

## The Sudan Consortium

*African and International Civil Society Action for Sudan*

### **The Impact of Aerial Bombing of Civilian Settlements in Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile States, Republic of Sudan February 2014**

The Sudan Consortium works with a trusted group of local Sudanese partners who have been carrying out monitoring on the ground in Southern Kordofan since the current conflict began in late 2011. All the attacks referred to in this report were launched against areas where there was no military presence and that were clearly identifiable as civilian in character. Permission was received from the family and community of the young girl who died for the taking of the photograph included in this briefing.

**We believe that this information provides strong circumstantial evidence that civilians are being directly and deliberately targeted by the Sudanese armed forces in Southern Kordofan.**

***Note: This briefing includes photos which may be disturbing.***

January 2014 saw no respite in the number of bombing attacks launched against civilians in Southern Kordofan, with monitors on the ground documenting the third highest number of air strikes recorded since the current conflict began in 2011. The intensity of the attacks was particularly high in the first half of the month, although it dropped noticeably in the second half of the month, with only three attacks reported between 15 and 31 January.

In the second half of January, however, an increased number of bombings were documented in Blue Nile. Human rights monitors on the ground in Blue Nile reported a total of 15 air strikes launched by the Sudanese air force on civilian areas in the areas they monitor over the month of January, the highest number since they began reporting in April 2013.

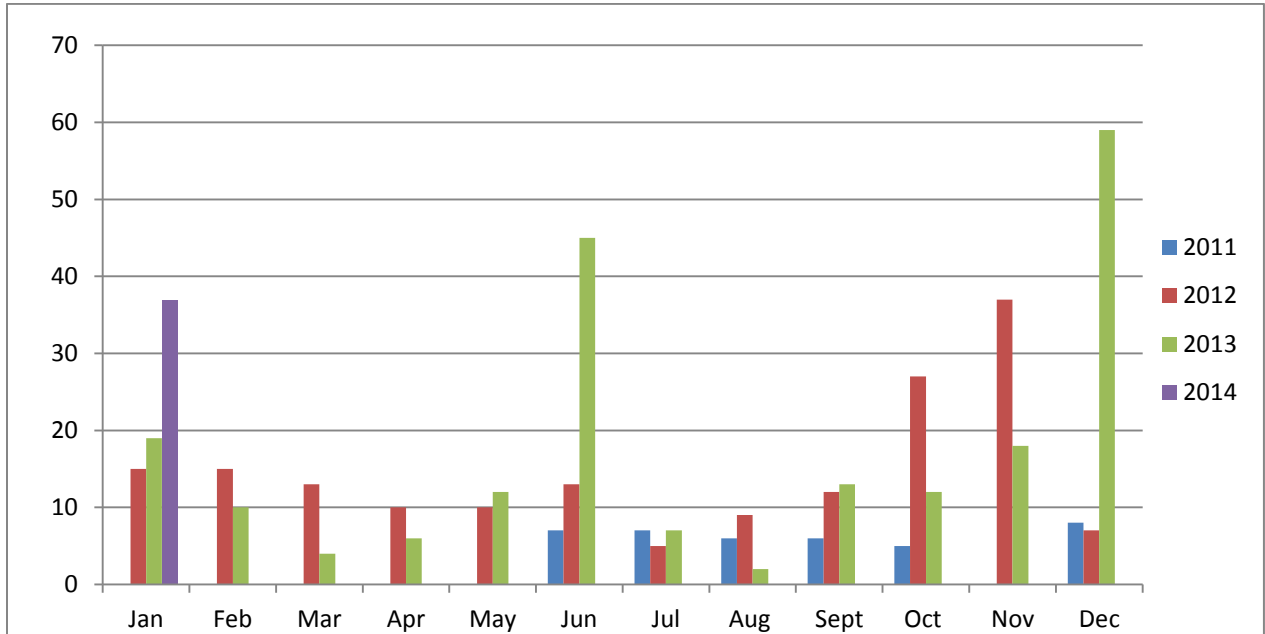
#### **SOUTHERN KORDOFAN**

In the second half of January 2014, as the Sudanese government's ground offensive against opposition-held areas in Southern Kordofan ran out of momentum, the number of aerial bombing attacks launched against the civilian population also decreased – albeit from the record high recorded in December.

However, notwithstanding the drop in the number attacks from 15 January onwards (only three air raids were documented by monitors on the ground in Southern Kordofan between 15-31 January), the total

number of bombing attacks launched against civilians in Southern Kordofan was still the third highest monthly total recorded since the current conflict began in 2011.

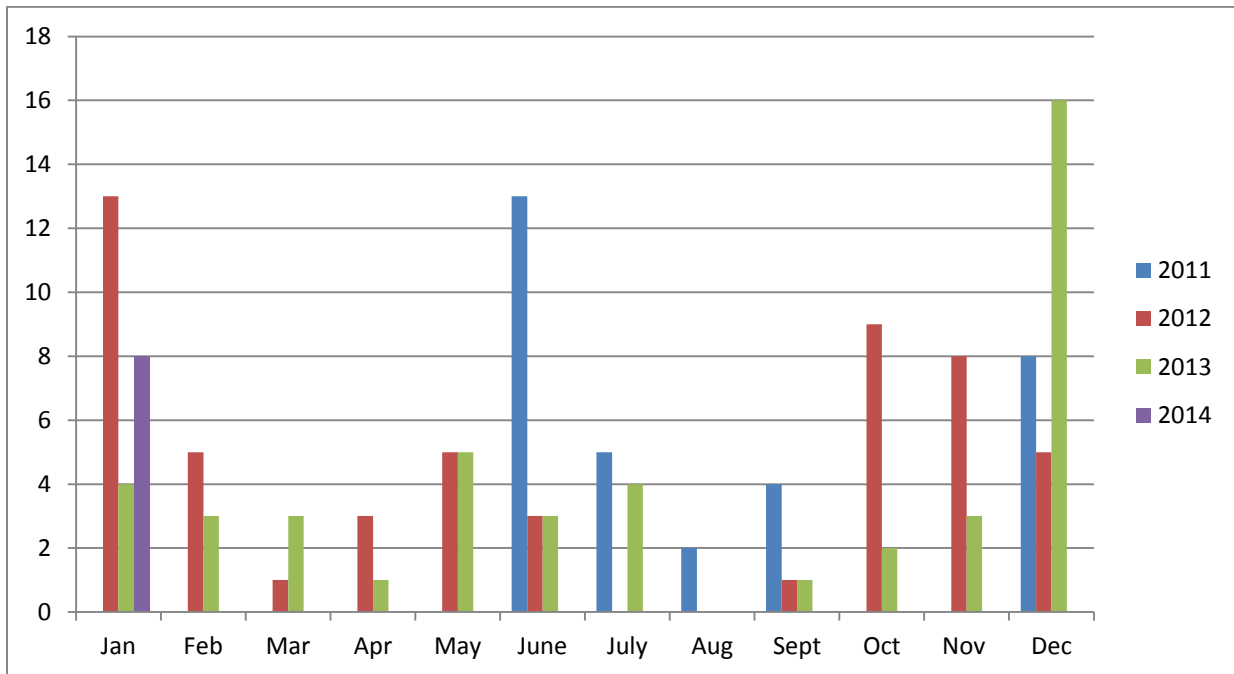
**Southern Kordofan: Bombing attacks on civilian settlements: June 2011-January 2014**



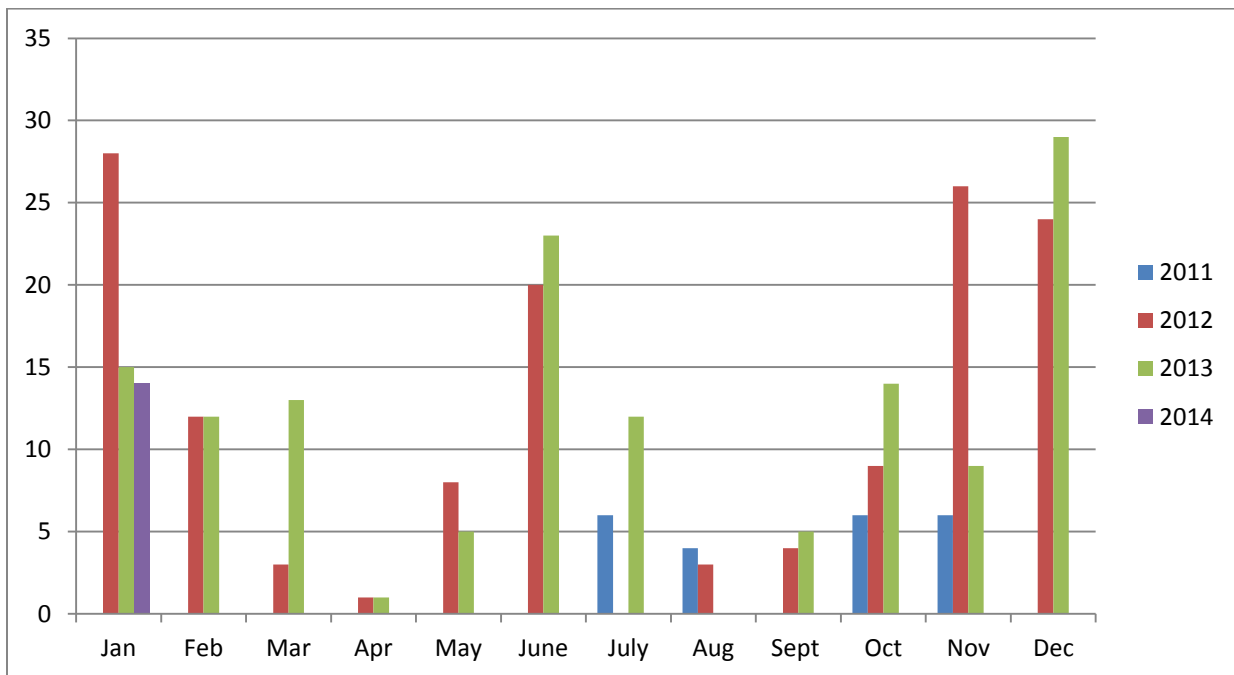
Although the number of attacks fell in the latter half of January, those attacks that did take place during this period were of particularly high intensity. Most notable was an attack on Kauda (the administrative capital of Heiban county and the largest population centre in opposition-held Southern Kordofan) on 25 January. In this attack, two fast jets of the Sudanese Air Force, repeatedly flying low and fast over their targets, dropped at least 32 bombs in a sustained attack which began at 12:00 noon. The attack destroyed ten houses, killed a significant number of livestock, and severely damaged a school, a teacher training facility, and a nearby playing field. Fortunately no civilians were killed in the attack on Kauda, although two civilians died in bombing attacks in other locations in Southern Kordofan during the same period (15-31 January), with a total of eight killed and 14 injured over the entire month.

Although the civilian population in Southern Kordofan experienced a relative respite from attacks in the second half of January, the Sudanese government, having failed to make ground in its offensive against opposition armed forces in Southern Kordofan, shifted its military focus to Blue Nile State.

**Southern Kordofan: Civilians killed by aerial bombardment: June 2011 – January 2014**



**Southern Kordofan: Civilians injured by aerial bombardment: June 2011 –January 2014**



## BLUE NILE



**Image: An 11 year old girl killed by bombs dropped by the Sudanese Air Force on Godulo village, Blue Nile State, on 27 January 2014. The girl's mother survived the attack, but remains seriously injured.**

During January, human rights monitors on the ground in Blue Nile reported a total of 15 air strikes launched by the Sudanese air force on civilian areas in the places they monitor. This represents the highest number of attacks recorded since these local monitors began to document such attacks in April 2013. (Note: similar attacks have been taking place in Blue Nile since the conflict began in 2011, but they have only been systematically recorded by the Sudan Consortium's partners since April 2013).

The spike in attacks on civilians in Blue Nile in January coincided with intense ground fighting between Sudanese government forces and armed forces of the opposition Sudan Peoples' Liberation Army - North (SPLA-N) around the settlement of Malkan in Bau County, Blue Nile State in mid/late January. Although no civilians were reported killed or injured in this fighting between the opposing armed forces, reports from the ground indicate that the Sudanese government is re-positioning its ground forces to launch another major offensive, this time against the opposition held territories in Blue Nile State.

In this context, the Sudan Consortium is concerned that, as with the recent ground offensive launched against opposition forces in Southern Kordofan, the Sudanese government forces will increase the numbers of indiscriminate and/or deliberately targeted air attacks against the civilian population as part of its planned offensive operations.

**Blue Nile: Bombing attacks on civilian settlements: April 2013-January 2014**

