

## The Sudan Consortium

*African and International Civil Society Action for Sudan*

### **The Impact of Conflict on Civilians in Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile States, Republic of Sudan March 2014**

The Sudan Consortium works with a trusted group of local Sudanese partners who have been working 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 which were clearly identifiable as civilian in character. **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.**

During the month of March, the number of attacks in Blue Nile increased significantly, with monitors on the ground reporting 66 bombs dropped on eight villages in 15 separate attacks. In addition, there were disturbing reports of prohibited stocks of anti-personnel landmines being discovered in vehicles captured from Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) by the Sudan Peoples' Liberation Army – North (SPLA-N) troops in ground fighting in Blue Nile.

In Southern Kordofan, although the number of air strikes launched by the Sudanese Air Force against civilians dropped during March, they nonetheless continued at a steady rate with ten bomb attacks recorded in the areas monitored by our partners. A total of four civilians were killed and 13 injured as a result of these attacks. All those killed were children. Another 3 children were injured, along with 4 women. While the number of air attacks decreased in Southern Kordofan during March, there were reports of increased activity on the ground by militia groups associated with the government of Sudan.

#### ***Update on the situation in Blue Nile***

##### ***Bombings***

Unlike in Southern Kordofan, where all the attacks on civilian settlements in March were carried out by aircraft from the Sudanese Air Force's recently acquired fleet of fast attack jets, the attacks in Blue Nile were all carried out by Antonov AN-26 Bombers. Since the start of the conflict in 2011, these antiquated bombers, which drop crude and inherently indiscriminate barrel bombs on civilian settlements from high

altitude, have been the prime weapon in the Sudanese government’s military campaign against civilians in Blue Nile and Southern Kordofan.

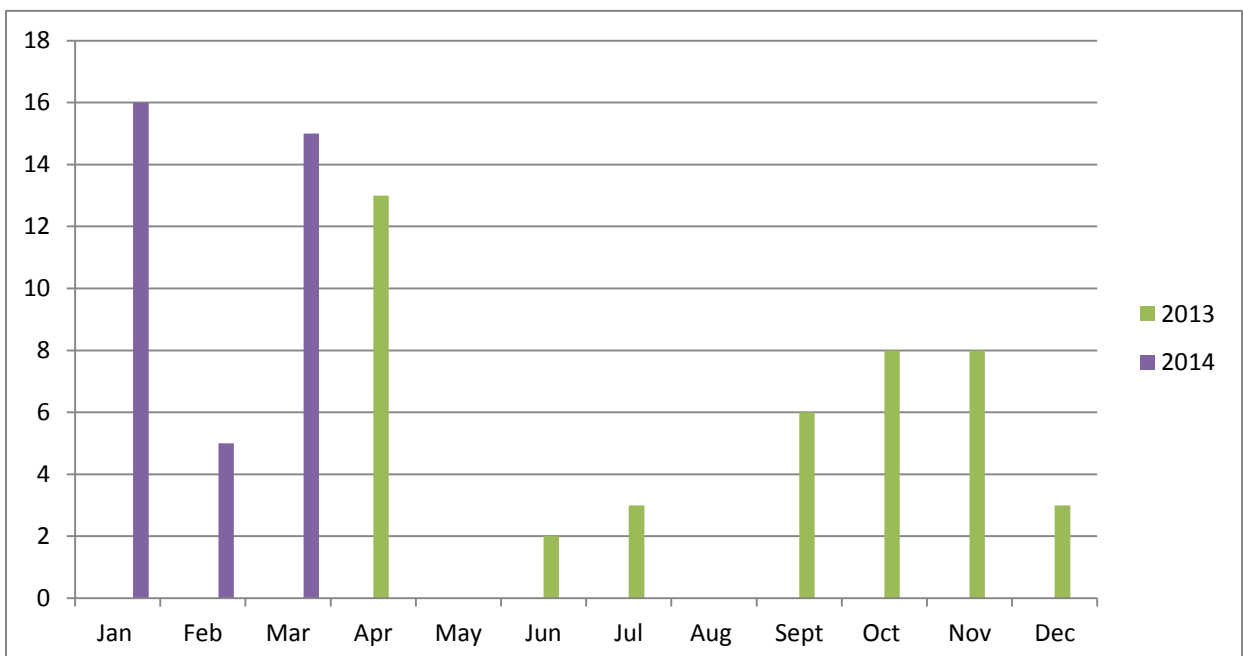
Although no civilian casualties were reported as a result of the March attacks on Blue Nile, the bombing caused extensive destruction of houses, farmland and livestock. The village of Mayak in Kurmuk County was particularly badly hit, suffering three separate Antonov attacks. During the course of these attacks, 20 houses were destroyed, along with the village mosque.

**The aftermath of an Antonov bombing attack on Mayak Village, Blue Nile, 20 March 2014**



The ongoing air strikes in Blue Nile continue to cause widespread population displacement, as the villagers targeted by these attritional attacks are forced off their land by the relentless and apparently deliberate campaign of violence being waged against them by the Sudanese government.

**BLUE NILE: Number of bombing attacks on civilian settlements, April 2013 – March 2014**



## Landmines

In an equally concerning development, monitors on the ground in Blue Nile are now reporting on the possession of stocks of anti-personnel land-mines by the SAF there.

The pictures below show some of the 200 anti-personnel land-mines reportedly captured by SPLA-N troops from SAF during ground fighting in Kurmuk County, Blue Nile in February.



**T 72A anti-personnel landmines. (Chinese made)**



**Metal casings for POMZ-2 stake-mounted anti-personnel mines. (Russian-made)**



**M14 anti-personnel land-mines (US-made)**



**No 4 anti-personnel land-mines (Israeli-made)**

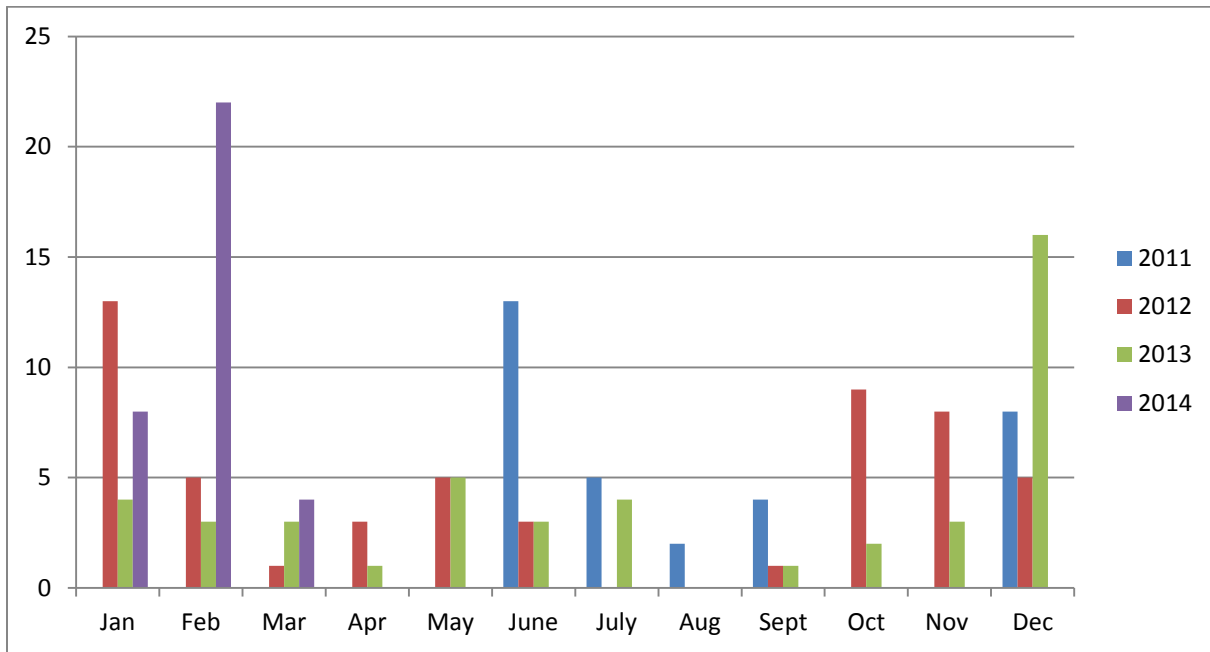
Sudan ratified the Convention on the Prohibition on the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Land Mines (the Ottawa Convention) in 2003 and had reportedly destroyed its stockpiles. Sudan would therefore be in breach of its obligations under this treaty if found to have been using, acquiring or retaining stockpiles of these weapons.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See International Campaign to Ban Landmines, "States Parties," available online at <https://www.icbl.org/index.php/icbl/Universal/MBT/States-Parties>

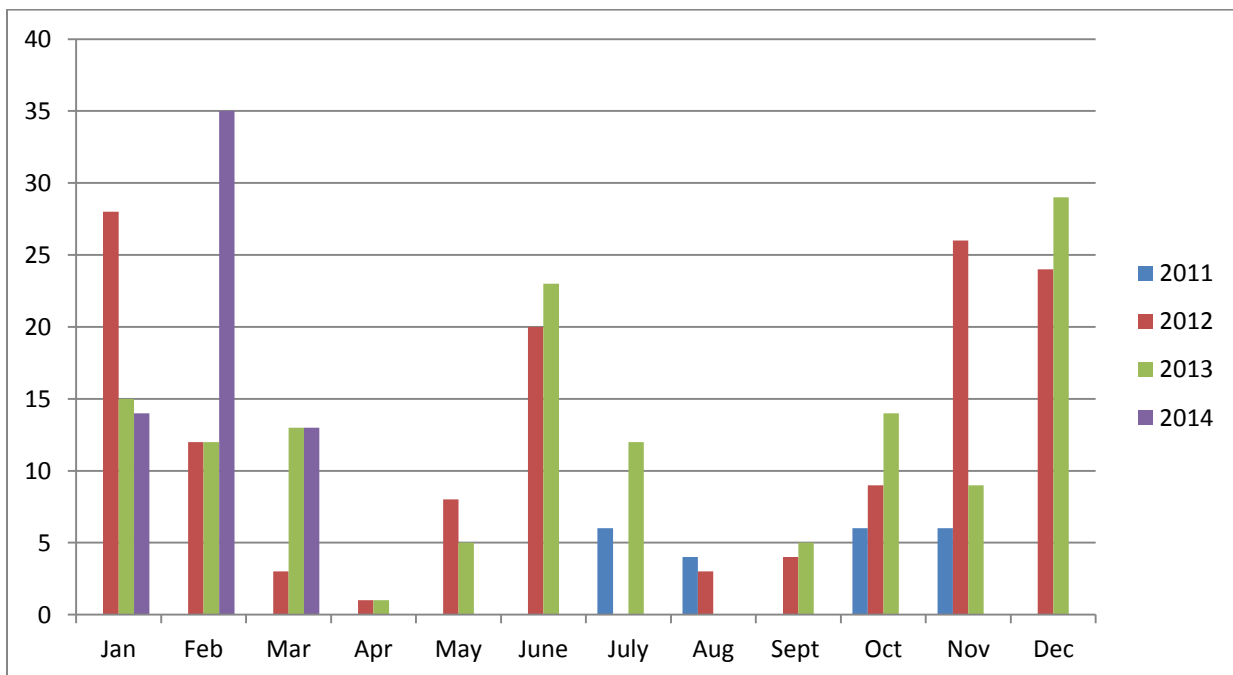
**Update on the Situation in Southern Kordofan**

As noted above, bombings continued in Southern Kordofan during the month. The below figures show this month's casualty figures against data for previous months.

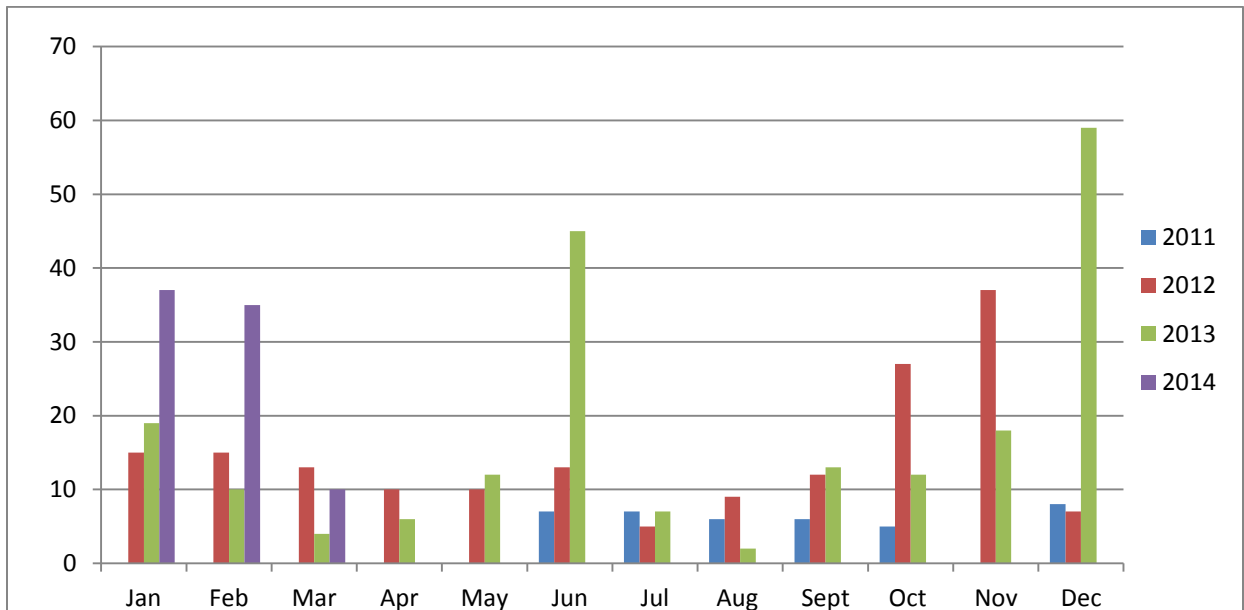
**Southern Kordofan: Civilians killed by aerial bombardment: June 2011 - March 2014**



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



**Southern Kordofan: Number of Bombing attacks on civilian settlements: June 2011-March 2014**



*Militia Ground Attacks*

Although the number of air attacks on civilians in Southern Kordofan fell during March, local human rights monitors reported an increase in ground activity by militia groups allied to the Sudanese government, with attacks on taking place on civilian settlements in Al Buram and Delami Counties. In one particularly egregious incident on 14 March, a group of 15 militiamen, mounted on camels and wearing uniforms of the People’s Defence Force (PDF) of the Sudanese government, attacked Adouna village in Delami County at 2:30am. Civilians in the village tried to seek shelter, but were nonetheless deliberately targeted by the attackers, who opened fire with AK-47 automatic rifles and rocket propelled grenade launchers (RPGs). According to witnesses, three children (boys aged 12, 13 and 15) who had sought shelter in a “fox-hole” were shot and killed by the militia. Two other children were injured, but survived the attack.

In what appears to have been a coordinated operation, once the militia force had departed, two Sudanese Air Force jets launched an air strike against the same village. Two children (one aged two years and one aged one month) were injured in the air-strike, along with two adult civilians (one male one female).

In a separate attack in Buram County on 15 March, a group of men armed with automatic weapons and identified by witnesses as “government militia” attacked Gabasa village at 1am. Three men were killed and two children injured in the attack. The attackers reportedly stole 35 head of cattle from the village.