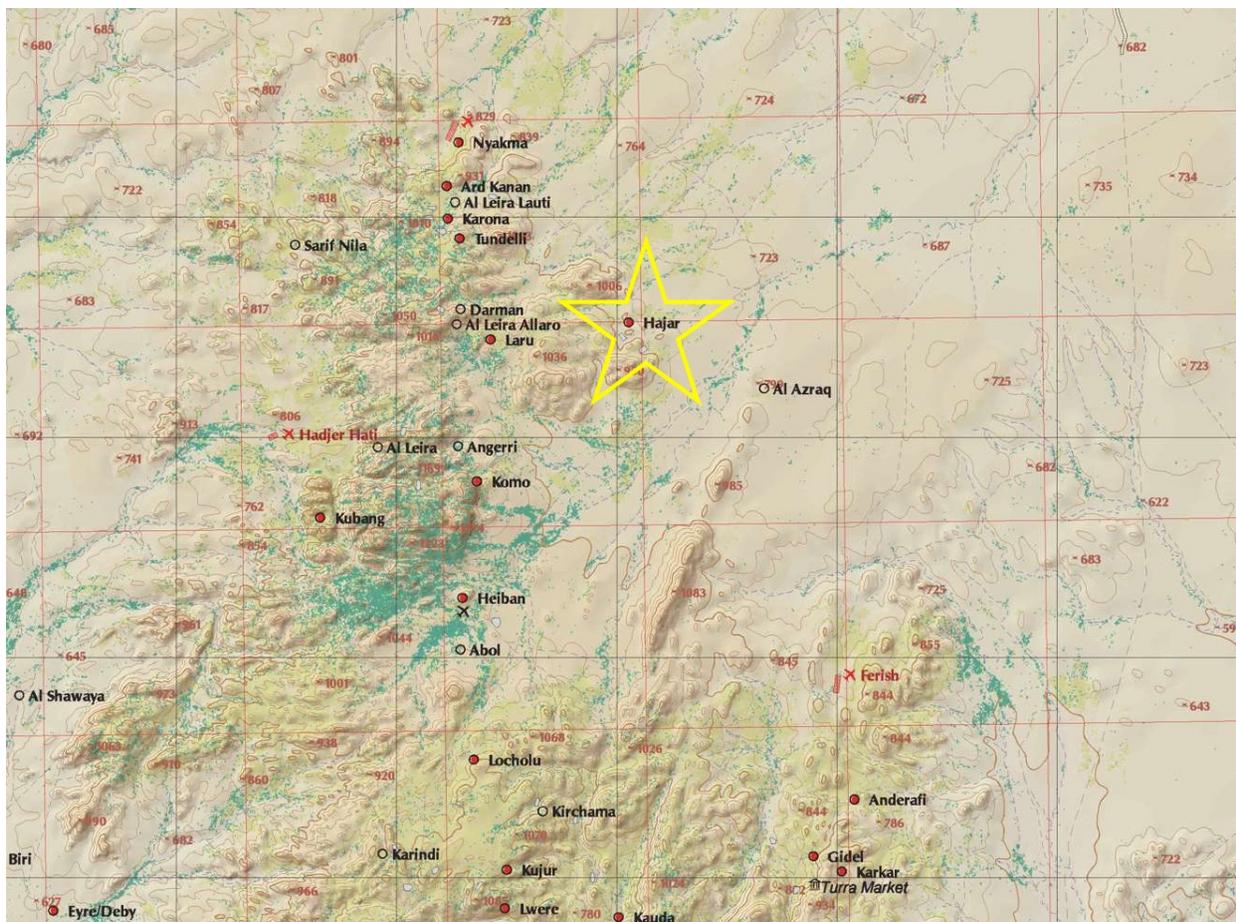


SKBNCU FLASH UPDATE #1

A landmine kills two people in SPLA-N areas, it undermines access to the affected population and raises concerns over the tenure of the Cessation of Hostilities

On March 20th, 2019, two young adults were killed by the explosion of a suspected landmine around Hajar Bago village, in Heiban county, within the SPLM/A-N controlled area of South Kordofan (about 15 Km north of Heiban town and about 30 Km north of Kauda).



The suspected anti-personnel (AP) landmine was planted around a water point used by both humans and animals, close to a main road. Three people were also injured in the incident, and one was discharged from hospital after a few days.

In a statement issued after the incident, the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N) has provided the names of the victims and blamed the Government for the attack. An SPLA-N committee was formed to investigate the matter.

Local monitors have provided evidence of the incident and the victims. Observers and monitors from the area reported that military activities were conducted in the area on the night before the incident. Mobile troops from SAF were seen moving from Al Azraq base into the SPLA-N controlled area, though it is unclear whether the two parties had clashed. It is reasonable to think

that the landmine was positioned on that night, since the water point was frequently used, and no incident had happened before. However, it remains unclear who positioned the landmine.

The presence of the possible AP mine poses a serious threat to peace in the area and to the protection of civilians, while it reduces access of people to water, farms and schools. It is also a clear violation of the Cessation of Hostilities in South Kordofan declared by the parties.

The use of landmines is prohibited by an international convention. Despite that, hundreds of civilians in South Kordofan and Blue Nile have been victims of AP mines and other explosive remnants of war (ERW). Sudan ratified the AP mine Ban Convention in 2003 that aims at eliminating the use and presence of all anti-personal landmines in the country (signed it on 4 December 1997). Sudan adopted the Sudan Mine Action Law on 31 March 2010, which includes penalties for violations. It also signed the Convention on Conventional Weapons (CCW) on 10 April 1981 but has not ratified it.

While the Convention does not directly apply to the SPLM-N, the group has been a signatory to Geneva Call's Deed of Commitment banning anti-personnel mines since November 2013 and to the Deed of Commitment protecting children in armed conflict since June 2015. As such, the SPLM-N agreed to prohibit the use, production, and transfer of antipersonnel mines, to cooperate in humanitarian mine action activities, and to destroy its stockpiles.

Uncleared areas pose a long-term threat to the safety of communities and their ability to cultivate, harvest and to return to normal life after conflict. It also affects humanitarian access to the people in need. An independent investigation on the incident should be urgently conducted.