLCU), based on experiences of Sudanese citizens living in Government held areas in Baw, northern Kurmuk and southern Geissan counties, Blue Nilereported that “Young boys were forcibly recruited, causing families to try to hide the young boys in bushes as cars approached the village”.⁷³³

In October 2015 the SKBLCU found that “The recruitment of local militias among the Nuba youth by government security organs is ongoing in all counties” of South Kordofan.⁷³⁴ Similarly, SUDO (UK) reported in its monthly report that “During the beginning of October [2015] the proliferation of small arms utilised by soldiers under the age of 18 has resulted in one death and two injuries, in addition to numerous incidents. This trend is the direct result of deliberate Government policy in recruiting youth into the various military institutions, as well as the pro-Government paramilitary forces. Indeed the youth are attracted by high salaries including and up to SDG 3,000 per month in addition to mission incentives”.⁷³⁵

The UNITED STATES Department of State reported in its annual report covering 2015 that:

The law prohibits the recruitment of children and provides criminal penalties for perpetrators. In July 2014 the government enacted a law raising the age of conscription into the Popular Defense Forces (PDF) from 16 to 18 years and establishing 18 as the minimum age for joining the national reserve service and the national service [...] Allegations persisted, however, that the armed movements, government forces, and government-aligned militias had child soldiers within their ranks. According to several reports, the government provided material and logistical support in the country to South Sudanese opposition group Sudan People’s Liberation Army in Opposition, which was widely reported to recruit and use child soldiers. In late 2014 the United Nations observed children under the age of 15 in SAF uniforms carrying weapons in Darfur; however, there were no similar reported observations

⁷²⁸Small Arms Survey, *Two Fronts, One War: Evolution of the Two Areas Conflict, 2014–15*, HSBA Working Paper 38, August 2015, V. *Humanitarian impacts and human rights violations*

⁷²⁹ HUDO Centre, *Human Rights Situation in South Kordofan and Blue Nile States of Sudan January-December 2015*, 20 March 2016, 2.2.1 *Child Violations in South Kordofan*

⁷³⁰ HUDO Centre, *Human Rights Situation in South Kordofan and Blue Nile States of Sudan January-December 2015*, 20 March 2016, 2.2.1 *Child Violations in South Kordofan*

⁷³¹ HUDO Centre, *Human Rights Situation in South Kordofan and Blue Nile States of Sudan January-December 2015*, 20 March 2016, 2.2.1 *Child Violations in South Kordofan*

⁷³² HUDO Centre, *Human Rights Situation in South Kordofan and Blue Nile States of Sudan January-December 2015*, 20 March 2016, 2.2.1 *Child Violations in South Kordofan*

⁷³³SKBLCU, *SKBLCU Flash update, Abuses against civilians continue in Government held areas in Blue Nile*, 15 September 2015

⁷³⁴ SKBLCU, *Humanitarian Update – October 2015, South Kordofan and Blue Nile States, Sudan*, Undated [latest accessed: 12 May 2016], *South Kordofan, A. Protection, Insecurity and Displacement*

⁷³⁵SUDO (UK), *Human rights abuses in Sudan over the month of October 2015*, 13 October 2015, *South Kordofan*

during the year involving children with government forces [...] In November a representative of Sudan's Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) Commission claimed the SAF and PDF did not recruit or use child soldiers [...] Many children lacked documents verifying their age. Children's rights organizations believed armed groups, including the SAF, exploited this lack of documentation to recruit or retain children. The SAF continued to deny recruiting children and having children in its ranks.⁷³⁶

The same source further noted that "Some sources reported the government PDF continued to recruit children. The government denied allegations it did so".⁷³⁷ Similarly, the Human Security Baseline Assessment (HSBA) for Sudan and South Sudan reported in February 2016 that "In the Two Areas, government recruitment of youths into militias and PDF continued throughout the 2015 rainy season".⁷³⁸

At the end of March 2016 the Sudanese government signed an Action Plan with the UN to prevent the recruitment and use of children by Sudanese government Security Forces.⁷³⁹ According to the same source, the Action Plan sets out "a series of measures to enhance the overall protection of children affected by armed conflict, including the cessation and prevention of child recruitment, and the release of children from national security forces".⁷⁴⁰

8.1.2. By armed opposition groups

The UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office Human Rights and Democracy Report, covering events in 2014, stated: "Gaps remain in Sudan's implementation of the Child Act (enacted in 2010), which raises the age of criminal responsibility, criminalises child exploitation and abuse, and prohibits recruitment of children to armed groups. There were credible reports of the continued use of child soldiers, particularly by armed opposition movements in Darfur, South Kordofan, and Blue Nile".⁷⁴¹

Although not detailing forced recruitment in Blue Nile or South Kordofan States the report of the UN Secretary-General on 'Children and armed conflict' covering events in 2014 stated that:

The United Nations verified the recruitment of 60 boys aged 14 to 17 years by the JEM (55) and SPLM-N (5). All but 3 of them occurred during a forced recruitment campaign in refugee settlements in Unity State in South Sudan. Unverified information was received about an additional 9 boys recruited by JEM in that same period [...] Large areas of those states were inaccessible, which limited United Nations ability to monitor allegations in order to reflect the full extent of violations.⁷⁴²

⁷³⁶ United States Department of State, [Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2015: Sudan](#), 13 April 2016, *Section 1.G. Use of Excessive Force and Other Abuses in Internal Conflicts*

⁷³⁷ United States Department of State, [Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2015: Sudan](#), 13 April 2016, *Section 1.G. Use of Excessive Force and Other Abuses in Internal Conflicts*

⁷³⁸ Human Security Baseline Assessment (HSBA) for Sudan and South Sudan, [Conflict in the Two Areas Security and political dynamics at the beginning of the fifth season of fighting](#), 17 February 2016

⁷³⁹ UN Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, [Sudan signs action plan to protect children from violations in armed conflict](#), 27 March 2016

⁷⁴⁰ UN Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, [Sudan signs action plan to protect children from violations in armed conflict](#), 27 March 2016

⁷⁴¹ UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office, [Human Rights and Democracy Report 2014 – Section XII: Human Rights in Countries of Concern – Sudan](#), 12 March 2015, *Children's Rights*

⁷⁴² United States Department of State, [Trafficking in Persons Report 2015 – Country Narratives, Sudan](#), 27 July 2015, "Prosecution"

The United States Department of State, in its 'Trafficking in Persons Report for 2015', also covering developments in 2014, stated "Non-governmental armed groups recruited and used children under 17 years old".⁷⁴³

The Human Security Baseline Assessment (HSBA) for Sudan and South Sudan reported in January 2015:

JEM is also accused of recruiting children in Yida camp and in South Kordofan, one reason the SPLA-N expelled them from South Kordofan. According to SPLA-N leaders and the local population around 600 youths were taken between 2012 and 2014. Around 200 Nuba youth (12–17 years old) were reportedly taken between January and March 2014 in exchange of money and pledges of honours and military rank. The numbers could not be independently verified. In general, recruitment was said to take place in the name of SRF.⁷⁴⁴

The Secretary-General of the National Council for Child Welfare, Amal Mahmoud, expressed concern in April 2015 over "renewal of incidents of kidnapping and recruitment of children by rebel movements in eastern South Kordofan State".⁷⁴⁵

An August 2015 Small Arms Survey report found that:

Previous research has also documented cases of child recruitment by the SPLA-N [...] SPLA-N officers admitted that some children are employed in front-line areas outside their control—which was confirmed by local humanitarian actors—but when found are sent to school in the refugee camps [...] Consistent reports were collected of JEM's recruitment of Nuba children in South Kordofan and Yida camp. It is reported that around 600 youths aged 12–17 were taken between 2012 and 2014, and around 200 between January and March 2014 (numbers could not be independently verified and JEM denies them) [...]

The children who managed to escape reported witnessing or being victims of abuses, including gang rape. According to the local community, JEM members are still roaming through the camp, often disguised as traders, and many families are afraid they might kidnap their sons again, because 'children are disappearing'.⁷⁴⁶

The UNITED STATES Department of State reported in its annual report covering 2015 that:

Many of the armed movements issued commands or statements prohibiting the use or recruitment of child soldiers, including the SLA/MM in 2014, the JEM in 2012 and again during the year, the SPLM-N during the year. Allegations persisted, however, that the armed movements, government forces, and government-aligned militias had child soldiers within their ranks [...] In January the National Council for Child Welfare reported an estimated 2,100 children had been recruited by armed movements [...] In November a representative of Sudan's Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) Commission claimed the SAF and PDF did not recruit or use child soldiers [...] Many children lacked documents verifying their age. Children's rights organizations believed armed groups, including the

⁷⁴³United States Department of State, [Trafficking in Persons Report 2015 – Country Narratives, Sudan](#), 27 July 2015

⁷⁴⁴Human Security Baseline Assessment (HSBA) for Sudan and South Sudan, [Conflict in the Two Areas: Describing events through 29 January 2015](#), 30 January 2015

⁷⁴⁵Sudanese News Agency, [National Council for Child Welfare expresses concern over renewal of incidents of abduction and recruitment of children in South Kordofan State](#), 7 April 2015

⁷⁴⁶Small Arms Survey, [Two Fronts, One War: Evolution of the Two Areas Conflict, 2014–15](#), HSBA Working Paper 38, August 2015, V. *Humanitarian impacts and human rights violations*

SAF, exploited this lack of documentation to recruit or retain children. The SAF continued to deny recruiting children and having children in its ranks.⁷⁴⁷

8.2. Access to education

For monthly updates on the humanitarian situation in South Kordofan and Blue Nile including a distinct section on 'education' view the South Kordofan Blue Nile Coordination Unit (SKBLCU) reports [here](#).⁷⁴⁸

For information on IDP's access to education, see [9. Internally displaced persons \(IDPs\), 9.2. Access to education](#).

In October 2014 UNICEF published its country report on out-of-school children in Sudan and found that "Inadequate financing and implementation of education policies and lack of equitable resource allocation directly contribute to the disparities between states in terms of gross enrolment rates. Some states have more advanced education systems and higher enrolment rates, while others are far behind in terms of enrolling children in basic school, especially the war-affected Darfur states, Blue Nile and South Kordofan [...] The bottlenecks in conflict-affected areas are many and include lack of access due to inadequate infrastructure, lack of security, poor school environment and costs that are too high for poor parents".⁷⁴⁹ The report further found high proportion of out-of-school children in Darfur states, Kordofan states and the Blue Nile, "where access to pre-schooling is very limited".⁷⁵⁰

Similarly, Radio Dabanga reported in July 2015 that at a workshop in Khartoum on the situation of education in Sudan it was noted that about one million children are not enrolled in basic school of which most are girls living in Darfur, South Kordofan and Blue Nile.⁷⁵¹

In September 2015, UNICEF reported that "One result of nearly four decades of war in Sudan has been to deprive more than three million children of their schooling. In Darfur and in the states of Blue Nile and South Kordofan conflict has been a major factor pushing children out of the classroom. Other factors include poor school infrastructure, lack of security, and the costs that are too high for many poor families".⁷⁵²

8.2.1. South Kordofan

A needs assessment by an international organisation⁷⁵³ in August 2014 in South Kordofan, whose findings were published in November 2014 by the Enough Project, found that "Education has been seriously impacted by the conflict. Fifty-three percent of households state that their children do not attend school regularly due to lack of money to pay school fees (37%) and insecurity (27%)".⁷⁵⁴

⁷⁴⁷ United States Department of State, [Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2015: Sudan](#), 13 April 2016, *Section 1.G. Use of Excessive Force and Other Abuses in Internal Conflicts*

⁷⁴⁸ See Sudan Consortium, [Sudan Crisis, South Kordofan Blue Nile Coordination Unit \(SKBLCU\) Updates](#)

⁷⁴⁹ UNICEF, [Sudan: Country report on out-of-school children](#), October 2014, 2.3 Profiles of out-of-school children in Dimension 1

⁷⁵⁰ UNICEF, [Sudan: Country report on out-of-school children](#), October 2014, *Executive Summary, Bottlenecks and barriers*

⁷⁵¹ Radio Dabanga, [One million Sudanese children not enrolled in basic schools: ministry](#), 14 July 2015

⁷⁵² UN Children's Fund, [Education Under Fire: How Conflict in the Middle East is Depriving Children of their Schooling](#), 3 September 2015

⁷⁵³ For security reasons they want to remain anonymous. See Enough Project, [Life under Siege: South Kordofan Needs Assessment](#), November 2014, *Editor's note*

⁷⁵⁴ Enough Project, [Life under Siege: South Kordofan Needs Assessment](#), November 2014, 2. *Executive Summary*

In December 2014 Voice of America reported that:

The school dropout rate is at an all-time high in Sudan's South Kordofan state because many schools have been destroyed during the three-year civil war between the government and SPLA-N rebel forces. In Sudan's Nuba Mountains' region many children are simply too scared to go to school [...] Almost every school in the Nuba Mountains state of South Kordofan has been bombed or damaged by attacks and at least 40 percent remain closed [...] Tunguli Model Primary School Headmaster Butru Mohan says the school was bombed last year and now holds lessons under trees close to some caves [...] Officials say 120 of the 243 primary schools in 10 Nuba Mountains' counties have been bombed. Tunguli Model Primary has 13 teachers for 900 pupils [...].⁷⁵⁵

Covering 2014, the UN report on 'Children and armed conflict' reported that it had received credible information regarding the military use of three schools by armed forces in South Kordofan.⁷⁵⁶

In May 2015 Human Rights Watch reported that "Government bombing has damaged or destroyed more than 20 schools, and most of the remaining 250 schools are operating outdoors under trees or nestled in rocky hills to protect them. Most have no school supplies, in some places forcing children to learn, and even complete their exams, orally and by writing words in the sand".⁷⁵⁷ The same source noted that "In many examples of health, education, or other facilities damaged from the air attacks, Human Rights Watch was not able to establish if particular sites were intentionally targeted or if they were hit because bombs were dropped indiscriminately on the settlements".⁷⁵⁸

The source further noted that

Sudan's ban on aid into rebel areas has resulted in a dearth of school materials in most schools. Teachers, paid by community members and struggling to keep schools open, had copies of textbooks in the schools Human Rights Watch visited but students did not. Students whose parents could afford exercise books reported sharing pieces of paper with poorer students [...] Even if students manage to finish their primary education, there are few options to continue studying and only 400 students are in secondary education in the entire region, in two remaining secondary schools. Thousands of children have turned to refugee camps in South Sudan to try and get an education.⁷⁵⁹

The South Kordofan and Blue Nile Coordination Unit (SKBNCU) reported in June 2015 that "FSMU reported that 43% of households in March 2015 reported to have withdrawn children from school due to decreased income [...] Lack of school feeding, NFIs [Non-food items] and shelter remains an issue. Out of 239 primary schools, only 10 receive appropriate support and 100 receiving [sic] limited chalk and teacher guides. Schools in South Kordofan continue to lack of scholastic materials, qualified teachers and school feeding. Teachers are not paid and depend on the community contribution, and that reduces the availability of prepared teachers to work on in the area. Existing build up schools are not attended, as the majority are situated in open areas at higher risk of aerial bombardment".⁷⁶⁰

⁷⁵⁵ Voice of America, [Sudan School Becomes Target of Aerial Attacks](#), 18 December 2014

⁷⁵⁶ UN Secretary-General (UNSG), [Children and armed conflict: report of the Secretary-General](#), 5 June 2015, A/69/926-S/2015/409, paragraph 177

⁷⁵⁷ Human Rights Watch, [Sudan: Bombing Campaign's Heavy Toll on Children](#), 6 May 2015

⁷⁵⁸ Human Rights Watch, [Sudan: Bombing Campaign's Heavy Toll on Children](#), 6 May 2015

⁷⁵⁹ Human Rights Watch, [Sudan: Bombing Campaign's Heavy Toll on Children](#), 6 May 2015

⁷⁶⁰ SKBUCU, [Humanitarian Update, June 2015, South Kordofan and Blue Nile states, Sudan](#), Undated [last accessed: 11 May 2016], *South Kordofan, F. Education*

Amnesty International's research into the conflict of South Kordofan, published in July 2015 found that "There were six secondary schools in SPLA-N controlled areas before the conflict began. Now only three secondary schools remain operational. The enrolment numbers have dropped from 3,000 before the conflict to about 300-500 secondary school students at the time of writing. 30 primary schools have been closed, and enrolment numbers have dropped by 23,000".⁷⁶¹

An August 2015 Small Arms Survey report noted that:

The interruption of youth education in the Two Areas is another dramatic effect of this conflict; more so because it has continued since the first war and was not resolved in the interim period. Due to insecurity and the departure of teachers (many were hired by the international NGOs (INGOs) that provide assistance in refugee camps), the war has caused the closure of 172 of 418 primary schools in South Kordofan, according to figures provided by the SPLM-N Secretariat of Education, based on an October 2014 assessment. There is only one secondary school in the rebel-held areas, and one was recently opened in the new Adjong Thok refugee camp. According to a local social worker around one-third of school-age Nuba children are not receiving an education at the moment and drop-out levels are alarmingly high.⁷⁶²

Human Rights Watch reported in September 2015 that "The bombing campaign has created an education crisis in rebel-held areas of Southern Kordofan. Since 2011, 22 schools have been targeted, which has forced students and teachers to move away from permanent structures and conduct school in grass shelters next to rocky hills for safety".⁷⁶³

In another publication the same source further noted in September 2015 that "The impact of aerial bombardments has also violated the right to education in South Kordofan. There were six secondary schools in SPLA-N controlled areas when the conflict began but now only three secondary schools remain operational. The enrolment of children to schools in SPLA-N controlled areas has further declined from 3000 to about 300-500 secondary school pupils. Further 30 primary schools have been closed and enrolment numbers have dropped by 23,000 since 2011".⁷⁶⁴

Amnesty International reported in its annual report covering 2015 that "The aerial bombardments also had a debilitating impact on the right to education in South Kordofan. There were six secondary schools in SPLM-N-controlled areas when the conflict began, of which only three were still operational in 2015. The number of children in secondary schools in SPLM-N-controlled areas fell from 3,000 to about 300-500, while 30 primary schools were closed with enrolment numbers dropping by 23,000 since 2011".⁷⁶⁵

In February 2016 the South Kordofan Blue Nile Coordination Unit (SKBNCU) reported in relation to education in South Kordofan that "In the Western Jebels, all schools are run by the community. Lack of trained teachers and teaching and learning materials, remain a major constraint. The CU

⁷⁶¹ Amnesty International, [Don't we matter? – Four years of unrelenting attacks against civilians in Sudan's South Kordofan State](#), July 2015, *A protracted and deepening humanitarian crisis: Access to Education*

⁷⁶² Small Arms Survey, [Two Fronts, One War: Evolution of the Two Areas Conflict, 2014–15](#), HSBA Working Paper 38, August 2015, V. *Humanitarian impacts and human rights violations, IDPs in the Two Areas and refugees in South Sudan and Ethiopia*

⁷⁶³ Human Rights Watch, [UN Human Rights Council: Interactive Dialogue with the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in Sudan](#), 30 September 2015

⁷⁶⁴ Human Rights Watch, [Joint NGO Letter: Human Rights Situation in Sudan](#), 3 September 2015, Annex: *Situation of human rights in Sudan since September 2014, Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile*

⁷⁶⁵ Amnesty International, [Amnesty International Report 2015/2016 – The State of the world's human rights](#), 24 February 2016, *Sudan: Armed conflict, South Kordofan and Blue Nile*

[Coordination Unit] continues to encourage donors and INGOs to provide school material and to assist in training teachers in the war affected areas”.⁷⁶⁶

8.2.2. Blue Nile

With regards to education in Blue Nile the Sudan Consortium noted in March 2015 “The additional four primary schools opened in December 2014 are now functioning, for a total of seventeen primary schools in the SPLM-N held areas in Blue Nile serving 4,299 kids. An additional four schools are expected to open in April 2015. Nonetheless, the schools available do not meet the needs of the population and more assistance is needed. Schools lack prepared teachers due to lack of incentives, with only 52 volunteers in place (an average of 82 students/teacher). Classrooms are congested or the classes meet under the trees and material is scarce affecting the quality of the education received for the students. As a teacher reported ‘we are not giving a proper education, we mostly help the kids spend some time’”.⁷⁶⁷

An August 2015 Small Arms Survey report noted that “The interruption of youth education in the Two Areas is another dramatic effect of this conflict; more so because it has continued since the first war and was not resolved in the interim period” and stated that compared to South Kordofan “In Blue Nile the situation is more critical: since 2012 there have been only five primary community schools and no secondary schools”.⁷⁶⁸

The South Kordofan Blue Nile Coordination Unit (SKBNCU) reported in December 2015 that “Only eighteen community primary schools are functioning in Blue Nile State (7 in Wadaka, 1 in Chali Afil and 10 in Yabus payams) with a total number of 5,262 pupils and 87 volunteer teachers or 60 children per teacher”.⁷⁶⁹

In January and February 2016 the same source stated that in relation to education in Blue Nile “Lack of qualified teachers, school material, and the poor conditions of school facilities, remain a major challenge”.⁷⁷⁰

9. Internally displaced persons (IDPs)

This section should be read in conjunction with section [4. Security situation: Impact of the conflict on civilians](#), particularly [4.3. Forced displacement](#), [4.4. Denial of humanitarian access](#), and [4.5. Access to health care](#).

For monthly updates on the humanitarian situation in South Kordofan and Blue Nile view the South Kordofan Blue Nile Coordination Unit (SKBLCU) reports [here](#).⁷⁷¹

⁷⁶⁶SKBUCU, [Humanitarian Update, February 2016, South Kordofan and Blue Nile states, Sudan](#), Undated [last accessed: 11 May 2016], *South Kordofan, F. Education*

⁷⁶⁷Sudan Consortium, [Humanitarian Update – March 2015](#), Undated [last accessed: 10 May 2016], *Blue Nile, E. Education*

⁷⁶⁸Small Arms Survey, [Two Fronts, One War: Evolution of the Two Areas Conflict, 2014–15](#), HSBA Working Paper 38, August 2015, *V. Humanitarian impacts and human rights violations, IDPs in the Two Areas and refugees in South Sudan and Ethiopia*

⁷⁶⁹SKBUCU, [Humanitarian Update, December 2015, South Kordofan and Blue Nile states, Sudan](#), Undated [last accessed: 11 May 2016], *Blue Nile, F. Education*

⁷⁷⁰ See SKBUCU, [Humanitarian Update, January 2016, South Kordofan and Blue Nile states, Sudan](#), Undated [last accessed: 11 May 2016], *Blue Nile, F. Education* and SKBUCU, [Humanitarian Update, February 2016, South Kordofan and Blue Nile states, Sudan](#), Undated [last accessed: 11 May 2016], *Blue Nile, E. Education*

⁷⁷¹ See Sudan Consortium, [Sudan Crisis, South Kordofan Blue Nile Coordination Unit \(SKBLCU\) Updates](#)

The weekly 'Humanitarian Bulletin' published by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) includes amongst others information on displacement figures and access to basic services in the Two Areas. Its reports can be accessed [here](#).⁷⁷²

9.1. Displacement figures

The 2015 UNITED STATES Department of State annual report stated that "According to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the four-year conflict has resulted in 1.74 million IDPs and severely affected people in the Two Areas and resulted in 281,100 refugees in neighboring states".⁷⁷³

9.1.1. Two Areas

2014

With regards to the availability of displacement figures in the Two Areas the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) provided the following background in July 2014:

In South Kordofan and Blue Nile, figures published by OCHA are provided by the government's Humanitarian Aid Commission (HAC) in government-controlled areas and in opposition-controlled areas by the Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Agency (SRRA, the humanitarian wing of the SPLM-N) and also by the independent South Kordofan and Blue Nile Coordination Unit (SKBNCU), which works with local civil society and international humanitarian actors to monitor displacement and humanitarian conditions. There is little or no data on IDPs living in towns and cities in Sudan. This constitutes a further obstacle to providing a comprehensive view of displacement. This is significant due to large numbers of IDPs fleeing to urban areas during the past decade, contributing to Sudan's accelerating urbanisation [...]

The lack of quality data makes it difficult to make an accurate assessment of IDPs' needs. The absence of disaggregated data, except for cases where biometric registration has taken place such as in Darfur, makes protection and vulnerability analysis all but impossible. There is little data with which to evaluate IDPs' progress towards durable solutions. The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) is the only agency reporting figures on verified returns but there is no information on failed returns or secondary displacement. Little is known about IDPs who live in informal settlements, with host families or in urban settings. Data on displacement caused by natural disasters, development projects, food insecurity and drought is non-existent or patchy.⁷⁷⁴

According to the UN "military operations in South Kordofan and Blue Nile reportedly displaced 140,000 people in 2014".⁷⁷⁵

In Mid October 2014 the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs' (OCHA) 'Humanitarian Bulletin' reported that "According to SKBNCU [South Kordofan Blue Nile Coordination Unit], there are an estimated 650,000 IDPs in SPLM-N areas of South Kordofan and another 65,000 IDPs in SPLM-N areas in Blue Nile. Many of these displaced families have been unable to cultivate sufficient crops to meet their basic needs for the next 12 months. The Sudan Relief and

⁷⁷²See UN OCHA, [Humanitarian Bulletin: Sudan](#)

⁷⁷³United States Department of State, [Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2015: Sudan](#), 13 April 2016, 1.g. *Use of Excessive Force and Other Abuses in Internal Conflicts*

⁷⁷⁴IDMC, [SUDAN: Other crises distract attention from tremendous needs of IDPs](#), 9 July 2014, *Displacement figures*

⁷⁷⁵UN Security Council, [Report of the Secretary-General on the protection of civilians in armed conflict](#), 18 June 2015, *Sudan, paragraph 23*

Rehabilitation Agency (SRRA), a humanitarian arm of SPLM-N, reported in August 2014 that there were 500,000 IDPs in SPLM-N areas in South Kordofan and Blue Nile”.⁷⁷⁶

2015

In August 2015 a report by the Small Arms Survey noted that “According to local SPLM-N authorities, around one million people have been displaced due to intensive air and ground attacks in the two SPLM/A-N-controlled areas. In South Kordofan slightly less than half a million people are reportedly displaced from a population of about 1.3 million, and there are around 80,000 IDPs in Blue Nile rebel held territories of a total population of about 100,000. The Small Arms Survey could not independently verify these numbers, but noted a large number of people living in the caves in South Kordofan’s northern areas or in displaced settlements throughout the SPLM/A-N-controlled territories, and there were many abandoned villages in Blue Nile, especially in the Bau, Chali, and Wadaka areas, where the population lives hiding in the bush”.⁷⁷⁷ The same source further noted with regards to the accuracy of figures that “The reduced presence of credible humanitarian actors on the ground and the absence of IDP camps made it difficult to obtain accurate figures for IDPs from the Two Areas in the rest of Sudan. The government refused to set up camps for the displaced, preferring to treat them as ‘citizens’. However, according to local humanitarian workers this suits the government’s purpose of downplaying the crisis in the Two Areas while avoiding a new humanitarian operation like the one in Darfur”.⁷⁷⁸

The 2015 UNITED STATES Department of State annual report stated that “During the year through October [2015], 92,000 individuals were newly displaced in Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile”.⁷⁷⁹

OCHA reported in its ‘Sudan: Humanitarian Snapshot as of 31 December 2015’ that:

- 3.1 million = total number of displaced population in Sudan
- Main displacement figures: Up to 538,000 in S/W. Kordofan & B. Nile [South/West Kordofan & Blue Nile]
- No access to: 90,000-250,000 estimated no. of IDPs in Blue Nile & South Kordofan where SPLM-N is present
- People in need of humanitarian assistance in main regions, as per 2015 Humanitarian Response Plan: 378,000 IDPs in Blue Nile & S/W Kordofan.⁷⁸⁰

[Previous ‘Sudan: Humanitarian Snapshot’ maps can be located on Reliefweb’s [Sudan](#) country page under ‘Maps’]

January-April 2016

UNHCR published the following map indicating the number of refugees, asylum-seekers, IDPs and others of concern to UNHCR in Sudan as of 31 March 2016 which shows that Sudan has 3.2 million IDPs of which just under 443,647 are based in South Kordofan and just under 192,025 in Blue Nile.⁷⁸¹

⁷⁷⁶ UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, [Humanitarian Bulletin; Sudan; Issue 42; 13 – 19 October 2014](#), 19 October 2014, *Humanitarian update on SPLM-N areas*

⁷⁷⁷ Small Arms Survey, [Two Fronts, One War: Evolution of the Two Areas Conflict, 2014–15](#), HSBA Working Paper 38, August 2015, *V. Humanitarian impacts and human rights, Violations, IDPs in the Two Areas and refugees in South Sudan and Ethiopia*

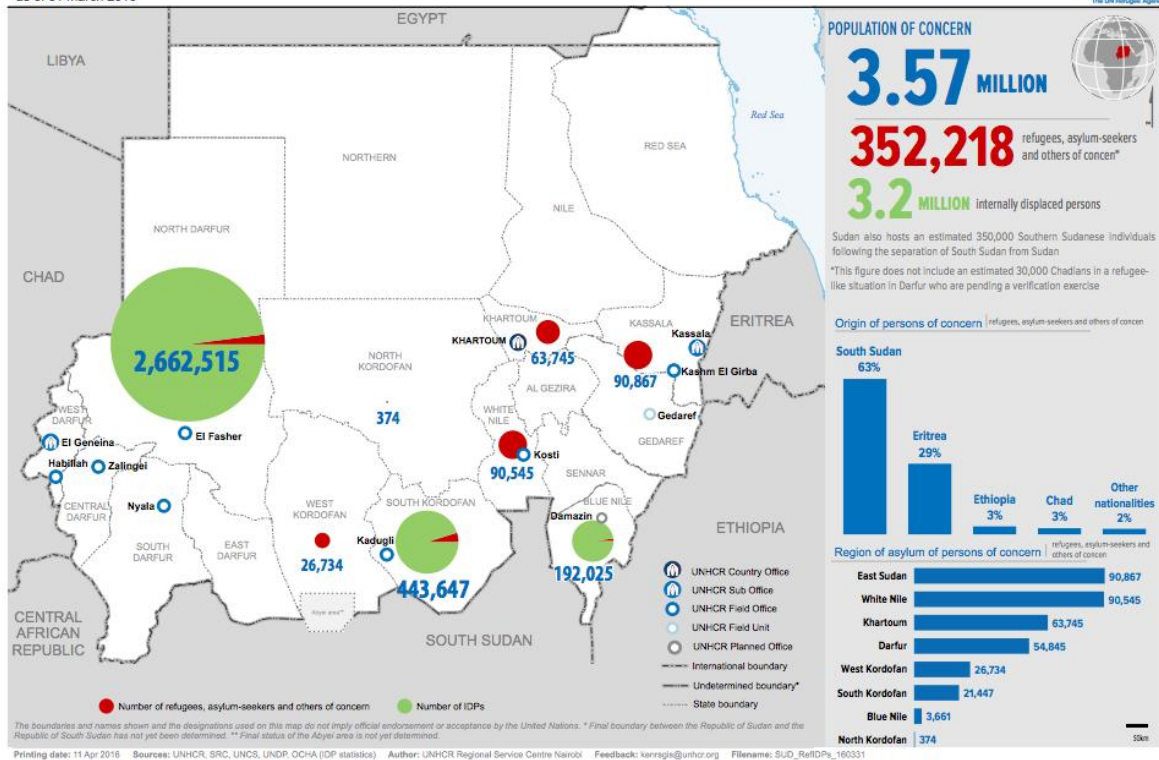
⁷⁷⁸ Small Arms Survey, [Two Fronts, One War: Evolution of the Two Areas Conflict, 2014–15](#), HSBA Working Paper 38, August 2015, *V. Humanitarian impacts and human rights, Violations, IDPs in the Two Areas and refugees in South Sudan and Ethiopia*

⁷⁷⁹ United States Department of State, [Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2015: Sudan](#), 13 April 2016, *1.g. Use of Excessive Force and Other Abuses in Internal Conflicts*

⁷⁸⁰ UN OCHA, [Sudan: Humanitarian Snapshot as of 31 December 2015](#), 19 January 2016

SUDAN

Refugees, asylum-seekers, IDPs and others of concern to UNHCR by State
as of 31 March 2016



9.1.2. South Kordofan

2015

In its February 2015 'Humanitarian Bulletin' UN OCHA reported on the outcome of an inter-agency mission to South Kordofan's eastern localities, which included the government's Humanitarian Aid Commission (HAC), UN agencies, IOM and the Sudanese Red Crescent Society (SRCS), and found:

There are about 88,000 IDPs and close to 9,000 South Sudanese refugees in these localities, according to HAC. The village of Um Marrhe, approximately 60km northeast of South Kordofan's AlAbassiya town, hosts an estimated 9,500 displaced people who fled surrounding villages following the start of conflict in 2011, according to the mission. Due to its remote location and insecurity these displaced people have not received any form of humanitarian assistance since arriving in the village in 2011. WFP included Um Marrhe in its 2014 food distribution list, however, the UN agency has not been able to access the area due to insecurity.⁷⁸²

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) reported through its Data Tracking Matrix that "The total number of IDPs verified between January to October of 2015 in the states of North Darfur, South Darfur, Central Darfur, South Kordofan and West Kordofan was 143,760 individuals" with 14%

⁷⁸¹ UNHCR, [SUDAN: Refugees, asylum-seekers, IDPs and others of concern to UNHCR by State as of 31 March 2016](#), 11 April 2016

⁷⁸² UN OCHA, [Humanitarian Bulletin: Sudan, Issue 08, 16-22 February 2015](#), 23 February 2015, *Inter-agency mission to South Kordofan's eastern localities*

verified individuals in South Kordofan amounting to 19,727 IDPs.⁷⁸³ Of those, 51% were female and 49% male.⁷⁸⁴

In its annual humanitarian overview, IOM reported that in 2015 “In government-controlled areas of South Kordofan an estimated 52,000 people have been displaced since January [2015], of whom 21,000 have returned”.⁷⁸⁵

9.1.3. Blue Nile

2014

Early October 2014 the UN OCHA ‘Humanitarian Bulletin’ reported that “Estimates from the humanitarian wing of SPLM-N and community-based organisations on the ground indicate that there are about 90,000 IDPs in SPLM-N controlled areas”.⁷⁸⁶

2015

Reporting by the Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust (HART) in January 2015, following their visit to Sudan, South Sudan and Uganda, stated that in the Government of Sudan-controlled regions of the Blue Nile State “there are an estimated 120,000 IDPs”.⁷⁸⁷

UN OCHA’s ‘Humanitarian Bulletin’ of early January 2015 reported that “According to the Humanitarian Needs Overview of the Strategic Response Plan 2015 for Sudan, there are an estimated 154,000 people in need of humanitarian assistance in accessible areas of Blue Nile. This includes about 83,000 internally displaced people (IDPs), with the rest being returnees, food insecure people and refugees from South Sudan”.⁷⁸⁸

In its annual humanitarian overview, IOM reported that in 2015 “in government-controlled areas of Blue Nile, an estimated 60,000 have been displaced (24,000 relocated; 26,000 returnees; and 10,000 displaced) since January [2015]”.⁷⁸⁹

9.2. Access to education

In May 2015 UNICEF reported that in the Two Areas “Over 18,000 school aged children are displaced in the Blue Nile and Kordofan states following conflict in the region. Partners are collecting data and information on the situation of children and are extending support in the provision of essential teaching, learning and the provision of recreational supplies to schools receiving enrolments of newly displaced children”.⁷⁹⁰

⁷⁸³ IOM, [IOM Sudan – Displacement Tracking Matrix](#), Undated [last accessed 11 May 2016]

⁷⁸⁴ IOM, [IOM Sudan – Displacement Tracking Matrix](#), Undated [last accessed 11 May 2016]

⁷⁸⁵ IOM, [IOM Sudan Humanitarian Summary 2015](#), Undated, *Introduction* [last accessed 11 May 2016]

⁷⁸⁶ UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, [Humanitarian Bulletin; Sudan; Issue 41; 6 - 12 October 2014](#), 12 October 2014, *Over 240,000 people need humanitarian aid in Blue Nile*

⁷⁸⁷ Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust, [“There is no place to hide” – HART visit report Sudan and South Sudan](#), January 2015, *Blue Nile State, Sudan, GoS-Controlled Areas of Blue Nile State*

⁷⁸⁸ UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, [Humanitarian Bulletin; Sudan; Issue 02; 5 - 11 January 2015](#), 11 January 2015, *HAC blue Nile: international staff can participate in joint needs assessments*

⁷⁸⁹ IOM, [IOM Sudan Humanitarian Summary 2015](#), Undated, *Introduction* [last accessed 11 May 2016]

⁷⁹⁰ UNICEF, [Education Sector Bulletin: Sudan, Issue 03](#), May 2015

In September 2015, UNICEF's 'Education Sector Bulletin: Sudan' reported that "In the first two quarters of the year, ongoing conflicts in Darfur region resulted in new displacements of more than 40,000 primary school-aged children. These new arrivals compounded an already dire situation with over-crowded classrooms, inadequate school supplies and teaching personnel. A similar situation prevails in the conflict affected areas of Kordofan and Blue Nile states where local schools strive to accommodate new arrivals. The situation is particularly critical in localities with high influx of IDPs such as Damazine, Roseiris, Kadugli, Abassia, Rashad and Habila".⁷⁹¹ The same source further noted "Tentative data reveals disruption of schooling for over 72,000 school-aged children in the last school year alone (2014 – 2015). Central, East and North Darfur states alongside South Kordofan and Blue Nile are amongst the worst affected states in terms of school closures".⁷⁹² It was further stated that with regards to school closure the "vast majority of affected children live in South Kordofan and the Jebel Mara region in Darfur, where some 61,000 school-aged children have been unable to access schools over the last three years, denying them their basic human right to receive primary education [...] In Blue Nile more than 3,204 school-aged children have missed out on their right to education due to forced displacements in Bau locality".⁷⁹³

Similarly, the UNITED STATES Department of State reported in its annual report covering 2015 that "Internally displaced children often lacked access to government services such as health and education due to their inability to pay related fees. In June 2014 UNICEF reported approximately 70 percent of IDPs were children".⁷⁹⁴

With specific regards to Blue Nile, UNICEF reported in its 'Education Sector Bulletin: Sudan' covering 1 November 2015-29 February 2016 that "13,500 displaced school-aged children are also affected by conflict [in Blue Nile]. Nearly 4,000 of them are now out-of-school. No assessment has been done recently and more gaps are expected to emerge in education supplies, classroom space, and WASH facilities. According to the state Ministry of Education and sector partners, Damazine and Roseires localities are the worst affected and most in need of assistance".⁷⁹⁵

9.3. South Kordofan

9.3.1. Access to basic services

In its February 2015 'Humanitarian Bulletin' UN OCHA reported on the outcome of an inter-agency mission to South Kordofan's eastern localities, which included the government's Humanitarian Aid Commission (HAC), UN agencies, IOM and the Sudanese Red Crescent Society (SRCS), and found:

There are about 88,000 IDPs and close to 9,000 South Sudanese refugees in these localities, according to HAC [...]

The arrival of displaced people to Um Marrhe village has strained existing village facilities, including food and water sources. The majority of school-age children in the village are not in school. There are no functioning health facilities, medical personnel (health workers, midwives or nurses) or regular drug supplies in the villages. The periodic immunisation programme is the only health assistance reaching the village. For health services people walk about 3km to neighbouring Banat village, where

⁷⁹¹ UNICEF, [Education Sector Bulletin: Sudan Issue 04](#), September 2015

⁷⁹² UNICEF, [Education Sector Bulletin: Sudan Issue 04](#), September 2015

⁷⁹³ UNICEF, [Education Sector Bulletin: Sudan Issue 04](#), September 2015

⁷⁹⁴ United States Department of State, [Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2015: Sudan](#), 13 April 2016, Section 6. *Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons*

⁷⁹⁵ UNICEF, [Education Sector Bulletin: Sudan, 1 November 2015-29 February 2016](#), 29 February 2016

there is a healthclinic with a medical assistant, a midwife and a nurse. The clinic has no medicine, furniture or equipment.⁷⁹⁶

Similarly, Amnesty International's report on South Kordofan published in July 2015 found that:

The situation in South Kordofan has also provoked massive internal displacement. It is estimated that at least one-third of the state's population of approximately 1.4 million people may be internally displaced within South Kordofan, living in precarious and insecure conditions in which food and other humanitarian needs are often unmet and communities remain vulnerable to ongoing armed attacks.⁷⁹⁷

The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) reported in July 2014 that "In South Kordofan, deliberate destruction of water points, farms and homes by SAF and RSF combatants are frequent and prevent IDPs from returning home".⁷⁹⁸

In its annual humanitarian overview, IOM reported that in 2014 "Return is precarious, as some returning IDPs are forced back into secondary displacement due to sheer lack of livelihoods and basic services".⁷⁹⁹

9.3.1.1. Shelter

The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) reported in July 2014 that "Some IDPs in South Kordofan reportedly live in caves in the Nuba mountains".⁸⁰⁰ In its annual humanitarian overview, IOM reported that in 2014 "In South Kordofan, the majority of the displaced and affected population lives in schools and mosques, or resides with host families or affected population sites".⁸⁰¹

In August 2015 a report by the Small Arms Survey noted that "The Small Arms Survey [...] noted a large number of people living in the caves in South Kordofan's northern areas or in displaced settlements throughout the SPLM/A-N-controlled territories [...]".⁸⁰²

The 2015 UNITED STATES Department of State annual report stated that "The government did not allow the establishment of formal IDP or refugee camps in White Nile, Southern Kordofan, and Blue Nile".⁸⁰³

In January 2016, the Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust (HART) following its visit to South Kordofan in the same month found that "As we travelled into the Nuba Mountains, at every check point there was a gathering of displaced people travelling either to or from Yida camp in South Sudan. This constant

⁷⁹⁶ UN OCHA, [Humanitarian Bulletin: Sudan, Issue 08, 16-22 February 2015](#), 23 February 2015, *Inter-agency mission to South Kordofan's eastern localities*

⁷⁹⁷ Amnesty International, [Don't we matter? – Four years of unrelenting attacks against civilians in Sudan's South Kordofan State](#), July 2015, *Executive Summary*

⁷⁹⁸ IDMC, [SUDAN: Other crises distract attention from tremendous needs of IDPs](#), 9 July 2014, *Durable solutions*

⁷⁹⁹ IOM, [IOM Sudan Humanitarian Summary 2014: Overview of the Humanitarian Situation in Sudan](#), undated [last accessed 11 May 2016]

⁸⁰⁰ IDMC, [SUDAN: Other crises distract attention from tremendous needs of IDPs](#), 9 July 2014, *Protection and assistance needs*

⁸⁰¹ IOM, [IOM Sudan Humanitarian Summary 2014: Overview of the Humanitarian Situation in Sudan](#), undated [last accessed 11 May 2016]

⁸⁰² Small Arms Survey, [Two Fronts, One War: Evolution of the Two Areas Conflict, 2014–15](#), HSBA Working Paper 38, August 2015, V. *Humanitarian impacts and human rights, Violations, IDPs in the Two Areas and refugees in South Sudan and Ethiopia*

⁸⁰³ United States Department of State, [Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2015: Sudan](#), 13 April 2016, 2.d. d. *Freedom of Movement, Internally Displaced Persons, Protection of Refugees, and Stateless Persons*

flux of the displaced is linked to them being trapped between two conflicts. Last year, we were told, 'There is nowhere to hide.' Within the Nuba Mountains, we met with internally displaced peoples (IDPs) who are living in caves in order to shelter from the aerial bombardment".⁸⁰⁴

9.3.1.2. Food

The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) reported in July 2014 "According to the Famine Early Warning System Network (FEWS Net), IDPs are the most acutely food insecure in areas controlled by the SPLM-N in South Kordofan".⁸⁰⁵

At the end of August 2014 USAID reported that "due to ongoing conflict and displacement, restricted humanitarian access, and reduced opportunity for income from seasonal agricultural labor, at least 20 percent of IDPs in SPLM-N-controlled areas of Southern Kordofan will likely experience Crisis—IPC 3—levels of food insecurity through December".⁸⁰⁶

Similarly, in August 2014, IRIN stated that: "an estimated 5.3 million people in Sudan face Stressed (IPC Phase 2), Crisis (IPC Phase 3) or Emergency (IPC Phase 4) acute food insecurity [...] Conflicts in Darfur, South Kordofan, Blue Nile, and West Kordofan, have disrupted livelihoods and reduced household food access, especially for IDPs, while the persistent rise of staple food prices has reduced household capacity to meet minimum food requirements during the peak of the lean season when households are most market dependent".⁸⁰⁷

In Mid October 2014 UN OCHA's Humanitarian Bulletin reported that "The Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET) reported in its September 2014 food security outlook report for Sudan that through December at least 20 percent of IDPs in SPLM-N controlled areas of South Kordofan will experience Crisis (IPC Phase 3) levels of food insecurity. This is primarily due to restricted access to humanitarian assistance, ongoing conflict, and reduced access to cash income from seasonal agricultural labour. According to FEWS NET, SPLM-N areas in South Kordofan have the highest level of food insecurity in Sudan".⁸⁰⁸

With regards to food insecurity levels, at the end of October 2014 UN OCHA's 'Humanitarian Bulletin' reported that "An estimated 25 to 30 per cent of displaced people in SPLM-N controlled areas of South Kordofan will remain in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) and an estimated 30 per cent of displaced people in Darfur are expected to remain in Stressed (IPC Phase 2) through March 2015".⁸⁰⁹ This was reconfirmed in UN OCHA's 'Humanitarian Bulletin'(s) of February 2015.⁸¹⁰

In February 2015 USAID reported that "Improvements in food security among displaced populations in Blue Nile, Southern Kordofan, and Western Kordofan states and the Darfur region have been

⁸⁰⁴ HART, ["They are killing us loudly but no-one is listening": Sudan and South Sudan](#), January 2016, *Executive Summary, Sudan*

⁸⁰⁵ IDMC, [SUDAN: Other crises distract attention from tremendous needs of IDPs](#), 9 July 2014, *Displacement figures*

⁸⁰⁶ USAID, [Sudan – Complex Emergency](#), 30 September 2014, *Food Security*

⁸⁰⁷ IRIN, [Food Security Alarm for East, Central Africa](#), 13 August 2014.

⁸⁰⁸ UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, [Humanitarian Bulletin; Sudan; Issue 42; 13 – 19 October 2014](#), 19 October 2014, *Humanitarian update on SPLM-N areas*

⁸⁰⁹ UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, [Humanitarian Bulletin; Sudan; Issue 44; 27 October – 2 November 2014](#), 2 November 2014, *Good harvest improves food security in Sudan*

⁸¹⁰ See UN OCHA, [Humanitarian Bulletin: Sudan, Issue 05, 26 January -01 February 2015](#), 2 February 2015, *Acute food insecurity persists among 3.5 million people in conflict-affected areas – FEWS NET* and UN OCHA, [Humanitarian Bulletin: Sudan, Issue 07, 9-15 February 2015](#), 16 February 2015, *Food insecurity likely to persist in conflict-affected areas of South Kordofan, Blue Nile and Darfur*

limited by ongoing conflict, which constrains access to productive areas, income generating activities, and markets, FEWS NET reports. As a result, displaced households in conflict-affected areas will continue to experience Stressed and Crisis—IPC 2 and 3—levels of food insecurity in the coming months.³ Approximately 3.5 million IDPs and host communities currently experience acute food insecurity”.⁸¹¹

The UNOCHA ‘Humanitarian Bulletin’ for end of April 2015 reported that “Most current food insecure people are in Darfur (70 per cent) and South Kordofan (15 per cent), and the prevalence of ‘Crisis’ (IPC Phase 3) level food insecurity is mainly among IDPs in Sudan People’s Liberation Movement – North (SPLMN) controlled areas of South Kordofan and new IDPs in Darfur”.⁸¹²

The 2015 UNITED STATES Department of State annual report stated that “Many of the IDPs faced chronic food shortages and inadequate medical care. Significant numbers of farmers were prevented from planting their fields due to the conflict, leading to near-famine conditions in parts of Southern Kordofan”.⁸¹³

9.3.1.3. Health care

No COI was found amongst the sources consulted within the timeframe of this report specific to IDPs’ access to health care in South Kordofan State. Information on the difficulties of accessing health care in South Kordofan in general can be found in section [4.5. Access to health care](#), specifically [4.5.1. South Kordofan](#).

9.4. Blue Nile

9.4.1. Access to basic services

A report by the Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust (HART) in January 2015, following their visit to Sudan, South Sudan and Uganda, stated that in the Government of Sudan-controlled regions of the Blue Nile State “The Government has not allowed the formation of IDP camps in areas under its control, in order to reduce the visibility of the suffering. According to local civil society groups, displaced persons have not been allowed to congregate but rather are scattered across unknown locations, often without food distribution, shelter, education or healthcare [...] There are widespread, credible reports that land and homes belonging to the displaced population are being given as a reward by the GoS to those who have fought alongside them against the SPLA-N, including mercenaries from Niger, Nigeria, Chad, Mali and Sudan itself. Many have moved in to these properties, bringing their families and livestock with the intention of permanent settlement. Large, fertile tracts of land are being given by the GoS to other countries, particularly Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Iran for agricultural projects and other investments. This policy of resettlement indicates that the GoS does not intend to allow displaced people to return, but rather to forcefully and permanently remove them from their land”.⁸¹⁴

⁸¹¹USAID, [Sudan – Complex Emergency](#), 12 February 2015, *Food Security*

⁸¹²UN OCHA, [Humanitarian Bulletin: Sudan, Issue 18, 27 April – 3 May 2015](#), 3 May 2015

⁸¹³United States Department of State, [Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2015: Sudan](#), 13 April 2016, *1.g. Use of Excessive Force and Other Abuses in Internal Conflicts*

⁸¹⁴Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust, [“There is no place to hide” – HART visit report Sudan and South Sudan](#), January 2015, *Blue Nile State, Sudan, GoS-Controlled Areas of Blue Nile State*

In August 2015 a report by the Small Arms Survey noted that “Eyewitnesses report that people on the outskirts of Damazin and Roseires in Blue Nile live in dire humanitarian conditions”.⁸¹⁵

The South Kordofan and Blue Nile Coordination Unit (SKBNCU) reported in September 2015 that “In government-held areas of Blue Nile, assistance is being withheld from IDPs”.⁸¹⁶

9.4.1.1. Shelter

The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) reported in July 2014 “There is little precise information on IDPs in Blue Nile but it is reported they often need to find makeshift shelters and seek refuge in caves”.⁸¹⁷

In August 2015 a report by the Small Arms Survey noted that “The Small Arms Survey [...] noted [...] there were many abandoned villages in Blue Nile, especially in the Bau, Chali, and Wadaka areas, where the population lives hiding in the bush”.⁸¹⁸

The South Kordofan and Blue Nile Coordination Unit (SKBNCU) reported in September 2015 that “As humanitarian and security conditions decline in Blue Nile government held areas, more IDPs and refugees have been reported in Wad al-nil, Sinja, Sinner and the Maban camps”.⁸¹⁹

The 2015 UNITED STATES Department of State annual report stated that “The government did not allow the establishment of formal IDP or refugee camps in White Nile, Southern Kordofan, and Blue Nile”.⁸²⁰

9.4.1.2. Food

In August 2014, IRIN stated that: “an estimated 5.3 million people in Sudan face Stressed (IPC Phase 2), Crisis (IPC Phase 3) or Emergency (IPC Phase 4) acute food insecurity... Conflicts in Darfur, South Kordofan, Blue Nile, and West Kordofan, have disrupted livelihoods and reduced household food access, especially for IDPs, while the persistent rise of staple food prices has reduced household capacity to meet minimum food requirements during the peak of the lean season when households are most market dependent”.⁸²¹

In February 2015 USAID reported that “Improvements in food security among displaced populations in Blue Nile, Southern Kordofan, and Western Kordofan states and the Darfur region have been limited by ongoing conflict, which constrains access to productive areas, income generating

⁸¹⁵Small Arms Survey, [Two Fronts, One War: Evolution of the Two Areas Conflict, 2014–15](#), HSBA Working Paper 38, August 2015, V. *Humanitarian impacts and human rights, Violations, IDPs in the Two Areas and refugees in South Sudan and Ethiopia*

⁸¹⁶SKBUCU, [Humanitarian Update, September 2015, South Kordofan and Blue Nile states, Sudan](#), Undated [last accessed: 11 May 2016], *Overview*

⁸¹⁷IDMC, [SUDAN: Other crises distract attention from tremendous needs of IDPs](#), 9 July 2014, *Displacement figures*

⁸¹⁸Small Arms Survey, [Two Fronts, One War: Evolution of the Two Areas Conflict, 2014–15](#), HSBA Working Paper 38, August 2015, V. *Humanitarian impacts and human rights, Violations, IDPs in the Two Areas and refugees in South Sudan and Ethiopia*

⁸¹⁹SKBUCU, [Humanitarian Update, September 2015, South Kordofan and Blue Nile states, Sudan](#), Undated [last accessed: 11 May 2016], *Overview*

⁸²⁰United States Department of State, [Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2015: Sudan](#), 13 April 2016, 2.d. d. *Freedom of Movement, Internally Displaced Persons, Protection of Refugees, and Stateless Persons*

⁸²¹IRIN, [Food Security Alarm for East, Central Africa](#), 13 August 2014.

activities, and markets, FEWS NET reports. As a result, displaced households in conflict-affected areas will continue to experience Stressed and Crisis—IPC 2 and 3—levels of food insecurity in the coming months. Approximately 3.5 million IDPs and host communities currently experience acute food insecurity”.⁸²²

The UN World Food Programme (WFP) found in its December 2015 food security analysis that “Households who self-identified as internally displaced persons (IDPs) and those who self-identified as residents exhibited similar levels of food security”.⁸²³

9.4.1.3. Health care

Very limited COI was found amongst the sources consulted within the time frame of this report specific to IDPs’ access to health care in Blue Nile State. Information on the difficulties of accessing health care in Blue Nile in general can be found in section [4.5. Access to health care](#), specifically [4.5.2 Blue Nile](#).

A report by the Human Rights Development Organization (HUDO) examining events throughout 2015 reported that in November 2015 the NISS denied a Sudanese medical team access to around 675 IDP families in Blue Nile for reportedly failure to inform the NISS about their arrival prior to departing from Khartoum.⁸²⁴

⁸²² USAID, [Sudan – Complex Emergency](#), 12 February 2015, *Food Security*

⁸²³ UN WFP, [Blue Nile, Sudan, Food Security Monitoring](#), December 2015, *Executive Summary*

⁸²⁴ HUDO Centre, [Human Rights Situation in South Kordofan and Blue Nile States of Sudan January-December 2015](#), 20 March 2016, *2.5 Denial of Humanitarian Aid*