

## **Update on Human Rights Violations in Blue Nile and South Kordofan January 2012**

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The African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies (ACJPS) continues to follow the conflicts that erupted in the Sudanese states of Blue Nile and South Kordofan in the summer of 2011. Please see below for an update on the human rights violations being committed in the two states.

### **I. Blue Nile**

With the increase in battles between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N), the situation for civilians deteriorated due to the absence of food and medicine, loss of shelter, and lack of international and national NGO presence. The government appointed one of the parties of the conflict, the SAF, to facilitate the movement of food inside the state. This has created challenges for people in areas that are known to be loyal to the SPLM-N to get food and supplies.

The arrest and torture of civilians has continued. There is also evidence of extrajudicial killings though it is not clear who is responsible for these killings.

#### **A. Security**

- On 3 December, clashes took place between SAF and SPLM-N in *Ahmer Seedak* area – about 45 Km from *Roro* city in *El-Tadamon* locality. The clashes caused the deaths of 22 civilians. ACJPS was not able to get the names of all of the people that were killed. However, among them were:
  - *Eisa Is'hag* – male lived in *Ahmer Seedak*,
  - *Ahmed Musa* – male lived also in *Ahmer Seedak*.

Around 50 civilians were injured and nearly 30 families were displaced from their homes in the area after losing their property and livestock (estimated to be around 4,000 sheep, goats and cows). The displaced persons remaining in *Roro* and

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*Ahmer Seedak* area have been plagued with disease, and lack access to both food and medicine.

- On 8 October, clashes resumed in *Bek* area – South West *Eldamazin* - between SAF and SPLM-N forces, causing the displacement of hundreds of civilians.

## **B. Extrajudicial Killings**

- On 9 November around 3:00 pm, the following people were murdered by two unknown armed assailants. Witnesses said that the shooters were wearing army uniform trousers and civilian shirts.
  - *El-Day Ahmed Shale'e* – the General Secretary of *Ansar* Affairs Authority, and a member of the political office for *Umma* National Party in Blue Nile State.
  - *Osama El-Rayah* – member of the *Umma* National Party.
  - *Kamal Mohamed Tom* – member of *Umma* National Party and the representative of the party in 1986 elections.

The shooting happened in *Abu-Garin* area – 30 Km to the South of *El-Damazin* city. They were shot as they were on their way to work at an agricultural project in the area.

## **C. Arbitrary Arrest**

- On 9 October, joint forces of the National Security and Intelligence Services (NISS) and the SAF in *El-Tadamon* locality – to the West of *El-Damazin* - arrested a civilian named *Mukhtar Abakar Shgar* for conducting trade between Blue Nile State and Upper Nile in South Sudan. In November he had his first court hearing in *Damazin Court* on charges of smuggling across borders. NISS was the plaintiff.
- Since 10 September, the NISS office in *Gely* village in Blue Nile state has put 6 civilians under house arrest. Among them is *Sheikh Haboya*, the Sheikh of the area. He is under house arrest for alleged collaboration with the SPLM-N. ACJPS researchers were unable to discover the names of the 5 other people under house arrest.
- Some detainees, arrested at the beginning of the conflict, report that they were released in *El-Damazin* only after they promised not to engage in political activism in support of the SPLM-N. Some of those arrested and subsequently released are mentioned below:
  1. *Mr. Yahya El-Yas*, male, lawyer, lives in *El-Damazin*.
  2. *Mr. Adam Mohamed*, male, lives in *El-Damazin*.

3. *Mr. Abbas Abdul Rahman*, male, former Minister for Humanitarian Affairs.
- Mr. Musa Goly is still in detention, despite being acquitted of killing soldiers at the *El-Damazin – Sinja Bridge*. Goly lives in *El-Nasr* neighborhood and works in cargo at the public market in *El-Damazin* with *Bababano* Transport Company. He has been detained since 7 September and was moved from the police headquarters to *El-Roseris* prison after the persons responsible for the killing of soldiers at *El-Damazin – Sinja Bridge* were found. A commercial vehicle that belongs to him was seized and has yet to be returned to the family despite their requests for it as it is the only commercial asset in the family. None of his family members have been allowed to visit him since his arrest.
  - A recently released detainee reports that detainees in *Gely* village in Blue Nile State who were released have been ordered by NISS to remain in their homes and not to travel anywhere without informing the NISS. They are also required to visit the NISS office every day.

#### **D. Intimidation and Torture**

- Several recently released political activists report that they were threatened and pressured by the NISS to create a new political party with the name of SPLM-N. The NISS was going to bring buses to take them to *Khartoum* to organize the party.

They also mentioned that they suffered inside detention due to slow procedures. It often took up to a week in detention before it was a person's turn to be questioned.

The detainees also complained that the detention cells for non-politicians were very small, while the number of detainees was very high, estimated at more than 200 persons. The numbers were high due to the fact that the NISS arrested everyone who belonged to the SPLM-N during the early days of the conflict. There was not enough space for everyone to sleep and meals were contentious as everyone tried to ensure that they received enough food.

- *T. A.* – male lives in *Ahmer Roro* – who was one of the detainees, reports that on 3 September, three members of the NISS in *Roro* came and ordered him to come with them to the police station without any explanation. When they arrived at the police station, he was put in a dark room with other detainees whom he recognized as *A. A. Rodwan Abbakar* and *Ibrahim Adam Shalabi*. The detainees were left in the room for three days without being charged with a crime. They were then transferred to the NISS office for three days. While in custody, they were insulted as the officers called them drunk SPLM-N members and threatened to rape and kill them. The officers also said things such as, “you Western Sudanese were created by God to create trouble by following this *Angasana* person *Malik Agar*.” They were then taken by three land cruisers to the NISS

headquarters in *El-Damazin*.

After three days in detention at the NISS headquarters, they were taken to the SAF headquarters in *El-Damazin*. T. A. says that they were ordered to sit down in the ground and close their eyes. Members of the NISS then began beating them with water tubes and sticks. They told the detainees, “we do not arrest anybody; you were brought here to be killed.” When the detainees mentioned that they were civilians and not soldiers, the reply was, “anyone who was brought here is a soldier and his/her fate is death.” After six hours they were returned to the NISS office and questioned about their names, tribes, and political affiliations. They were also forced to sign pledges that they will no longer participate in the SPLM-N. One of the detainees said he was forced to condemn *Malik Agar* and the SPLM-N on television saying, “I did that because a gun was directed to my neck.”

### **E. The Humanitarian Situation**

- Sources told ACJPS researchers that other states in Sudan were sending food to Blue Nile through the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, but that most of the supplies were being controlled by a small number of officials.
- K. A., a male civilian that lives in *El-Zohoor* neighborhood in *El-Damazin*, said even though his family registered their names with Humanitarian Affairs, they have not received any food.
- F. R. from *Baw* locality told ACJPS researchers that “they refused to provide us with relief because we belong to *Malik Agar’s* tribe (*Angasana* tribe).”
- F. M., a male IDP from *Wad Book* area and who stays in *Roro*, mentioned that one of the members of the distribution committee said that the condition for receiving relief is that they go back to their home areas, where the war is still ongoing.
- A. D., a male from *Gely* area, said that “joining the NCP is the price to get relief.”
- One of the employees from the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs said that the relief supplies are distributed by committees of NCP leaders in villages and neighborhoods. She mentioned that the Ministry received many complaints from citizens about the absence of food. According to her, the Ministry has received financial assistance from other states estimated around 860,000 Sudanese Pounds, but it has yet to be distributed.
- H. A., a 32 male nurse and one of the people who were displaced from *Ahmer Seedak* area, confirmed that there were clashes on 3 September between SAF and SPLM-N that caused him to leave the area. He was one of the 30 families previously mentioned. H. A. also reports that they now live in schools in *Roro* area without food and are plagued by disease, especially among children. He

confirmed that the group of displaced persons does not receive assistance from the government or NGOs.

- ACJPS researchers received reports of an outbreak of diseases among women and children in *El-Kormok* locality among both IDPs and returnees. It was also reported that they do not have access to medicine. The manager of *El-Kormok* hospital *Mr. Salih Osman* said that they have medicine for malaria, cholera and other diseases, but that these medicines are not being provided to the IDPs. *Mr. Osman* criticized the government and humanitarian organizations for not providing relief to the victims of the war.
- The humanitarian situation in *Dindro* is very difficult due to lack of food and medicine.
- On 9 October, NISS officers ordered a number of farmers to drive their tractors to the conflict area to be used in service to the SAF. They then took the tractors by force. The owners of the tractors are:
  1. *Jamal Ajbar* – male.
  2. *Mohamed El-Tahir* – male.
  3. *Burma Adam* – male.
  4. *Dalloom Shogar Is'hag* – male.
- In places such as *Wadbook*, *Baw* and *Dering* there is no trading due to the conflict.

#### **F. Arming of Citizens and Reactivation of Retired Soldiers**

- Following the outbreak of the conflict, the government reactivated and rearmed previously disarmed military soldiers in the state. ACJPS monitors documented a large-scale return of former soldiers who were released under the DDR program following the end of the North-South war.
- In a television interview on 2 November, *Mr. El-Radi Ahmed El-Awad*, the Coordinator of the Popular Defense Forces (PDF) in Blue Nile state said that the PDF leadership has been preparing citizens in PDF battalions to be ready for war since June and that before Ramadan they were sent to Khartoum for a month for training. The PDF leadership created the Battalion of the Blue Nile Protectors to protect the community. *Mr. El-Awad* thanked the citizens for their positive response to the “Cleansing Campaign” launched in response to the SPLM-N attack and for their willingness to carry arms.

## **II. South Kordofan**

ACJPS researchers received reports that air attacks are ongoing in South Kordofan in *El-Hamra, Kringo and Ingarto*, south and east of *Kadugli* up to the date of publication. In recent months, there has also been bombing of the *Talodi* and *Kadugli* areas.

The situation for civilians in South Kordofan continues to deteriorate due in part to the absence of government relief and the refusal by both parties to allow relief organizations to enter the area. There continues to be large movements of IDPs due to aerial bombardments and ground clashes between the two parties. Furthermore, the restrictions placed by the government on the movement of food and supplies in the state have decreased the amounts of food and material supplies available to people in a large portions of the state.

### **A. Security Situation**

- On 19 October at 10:30 am, 5 Tatsher<sup>1</sup> vehicles carrying members of the SPLM-N entered *El-Dalang* from the south. SAF fired their weapons at these vehicles for 10 minutes and then the 5 cars disappeared. No civilian was shot during this attack.
- Battles raged between the SAF and SPLM-N in *Talodi* area – 80 Km east of *Kadugli* – until 7 November. The battles cost both parties significant financial and human resources. Neither side controls the town, but it has become clear, even with a media blackout, that the humanitarian situation is particularly bad.
- On 30 October, at 4:42 pm, 35 SAF Tatsher vehicles entered *El-Dalang*. All were loaded with Doshka weapons carried 10 soldiers in each vehicle. Six large Magaros trucks carrying soldiers also entered at 5:18 pm, moving towards *Kadugli*.
- On 28 October, a heavily armed SAF force consisting of 40 Tatsher vehicles, 7 Magaros trucks and weapons entered *El-Dalang*.
- On 26 October, at around 4:00 am, a SPLM-N force attacked *Um-Hetan* area in *El-Dalang* locality. This area was previously under SPLM-N control, but was taken by SAF two weeks prior. The fighting raged for 8 hours. At the end, 22 SAF soldiers were killed and taken to the military hospital in *El-Obeid*. A SAF source reported that 7 SAF officers were also taken to the military hospital in Khartoum for medical treatment.
- On 28 October, SAF aircraft bombed *Atmor*. The bombing began in the early morning and continued until 7:00 pm. Reports indicate that 73 SPLM-N soldiers were killed during this attack.
- On 26 October, *Ahmed Haroun* the NCP Governor of South Kordofan traveled with 6 military leaders to *Talodi* and held a meeting in the *Talodi* military camp,

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<sup>1</sup> Type of vehicle often used by the Sudanese Armed Forces.

where he issued a directive to SAF to launch military operations. According to a source that chooses to remain anonymous, Haroun ordered the soldiers to take back all of the areas controlled by SPLM-N in one month's time at any price. *El-Magboul El-Fadil Hagam*, a brigadier in SAF that works now as an appointed commissioner of *Talodi*, was at the meeting along with members of the security committee of the state, including the manager of the NISS and the head of the intelligence forces. Following the meeting, the aircraft carrying the Governor returned to *Kadugli* and a SAF source reported that the soldiers immediately moved to *Ingarto* area in eastern *Kadugli* and western *Talodi*, areas that are controlled by the SPLM-N.

At 7:00 pm on the same day, a battle started between the two sides, leading to the death of 16 and injury of 22 SPLM-N soldiers. 2 PDF soldiers were killed and 7 were injured and taken to *Talodi* hospital. The PDF gained control of all of the weapons and ammunitions that were in the SPLM-N's military camp at *Ingarto*. Local civilians were displaced, as most were affiliated with the SPLM-N. The area now is fully controlled by SAF. A source reports that the Governor ordered the *El-Marg* company to immediately begin work on the road between *Abu-Jibeha* and *Talodi*.

#### **B. Arbitrary Arrest**

- Mr Abdalla Abdelgadir a lawyer, 60 years old, arrested in Alabasiya, Tegali on 8 January 2012.
- Mr Abraham Garad, a forestry officer and SPLM secretary in Rashad locality, 55 years old, arrested in Rashad town on 10 January 2012.
- Mr Mohamed Ibrahim Suwar, a civil servant, 52 years old, arrested in Rashad town on 10 January 2012.

All three persons have been transferred to Abu Jibeha, the headquarters of the military intelligence in the eastern part of Southern Kordofan, for interrogation.