



Human Rights Update: October - December 2018

Civilians in the conflictual areas of Southern Kordofan / Nuba Mountains and Blue Nile states remain tense.

The National Human Rights Monitors Organisation (NHRMO) has been monitoring human rights violations committed against the civilian population in Southern Kordofan (SK) and Blue Nile (BN), Sudan, since the current conflict began in 2011.

The information in this update has been verified by NHRMO field monitors in the areas controlled by the Sudan Peoples' Liberation Movement/Army–North (SPLM/A-N). Other information has been provided by trusted sources. The update highlights several incidents perpetrated by Sudanese government forces and its allied militias/paramilitary forces against the local population in these areas. The update provides strong evidence that civilians are being directly and deliberately targeted by the Sudanese government and its allied militias/paramilitary forces as most of the attacks were against clearly identifiable and unarmed civilians.

This report covers the period October – December 2018 under the unilateral ceasefires declared by each of the two opposing forces, the Sudan government and the SPLM/A-N. The NHRMO is not aware of any ceasefire extension by either party since 31 December 2018.

In July 2018, the Sudan government issued a decree extending the unilateral ceasefire in Southern Kordofan, Blue Nile and Darfur until 31 December 2018. On 28 November 2018, on behalf of SPLM/A-N, Lieutenant General Abdalaziz Adam Alhilu extended the cessation of hostilities from 1 November to 31 December 2018.

In terms of human rights violations and/or ceasefire violations, there were only three incidents recorded by our monitors in SK during the last three months of 2018 involving looting or attempted looting of livestock by SAF and/or its allied militias. There were no recorded incidents in BN in December 2018. This is in line with the previous few months of 2018 when the number of incidents were significantly lower than had been the case prior to the ceasefire. However, according to reports received from the counties, there are signs that the Sudan government may be preparing for a flare up in the conflict with the SPLM/A-N. The last few months of 2018 were characterised by more military movements at the frontlines as well as frequent circulations of Antonov “bombers” over SK and BN air space both of which are usual indicators of escalation of state violence in the Two Areas. According to trusted sources in government-controlled areas, there has been a military build-up and a surge in the recruitment of young Nuba men into the army, as reported in our last few publications. In Alazrag Payam, for example, an additional 50 military vehicles mounted with Katyusha rockets and machine guns and 200-500 new troops were reportedly brought in.

Human Rights and / or Ceasefire Violations (October – December 2018)

SOUTHERN KORDOFAN STATE / NUBA MOUNTAINS

Delami County

October 2018

- **On 8 October 2018, at 1.40pm**, in Rigilzirga village, Nyukur Payam, Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) soldiers attacked cattle keepers herding about 80 animals belonging to five households with apparent intent to loot them. The attackers came from Umhitan village, Umhitan Payam, Delami County and were wearing SAF uniforms. The cattle keepers resisted by shooting at the SAF until the latter were forced to withdraw without taking any of the cattle. No casualties were reported.

November 2018

- **On 23 November 2018, at 11.00pm**, nine soldiers of the Popular Defence Forces (PDF), in green uniforms, armed with AK47 assault rifles, looted 34 goats from civilians in Hadara Village, Umhetan Payam. No casualties were reported.

December 2018

Tobo (Alburam) County

- On 28 December 2018, at midday, in Tagule village, Tabanya Payam, Tobo County, a group of PDF men, riding on camels from Talodi town, killed a man who was working on a farm with his wife. The men attacked the couple, seized the wife and took her away but the man shot at them to rescue his wife. He was killed during the ensuing exchange of fire but the woman disappeared into the bush and ran to the nearest village.

BLUE NILE STATE

- Our monitors reported that the ceasefire held in BN during the reporting period and no conflict related human rights violations were documented during the months of October, November and December 2018 except the circulation of Antonovs.
- The monitors have also mentioned some returns of Sudanese refugees to the SPLM-N controlled areas of BN from Ethiopia, apparently triggered by ethnic tensions and the reduction of food rations in refugee camps there, particularly in Tango and Kubri Khamsa refugee camps.

Reports from SAF-controlled areas of Blue Nile State

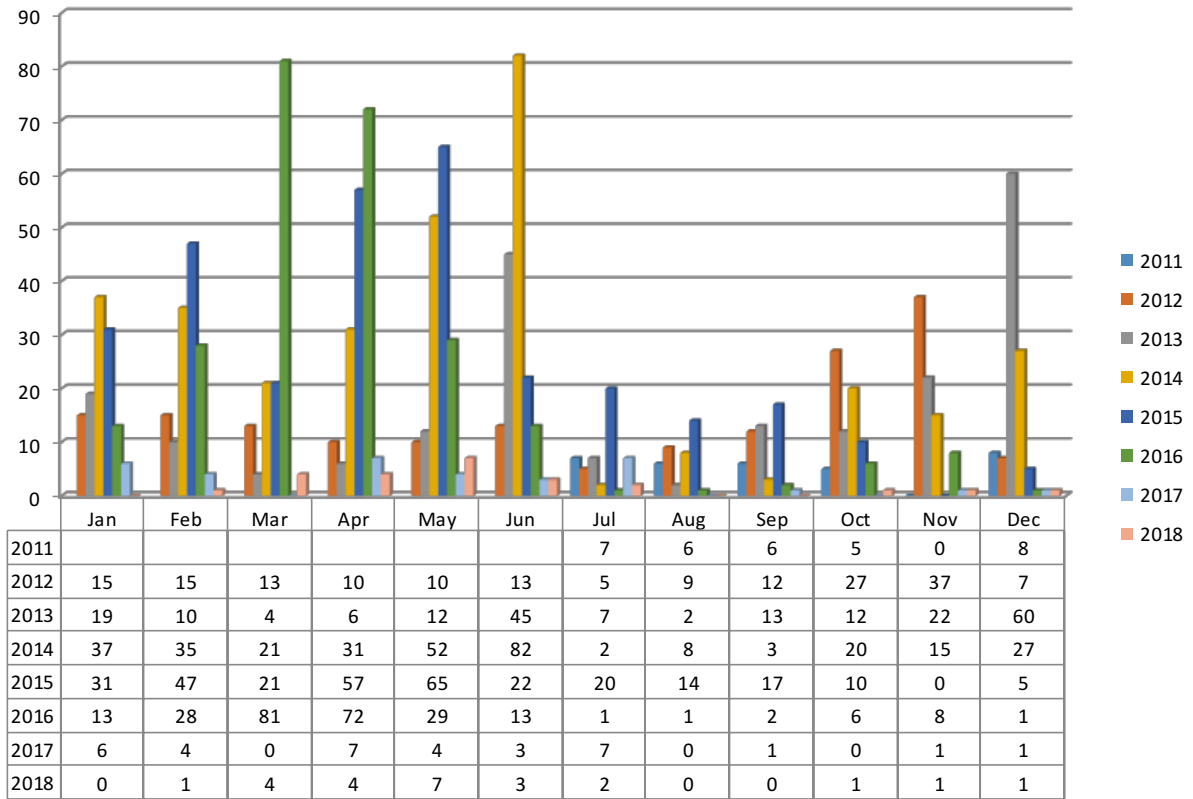
In the government controlled areas of Blue Nile, trusted sources reported that the Sudanese state had cracked down on protests and demonstrations by civilians, including students, particularly in Damazin, the capital of the state. Similar protests have erupted throughout Sudan focussing on, among other grievances, the worsening economic situation in the country. Grievances specific to BN include the following: low school enrolment due to the high costs of education; the military recruitment of children who were then sent to fight in Yemen. A large number of women have also protested that their husbands have died in wars that they see as senseless. The monitors could not independently verify this information in SAF controlled areas.

In addition, a press statement on 31 December 2018 from Human Rights and Development Organization (HUDO Centre), a Sudanese human rights organisation operating in the government-controlled areas confirmed that there was a peaceful demonstration organised primarily by students in Damazin on 13 December 2018. As a result, many students were arrested by police and NISS. The students were later released. Another demonstration led by students took place on 16 December 2018 but it was dispersed by police with teargas and many were arrested and taken to court. The case was dismissed by court for lack of evidence but the arrested students were forced to sign a document promising not to participate in demonstrations again. On 23 December 2018, residents of Ganees Sharq/East in the neighbourhood of Roseries conducted a peaceful demonstration but NISS together with police used teargas and fired live ammunition in the air to disperse them. Since then, police, SAF and NISS have deployed heavily in Damazin and Blue Nile University and schools remain closed.

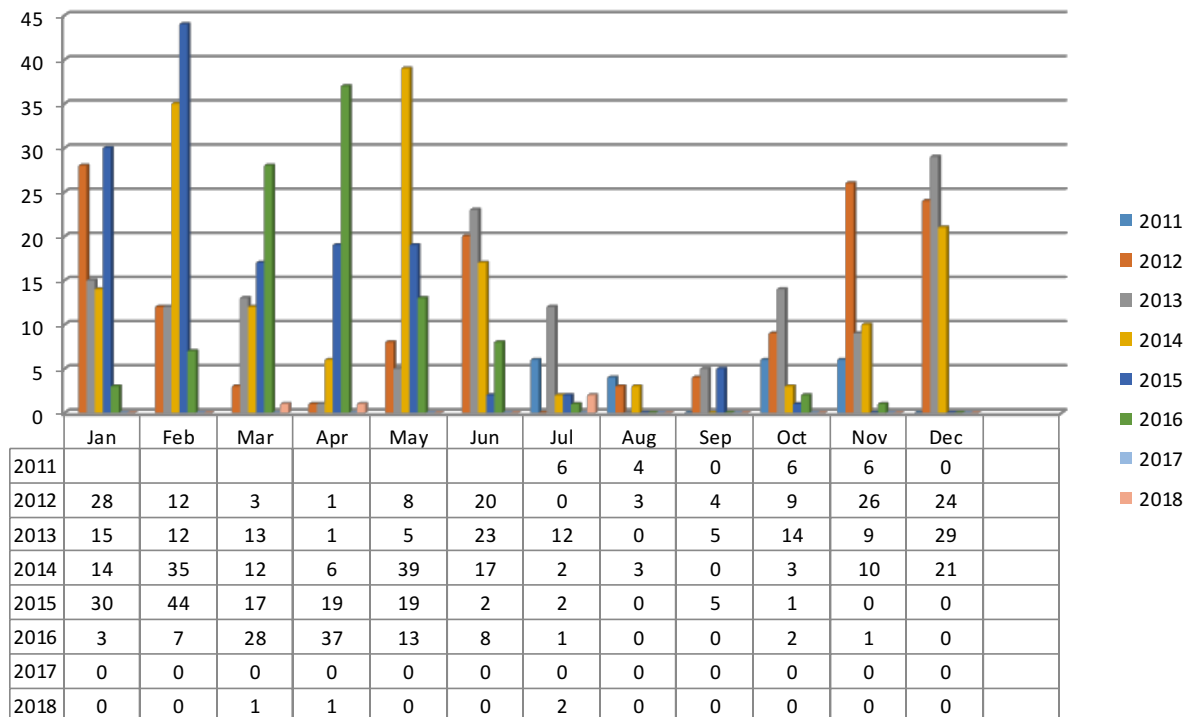
Conclusion

Reports from Southern Kordofan / Nuba Mountains and Blue Nile states of Sudan continue to indicate a general calm owing to the cessation of aerial bombing by the Sudan Air Force over two years ago. During the last three months of 2018, there were few incidents of conflict related human rights violations and/or ceasefire violations and no deaths, casualties, abductions or successful livestock lootings by the Sudan government forces and/or its allied militias. However, there have been reports of intensified recruitment of young men and a military build-up by the Sudan government. Coupled with this, as previously mentioned, the movement of Antonovs in the skies of the Two Areas resumed in the second half of 2018. Significantly, neither warring party (Sudan Government or SPLM/A-N) seems to have renewed their unilateral ceasefire each of which expired on 31 December 2018, raising fears of renewed fighting. Therefore, the situation remains tense and some observers believe that it is only the current countrywide anti-government protests in Sudan that may be delaying, a flare up of the conflict. The civilian population remains apprehensive.

Number of incidents against civilians in SK and BN 2011 - 2018



Number of civilians injured in SK and BN 2011 - 2018



Number of civilians killed in SK and BN 2011 - 2018

