

The Sudan Consortium
African and International Civil Society Action for Sudan

Human Rights Update: August 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.**

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.¹ The attacks killed two people, injured five, killed 60 animals and damaged property and crops.

Refugees from Blue Nile in camps in Maban County, South Sudan were caught up in renewed violence, which caused aid disruptions and widespread fear in the camps.

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 (see graphs on page 3). Thus it would appear that this is a seasonal lull in the attacks, rather than a fundamental shift in the dynamics of the conflict.

Blue Nile

In Blue Nile, two attacks were recorded on 15 July 2014. These attacks targeted the villages of Chali El Fil and Mayak with numerous bombs. Although no casualties were documented, the attacks reportedly destroyed a large area of farmland and forced the civilian population to flee. They have further undermined food security in an area that is already suffering from lack of humanitarian access and poor infrastructure. Forced out of their homes and into wooded areas, the people of these villages have become even more vulnerable to malnutrition and disease.

Refugee Camps in South Sudan

In addition, refugees from Blue Nile currently in South Sudan were severely affected in this period by violence in Bunj, the capital of Maban County, South Sudan, which functions as the base of operations for a relief operation serving an estimated 127,000 refugees.²

On Sunday 3 August 2014, a group of government of South Sudan soldiers from the military base in Bunj reportedly deserted to join the rebel forces of Riek Machar. Bunj is the South Sudanese town nearest to Doro refugee camp, which hosts nearly 50,000 refugees from Blue Nile. South Sudanese troops apparently engaged the deserters, resulting in a number of casualties. Another skirmish

¹ The number of incident reflects only those directly observed by trusted local partners. The numbers for August only reflect information from Southern Kordofan due to communication difficulties with Blue Nile.

² UNOCHA, "[South Sudan Aid Chief Appalled by Killing of Aid Worker](#)," 4 August 2014.

reportedly occurred later in the day in the market in Bunj and other engagements in the area continued the following day.

A militia group, known as the Maban Defence Forces, reportedly began moving around Maban, asking humanitarian organisations whether they had any employees of Nuer ethnicity. On 4 August, a staff member of Norwegian People's Aid (NPA), Gabriel Yien Gach, was pulled from an NPA vehicle and killed, reportedly on the basis of his Nuer ethnicity.³ By the end of the next day, 5 August, a total of six aid workers had reportedly been killed.⁴

The violence led to approximately 200 aid workers being evacuated⁵ and a number of South Sudanese civilians seeking protection in the refugee camps.⁶ It has disrupted aid operations in Maban and caused widespread fear among the refugees. However, aid flights have now resumed and the World Food Programme has re-deployed its staff.⁷ In addition, local officials claim that two people have been arrested in connection with the killings.⁸

Southern Kordofan

In Southern Kordofan, trusted partners on the ground reported three attacks in July and four in August. On 1 July, the town of Tunguli in Delami County was shelled, hitting farming areas and killing four donkeys. On 17 July, a looting incident in the town of Aberi in Delami County left one man dead. On 29 July, a bombing attack on the village of Hadara in Delami County left two people injured and six homes damaged.

In August, there were a total of eight attacks monitored in three counties. The most heavily affected was Delami County, which was hit by four of the eight attacks. All of the attacks in August were carried out by Sudanese Air Force Antonov bombers using barrel bombs. The inaccuracy of barrel bombings, which involves rolling crude unguided bombs out of the back of the aircraft from high altitude, raises serious questions about the legality of such actions.

On 1 August, the village of Umserndiba was hit by twelve bombs in the early hours of the morning and whilst none of the villagers were hurt, the bombing caused significant damage. Two farms were damaged and 11 animals – which the population depends upon for their survival – were killed, weakening the already limited capacity of the population to provide for their basic needs. In addition, the local church was damaged and the population is unsure if it can be used in its current condition.

Less than a week later, around midday, a village in Tangal Payam in Um Dorein County was hit by two bombs, killing a pregnant woman who was attempting to tend to her farm. The woman's husband is paralysed and he and their two children are now left without a mother and caregiver. In Farandalla village in Buram County, four bombs left one man



Bomb crater near settlement, Um Dorein County

³ Norwegian People's Aid, "[Norwegian People's Aid Staff Killed in South Sudan](#)," 4 August 2014.

⁴ South Sudan News Agency, "[A militia group carries out targeted killings in Upper Nile; rebels accuse government of 'complicity'](#)" 5 August 2014.

⁵ Sam Jones, "[UN outraged at ethnic murder of South Sudanese Humanitarian Workers](#)", The Guardian, 6 August 2014.

⁶ Special Update, [Blue Nile Centre for Human Rights and Peace](#), 6 August 2014.

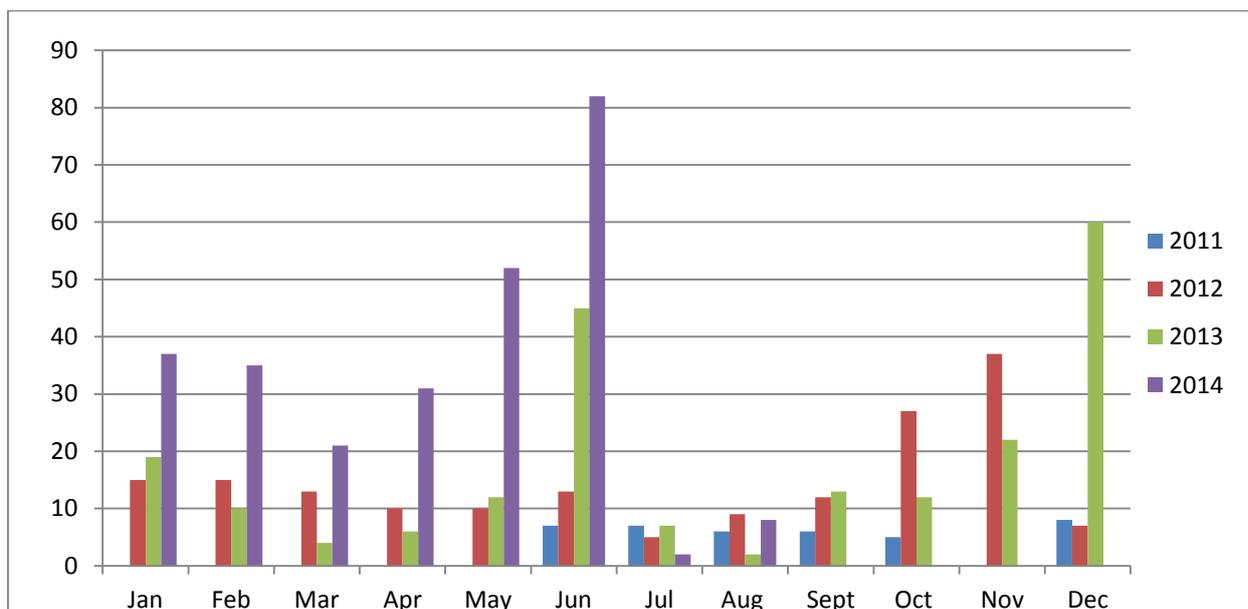
⁷ World Food Programme, "[South Sudan Situation Report #39](#)," 15 August 2014.

⁸ Radio Tamazuj, "[Two arrested in connection with Maban ethnic killings](#)," 5 September 2014.

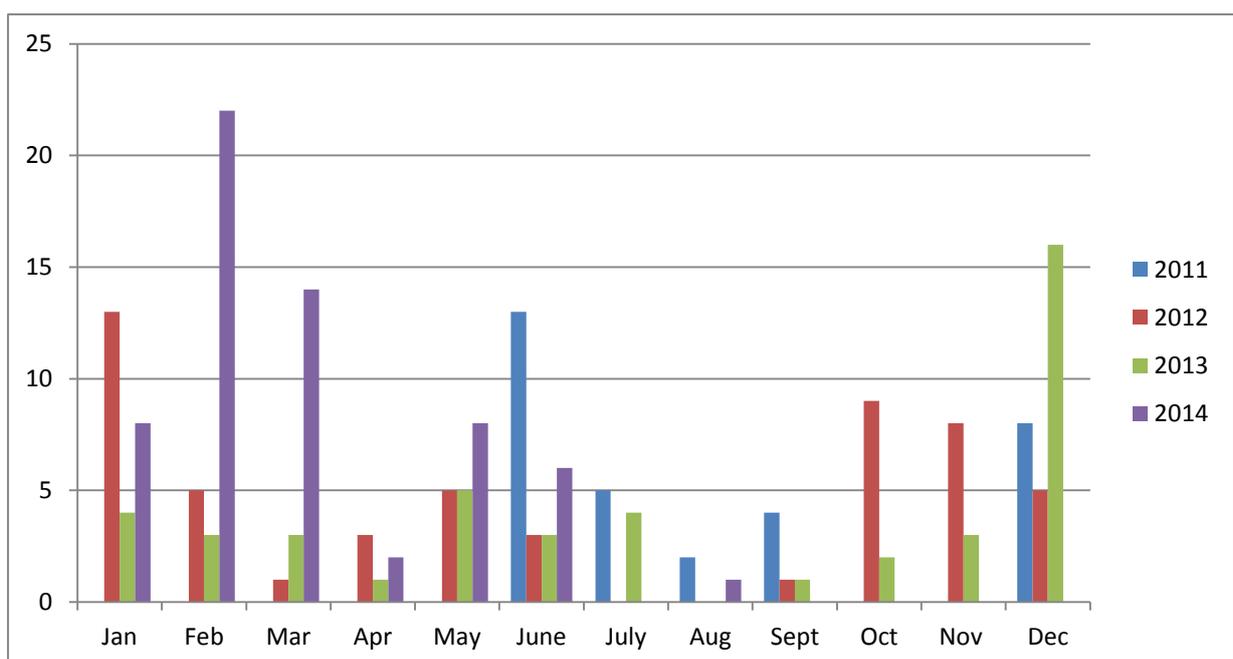
and one child injured.

On 12 August, four separate villages in Delami County were attacked. The village of Adour was attacked with four bombs, leaving one man injured. The attack also damaged two homes and left ten cows dead. Many in the village had already been displaced by attacks by the Rapid Support Forces in April. In Sabat village, there were no human casualties, but a number of livestock were killed, and in Mardes a farm was damaged. In Nyinger village, two bombs were dropped, but no casualties or property damage were documented.

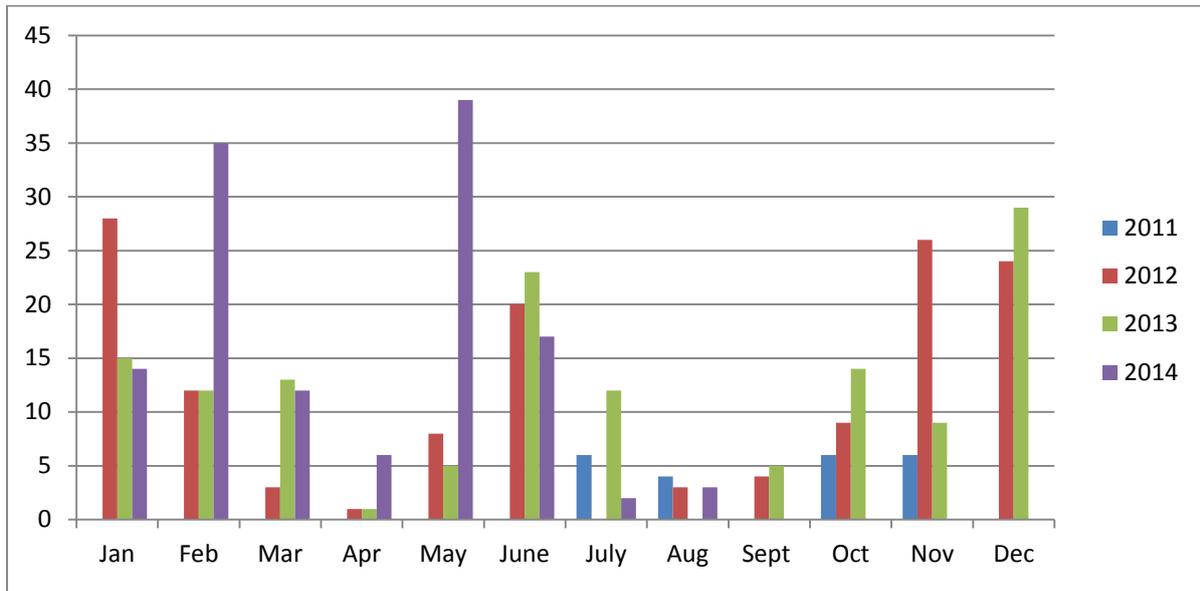
**Number of bombing and shelling attacks on civilians and civilian objects in Southern Kordofan
June 2011 - August 2014**



Civilians killed by bombing and shelling attacks in Southern Kordofan: June 2011 - August 2014



Civilians injured by bombing and shelling attacks in Southern Kordofan: June 2011 – August 2014



Conclusion

The relentless bombing of civilian targets is wearing away the capacity of civilians to survive. The bombings sow fear among the civilian population and discourage them from tending their fields. The attacks, combined with the deaths of livestock and destruction of crops on which the population depend to survive along with the obstruction of humanitarian assistance, appears to be a deliberate tactic to force the population to flee.